

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (ZAIRE)

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Michael A. Boorstein	1974-1977	Personnel Officer, Kinshasa
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Walter L. Cutler	1975-1979	Ambassador, Zaire
Thomas N. Hull III	1976-1977	Public Affairs Trainee, USIS, Kinshasa
Parker W. Borg	1976-1978	Principal Officer, Lubumbashi (Zaire)
Arma Jane Karaer	1976-1979	Economic Officer, Kinshasa
Joyce E. Leader	1976-1979	Associate Director for Education, Peace Corps, Kinshasa
Frank D. Correl	1977	Acting Program Officer, USAID, Kinshasa
Robert J. MacAlister	1977-1979	Director, Peace Corps, Kinshasa
Willis J. Sutter	1977-1979	Cultural Officer, USIS, Kinshasa
Allen C. Davis	1977-1980	Deputy Chief of Mission, Kinshasa
Phyllis E. Oakley	1979-1982	Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS, Kinshasa
Robert B. Oakley	1979-1982	Ambassador, Zaire
Derek S. Singer	1980-1984	Development Officer, USAID, Kinshasa
Peter D. Constable	1982-1984	Ambassador, Zaire
Richard Podol	1982-1986	Mission Director, USAID, Kinshasa

Stevenson McIlvaine	1983-1985	Political Officer, Kinshasa
Leonard H. Robinson, Jr.	1983-1985	Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Washington, DC
Brandon Grove	1984-1987	Ambassador, Zaire
Michael W. Cotter	1984-1988	Political Officer, Kinshasa
Alica A. Dress	1985-1988	Finance and Development Officer, Kinshasa
George Kenney	1991	Finance and Development Officer, Kinshasa
Melissa Foelsch Wells	1991-1992	Ambassador, Zaire
David R. Adams	1997-1998	USAID Deputy, Interagency Task Force on Zaire, Washington, DC
Aubrey Hooks	2001-2004	Ambassador, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Melissa Sanderson	2003-2006	Political Counselor, Kinshasa

L. DEAN BROWN
Economic Officer
Leopoldville (1946-1948)

Ambassador L. Dean Brown was born in New York in 1920. He graduated from Wesleyan University in 1942 and subsequently served as a second lieutenant in the US Army overseas. His Foreign Service Career began in 1946, and included overseas assignments of Congo, Saint Johns, Ottawa, Paris, Rabat and Senegal, as well as an ambassadorship to Jordan. Ambassador Brown was interviewed by Horace G. Torbert on May 17, 1989

Q: Well, did you go right out to Leopoldville which, I note, was your first post?

BROWN: Yes. You remember, we always had the choice of posts, so I put down Belgium, and they announced that I had come very close. I got to the Belgian Congo, which is better than most people at the time. I should have learned not to pick a country with a colony. [Laughter]

Q: What did the post consist of at that time?

BROWN: Well, the post covers what are now, probably, ten or twelve independent countries, but it consisted of a consul general, of which there wasn't one when I arrived, and three temporary, war-time-appointed officers, all of whom left shortly thereafter. We did get a consul general in, but the post was never more than three or four people.

Q: *What were the principal functions?*

BROWN: I could never figure out what the functions were. We did fly the flag's, we had some consular business, and I started out doing economic work. I just saw that there was a gap there. The consul general didn't know what exactly to do with these new people, so I wrote economic dispatches.

Q: *This had to do with raw materials?*

BROWN: Yes, largely raw materials, the mineral and agricultural wealth. This was a very tightly-held colony at the time. There was no political action of any kind; we had very little contact with the Congolese people. About the only contact I could remember was a man in a little truck, who ran a successful truck farm, who delivered food to the consul general. His name was Mr. [Joseph] Kasavubu, and he became the first president of the Congo, but nobody knew who he was at all, at that time. [Laughter]

Q: *So you established very early contact.*

BROWN: I had to talk to him. [Laughter]

Q: *Did you have much contact with Portugal at that time, either with our embassy there or with the Portuguese Government?*

BROWN: Well, not Portugal, but we used to do our own courier work. We had, at that time, a very nice, little consulate general in Luanda, Angola. So I'd go down every couple of months, carrying what courier there was and bringing back fresh fish, with which we always filled a big sack.

Q: *This is your background for being, later, on the administrative business?*

BROWN: The other part of it is, here we have all of these countries to take care of, and they were largely missionaries, very little American business, but there was a big Rockefeller interest out in the Congo, which I used to visit. It was a cotton-mill. Our total travel funds for a year for all the staff were \$50.

Q: *So that didn't get you around-the-world cruises.*

BROWN: No, it sort of got you either on the ferry going to Brazzaville, which we had to do once a week as we had interests there, or you got someone else to pay for it. Pan Am, the Rockefellers, or someone else would pay for the travel of our people. Kind of ridiculous, involved in when you think of it.

MARGARET JOY TIBBETTS
Political Officer
Leopoldville (1954-1957)

Among the overseas posts that Margaret Joy Tibbetts has served at include London, Leopoldville, Brussels, and Oslo. She was interviewed by Ann Miller Morin on May 28, 1985 in an interview that complements one by Helene K. Sargent which was conducted in September 1982.

Q: But I seem to remember when you came back from the Congo and you predicted great problems if things weren't done, didn't that -- wasn't that sort of a novel idea in the department?

TIBBETTS: Oh, yes. They all thought that I was -- but that wasn't because I was a woman; that was because I was one of the better trained officers that had been sent to the Congo. Thirty years ago, the people they were sending to Africa were not always the outstanding officers in the Foreign Service by any means. And also I'm articulate, so when I was debriefed, I wasn't afraid to say what I thought.

I had a lot of friends in the Congo that the consul general didn't have, because I made friends with the professors at the university. He was strictly -- the consul general, and this is inevitable in his position; I mean, you can't criticize anyone -- was strictly in the Rotary, upper businessman class, and the governor general and so forth. What the governor general tells you is what he thinks the United States government is going to be interested in hearing.

I had a lot of friends at the university. One day a young man came in the office, and he said he'd written an article about some sociological researches he'd made in the eastern Congo and he wanted it translated. It had been accepted by a journal in Great Britain, and they had told him he had to have an English translation. But like many people, he could speak English well, but he couldn't write it. He'd gone to the British consulate and they had said, "Don't waste our time." And he wanted to know if I'd recommend a translator. Well, I was interested in the nature of the article, and I said, "I'll do it myself."

He said, "Well, you're not professionally trained."

I said, "Try me."

And I made the translation, and I was very interested in the substance of the article. He sent it off to the British Institute, by which it was accepted; and from then on we were friends. He was a professor at the university. And that led -- one thing leads to another. So I think I had much better contacts.

Q: And they didn't tell you what they thought the United States wanted to hear.

TIBBETTS: Well, they had no use for diplomats; they thought we were all sort of stupid -- and we've had some that were. Really, in the not-too-distant past, in Africa at that time we'd had some real prizes. I mean, the Congo wasn't the place in those days -- African posts weren't staffed well.

ARTHUR T. TIENKEN
Economic Officer
Brussels, Belgium (1955-1960)

Congo Desk Officer, Africa Bureau
Washington, DC (1963-1964)

Principal Officer
Elisabethville (1964-1966)

Ambassador Arthur T. Tienken entered the Foreign Service in 1949 after graduating from Princeton and serving briefly in the Army. The overseas posts that he has served in include Brussels, Elisabethville, Zaire, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and as Ambassador to Gabon. Ambassador Tienken was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 28, 1989.

Q: I would like to just concentrate there on your view of Africa. I mean, how did you see Belgians looking at their African possessions, which were extensive at that time?

TIENKEN: The Belgians were fairly authoritarian in Africa as well. Their colonial system wasn't quite as strict as the Portuguese, but it was fairly strict. But the Belgians, unlike the Portuguese, had a little money. And the Congo was a wealthy, comparatively speaking, colony as opposed to Mozambique, which was not. So they had done a fair amount of exploitation, I think is the proper word. But they had also given the Congo a certain amount in return such as infrastructure. What they hadn't done to speak of, was to given them any political education.

And the time I was in Brussels, I was more interested in the economic side of the house, copper and that sort of thing. The embassy as a whole was also interested in the beginnings of the political developments in the Congo. But there wasn't very much you could put your finger on other than there was obviously restlessness that was building up because it was also building up elsewhere in Africa, particularly in the French colonies. The embassy tended to see the Congo in terms of Belgian interests, as opposed to the Department, which saw it more in terms of emerging nationalism and individual and independent countries in those days. And as a result, the embassy in Brussels did not necessarily see eye to eye with those in the Department, of which Fred Hadsel was one, who were interested more in political developments and eventual moves toward independence.

Q: Was there any effort on our part to sort of nudge the Belgians and say you are not educating these Congolese or Rwandese? Because we did have the example of both the French and the

British, who had rather extensive nativization programs, if you want to call it, or something, but at least they were having quite a few of the people coming back and getting degrees and all this.

TIENKEN: I think the short answer to that is no. We didn't, to the best of my memory, encourage the Belgians to educate the Congolese, for example. I think you probably know at the time of independence, there weren't more than twenty to thirty Congolese who had ever received more than a high school education. They were basically an uneducated country. But we hadn't made any move, to the best of my knowledge, to encourage the Belgians to do that.

Q: What was the situation in the Congo as you saw it from Washington, and what were our interests?

TIENKEN: We, in fact, had economic interests. Cobalt, manganese, copper, industrial diamonds, and so forth. We had become fairly deeply involved in the Congo, as you know, early at the time of independence.

Q: This is the time of independence in 19--

TIENKEN: 1960.

Q: 1960, yes.

TIENKEN: We wanted very much to keep some kind of order in the Congo because the Congo was then the largest and potentially the most powerful of the emerging black African states. And if we were to keep some kind of order throughout Africa or see that that kind of Africa developed, you more or less had to start in the Congo, which was the biggest of them all.

Q: Okay. We are talking about the Congo.

TIENKEN: Yes. We were interested in political stability and territorial integrity of the Congo. For example, we did not support the Katanga secession, which broke out in '60, as opposed to the Belgians who, I guess, officially didn't support them, but were very sympathetic.

Q: This is a mineral rich area?

TIENKEN: That's right.

Q: Of Katanga, is it?

TIENKEN: Yes.

Q: Under Tshombe?

TIENKEN: Tshombe was in charge of Katanga all right.

To answer your original question, our major concerns were both territorial integrity and political stability, keeping the country together, hoping that it would provide a nucleus for a future stable Africa. Africa at that time was an unknown quantity as far as what the future would be in any of these countries.

Q: Was the battle pretty well over between the Europeanists and worried about NATO and all within the State Department, and so they were more interested in Belgians interests than in African interests in Africa? I mean, there was sort of a fight between the two bureaus. Was this going on?

TIENKEN: In my early days in AFC, the fight was still going on. The Katanga secession was not quite over. The Europeanists tended to, as I mentioned earlier, look in terms of European and particularly Belgian interests. That discussion was still going on. When the secession ended and things quieted down some, the Europeanists tended to back off some. You didn't have the rather sharp differences and conflict of interests between the two bureaus. The Congo then had problems with a variety of local insurrections, mercenaries, and those went on for years and years and years. But those tended to become more and more surely African problems as opposed to differences between Europeans and the Africanists and the early difficulties between the two bureaus and, indeed, the two embassies -- one in then Leopoldville and in Brussels -- began to melt away.

Q: Well, then you finally got another assignment and right into it. Was it still called Elisabethville when you went there? Later it was called Lubumbashi.

TIENKEN: Yes.

Q: As principal officer. Could you describe where it is and what the situation was there and around it?

TIENKEN: Stu, I think if you were to ask me my most fun assignment in the Foreign Service, it would probably be Elisabethville. Elisabethville is in the extreme southeast of the Congo, close to what was then the Northern Rhodesia, now Zambian border. It was the copper center of the Congo. In fact, we had a consulate there before independence, but it was staffed by the Bureau of Mines.

Q: My God.

TIENKEN: Two officers, Merdock and Joe Arandale, and Merdock had been there ten years, I think. And Arandale had gone there just before independence.

Q: These were really out of the Department of Interior.

TIENKEN: That's right.

Q: This must have been a unique post.

TIENKEN: Yes, they were nominated by the Department of the Interior. They didn't follow the usual rules and tours of duty. They were specialists, and they stayed there. Elisabethville was a nice climate, so that when the secession broke out, as I mentioned earlier, we tended not to favor Tshombe but rather to get him to end the secession and to integrate with the rest of the Congo. The Belgians, because of their mining interests, tended to be more favorable, although not officially so.

Q: Let's me stop right here for a second.

TIENKEN: Okay. So, as I say, we tended to differ with the Belgians and try to support the U.N. efforts to end the secession and maintain the territorial integrity of the Congo.

When I got there, the secession was over. It was 1964. I was told by the ambassador, who was Mac Godley at the time, "Mac, what do you want me to do down there?"

He said, "Repair fences with the Belgians. Follow political developments and so forth, but repair fences with the Belgians."

Q: So, although it was now an independent country, your main task was really pointed towards -- what, these Belgian technicians were doing?

TIENKEN: Yes. The mining interest was then Union Miniere Du Haut Katanga (UMHK), which was very Belgian. They were still a powerful force in the land. They were providing a good deal of the economic structure of the whole Congo, as a matter of fact.

And I said, "Okay."

And he said, "Oh, one other thing. I'll be down to see you twice a year on ambassadorial trips. But, otherwise, if you don't put me in a difficult position, you are not going to hear very much from me."

Q: Yes.

TIENKEN: In other words, "You are on your own." And I had a lot of fun being on my own. In fact, however, we started out on a rather difficult note because just before we went to Elisabethville, the consulate general in Stanleyville had been occupied by the so-called Simbas. It was a rather tense period.

Q: Could you explain a bit for those that might not be familiar, why it was difficult?

TIENKEN: Well, the Simbas were not a terribly pleasant group of people. They were mostly eastern tribesmen, eastern Congo tribesmen, who were anti-government and recognized the United States as being pro-central government, and so we were a target as well. They took over that consulate and penned up, oh, a half-dozen of our people.

Q: Americans.

TIENKEN: Americans for a 111 days.

Q: *And several thousand Belgians and others.*

TIENKEN: Belgians and others. What amounted to a full-scale insurrection in the east. The tension was fairly high. We got down to Elisabethville a few days afterwards. The Simbas mounted attacks even in north Katanga to the point where Elisabethville itself began to think it was threatened. In time, the National Congolese Army, the ANC, which did not have a very good reputation, managed to halt the Simbas, and retook Stanleyville, I guess for their only victory that I ever knew of, aided by mercenaries, led by Hoare.

Q: *H-O-A-R, isn't it?*

TIENKEN: E. H-O-A-R-E. He was a South African. Eventually, they retook Stanleyville.

Q: *This was not the Dragon Rouge operation --*

TIENKEN: It certainly was.

Q: *The United States flew Belgian paratroopers?*

TIENKEN: Yes. But they linked up with the mercenaries, who came from the south. Dragon Rouge was the code name for the Belgian paratroopers flown in American military aircraft. They converged in Stanleyville and freed the hostages. Not all of them because -- they did free all of the Americans. I'm not certain, maybe one or two died, but they did free them all. We got some overflow in Elisabethville, missionary families who had lost people to the Simbas at the time.

And a large part of my work in Elisabethville then had to do with visiting and keeping the embassy and Washington informed of what was going on in north Katanga, basically, in a political sense. One of the ways we did that was kind of fun. The Belgians had a consulate general in Elisabethville; so did the British. Those three countries were interested in local developments, Belgians for obvious reasons, the British because the British were like us. They were involved in trying to get the Congolese to move forward as an integrated state. I and my two colleagues would charter an aircraft, a small aircraft, and split the cost three ways. Then we would go up to visit our interests. We had missionary interests there, as did the British and the Belgians. Fly in to little, small landing strips. Visit the American missionaries, mostly Methodists. Visit the British, who were mostly Church of England, or the Belgians, who were Catholic. They were wonderful sources of information about what was going on in all of these places. And we could get around very well at a relatively small cost to each one of the three governments. Since we basically by that time shared the same interests, we were basically asking the same questions and interested in the same answers. So we had good fun doing that. And I guess maybe I have never had that experience again in the Foreign Service, but it was fun.

Q: *Well, how did you deal with the Congolese in your area of responsibility, the Congolese authorities?*

TIENKEN: To the extent that you could support their efforts -- and the Congolese authorities were basically out of Kinshasa; they weren't necessarily Katangans then -- you did so. And you identified yourself with them, which then reflected in the appearance -- what do I want to say? The way you were looked at by the Katangans. So you had a certain amount of prestige, if you like, by being associated with the central government. You dealt with them as equals, if you like. They were the local authorities. You also dealt with the army because you were very interested in what was going on in the army. Once you overcame the military's aversion to civilians fooling around in their business, they could be very friendly and very open.

We had a public safety program in Elisabethville, where aid under the now defunct public safety program provided the local police with a half-dozen jeeps. There were a certain amount of unruly elements there in Elisabethville, some of whom turned up in a fair amount of crime, which we were interested in curbing. Others would get into various little political squabbles of one sort or another.

In the first months of Elisabethville, there was nothing in the stores. You had to do your shopping in the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia. To get there, you went on a two-lane badly kept highway in convoy because you were not sure that there were not elements of a bandit nature out there that would intercept individual vehicles. That disappeared after probably six months. You could then drive in relative safety. But there were still incidences of banditry, along that road. And so we hoped to help the Congolese curb that kind of thing with this public safety program.

Public safety, as you probably know, eventually disappeared because of a variety of reasons. Congress no longer wanted us in that business.

I did a fair amount of representation. There was a lot of political reporting to do, so you made your usual contacts with all the local leaders. Every Congolese in those days was a politician, anyway, and they all had their views of what was going to go on. So there was lots to do. As I said before, it was lots of fun doing it.

The embassy was a thousand miles away. Mac Godley kept his word. He didn't bother me, and I didn't get him in trouble. He made his couple of visits a year. And I would go up there once or twice. But, basically, I was pretty much on my own and had a heck of a good time doing it.

Q: Oh, yes. It sounds like an ideal assignment.

TIENKEN: It was.

Q: Well, looking at this at this point. I've talked to a diplomatic historian who said "examine the viewpoint at that time, why did we see things" -- were we still seeing things as a Soviet bloc threat or Soviet threat to that area, and why did we think this?

TIENKEN: There was always the feeling that the Soviets would take advantage of turmoil in Africa to establish themselves stronger. That went back to the beginning days of African independence. I suspect there is still an element of that yet even today in the minds of some of the people that deal with Africa. Certainly that was an element.

And, indeed, in the early days of the Congo, the Soviets did mess around there quite a little bit. They got chucked out at least once, and I think maybe even twice by for what the Zairians felt was unwarranted interference in their internal affairs. And Gazenga, who was one of the rivals along with Lumumba -- Lumumba who was maybe questionable as to how much of a neo-Communist he really was; Gazenga, however, was not. He was pretty much identified with the Soviets. And there was a period of time when there was real concern that Gazenga would become leader of the Congo.

Q: So to put it in medical terms, when we sometimes seem to have a paranoia about the Soviet Union, there was a basis to that paranoia. The Soviets really were out to try to do something there.

TIENKEN: Oh, yes. And indeed later when I was in Ethiopia and presiding over the virtual dissolution of the American embassy in Addis, that was the time when the Soviets came in, along with the Cubans, and became the main supporter of Mengistu. That was a real threat. In fact, not only real, but it actually happened. So that the Soviets in those days certainly were not adverse to taking advantage of the situation if they could in Africa.

Q: Well, looking at that, while you were sitting there watching this area, which we felt was important particularly because of both its size and the mining interests and all, how good information were you getting from other agencies, particularly the Central Intelligence Agency. This being an unclassified interview, as you know. How well were you served there as opposed to or in conjunction with those who were doing the regular reporting from those areas?

TIENKEN: In, I think it would be fair to say that we were very well served by our intelligence people. Not only CIA, but even the military. True, we had very close contacts within the Congolese Army, and that made it possible for that kind of intelligence to take place fairly easily. But by and large to answer your question, I think we were well served by both the military intelligence and CIA. We also had a fair amount of military assistance, which is a different kind of a military program. And I think that was done reasonably well.

Q: So we weren't going off in different tracks as far as, say, the intelligence saying you have a real problem here and our people feel the same or no we don't or vice versa. They complemented each other rather than opposed each other.

TIENKEN: Yes, I think that is fair enough. The only divergence of opinion that I knew, and it wasn't even in my time, was in the early days of the Katanga secession where the Agency people were seeing developments that the State people weren't. And there was a fair amount of divergence of opinion as to what we ought to be doing in Katanga as a result of it. But as time went on, I can't say whether or not that Agency position was shared by their own people in Kinshasa as well or Leopoldville as well. I think not. I think it was fairly local. But since Katanga at the time was the centerpiece of the problems in the Congo, the fact that we didn't necessarily see totally eye to eye in intelligence terms, I am told, although I didn't have that problem, did cause some problems, which later disappeared.

One comment on the other agencies, at least my first experience with the Congo when I was in Elisabethville and Mac Godley was ambassador. Mac went out of his way to assemble what he

considered to be a very strong country team. And they were all good. The then USIA officer was a little strange, but he did know his business. And when Mac left the Congo and went to -- I can never remember whether it was Cambodia or Laos -- he took practically all the agency chiefs with him and formed the same team there, which was a measure of the confidence he had in that group.

Q: *Yes.*

TIENKEN: So, I think it is fair to say that the embassy did work as a very strong team.

Q: *Speaking of teams, when you were back in African Affairs -- this was '67 to '69 -- Joseph Palmer was the head of African Affairs. How did he operate, and how did you evaluate him?*

TIENKEN: Joe was a professional. I had probably less to do with him than I might in other cases because my first boss then was Dean Brown. Dean Brown was undoubtedly one of the strongest officers I ever worked for. Dean was calling a great number of the shots in (once again we were interested primarily in .)

It was another bad time. This one involving mercenaries again, who came into from Angola, theoretically with the old Katanga gendarmes with the supposed mission of dethroning the central government. We spent a lot of time on the mercenary issue. But the shots were called by Dean as much as anybody else. And unless Joe Palmer had rather strong views on the subject, he let Dean do it. This time, unlike the first time in the Congo, the issue didn't escalate all the way up to the seventh floor.

Q: *The seventh floor, in our parlance, means up to the Secretary of State.*

TIENKEN: That's right.

OWEN W. ROBERTS
Consular Officer and Economic/Commercial Assistant
Leopoldville (1958-1960)

Ambassador Owen W. Roberts was born in Oklahoma and raised in New Jersey. He attended Princeton University until he joined the military at the beginning of World War II. After the war, Owen Roberts returned to school and graduated from Princeton University with a degree in international affairs. He then attended Columbia University and received his doctorate in international affairs. Owen Roberts entered the Foreign Service in 1955 and served such places as Cairo, Lagos, and Ouagadougou. In 1984, he became ambassador to Togo. Ambassador Roberts was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in February and April of 1991.

Q: *Well, you left this, already having gone through one war, and off you went to Leopoldville. You were there from '58 to '60. Was this just an assignment, or had you decided Africa was the place to be in? How did this assignment come about?*

ROBERTS: Well, that's a nice event to remember. Pete Hart was DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) at the Cairo embassy.

Q: *Parker T. Hart, I think.*

ROBERTS: Who later on became ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Turkey and was also Assistant Secretary for NEA (Near Eastern Affairs). He called me into his office (the first time I'd ever been there), about two months before I was due to leave Cairo. I thought, "My goodness, what have I done?" I reviewed my past: where I'd been recently, whether or not I'd strictly obeyed all the embassy rules and regulations or whatnot.

Instead of some transgression, it turned out that he was being a very genial senior officer and invited me to have some Turkish coffee with him. Sitting there in the sunlight in his large, pleasant office he said kindly that he'd heard I had been performing well as a junior officer, and he'd like to know what my plans were for the future, and if he could be of any help.

Well, that was a very different kind of approach than my boss Larry Roeder's, who was a hard taskmaster who remembered your mistakes more than the accomplishments. I said, well, I really didn't know that much about the Foreign Service and what were good things to do, but that I had a political background and an interest in analysis.

He replied: "Well, a frontier is a good place to be. If you're a young officer, you have more opportunity at the frontiers. You will get more responsibility and you'll have more chance to do analysis than if you go to a big place where there are a lot of people and where a lot of the ground has been fairly carefully reviewed. Africa is a frontier, why don't you go to Africa?"

And I said, "Fine. I don't know anything about it, I'd be happy if you'd make such a recommendation." He did, and after the Cairo tour the Department sent me to three months of language training at Nice. While there, I received a cable assigning me as political officer in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. Well, that was just exactly what I thought would be the first nice step in a policy career. But that got changed before I got back to the Department.

In Washington, I found that the assignment had been canceled. The Personnel Office refused to acknowledge the cable. Instead, I was going off to the Belgian Congo as consular officer and economic/commercial assistant. I complained strongly but was told that if I persisted I would earn a reputation for bad attitude and would stay around Washington in limbo. Friendly treatment.

So I went off to the Belgian Congo. It turned out that sometimes you can't manage your own career as well as fate. The Belgian Congo became diplomatically quite a growth stock. While I was there, we went from five officers in a consulate general to the post-independence period of an embassy with about 35 people and at least 80 more in other agencies. The Congo developed into a major Washington concern, and it ultimately involved a 24,000-man United Nations peacekeeping force, even, from time to time, some direct Secretary-of-State attention, and general White House interest.

Q: What was your job like when you got there and the situation that you were dealing with right at the beginning?

ROBERTS: Well, the Congo was strictly a Belgian colony. The U.S. consulate general there, you might say, was a colony of our embassy in Brussels. As a CG, we were expected to do citizenship affairs, promote a little trade, travel, and live very much within the Belgian framework. All analysis and real reporting would be done by the embassy in Brussels. We had a consul general, an economic consul, myself, an administrative officer, and a secretary.

Q: That was it?

ROBERTS: Yes; a small post in a backwater with no expectations of any change.

Q: Oh, boy.

ROBERTS: If we did a cable, it took several of us to put it on the one-time pad. Then usually when we said anything, Embassy Brussels commented about five times more than we had. It cost us hours deciphering all the messages that Brussels sent reviewing our obstreperous remarks. This didn't make much difference for the first year, because it was a very backward, controlled colony and nothing was yet happening of any great interest.

But as independence got closer, there got to be more and more violence. Belgian control began slipping and the future got uncertain rapidly. The Congolese were really totally unprepared. I think that it's generally acknowledged there were fifteen Congolese college graduates at that time, and maybe only one or two of them actually back in the Congo doing any kind of work in the civil service. No Congolese in the military was higher than a sergeant-major. Nobody in private employment did more than run heavy equipment like bulldozers. Nobody was in any kind of private business outside the native areas. There was no one with any kind of organizational or managerial experience. There was the MNC political party (Mouvement National Congolais), but it was really put together by Belgians, largely academicians out at the Lovanium University, who were meeting with Congolese.

Once Belgium announced that it was going to grant independence and hold elections, we Americans started to make a few contacts. This had been and still was forbidden. I remember that our consul general invited Kasavubu, who was then one of the leading candidates for local ward office in Leopoldville, and who later became the first President, in to see him. It was unimaginable that you would meet a Congolese in an office, so he was invited to the residence. The consul general's cook arranged for Kasavubu to come in through the kitchen to meet the consul general.

Q: Was this because of Belgian sensitivities?

ROBERTS: Indeed. We had not been allowed to have any contact with any Congolese up to that time. This was Belgian policy, accepted by Embassy Brussels and Washington.

In those six months before independence, I tried to branch out. Coming back on an airplane from a trip around the interior, I talked with a Congolese, who was being invited by the Administration to

a meeting of chieftains who were going to become part of an honorary senate. I asked him to visit the office, but he said he didn't think he could do that, but maybe I could meet him downtown. I did, and only learned much later that the Belgian government had asked that I be declared persona non grata. I don't think even our consul general knew anything about it; this was done by a Belgian channel directly to Brussels, and it was sent then to the Department. The Department handled it, and I never learned anything more about it than that it had happened.

It was a completely U.S. hands-off situation. But then when violence and rioting started, it escalated rapidly and on quite a large scale. Things got more and more tense - just the way the front lines that I knew in World War II had been. You drove your car very carefully, you looked around corners, because there might be logs in the road. You watched people on the edge of the road closely, because they would suddenly scoop up a rock and heave it at you. Any white person was an enemy. It was one of my first frustrations, learning that when there's a class war situation, it doesn't make any difference if you're a good American and or a bad Belgian, as whites you're all in the same boat. It was a difficult situation.

On one of those occasions, I tried to skirt along the African sections of town where there had been about 85 people killed, to follow up on what was happening. I came across a manned roadblock; some Congolese jumped out from the roadside bushes and began beating on the car with clubs and big iron rods. I only just got out of there -- the windows were broken and they were jamming the rods through the windows -- by driving through the bamboo compounds, and rejoined the road at a later point.

It was a dangerous, difficult period. In a matter of two years, the Congo went from an absolute calm, controlled, Belgian atmosphere -- you could have been in Brussels, for all you knew, except for the palm trees and heat -- to where you were in a primal, savage situation and could be killed anywhere outside the all white areas.

Q: We just took a break, and you were telling me, Owen, about an Assistant Secretary for International Organizations, whose name I'll try to look up here.

ROBERTS: I'll give you some background while you're doing that.

Q: Was it Francis Wilcox, or Harlan Cleveland?

ROBERTS: It would have probably been Wilcox. He came, I think, in April or May of '60, after there had been several violent demonstrations. It was pretty clear that the situation was out of control. When one of these outbreaks occurred, the Belgians simply deserted their offices. They rushed home, collected their families, went to a hotel, got onto the highest possible floor, and stayed there. They were really the most chicken bunch of people that could be imagined.

On the other hand, they had a very good general in charge of the military force, who assured everybody that things were under control and there'd be no problem. But there continued to be outbreaks. When Wilcox came, we eagerly poured out our analyses and frustrations with lack of Washington response. He then explained that he had undertaken this around-the-world trip so that he could better appreciate the problems with which he might have to deal at the United Nations.

After his first 30 posts, he had learned far more than he could handle. He'd come to realize that he was more stirring up expectations than he was helping, and that he now knew what to tell us, which was: "Gentlemen, I'm very sensitive to the problems you have here. I'm glad to hear that you're so much on top of them. I encourage you to keep informed about them and to keep Washington informed on them. But really don't expect us to do anything about them. Washington can only handle five or so issues at a time. You people in the field will have to manage most of these things yourselves."

Well, about six or eight months after that, the Congo was more than front-page news. President Kennedy was personally interested and had set up a cabinet-level task force which in retrospect was undue and an example of the new administration's inexperience with the ongoing outer world. When I happened to meet the Assistant Secretary, I said happily, "Hey, hey, we made it to the top!" He looked at me hard and replied, "Don't get uppity. I want you to remember what I told you, and that is that Washington can only handle about five or so real issues. The Congo is an exception, and probably shouldn't be among them."

The longer I stayed in the Foreign Service, the more often I remembered it.

Q: During this time, was there almost a sigh of relief within the consulate general when you became an embassy and just sort of dropped our embassy-in-Belgium connection, because you felt that they either weren't with it or they weren't helpful or something?

ROBERTS: Well, organizationally, the State Department was well behind the Africa curve. When I went out to the Congo in 1958, there was one officer for all of Africa, and he was in NEA. African events developed all over, with the independence movements in the late '50s and grants of self-government in 1960. Most of the reporting done on African problems in the field was hashed over by our embassies in European capitals. Whenever we Africanists reported difficult or dangerous developments, our colleagues would rush off to see the Foreign Office or even somebody in the prime minister's office. They would also verify such views with the military establishment. Then they would report that Brussels, for example, was confident all was in control. In the meanwhile, our African communications were still based on the one-time pad. We could only afford, in terms of staffing, to send out a couple of original cables a week as we then had to decode replies and respond to points made.

I was due to leave the middle of June in 1960, but because it was so interesting, I'd put in for an extension, asking for six months or a year, and the Department had said no. The times had gotten more exciting, and I'd slowly become the CG's outside contact man.

Q: What was your job?

ROBERTS: I was still commercial affairs and consular officer. But I liked reporting, and I'd actually met a good number of people. I had developed some acquaintance with Kasavubu. I'd actually met Lumumba and had lunch with him at the Leopoldville zoo, where there was a small out-of-the-way restaurant. Embassy Brussels had no such first hand sources, so we had a primary reporting situation. But we didn't have the staff, or the equipment, or the voice to convince anybody. And in retrospect, perhaps not the self-confidence to make a fuss.

Q: You were still a consulate general at that point.

ROBERTS: It was still just a consulate general. I remember that our Ambassador from Brussels came down, I think it might have been in December of '59 or January of '60, with political counselor Stan Cleveland. It was a revelation. They had tape recorders and secretaries, extensive appointments made from Brussels and they proceeded to analyze the whole situation in a few days. They were a big operation.

Returning to my extension request. We had sold our car, we had packed all our furniture, and we were in the hotel, waiting to leave the next morning at 8 o'clock, when the consul general knocked on the door. He had a cable from Washington, extending us. So he said, "I'll retire for ten minutes while you and Janet decide what you're going to do." Well, at that point, we really couldn't get back into it. So I went out and told the consul general with some regret that we had, for all intents and purposes, already left.

We stopped in Europe for about a week, getting tear gassed in an underground movie with our three children during a Fascist riot in Naples. Finally, we got on a boat in Nice and started peacefully back to the United States. Then in early July, while we were still on board, the fighting broke out in Leopoldville. I heard the news, and I knew those people, knew what was happening, and there I was locked up on a boat. I couldn't get involved!

As soon as we docked, I rushed to Washington and, sure enough, they wanted me immediately. I didn't even see my family, I just unpacked the suitcase and began working immediately as INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) analyst for the Congo and Rwanda/Burundi.

Q: Well, this was a very interesting time. I might add that I came slightly thereafter, in about August or so, into INR, into the African affairs, but I was dealing with the Horn of Africa. But I would listen to you, and I think your experience in INR is something I've always remembered, about trying to put everything into perspective for some of the people in the administration on both sides, both the Kennedy and the forerunner of it, the Eisenhower administration, to understand what the Congo was about. Could you describe how INR worked and how you worked to explain the Congo to those that really didn't understand it?

ROBERTS: Well, INR, I think, has always struggled with several fundamental operational issues: should it be just information and analysis, or make some policy suggestions; just cover foreign developments or also consider U.S. aspects; and have long term or short term approaches.

Basically, I think INR should keep the regional bureaus and the functional bureaus honest, providing a separate voice within the State Department on whatever is important. INR can't be as independent as an outside voice, but they can be a separate voice. Within that basic situation, you also have to decide to what extent are you going to take chances and be forcefully analytical or take a wait-and-see approach, accommodating current thinking. It's rather a hard line. If your analysis says that they're going to drop the atomic bomb on us tomorrow, the policy implications are immediate and you hardly need to pause or add a line saying ring the alarms. But mostly your analysis doesn't deal with clear developments or evident solutions. As the operational bureaus are

usually proceeding carefully, I think INR can afford to be the quicker at assessing new outlooks or possibilities.

At the time I joined it, however, we were very much on the side of being strictly analysts and not getting involved in policy. In fact, my major assigned job in INR was to do an encyclopedia on the Belgian Congo for a background series for the CIA. The Agency had given the State Department money to pay for INR analysts who would provide these great data books, a bit like those Army country studies, which were comprehensive but really unused.

Q: The national security estimates, or something like that, an NSC estimate.

ROBERTS: They were NIE's (National Intelligence Estimates). INR agreed to do them as it was a way of paying for their analysts. So, I was supposed to be working on that, but at the same time there were continual front page developments: what was happening to American missionaries; what was happening to businesses; how serious was the rioting taking place; what were the colonial administrators likely to do; and what would the Belgian forces do. Later, we covered the creating of a UN peacekeeping operation; its mandate and functioning; the relationship between that force and the Congolese; and the UN funding, organizational problems, operations, and politicking.

It was a tremendous scene, and a stimulating moment to be one of the few technicians available for senior people to call upon. I had had no real policy or Department experience -- remember I went from three months with you in the Foreign Service Institute directly into a vice consul job in an embassy where I was not on a need-to-know basis, transferred to the small Congo office, and then back to Washington -- I hadn't even worked in a big institution. As I mentioned earlier, I had no idea how policy was made, or how Washington Departments were involved, and it took me quite a while to find out.

In the meantime, I was also being used as Department liaison with all the various Congolese groups that came up to the United Nations and to Washington. I was escort officer for President Kasavubu and for Prime Minister Lumumba on his State visit. I even lived at Blair House while Lumumba was in Washington and was the one liaison officer for the eighteen ministers who accompanied him. That was a scene. I learned a lot about what New York can provide for visitors and how to get it on short notice. For example, when the Congolese wanted women, I called the Chief of Police and shortly there were lots of harlots stalking the Hotel Pierre corridors.

Q: Well, just from a personnel point of view, looking at it, we'd had this very small consulate general there, so you were probably the only person really with the field experience back from the immediate time, which had not been under the purely sort of Belgian connection.

ROBERTS: I was the first Foreign Service officer to know many of the Congolese leadership personally. Kasavubu had called on the Consulate General maybe twice; Lumumba never had, nor had Gizenga, nor had some of the other leaders.

Q: Tshombe, was he...

ROBERTS: Tshombe, of course, was a big element in the internal political splits. But I had not met him; he always stayed safely on the other side of the country in Katanga. The CIA had had one agent in the Congo, and he also had firsthand contacts. But the CIA couldn't use him in the U.S. and at the United Nations. So at first I was the main U.S. contact with Congolese visitors, and it was a very active role for somebody who was, strictly speaking, an INR analyst. Then, everyone became knowledgeable about the Congo, as always with an important development.

As order was being re-established, it occurred to me that we needed to put together and legitimize a Congolese leadership. So I started suggesting to my INR bosses, and even at inter-office meetings, that we assemble a kind of a constitutional committee meeting in Leopoldville, which would also elect a leadership.

This was my first introduction to the fact that INR generally doesn't directly put up policy ideas like that. What you do is go around and talk to other people about your ideas. You try to sell the regional bureau on them, and IO (International Organization Affairs), and Policy Planning; then outside offices: DOD/ISA, CIA/analysis, and NSC staff. But you do not put them into a paper until positions take shape. INR doesn't do much of this, but there are exceptions. My bosses were marvelous people -- there was Bill Edmondson, who was my immediate supervisor, plus two civil servants who had been in INR for a long time in the African field, and an innovative political appointee office director, Robert Good. Policy Planning didn't get involved in the Congo, a sort of upstart activity, so we filled that void. There really were many more important events and issues at the time.

Q: How did you find the Assistant Secretary, for INR? Roger Hilsman came in with the Kennedy administration. I'm not sure who was head of INR prior to that. What was your contact with these people?

ROBERTS: Well, Roger Hilsman liked to deal directly with people as well as through the hierarchy, and so I actually saw him several times. As junior INR analysts, we were expected to cover the front office on weekends, and go over daily intelligence materials, and do little briefing papers. He was glad to see all the younger analysts, and I think he got to know a great many of his staff. It was satisfying to have a chance to talk with bosses, and so I didn't really mind that there wasn't a major INR paper that went forward, because there was so much opportunity in the State Department to make policy if you had an idea and if you were in an area where there was some real interest and action needed. You could walk in almost anywhere and discuss matters - you didn't always have to work within the strict organizational framework.

Q: I can only recall one instance when you sort of briefed me before I briefed Roger Hilsman early in the morning when we used to have that duty, and you were being very careful to have me explain that he should not be misled by the news reports, because there are always news reports coming out of the Congo: there are columns of armed troops going here and there. And you were saying, be sure to get it across that these columns of troops probably don't mean anything. They may be going in a truck, but they just may disappear into the woodwork or into the jungle or something.

ROBERTS: It was very hard to convey the Congo, because it was so different from everybody else's experience in the State Department. People were used to working with the bigger embassies

and the bigger states around the world. If you went in to see a leader or the foreign minister, he spoke for his country; and if he said this and this would happen, you had reasonable hope that it was going to happen. The tendency at first in the Department was to contact "the leadership" and expect to influence developments. But the Congo was chaos. Everything was episodic.

My own experience with the upheaval had been that...better go back to the fact that the Congo is a very tribal place. I think there are some 370 recognized tribes. If you want to think of it in more international terms, you could say ethnic sub-states. They were just as diverse as if you took all the countries from Tokyo to London and pushed them all together and made a state which you called the Congo -- you'd have about that many cultural, language, and cosmological differences. There was no overall leadership, there was no overall structure. The Belgians had provided all that, and when they collapsed, there was nothing.

I can remember particularly Harriman coming into a meeting on the Congo and saying, "I've just been asked to get involved in this, and I'd like to go and meet the leadership. I think I can help you all." Everybody was kind of quiet; Harriman was a very respected figure.

As briefer, I suggested to him that there was somebody called a prime minister, and there was somebody called a president, but they didn't handle anything. He couldn't accept this. So, I told him, for instance, that as our Ambassador was meeting privately with Lumumba, then the prime minister, the door broke open and six soldiers rushed in insisting they get paid on the spot. Lumumba scrambled around in his desk and found a little money. The soldiers were dissatisfied, banged on the desk, said they wanted more, and began looking in the drawers. One of them threatened him a bit, and the prime minister got up, ran down the hall, went around the corner, and disappeared. The soldiers looked around the room, stole a few things, and walked out. It turned out later that Lumumba had hidden in a broom closet. The Ambassador reported it matter of factly, rightly.

Well, it was difficult to impossible to convince somebody like Mr. Harriman, who had dealt with majesties, prime ministers, and dictators who were in charge of things, that you couldn't fix the Congo through authority figures. There were titles but no authority. It was a very, very amorphous kind of situation. Someone later summarized the situation as "like nailing jello to the wall." That finally encapsulized it.

Q: How did you find, looking at this from this angle, having been there and all, the media reports? We sent all our journalists, a lot of the same group that later went to Vietnam and I guess are now in the Gulf area, including Richard Halberstam and all. But how did you find the media reports? Were they sort of up in the air? Were they still reporting things that...

ROBERTS: Well, the media were really excellent. You learn a lot from the media, because they are just so many more eyes, ears, and smart, observant minds. They send back all kinds of fresh detail which we didn't get, necessarily, from the embassy. It had only a limited number of officers who could get out, and suddenly there was a press corps of 80. They fanned out and came up with a whole lot more stories. But most of them had very little background on the area upon which to evaluate their material. There were wild pronouncements. They picked up each others' conclusions and that became it. They didn't have any database -- at least in those days they didn't. When I was

sent to Leopoldville, I went to the Princeton University library looking for books on the Congo, and there were three: two of them by missionaries on their activities, and one by Arthur Conan Doyle, who reported on Belgian atrocities in the pre-World War I period.

Q: Oh, yes, he was later executed by the British as a German spy.

ROBERTS: This was the Sherlock Holmes Doyle. But then no one had much database. I remember, for instance, that I was asked to testify on the Hill to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the Congo. One of the hot issues was: Just who is Lumumba and what is he politically?

All the journalists labeled him a Communist. I went through every single piece of paper we had in the State Department, everything in INR files, everything in the Africa Bureau files, everything in the historical files. I went over to the CIA and went through everything they had. I don't think there were more than 25 items at that time -- about six months after independence -- about Lumumba. References, I mean, just even mentions. No such thing as any biographical data.

And no wonder, because he was a real nouveau arrivé; he'd been a postal clerk up in Stanleyville. But he was angry, anti-Belgian, and nationalistic. He came down to Leopoldville and attached himself to the MNC Party, where he found that his colleagues were largely being controlled by Belgian academics at the new Lovanium University. The other wouldn't give him a leadership role, so he publicly declared himself president of the MNC. The other Congolese didn't want an open dispute about their party, so they never issued a formal denial. Lumumba never bothered to work with any MNC members, he just used the title. He was the first voice really to shout for independence. He was a charismatic, loud leader, like Sekou Touré in Guinea and Nkrumah in Ghana. But he had had no benefit of any kind of organizational experience, absolutely no administrative or management experience, and he had never been out of the country.

And yet the U.S. press said he was a Communist. Yes, he was radical, but he could hardly be a communist because there weren't any Communist materials in the Belgian Congo. Or any Communists, Marxists, or even Socialists. The Belgians wouldn't dream of allowing any such in their colonial preserve. Some journalist used the term "communist" as shorthand for a loud, pushy, radical leader, and others just picked up the label as gospel.

So I went up on the Hill and testified that Lumumba was a radical, that we had looked through all the material and it appeared that he had never been out of the Congo, or associated with any communist group, or even been in contact with any Communists. A certain amount of international news and political views of other African leaders certainly filtered into the Congo, and he was talking African nationalism and radicalism. He wasn't a communist.

Well, I can remember several senators saying, "But it says in the newspaper that he's a Communist. So and So says he's a Communist." My response was, "Well, what does So and So know? He's been only two weeks in the Congo. Does his paper have any files? No. We've called up and asked the New York Times what they had on Lumumba. Nothing: only what their man had filed." Not surprising, considering there hadn't been any non-transient newspaper reporters in the Belgian Congo until independence and the troubles.

So I find that journalists are very quick to pick up stories and write summarizations that provide a convenient approximation for understanding, but don't necessarily represent a complex reality. Also, they are frequently starting from scratch. Good analysis, independent analysis, comes only with time -- as in Vietnam. The Congo was somewhat special; and as noted, we in the State Department were having a hard time ourselves understanding it.

Q: You were in INR until 1962, during the whole height of this. From your point of view, how did you find working with the desk? Was the desk using you, which would have been really a new desk, because before that it had been part of the Belgian Desk, I guess?

ROBERTS: Well, it was absorbing. Everyone "used" each other; and I learned this was normal. It was my first experience with what I would now call "operations" in the State Department. This is when a group decides to make something happen. It begins with mobilizing opinion within and without the Department, developing an action group (a committee, a Task Force involving other Agency personnel), and finding funding. It brings out the best in people, but at the same time it's kind of dangerous.

Soapy Williams was Assistant Secretary at that time, and he was determined to "win" the Congo war. He did not want to hear the slightest disagreement or doubt about that policy and its underlying evaluations. Anything like that hurt, because it tended to undercut his efforts to get more personnel assigned, or to find more money, or to win other Bureaus' agreement on an initiative that he might be interested in, or get more support for the United Nations. Such efforts were much assisted by two successive, very operational, if not downright manipulative, ambassadors in the Congo during those times.

Q: Who were they?

ROBERTS: Ed Gullion and Mac Godley. They were real front-line leaders. They understood the press, they understood the bureaucracy, they understood Congress, and they really acted almost like military commanders. Godley in particular would call up the press and take them out in his car, day or night. They'd get stopped at roadblocks and talk with the Congolese irregulars, they'd have escapades, and at the same time Godley would be "briefing" them -- selling them his policies. Then he would submit formal evaluations through the embassy channel. He also established a private radio network, through somebody in Long Island, so he could privately tell the AF Bureau leadership what he was doing and his own assessment of the odds. Most others, including senior State Department people, were generally comforted by finding that the embassy's reports and views largely matched those in their morning papers.

I learned something very fundamental about operations and about analysis. If we in the INR Bureau sat back and said, "The chances of putting together a group of Congolese who will choose a leader and then write a constitution are about 55-45 and it's going to take a lot of effort, about two million dollars, and maybe some luck," you're not very likely to get the senior support and the money to do it. But if you say, "It's 70-30," it's quite likely that the senior people will decide to do it, and then you, as operator, are free to try to make it happen. The real difference between the

Department's analysts and outside ones, press or academic, is that you can help make history that analytically shouldn't happen.

Soapy Williams, Gullion, Godley, and Vance and Charlie Whitehouse (directors of AF's Congo Office, and, later on, Frank Carlucci as assistant, were all involved in winning a diplomatic/military war. It was much like the situation that you can feel today in Washington as President Bush starts organizing for war in the Persian Gulf. You can see that there are really various options, but you can also sense that the situation is going only one way as there isn't too much insider disagreement. Not very much surfaces, but you recognize decisions have been made and that the bureaucratic glacier is moving.

I've come to have mixed feelings about this, because to considerable extent I think the Foreign Service is where you try to make history happen in the United States' favor, and it takes a lot of initiative and organizational push to do that. But at the same time, this gets you into beginning to shade the analytical odds and say something is 70-30 when really it may be only 51-49. That's very dangerous. So I believe that you need to have the organizational freedom to have and encourage operators in your system. But at the same time, you have to build in protections such as a separate INR voice, and outside agencies like the CIA. Of course, we have the benefit of the press, which serves that function also, but they aren't an independent voice within the system.

Q: At the time, was INR sort of going in one direction and the desk going in another?

ROBERTS: No, AF regularly asked us for studies, and wanted to co-opt us. The heads of both Bureaus were activist and operation oriented. AF was just shorthanded. The Department, as you probably know, rarely shifts office personnel about even when a Bureau or an Office gets into a big issue. AF got along with just one or two full-time Congo officers for a year or more and only created a Task Force when the Congo remained big time. AF did occasionally ignore INR ideas, but they never openly challenged our making policy suggestions. The problem was less between INR and AF than between these two and EUR (Bureau of European Affairs), which was supportive of the ex-colonial powers. The other split was with the seventh floor, which felt that the Congo wasn't worth so much Department attention.

I personally believed that the United Nations and the United States should be involved in the Congo and acted more as a desk officer than an ivory tower analyst. I was frequently sent TDY to the UN for important votes and assigned as liaison officer for many of the major Congolese visitors. The problem was less analysis than trying to make the unusually amorphous Congo situation understandable to those not regularly involved, like the seventh floor. I was once called to report immediately to Secretary Rusk. I found him worriedly pouring over an ethno-graphic map of the Congo's 370 Å tribes. I tried to comfort him by saying he did not need to know more than that there that many as it was more a case of creating reality than understanding it. You couldn't, as Harriman thought, "speak to the boss," or chiefs, and get results. You really had to create your own organizations within the Congo which you could rely on -- ultimately the U.N. force -- in order to get something done.

Q: Do you recall, were there sort of voices that "We should disengage from there," or not? Why did we see this as being important? I'm trying to put it in the context . Was it because of the "Soviet menace?" Why was a tribal dispute in the heart of Africa a problem to us?

ROBERTS: Well, I have to admit that I didn't then have much detached perspective. These were people I knew, a situation I knew, and I felt personally involved.

After about a year, when the situation had escalated and the United Nations was quite involved, I got a call in INR saying that George Ball, who was deputy secretary for political affairs, wanted to see me. So I reported to his office, and was told, "Oh, no, he's home. He wants to meet you there." So I went to his house, which was in Cleveland Park, just north of the big cathedral, and there on the doorstep I found Frank Carlucci, who was the AF desk officer for the Congo. We knew each other very well; he had followed me in the Congo and had had a lot of firsthand experiences himself, and was a very operationally oriented, very capable guy. George Ball came to the door in his slippers and a dressing gown (he was a bachelor), invited us into his living room, and gave us drinks. Then he said, "All right, gentlemen..." We waited, because both of us, knowing we were going to see him, had mentally organized lots of facts. But all he asked was: "Gentlemen, why are we involved there?" Frank and I had both repeatedly presented justifications for our Congo operations, but hadn't fundamentally considered if it was worth the cost. When we left, Ball was not really convinced that we should be in it. But I think that we were so far involved that he didn't think that we could back out, and that there was enough justification to follow through.

The justification we gave him was not that there was any overall Soviet menace. Lumumba, for instance, was no Communist, and there was no Communist Party in the Congo, and the Soviets couldn't run it any more than any other outsider. There were all kinds of self-declared parties, all kinds of tribal variety, and no national structure, and no military or police that an authoritarian group could have gotten in and manipulated. The real problem was that it was a totally chaotic place which might fall into all kinds of parts. This would affect Angola, which was just to the south and still a Portuguese colony. It would affect the British areas over in the Rhodesias. It would affect independence developments in Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. And it would affect the French areas. If Lumumba gained control, and the United Nations left things to him, he would certainly invite in outside helpers. These would include radical Africans -- Sékou Touré and Nkrumah -- and probably a lot of Soviets. There would be a mess. Also, as he was mainly a populist orator and a completely disorganized man, there would be much damage to a country which had all kinds of resources and long-term possibilities and had an impact on a lot of countries around the periphery.

This was the best explanation that we could give Ball, but I think he only bought it in part. The key factor for him was probably the extent of the UN involvement and of our existing commitment.

President Kennedy was interested in the Congo. He was concerned about independence for colonized peoples. He also favored a strong U.N. -- I won't say peacekeeping role -- but as a means of the U.S. indirectly promoting democracy and freedom overseas. And so, with White House support, we built up the U.N. Congo presence to 24,000 troops. This provided the presence through which we could organize the Congolese leadership, bring them into Leopoldville to form a

constitution, create a parliament, elect a leader, end the secessionist Katanga regime, and, finally, rebuild the country. And this we did by remote control, over a period of three years.

Let me tell you another story about INR analysis and presidential involvement.

Q: *Please do.*

ROBERTS: One of the other African issues of the time was helping finance the Volta Dam in Ghana -- a contribution of about \$125 million, or maybe more. The moment had come to make a decision one way or another: the White House had sent INR a request for a recommendation (the AF Bureau had already weighed in for the dam).

Bob Good, a Kennedy appointee, was still head of INR/Africa. He was an excellent analyst and an independent spirit with friends on the NSC staff, which helped distribution of output. He decided to introduce some management type analysis on this decision. We would develop all the factors -- the political elements, the economic, the social, the long-term historical, the short-term -- and we'd put them on a sheet of paper in columns and assign weights to them, and see whether the weights indicated we should fund or not fund.

Well, as we debated this back and forth, it quickly became clear that though this was a nice intellectual framework, what made all the difference was how much weight you gave to the factors. This in turn was just as subjective or intuitive as deciding without the benefit of all the boxes, though the boxes did help by putting all the factors in front of you.

One of the factors was that President Kennedy had talked to Nkrumah at the United Nations and had said, "I certainly want to help you with this, Mr. Nkrumah," to the best that we could tell from the sketchy memos of conversation. This was a semi-commitment, to which we gave high value. Then, just as we were about to send out our paper in favor, Kennedy's brother Robert, who was then attorney general, came out against it. So we were faced with adding and weighting a Robert factor. While logical, it wasn't wise. We resolved the problem by going out to a good Italian dinner and deciding yes. Our INR Director, Roger Hilsman, didn't even try to be scientifically analytical: he just tore off our involved factor annex and sent the White House the brief covering memo in favor. Sometimes the best analysis is simple good sense.

I might add that the President decided to do it. But it was because Kennedy was an involved, people oriented president. I think, if you go back and read his Schlesinger biography, you will find that it starts with a wonderful depiction of the organization of the inauguration and the celebration parties. And then, about page 88, if I remember, he's standing in the Oval Room, his first day in office, and he has a lot of maps spread out, and he looks at his biographer and says, "The problem for my government in this next year or two is going to be Cambodia and the East." Here he was, with all kind of Russian problems, disarmament problems, NATO problems, China, and all kinds of domestic problems and issues. But there he was, saying that a small part of the international area was going to be his major concern. To some extent, his concern for emerging people led to an interest in Africa, and particularly the Congo.

Q: Did you ever experience one of those famous telephone calls? The president once in a while would call up people within the State Department to ask about things.

ROBERTS: Not personally. I think he called the Ghana INR analyst, and he had called the Ghana desk officer on the Volta dam.

Q: Well, you left INR in 1962. You were still within the Department; you went where?

ROBERTS: I went over to IO. The International Organization Affairs Bureau wanted an experienced Congo hand because the issue was continuing to be a major one and appeared long term.

Q: Who was the head of IO at that time?

ROBERTS: I think it was Harlan Cleveland.

Q: It probably was. Well, how did IO fit into the bureaucratic framework of the State Department?

ROBERTS: IO, I think, under Harlan Cleveland, had considerable influence. Furthermore, Stevenson was our Ambassador at the UN. These were two very high-powered men. Harlan Cleveland was not a particularly analytical or bureaucratic personality. He was much more an operator and sensitive to U.S. politics and White House concerns. He and Joe Sisco, director for UN Political Affairs, exercised considerable leadership because other senior people outside AF in the Department were less interested in the Congo. Secretary Rusk and George Ball managed the real big issues, and didn't want this thing to take up their time. For Harlan Cleveland, however, it was something that the president was interested in, something that the United Nations might be able to carry off, and the U.N. might fulfill its role of becoming an international peace keeper. Cleveland was all for the U.N. being our agent in the Congo, and the U.N. developing as an institution on the world stage. While Soapy Williams wanted to beat Tshombe and see that there was a nonradical government in Leopoldville, Harlan Cleveland's interest was in the United Nations as an organization, and in the Congo operation as an undertaking in which it could build a stake in the future. Actually, we encouraged the UN to over-reach itself, politically and financially, and we accidentally seriously weakened its peacekeeping capability for many years.

Q: How did he use you?

ROBERTS: I was just a junior resource who still had personal contacts with many of the Congolese and African delegations. I went up to New York City and met with them whenever there were major General Assembly Congo issues, as votes on funding the UN forces. When Kasavubu came to the UN to insist on recognition as President, I was our liaison officer.

I lived next door to him in the hotel, handled his living problems, was go-between with his FBI security detail, translated and explained TV programs, summarized the news, and commented on Assembly tactics, his drafts to the Secretary General and to the Department. While I was sort of private staff aide, Kasavubu made appointments and handled all direct contacts with other delegations. But the Africans generally knew I was there and I had some bitter times with the

Ghanaian and Guinean representatives. So I was IO's Congo-Africa hand, a lobbyist at the UNGA, and also kept in touch with what the AF Bureau, INR, and others were doing. I was the junior gear in the machine, but there was a role.

Q: You were mentioning the representatives from Ghana and Guinea; they were the radicals of Africa at that time.

ROBERTS: They were. Ghana had a contingent in the UN Congo forces, which was under Accra's direct operational control rather than UN New York's. It provided shelter to Lumumba once when he was chased out of his prime minister's offices. Both Nkrumah and Sekou Touré were fiercely opposed to the UN proceedings because mostly we had the votes. They were particularly bitter when we won a very close vote in the General Assembly on who was Head of State, Kasavubu or Lumumba, and thus to whom the UN was responsive.

This was the beginning of Lumumba's decline. He was slowly maneuvered out of his prime-ministership office and out of any kind of prominence. Finally, he was seized by non-UN persons, taken from Leopoldville to Thysville, put on the only four-engine plane in the Congo, which was owned by Belgium, and flown to the Katanga. He was off-loaded there much beat up and never seen again.

The Ghanaians and Guineans strongly supported Lumumba because he was an African nationalist -- loud and clear. Kasavubu was equally African but was a slow, deliberate tribal chief. He was more amenable to institutional, gradual approaches, and had basic human, political values in common with much of the internationalized world. Lumumba was wild, unprincipled, dishonest -- but a spell-binder. As the Congo's first Prime Minister, he arrived at the UN in the fall of 1960 with 17 Ministers and immediately met with 70 or more worldly UN journalists. With no public relations experience, but with supreme confidence and eloquence, he won them all over to his simplistic proposition that all problems would be solved if only the Belgians were wholly removed. He also arrived with no schedule, contacts, or papers, but with the Congo's only flag. He did not use his ministers, control them, or organize the delegation. He worked mainly one-on-one and treated meetings as opportunities to solicit both for the Congo and himself. On one of his shopping trips, he came up \$150 short for some leather luggage. Rather than put an item back on the shelf, he asked me to help him out. I had some travelers checks and did so. Later, in the limousine going back to the hotel, he pulled out his handkerchief and three \$100 bills tumbled to the floor. He nonchalantly scooped them up and never looked at me. Cute guy.

Q: Did they try to undercut you because you were talking to Kasavubu?

ROBERTS: Oh, absolutely. I had some very difficult times with them. They misrepresented their positions and outright lied to me, and misrepresented or lied about anything I said or did. I have never encountered anybody who was quite so willing to cut my throat. On a diplomatic basis, it was the absolutely untrammelled warfare that I'd known in the front in World War II. A very sobering experience. There were no threats, and little personal confrontation, just totally devious personal/parliamentary maneuvering. I would try to make some agreement or arrangement, and they would see to it that it wasn't handled or that other Africans weren't told, that meetings didn't happen, their chiefs were told the wrong things. It was a very manipulative situation.

On the other hand, we were doing just as much manipulation as we could to win the votes when they came up.

IO's main Congo honchos were Joe Sisco and Bill Buffum, director and deputy director of IO/UN/P. Sisco was as manipulative as the African radicals; he was an operator in the sense of Ambassadors Gullion and Godley. He was also one of those people with whom you have to be careful. A wonderful salesman with a hearty, open manner, he was also a con man, a consummate bureaucrat, and artful to the extent of occasional outright dishonesty. But he certainly could move the issue. It was a real experience working for somebody who had as much operational ability as he did. Many of the Congo initiatives and a lot of the Department push came out of Joe Sisco and Bill Buffum in UN/P.

Q: Again, were we seeing this moving more and more into the East-West, Soviet-American relationship, as other problems in Africa?

ROBERTS: Well, in broad terms of competing for prestige and denying the Soviets a "win" in the Congo, there was a real East-West struggle. The more important the Congo as an issue became, the more important was the U.S.-Soviet aspect. The real problem was quelling the Katanga session, putting the Congo together politically, and administratively rebuilding it. We were doing this through the United Nations. In that framework, we were coping less with the Soviets than with the radical Africans. They needed no guidance from Moscow on the Congo, and were probably better manipulative parliamentarians in the UNGA. There were about 40 African members at that time, representing a significant vote within the UN. There were two African blocs, do you remember? There was the Nkrumah-Touré radical bloc, and then the Casablanca group, which consisted mainly of the ex-French African states, and a few moderates as Sierra Leone and Liberia. A few were also on the fence, like the Sudan and Cameroon. These were all neither collectively nor individually of great US interest. But they did have a lot of votes in the UNGA, where there were important issues for the U.S. In particular, the UNGA voted the Congo budget and administrative measures. The Security Council was less operationally important to us because the Soviets had a veto there. The Council's main contribution was the original authorization of the UN forces, and that succeeded only because the Soviets happened to be boycotting its meetings at that moment. After that, it was a matter of carrying out the Congo operation through the Secretary General's office and the funding of the United Nations force, which was a General Assembly matter. And in that arena, it was not the Soviets but the radical Africans who mattered.

Q: Well, how did we deal with this? Was this a matter of payoffs? I'm not using it in the derogatory form, but, you know, you want another road there, we'll give you one if you vote for us. Were you running around with the equivalent of a satchel full of aid promises or something like that?

ROBERTS: No, it did not work that way. The CIA made some payoffs, I know, to Congolese delegations, and maybe to some others. They are not supposed to operate in the US and I believe their UN NY involvement in African affairs was small. As for development projects, AID funding, this was never directly involved in our UN NY lobbying. It may have been of some concern in African capitals when issues were referred back there for instructions. Or generally when our Ambassadors in Africa brought up UN issues. But direct barter, no.

Basically, if we were going to try to win a GA position, the USUN mission would do some preliminary work, get a nose count, tell IO back in Washington what the varying concerns were, and suggest the kind of demarches might be made where. The African diplomats at the UN tended to follow the "Third World" approach and many voted in blocs, often without much reference to home ministries. Our tactic was to get specific instructions sent out by Foreign Ministries to their UNGA delegations. IO would draft such demarches for our Embassies to local capitals, get clearances in the Department, coordinate with allies, and cable them out. As a lobbyist, I tried to contact as many delegates as possible, sometimes numbering ten to even twenty per country. I would argue our case and try to confirm their positions and especially their instructions. If necessary, we would suggest IO send out follow up demarches. Occasionally, we put on a full press and the seniors like Stevenson would call up Washington and say, you know, it is of primary importance that we get this instruction out. Once, I was ordered to get six African foreign ministers out of their hotel beds for a 1:30 AM vote. After getting the Togolese up, with great objections, I realized that for the rest it would be counter-productive. So I hid out at the General Assembly bar with the Canadian Ambassador and talked trout fishing.

I was aware that the CIA to some extent was also contacting people, because I knew one or two of the CIA agents. Once in a while I would see them, and occasionally an African would be confused as to whether I was a satchel carrier or not. So we were doing some of that, but mainly it was straight forward diplomatic lobbying and maneuvering. We did not condition the Volta dam issue on Accra's UN votes. It wouldn't have done any good anyway. On a matter like the Congo, Nkrumah was going to be an African radical first and always.

Q: Were we able to make any inroads in that we were for African nationalism, too? Because in a way our skirts were pretty clean on pushing for independence. Was it just that we were a handy target, or did they feel that we were too much in the colonial pocket of the Europeans, or what?

ROBERTS: I think that even the radical Africans differentiated us from the ex-colonial group. But they focused on us as opponents more than on the ex-colonial countries because we were the organizing power behind the United Nations. For instance, when we couldn't round up the contributions to finance those 24,000 UN troops, it was USUN which proposed that the UN sell \$200 million worth of bonds to continue the Congo operation. The ex-colonial powers were in no position to do this; they no longer had the power. Also, we had people in Washington who were really committed to making a success of the Congo. Our standing among Africans depended, however, on many factors other than the Congo: our bilateral relations, our stance on Southern Africa/apartheid, and of course on the remaining decolonization in Africa.

Q: Did you find that our growing involvement in Vietnam was becoming a problem as far as Africa went? Or was Africa, particularly the Congo, enough on center stage that you really didn't have to worry about getting people's attention?

ROBERTS: There were lots of issues going on at the same time. The USUN mission was, and I think is still, very good at being able to handle those five to seven major issues on which Washington really focuses, that get White House support. They were able to carry on with several major issues simultaneously in the General Assembly and the Security Council. The USUN

officers specialize not only in issues and areas, but in UN arenas. They in turn deal with other delegations for whom issues are their the country's life blood to other groups that know nothing about it whatever. It is all contact. Lobbying works. That's why during GA sessions, when the normal, small delegation staffs are supplemented by many more from home, the Department sends extra specialists to USUN on TDY. The USUN mission, however, is no place for long term outlooks and solutions. It handles the UN aspect of whatever the problem is. Generally, this is a vote, or series of votes on action where the main developments are elsewhere. For example, when Tshombe had been chased out of the Katanga, Lumumba had been killed, and Kasavubu had become an active president presiding over the formation of a government, the Secretary General wanted to pack up and go home. The U.S. didn't agree. Soapy Williams realized all too well, as did Godley in the field, that there simply wasn't much structure left in the Congo and what there was could collapse momentarily. If the UN withdrew, it would leave a very new Congolese government with no real background, no organization, no party structure, no national infrastructure, no anything. So, the Embassy and the AF Bureau very strongly supported keeping the UN there. While agreeing as an Africanist, I remember thinking that this might be a mistake because the UN couldn't afford to pay for it, and sooner or later the Article 19 issue on contributions/voting rights would come up.

The Soviets and the radical Africans who opposed us in principle, also began refusing to pay for peacekeeping operations. The French, while supporting us generally on the Congo, were opposed to the UN becoming too effective militarily/politically, and they stopped paying for international peacekeeping. So to some extent, we were breaking the UN's institutional back by getting it so involved.

I put this up to Joe Sisco, and he said, "Well, that's possible, but it's not today's problem. Today's problem is that we've got this and this happening in the Congo, and the Ambassador says that we need the UN for such and such. Your point is a problem for tomorrow."

So, I went back to work and didn't push it any more. But after I'd been up at the UN for a while, I felt more and more that this was an issue. Thus I brought it up with the senior USUN Africa man, Ambassador Charlie Yost. He was a very decent, intelligent, thoughtful, respected officer who would have been influential. I told him frankly that I'd already raised it with Joe Sisco, and that Joe had turned it down. He said, "You know, I think that you've got a point, but I know how Joe Sisco and Harlan Cleveland feel about this. But I just might try writing a personal letter to the Embassy, because I know Godley well."

A month later he phoned me to say that Godley had replied, "Well, this is a consideration, but please look at my situation. I'm in a place which is falling apart from day to day. Washington thinks we've won the war. We've won a skirmish, but it's going to happen all over again if we don't also win the peace. And the only way to have that is to keep the U.N. here." Yost concluded that without support from the Embassy and IO the idea was dead.

This is another example of how, when the Department is in an operational mode, dissident ideas don't get raised up to where the senior people can look at them. If I had been a real operator, I think, in hindsight, the thing to have done was to go to someone like Under Secretary George Ball responsible for the big picture of what the U.S. interests were, and suggest weighing the long term

advantages of saving the UN's peacekeeping ability against propping up the Congo. At that time, there was no DISSENT channel for putting up unconventional ideas to senior officers.

FRANCIS TERRY MCNAMARA
Intelligence Research Specialist
Washington, DC (1959-1961)

Political Officer
Elisabethville (1961-1963)

Ambassador Francis Terry McNamara, born in New York, served in the Navy during both World War II and Korea. He graduated from McGill University in Montreal and then entered the Foreign Service in September of 1956. His overseas posts included Salisbury, Saigon, Dahomey (Benin), Beirut, and Cape Verde. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy between March and November of 1993.

Q: Where did you think the Belgian Congo was going to go? Later, you were right in the thick of that, but at the time you were in Rhodesia, what was the prognosis among our people there?

MCNAMARA: Well, as I recall, people thought that the Belgians were going to be very slow in moving towards independence. Their colonial theory was to bring the whole population along a stage at a time. They consciously tried not to create an elite. They were going to give everybody a primary school education, and everybody a secondary school education, and then ultimately go beyond that. It was an authoritarian, paternalistic attitude towards the Africans. They just didn't do what the French did at all, in consciously creating an elite. In fact, they did just the opposite. They tried not to create an elite. And so, at independence time, all you had was a handful of university graduates. The few who had gone beyond secondary school were mainly Catholic seminarians or ex-seminarians. Kasavubu was a perfect example of this group.

Q: Were you carrying on any sort of a watching brief on this?

MCNAMARA: No. We had a consulate general in Leopoldville. I visited Elisabethville once when I did a long tour through Northern Rhodesia. There's a part of Southeastern that sticks down into Zambia. Well, I was going from the Zambia copperbelt up into the northern province, which is the part above that penis that sticks down into the middle of Zambia, penetrating Zambia. No official Americans had been to the Northern or the Luapula Provinces in years. In any case, I went through what was then the Belgian Congo and stopped in Elisabethville overnight. This was in 1959, I guess, a year before Congo independence. There was much more mixing of the races in the Congo. One felt a certain tension. For instance, I saw a violent argument between a black and a white that seemed to be on the point of fisticuffs. You would never see that in Rhodesia; no black would dare get out of line to that degree in Rhodesia in those days, even in Northern Rhodesia. This apparently was not the case in the Congo. At the same time, nobody expected independence. The Belgians panicked and gave independence within months of riots in Leopoldville.

Q: Did you get at all involved, in a peripheral way, by being duty officer or something like that, with the Congo business?

MCNAMARA: Yes. We were duty officers every few weeks. Moreover, Northern Rhodesia had a common border with the Congo. Therefore, I followed events across the border closely. In any case, it was a question of great interest to any Africanist.

Q: How did your next assignment come about?

MCNAMARA: Well, I was doing my Italian every morning dreaming of Venezia, Firenze or some other delightful Italian posting. One day late in March I had a call from personnel informing me that, "We have you lined up to go to Katanga in the Congo."

Q: This was in the middle of a very...

MCNAMARA: Oh, this was in the middle of a civil war. Katanga was in secession from the rest of the country. Fighting actually hadn't started in Katanga itself, between the UN and the Katangans, but, nonetheless, there were plenty of problems and it was a very troubled place.

Well, anyway, in those days, you didn't say no to an assignment. You went without argument. Even though I had a wife and small children I went off to Katanga like a good soldier.

Initially, I went by myself. My wife couldn't come with me. There wasn't any way. There was no housing. In those days, they didn't provide housing. So I went to Katanga to get established and to find housing for us. She stayed behind while our kids finished the school year in Washington.

First, I went to Kinshasa, which was then Leopoldville. At the embassy I got briefed by a variety of people, including Frank Carlucci. Mac Godley was the chargé d'affaires at the time. The most memorable aspect of my visit was when Carlucci introduced me to Albert Kalonji, who was the king or the emperor or something or other of the South Kasai, which had also declared itself to be independent. I remember Carlucci introducing me to a man who smiled. Suddenly, somebody else came and shook my hand. I couldn't figure this out. I was talking to one man, and somebody else shook my hand. When we left Kalonji's presence, I asked Frank, "Which one was Kalonji? Who was that guy that shook my hand?"

Frank laughed explaining; "Oh, that's his official hand-shaker. He doesn't shake hands with mortals. He has a semi-divine nature, and can't shake your hand. Kalonji was the one you were talking to."

Q: When in '61 did you get there?

MCNAMARA: I got there in August.

Q: What were they saying about the situation in the Congo and Katanga? Katanga became very much the center of...

MCNAMARA: Of interest.

Q: But what were they saying at that time of whether things were going and how they felt about things?

MCNAMARA: Well, things were far from decided in the Congo. There were two sets of potential secessionists: one was the Katangese, the other was the Lumumbists in the northeast. These were being supported by the Russians and the Egyptians at the time.

The embassy was worried that, if the Katangan secession succeeded, it would encourage the secession of this other Russian-backed group. The Cold War was very much at the center of American preoccupation in the Congo in those days. Understandably, the Congolese did not share our concern. They were focused on their own problems. A politically aware minority, however, was beginning to understand how our preoccupation could be exploited to their personal profit.

My impressions of Leopoldville in mid-1961 were of a peaceful, calm city occupying a beautiful site overlooking the Congo River. The Belgians left an impressively modern city with gleaming white buildings set in the deep greens of tropical foliage. I was shown the places where the great events of 1960 had taken place, but by that time, things were quieter.

A meeting of a constituent Assembly was in progress at the university, as I recall. The UN had the members locked in the university grounds trying to get them to choose a government before being released.

Q: Lumumba was alive?

MCNAMARA: Lumumba was dead. He had been killed earlier in the year. To get to Katanga from Leopoldville, I had to...

Q: Katanga was still Elisabethville?

MCNAMARA: Well, the province was Katanga, and the capital was Elisabethville. At that point, there was no direct communication between Leopoldville and Elisabethville, between Katanga and the rest of the Congo. I had to go across the river to Brazzaville in the former French Congo to get an airplane from there to Elisabethville. At that time, Abbé Fulbert Youlou was the president of the Congo (Brazzaville), He was friendly with Tshombe, who was, as you remember, the president of secessionist Katanga. And so I got a UTA flight from Brazzaville to Elisabethville.

Before I went, while I was in Leopoldville (I was in Leopoldville for maybe five, six days), I met some officers from the Indian Army, just by chance. We became friendly, and one of them told me, "Oh, we're going up to Elisabethville in a week or two, and we'll see you up there."

I said, "Fine," and I didn't think anything of it, because I didn't know the significance of this. I was brand new and didn't understand all of the subtleties of troop movements, etc. When I got to Elisabethville, I told Bill Canup, the consul, that Indian troops were on their way to Elisabethville. He was shocked.

Q: *Who was the consul there?*

MCNAMARA: Bill Canup, who at this point was sleeping with a pistol under his pillow. He was worried by threats that mercenaries would kill him. Reportedly, he had been threatened. American policy was highly unpopular in Katanga. We opposed secession. Our allies disagreed with our efforts to force Katanga to acquiesce. The U.N. forces were in Katanga and resolutions had been passed that the mercenaries had to leave and the secession had to end. The forces on the ground were mainly innocuous Irish and Swedish troops. Their unthreatening presence suddenly changed as the Indians arrived. The U.N. troops who were there already were Swedes and Irish, both of whom were very ineffective and who didn't feel that they were there to perform a combat role, nor were they prepared for it. The Indians, on the other hand, were ready to go to war. They were good troops ready for serious military action. Moreover, their governments wanted to bring down Tshombe and end Katangan secession.

Q: *Tshombe at that time was seen as a creature of the...*

MCNAMARA: Of the Belgians, the British, the Rhodesians and the South Africans. In short, a neocolonial creature. He was looked on by the Indians and the more militant Africans as a creature of European capitalist influences who were viewed as also supporting white domination in southern Africa.

Q: *Just to get a feel for this. Katanga being the rich province of...*

MCNAMARA: The bulk of the export wealth of the Congo was produced in Katanga. Like Northern Rhodesia, it was one of the major copper producers in the world. Copper prices were high at that time.

Q: *Was there a split? You mentioned the British, the French and the Belgians. Are you talking about those people's commercial interests, or are you talking about their governments?*

MCNAMARA: Both.

Q: *They were in support of independence?*

MCNAMARA: A separatist, independent Katanga. Now they may not have done it openly, but they were generally supportive of secession.

Q: *Did they have representatives?*

MCNAMARA: Oh, yes, they had consuls general in Elisabethville.

Q: *Were you all at loggerheads, kind of?*

MCNAMARA: Yes, sort of, in a friendly way, especially with the British who were more ambivalent. Our relations with the British consul were very friendly. The Frenchman, on the other hand, was very angry with our consul. I forget the particular issue now, but he felt that our consul had somehow insulted his honor. I don't recall the nature of the issue, but Tambroschini's reaction was very Corsican. The Belgians were resentful of our support for the central government against Katanga and for the U.N. position, which was very much against the mercenaries and Belgian Army people. At the time, they had regular Belgian Army personnel training the Katangan gendarmerie.

Q: Who were the mercenaries and what was their role?

MCNAMARA: They were a mixed bag. There were two military groups of foreigners in Katanga. One was made up of regular Belgian Army people who were training and providing cadre for the Katangan gendarmerie, which was really an army. It was called a gendarmerie, but it was the Katangan army. The second group were mercenaries hired from all over the world. There were a number of Belgians, French, British, South Africans, Rhodesians, and a mixed bag of odds and sods from a wide variety of places. An amusing case was the former cook of the governor general of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. I'd known him when he was cooking in Salisbury. He was a Pole, I believe. The mercenaries were hired and paid by the Katangans. However, some of them were working clandestinely for their own governments. Certainly the French were. They were recruited as a team from the French Army and sent to Katanga. Little effort was made to hide their official connection as they openly frequented the French Consulate General. The French government wanted to get its hands on the mineral wealth of Katanga. These mercenaries were there as an instrument of French national policy, there's no question of it.

Q: We didn't support this. What did we do?

MCNAMARA: We opposed it supporting the U.N. militarily and financially. Without our logistics and financial support, the U.N. could not have operated in the Congo, and certainly could not have mounted an operation against the Katangans.

Q: Did you have any dealings with Tshombe at all?

MCNAMARA: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of him?

MCNAMARA: A man of great charm. Great charm and intelligence. Good leader. The idea that he was just a creature of neocolonial influences is a gross exaggeration and misunderstanding of fact.

For instance, the guy in charge of the U.N. operations in Katanga at that time was Connor Cruise O'Brien. He is an avowed Irish Socialist. As a result he seemed to see everything in terms of British and capitalist conspiracies. These ideological blinders prevented him from even considering that Tshombe might represent an authentic element of African opinion. Like most African political leaders his support was tribally based. He openly opposed the central

government. In the beginning he was manipulated, to a degree, by the Belgians, the French and the British. But they did not create his authentic local rapport. It still exists. A lot of the problems in southeastern continue to exist. There is a lack of trust of a far away control government. People's only real identification is still with tribe and region. The country is an artificial creation of the colonial powers. Prior to independence in 1960, Africans had no role in governance, nor was there any national civic life.

Q: This was something that we were seeing, but what were our relations with Connor Cruise O'Brien?

MCNAMARA: Our relations with Conner Cruise O'Brien were close, because we were on the same side. We were supporting the U.N. We were the ones who supplied the essential support. If they didn't have our support...financial and logistic...the U.N. operation could not have been mounted. As Cruise O'Brien himself acknowledged, the U.N. Congo operation was based on a U.S.-Third World agreement made in the absence of Russians from the General Assembly.

Q: Financial and logistic, meaning our airplanes were being...

MCNAMARA: Well, at this point, we weren't sending U.S. Air Force planes in. But we were supplying the wherewithal to hire airplanes and buy all of the other things that were needed for an operation of great magnitude.

Q: How many officers were at our consulate there?

MCNAMARA: Oh, let's see. There was the consul, there was me, there was one spook. In addition, we had a small support staff of about four other Americans.

Q: Spook being a CIA representative.

MCNAMARA: That's right. And then there was a couple: the lady was a secretary and the husband was admin. communicator. And then the spook had his own communicator and secretary. That was the whole American complement. Very small.

Q: What were you doing?

MCNAMARA: I was writing political reports.

Q: How'd you go about it?

MCNAMARA: I talked to an awful lot of the people in the U.N. We were reporting on military and political. I was talking to a lot of the people at the U.N. I was also going around town talking to people and so on. I'd only just arrived. I'd only been there for a couple of weeks before the first bout of fighting started, so I didn't have a hell of a lot of time to get prepared to do normal political reporting.

Q: You were in Elisabethville from '61 to '62. Could you talk about the developments. The troops arrived, and then what happened?

MCNAMARA: What happened was, about a brigade of Indian troops suddenly arrived shortly after I did. They got themselves settled on the ground.

I couldn't find a place to live. And I got to know a Canadian captain, a guy named Marv Rich, who was seconded to the U.N. command. The Canadians provided the communications, and he was in charge of the Canadian communications group that was there at the headquarters. He had an apartment downtown. He let me move in with him, because he had an extra bedroom. And so I was living in his apartment.

One evening, he said, "I have to go out to the headquarters. I won't be here tonight, so you go ahead and have dinner. Don't worry about me."

I had dinner and went quietly to bed. At about four o'clock in the morning, I was awakened by noise in the central square just down the street. I looked out the window, and saw U.N. troops and armored cars drawn up in the main square. The post office had been occupied by Katangan "paracommandos." Tensions had been growing over the past few days as the U.N. picked up mercenaries and Belgian officers. They were scooping them up off the streets, and raiding apartments. Groups of Belgians had already been sent home. In response the paracommandos took over the post office in the center of town. Suddenly, that night, Indian troops came into the Place de Post, in front of the post office. I heard them issue an ultimatum, over a loudspeaker. The apartment I was in was just off the Place, so I could see into the Place and hear what was going on. They gave the Katangans an ultimatum to surrender and leave the post office. When the Katangans refused, the Indians started to shoot. The shooting went on for some time. There was riposte from the Katangans, but they were outgunned and lacked effective leadership. Their mercenary officers were in hiding. The post office was stormed by Indian troops. They weren't Gurkhas. I can't remember the regiment now, but it was not the Gurkhas. By eight o'clock in the morning, resistance had ended. The Katangans had suffered some casualties but most were taken prisoner. After seizing strategic points around the town, the U.N. troops began a search. This is how the fighting started in Elisabethville based on my own observations.

On the same morning, the U.N. took over control of the radio station and a couple strategic points. They tried to grab Tshombe in his palace, but he got away before they could seize him. Some people say he got away with the help of the British consul using a secret tunnel to exit the Presidential palace. I don't know whether that's true or not.

Connor Cruise O'Brien, in his book, says that he received the orders to initiate this armed action from a man named Kiari, a Tunisian in the U.N. hierarchy in Leopoldville. O'Brien assumed at the time, that the order came from Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold. Kiari, he believed, was speaking on behalf of the Secretary General. For the U.N. the initial military action in a sovereign country was and remains controversial. Connor Cruise O'Brien, in his book, tries to defend himself, saying that it wasn't his initiative; he was simply carrying out an order that he considered to be legitimate. He doesn't say that it was wrong, he just says that he didn't take the initiative. He

got an order, which he considered legitimate, from a man who came from Leopoldville and appeared to have the authority to pass it on.

I don't know whether Hammarskjold himself ever got to deny it, but Brian Urquhart denied to me that Hammarskjold had given the order.

Q: *He was Hammarskjold's deputy.*

MCNAMARA: No he wasn't the deputy, but he was an important aide who was privy to what went on in the SecGen's office.

Q: *He was at the peacekeeping level, I think.*

MCNAMARA: No, he got to be an Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping later. But he was very close to Hammarskjold. Brian was one of Hammarskjold's aides and very close to Hammarskjold. In fact, he's written a biography of Hammarskjold. He claims that Hammarskjold did not give this order and that he was not aware that they were going to take a military initiative. It's murky as to where the order came from.

However, there is no question as to what was going on in terms of the dynamics within the U.N. The Indians and the Africans, the so-called Bandung group, the Ghanaians, the radical Africans and Asians, had made a deal with us. Now I don't know whether the deal was explicit or implicit, but there was certainly a deal. And that was that we would enforce the unity of the Congo, against the wishes of our colonialist allies, in return for their support in keeping the U.N. presence strong in the country. The U.N. was seen by us as keeping the Russians and the Egyptians out. It appears that was the deal that was struck. Whether it was implicit or explicit, I don't know. I know of no documentary evidence, but research here may turn up some confidential communications as information becomes declassified.

Q: *Well, it never would be like that.*

MCNAMARA: It would never be like that. I reckon that an informal deal was struck between the Kennedy administration and Nkrumah and Nehru.

Q: *What happened then? I mean, here you are...*

MCNAMARA: There I was, in an upstairs window, watching as tracer bullets pass back and forth in front of me. I watched the spectacle through most of the early morning.

The next morning, after the U.N. Indian troop stormed the Post Office, I came out of the apartment. It was a little risky, because I'm white and I was in civilian clothes -- I could have been taken for God knows what by some trigger-happy Indians or others. I remember the apartment house that I was in (I was on the second floor) had a number of shops on the ground floor and there were large columns that supported the upper floors. A number of whites had collected sheltering behind the columns. I don't know who they were. A couple may have been mercenaries. God knows what they were. But nobody had guns that I could see. Anyway, we were all trying to see what was going on

in the Place. And as a U.N. Swedish armored personnel carrier (APC) came up the street past us, we hid behind a column. As the APC came in front of us, we shifted our position so that we always had a column between us and them.

Somewhat later, I visited a small hotel that housed some mercenaries. A number of mercenaries and Belgian officers were hanging around in civilian clothes not knowing what to do next. I listened and mixed with the crowd. Since I had only just arrived in Elisabethville, no one knew my appearance, I was just another white male of about 30 years.

Then I went to the consulate general and helped draft reports on what had happened, including my own observations. We had not known the military action was planned, nor did we expect anything so dramatic.

Q: How did business carry on after that? What was happening and how did you all operate?

MCNAMARA: That day, there were a couple of things that happened. One, the African population began hunting Ba-Lubas. Ba-Lubas are from Kasai, and from Northern Katanga. They were not viewed favorably by tribesmen from southern Katanga who provided the bulk of support for Tshombe's separatist movement. On the contrary, the Ba-Lubas strongly supported the central government. The antagonism stems, at least in part, from the large number of Ba-Lubas that enjoyed well paid jobs, especially with the copper company. There was a large colony of them living in Elisabethville. By mid-afternoon the Ba-Luba hunts began throughout Elisabethville. Groups of young Katangans sought them out, beat them and often killed them.

I was walking down the main street of Elisabethville that day when suddenly I saw a man peddling like mad on a bicycle, with a gang of youths chasing him on foot. Finally, one guy caught up to him. This gent had a bicycle chain attached to a stick that he used like a whip. It wrapped around the unfortunate's neck. The chaser then yanked the man backwards off the bicycle. He landed with a sickening thud. The chain had cut into his neck and was strangling him. The gang of assailants then proceeded to kick him to death.

The Ba-Luba pogrom caused the tribe's local population to move into a camp under the protection of the U.N. They remained living in harsh conditions in a village, fed by the U.N. for the next two years.

There was a quiescence period several hours after the U.N. made their early morning move. Early in the afternoon I left the consulate with a colleague named Tom Cassilly, who was in Elisabethville on TDY, to get the wife of the CIA communicator, Will Poole. We were trying to concentrate the Americans at the consulate and in houses where they would be more accessible, less isolated and in areas away from points of potential conflict. We picked up "Dottie" Poole in the consulate Jeep and were bringing her back to the consulate building, when suddenly we ran into Katangan troops preparing an attack on the U.N. headquarters. When they saw our Jeep, they began shooting at us. We were in one of those Jeep station wagons, the old high-bodied variety. They mistook it for a U.N. vehicle. This was just a plain old Jeep station wagon, nothing fancy. They thought that we were U.N., because of the vehicle. Anyway, we pulled into a driveway, jumped out of the car, and got into a drainage ditch. When the shooting died down, we went to a

neighboring house and knocked on the door. A young Belgian couple opened the door and let us in. We all took shelter in their cave, in the back of the house as the rate of firing increased. The Katangans soon surrounded the house. They then banged on the door. When the owner opened up, he was told politely that they wanted us to come out of the house. The man insisted that we were not from the U.N. We refused to leave the questionable safety of the house. Surprisingly, they did not force the issue or attempt to enter the house. Instead, they asked the Belgian next door, "Do you think those are U.N. people?" He assured them that we must be local civilians as our Jeep's license plates were ordinary Congolese private plates.

This seemed to satisfy them, and they went away.

But, Jesus. I mean if they'd grabbed us, God knows what would have happened. Thank God they did not suspect that we were official Americans. We stayed in the Belgian's cave for the best part of the afternoon. Just before dusk, we decided to make a run for it. I told Cassilly to take Mrs. Poole and head up the street where I could shelter behind some buildings. They shot at us as we were leaving, but the bullets were high above the top of the Jeep. Cassilly and Mrs. Poole soon joined me and we returned to her house rather than attempt to cross the town to the consulate.

In her apartment, we had no communications. We simply lay on the floor and hoped the random firing would not penetrate the sides of the building. In the middle of the night, a U.N. convoy suddenly pulled up in front of the house, complete with armored cars. When we had gone missing, the people in the consulate had organized a search party for us fearing that we had been taken prisoner by the Katangans. Fortunately, the convoy was able to escort us to the consulate.

The relationship between the American Consulate and the U.N. was very, very close. We supported the operation with advice and intelligence. I was in the U.N. headquarters every day during the fighting with advice and information crossing lines at some considerable risk.

Q: When you say "advice," what do you mean?

MCNAMARA: Advising on military operations and on the attitude of the population. I gave first hand accounts of Katangan military dispositions and on their reaction to the fighting.

Q: Well, I take it that the U.N. really didn't have the equivalent to political advisors, as we know them.

MCNAMARA: No, they didn't. But here we were, we had our consulate general situated next to Tshombe's palace. I was floating around town, talking to people, moving between the lines. I found a relatively lightly covered back road leading into the U.N. camp. The Gurkhas would often provide covering fire while I scooted into the camp. It was an incredible situation, and it went on for some two weeks.

Finally, a cease-fire was declared. The U.N. had seriously miscalculated Katangan resolve and mercenary abilities. Indeed, French mercenaries had engineered the capture of Jadotville without firing a shot. They were held as hostage. This had much to do with the acceptance of a hasty cease-fire and the conditions of the cease-fire.

A period of uneasy peace followed for some three months. As time passed, things got more and more tense. Early in December the consulate organized a large reception.

A new consul had been appointed. His name was Hoffacker. He took Bill Canup's place. Canup left just after the first bout of fighting. Sadly, he left under a cloud. Apparently he was not seen as being firm enough and tough enough. Hoffacker was, well, I don't want to say sympathetic to the Katangans, but he was at least understanding of them and, I suppose, sympathetic to some degree. He seriously sought a peaceful solution. Unfortunately, there were many who opposed any negotiated settlement. They insisted upon complete capitulation by the Katangans with forced reintegration with the rest of the Congo. It appeared that this hard line view found some favor in high places in Washington. The reception in November was held to honor a visit to Elisabethville by Senator Thomas Dodd -- father of Senator Chris Dodd.

Q: *Yes.*

MCNAMARA: Senator Dodd was in Tshombe's hip pocket. He supported Katangan independence and followed a line pushed by the well-financed Katanga lobbying operation in Washington.

Hoffacker invited both Katangans and U.N. people to the reception. In his naive way, he thought understanding could be furthered by putting the two immediate protagonists together. Since these U.N. people on the spot were no more than an instrument, they were unable to change policy made by their betters in Washington, New York, New Delhi or Accra. Only limited tactical decision was made in Elisabethville. Unaware of this reality, poor Hoffacker held an attempted love-in.

By this time, Connor Cruise O'Brien had been replaced by two of Hammarskjold's most tried aides -- George Ivan Smith and Brian Urquhart.

After the reception, a smaller dinner was to be held at the local Mobil Oil man's house. Senator Dodd was to be guest of honor. Both Urquhart, Brian and George Ivan Smith were invited. The two U.N. people arrived at the Mobil Oil man's house at about nine in the evening without guards. Unfortunately, the house was just up the street from the Katangan general's home, which was surrounded by a Katangan Paracommandos protection unit. The Paracommandos saw the U.N. car arrive and the two representatives go in the house. Perhaps, suspecting a plot or a seizing opportunity, they surrounded the house, went inside, and dragged Urquhart and George Ivan Smith out, taking them prisoners. A Belgian banker tried to intervene, and was beaten for his trouble. Just as they were forcing these two U.N. people into the back of a truck, the motorcade, with Tshombe's motorcycle outriders and a presidential limousine arrived with Senator Dodd and Hoffacker. Rapidly sizing up the situation, Hoffacker jumped from the car. With the help of the Katangan motorcycle escort, he got George Ivan Smith away from the paracommandos. Brian Urquhart, however, was already inside the truck. Hoffacker either did not know he was there or could not get at him. In any case, he got Ivan Smith into the car with Dodd and hurriedly left the scene before the Paracommandos could react. Senator Dodd was in the limousine's back seat being shielded by a 200 pound American Army colonel who was serving as his escort officer. Poor Urquhart was left to the tender mercies of the Paracommandos.

The U.N. went bananas. The U.N. troops were ready to go.

By this time, I had become a close friend of the Gurkha commander, a Colonel Mitra of the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Gurkhas. He was all set to storm Tshombe's palace and take Tshombe prisoner. He had his Gurkhas in place across the street from the Palace. I was holding him back while Hoffacker was trying to negotiate Brian's release with Tshombe and some of his ministers. Brian was now being held in an army camp outside town.

Finally they got Urquhart released, but only after the personal intervention of the most intransigent of Tshombe's ministers, Gadfoid Manungo.

After they stood down, one of their company commanders, a major, came by the consulate. He'd been with his troops and was going back to the battalion mess, which was near their headquarters. His troops were in a position some distance away. He swung by our consulate, and I chatted with him at the front gate. We were all great pals by this time; I was very close friends with all the battalion officers. He then left and went up the street about half a block and ran into a group of excited Paracommandos. They apparently took him prisoner, killing his driver on the spot (we heard shots). He has never been heard of since.

This made the Gurkha's fighting mad. They couldn't be sure what had happened to him. If they had known where he was being held or by whom they certainly would have gone after him. Unfortunately, no one had a clear idea of what happened and U.N. superiors held them back from taking revenge on uninvolved hostages.

Incidentally, through all this, after the first day, we got a platoon of Gurkhas guarding our consulate. We had Gurkhas in the garden. They had a machine gun nest in my office. I would be sitting at my desk trying to write a report, and suddenly I'd sense that somebody was watching me. I'd look up, and there'd be a couple of little brown men looking over my shoulder, watching what I wrote. It was eerie, but not unpleasant. They are among the nicest people I have met. However, they are also among the most ferocious fighters when aroused.

There was a period of about two or three months of an uneasy peace. Pressures within the U.N. in New York had brought about a cease-fire. However, nothing had been solved, aside from the U.N. forces having consolidated their positions within Elisabethville. However, they still didn't control the town completely; they controlled the European center of the town as well as strategic points around the town.

I suppose I should talk about some personal things now. I arrived in August of 1961. My wife and children had remained in the United States, waiting for me to find a place for us to live. The fighting broke out as they were on their way. Actually, they had gotten as far as Egypt, and were staying with friends of ours in Cairo, named Curt and Jane Strong. Suddenly, the fighting broke out in September and they were forced to remain in Cairo. They stayed there for about a month and a half, and then went onwards to Salisbury, in Rhodesia, where we had been stationed a couple of years before. They were going to stay there until they could come into Elisabethville. They were in

Salisbury for a short time, but didn't have any place to live. Finally, they came to Elisabethville in November, and were there during the second bout of fighting.

Q: What was happening to you in between times? You say that the Katangans more or less held the city.

MCNAMARA: They still held parts of the city and, of course, the rest of South Katanga. The U.N. held the center of the town and a few positions around the city. These included: the airport, their own headquarters on the northern fringes of the city and an area east of the city where the Ba-Luba people had gathered in a refugee camp. The Ba-Lubas were from North Katanga and from Kasai, and there were tribal tensions between them and the people of South Katanga. When the fighting started, the South Katangans went after the Ba-Lubas. In fear, the Ba-Lubas fled to the protection of the U.N., a large refugee camp grew up. All sorts of things, unfortunately, were taking place within this refugee camp.

For instance, one day, when I was in the camp with some Swedish soldiers who were there administering and guarding the camp, a group of Ba-Lubas came down the muddy street, chanting and dancing. There was a man leading them, waving a stick much like a drum major. I noticed at a distance that there was something on the end of the stick. As they drew abreast of us, I saw that it was: a penis and testicles, stuck on the end of this stick; a little bit like children skewer a hot dog to the end of a stick to roast it. One of the Swedish soldiers next to me got sick to his stomach when he saw what the Maluba was waving so joyously. Apparently the Ba-Lubas had caught someone, from an opposing tribe, killed him and castrated him.

Evidently, some terrible things were going on. There was even talk of cannibalism. The social tensions under which people were living were so harsh that some people lost usually observed social and moral restraints.

Q: What were you doing in this in-between time, officially?

MCNAMARA: Officially, we were reporting on what was going on. We were trying to maintain contact on all sides, with the U.N., with the Katangans, and trying as much as we could, to serve as a conduit between the two, and to ease the tensions to the extent that we could. Sadly there wasn't really much that could be done in Katanga to influence the course of larger events. The tensions were there, obviously. The situation was tinder; all it needed was some sparks to ignite another bout of fighting. But the real decisions, I believe, were made elsewhere.

Q: How was the consulate viewed by the Katangans at that time?

MCNAMARA: Well, we were looked on as the enemy. We were supporting the central government and the U.N. in their fight against Katanga. The American government supplied the essential element in terms of support for the U.N. force in the Congo. It couldn't have existed without American support and encouragement. Therefore, we were looked on as an enemy. There had been demonstrations against the consulate, which was, by this time, guarded by Gurkha soldiers, as I said in the earlier interview.

The Cold War was on, and most people viewed the United States as the great power in the world, and certainly the one that had had probably the greatest influence on events in the Congo. Therefore, at the same time that we were viewed as an enemy, we were also viewed as an entity that could be influenced and could be decisive. If they could bring around American opinion to be sympathetic to Katangan separatism or opposed to U.N. armed intervention in the Congo, then the U.N. could lose vital support. Secession would succeed if the Katangans could neutralize the U.N. force. The central government -- on its own -- was incapable of bringing Katanga to heel.

Q: Was Tshombe much in control there?

MCNAMARA: He was in control. One of the things that Connor Cruise O'Brien, who was in charge of the U.N. during the first bout of fighting, contended was that Tshombe was simply a creature of the Belgians, the British, and capitalist interests in Union Miniere, the great copper-mining organization that was running the mines in Katanga, and certain other organizations, like Tanganyikan Concessions, which had the majority holding in the Benguela Railway that took much of the production on its railway through Angola to a port at Lobito Bay, and exported them to its markets overseas. O'Brien looked on these international interests as the sole source of Katangan separatism, and that Tshombe and his people were simply manipulated by them. Connor Cruise O'Brien was an Irishman and a Socialist who came by his prejudices naturally. He saw British capitalists under every bed in Katanga.

To give him his due, there was a degree of truth in his allegations. Belgian, and British mining and railway interests were supporting Tshombe. However, O'Brien's sweeping allegations were exaggerated. Tshombe had a genuine African constituency in South Katanga. Tribalism was strong, and there was a natural constituency for separatism.

The Congo, as it was put together by King Leopold, was an artificial entity. It was a creature that was put together by King Leopold and the Europeans. It had no relationship to anything African. It cut across tribal ethnic and natural geographic lines. Few of the people in Africa had any real identity with the Congo as a nation. They didn't have any feeling of nationhood. And certainly the Belgians had never encouraged this during their colonial period. So there really wasn't much of a loyalty to Congo as a nation, or to Congo unity.

The tribes in South Katanga felt that, since the riches were in their territory, they should benefit primarily from these riches. They shouldn't have to share them with others in this very large country, which produced precious little else at this time.

In Katanga itself, they saw many of the best jobs go to outsiders -- e.g. Ba-Luba, for instance, from Kasai and from North Katanga -- and they resented it. The Ba-Luba were viewed by the mining companies as better workers and people who were better educated than the people from South Katanga tribes. As a result, they were sought after by Belgian employers during the colonial period.

Q: Did you find that our consulate there was operating separately from, say, the Belgians and the British and others?

MCNAMARA: Oh, yes, we were certainly operating very much separately. We were the ones who were supporting the U.N. The British and the Belgian governments were opposing what the U.N. was doing. At times they were forced to pay lip service to Congolese unity. Nonetheless, they all saw their chances of profiting from Katangan riches improved under a separate Katanga government. Moreover, the Rhodesians, South Africans, Portuguese and certain British interests saw Katanga as an outer bulwark against the spread southward of African nationalism.

Q: Well, then, how did this thing play out, particularly focusing on what you and the consulate were doing?

MCNAMARA: We were very close to the people at the U.N. The British, French, Belgians, and others were, sometimes openly, sometimes behind the scenes, favoring and working closely with the Katangans.

In the British Consulate, for instance, they had a consul from Rhodesia who was working as a member of the British Consulate. He was a British consul, or vice consul, I don't remember which, whose name was David Smith. He represented the government of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In fact he was Roy Walensky's and the federal government's man in Katanga. And the federal government looked on Katangan separatism as an important geostrategic entity that protected the northern border from the spread of African nationalism.

Q: You were doing, I suppose, both the normal reporting, but running back and forth without making any great impression on the Katangans. I mean, they were getting support from these other countries.

MCNAMARA: We were, however, always being courted by them. Lew Hoffacker, who was the consul, was perceived as being sympathetic towards the Katangans. I think that probably exaggerated his real feelings. What he did was go out of his way to make contacts with them, to speak to them, to get their point of view, to try to bring them together with U.N. people to the extent possible, and to encourage a peaceful solution to their problem. But he was viewed by the Katangans as more friendly than his predecessor, Canup. Ultimately, this was his downfall. He was perceived by some Americans as being too sympathetic towards the Katangan point of view.

Q: Were you getting visitors in, looking you over?

MCNAMARA: Yes, we got visitors from the embassy in Leopoldville. The one visitor of note that we got, as I mentioned in the last interview, was Senator Dodd.

Q: Yes, who got caught in the middle of things. Well, then, what happened? How did the thing break down, and what were you and the consulate doing?

MCNAMARA: To tell you the truth, Stu, it's hard for me now to keep the three bouts of fighting separated; what led up to one or what led up to the other. For anybody who is interested, obviously all they'd have to do is check the newspaper of the day for a chronology.

Q: But anyway, give whatever your impressions were, how you felt about it, what you can recall.

MCNAMARA: Very nervous. It was obvious in November-December that anything could set off another bout of fighting. The U.N. was building up its forces. They brought in an Ethiopian contingent. I think they brought in additional Indians. A Malayan armored-car company was also added during this period. Forces were obviously being marshaled for another more decisive go.

Something sparked it, and I don't remember what. It seems to me that it was a little exchange of fire between the Katangans and the U.N. on one of the perimeters, but I don't really remember the incident clearly. Anyway, the kidnaping, obviously, of the U.N. people and the killing of the Indian officer certainly set the stage for more fighting. It didn't take much to start it.

In November '61, my family came up from Rhodesia, and we had no place to live. I had no place to put them. A friend, Colonel Mitra of the 3/1 Gurkha Rifles, took us in. We lived in his house for a short while, in the U.N. perimeter, while we were looking for a house of our own. It was very hard to find houses in those days that were within our allowances and that were suitable. I had three small children. The eldest was about five or six, and they ranged down from that to three or four years.

Essentially, the consulate was trying to keep the peace in a very tenuous situation. At the same time, we were advising the U.N. on military and political affairs. They were isolated without much reliable intelligence. I gave them briefings every day to the U.N. leaders on what was going on in town, the mood of the Katangans, and their military dispositions. Members of the Swedish contingent had cultivated some contacts among the local Belgian population. This seemed to be the extent of their sources of information. Given our greater mobility and wider range of contacts we were able to brief and advise the U.N. leadership. At the same time, we reported to Washington and to Leopoldville what was going on, on both the U.N. and on the Katangan side. We described growing tensions and what, on a day-to-day basis, we could see of what was happening on both sides.

The fighting broke out in mid-December. It went on for about two weeks. The outcome was an assertion of U.N. control over the whole of the center of Elisabethville. They extended their perimeters out to the suburbs of town. The European center of the town was taken over by the U.N. The Ethiopians were involved in this, the Swedes, the Irish, and the Indians. The Ethiopians were accused of some atrocities, killing civilians. They killed some Belgians. I remember a woman being killed, allegedly, by the Ethiopians. And as far as I could tell, it was true. But it's not unusual in war, and certainly not unusual under those circumstances. What was more troubling was that a lot of Africans were also being hurt, killed, displaced, and not too much notice was being taken of that.

Anyway, the fighting was reasonably hard. The opposition wasn't well organized, but it was there. Mercenaries were involved in all of the most effective action taken against the U.N.

The Katangans had 2 or 3 small jet trainers called "Fougas". They carried small bombs and a couple of machine guns. The U.N., on the other hand, had no air support. The Katangans also had a variety of civilian aircraft. The Fouga took on an incredible psychological and symbolic significance. The U.N. people were bugged by them.

One day, I was in the U.N. headquarters, and the Irish Army chief of staff, from Ireland, was there. I forget his name now, General something or other. Hammarskjöld was expected in Northern Rhodesia to talk about a peace settlement. One of the Fougas bombed and strafed the U.N. headquarters at about noon. The large foreign press corps was assembled for an impromptu press conference with the Irish general. Katanga had drawn much press interest. People like David Halberstam from the New York Times were covering events. Later some -- like Halberstam -- became well-known. Suddenly, the Fouga appeared, dove towards us and dropped a small bomb. We all jumped for cover. Somebody landed on top of the Irish general in a slit trench. Clearly, there was great fear of Fouga. I'm not quite sure why, because its capabilities were very limited. In any case, it took on inordinate symbolic importance.

The second bout of fighting was again inconclusive, aside from the fact that the U.N. people extended their perimeters and took full control of the center of Elisabethville. They consolidated their positions and took control of the communication between their positions. At this point, they had a large area that took in all of the center of Elisabethville. The only exposed "LOC" was the road to the airport.

During the fighting, things got really nasty as far as Americans were concerned. The Katangans started threatening Americans. They hadn't threatened Americans before. The American missionaries in general were sympathetic towards the Katangans. The Katangans sensed this and were using this sympathy to try to gain a more widespread sympathy in the United States, hoping that... Then, when the fighting started in the second round, they turned against the missionaries and started threatening them, as Americans, because of the American support for the U.N. forces.

American Air Force airplanes at this point were coming into Elisabethville, bringing in supplies and troops to strengthen the...

Q: Non-American troops, but bringing in supplies.

MCNAMARA: No American troops, but they were bringing in supplies and non- American troops for the U.N. In other words, these were American Air Force planes. No longer were they just hired airplanes that were being contracted for by the U.N., and maybe paid for with American money, but these were actual USAF airplanes.

The American support for the whole operation was therefore much more obvious to the average Katangan. It was also equally obvious that America was certainly not taking any sort of neutral role, that we were one of the essential elements in this whole thing.

So, naturally, the average Katangan started to be alienated from and angry with America, and threatening of Americans there, even Americans who were sympathetic towards them. It didn't really make much difference.

The Katangans, however, controlled most of the African suburbs of Elisabethville, as well as much of the remaining territory of the province.

We decided that we had to evacuate the American citizens in Elisabethville, because it was getting too dangerous.

At this time, the Seventh Day Adventists had decided to have their regional convention at their headquarters in Elisabethville. They brought people from the United States and from other parts of eastern Africa to Elisabethville. Their headquarters was across the street from the U.N. headquarters, which was a special target of the Katangans. When fighting started, the Adventists found themselves in the cross-fire between the two sides. The poor Adventists were really under the gun.

With the help of a journalist who had good contacts with the Katangans, we arranged a cease-fire, from twelve to one o'clock, to get them out of their precarious position. I went from our consulate to get them out. I crawled down a long drainage ditch to the back door of the mission building. The cease-fire took place on time. No more shooting. We had an hour to get out. Both sides had agreed to this. So I told the missionaries, "You've got to leave now."

Over the phone they had earlier accepted that they would leave, as soon as a cease-fire could be arranged. When the shooting stopped, however, they changed their minds. Some decided, no, they wouldn't leave. So all refused to leave.

I said, "Look, you've got to go. The shooting is going to start in another hour. We've got one hour to get you out of here. If you don't leave, you're again going to be in exactly the same situation."

"Oh, no, no, no. It's okay now. We can't leave our homes. We can't leave our buildings, all of our work and so on."

After much fruitless urging I had to leave without them. I was sure that as soon as one o'clock came, the shooting was going to start again and I would receive another frantic telephone appeal. "Please get us out of here." Predictably, the shooting started at one o'clock, the war began again, and they were on the phone two or three minutes later, saying, "Oh, you've got to get us out of here!"

With some difficulty, we again arranged another cease-fire. This time, they left without serious resistance.

That evening, we gathered all of the missionaries, not just the Seventh Day Adventists, but the other groups that were in town. The biggest was Southern Baptist.

I organized a convoy into the U.N. headquarters, and then, from the U.N. headquarters, at night, out to the airport, with protection from U.N. forces. I got protection from the Swedes in armored personnel carriers, and from the Gurkhas.

As a prelude and a test run to the biggest evacuation, I took the families from the consulate out to the airport first. We had three or four families, women and children. I took them out earlier, to see how it would all go. We put them in the back of an open Swedish APC and drove out to the airport.

There were bullets bouncing off the sides and the Swedes fired machine guns in reply. I recall the spent shell casings flipping into the back of the APC; some fell on my sleeping children.

It was very interesting, the differing reactions of the several families. I was the only male parent present. Otherwise, we had the three mothers with their children. Where the mother was calm, the children remained calm. Where the mother was agitated, nervous and frightened, the children reacted in the same way.

For instance, my ex-wife, who is very tough, was calm, joked with the soldiers and reassured our kids. My children stayed calm and relaxed with the youngest sleeping soundly.

The youngest one fell asleep on the way out, even though the machine guns were blasting away. She hadn't had much sleep the night before. She and my wife had been in our friend Colonel Mitra's house. When the fighting started, and the bullets began bouncing off the outside walls, the colonel put my daughter in the bathtub with a mattress in front of the tub to protect against bullets or shrapnel. She played quietly there for most of the day.

When the fighting started, two of my children had been at school. They were enrolled in a local Catholic school called Marie José school with Belgian and Katangan children. When the fighting started, the wife of the other vice consul, her name is Whipple, went to get the kids. She got her children and mine and took them to her house.

That evening we had to get out of the colonel's house. Mitra told me that U.N. intelligence had picked up a report that the Katangans would bomb the area of the U.N. HQ that night. He did not want the kids there. We gathered ourselves together and snuck out in the middle of the night through a little used entrance to the U.N. perimeter, and went to Whipple's house. Whipple was not pleased at being awakened. His wife, however, was more gracious taking us in and bedding down the children.

The next day, I organized the evacuation and took the Whipple, Hoffacker, and McNamara kids, their mothers, and one or two other wives out to the airport in a Swedish APC under enemy fire. Thank God, the Katangans didn't have heavy weapons.

The Air Attaché's airplane was in the airport when we arrived. He evacuated our families to Northern Rhodesia in his C-47 without any seats on the floor. They landed at Ndola, which is the major city in the copper belt in what's now Zambia. Later on, they went to Salisbury, where they stayed for a few months before returning to Elisabethville.

The next day, I organized a larger evacuation of all of the American community. Most were missionaries. After we'd had the dry run with our own families to see how it worked, we had a better idea of what we were doing. First, we organized the Americans in a convoy using their own vehicles. There were some 200 of them. I led the convoy into the U.N. perimeter. Escort was organized from there for the run to the airport at night. There was some shooting, but no serious opposition. We got to the airport without casualties. The Air Attaché was there with 2 or 3 airplanes.

I had my friend Mitra, the Gurkha colonel, with me to serve as convoy commander. He was a marvelous man, full of energy, ideas, and brave as a lion. He came along as a personal favor to me. We had developed a close friendship.

When we got to the airport, the perimeter of which was now held by the U.N., a couple of the missionaries, after the U.N. soldiers had protected them and gotten them out to the airport, where they were safe and preparing to be evacuated, complained bitterly about the U.N. "intervention." I got angry with this wanton ingratitude. The U.N. soldiers had just risked their lives to protect the missionaries and their families. So I told one of the missionaries what I thought of him. I came close to punching him in the nose, but I resisted the temptation.

Afterwards, I got a letter from the Baptist bishop apologizing to me for the intemperate things that his colleague had said to me, and for his nasty accusations of the American government. Above all, the bishop disassociated himself and his church from the defamatory remarks aimed at soldiers who had risked their lives to protect the missionaries. A very nice letter. The bishop did the decent thing.

Anyway, feelings were very high.

After assuring that the missionary families were as comfortable as possible as they waited in one of the airport hangers for the morning evacuation flights in the military attaché's aircraft. Mitra and I visited the Canadian soldiers who were handling airport communication. By this time, I had become unofficial consul for the Canadians. I took care of them as fellow North Americans. This time, I brought them beer from town. Mitra then said he wanted to get back to Elisabethville. The Swedes were being very slow in organizing a convoy with their APC's. So Mitra said, "Let's go." I had a consulate car, so we got into the car, and I drove as fast as I could, in the night, back to Elisabethville. There were a few shots that went over the top of the car, but we made it.

As we were coming into the outskirts of Elisabethville, where the Gurkhas were holding a position at the strategic traffic circle, Mitra leaned out of the car window, on the passenger side screaming "Hail the Gurkhas" in Gurhali, so that they'd know that we were friends coming into their line and they wouldn't shoot at us.

He had picked up mail for his troops while at the airport. He insisted that we stop to distribute the post and to cheer up his troops. He was a great show man. His troops adored him. We stopped in the middle of the road, and he got out of the car. And he started, very carefully and very slowly, distributing the mail to his soldiers. The Gurkhas adored him. Like many effective military leaders, he was a great showman.

The Katangans saw us stop and began to mortar the position. Mitra went on with his mail call, standing in the middle of the road. Each little Johnny Gurkha would come to him, salute, take his mail, and go back to his foxhole.

Honor demanded that I stand next to Mitra. He had the assurance of an Indian astrologer that he would live to an age of 74 years. I had no such assurance. Nonetheless, to keep face, I stood next to him with mortars going off around us. Thank God, the Katangans were lousy marksmen.

Finally, I got back in the car and drove into the U.N. positions. I dropped him off at his headquarters, then snuck out a back way and went back to the consulate myself.

Two missionaries had been in the back of the car on our way back from the airport. They were supposed to stay with us to watch after the missions' property and interests. Our return from the airport without protection had unsettled them. Mitra's impromptu mail call had completely unnerved these men of God. When we stopped to distribute mail they slithered out of the back seat into a ditch. They seemed more preoccupied with their asses than with face.

After leaving the U.N. compound by a back route I took my two ecclesiastical friends to the house of the other vice consul, Whipple, where we were to sleep. The house was empty when we arrived. Tired after a full and exciting day, I went to bed. The missionaries were to sleep in another room. The next morning, I woke up and felt something peculiar on the bed covers. I looked down and there was a note pinned to the blanket under my chin. The note was addressed to me. It informed me that my two companions had decided that the mission property really wasn't in great danger. Therefore, they had decided to leave the country to American vice consuls or mad Gurkha colonels.

Fighting in town continued at a fairly intense level for a couple of weeks. It ended just after Christmas with another inconclusive cease-fire. Western public opinion had again been mobilized to save the Katangan regime.

Q: While the fighting was going on this second time, had you had any contact with the Katangans?

MCNAMARA: I don't recall having any. That doesn't mean that there wasn't any. Hoffacker may have had some contact with the Katangans, but I spent most of my time serving as a go-between with the U.N. I crossed the lines every day, went in and talked to the people in the U.N. and gave them briefings on the situation, as we saw it, on the other side of the lines. I was the outside guy. Whether Hoffacker had any contacts with the official Katangans, I don't know. Probably not. He certainly saw the other consuls and others who did have contacts with the Katangan leaders.

During that second bout of fighting, the Swiss honorary consul suddenly arrived breathlessly at our consulate declaring that the French consul, Lambrouscini, "has just been blessed in front of the synagogue!" He said this in English.

I said, "Blessed?" I had visions of the rabbi holding a ceremony with Lambrouscini on his knees. Finally, I realized the Swiss had confused English and French. What he meant was blessé, wounded. After calming our Swiss colleague, we found that the French consul had been wounded in the arm in front of the synagogue. What he was doing there, God only knows. There were French mercenaries deeply involved on the Katangan side. In fact, they are the ones who orchestrated the capture of the Irish troops in Jadotville in the first bout of fighting. Moreover, they were frequently seen entering or leaving the consulate. Subsequently, I have established that they were there with the actual connivance of the French government. This was also the time when Dag Hammarskjöld lost his life as a result of a crash in Northern Rhodesia, near Ndola. He was coming to Ndola to meet with Tshombe. Presumably, they were to discuss an end to the fight. Perhaps,

Hammarskjold was hoping to draw Tshombe into a more general discussion of a settlement for the whole Congo crisis. I wasn't personally in Northern Rhodesia and never saw the crash site. However, our attaché flew over it the next morning, and he said that it looked very much like just a miscalculation by the pilot. Hammarskjold's plane let down too soon, he reckoned, running into big mounds of hard packed earth built up by termites. These are common in that part of Africa. They're 20, 30, or 40 feet high and they're solid. It would be like hitting a concrete block. The attaché said the crash site and the wreckage was in a direct line with the runway of the airport. Therefore, he concluded that it was pilot error. The cause of the crash has always been controversial. Many assumed sabotage. Others were convinced that the plane was shot down by the Katangan jet trainer that was active at the time. From what I've heard and what I've read about it, I just don't find any of those kinds of theories very convincing. I think it was some sort of pilot error. The exact cause is not clear. However, none of the investigations carried out at the time found any convincing evidence of foul play.

Q: What happened after the second fighting?

MCNAMARA: The second round of fighting ended, again inconclusively, with a cease-fire. Hammarskjold was dead. In charge in Elisabethville of the U.N. were George Ivan Smith and Brian Urquhart, the two U.N. officials who had been involved in the kidnaping incident with the Katangans. Their presence in Elisabethville was useful. It was a steadying, reasonable presence, and they weren't given to flights of fancy like Connor Cruise O'Brien. There was still tension, but the Katangans had gotten a good bloody nose by this time. The whole of the modern center of Elisabethville was now firmly in the hands of the U.N. A lot of it was badly damaged, however, because of the fighting. The fighting had also resulted in many casualties especially among the African population. A few Europeans were hurt or killed but most civilian casualties were Africans. I think the Katangans were very happy to have this respite. They realized that they weren't, militarily, a match for the U.N. forces. But they also hadn't surrendered, and they hadn't lost much territory aside from the center of their capital. In any case, they weren't giving up. Mainly as a ploy to buy time, they expressed a willingness to negotiate. This was typical Tshombe.

On a personal level, just after the fighting ended, I decided to go down to Rhodesia to visit my family. So I drove out of Katanga and down (I had all of the various passes and so on to get through the various lines), to Northern Rhodesia on New Year's Eve.

Much of the swollen press corps from Katanga were in Ndola for some R&R. The largest number were English with a few Americans and some other nationalities. They were camped in the principal hotels. Sadly, I couldn't get an airplane to Salisbury on New Year's Eve. All flights were fully booked until the next day.

My journalist friends were having a big bash that night and invited me to join them. Alcohol flowed freely that night. Some of the mercenaries were also there in the dining room of Ndola's biggest hotel. Suddenly, one of the mercenaries (he was the ace of the Katangan air force; he had crashed five of their airplanes) stood up and threw a potted palm at me, shouting, "To hell with JFK and the American government!" The potted palm landed on the table in front of me. Plates were then thrown and fist fights ensued. The police arrived and reasonable calm was restored.

The next day, I went to Salisbury and saw my family. I spent a week with them. On my return from Ndola I brought supplies back in the consulate Jeep. Our larders were running low and there was little food to be had in Elisabethville.

The Katangans were relieved that the cease-fire had taken place. They needed a respite, but they hadn't given up. They were manipulating world opinion. For instance, they played on allegations that Ethiopian troops had committed atrocities -- killing an old Belgian woman and her son. These stories were used to manipulate public opinion in Western Europe and in the United States. The Katangans had a representative in the United States, a Belgian. I think his name was Michael Timberlane. He was particularly effective as a propagandist and as a lobbyist.

Q: The name rings a bell.

MCNAMARA: And he was very active.

Q: He had some senators in his pocket, didn't he?

MCNAMARA: Well, Senator Dodd was the most important one. There were stories that money had passed hands, but I have no direct knowledge of anything of that sort.

In any case, Timberlane's activities were having some effect influencing opinion in the United States and in Western Europe. Indeed, western public opinion was forcing the U.N. to pull its military punches. From a military point of view, the several cease-fires in Katanga were premature and saved the Katangans from much worse defeats.

After the December battles, the situation remained relatively calm for some months. Tension started again to build up some three or four months after the fighting had ended.

At this time, my family and the other families from the consulate had been evacuated to Rhodesia and were staying there on a temporary basis. As relative calm was restored, I began looking for a house, to bring them back. One day Colonel Mitra and I were talking to a Belgian man that we knew who had a house in an area that had been badly damaged. It was just south of the U.N. headquarters where there had been some of the heaviest fighting. Most houses in the area were damaged. Since the U.N. controlled the area, Ba-Lubas from the refugee camps had filtered in occupying many of the large villas in what had been one of the town's most affluent suburbs. Sensing Katangan weakness, the Ba-Lubas became aggressive. It was dangerous to go into areas they dominated. They assumed that any white civilian was Belgian and sympathetic towards the Katangans. They had good reason for their animosity. The Ba-Lubas had been butchered by the people from the south Katangan tribes that supported Tshombe. In any case, no South Katangan would have survived five minutes, and neither would any Belgian who wanted to occupy his house in the area north of Elisabethville. At the same time, I was finding it difficult to locate a house. A Belgian told me that, "I'll rent you my house if you will protect the people who are doing the repairs and guarantee the safety of the house after it is fixed up."

Colonel Mitra immediately gave assurance that the house would be protected by his Gurkhas. The Belgian then agreed to repair the house and rent it to me at a reasonable price paid in U.S. dollars. Details were agreed upon and a lease signed.

Mitra got a squad of Gurkhas and we went around to the house. There were about 40 or 50 Ba-Lubas squatting in the house. They had their cooking fires set in the middle of a marble floor in the living room. The house was a mess but had great possibilities, if it could be cleaned and fixed up. Mitra and I went in with the Gurkhas. We asked the Ba-Lubas very politely to leave, but they were reluctant to do so. Finally, Mitra lost patience. He ordered the Gurkhas to fix bayonets. The Ba-Lubas got the message. Then Mitra summoned the chief of the clan. He took out his kukri, a deadly curved knife that all Gurkhas carry. A Gurkha is not supposed to take it out without drawing blood. The only way he can do it, if he doesn't draw somebody else's blood, is to nick his own finger and put blood on the blade. Putting the razor sharp blade next to the Ba-Luba's throat the colonel warned him that, "If anything happened to me he would come back with his Gurkhas, and kill his Malubu interlocutor with his entire entourage. Mitra assured him that his death would be neither quick nor painless. "Get out of this house and don't come back. You are personally responsible for my friend's safety while he lives here. Do not allow anything to happen to him." The poor man gave hasty and repeated assurances of my safety.

The house I rented had been badly damaged during the fighting and during the subsequent occupation by the Ba-Lubas. A small guest house, attached to the larger house, was not damaged. I lived there while they repaired the main house. The Ba-Lubas had only moved out of my new house and its grounds, but they remained in all of the surrounding area. To reassure myself, I took a .38 Smith & Wesson pistol from the consulate. Every morning when I left the house to go to work, there would be people lining the fence watching me. As a silly act of bravura, I occasionally fired a couple of shots in the air warning them not to cross the line into my property. "Colonel Mitra," I said, "will be back with the Gurkhas to fix anybody that I do not get." Whether these melodramatic warnings had any effect, I do not know. In any case, no one ever bothered me.

Q: You mentioned that Hoffacker left. What happened to him?

MCNAMARA: Lew was viewed as being pro-Katangan. He'd sent cables to the Department describing alleged U.N. atrocities, and other such emotive happenings. I reckon people in Washington and the Ambassador in Kinshasa thought he was too sympathetic to the Katangan point of view. The fact that he was credited with having saved Senator Dodd, made it difficult for them to just yank him out and damage his career. He was a hero with a spread in Life and Time to prove it. No doubt this made it more difficult for his critics to send him off to a career damaging limbo. Nonetheless, he was yanked out of Katanga and sent to Leopoldville as chief of the political section in the embassy.

Hoffacker's replacement in Elisabethville was a very tough guy named Jock Dean. He was a Central European specialist, with no previous African experience. He arrived after the second bout of fighting.

The original Indian brigade was replaced after the December fighting, by another crack Indian unit. A new U.N. military commander named General Premchon accompanied them. The new

brigade was commanded by Reggie Nirona, who ultimately became the Indian Army chief of staff. The brigade major (Chief of Staff) also became Army chief of staff many years later. His name is Sundargee. The new Indian team were first rate. They had three battalions. One was the 1st of the 5th Gurkhas, called the Royal Gurkhas. This battalion had two winners of the Victoria Cross actually serving in the battalion at that time, two senior warrant officers. It is a rank peculiar to the Indian Army. Subidar and subidar major and so on. Gemadar is the lowest of these ranks. A second battalion was from the Raj Puton Rifles. They had been the most decorated battalion in all of the British Empire forces during World War II. The battalion had been decimated and re-raised three times. The third battalion was from the Madras Regiment. The Madrasi aren't as good soldiers as the Raj Puts or the Gurkhas, but this battalion was a good professional outfit.

Q: They're not part of the soldier-class staff.

MCNAMARA: No, they're not a warrior people. But Nirona, who was the brigade commander, was a Madrasi, and he'd won two military crosses in World War II with the Madrasi, and so I think that had something to do with the Madrasi being included in his brigade. It was a good battalion, but they didn't have the same soldierly qualities that the Gurkhas have and the Rajputs, who were first-class soldiers.

The Indian brigade became the central strike force of the U.N. command. This was the force that was going to do something if anything was going to be done in terms of the Katangans. This was the crack military unit that they really needed to finish the Katangans, if the circumstances, and U.N. politics, allowed. The rest of the force was made up of Irish and Swedes and Ethiopians.

The tenuous situation rocked on inconclusively, with the U.N. sitting in the middle of Elisabethville, for about six months as tension again began to build up.

During this period the Katangans organized popular demonstrations against the U.N. The most notable were demonstrations by women. They taunted and insulted the Indian soldiers. It was an impressive show of discipline as the soldiers tried to maintain dignity without reacting physically to terrible provocation. The Katangans, of course, had the press there waiting to record any U.N. "abuse" of poor defenseless women. Indeed, these Katangan ladies were formidable. Such incidents continued to raise the level of tension. The Indians, of course, were biding their time waiting for the right excuse to squash the Katangans and end the comedy.

Ultimately, in June or July, fighting again broke out. This time, the Indians were ready to bring the thing to a conclusion. The Katangans still held the copper-mining centers of Jadotville and Kolwezi. Only the administrative offices of Union Miniere were in Elisabethville. The real economic prize was in Katangan lands. To end the secession and restore the country's most valuable economic asset to central government control the U.N. had to take control of these towns and their nearby mines and refineries.

When fighting started, I remember going out with Nirona, the Brigadier, to an area where there were mercenaries and some Katangans on a hillside. A battalion of Gurkhas were in the valley below. To get to the Gurkha position a journalist, an Indian armor officer, and I took a captured Jeep down a road, into the area the Gurkhas were in. I didn't know it at the time, but I was told by

the Gurkha company commander later that they thought we were mercenaries, because of our civilian clothes. The Indian officer was wearing black coveralls, as most "tankers" do in the Indian army. In any case, we were not recognized as friendly. An order was given to shoot us. The Gurkhas were on both sides of the road all set to open fire, when the company commander took one last look in his glasses at the Jeep and recognized me. Providentially, he rescinded his fire order. Surely, we were within that much of being killed.

Happily ignorant of my close shave I joined the brigade commander at a high point overlooking the ridge where the mercenaries and Katangans had positioned themselves. We were out on an exposed spur. When the Katangans saw us they fired mortars at us. With this little diversion the brigade commander gave the order to the Gurkhas to charge up the hill at our Katangan antagonists. The Gurkhas decided on a kukri charge. They took their kukris out, laid their rifles down, and went up the hill, screaming. The mercenaries and their Katangan friends saw a mass of madmen coming at them with fierce looking knives. Sensibly, they took off. We watched them as they ran off, got into Jeeps and left in great haste.

The Indians then decided to go all the way to Kolwezi. At the consulate, we encouraged them to do so. Under Jock Dean's leadership we were all agreed, that this thing had to be ended. At U.N. headquarters in Elisabethville and at the American consulate radios were turned off so that the Indian offensive could not be stopped by another weak-kneed cease-fire order coming from New York or Washington.

Q: You're talking about the consul's level.

MCNAMARA: We just decided to turn the radio off. We turned the radio off, and the U.N. turned the radio off. And the Indians went for Jadotville. They got very little resistance, but there were some bridges blown up, and they had to get across some small rivers. The U.S. had lent a couple of our amphibious APCs to get across the rivers. Anyway, the offensive was mounted on Jadotville. I went into Jadotville with the Indians as I was their only trusted guide. I had visited both Jadotville and Kolwezi with a Katangan military guide. I led Brigade Major Sundarji to the old Katangan headquarters. There, we searched for anything of interest that might have been left behind as the Katangans beat a hasty retreat towards Kolwezi. We found nothing.

After Jadotville, the Indians continued on the road to Kolwezi. Predictably, however, they were finally stopped by yet another cease-fire order from New York. Orders had arrived by aircraft from Leopoldville and radio contact was quickly restored.

Ultimately, the U.N. got into Kolwezi as well. Tshombe capitulated and the remnants of the Katangan gendarmerie (army) fled into Angola. The U.N. then was in control of South Katanga, and the Katangan secession was over.

They brought in symbolic units from the national army, as well as a resident minister from the government, named Joseph Ileo, to administer the reintegration of Katanga with the rest of the Congo. A nasty contingent from the Nationale arrived to seek out secessionist, mercenaries and other subversives. I remember one poor Belgian being left tied to a tree for four or five days. His body was covered with cigarette burns. Obviously, he was being tortured. The Surete types

grabbed a couple of Americans who happened to be in Katanga. I don't remember quite why they were there. They were being held in the back yard behind Ileo's house. In the middle of the night, to assure that they were not being mistreated, I snuck into the yard next to a campfire. The secret police agents were startled by my sudden appearance. I had come armed with several bottles of beer. This seemed to take the edge off their suspicions. We finally wound up an amicable group around the camp fire -- the secret police thugs, the American prisoners and the American Vice-Consul. I suppose this was a dangerous thing to do, but it may have saved our citizens some disagreeable moments. The next day they were released without casualty. We got them out of the country as quickly as possible.

With the third bout of fighting over and the U.N. and the central government in control, Katangan secession was ended.

Several months after, the last bout of fighting ended. The prime minister in Kinshasa, a man named Adoula, decided that a symbolic gesture was appropriate. The opening of railway traffic was to be a symbol of reunification. The Katangans had blown up the railway bridge on what was called the "Voie Nationale," a railway connecting Katanga with the rest of the Congo. From Katanga, this railway crosses the Congo, from Katanga to a tributary of the Congo River where transshipment of copper and other lesser cargoes takes place at Port Franqui. River boats then take the copper to Kinshasa, where it is again transshipped onto a railway for the trip to the port of Matadi at the mouth of the Congo.

Adoula had decided that the reopening of the railway would provide a strong political vehicle for his own ambitions. So he issued instructions to the railway people in Katanga, Union Miniere, to open the railway and organize a special train for the ceremonial trip. The consular corps in Elisabethville was invited to come along as a sort of diplomatic claque. Other dignitaries were invited from various parts of the Congo. On the appointed date, Adoula arrived in Elisabethville. At the time, the principal officer, the consul, was gone, and I was the acting principal officer. Thus, I was designated to act as the U.S. government representative on the rail trip.

With bands playing, we boarded the train in Elisabethville. It was a special train that had been brought out to the Congo a few years earlier for a visit by King Baudouin of Belgium. The cars had been refurbished. A fancy restaurant car and a bar car were included. Everything possible was laid on with no expense spared. Food and drink were flown in from Belgium. It was really organized. The president of the railway company himself came along as a superconductor. He was in charge of the train. Nothing was being left to chance. The head of the giant copper company, Union Miniere, also joined us. These were the people who really ran the country's economy.

Adoula declared that, "This is very serious political business, and no wives will be brought along." Some poor journalist showed up with his wife. She got on the train. As we left Elisabethville, she was found and chucked off at the first stop. No women; this was serious business in the Congo. Initially, each time we came across three or four people standing along the rail line, they stopped, and the prime minister got out and made a speech.

As the train went further into the second and third day, women were taken aboard but were hidden from most of the passengers. Most of the Congolese elite, in those days, seemed incapable of abstinence from sex for more than 24 hours.

The relative austere decorum lasted until we arrived in Luluabourg (now Kananga), the principal town in the middle of the Kasai. When we arrived, the town was in fete. A military parade was organized. That evening, a huge reception and dinner were held that went on all night long. My consular colleagues and I got back to the train in the wee hours of the morning. We'd gone to the dinner and the reception, and then we went and had some more drinks with the local U.N. representative, a Chilean whom I had known in Elisabethville. We returned to the train at about four or five in the morning. In the station, it looked as though every prostitute in Luluabourg was being loaded on the train. That was the end of serious political business. From that point on, there were big mamas all over the train. Adoula himself never came out of his private carriage until we arrived in Port Franequi two days later.

Our train would arrive in a station, the band would get out and play. On one occasion, the Belgian Consul General, who was pissed to the ears, decided to review the guard of honor as no Congolese official was interested or capable of bestirring himself. The crowd were chanting "Hooray for Tshombe!" Somehow they thought Tshombe had arrived. When the Belgian went out to review the troops, the crowd began to chant, "Vive le roi!" There appeared to have been a serious breakdown in communications and our Congolese hosts did nothing to correct them.

Anyway, Adoula never stuck his nose outside the train again until we arrived at our destination. I remember being bored. We were on the train for a whole week. The Greek consul, who was with us, was very prissy (he was a pain in the ass, to be absolutely frank). The British vice consul and I were good friends. He was also, at this point, the acting consul for the British. His name was Terrence Grady. We met again later in Gabon where he was the British ambassador and I was the American ambassador. We were sharing a compartment on the train. We also became friendly with a Belgian officer who was an aide-de-camp to a senior Congolese Army colonel.

Finally, we arrived at our destination, Port Francqui, which was the terminus of the railway, and the transshipment point from rail to river barge. The train was to return to Elisabethville. None of us could stomach another week of this lunacy. We decided to detrain and find our way back to Elisabethville after festivities in Port Francqui. We had done our duty. The Union Miniere director informed us that an airplane would be coming to pick him up. He offered to take us with him. With light hearts our little consular band abandoned the train.

To our chagrin, the airplane came, but wasn't big enough to take everyone. Some of our traveling companions were older. I was fairly young, at that time, as was Terrence Grady. We volunteered to stay behind on the promise from the Union Miniere man that an airplane would come back and pick us up. Our brave party of stay behinds consisted of the Belgian Consul General, the British consul, the American consul, and Mr. Ileo, Chef de Cabinet. The latter was a charming, intelligent young man whom we all liked and respected. The four of us volunteered to stay and wait for the next airplane. Little did we know that the promise to send another aircraft would not be honored. Out of sight, out of mind.

We went into town, and were taken to the best local hotel. After a warm greeting from the drunken reception staff, we went to our rooms. I was to share a room with the British consul. Terrence and I also shared a compartment on the train. We were good friends. After a dirty afternoon, we asked for some water for washing. The plumbing was not working. A tipsy maid picked up a bucket and went outside where she turned a tap on the outside of the hotel filling the bucket with dark brown liquid that was only just viscous. This, she proclaimed, was our washing water. Terrence and I distributed it evenly over myself, taking on a darker shade in the process. We then asked for drinking water. The manager smiled a happy, agreeable grin and produced another pitcher of brown liquid. When asked whether it was safe to drink, he offered a bottle of whiskey, made in the Congo, to purify our "water." "That will kill anything," he assured. Made in Kinshasa, Old Granddad or something. Old Grand Uncle, perhaps.

Anyway, that's what we had to brush our teeth with.

No airplane arrived that day so we prepared to stay the night. We had dinner at the hotel, by candlelight. There was no electricity. Trying to be hospitable, our host asked what we would like as an aperitif? Our Belgian colleague, who liked his drink, eagerly requested whiskey. I tried to warn him against it for I was sure that he would be offered the made-in-the-Congo potion of very uncertain quality. "Don't drink that. You'll kill yourself. Drink beer," I pleaded. Congolese beer was still good and safe. The rest of us drank beer, but he insisted on whiskey. With relish he downed half a glass of the Congo's finest. It went down, hit bottom, and then everything in his stomach came up like a fire hose. That ended our alcoholic adventure. A lady arrived with a large cooked fish, that overlapped a platter. Canned peas had been poured on the fish. This was to be dinner; a limited but acceptable menu. As she approached our table, she staggered, lost balance and dropped the fish on the Belgian consul's head. At this point, he was just recovering from his whiskey experience. I still see him with the fish draped across his head and shoulders. A pea rested on the end of his long nose. We plucked the fish off him, dusted it off, and ate it. Clearly, we were in no position to be too concerned with hygienic problems.

After dinner, the local army commander came to take us for a night out. He commanded the local battalion that, a year earlier, had eaten a platoon of Ghanaian troops with their British officers. The Ghanaians were serving with the U.N. forces when they came into conflict with the Congolese. He seemed an agreeable fellow when we met him. We all boarded cars for the drive to a local nightclub. It was the only place in town with electricity. They had their own generator. Later, I learned that it was owned by the colonel and some other local political figures. The club was crowded when we entered. Our host, the colonel, went to a table next to the dance floor, and he drew his sword out. People were sitting around the table with no apparent regard for their safety, he cleared the table with the flat of his sword, bottles and glasses flew every which way. Startled people sitting at the table fell over backwards trying to get away from the vicious swipes of the saber. Very smartly, we had the best table in the house. Terrence and I were still in shock when the colonel graciously offered us seats, still warm from their previous occupants. Sitting next to me he affably inquired, "Do you wish to dance?" Somebody had told him that I liked dancing. I replied in the affirmative thinking it would not be politic to say no. He might even consider my declining as a breach of protocol. Reacting to my mumbled reply, he grabbed a woman from another table, someone's wife, sweetheart or whatever, dragged her to our table and ordered, "Dance with him." Not wishing to incur the colonel's displeasure, I danced the lady to the other side of the crowded

floor whispering that she should make her exit quickly. I found many willing partners and danced the evening away. Sometime early in the morning we were taken back to our hotel traveling at high speed on the dark, unpaved streets. I was very pleased to see our hotel again despite my earlier bizarre experiences.

Q: Did you finally get a plane and get the hell out of that town?

MCNAMARA: Not yet! When we returned from the nightclub, the British consul and I went to our room. We were both tired and welcomed any kind of bed that did not rock and jolt, after our week aboard a train. I was in the bathroom when, suddenly, I heard an awful scream. We couldn't see much, as it was pitch dark. We did have a lantern, but it didn't give much light. The twin beds had white mosquito-netting canopies over them, further obscuring the beds themselves. As I rushed back into the bedroom, I found Terrence thrashing about in his bed, now enmeshed in the mosquito netting. With some difficulty, I extracted him from the bed to find a very frightened lady had been in the bed awaiting our return. Her sister in labor was in the other bed. The good colonel was thinking of us all the time. After calming ourselves, we dismissed the girls with a fistful of francs. In those pre-AIDS days there was plenty of gonorrhea and syphilis around, especially in those little port towns on the Congo. Neither of us was keen on screwing around with the local prostitutes.

The next day, we again went to the airport to await our promised aircraft. We waited and waited and waited. And while we were waiting, we were joined by an interesting gentleman who turned out to be a minister in the provincial government at Port Francqui. Shortly after we became acquainted, he pulled me aside offering a sackful of things that looked like little pieces of glass. He claimed they were diamonds. Intent on making a deal with me, the Minister proposed that I become his sales distributor. "Just send me things like radios and record players and I'll send you packages of diamonds in return. Here is a package as my first consignment." One of our party had a small portable radio. The Minister offered his sack of diamonds for it. I didn't know whether they were genuine diamonds or not. I do know that diamonds are mined near Port Francqui. I declined the Minister's kind offer, as did my colleagues.

Ultimately, an airplane did arrive. It was not sent, however, by the friendly Union Miniere Director. Anyway, we got on the airplane, and returned to Elisabethville.

At about the same time, the American government was searching for ways to assure the continued unity of the Congo. They were looking for instruments to encourage the cohesion of the Congo. At the time, I was still in charge of the consulate when two young gentlemen from Washington arrived. One was Ed Streator, who ultimately became our ambassador at the EEC. The other was Crawford Young, who was working on contract with the State Department but was regularly employed teaching in Wisconsin. Since that time, he had become one of President Mobutu's most severe critics. Shortly after their arrival, the two asked me whether I thought that the national army was a viable instrument that could be used to further national unity?

At first I thought they were joking. Such a proposition was absurd. When I realized they were indeed serious, I told them that the best thing that could be done for the country would be to disarm and disband the national army. It was the source of much of the country's woes and was

irrecoverable. The army had mutinied. It specialized in rape and pillage. It was undisciplined and out of control. In short, the army was the most dangerous element in the society. They were an armed rabble with just enough organization to make them dangerous. I said, "Get rid of them and form an entirely new army. Once an army has mutinied like this and gone through such experiences, there's no recouping them. Just get rid of them and start over again, forming a rural constabulary with separate urban police forces for the cities. That's what the Congo really needs. There are no credible external threats. In any case, the present army would be useless against any serious military force." My two apprentice sorcerers didn't agree with that assessment.

I made the assessment on the basis of my acquaintanceship with the Congolese that I had seen and the things that had occurred. Their plan, I felt, could only lead to disaster. Unfortunately, history has proven my warning to have been prophetic. Actually, it took no great genius to make them -- only a little experience in the Congo and some common sense. Sadly, our sorcerer's were listened to in Washington. Their recommendation led to our backing of Mobutu and thirty years of suffering and waste in the Congo.

The Mobutu problem still hasn't gone away. The army that preys on its citizens is still there, and it remains as big a problem as it was in 1963. We might have avoided that problem if we had disbanded the army. Perhaps a new army would have become just as corrupt and undisciplined. I don't know for sure. But the price of not disbanding the old army is now clear for all to see.

Q: But, anyway, this was part of our effort. What else happened while you were there?

MCNAMARA: Well, let me see if I can think of any other interesting tidbits.

Q: After all these attacks and all that, did you get much support from the embassy?

MCNAMARA: The embassy in Kinshasa?

Q: Yes.

MCNAMARA: Well, the air attaché flew in C rations for us and things of that sort. We got support in a material sense. And every now and then they'd send up people to look into what we were doing. And, of course, whenever there was fighting, the Army attaché would rush up and try to monitor what was going on. The Army attaché was certainly there during the last bout of fighting.

Q: You left there when?

MCNAMARA: I left Elisabethville in October, 1963. I am reasonably certain of the timing because I arrived in Washington just before President Kennedy's death.

Q: Which was November.

MCNAMARA: When I came back, I didn't realize that I was psychologically rocky as I must have been. I certainly was suffering battle fatigue after two years in that dangerous, unpredictable place. I'd gone through two years of drunks sticking loaded guns in my face. An inadvertent stumble

could have blown my head off. Living in a hostile city, crossing opposing lines during combat, evacuating people, and nearly being killed by my own friends had all taken toll.

HOWARD IMBREY
CIA
Leopoldville (1959-1963)

CIA
New York City (1960-1963)

Mr. Imbrey was born in New Jersey in 1921. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and served in the Pacific Theater in WWII. He entered the CIA in 1948. He served in India, Sri Lanka, Addis Ababa, the Congo and Italy. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

IMBREY: '58 to '63, but in '60 the whole thing changed because they sent me out. I guess it was in April and May of 1960 I was sent to Leopoldville to help out with the station, developing sources for the oncoming independence of the Congo and I did all sorts of jobs along with the chief of station and a couple of other guys. One of my people was Al Canharogey, who was to play a larger part with the Baluba element, and Cyrille Adoula who became the prime minister, later and a number of other people, passing money most of the time.

Q: I would think it would be very hard to sort of identify because the Belgians really hadn't done much to develop a political class, had they?

IMBREY: They didn't, but the White Fathers had graduated at least maybe 480 more licentiates.

Q: High school graduates?

IMBREY: No, better than that. That's why I was hesitating. There were sharp young men and we were dealing with as many of those as we could. A year later, you may recall a sequence of events that happened in the Congo. After Lumumba was killed, the government became a government of commissars. There were twelve commissars who were under the aegis of a chief commissar, who was Adoula, and all the commissars were young men who had some university experience or at least some experience under the White Fathers. So, they were a pretty classy set. They could write, they could do a lot of things. So, we're dealing with all of these people and passing out a lot of pittances. It wasn't a lot of money. We were passing out money to enable them to form their political cadres and get around the country and talk. Now getting around the country in those days was not terribly difficult because the Belgians had made an infrastructure that was unbelievable between the river traffic and the road traffic of at least 50,000 miles of paved roads.

Q: You were doing from '59 to?

IMBREY: From '59 to '60, and then shortly after independence I went home.

Q: Came back to New York?

IMBREY: Came back to New York. There was a fight between President Kasavubu and Lumumba. Lumumba was prime minister, Kasavubu the president. Each one could seek a delegation at the United Nations, but there could only be one delegation; they both had the right to seek it. Now, we figured that if Kasavubu seated his delegation at the United Nations it would be a pro-American one and if Lumumba seated his, God knows what it would be. So, Ambassador Timberlake, who is very good friend of mine, Clare Timberlake had been the best man at my wedding in Bombay and we were old, old friends. He knew that I had this public relations office and he asked if I would take on the job of taking on Kasavubu, which I would get paid for by my organization and the expenses would be met. So, I agreed to do that and they sent over Kasavubu and with a little bit of engineering we got Kasavubu into the United Nations and seated his delegation even though Lumumba was there trying to make a big pitch for his organization.

Q: How do you work this sort of thing?

IMBREY: Well, we knew the people in the delegations and we had on our side Morocco and a number of heavy hitters, France, England. It just was a matter of explanation getting their support for the Congo delegation under Kasavubu and we heralded non-communist delegations and at any rate we got him in. Then Kasavubu went home. I was named public relations counselor through the government of the Congo. A very nice title you see. So, they began calling on me, they said, "Well, we're having trouble in Zambia, why don't you go there and tell them what it's all about. We're having trouble in West Africa." Well, I went to every country in Africa, explaining what the Congo was up to and that took at least two or three years out of my life. I was all over the place.

Q: Oh, boy. Well, this was a particularly difficult period because Lumumba was killed; you had the break away with Katanga. Were you there during the Simbas?

IMBREY: In and out.

Q: It was really chaotic, wasn't it?

IMBREY: Oh, it was terrible. I learned one thing. Don't wear a wristwatch. Anytime a soldier saw you with a wristwatch, he would say, "Is that your wristwatch?" and you'd better say, "No, I think it's yours." An officer got hit over the head.

Q: How did you deal with these people? Was it completely denial?

IMBREY: No, no, it wasn't at all because they had their own interests at heart and they had so much money in that place at the time. Not only the Belgians, the various going concerns. When you have the huge mining industry that is there, money is tumbling in every direction and so all these people were playing for the big money. Now the Congo had diamonds, copper, uranium, even the river traffic that carries the boats, everything produced money.

So, also the infrastructure the Belgians had devised. I can only explain it this way. They had to have a work force for Katanga to exploit the mines there. This was back around the 1920s and they found that there was only one group they could depend on to pick up something off the ground and not drop it because the Africans had very little prehensile training as children. They don't have toys, but there was one group, the Baluba. The Balubas are in the mid-section of the country. They imported all of the Baluba and made them the Balubas of the Katanga. That started a number of problems, but they also built houses for all of these people, lovely beautiful houses with water every other house. The women could go to the spigot and fill a bucket. Then they needed coal for the mines; they built the colliery, which produced coal. They need pharmaceuticals; they built their own pharmaceuticals. All of these are money producers. So, they weren't looking for us for their small change, they were looking for the big stuff, the president of a colliery.

Q: Were you sort of working on the same side with the Belgians or did they have their own agenda?

IMBREY: We certainly knew a number of the Belgians and cooperated with them although our programs were different.

Q: Did you get involved at all with the Lumumba business?

IMBREY: No, the only thing I can tell you is they sent out this shellfish compound to chief of station Larry Devlin and he sent it back with an angry note saying, "Don't you know the Belgians are going to kill him, what do you want us to do?" We kept totally out of that one. Then Lumumba really put himself in terrible trouble when he gave a rise of one rank to everybody in the army and then found he couldn't pay the new prices. Then the army rebelled; they put him in an airplane, took him south and they pulled him out of the airplane on the driveway, brought him up to the chief of the Lunda tribe and in Munongo's office and I guess they shot him there or it may not have been there. In Munongo's office they began asking him a couple of questions. Well, this was according to his answers. Munongo took a bayonet and put it right into Lumumba's chest and Captain Gatt, a Belgian, was right there and he fired a bullet in the back of Lumumba's head to put him out of his misery and that was how it happened, but no Americans were involved.

Q: How about Mobutu? Was he a figure while you were there?

IMBREY: No. That was about '62 or '63. I was in and out of the Congo in various countries, but I wasn't involved with the Embassy at all or with our station.

Q: Were you again an attaché or you were just a public relations person?

IMBREY: Public relations handler with an office in New York and tired feet in Africa.

Q: Were you finding other surrounding African countries sort of looking upon the dismemberment of the Congo or not, hoping to get something from it?

IMBREY: No, they didn't have a care for the Congo; they had their own troubles. Let's see I was in Guinea, Mali, and Ivory Coast, well all of them in French West Africa.

Q: How about the Congo Brazzaville, was that sort of out of bounds?

IMBREY: No, they were having their own revolution there and not terribly much to be done. You have to understand the situation. They had people up in Fort Rousset which is in the middle of the country where different tribes are the ones along the Congo River and the Fort Rousset people eventually did take over.

Q: Was the Embassy going in one direction and the station going in another?

IMBREY: Oh, no, the station and the Embassy were very close. In Brazzaville we didn't have a representative. Al Lukens was the chief there and he reported I guess.

Q: What about the Tshombe and the Katanga situation. What were our concerns?

IMBREY: Our concerns were that the country should not be divided into two different countries, which was what Tshombe really wanted. He wanted separatism for Katanga and we regarded that as a misery for the entire country, for they were so dependent on the mining revenues from Katanga, and so the fight really was against separation. We supported the central government. The central government was then run by Adoula and was very adamant against Tshombe. Lumumba had already disappeared from the scene and then Kasavubu was never a terribly important character, just wishy, washy. A chap we followed was named Josef Laho [as heard] who I think was demented. It was very hard for us to find any reliable people. Our principal helpmates were Justin Bomboko with the minister of foreign affairs and the head of the service. Those two really fought to keep the country together.

THOMPSON R. BUCHANAN
Communist Economic Affairs
Washington, DC (1960-1962)

Director, Central African Affairs, Africa Bureau
Washington, DC (1975-1977)

Thompson R. Buchanan was born in California and moved shortly thereafter to Europe. He received his elementary education in France, Switzerland, and England. His high school education took place at Phillips Exeter and then attended Yale. When World War II began, he was called into the Navy in the Navy V-12 Program for Officer's Training. Mr. Buchanan received a B.A. in international affairs from Yale University and an M.A. from Columbia. He has served abroad in Germany, France, Russia, Burundi, Gabon and Norway. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 15, 1996.

BUCHANAN: I think Phil and I were proudest of our work on the Congo. There we proposed that the UN be used as a type of fire wall to prevent the Russians from moving in with the help of the radical nationalist, Patrice Lumumba.

Q: I'm getting confused with my dates. The Congo became independent in...?

BUCHANAN: It was granted independence in 1960, but already in 1959 the danger signs were clear. The Belgians had panicked and hastened to leave. They had done little to prepare a potentially very wealthy country, two thirds the size of the United States, for independence. There were barely 26 "university graduates" in the whole country. It was obviously a tempting target for Moscow. Through intelligence reports, we began to hear of meetings between the Soviet ideologue, Suslov, and members of the Belgian Communist Party. The potential for serious East-West confrontation was obvious. Secretary Rusk liked our idea, but asked Habib, "Phil, how much is this going to cost." Now if Rusk had asked me, I would have done a bureaucratic waffle, asking for time to cost it out. Phil gave me a good lesson in bureaucratic savoir faire. As a smart Lebanese from Brooklyn, he understood that the secretary simply needed some figure to be able to talk to Congress, so he said with little hesitation (as he described it to me in any case): "Well, I would guess around \$200 million."

Q: You were doing this from when to when?

BUCHANAN: From 1960-62.

Q: Well, this, of course, was a time when all hell was breaking loose in Africa and it was also the hey day of interest in Africa.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the Congo. Did you deal with the Congo?

BUCHANAN: Well, we dealt with the Congo at that time only in the sense of trying to block a Soviet power play: Our responsibility was not day-to-day policy but action programs designed to block Soviet moves in a given country. In that sense we were very active in the Congo. We kept heckling the African bureau to set up UN and bilateral programs to provide aid in a variety of fields...in the security field, in the agricultural field, all the logical programs that would interest an undeveloped country that had nothing.

Q: Were we getting any intelligence that you were seeing, or analysis from our embassy in Moscow about what Soviet intentions were?

BUCHANAN: Not a great deal. We learned more from CIA intelligence reports describing, for example, the contacts between the Soviets and the Belgian Communists than anything received from Moscow. All the embassy could report was what *Pravda* or *Izvestia* wrote about Africa, or Khrushchev said in his speeches, all making it very clear, however, that Africa was seen as a vulnerable target of opportunity. But, in terms of tactics, what the Soviets planned to do, we depended more on intelligence reports.

Q: Did you get any feel that our posts in Africa were using the "communist menace" as a way in getting what any post would want as far as more assistance for the country to which they were assigned?

BUCHANAN: Oh, yes. Certainly. Everybody exploited the Communist threat to get action out of the Washington bureaucracy. With some it was just a cynical "squeaky wheel" tactic, but with many it reflected genuine concern that we were in a race for influence in Africa with an aggressive opponent. Over the years people became more cynical because it became clear that the Africans were becoming very effective at playing the great powers off against each, telling them what they wanted to hear. An increasing number of officials in both Washington and Moscow began arguing that we should not give in to this sort of black mail.

Q: Was there anything else about Angola that you wanted to add?

BUCHANAN: I am not sure I mentioned Stockwell. Ed Mulcahy was my boss, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary for African affairs, and he and I would go over to be briefed by CIA in the Angola Task Force on what was happening. They were trying to persuade us that we could still win the war, or at least block what was perceived generally to be a Soviet-inspired Cuban takeover of Angola. We normally were fed a bill of goods that had not too much relation to reality. We did not know exactly what sort of material was still "in the pipeline" from before the cutoff of our aid, at least that was the claim. We were briefed by a very energetic, earnest young man, Stockwell, who was born in Zaire of missionary parents. He was sent into the bush to talk to Savimbi, provide military equipment to UNITA and the FNLA, and come back and tell us what was happening. He, of course, gave us the CIA version of events, but underneath it all he was disgusted by what he considered American exploitation of Africans for selfish national motives. He later resigned from the CIA and wrote an expose of our Angola policy.

I was also disgusted, not so much by our exploitation of the Africans, which I suppose as a somewhat old cynical FSO didn't surprise me, but by what I considered the foolishness of our policies. I felt that Nat Davis had been absolutely right in arguing against our involvement in what was essentially a tribal war in Angola, under its veneer of ideological labels. Without CIA's heavy involvement, there would have been no pretext for Moscow or Havana to send a large expeditionary force to Angola. We had essentially allowed ourselves to be manipulated by African leaders, on ideological grounds, to support their aspirations for tribal power. Henry was, of course, convinced that any failure to support those who claimed to be anti-Communist would signal weakness to our enemies, and a shift in the global power balance, and result in an unraveling of our alliance systems.

Viewed in hindsight, the massive Cuban intervention had the positive effect of forcing America to look more seriously at the problems of Southern Africa, and in particular of Rhodesia. We began playing a more active and creative role in helping bring about a peaceful transition to independence in both Rhodesia and Namibia. In that sense, an essentially foolish policy had what the Communists would call "objective" virtues. In the final analysis, it accelerated the process of change within South Africa itself, which was very far from Henry's initial intention.

Q: You mentioned the CIA. We are talking about 1976. When you went over for CIA

briefings and other times to get CIA documents, what was your attitude for what you were getting and the other people in the African bureau, about what the CIA was giving you at that time?

BUCHANAN: After the meeting with CIA, Ed Mulcahy and I would go back and wonder what really had taken place, what really had been sent in. Ostensibly we had a congressional cut off, Congress had said no more aid shall go to this conflict. We were pretty convinced that we were clandestinely still supplying Savimbi, in effect prolonging the civil war in Angola. As I said before, we had no way of knowing what precisely remained in the pipeline before the cutoff in aid, and what was provided in direct contravention of the will of Congress. Even if we had not withdrawn our Consul in Luanda, Tom Killoran, who was back in Washington helping me on the desk, we would not have been in a position to monitor what was being delivered to UNITA in the Ovimbundu territory far away from Luanda.

Q: From the CIA and from whatever sources you had, were you getting any feel about what was in it for the Cubans and also how the Cubans were seeing this...the troops, the morale, etc. ?

BUCHANAN: There are, of course, different theories. What I do know is that Cuba sent in a small group of advisors in 1975 to provide support and training, sort of like our sending in the Green berets early on in Vietnam. Fidel certainly did see the civil war in Angola as a liberation struggle, and when the South Africans threatened to drive all the way to Luanda, I suspect that Fidel put pressure on Moscow to provide the airlift for a Cuban relief force. There were certainly reports of debate within the Soviet Politburo over the question of whether or not to risk confrontation with the US in Angola. The action of Congress in banning US military aid to Angola removed any hesitation that Moscow might have had. The rest is history.

So far as the Cuban presence in Angola is concerned, it reportedly aroused increased resentment over time. The Cubans were accused of being arrogant, and of interfering in Angolan internal affairs. The Cubans, with or without Soviet approval, reportedly intervened militarily to crush an attempted putsch within the MPLA by a dissident nationalist faction. There were also numerous reports of friction between the MPLA leader and poet Angostino Neto, and the Soviets. When Neto died on the operating table in Russia -- I suspect from medical incompetence -- it was widely believed in Angola that the Soviets killed him. The Cuban troops, for their part, were unhappy at being kept so long in Angola. And again, there were rumors that Castro was concerned to bring them back to Cuba, that they might prove to be a dangerous source of dissatisfaction.

To make this complicated story even more bizarre, there was the anomaly that the pro-Communist MPLA was defending American oil operations in its enclave of Cabinda against attacks by America's ally, Zaire, which wanted to take over Cabinda itself. As you can imagine, Congress and Henry Kissinger were very unhappy with American oil companies that were helping finance what they regarded as a Communist regime.

Q: Well, you mentioned that you were involved in a delegation. Could you explain what that was?

BUCHANAN: Well, partly as a result of the Angolan civil war, some para-military groups from the Katangan tribal area of the Shaba in Zaire fled to Angola to get away from Mobutu. Since

Mobutu had supported the FNLA insurgency in Angola involving the Kango tribe, the MPLA saw an opportunity to strike back by retraining and arming these Katanga refugees. You will recall that there were two invasions of the Shaba, in 1977 and 1978, spearheaded by the Katangans. The Zairian army behaved very poorly and had to be rescued by French paratroopers. So, we faced the eternal problem in Zaire of what to do to help Zaire become a viable nation-state, capable of defending itself. While this country, two-thirds the size of the United States, remains potentially very wealthy, it is continuously, and again right now as we speak, being riven by tribal conflict, and sickened at the top by the pervasive corruption of the Mobutu regime.

In response to the first Shaba invasion, it was decided (I don't remember if it was initially my idea or someone else's) that we should try to get the Belgians and French to cooperate in providing military training to the Zairian forces. As a result, I led a very small delegation to Brussels, where the Belgians were very cautious about getting deeply involved once again in their former colony. The French seemed more receptive to my arguments, and, as I recall, both the Belgians and the French ended up providing some military training. Some Zairian units became more professional, but the military, like the government itself, remains basically corrupt and incompetent.

Q: The Shaba business, as I recall, was connected to attempts at various times to get Katanga out of this. And in many ways the Belgians were supportive in getting them out because this is where their Union Miniere was involved and at least they would have control over this rather than this amorphous Congo.

BUCHANAN: Well, there were certainly some Belgians, and local Shaban politicians who saw some economic and political advantage in an independent Katanga. On the other hand, the invasion of the Shaba by radical Katangan "gendarmes" also threatened their interests. When the issue of an independent Katanga was first posed in the early days of independence, we determined that it should be Western policy to keep Zaire an integral country, and not allow a process of disintegration to gain momentum. The "liberation" of Eastern Zaire at the present time by a motley army of Tutsi-led rebels confronts both Kinshasa and the West with this recurring dilemma.

Q. Weren't we faced with a very similar problem in Biafra?

BUCHANAN: That is right. No one knows better than the Africans themselves the danger of allowing any of these artificially constructed African states to fracture into their separate tribal groups. Even though they have inherited all these arbitrary colonial boundaries that often bear little relationship to tribal divisions or geography, "you shall not touch African borders" has been enshrined as one of the sacred principles of the Organization for African Unity, the OAU. So, in a sense, we are on the side of the angels and motherhood on this issue. But, it is not an easy policy to implement in any large African country, where the central government has been unwilling or unable to respond to the needs of its different tribal peoples.

Q: I have just been interviewing someone dealing with the Biafran thing. Did you in Angola have the problem of true believers and, you might say, the one side or other of the Angolan conflict in Congress or outside who were basically opposed to what we were doing? Often there are staffers who get involved.

BUCHANAN: Oh, very much so. In fact, to deal with the problem Bill Schaufele, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, invited staffers down from the Hill on several occasions, after work, just to sit around, have a drink and a bull session about what we were trying to do in both Angola and Zaire, and why we were trying to do it, and what were the options. You did have very strong people with very strong views on the Hill. Many of them, of course, opposed our Angolan policy and almost all of them were opposed to our Zairian policy. Mobutu was a villain personified.

Q: When you would talk to the staffers... I mean as we are speaking now in early 1997, Mobutu is still there.

BUCHANAN: I always tell people who start talking about Hussein in Iraq, or Yeltsin in Russia, or someone in a highly unstable "developing" country, "Don't jump to conclusions that they are going to topple easily. Corruption, fear, power, security forces, apathy, all provide for longevity. Also, you have to ask yourself, if they go, who is going to take their place? Is it institutionally likely that you will get a better government?"

Q: Well, this is the question. When you were looking at the Mobutu business and the horrible corruption in the Congo and what it was causing at that time and it has just gotten worse, could you come up with any "what if" answers for the staffers or in your own internal meetings?

BUCHANAN: Well, we had moments of hope. For example, the former Foreign Minister, Karl-I-Bond, had a reputation for integrity. We were all quite impressed by him, by his excellent English and his ability to lobby the Congress. The problem was that he lacked the power and probably the killer instinct of Mobutu, who also was concerned to rein in anyone whom he considered a potential threat. One moment Karl-I-Bond would be a minister, and the next we would hear that he was in jail, condemned to death. Sentence commuted, he would pop back up again in an official position. Mobutu is a master of "divide and conquer," and in a tribal society this is not too difficult. We were all tempted at times to try and play the game that we have played elsewhere: saying to ourselves, "Well, obviously our man is a crook (or an ideological enemy, or incompetent) and we should find someone else to take his place." But we all knew where this policy led us in the past. CIA placed "our man" in power in Guatemala, we got rid of the nationalist Mossadegh in Iran, with disastrous long-term results in both cases. In the eyes of most Africans, CIA is also responsible for the murder of Lumumba in the early days of the Congo. The image, carefully nurtured by Communist propaganda, of the CIA as the destabilizer of revolutionary, nationalist regimes, remains an albatross around our necks in Africa and elsewhere.

Q: And, Vietnam, I suppose, was very much hanging over us. Was this part of our thinking process?

BUCHANAN: The thinking process kept coming back to "yes, he is a bastard, but he is our bastard" and we should try and reform him. An amusing conversation with Pat Derian, who was in charge of human rights under President Carter, illustrated the dilemma of reform. I had to brief Derian, who was going out to Zaire. She was convinced that Zaire was an area of major genital mutilation of women, and for this reason we ought to cut off all aid. My argument to her, and it was an argument I made also to a lot of people on the Hill, is that the things we are complaining about are the result of underdevelopment, the result of lack of institutional safeguards. By cutting off aid,

cutting off the programs that are designed to create institutional safeguards, you may be satisfying your conscience but you certainly are not bringing the day closer when there will be institutional safeguards to prevent these things that we are rightly condemning. This remains a general problem in American foreign policy: we like to get on our puritanical high horse and preach. But as a practical measure, it takes years to change societies and we generally don't have the patience to wait. If nothing happens in a three or four-year program, then we say it obviously is not working and should be cut off. From a Foreign Service viewpoint, of course, this is naive and shortsighted.

Q: I just want to quickly go back to this delegation that you led. Did you find that the French and the Belgians were looking upon you as sort of newcomers to this whole area?

BUCHANAN: Well, of course, it was on a specific issue of military aid and doing something in the wake of Shaba, so the broader questions of attitudes of colonial regimes, etc. didn't come to the fore particularly. I had some advantage since I had served some years in Francophone Africa, in both Belgian and French areas. And, because of my childhood background, I spoke at that time almost bilingual French. So that helped. But there was always a little bit of the attitude, "we have been through this before;" and a certain paternalism, but that is the general European paternalism toward those wealthy but somewhat naive people from across the ocean.

Q: Did you get any feel for the African expertise credentials of the people you were dealing with, the Belgians and the French?

BUCHANAN: The heads of both delegations certainly had them. I don't remember in detail. They both had served in Africa, some of the military people anyway. The French, of course, maintain a presence in a number of African states, so they have through that both experience and a continuing military input of some consequence. I will turn it around the other way, I didn't at any point feel "Gosh, I am talking to European idiots who don't know what Africa is all about." It had all come down to just a few practical questions -- How much money? How many guns? How are we going to transport them? Who is going to pay for the transportation? This is a Belgian airbase, will it be under French or under Belgian control? Those sorts of practical questions.

Q: What was your impression of the reporting and the presence of our embassy in Zaire?

BUCHANAN: Impressive, although we didn't always agree with it. You had Lannon Walker as DCM there for quite a while. There was always the question of how responsive you should be to a Mobutu request and how much muscle you should apply or no. There was the usual tendency for the embassy to be more protective, with a lot of good arguments (that they think are good anyway), and for the desk under pressure from Congress to say, "Well, we need to apply a little more muscle." The reporting was pretty good. It was a very activist embassy. Walter Cutler was ambassador. So, you had two high power people, Walter Cutler and Lannon Walker. When I went out and met with Mobutu, he obviously had great respect for them. Of course, behind the scenes, as you know, a lot of what took place in Zaire was funded by CIA. Larry Devlin was sort of the second ambassador there for years. I think I mentioned before that this particular inheritance, the vision of the CIA's wealthy, manipulative hand operating in all of these African states was a major handicap to our policy. Even if there was no CIA presence, as I mentioned in Gabon, high officials were convinced that it was taking place. So, we remained an easy target for communist

propaganda. The CIA doubtless did some good things, but in Africa at least, I suspect that we might have had an easier time with a less activist policy.

ROBINSON MCILVAINE
Consul General
Leopoldville (1960-1961)

Ambassador Robinson McIlvaine entered the State Department in the early 1950s. Before his career in the Foreign Service, he graduated from Harvard, served in the Navy and worked in both journalism and advertising. His overseas posts included Lisbon, Dahomey, Guinea, and Kenya. Ambassador McIlvaine was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 1988.

MCILVAINE: I said, "Well, I want a post in Africa." Because Africa was opening up and I thought that was going to be the most interesting part of the world for a while, and I have proved to be right.

So I went to the senior seminar, and during the course of that, he, Loy Henderson, called me up and said, "How about going as Consul General to Leopoldville and turn it into an embassy?"

So I said, "Fine." And so that, in effect, is what happened six months later.

Q: *So we're talking about what years?*

MCILVAINE: That was '59-'60.

Q: *You were in the senior seminar.*

MCILVAINE: I started in mid-September.

Q: *So you were finished in June of 1960. You were going as Consul General. Could you explain what the embassy situation was then?*

MCILVAINE: The Congo, as it was called then, belonged to Belgium. It was not an independent country. Therefore, we did not have an embassy; we had a consulate. The top officer there had, for some time, been a Consul General. However, once independence came, this entity was transferred into an embassy, so I went from being Consul General to Chargé d'affaires, until we got an ambassador, who was Clare Timberlake. This all happened practically simultaneously.

Q: *You arrived there at a very turbulent time in the Congo. Did you have any instructions or any idea of what our policy was and what we wanted when you were sent out there?*

MCILVAINE: Only in the vaguest terms. I don't think anybody in the U.S. Government had much idea about this part of the world. Those who had any idea had it primarily from the point of view of those who had served in the few posts that there were in Africa -- all of them were consulates --

from the point of view of a colony. There was almost nobody who had any idea what was going to happen to these countries once they were independent. Of course, the Congo was the classic example of the horrors that people feared actually happening. The Congo was chaotic for four or five -- six years, I guess. Fortunately, it did not turn out to be the norm for all of Africa, as a lot of people feared, but it was bad enough.

Q: Did you get any sort of good knowledge, then, from the State Department before you went out? Were they able to tell you what the situation was and where they thought it was going?

MCILVAINE: I don't recall anything very solid from that point of view. There were briefings in the bureau and I spent a couple of days in Brussels getting their view of things.

Q: When you arrived there, what sort of a staff did we have in Leopoldville at the time?

MCILVAINE: We had a political officer, who was very good. His name was Jerry Lavalle. He spoke impeccable French; The language there was French. We had a junior political officer who was the best I ever ran into in the Foreign Service; his name was Frank Carlucci. He's now Secretary of Defense. [Laughter] Indeed, I wrote in his efficiency report in the section where you're supposed to say if the young officer is ever going to make ambassador, I said, "Not only will he do it before most of his class, but if there's ever a time a career Foreign Service officer could be a cabinet member, Carlucci will be the boy." I'm very proud of that prognostication. We had a PAO, a public affairs officer, and usual administrative setup. It was a middle-sized embassy. We had some military attachés, and the beginnings of an AID mission.

Q: Were they plugged in or connected with the emerging Congolese government?

MCILVAINE: Yes, very much so. The group that were there when I arrived had spent the entire preceding year plugging into the new politicians. Before that, it was very unhealthy to do so, because the Belgians didn't like it and they would generally PNG any...

Q: That's make you a persona non grata.

MCILVAINE: In other words, throw them out, anybody who looked as though they were fooling around with "insurgents." [Laughter] But by the time the Belgians had more or less made up their mind to give the Congo independence, they relaxed on that, although every now and then there would be cases of a hard-nosed old colonial type getting very upset about what the Americans were doing, such as talking to people who later became president of the country.

Q: What was the legal situation in the Congo when you arrived in June?

MCILVAINE: Independence was June 30th. I arrived the week before, say, the 25th. Then they had the big ceremony, and the King of the Belgians came for that, and he was insulted. I think we got through to the Fourth of July -- it was the sixth when the whole place fell apart. The Force Publique Army had been trained by the Belgians, totally fell apart, the white officers fled, and the troops more or less went amuck. That was really the cause of most of the problems for the next long time.

It was shortly following that, when nothing could be done, that an appeal was made to the United Nations, and United Nations troops were sent in from something like 19 or 20 different countries, many of them other African countries and Third World countries. The only troops that were furnished from the Western world were the Irish, Canadians, as I recall, and the rest were Ghanaians, Nigerians, Moroccans, Indians, Pakistanis, Malaysian, on and on. I think there were about 19 or 20 different nations supplying troops. It was a remarkable experience because it worked. It somehow or other stopped the chaos. It didn't work as well as a lot of people hoped, but everything is relative in Africa, and I consider that to be one of the great international efforts in modern times. It was a success.

Q: By that time, you were the DCM, and the ambassador was Clare Timberlake. How did you work with him?

MCILVAINE: In the same way I'd worked with others -- very closely. I was then a bachelor, so I was around, in and out of his house a great deal. Mind you, I didn't even get to move into my house until a couple of weeks after arrival because everything was so chaotic. I was living in a commo clerk's apartment in the chancery.

Q: That's a communications clerk.

MCILVAINE: Yes, his apartment in the chancery, in the office, that is.

Q: Was the staff in the embassy under any threat at that time?

MCILVAINE: No, not per se, but everything was so wild and unpredictable, you know, you never knew when you were going to be stopped by somebody with a machine gun, and accused of being a "sale flamand", a dirty Belgian. It took a little while to explain that you weren't. I had many experiences during the year that I was there of that nature. In fact, I was in jail several times in Stanleyville. But none of it was directed at me personally or at Americans. Belgians were the enemy.

Q: Was there really any understanding at that point by those in leadership of the Congo of what the United States was?

MCILVAINE: Minimal.

Q: What were we trying to do there? I'm speaking of our embassy.

MCILVAINE: We were trying to help create an atmosphere of stability under which they could get on with development and governing themselves. As it turned out, the first thing that had to be done was to get this force publique under control and the United Nations did that. Of course, the important thing about this whole effort was that it was not us or the Belgians doing it alone, which has all sorts of connotations of imperialism. This was the United Nations, and the people actually confronting the Congolese, moving them around and calming them down were other Third World

people, and many of them other Africans, so that it was much more acceptable, in my opinion, than if it had been done entirely by the U.S. or entirely by the Belgians or any other one nation.

Q: Were you, as part of your job, monitoring the efforts of the various United Nations groups to see how they were doing it and to be concerned about maybe they were trying to establish a larger foothold in the area than we would like?

MCILVAINE: Oh, yes. We tried to follow everything that was going on. It wasn't easy, because for that first year after independence, very little got accomplished other than just trying to calm things down and get things going. AID programs were impossible for another year or so, I would imagine. I left after a year, but the United Nations' main job was just keeping a lid on things in an effort to allow some of the politicians to acquire some kind of a following and get some sort of a national spirit going.

You see, the Congo had been run by the Belgians for umpty-ump years. It was, like most places, in Africa, not a nation at all; it was a conglomeration of tribes, many of whom hated each other and had always fought each other. So you know, once they were finished fighting with the Belgians, they took to fighting with each other, and it was the United Nations' job to keep a lid on all that, while a political system developed.

Regimes changed remarkably easily, it seemed to me. When Mobutu first took over, he simply got up on a chair in a restaurant in downtown Leopoldville and announced that he'd taken over. That was that, and nobody contested it. From then on he was in charge. Then he allowed certain politicians to take over. There was Adoula, who was a very fine man, but it was an awfully big job, and no one guy could do it. In the end, two or three years later, Mobutu deposed everybody else and took over again himself, and has been running it ever since to this day. No matter what you may think about him, he certainly has provided "stability" for the Congo, now called Zaire.

Q: How did we look upon some of these leaders? Lumumba was there. Well, he was killed in February of 1961. I'm speaking about the embassy when you were reporting. Was he considered the threat that seemed to be reflected here in the United States in the press?

MCILVAINE: He certainly was a pain in the neck from almost all points of view. He was very volatile and didn't have great experience except as a labor leader. He'd been a postal clerk, about his only job, which is not much in the way of executive training. And he was very definitely aligned with leftish movements in Africa. What that really meant in the long run, I'm not at all sure. But he certainly didn't add much to the stability the short time he was in charge, and that was why he was thrown out by Mobutu, who had been his aide de camp and secretary general of his party. Mobutu just stood up on a table in a restaurant, and that was the end of Lumumba. Then there was a lot of back and forth. As you may recall, he was sent by Kasavubu and company to Elisabethville, where Tshombe was, and that's the last he was heard of. Presumably, the Tshombe types did him in.

Q: Tshombe was in Elisabethville?

MCILVAINE: Yes. At the time of independence, the major political leaders were Tshombe (he was a regional leader in the Elisabethville area; that's near Zambia, the copper area.) Kasavubu, who was from a tribe near the coast, and Lumumba, those three were the big ones, but there were lesser ones around. Kasavubu was president, Lumumba was prime minister, and Tshombe was just a regional governor. But they all changed chairs as time went on. Tshombe later became prime minister for a while, Kasavubu was thrown out as president, until you came to the final phase of Mobutu, which is the phase we're still in. But, I think it must be over 20 years that he's been running the place.

Q: What sort of contact would we have with these leaders insofar as the embassy was concerned?

MCILVAINE: We had pretty good contact. Jerry Lavalle, who was there before I got there, knew them all very well. I got to know them quite well. It's just that things were moving so fast, you never knew who was on first and who was on second and who was up or down, and it didn't seem to matter too much.

Q: At the time, the Soviet bloc included China, I believe. What was our concern with these people?

MCILVAINE: It was thought -- probably correctly -- that they wished to try to get in on this very rich -- you must bear in mind that the Congo, (Zaire), has some of the greatest mineral wealth of Africa. In fact, most of it. Obviously, the Soviets wanted to have a hand in that, and they, I think, chose Lumumba as their instrument. Indeed, many of the things he did favored their influence. Now, of course, that meant that anybody, who tribally and otherwise was opposed to Lumumba, automatically went to the other side, and therefore favored the West.

In so many of these cases in Africa, you know, people talk about ideology. I've learned over the years that they're pretty weak ideologues. It depends on how the bread is buttered and what's in their own personal interests. I've seen more left-wingers turn right and right-wingers turn left over the years, that I don't take those labels too seriously. I don't know. Had Lumumba lasted, conceivably he might have turned out to be way to the right of what he certainly seemed to be then if he thought it was in his personal interest.

I don't think they understood what Communism was about or capitalism. Actually most Africans are rampant capitalists. I mean, land to them is everything. They love to trade, and their women are great traders. I've never seen yet an African who took to state socialism, where everybody was working on a state farm for free and having to turn its produce in, or anything like that at all.

Q: The year you were there was a period of absolute chaos. We couldn't have an AID program, and obviously military intervention on our part was out. Did we have any cards with which to play with in order to bring about a situation that we were interested in, or were we basically bystanders at this point?

MCILVAINE: We were bystanders, but we felt that the entire United Nations' effort was in our long-run interest, because it was advancing stability. And, as it turned out, that was the case. *Q: So did you deal with the various United Nations commands?*

MCILVAINE: Yes.

Q: Any problems with them?

MCILVAINE: Oh, sure. Occasionally they would see things somewhat differently than we did. But in the long run, it was a very good relationship. The first one that I dealt with a lot was Ralph Bunche, who was out there the summer of '60, right after things got started. He was a remarkable man of great wisdom, and did a fabulous job of keeping things on an even keel. He was succeeded by his assistant Brian Urquhart, who was an Englishman, a top-notch type. Urquhart just retired from the U.N. last year, and was, I think, the top U.N. civil servant at the time of his retirement. Those people we worked very closely with. Of course, there was some criticism on some sides that these guys were toading to U.S. points of view, and so that made it very hard for them.

Then there was another U.N. top fellow there named Dayal, he was an Indian. We had much more trouble with him. He saw things quite differently than we did. So there was always a certain amount of pulling and hauling and, "Oh, you're favoring this and favoring that," and so on and so forth.

Q: What about some of the other groups? In the first place, you had a lot of American media, I suppose, there. This is where the action was.

MCILVAINE: Yes. There must have been 100, at least, in the early days. As I recall, the Congo, as it was called then -- you have to remember it's now -- was on the front pages of the world's press for almost five years, nearly every day or at least once a week. So there were a lot of them there. They didn't know what the hell was going on. They used to come around, particularly during the first summer of '60. I remember they'd come into my office after 8:00 or 9:00 at night and sit with Lavalley, Frank Carlucci and myself, and try to piece out what the devil had gone on during that day and who had done what to whom and who had said what to whom, and so on and so forth. That was very interesting, because it was a very good exchange, and there was absolutely no such thing as classified anything, because things happened so fast. [Laughter] So we would have a very good exchange of ideas.

We generally knew more than they did, I must say, and Frank Carlucci was the star of that exercise, because he really got around. He knew mostly who was doing what to whom. We'd sit there, and he'd tell me about it and the other guys in the press, just as if we were having a staff meeting.

Q: What was the secret to Carlucci's success as a political reporter?

MCILVAINE: He didn't sit on his duff. He got out and he got around, and he got to know all these people. He was a junior FSO-6 or something like that, maybe five, at the time, and he was a self-starter. He also had judgment, too, in analyzing. He didn't get carried away by some of the extreme statements that some people would make, particularly Lumumba and Kasavubu and all the ins and outs. He'd sort of say, "Now, you know, the guy has to say that. Let's not get too excited." I found he was very wise and absolutely fearless. One time an embassy car ran into a bicycle on the way to the airport and killed the Congolese bicyclist. Frank Carlucci came along just

afterwards, and the whole mob surrounded him. He got the other people out of the place, and he got a knife in his shoulder for his pains. Another embassy officer, a girl, our consular officer, her name was Tally Palmer, she came along and she swept up Carlucci and took him out of the crowd. Carlucci was very courageous. He didn't just sit around and count his beads or anything like that.

Q: How about the American missionaries? There was a sizable missionary contingent, and it was a dangerous situation for anybody of European stock at that time, wasn't it?

MCILVAINE: We didn't see too much of them. Mind you, I believe there were something like 40-odd Protestant sects. If you want to find anything more confusing than that, if you're an African, and you're told that the only true religion is 48 different things and you shouldn't do this, and you shouldn't do that, well, that's what it was. Missionaries are mixed groups. Some of them are tremendous, devoted, hard working people but there were an awful lot of them who were just out there living a lot better than they could at home. I've run into missionaries who hadn't made a conversion in 40 years, and you just wonder why they're there, and they're not sure why they're there either. Anyhow, we felt we had to get them out of the country, and we did get most of them out. But then there were a number, particularly in the eastern part, that refused to leave. Some of those survived fine; others didn't.

Q: We were trying to order people out at that time.

MCILVAINE: Yes.

Q: It just wasn't a safe place to be.

MCILVAINE: Yes. You know, the classic situation is you get a place like that with a lot of troubles, and somebody's hurt and killed, and there's a big hue and cry, "Why didn't the State Department get them out of there and do something?" So I think the State Department sometimes leans a little bit towards premature evacuation, but then that's just like doctors who do operations that aren't necessary for fear you'll sue them for not doing it.

Q: What about getting out and around? Did you get to Elisabethville and Stanleyville and places like that?

MCILVAINE: Yes, I got to each of those once, but getting out and around was almost impossible, compared with what I'd done previously in other countries and did later in other countries in Africa, where I visited every single village. You couldn't get around in the Congo in those days. The roads were largely impassable, you never knew what was going to happen, so we didn't do much going around by vehicle.

Q: Did we have any representation in Elisabethville at that time?

MCILVAINE: Yes, we had a consulate there.

Q: Stanleyville, too?

MCILVAINE: No, we didn't in Stanleyville at that time. Later there was.

Q: What sort of reporting was coming out of Elisabethville?

MCILVAINE: That was mostly what Tshombe was thinking, which was somewhat different from what everybody else was thinking in Leopoldville.

Q: Did we try to use our consulate there to bring Tshombe around?

MCILVAINE: Oh, yes, indeed. Yes, indeed. In fact, several of them had a rough time trying to do that.

Q: Do you remember who was out there at the time?

MCILVAINE: I think Bill Connett was there at one time and Lou Hoffacker, but neither of those was the ones that were there when I was, and I can't remember who it was.

Q: But the situation in Elisabethville was not a dangerous one compared to some of the other places?

MCILVAINE: For much of the time, no, but then some time in '61, the business between the U.N. and Tshombe sort of came to a head, and it got to be very dicey. The Tshombe people were roughing people up and so on and so forth.

Q: How about with the Belgians? Did you have much contact with the Belgians, or were they sort of discredited and nobody talked to them?

MCILVAINE: First of all, they were thrown out almost immediately after the initial uprising in July of 1960. I can't remember when it was that they came back in. Probably in the fall. But the answer is yes, one had very little contact with them, because by this time, they really didn't matter much and were sort of a liability.

Q: I noted that Henry Labouisse was a special assistant to Hammarskjold of the U.N. Was he out there at that time, too?

MCILVAINE: Yes, I think Henry came one time with Hammarskjold, yes. I'm pretty sure he did.

Q: He wasn't a particular player?

MCILVAINE: He didn't stay. Hammarskjold came twice or maybe more often when I was there, and I think Henry was with him one time. No, the ones who I've already mentioned, they were, first of all, Bunche, Dayal was representing the U.N., and then a number of military types. In command of the U.N. forces was a Swedish general Van Horn, as I recall. Among the Nigerian contingent of about 1,000 men, there were, I think, something like three officers who were then majors and colonels, who later became presidents of Nigeria. [Laughter]

Q: I note that right after you arrived, there was an invasion of the embassy by Congolese troops after some United States photographers. Were you there at the time?

MCILVAINE: Yes.

Q: What happened then?

MCILVAINE: It wasn't an invasion. The place was jammed with Belgian refugees. Of course, they were looking for them. It had great glass doors, typical modern architecture, just the wrong thing for that part of the world. Anyhow, we were upstairs in the office, and we heard that there was a Congolese soldier with his rifle, getting ready to break down the glass doors. So I dashed down, and Ambassador Timberlake followed me. I opened the door and asked him what it was all about, and gave him a cigarette. He wanted to get them. Timberlake arrived, and we chatted the guy up and gave him cigarettes, and finally we got him to leave. He did not break in. [Laughter] But he was all ready to do it. As I opened the door, he had the rifle butt up. But you know, they were generally hopped up on hashish or something, wild men.

Q: This is an unclassified interview, but what was the role of the CIA? Were they doing much there, or were they as confused as everybody else?

MCILVAINE: We were often told that the CIA did this or the Americans did this, that, and the other thing. I can assure you nobody in that place could organize a coup or anything like that. The Mobutu thing, in the fall of 1960, was typical. Frank Carlucci called me and said, "I hear Mobutu's going to make a speech at the bumty-bump hotel." I can't remember the name of it.

I said, "Great. I'll meet you down there." So I jumped in my car. He lived someplace else, but we met down there. Mobutu gets up on the table, and there are a whole bunch of correspondents around there, and he announces that he has overthrown the government!

Q: This is really to a European, a non-Congolese crowd.

MCILVAINE: Yes! The international press I remember talking to our CIA man. I said, "Well, I see you pulled a coup."

He said, "What can we do?" [Laughter] God! Nobody would have thought of doing it that way, you know.

Q: Did you have any dealings with Mobutu at the time?

MCILVAINE: I didn't have many personally, no.

Q: What was our estimate of Mobutu?

MCILVAINE: I think the general estimate was that he was basically on our side, and therefore was a good guy to be with and to have on our side in all the goings on and struggles for influence on the new government.

Q: Looking back on it in this period, what was the effectiveness of the role of the United States? I'm speaking about the period you were there in the Congo.

MCILVAINE: I think, basically, it was our effort to get the United Nations involved and to get it out of the polarization of East-West and that sort of thing. I think that was the main role. We certainly did. In fact, I had a lot to do with it, in getting the United Nations there. So, I think that over the long haul, that was the most important thing we did. Forget about all the little pullings and haulings and this; I can't even remember what they were now.

Q: You said you played a role in getting the United Nations there. How did this work?

MCILVAINE: Well, Timberlake had gone back to the U.S., and I was in charge. Lumumba was going, so Timberlake had to go back. Things went from bad to worse. Gizenga, who was Lumumba's deputy, called me on the phone. Here's Gizenga, who, in everybody's book is a Communist, and he wants me to bring in the U.S. Marines and establish order. I said, no, no, that wouldn't be a good idea. [Laughter]

Q: What's the time frame of this?

MCILVAINE: Late in July 1960. I said, "The thing to do is get the United Nations." I sent off a report about the conversation. I said, "Really, before we all get mired down in this place in some kind of an East-West battle, let's see if we can't get the United Nations in." The long and short of it was they, back in Washington, did accomplish that. I think it would have been a disaster if we'd sent in the Marines. Talk about Vietnam and some of the other places, that's one Vietnam we didn't have.

Q: Did you notice any change? While you were there, the Kennedy Administration replaced the Eisenhower Administration. It was very much an administration dedicated to freeing Africa and all. Was there a chance, before you left the Congo, to have any feel as far as the direction of your work was concerned?

MCILVAINE: The answer is no, because by the time I left, Kennedy selected me to be ambassador in Dahomey. That's why I left when I did. But by that time, I don't think that the new administration had gotten its act together at all in that respect. It's true that you felt there was more interest in Africa in Washington than there had been before, and that there might be more people listening when you tried to recommend something.

Q: Just to wind up this interview, Mr. Ambassador, what do you consider your major accomplishments in the Foreign Service?

MCILVAINE: Glory be, I've never thought about it!

Q: Well, I'm asking. [Laughter]

MCILVAINE: What is an accomplishment? I guess I would say my role in getting the United Nations involved in the Congo. I feel that was a very important thing. I felt so then, and, of course,

we've lived through Vietnam since, and I've often thought back, had we not done this, we could have had a Vietnam in Africa, which we never had.

STEVENSON MCILVAINE
Son of DCM
Leopoldville (1960-1961)

UN interpreter
Katanga (1960-1961)

Born in Pennsylvania of Foreign Service Parents, Mr. McIlvaine was raised in Washington D.C. and abroad. He graduated from Harvard University and served in the US Army before joining the Foreign Service in 1967. His assignments abroad took him to a number of posts in Africa, including Kinshasa, Bissau, Dar es Salaam, and Lusaka, where he served as Chargé d'Affaires. At the State Department in Washington, Mr. McIlvaine dealt primarily with African issues. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: You went to the Congo when?

MCILVAINE: After freshman year, my grades were less than distinguished. In fact, I was on the edge of flunking out and the dean said it would be a good idea if I took a year off and thought about this and came back a little more serious. My father had just gone as DCM in Leopoldville, this brand new embassy that was opening up with independence June 30, 1960. So I decided I'd go spend some time with him and see. While we were working that out, Leopoldville blew up and I couldn't go until late August, by which point I had to make a decision about whether I was going back to school or not and decided to take a year off. I spent 3 months with him in Leopoldville working part-time with USIS doing things like a Louis Armstrong concert. That was great fun. And that visit with Senator Church and Ted Kennedy and company. And then USIS had run out of useful things for me to do and I was teaching English in one of those English... USIS used to have lots of English courses. I went over to the UN, which had by then set up, and asked them for a job and was hired immediately as an interpreter for the Third Nigerian Brigade in Albertville, North Katanga.

Q: This is where your French came in.

MCILVAINE: Yes. A little Lebanese guy named Shazoom or something like that said, "Do you speak French?" I said, "Yes." He spoke to me in French for 10 minutes and said, "You'll do. Can you leave the day after Christmas?" I said, "I guess." The day after Christmas, I was sent off to northern Katanga.

Q: Before we go there, let's talk about Leopoldville. I realize you were a college kid. What were you seeing there? One thinks about the chaos that continues to be in the Congo today. What was it like?

MCILVAINE: It was fascinating. That was where I developed my taste for African crises for lack of a better phrase – the adrenalin rush and the excitement. Some people are appalled by this. Some people hate it. Some people thrive on it. I thrived on it. I liked it. We had Lumumba in his house down the street under house arrest for a while. We had all sorts of characters around. I saw firsthand coup attempts and the press corps and all the correspondents. We had a firefight one night with a machine gunner in our backyard. I had to get by him through the drainage ditches over to the ambassador's house because the ambassador wasn't there and his children were. His German nanny spoke no French. So I got over there and spent the night with them to make sure they didn't get in any trouble. Throughout this firefight that went on all night over at the Ghanaian ambassador, who was next door to him. That was fun to me. I found that very exciting.

Q: What were they fighting about?

MCILVAINE: The Ghanaian ambassador working for Kwame Nkrumah had been very actively supporting and working with the Lumumba faction. The government was saying, "That's improper behavior for an ambassador. You must go." He was PNGed. He said, "I won't go unless my president tells me to go," which is a direct violation of traditional diplomatic discourse. When you're PNGed, you go. Well, he wouldn't go. That would have been all right. They would have just bundled him up and put him on a plane. But the UN then made what I still consider to be a very serious mistake of sending some Tunisian troops up there to protect him. That made it a challenge and the Congolese army deployed. Inevitably, somebody started shooting and they shot at each other all night long until in the morning they negotiated a settlement and the guy got on a plane and left. But in the process, 4 or 5 Tunisians and 4 or 5 Congolese got killed for no reason whatsoever other than just some bad judgment on all sides.

Q: Was this a place you could go around downtown?

MCILVAINE: You could still get around, yes. I remember going to a concert of the Okay Jazz, which was still a great Zairian band when I got there as a Foreign Service officer 25 years later. I remember there was a great restaurant at the zoo, some discussion over where the meat came from. Yes, you could get around some of the time. Some of the time it wasn't wise. But there would be spasms.

Q: Did you get any feel at that time that being white was a problem?

MCILVAINE: No, there was absolutely no racism. It was intriguing. There was anti-Belgium sentiment. If you could be mistaken for a Flamande, because they had been the overseers largely, the people most in contact with African labor and therefore the hated ones, and that was a great insult, "Sale Flamande." If in any way you were confused with the Flemish, you could be in trouble, get beaten up, but probably not killed. But I never felt the slightest bit of racial fear. Maybe I was just rather insensitive, but I never did. And I dealt with Congolese every day.

Q: Let's go to Katanga. You were there in '61?

MCILVAINE: Yes. I got to Albertville New Year's Eve 1960.

Q: Albertville was...

MCILVAINE: A little town on Lake Tanganyika, maybe 1,500 miles from Leopoldville. Congo's huge.

Q: What was the relationship between Albertville and Stanleyville?

MCILVAINE: None except that the later Stanleyville problems of '64 and all that with the sambas. It's where Kabila started. It was a wild rebel group that came from northern Tanganyika. They went to Stanleyville and set up briefly, the Simbas, and killed some people and eventually Belgian paratroopers went in and put it down. When I was there, Stanleyville had been set up by Gizenga as, the Marxist Lumumbist seceding province. Katanga was the conservative Belgian Union Miniere seceding province led by Tshombe. The Kasais were somewhere in between, also playing games. And the UN was trying to patch this Humpty Dumpty back together again and ignore all the secessions or end them. I was working for the UN as an interpreter in one part that was relatively... Well, it wasn't all that quiet. There was the UN force. When I arrived an Irish brigade was just leaving but I worked for the Nigerian brigade that was coming in to replace them. The Katangese with the gendarmerie, led by white mercenaries, some wild characters. They were in town. They were controlling the town and running around like cowboys in jeeps that had machineguns mounted in the back. Then outside of town, the Baluba, the tribesmen of northern Katanga, who were furious with this southern Katanga insurrection and did not support it at all but didn't have any weapons or much of anything, so whenever they got their hands on anybody, they tended to commit violence upon them. Eventually, they tore up the railroad. There were all these fights along the railroad. The Katangese were trying to keep it open to serve the mines. Gradually the Baluba closed it. A number of Old West fights were along the railroad line. With the UN trying to keep everybody from killing each other without much success.

Q: Was it the Irish brigade that had some problems?

MCILVAINE: They had their first combat casualties in the history of independent Ireland just before I arrived. As part of their sweeping up and moving out, they were burying what was left and sending the bodies home and that sort of thing. A patrol of 10 Irish soldiers had been taken by the Baluba, who didn't necessarily know the difference between the UN and the Katangese gendarmerie, and there was a fight and the most courageous of the Irish after the Balubas subdued them or killed them was at least partially eaten – that was a tradition to acquire the courage of your most esteemed opponent. This was a sensation in Europe. Private Anthony Brown was partially consumed, eaten in action as it were. That's black humor, very black humor. The Irish were stunned. They had missed World War II. They hadn't been in any wars. This was the first time the Irish army had actually suffered wartime casualties, so it was a big deal. They packed up and left but not before Near Year's Eve. I had just arrived. I had come into this little town in northern Katanga in my madras jacket because my mother always told me to wear a jacket when you're traveling and that's the only jacket I had, and a tennis racket. I looked like I had just stepped out of space. They were polite enough not to fall all over the ground laughing at me. I was accepted in. That night, there was a Near Year's Eve party and some drinking. I was an 18 year old kid, trying to keep up. Naturally, at about 11:30, it was time to roust the piper. Somebody got the piper up.

This fairly well lubricated band of mostly Irish and a few British officers with the Nigerian brigade marched through town behind the piper in his undershorts and the question was, who were the savages here? You know what bagpipes sound like in the middle of the night? I think we were the primitives. God knows what the local populace thought this was.

Q: Talk about the Nigerian brigade.

MCILVAINE: It was still semi-British, a British commander, a British brigadier, rosy cheeks. I can still remember, he would say, “Whacko” of things that he approved of. A British brigade major and a few British junior officers and then a Nigerian brigade major who sort of took on my godfather role. He really helped me out. He was really nice. He later became Nigerian ambassador to London and then died abruptly in the mid-‘60s, I’m not sure what of. The Nigerian army at that point was the pride of the British colonial system. They were very good, very straight, very correct, and a lot of them, the officers I knew, I’m sure later got into politics. The Nigerian army is actively engaged in Nigerian politics until this day.

Q: How did they interface with the Congolese in that area?

MCILVAINE: Not well. They had no way to communicate, no common language. I was translating African French to African English and the African French was easy. It was the African English that I was struggling with. The Nigerian English is a challenge.

Q: You really have to work at it.

MCILVAINE: Yes. You have to listen carefully. If you’re not used to the rhythms and sounds, it’s quite creative and interesting English. There’s nothing wrong with it, but you’re not used to it. That was a challenge. They had virtually nothing in common. These were largely Sandhurst trained – I was dealing with the officers... The common soldiers might have had more village kinship. But I was dealing with the officers and they tended to be Sandhurst- (end of tape)

Q: What were they doing?

MCILVAINE: We, the UN force, were trying to manage this port town on the lake, keep the peace, keep the Katangese from doing anything terrible to the Baluba, keep the Baluba from doing anything terrible to the Katangese, and not doing a great job at any of that because it was a problem that’s still very much a problem today and one that interests me enormously: how do you peacekeep when you don’t have clearly delineated lines and a setting where everybody understands the rules? And we didn’t. There were these mercenaries running around town in these jeeps ready to shoot up anything they felt like shooting up, including us. This Nigerian force that wasn’t really expecting to engage in outright combat. The Nigerians expect to present themselves, look good, and everybody would behave, and everybody didn’t. So, it was awkward. The town was like a western movie. It was one long street of storefronts with the arcade in the front and all the rest of it. It had everything but the gunfighters swaggering down the sidewalk. Instead of horses, you had jeeps tied up with machineguns in the back. It was amazing.

Q: Michael Hoare was a well known professional soldier from South Africa?

MCILVAINE: I think he was British, but a lot of them were white South Africans. But the ones I had, I had a Belgian, I had a Scottish mercenary who had been in Malaysia, been with Castro in Cuba until, as he said it, he sold one of Raul's jeeps and Raul didn't take it well and he had to leave quickly.

Q: What were they doing?

MCILVAINE: They were running around and getting into fights with the Baluba over this rail line. They were trying to keep the rail line open. That was the key to Kabalo and the mines and central northern Katanga. The idea was, you get the ore out to the lake and you can ship it out, although in fact the rail line wasn't staying open, the Baluba were shutting that, and not much was going on in the port either.

Q: Rwanda and Burundi...

MCILVAINE: That was all quiet at the time. Tanganyika was still a British colony across the river, although I later became good friends with Jane Goodall, who was starting at exactly the same time across the lake in Gombe in her mountains with her chimpanzees just as I was over there with my Nigerian troops on the Congolese side.

Q: What would you do? Would there be an incident and then...

MCILVAINE: I spent most of my time working with the Katangese chief of police, who was constantly arresting the UN forces, workers, for various infractions. I'd have to go get them out of jail. That was a large part my job, and working with the soldiers to organize refugee things. Periodically there would be waves of Belgians and the like who would come in from somewhere else where things had gotten out of hand and we'd put them up in the railroad cars. We had this big railroad depot there.

Q: Did you get involved with missionaries? The Congo was full of missionaries.

MCILVAINE: It was full of missionaries and that was a big deal for the embassy trying to get them all evacuated. They had pretty much either gone or were off in the bush where nobody was ever going to see them. I didn't have much contact with them out there. The missionary thing had been earlier.

Q: I've interviewed Terry McNamara, who was in Stanleyville. He was number 2 in the consulate in '61.

MCILVAINE: That must have been fascinating.

Q: They had Gurhkas there.

How did you find the Congolese officials?

MCILVAINE: See, I had Katangese officials. They were Tshombe's folks. I didn't really see it at the time, but looking back on it, it was pretty clear that it was a cardboard government pretty well set up by the Belgian mining interests to protect their interests for the mines of southern Katanga, which they did.

Q: Were the Belgians apparent there?

MCILVAINE: There were still a few. Not mining type. They were the hotel manager and the few people around town, business mainly. But gradually leaving as it became increasingly clear that this wasn't going to get over quickly and things were not going to go back to the way they were.

Q: Did the railroad run at all?

MCILVAINE: It did, gradually getting closed down until by the time I left after 6 months there, it was not running at all.

Q: This is a pretty heady experience.

MCILVAINE: For an 18 year old kid, it was great. I was paid real money. It was a real job. I was working with all these Nigerian and British officers and lots of Katangese officials in as remote a spot as you could probably find. It was fascinating. I was sharing a little house with a Colombian accountant and down the road was a Swiss accountant. They were doing the books for the thing. I remember vividly one day when we stopped to pick up the Swiss on our way to the office, which was in the old railroad station downtown, and he was outside his door screaming and pointing at the house. There was a snake in there. I think his servant and I went and dealt with the snake and restored peace. But the Swiss was totally undone. There are not so many snakes in Switzerland. I don't think he had ever been out of Switzerland before, so this was a shock to his system.

Q: What was the attitude of the Nigerian officer corps? Was it a plague on all your houses? Were they having a good time?

MCILVAINE: They were kind of bewildered by this. It wasn't ideological. I do remember being very suspicious. The top civilian at the UN there, my boss, was a Czech named Berzac. I was enough of a Cold War kid to be very suspicious about what was he really up to? As far as I know, he was just doing the job. There was no indication he was up to much of anything. He worked with the British general.

Q: Were the Nigerians-

MCILVAINE: The striking thing about them was how proud they were - and it's still true - of Nigeria. They were just coming to independence. They were pulling the country together and this huge, disparate country was going to be the powerhouse of Africa and it was going to be great and all the rest of it. Sadly, it didn't turn out that way.

Q: It's really very sad, the things that have happened.

MCILVAINE: But at that point, they were the federal institution, the army, probably the only, and still the only real national institution.

Q: Did you get a feel for the fact that they had Christians, animists, Muslims?

MCILVAINE: Oh, definitely Christians and Muslims. The animist bit was pretty quiet if it was there. I learned all about the Yoruba and the Ibo and the Hausa-Fulani, the 3 main blocs.

FRANK CHARLES CARLUCCI III
Political Officer
Leopoldville (1960-1962)

Mr. Carlucci was born in Pennsylvania, graduated from Princeton University, after which he served in the US Navy. After a year at Harvard Business School, in 1956 he joined the Department of State. Before his tenure as Ambassador to Portugal from 1975 to 1978, Mr. Carlucci served in a number of posts abroad, including Johannesburg, Leopoldville and Rio de Janeiro. His career includes several high level assignments at the Department of State in Washington. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996 and 1997.

Q: Well then, you went in 1960 it was to the Congo.

CARLUCCI: Right.

Q: This as a political officer. What was the situation in the Congo when you arrived there?

CARLUCCI: I arrived 15 days before independence. We had a Consul General who was leaving and an ambassador had been designated, Clare Timberlake. The situation was one of considerable confusion. Nobody knew what was going to happen on the day of independence. There was a lot of focus in the consulate general on getting our independence delegation in place, making sure we were appropriately represented. There was a feeling that we did not really know the real African leadership. What was it going to be? Who was it going to be? What did the Belgians let go of at the time of independence? There were just a lot of unanswered questions. Some felt the Belgians had gone too fast. Everybody knew that education-wise the Congolese were not fully prepared for Independence so there was anticipation of difficulty.

Q: At the beginning, were you involved in busy work or were you really starting anew?

CARLUCCI: The most you could get was what you could dig out of the newspaper. The bio files were inadequate to non-existent, to say the least. I set about to get to know the political figures. I did several unorthodox things which irritated the administrative officer of the embassy no end. I persuaded the DCM [deputy chief of mission], Rob McIlvaine, a marvelous man, to allow me to rent a Volkswagen so I had my own car and didn't go around in an embassy chauffeured car. I then got myself some press credentials because the press moved around more freely than anybody else

could. Lumumba tended to hold a press conference a day and I figured it was important to get into those. Then I got myself a pass to the Parliament which was in formation. And basically spent all day outside the embassy. Just floating in from time to time.

Towards the end of the day, Rob McIlvaine, the DCM, called me and said, "Patrice Lumumba called and wants to go to Stanleyville and would we take him."

And he said, "Frank, he's coming, he's on his way out."

I guess that was early afternoon. Well, he didn't show up until about 5:00 and just drove out onto the tarmac with a big entourage. On the other side, the Belgian forces drove up and confronted him. I was standing in the middle between the two forces with machine guns pointed at each other.

Lumumba said, "I'm here to go to Stanleyville and you're going to take me."

The aircraft commander came up and said, "We've just learned that the controllers in Stanleyville have been killed and all the lights are out. We're not going."

The Belgian colonel said, "Unless you get these people off the tarmac in five minutes, I'm opening fire."

So I had a dilemma on my hands. I finally grabbed the aircraft commander and I said, "I don't care if we fly up to Stanleyville. Turn around and fly back. We're getting in this airplane right now or there is going to be gunfire here."

He said, "Okay."

So I took Lumumba and Kasavubu, both to Stanleyville.

Q: Could you explain, at that point, who were these two?

CARLUCCI: Lumumba was prime minister and Kasavubu was president at that point. And there was a man named Maurice Mpolo who was accompanying them as sort of a military aide, who later became Minister of Sports. I told him that we had a problem in Stanleyville, but if they insisted on going, I would take them. They said we insist on going. In fact Lumumba had screamed at me. He called me and he said something to the effect that "You Europeans are all hypocrites. You promised me."

And when we got on the airplane, I said, " Why did you scream at me?"

He said, "I didn't realize you were an American. I thought you were European." The two of them stood in the cockpit. It was a Globemaster C-124. They stood in the cockpit the entire flight to Stanleyville. On the way up, I told them that there were Europeans in Stanleyville and I assumed they didn't have any objection if we took them back on the plane. Lumumba agreed. Then when we got off the plane, the Europeans came to me and said, "We want to leave but the immigration authorities won't let us leave."

I said, "Well, that's your problem. You go work it out with them. I'm not your Consul." These were basically Belgians. There were about 30 of them. They came back a couple of hours later and said, "It's really hopeless. They won't let us leave and they are now treating us in a way that our lives are in danger."

I said, "Well, I'm not your Consul but I'll see what I can do."

So I went around to the governor's house in Stanleyville where Lumumba and Kasavubu were having a cocktail party and talked to Lumumba and said, "You had in effect said I could take them out. We have done you a favor by bringing you up here and I hoped that we could go ahead. You should let these people loose."

And he responded with something like, "These are bad 'Flemish' and they shouldn't be allowed to go." But then he turned to me - he was tall and I am short - and dropped his hand on my shoulder and said, "But I like you. You are my friend. I give you the Belgians. It's a gift."

I said, "Don't give it as a gift, but I'm happy to take them."

For several years thereafter I got cards from the Belgians thanking me for getting them out of Stanleyville. That's how I got to know Lumumba. We became pretty good-I don't want to say friends-but every time I'd run across him, he'd have a pleasant greeting for me.

Q: Tell me, Frank, when you started this thing, when you arrived, this is obviously Cold War time and all that, what were you getting when you arrived at the embassy about sort of American interests in the Congo and the people who seemed to be coming in - Lumumba, Kasavubu, and that?

CARLUCCI: Well the Congo was the focus of world attention. It was at the heart of the Cold War struggle at the time. There was a lot of feeling that Lumumba was a Communist sympathizer. We had Senator Dodd, Tom Dodd, who was an active critic of people like Lumumba and Gbenye, the latter being Lumumba's Interior Minister. Dodd came out and I was his escort officer. I thought he had become convinced that Lumumba and Gbenye, while they may have had some sympathy for the Soviets, didn't really understand what communism was. But when he went back to the U.S., he called them communists again. We should remember that Lumumba came to Washington and was rejected before he turned to the Soviets. How he got to Washington was an interesting story.

Q: Well, let's hear it.

CARLUCCI: DCM, McIlvaine called me one day and said the prime minister had just called him and he said that he wanted to go to Washington. McIlvaine had said, "Fine, we will be glad to welcome you in Washington. Could you tell me when the visit will take place?"

The answer was "This afternoon." McIlvaine instructed me, "Frank, you've got to organize this."

I went to the consul, who was a rather strong-willed woman named Tally Palmer - Allison - who later became famous for defense of women's rights in the State Department. I said, "Tally, I want

you to prepare about 20 visas on blank sheets of paper." She looked at me like I was crazy. I said, "Now, just do it." Sure enough, all of a sudden a delegation appeared on her doorstep and said, "We want 20 visas." She was able to issue these visas on blank sheets of paper.

I then went to the airport. I couldn't find an airplane. I couldn't figure out how they were going to get to the U.S. So I went to the controller's office and said, "Do you have an aircraft coming in that is going to take the prime minister of the Congo to the United States?"

He said, "No. The only thing we've got in is a Ghanaian Air Force plane that just landed and disembarked some troops."

So, I went back to the radio room and at that moment, Lumumba and his entourage pulled up. I stopped them and said, "Mr. Prime Minister, we would like to welcome you to the United States, but do you know how you are going to get there?"

He said, "Do you see that plane over there?"

And I said, "Yes. It's a Ghanaian Air Force plane."

He said, "We're going in that plane."

I went over to the plane and said to the pilot, "Did anybody give you any instructions to take a group of Congolese to the United States?"

He said, "No." And at that moment Lumumba and company approached the plane. The pilot looked at me and he said, "What should I do?"

I said, "You better salute and let him board and take them wherever they want to go," which is precisely what the pilot did. In fact, there was a humorous sequence when he got out on the tarmac ready to take off. A straggler came running out and stood in front of the airplane and wouldn't let them take off until they put him on board. They lowered the ladder and put him on board. They flew to Accra where apparently they got a plane to go to the United States.

Q: Let's go back to the time of the independence, when independence happened. What were your experiences sort of on the day and right afterward?

CARLUCCI: On the day of independence I had heard rumors that rioting was occurring at the Parliament building so I grabbed an Lingala-speaking driver and went to the Parliament building where the troops were indeed rioting. I went up to them and through the driver asked what they were rioting about. The answer was interesting. They were upset not so much at the Belgians as at their own leadership, Patrice Lumumba and others, who had suddenly sprouted big cars, big houses, and flashy suits. They said General Janssens, who had been made commander of the Force Publique, had written on the blackboard independence equals no change for the military. They asked, "What's in it for us? Everybody else gets something and we get nothing." Subsequently, Lumumba who was an absolute spellbinder, a very charismatic man...

Q: Was he from the Leopoldville area?

CARLUCCI: He was from Stanleyville. He didn't have a tribal base in Leopoldville. He didn't have a strong tribal base anywhere, in fact. He'd been a postal clerk in Stanleyville. I think he'd actually been arrested for embezzlement or something similar during the colonial period. He went out to the military camp at Djelo Binza and talked to the soldiers. He managed to turn them against the Belgians. That's when anti-Belgian rioting started. I went out, I think it was either that day or the next day to the neighborhood where I was living which was past the military camp. We assembled the Americans and I led a convoy of Americans into the embassy. We were stopped a number of times by soldiers. In fact, my then two year old daughter had a bayonet poked right in her face. But we made it to the embassy. People essentially lived in the embassy until they were evacuated. We evacuated as many as we could by ferry but then the ferry...

Q: Was the ferry over to Brazzaville?

CARLUCCI: Brazzaville, yes. Then the ferries were shut off. On occasion soldiers would come up and point guns at the embassy. I remember going out and confronting one. He was pointing his gun at the embassy. I told him that he had a duty not to attack the embassy but to help me go over and rescue some Americans who were in a hotel. To my surprise he agreed and we went over and got some Americans out of the hotel. But we lived in the embassy for a couple of days. Timberlake did a marvelous job as ambassador.

Q: What was he doing at that time?

CARLUCCI: He was sending cables and giving instructions. It was he who told me to get out and get the planes landed. He began to feel that the Lumumba regime was increasingly erratic and very difficult to deal with. He was pushing for the UN troops to come in quickly as the only means of saving the situation. Peacekeeping has a somewhat mixed reputation these days but the Congo has to be characterized as a very successful multinational peacekeeping operation. The troops who came in - the Ghanaians, the Moroccans, the Nigerians, Ethiopians, subsequently Indians, Pakistanis - all did a marvelous job. Basically, they restored order after a period of time. The panic with which the Belgians fled was amazing. I went around my neighborhood and remember a houseboy coming out and telling me his employer had said, "Take everything; it's all yours."

Another said, "They left the phonograph playing. Should I turn it off?" People fled literally in their nightgowns. The neighborhoods were deserted for quite some time.

Q: When was the decision made to get the families out? Was this right after independence?

CARLUCCI: When the rioting broke out. It became very clear that it was an extremely dangerous situation. I think the rioting broke out around the early part of July, about a month after independence.

Q: Were you able to get any fix on where Lumumba and Kasavubu were or what they were trying to do at that time?

CARLUCCI: Oh yes, we had some contact with them. Lumumba wasn't hard to get a fix on because he had a press conference practically every day. By talking to his aides and by attending the press conferences, we could keep track of Lumumba. It wasn't very good news. Kasavubu kept pretty much to himself in his presidential residence, but Timberlake would call on him. He took me along as the interpreter. We called on him several times. Lumumba, of course, at one point called on the Russians to come into the Congo which made big headlines. That's another interesting story. I attended that press conference. At the end of the press conference, I was rushing back to the embassy to file my cable and three reporters, Welles Hangen, who later was missing in Cambodia, Henry Tanner of the New York Times and Arnaud De Borchgrave, who was then with Newsweek, said, "Frank, it's more important that the U.S. government get this message straight than it is that we file our dispatches early. So we're going to come back and help you write your cable." Very unusual. They came back and helped me write the cable and then went off and filed their dispatches. Bob McIlvaine who was a stickler for good drafting took a look at my cable and puffed on his pipe and said, "Well I guess it can go by cable and not by airgram. But get it down to one and a half pages, Frank."

I said, "But my God, he's called on the Russians to come in!"

He said, "Go do it right."

I learned a lesson and I went back and redrafted it.

Q: What was the analysis of why he called the Russians in?

CARLUCCI: I think he had become frustrated with the west. He had gone to Washington and asked us for military help. He realized, correctly it turned out- we didn't agree at the time-that the Katanga secession could only be put down by force.

He wanted military assistance to do that. He went to Washington and did not get the kind of assistance that he sought. He went to Moscow and they responded by sending him some trucks-something like 100 Russian trucks came into Congo. As history can now document, in the end we had to agree to allow the UN forces to go in to Katanga and put an end to the secession. I ended up in the front wave of the troops that did that.

Q: Before we come to that, what were we saying as far as American participation or doing something when we'd helped Lumumba go to the United States? What was the embassy recommendation on his sudden coming there and how to treat him and how did it work out from your perspective?

CARLUCCI: Well, there wasn't much time to make any recommendation other than he's coming to the United States and wants our support. Treat him hospitably and be as responsive as you can. The embassy, as I recall, it was a long time ago, but I don't think we were arguing in favor of giving military support to Lumumba. We thought that preserving the integrity of the Congo was important and we were sympathetic on that goal. But it was the means to accomplish the goal that we could not support.

Q: What was the attitude toward the province at that time as far as American interest and the recent secession movement? How did we feel about that?

CARLUCCI: At that time, those were the early days, the days of Patrice Lumumba, there was very little sentiment in the United States for a separate Katanga. That changed, over the course of the next year and a half as Tshombe's very successful lobbying machine got into operation.

Q: Did we know any of the leaders in Chatting? I mean, did we have much of a fix on Chatting?

CARLUCCI: We did indeed. We had a consul down there named Bill Canup, who knew Tshombe as a provincial governor. I had met Tshombe during the independence ceremonies. And we knew Monongo, the Interior Minister who allegedly was present when Lumumba was killed.

Q: When you arrived in Leopoldville and started there as a political officer, what was your impression of the CIA station there and its duty? I mean all this is brand new and I was wondering-later this became a very important thing-but what was your impression when you first arrived?

CARLUCCI: When I first arrived I didn't have much contact with the station. The consulate general had virtually no outside contacts. I remember being startled when the consulate general said to me, "You need to find out what's going on here," go down and mix with the U.S. press.

Q: Wait a minute, we're talking about Consulate General, this is before it became an embassy?

CARLUCCI: Before it became an embassy.

I thought to myself, that's a strange way to function to mix with the U.S. press and I proceeded to do my own thing. We weren't getting much information out of the CIA. They didn't have a lot of contacts either.

Q: What about the meeting-the press going in there-this was sort of a precursor to Vietnam. I mean this is where all the...?

CARLUCCI: We were swamped with press people. I think the quality was quite high. Some of them went into danger. There was one who was killed in the Kasai. He was a very bright and able young man.

Q: Did you find there was a close relationship between the embassy reporting staff and the press corps at that point?

CARLUCCI: Since I was the principal writer in the embassy, there wasn't a day that the press wasn't in my office. Those were the days when it wasn't a sin for the press to talk to government officials and vice versa. Those were also the days when I could say to the press, "This is confidential," and know that they would respect the confidentiality. They would also share information with me. So we did have a good relationship, plus the fact that I saw them all the time at Lumumba's press conferences.

Q: What about as these trucks arrived? What were we seeing by that time? Had Lumumba with his 100 trucks, Soviet trucks, I mean had this become a cause for us or...?

CARLUCCI: Yes. This had been blown up out of proportion to its intrinsic worth. We were all worried about the Russian technicians who had come along with the trucks and what they would do. It was a symbol that Lumumba was willing to, if necessary, play the Soviet game and that aroused a great deal of concern. Lumumba moved further and further to the left. You could argue that he was driven there by the west's lack of responsiveness. Whether it was that or whether it was his inclination, or whether he was enticed by what the Soviets had to offer, those were all fears. The fact was that he gradually became more critical in his comments toward the west and more erratic in his behavior. I came to fear that he had lost not only our confidence but he was losing the confidence of his own parliament. A lot of people thought I was nuts when I said that. One of the riskier things that I've done in my entire career was to do a nose count of the Congolese parliament in 1960. But I listed each member and where I thought he was going to vote and I concluded that Lumumba would lose. Washington couldn't believe that but we managed to persuade Washington that the UN should be allowed to hold what was called the Lovanium summit where the parliament was sequestered. It was kept insulated from political pressures and beer until they voted. Lumumba was defeated. It was out of that meeting that Adoula became Prime Minister, a much more moderate man. It's common to say that Lumumba was - there was a coup against Lumumba - but in fact he was voted out. It was then that he, as I recall the sequence, that he reacted.

He went into his residence and it was only when he left his residence to try and flee that he was captured. Had he stayed in his residence, he probably wouldn't have been captured. As it was, I was probably - I and then Senator Gale McGee - were probably the last two westerners to see him alive. We were having a drink about mid-afternoon at a sidewalk café and a truck went by. Lumumba had his hands tied behind his back and was in the rear part of the truck. The truck was on the way to the airport. As you know, he was killed either in the airplane or shortly after he got off the airplane in the Katanga.

Q: At that time, did we see the... Were the Soviets or the Soviet embassy, was it a real competition? I mean did you find yourself jostling the Soviet political officers or not?

CARLUCCI: No. I can't recall the Soviet embassy being that active. But I have to say I was not dealing with the diplomatic community. I was essentially the embassy's outrider and I was dealing with the Congolese. But the diplomatic relationships with the embassies were being handled at level higher than mine.

Q: You mentioned when Lumumba was using these 100 trucks, you got involved with those?

CARLUCCI: I didn't get involved. I was at the press conference when he called on the Soviets to come in. The trucks were sent and that caused quite a fuss, quite a stir in the western press. It was the beginning of the slippery slope that Lumumba got on.

Q: When Adoula came in, what was the feeling towards him?

CARLUCCI: We'd known Adoula, we liked him, there was a warm feeling, a feeling that we wanted to make his government a success. He was invited to Washington. By then I had gone back

to Washington. I was his escort officer when he was in Washington. It was a whole new atmosphere.

Q: Kasavubu, where did we see him?

CARLUCCI: Well, we saw Kasavubu as a moderate figure, but he was very slow to action. We made efforts to persuade him that he had to move and I guess eventually, certainly when the Congress and the Parliament voted, he dismissed Lumumba. But there was no love lost between Kasavubu and Lumumba.

Q: With this group, I think wasn't there an instance where you got knifed or something like that happened to you?

CARLUCCI: Yes. That was during a visit of, I believe it was Loy Henderson.

Q: He was Under Secretary for Political Affairs or something like that or number two man...?

CARLUCCI: I think he was Deputy Secretary. Anyway, he came out. We were heading back to the airport. I was in a separate car. I wasn't part of the entourage. I was in a car that was being driven by the chief warrant officer of the Defense attaché's office. We had in the car Lieutenant Colonel Dannemiller, who was the Army attaché, and his wife. I was sitting in the front seat. The car was going too fast. I can remember telling the warrant officer that I thought he was going too fast. A bicyclist was crossing the road - one of these things where neither could guess which way the other was going and eventually we hit him and plowed into a ditch. I could see right away that he was dead. I knew what was going to happen. I told the warrant officer to run and get out of there quickly which he did. The wife of our Army attaché was in a state of shock. We couldn't get her out of the car, so I did the only thing that could be done at that point. I went over to the body to draw the crowd away from the car. I was successful. He eventually got her out of the car and they got away. But in the meantime, of course, the crowd surrounded me. Several people stopped and tried to help. Tally Palmer stopped. She had a silver convertible. I'll never forget it. I told her, "Get out of here," because she couldn't get close to me.

Then the crowd started beating me up. I felt what I thought was a hard blow to my back, and about that time - actually somebody else, I think Larry Detlan stopped as well - and shouted at me and said, "Some people will take you into the village."

I said, "Larry, the last place I want to go is into the village."

It was getting fairly serious when a Congolese bus driver drove his bus right through the crowd and opened his door right at my back and I just stepped into the bus. I didn't know I had been stabbed until I saw the pool of blood on the floor of the bus. He, in essence, saved my life.

Q: It was an extremely dangerous time, wasn't it there, at that point?

CARLUCCI: Well, yes. Subsequently there had been a lot of dangerous posts in the foreign service, but that was one of the earlier ones.

Q: What about Allison Palmer? What was your impression, because she became a figure in her own right particularly on women's affairs and this? How did she operate?

CARLUCCI: She was a consulate officer in the embassy. I think she showed courage, certainly by stopping and trying to help me at the time. I didn't have a lot of interaction with her. We had a cordial relationship. She didn't really comment on political affairs. She didn't spend much time outside the embassy. She just basically did visa and passport work. Certainly she might have held strong views, we didn't hear those views at the time. At least I didn't.

Q: The Kennedy administration came on in January 1961 and did you see a change in the embassy policy and all because the Kennedy administration came and Soapy Williams was the assistant secretary for African Affairs? You know there was a lot of emphasis on Africa.

CARLUCCI: The major change was there had been a history of bad feelings between Chester Bowles and Clare Timberlake. I can remember Timberlake telling me when Chester Bowles was named Under Secretary of State that his days on the job were probably numbered, because he and Bowles had clashed in India. In fact, that turned out to be the case. Timberlake became increasingly critical of the UN operation, Rajeshwar Dayal in particular.

Q: Who was he?

CARLUCCI: He was the Indian who headed the UN operation. Not a particularly good choice, if I may say so. He was a very bright man, but he had a somewhat supercilious attitude toward the Africans-tended to look down on them. They didn't like him. In fact, it is fair to say they despised him.

Q: When you say Africans, does this also mean the troops of Guyana and from other African...?

CARLUCCI: No, no. The Congolese. They tended to view him as a new form of colonialism. This was post-Lumumba, but certainly Adoula had problems with Dayal. Mobutu, the military, all had problems with him. Timberlake came to feel that the UN was not being supportive enough of the central government efforts to deal with Katanga's secession as well. Timberlake was called back for consultation and never returned.

Q: This was after the Kennedy administration came in?

CARLUCCI: Yes, after the Kennedy administration. He was called back for consultation and never returned. At the same time, Dayal was called back for consultation and never returned. So there was an obvious swap. It looks like that's what happened. A man named Sture Linner took over, a Swede, who was much more effective. He gradually gained the confidence of the Congolese. It cost us a very able ambassador, not that we didn't have a good replacement. Mac Godley came as chargé and did a superb job.

Q: How did Mac Godley operate? Was there a difference between how he operated and maybe his outlook than Clare Timberlake?

CARLUCCI: Clare Timberlake was kind of a street fighter. Godley was a very courageous individual, but he had a more sophisticated approach. Timberlake was very blunt. Once when Washington told him to do something, he shot back, "I'll go ahead and do it, but trying to do that out here is like trying to stuff a raw oyster in a slot machine." I can remember staying up with Godley all night while we were arguing with Dean Rusk about the Lovanium Conference. At one point the State Department felt that Lumumba was going to win at Lovanium and they wanted to call the whole thing off after it had been started. We went out to a secure telephone in a trailer in a remote area and spent all night arguing with Washington. Our channel was through Sheldon Vance, the office director, but Dean Rusk was the real problem. Godley stood up to the State Department and convinced them that the Lovanium Conference ought to continue. And it had, as I mentioned earlier, it had a successful outcome. We turned out to be right, thank God.

Q: How about Mobutu? We're talking today on April 1, 1997, and Mobutu is seemingly on the ropes in Zaire now, but he's been around since that time. Did you run across Mobutu and have any dealings with him?

CARLUCCI: I knew him because of my habit of mixing with the Congolese down at the parliament. He'd show up at the parliament and I got to know him while he was still a Sergeant, before he became commander of the troops. I can remember one episode after he became commander of the troops. I wanted to get into the parliament and I had already missed their passes. The guard at the door wouldn't let me in and actually pushed his bayonet against my stomach. The picture was in the New York Times the next day. I was very irritated. I went over and I found Mobutu having a beer at the bar. I said to him, "Look, here are all my credentials, don't you think I should be allowed to get into the parliament?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Well will you please see that I'm allowed in?"

He said, "I can't do that."

I said, "Why not?"

He said, "Because I'm not in charge here."

I said, "Well you're commander in chief of the Army and if you're not in charge here, who is?"

And he pointed to the guy who had just jammed the bayonet in my stomach and said, "He is."

We developed a relationship. I don't want to say it was close, but we certainly knew each other. I think Larry Devlin and I went to see him shortly after he took over. I walked out of there saying, "Larry, this guy can't last 10 days!" Shows you how good a political leader analyst I was.

Q: What was the reaction of the embassy on the report of knowledge of Lumumba's murder?

CARLUCCI: Well, we were of course distressed, but what we tried to do was report the facts as we had them. There wasn't a lot to be obtained in Leopoldville. Most of the action had taken place in the Katanga and we had to depend on our consul in Elizabethville to report in on what had transpired there. Our best assessment was that he had been killed after he arrived in the Katanga. A UN report subsequently said this, probably in the presence of Monongo.

Q: Did this cause a change? Was there at that time any concern that maybe this was part of the United Nations' effort to rid ourselves of this gentleman?

CARLUCCI: We had other things on our mind. When this happened, as I recall, I was in Stanleyville. This was shortly after they had arrested all the Europeans in Stanleyville and thrown them out. Timberlake asked me if I'd go up there, back and forth and act as consul for Stanleyville. They announced on Stanleyville radio that Lumumba had been murdered and that I was the man who had done it. They claimed I was a paratroop captain or colonel, I guess. I had made it up to the rank of colonel. They were going to see that justice was done. And as I recall, Kwame Nkrumah sent a cable to Dag Hammarskjold about me killing Lumumba and a few other things like that. So we had to worry a little bit about survival. I had to find my way out of Stanleyville. I did that by hitchhiking. In fact, I hitchhiked in a UN plane to Bukavu and then to Elizabethville and then back to Leopoldville. I went back up to Stanleyville a couple of weeks later and they arrested me.

Q: What happened then?

CARLUCCI: Well, they put me under house arrest. They declared me persona non grata.

Q: This was the Congolese government.

CARLUCCI: It was a breakaway government in Stanleyville, headed by Antoine Gizenga. Kabula was a member of that government. I didn't know him well.

Q: He's now the rebel leader looking like he might take over.

CARLUCCI: We had Gizenga, Gbenye, Weregemere, and a number of other Lumumba supporters in Stanleyville. They had broken away when - I guess after Lovanium - I can't recall the exact sequence, certainly when Mobutu had taken over. They declared their own government. I'd been going back and forth, meeting with them, when they declared me persona non grata. About then, I wanted to introduce my successor, Tom Cassilly (who later got arrested himself), so I said I'd go up one more time. I flew up and at the airport, they arrested me and they said I should get back on the airplane and go back to Leopoldville.

I said, "I had no intention of doing that. I was staying in Stanleyville."

By that time the airplane had left and the next airplane was four or five days away. So they said, "Well we're going to put you under house arrest."

So they put me in a house with a guard out in front. The guard had a machine gun. I managed to step out once or twice anyway. The day I was due to leave, the acting foreign minister, a man

named Arsen Dionge, acting foreign minister of the Gizenga breakaway government, came around. He was trying to be very diplomatic. He came in and he said, "How is everything?"

I said, "Not very well."

He said, "What's your problem?"

I said, "I certainly don't like being under house arrest and I don't like being declared persona non grata."

He said, "Oh, well, that. That, you shouldn't worry about it. It's just that it's not convenient to have you around right now. It's really not persona non grata or anything like that."

I said, "Well the next thing you are going to tell me is that I'm not under house arrest."

He said, "No, you're not under house arrest, no problem."

With that, the guard, who had apparently lost his patience, came in and pointed his machine gun at the acting Foreign Minister and starting talking in a local dialect. And Dionge turned to me and said, "Well, could you tell him who you are and who I am and that I'm the acting Foreign Minister because he doesn't seem to understand."

Well, it was a little hard to contain my laughter. So I tried to explain to the guard that it's okay because he was the foreign minister and the foreign minister is a big man around here. Finally, the guard decided it was okay, and he put down his gun and walked back to his post. With that, the acting foreign minister turned to me and said, "This place is terrible. Can you sell me any dollars?"

They then took me and put me on an airplane and that was my last time in Stanleyville.

Q: What were the people in our consulate general doing there?

CARLUCCI: Oh, they had closed that.

Q: It had been closed by that time?

CARLUCCI: Oh, yes. You see what happened, shortly, I guess about three or four months into Independence, they rounded up all Europeans and made them stand in the sun all day long. They chased out our consul and there was nobody up there. Timberlake called me. I'll never forget, he called me on the phone and said, "Frank, I hate to have to ask you to do this but somebody's got to protect the American citizens in Stanleyville. Are you willing to go up there?"

I said, "Okay."

I must say the first airplane ride up there was pretty lonely. I was the only person on the airplane. Nobody was going near Stanleyville. I was able to, I think, restore some sense of confidence to the Americans and able to deal a little bit with the breakaway government.

Q: When you say, who were the Americans and how did they...?

CARLUCCI: Missionaries.

Q: Missionaries.

CARLUCCI: I tried to get them to leave. I can remember urging them to leave. They were very fatalistic. They didn't want to leave. And you may recall that about a year later Belgian paratroops had to go in and rescue them and some were killed.

Q: Was this...Elizabethville is now...?

CARLUCCI: No, this is Stanleyville.

Q: This is Stanleyville in the Katanga?

CARLUCCI: No Stanleyville is in Orientale.

Q: Oh, yes, Orientale Province.

CARLUCCI: Stanleyville was Patrice Lumumba's home.

Q: Was Michael Hoyt there at this point?

CARLUCCI: He was much later.

Q: Much later. And he got caught in that Dragon Rouge operation.

CARLUCCI: Yes.

Q: As you are dealing with the Congolese at that time, either in Parliament or at these breakaway assemblies, what was your impression of how the government was operating?

CARLUCCI: The Congolese government?

Q: Yes.

CARLUCCI: It was chaotic. There was no government. There were ministers and soldiers who had big cars and big houses. All your conversations with them were political. Nobody was interested in restoring the country's economy or dealing with payment problems, inflation, or anything like that. Adoula's government took it a little more seriously. There was a man named Albert Adele who was governor of the central bank. He was one of the Congo's only three or four Ph.D.s, and he was very bright. He tended to take it seriously. There were others. There was an opposition politician who I gave a leader grant to, Kamitas Kamitata, who was governor of the province that included Leopoldville. He, I thought, was responsible. There were elements of leadership, but the chaos almost overwhelmed everyone.

Q: Now, I was in African INR about this time, and although I had the heart of Africa, we'd look at the airgrams and all, there was a feeling that it reminded me at that time of caricatures, hostile caricatures, of what happened in the South during the early Reconstruction period when the freed slaves were taking over. This is a caricature that has gone on but the reports seem to almost define that.

CARLUCCI: It was pretty chaotic. I was in a hotel room one time in Stanleyville when a farce took place. A minister of the breakaway government and I were talking. He had his girlfriend in the hotel room and a man came pounding on the door shouting it was his wife. The man was hauled away in a jeep. It was chaotic.

Q: Were we pretty much, except for trying to protect ourselves and all, were we trying to do the equivalent of later what would become nationbuilding?

CARLUCCI: Yes. When I got back to Washington, I found there were three of us working on the desk: Bill Harrop, Charlie Whitehouse, and myself. I concerned myself with internal politics, and Charlie worked on nationbuilding. Basically the first task was to get the rabble called the Congolese Army under control. Of course, 35 years later, it's still not under control. There is no discipline in it. There was no discipline then. It was a pure rabble then. It is a pure rabble now. We tried. Now, of course, we are being criticized for trying because that was characterized as military aid to Mobutu. So you're damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Q: By the way, while you were in the Congo, you were talking about being used as the point man and going out and I mean this is not a comfortable period. In fact, your exploits there became legendary within the Foreign Service. I heard about these. The aura lingers on.

CARLUCCI: The embassy administrative officer called me accident prone because I kept smashing up his Volkswagen. It was a rented car. It was exciting.

Q: Tell me, what about the other side of this? What about your family?

CARLUCCI: They were evacuated. They were sent to Ghana. They later came back. You had personal inconvenience. Our house was robbed several times. I caught a burglar cutting through the screen with a machete three feet from my baby daughter's crib. We had a lot of personal inconvenience. We were all young and lived with that.

Q: We'll finish up on the Congo side as the desk officer. With the three of you working on that, did you sense a different attitude when you got back to Washington? Did they have a sense of the reality of the Congo?

CARLUCCI: No, Washington was torn. There was an acknowledgment that probably it was desirable to keep the Congo together but there was a lot of sympathy for Katanga's secession. Tom Dodd lobbied...

DEREK S. SINGER
Program Officer, USAID
Leopoldville (1960-1962)

Mr. Singer was born in New York City and Graduated from NYU. He has served in a number of posts including Bolivia, Taiwan, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Zaire and Cameroon. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1999.

SINGER: Yes. A little over a year into our tour there, AID Washington announced, "We want to go into the new African countries, the new independent African countries, as soon as we can." The push started in 1960. So, they said, we need volunteers, people who speak French and people who would fit into a new sort of proto-AID mission that we want to set up in Kinshasa, ex-Belgian Congo. So, the word went around, world wide at the time, for volunteers. I decided I may as well volunteer. I was anxious to go to a continent I hadn't been to yet. Costa Rica was fun, but I wanted to do something perhaps a bit more exciting, a little more "cutting edge". So, it seemed to me that helping to open up a new AID mission in a brand new country, where nobody knew what was going to happen as a reluctant Belgium was finally yielding to UN pressure to get out, that this would be a real challenge. So, my wife gave me a leave of absence, and I said, "okay." AID said "it won't be more than 60 to 90 days, to get things organized", so off I went to Kinshasa.

Q: It wasn't called Kinshasa in those days, was it?

SINGER: No, it was Leopoldville still. That's right. Leopoldville, of course, named after former Belgian King Leopold, whose personal fiefdom the whole country was for a number of years. This was before Belgium took it over as a colony, and ran it for 70 years or so before it became fully independent, or at least was given its nominal independence by Belgium in '60. Belgium was slow to backdown to the growing pressure for decolonization, and acted only under strong pressure from the freedom-minded UNSG, the famous Dag Hammarskjold. Finally, in effect the Belgians said they'd leave, but tacitly supported by the influential French President, Charles DeGaulle, they made clear their cynicism about the Congo's ability to ever govern itself.

Q: So, this was an understanding between the Belgians and the United Nations?

SINGER: It was, but subsequently, the Belgians, to some extent, reneged on that. They tried to come back again to take over things when, under Patrice Lumumba, who was President of the country, and his Prime Minister, things began to go sour. Riots began to break out, travel and ethnic conflicts occurred, transportation and communications were curtailed. Perhaps most poignant of all, at the start of the unrest attending the Belgians' departure, many American and European missionaries around the country, especially in what is called Bas Zaire (the Western or lower part of the Congo between Kinshasa and the Atlantic Ocean), found themselves at risk. Populous, close to the capital, and with many people living there, Bas Zaire was full of missionary groups of one kind or another, the Salvation Army, the Baptists, and the Catholics, most all the Christian groups had people there. The missionaries became a target of a number of unhappy and frustrated Congolese. A number of them were threatened, and, in some cases, they were robbed and otherwise attacked when local law and order broke down and panic broke out. The word

quickly got out through their short wave radio systems, and contacts, that somebody had to come and save them. They were afraid for their lives.

Q: Do you know why they were taking after the missionaries?

SINGER: Well, most were Belgian and French, and they were taking after them, I guess, as symbolic to a number of the Congolese of their former colonial oppressors and overlords, and what have you. These were the people to target. They were there. They were targets of opportunity, if you will. So, in any case, all this began just as our little AID group moved into the country to see what we could do to help, just as we did with a number of newly-independent African countries in the early 1960's. When I got there, I guess in October or November of 1960, a lot of unrest was already brewing, with many rumors of worse to come. The Belgians decided to come back and save their missionaries, and save the situation. Against the wishes of the new government, they parachuted Belgian troops back into the country, despite the fact that they had just given the Congo its independence. Thereupon, for the first time the U.N., under Dag Hammerskjold, who was very much a decolonizer and somebody who believed in a strong United Nations peacemaking, as well as peacekeeping mission, voted for the very first time to send in its own forces to keep order, meaning to eject the Belgians, hopefully without bloodshed. But, the "casques bleus" also were to chase out the nasties from menacing the missionaries and other Western interests, many of which were commercial business interests, and professionals and what have you, who were living there. So, the U.N. sent in its troops, while the U.S. government, also for the first time ever, decided to fly in those U.N. troops because the U.N. had no airlift capability of its own. So we used our planes based in Germany, principally to pick up the troops seconded to the U.N. Congo force from countries all over the world.

Q: But, no Americans involved?

SINGER: No American troops. There were American airmen, including both aircraft and helicopters crews, which we did send in, but no American ground forces. The U.N. troops came from all over. Chiefly, they were from neutral countries, so-called neutral countries, at the time. Now, remember this was the Cold War, big time. Neutral countries such as Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Nigeria sent in their troops, with smaller numbers from other third world countries. Well, with all of that going on just as we were trying to set up an AID mission, it turned out that my own first job Training Officer, was to try to find 50 Congolese with college education, or at least some college credits. We wanted to send them for graduate studies in the United States, and hopefully to set up an English language training program in the country, as well, to help get them ready. My job was to administer the 50 scholarships, in effect, that were a principal independence gift from America to the brand new Congo Republic. Well, it turned out that job had to go on the back burner because of what was transpiring elsewhere, as I mentioned earlier. So we, the core AID group, the six or eight of us AID found to set up the mission, we were dispersed and many of us assigned to other things while the emergency was taking place. Of course, everybody thought things would return to normal at most in a matter of a few weeks. As a matter of fact, my own "emergency assignment" turned out to be pretty interesting. I was sent across the river to work the French Air Force in Brazzaville. Brazzaville, of course, was the counterpart town to Leopoldville (Kinshasa), in the soon to be ex-French Congo. But, in '60 and '61, it was still the French Congo, and run as a French colony under direct French rule.

My assignment came about after it became clear that the US planes flying in the U.N. troops often could not land at the airport in Kinshasa, since the control of the airport in those tumultuous days was often unclear, and could rapidly change hands between government and rebel troops. Kinshasa Airport was simply unsuitable, the UN and the USAF believed. It was not safe enough, and in fact, things were happening so that there were riots and disturbances beginning to occur all around town. So, the decision was made to find a secure alternative airport, and the nearest one that could accept the large troop carrying planes was in Brazzaville, ten minutes by helicopter from Kinshasa. But, Charles De Gaulle was still the President of France, and he abhorred the idea of having an armed U.N. presence anywhere in the world - much less in his own back yard, across the Congo River, from Brazzaville, still a pearl in France's colonial crown! He planned to hang onto this capital of French Equatorial Africa, if he possibly could, at any cost - which remained a key strategic French base. So, the French were very nervous about the UN operation in the former Belgian Congo. They didn't like the idea of the U.N. around there, didn't like it at all, especially armed U.N. troops getting into some kind of war with a former colonial power! And France certainly didn't like the idea of American military planes flying nearby, much less flying troops over sovereign French territory.

But the new young American president, John Kennedy, exerted an irresistible influence on the old French general, and France grudgingly accepted the idea and cooperated with Dag Hammerskjold's unprecedented initiative in both Congo. Otherwise, De Gaulle became convinced, he might be held responsible for putting at risk a significant number - probably several thousand - of the missionaries in Bas Zaire and elsewhere - missionaries the UN forces were pledged to save and protect. Anyway, that argument prevailed and De Gaulle agreed that his military airport in Brazzaville could be used for a limited number of U.S. flights bringing in the U.N. troops. With the president himself playing a role in the agreement, the United States was sufficiently concerned that we wanted to monitor it to make sure it was really working. So, the decision was to assign one civilian (me), and several "military attaches", to the Brazzaville airport as the planes came in with the U.N. troops. Many transports did indeed land in Brazzaville, and some of them also ferried in light planes and helicopters to fly into the lower Congo area to save the missionaries and any others they found at risk.

Q: What numbers or flights of troops were brought in?

SINGER: Not an awful lot of them - probably about 10,000 troops altogether were brought in and subsequently dispersed around Kinshasa.

Q: They had to be ferried across the river?

SINGER: They had to be ferried across the river, as well, either on boats or in the copters and light planes, which could land more easily at alternate airports and landing strips on the Zaire side. They could go where the larger planes could not. So, it turned out that for the five and a half months that I spent in my Congo assignments, if you will, I spent maybe two months on this emergency business with the U.N. troops coming in Brazzaville and so forth. I spent about three months, more or less, on AID business, "real" AID business, both before and after the immediate emergency we faced with the U.N. troops coming in and things settling down.

Q: How would you describe the situation among the Congolese people?

SINGER: Great confusion. Nobody knew what was going on. They had never been independent. They were never even told what independence was. The Belgians did, in my honest estimation, very little indeed to prepare the Congolese for independence, for national responsibility, for decision making, even for pulling the basic levers of government when they were catapulted into independence. My specific job of finding 50 Congolese or Zaireans to take on these scholarships only underscored the confusion and misunderstanding... . It turned out that we did some research and our Embassies in Europe were doing some research for us on this, particularly in Brussels. We learned there were 13 known college graduates in country among the entire population of 20, 30 million, I guess, at the time in Zaire. Thirteen known college graduates! We are talking about a number of unknowns who probably had been trained and stayed in Europe, blended into the populations of countries where they had received their education, and they certainly didn't want to ever go back during the colonial days, in any case, to Zaire. But, within all of Zaire in early 1961, we could identify only those 13 as the obvious candidates for our scholarships! That was an amazing figure, and it certainly made our ambitious program to hand out that well-meant Independence Day gift of 50 scholarships into rather a bad joke.

Q: These were just 13 known in the whole country?

SINGER: Yes, there were 13. It also turned out that there were people on the street corners of Kinshasa selling gaudily wrapped cardboard packages. They looked like Christmas boxes with ribbons, and what have you. Some were labeled "Independence", and others were labeled "Liberte" (liberty). As it turned out, the Belgians had done such an appallingly bad job of preparing the Congolese people for independence that it was possible to do a brisk business selling such boxes because so many Congolese, chiefly the poorest and worst educated, knew absolutely nothing about independence. They only knew it was said to be a "good thing" that had been given to them. Somehow or other, they were not quite sure what it was, but maybe if they went out and bought a box labeled "Independence," they would have some... It was an incredible situation when you stop and think of it. A country that size, and at that time, relatively prosperous, certainly for Central Africa... Economically speaking, it looked pretty good. Kinshasa was a major town compared to Brazzaville, having even a few ten-storey skyscrapers, and what have you. But, the Congo's population was so woefully unprepared and ignorant about freedom, and about what their role as free people should be, or even could be, in a newly independent country. . . no wonder Mobutu could come along a few years later and drive the country to ruin!

Q: Apart from the 13, what were the educational levels of the rest of the population?

SINGER: There were a fair amount of secondary school graduates, high school graduates, and more from the missionary (and some state) elementary schools. The colonial government did almost nothing except to hand pick a few to send abroad for higher education purposes, to be chief clerks, or veterinarians, or nurses, or what have you, relatively lower ranking, "non-threatening" professional jobs. They knew they needed to have some of those return to help run the country. But, as I said, they sent those people to Europe rather than build up national training and education institutions of a higher caliber, higher level, for them, in their new country. They didn't want to do

that. They were afraid of the very idea. So, it was a rather frustrating situation, to say the least. We did manage to begin setting up a rudimentary English language training program. A lot of scholarships were also offered by other private American foundations, the African American Institute, Ford, Rockefeller, what have you, to try to get people into what might turn out to be, say, second or third year of American high schools. They recognized they couldn't do very much else to try to prepare them and keep them on, if possible, in sort of crash courses to get ready for at least undergraduate work at U.S. universities.

Q: I seem to recall that we had a special program for secondary education. Is that something you set up?

SINGER: We helped, but I think that was done by the African American Institute.

Q: Funded by AID, I believe.

SINGER: Yes, but I think Rockefeller and Ford money was in there as well, which was all to the good. Anyway, as it turned out, as I said, I stayed on for five and a half months in Zaire and the Congo. Finally, they sort of let me go and said, "Okay, you have done well, now we are going to, hopefully, set up a real AID mission." Mobutu was going to be coming to the fore pretty soon after that, although he wasn't there during the time I was. Once the initial peace-making effort seemed to work, AID also decided it was time to set up a permanent Mission with permanent staff stationed there.

Q: Is that the time when they brought in a large number of U.N. people to run the government?

SINGER: Yes, U.N. people came in the early 1960s.

Q: Funded by U.S.?

SINGER: Yes, the U.S. funded a number of them. The IREX program, or whatever it was called, I remember that . . . But, as for myself, I went back to Costa Rica. When I got there, I found, quite naturally, my deputy had pretty much taken over my job, after five and a half months. Somebody had to do it, because there was plenty going on there, too. So, I applied to go back to my old graduate school, my old University, SAIS, the School of Advanced International Studies of Hopkins, because AID had announced a new program to choose selected officers who wanted training in economics, so as to become program officers. AID had contracted with SAIS to do this. That was in mid-1961.

ANDREW STEIGMAN
Consular/Economic Officer
Leopoldville (1960-1962)

Andrew Steigman became interested in foreign affairs while completing his undergraduate degree at Princeton University. He then studied for a year at the

London School of Economics. Steigman entered the Foreign Service in April 1958. His overseas posts included Libya, Paris, Nigeria, and Gabon. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 1989.

Q: Let's move to your assignment to Leopoldville. You were there from 1960 to '62. You couldn't have asked for a better time to go to a country or a worse time to go to a country. Could you describe when you arrived what the situation was at the time?

STEIGMAN: When we arrived there, the situation was very peaceful. It was the Belgian Congo.

Q: You arrived when?

STEIGMAN: We arrived in March of '60, three and a half months before independence. There was a certain amount of what the Belgians might call effervescence because everybody was anticipating independence. There was great excitement in the anticipation of independence. New political coalitions were forming and reforming in a very, very inexperienced and unstructured body politic, and it was great fun trying to keep up with it. I mean, we were working our heads off, and we still had a very small, understaffed consulate general.

Q: It was a Consulate General when you arrived?

STEIGMAN: Yes, facing a transition to independence it had one political officer; one economic officer, me; one consular officer, also me for the first couple of months, so I overlapped the economic officer I was replacing for about a month; one CIA officer; an administrative officer and a GSO.

Q: And a Consul General.

STEIGMAN: A Consul General.

Q: Who was the Consul General at the time?

STEIGMAN: Tommy Tomlinson was the Consul General. Jerry LeValle was the number two and the political officer. Jerry was very good and knew everybody. He knew a lot of the Congolese.

Q: I was wondering, was it difficult to meet the Congolese at that point?

STEIGMAN: No, Jerry knew a lot of them. He had very good relations with a number of them.

Q: But there was any way to get a hold of them? I don't mean get a hold of them, but since the Belgians had sort of excluded them so much from leadership positions . . .

STEIGMAN: At the point we got there, of course, they were preparing for leadership and leadership transition. A lot of them very much wanted to talk to the Americans. They were very inexperienced. They really didn't know what they were dealing with or how they were going to cope, and they were coming around looking for advice and counsel. The Belgians obviously were

going to be the main source, but some of these guys didn't trust the Belgians and wanted to talk to other people. So, a number of them had started to talk to the Americans. Both Jerry and the CIA guy, we had them make contacts. They were the two people, really, working in the political field and were starting to meet people and talk to them and get a feel for them.

Q: How about the Belgians? Were they sort of being the dog in the manger at the time?

STEIGMAN: Oh, no. The Belgian gamble was to give the Congolese their independence before they were ready for it on the assumption that the Congolese would then be totally dependent on the Belgians and the Belgians would stay and run things from behind the scenes.

Q: This was open talk?

STEIGMAN: Oh, yes. The Congolese were clearly unprepared. The Belgians had done nothing for generations to prepare them. They had trained only a handful beyond the high school level. They essentially were training clerks and locomotive drivers on the assumption the Belgians would continue to run things. They figured, "Okay, we'll make the clerks office directors and ministers, and the locomotive drivers will become the presidents of the corporations, but obviously they won't know what to do so their Belgium counselors behind the scenes will continue to make all the decisions." It might have worked if they had been not quite so heavy handed with the military.

Q: What were you all doing? Were you going around and saying, "This is a hell of a way to run a railroad!" and telling people this? or just saying this isn't our business so we'll just report on what's happening.

STEIGMAN: On my level, we were just reporting. I was so busy running the consular section and trying to do economic reporting on what was happening, to fix the position of exchange controls and the risks of capital, the way the Belgians were behaving, what was happening to -- you know, we had all these periodic mineral reports and agricultural. Since I was doing two jobs, I was just totally occupied with that. I mean, I would wind up going over trade figures at night and reading the consular manuals at night to try to solve problems, plus trying to move into a house and trying to get our household goods in. It was a very busy two or three months. I'm really not sure what line was being taken by the Consul General and Jerry when they talked with the Congolese.

Q: Well, let's come to when independence came. What were you doing?

STEIGMAN: Well, independence came very peacefully.

Q: It was which day?

STEIGMAN: June 30th. There were big ceremonies, delegations from abroad, we had a major delegation with our ambassador-to-be and a couple of other senior representatives, and the Belgians orchestrated it pretty well. The transportation worked. Lumumba, then who was the new prime minister, made a rather sour speech which insulted King Baudouin. He was establishing his nationalist credentials. Apart from that, it all went off fairly well and everybody congratulated themselves that they seemed to have passed the moment of independence, the flags had changed

and the Belgians were saying, "Aha! Okay. You know the surface appearances have changed, now we can go back to business as usual."

It might have worked if the guy who ran the military, the Force Publique, General Jassens had not been so heavy-handed. Had he made a couple of quick promotions of Congolese sergeants to be junior officers and give them quick responsibilities in visible leadership positions with a Belgium advisor, they might have gotten away with it for a little while. Jassens has said in a meeting with the troops and sergeants apparently something about the fact that, look, they're not going to have any Congolese, it's going to be a slow transition, the Belgians are going to continue to run this, this is a military operation, by God, and it can't be done the sloppy way the civilians are doing it, which triggered mutiny. And since there were a lot more Congolese than there were Belgians, that was the end of the one force that was able to maintain order and all uncertainty rushed to the surface. The place essentially came apart, and the Belgians panicked. The troops rampaged on a couple of military bases, people gotten beaten up, several women were raped, very few deaths. It was mostly, I think, a repaying of past humiliations.

The Congolese had always been treated as very much inferior beings, and one suspects that the people who were beaten, raped, abused, were those who probably had used a certain amount of abuse on the Congolese in the past, and that those, in fact, who had treated the Congolese well in the past probably were not hurt. The stories were wildly exaggerated in the telling. The numbers of people who had been assaulted, who had been killed had been magnified, and there was general panic. Most of the Belgians fled the country.

The Belgians then sent troops in to try to restore order to try and protect their nationals, stirring a real anti-Belgian feeling because here we are independent, our sovereignty is being abused, we're being invaded. There was a call for U.N. intervention by the Congolese; they called for a U.N. force. We were there when history was being made.

Q: What were you doing during this period of time?

STEIGMAN: At that point, the consular section, fortunately, was out of my hands and the consular officer had turned up around the beginning of June.

Q: There must have been a terrible demand on the consular officer for Americans trying to get out.

STEIGMAN: No, there were hardly any Americans then. There were almost no American citizens. The Belgians just wanted to go home. There was no time to do any immigrant visa business. People were just fleeing and if they had to do any visa business they were going to have to go elsewhere. So the consular section, in fact, was not terribly busy. What the consular officer did, in fact, try to manage the emergency evacuation effort because there was very little immediate demand from Americans in the capital. But I guess what we were doing more than anything else was trying to figure out what was going on. We were all trying to sort out rumors.

Q: Let's try now to reconstruct where we were. What were you doing at the time?

STEIGMAN: We were pretty much running around trying to find out what was going on. Once the Force Publique had mutinied, the question was what remained in the way of government structures, and we were really trying to find out who was in charge, how much control they had, how were the factions forming and reforming. We had people running in and out of the embassy. We had a group of very inexperienced Congolese ministers. We didn't know whether the ministries were functioning or not. We didn't know with whom we could deal on questions of anything -- everything ranging from security to possible economic assistance. A large part of our problem was just trying to track down the people who were in charge. The place had come apart before they could put an organizational structure into place, and it was a very confusing atmosphere in which to operate. We were also very busily engaged going back and forth with Lumumba. He first asked for U.S. forces, then when we said no, he asked for U.N. forces. At one point he asked the Russians for help, and we were trying to keep track of it, trying to influence decisions. The whole story is told in Madeline Kalb's book, The Congo Cables.

Q: What sort of support were you getting? Speaking of the Congo cables, these were cables between our mission in Leopoldville and Washington. What instructions was Washington giving you at the time? Were you just playing it by ear?

STEIGMAN: I must say, most of what I remember of this comes from having reread Madeline Kalb's book a few years ago, but not recently enough to be able to give you the details. I really think the book is going to be a much better source on it than my recollection at this point in terms of the substance.

Q: Okay. Now I want to touch more on what you were doing. Did you feel under any threat yourself? Was it a dangerous time for you and your family?

STEIGMAN: The first couple of weeks we were really not sure how the Congolese military were going to behave. Initially, a day or two after the mutiny, we were advised by the embassy not to leave our homes. The Force Publique had set up roadblocks, and we weren't really sure what instructions they had been given. Then the embassy got word that Lumumba was going to make an inflammatory speech over the radio at noon, and the network called everybody and said, "Okay, form up into convoys. Everybody come down to the embassy as a safe haven in case we need to get out." Nobody was quite sure, and Lumumba was considered quite unpredictable. Nobody was quite sure what he was going to do or whether he was going to call on the Congolese to throw out all the foreigners. He didn't. So we set up convoys and went down and worked our way through a series of road blocks, and all grouped at the embassy. The Lumumba speech was not sufficiently inflammatory to put us in any danger, but we still weren't sure. We weren't sure how they were going to look at the Americans.

As it turned out, the Congolese man in the street and most of the troops looked at the Americans as friends. We were next door to the Portuguese Embassy, and the Portuguese were considered terrible colonialists. One time they came and there was a hostile demonstration at the Portuguese Embassy with a certain amount of rock throwing. Then they started marching, and we were right next door, and we didn't know whether we were going to get rocked. They pulled up in front and they gave us three cheers, and then they went on to stone the British Embassy. But we didn't know. As the crowd came by, we really were not sure what their reaction was going to be.

Q: Let's get a little idea of how now all of a sudden you're no longer a consulate general, you're an embassy. Were any more people sent in to help you?

STEIGMAN: Oh, yes. We got tons of people at that point. We got two political officers. We got Army, Navy and Air Force attachés. We got additional CIA personnel. We got additional administrative help. The staff suddenly tripled.

Q: But all of them were obviously unfamiliar with the situation there.

STEIGMAN: Yes, but on the other hand, the old hands, for the most part, who had been there, like me, had been there for two months. So we weren't exactly in-depth experts. We were all learning very quickly. This was a brand-new ball game.

Q: Who was your ambassador at the time?

STEIGMAN: Clare Timberlake came out as the ambassador.

Q: How did you operate? I'm speaking now about the officers. Did you all get together in the morning and say, "Tell me, what the hell is happening here," and sort of share information and then fan out, or what would you do?

STEIGMAN: The first ten days after the mutiny when we were all assembled in the embassy, we slept in the embassy. Families were all evacuated. Women employees were offered the option of evacuating if they wished to. We only had, I think, two secretaries who were evacuated. Essentially it was entirely voluntary; it was not an ordered evacuation. My wife stayed. The consular officer, who was a woman, stayed.

Q: Who was she?

STEIGMAN: Alison Palmer. I think there was one woman working with the CIA who stayed. But otherwise it was essentially an all-male group, and we just lived in the embassy for the first couple of weeks. At that point, we had our staff meetings around midnight or whenever we finished for the day. Anytime between 10:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m., we would all gather in the ambassador's office, and we would all have a drink and we would all talk over what had happened during the day and what was likely to happen tomorrow so that when we got up we knew what we were going to start with, we knew what rumors we had to track down, who we needed to talk to. People reported on which journalists they had met with during the day and what stories the journalists had come in with.

We were working very closely with the American press. There were some top reporters that had come out there, and they were, in effect, almost extra political officers for the embassy because we were very open with them. They would bring us the stories that they picked up, and we would tell them whether or not we had information that could confirm or if we had totally contradictory information so that their reporting would be as accurate as possible.

Q: I have to say that I was in Washington and was in INR dealing with African affairs. Although I had the Horn of Africa, obviously the Belgian Congo was number one on our list. Most of the reports that we were looking at, because they came faster, were the news reports. These seemed to be rather wild at the time talking about armies moving through the jungle and all that. It was a peculiar time. To get an idea of how a brand new embassy works in a crisis, what would you do? I mean, you say you go out and track down rumors. How does one as a Foreign Service officer go out and track down a rumor?

STEIGMAN: We would do the same kinds of things that the press people would do. We would drop in on different ministries, drop in on different offices, make phone calls, we would check with the journalists to see what they were picking up, check whatever sources we could reach. I'd say the big problem in those days for all of us, the journalists and the embassy alike, was we weren't sure who was where. We also had a number of people who would drop in to see us. There would be a rumor, for example, that Lumumba had ordered the arrest of the Foreign Minister. We would try to find out. We would start calling people who might be in a position to know. We got the final answer when the Foreign Minister showed up at the embassy and went up and took refuge in the ambassador's office, then there was an arrest order out on him. That's how we found out for sure. That was the absolute confirmation.

Q: You saw a whole bunch of people from the press. At that time, it was mostly the written press rather than the TV press. Again, coming into an unfamiliar place, and the word there going out was of paramount importance to how the world would view this. As I say, at INR we were responding probably more to press reports at that time because they were coming first. But how did you evaluate their reporting? How good were they?

STEIGMAN: The top American reporters who were there at different times, people like Lloyd Garrison, Paul Hoffman, later David Halberstam, Jonathan Randal, were among the best foreign correspondents in the business. They tried very hard to be sure that their reports were accurate and were well documented. We didn't read their stuff, but we talked to them and had a sense from talking to them what they were going to report. All I can say is that from that side of the experience, we had the impression they were trying to be very careful to sift out the wild rumor and the exaggerated story and to keep it out of their accounts.

Q: How about some of the other reporters? These, of course, were the main reporters and the main ones that were read by policy makers.

STEIGMAN: Yes. I mean, the New York Times people, the International Herald Tribune people, the people from the major news services, I'd say they tried to be very responsible. It was, however, as you've also noted, extremely difficult to sort out the facts, and these guys were working on deadlines. We had the luxury that we did not have to get a report in by 2:00 in order to get it into the morning paper. We could wait until 6:00 if that extra four hours helped us confirm something. So you might very well have seen something first in the newspaper because it was still uncertain, and they would have to send in something that said, "It has been alleged that . . ." or "It has been reported that . . ." or "There is an unconfirmed account of . . ." We would try to hold it until we could confirm it one way or another.

Q: Did we have a particular line or policy that we were doing, or was it just trying to keep . . .

STEIGMAN: To keep the Russians out. It was a very Cold War policy. Lumumba was not necessarily considered to be a Communist or anything, but he was considered to be very unstable, and nobody was really quite sure what he was going to do, and the big thing that one wanted to avoid was to have him create an opening for the Russians. The U.S. was not prepared to bring in its own forces, but the U.N. force was seen as a way of providing stability and precluding Russian intrusion.

Q: We felt this was a very serious possibility at the time?

STEIGMAN: Oh, yes. This was very much a Cold War approach in Washington. It shines through The Congo Cables; it shines through other books that have been written about Kennedy policy in Africa in that era.

Q: After the situation sort of settled down, if you could call it that, I mean it's a turbulent time, what were you doing for the remainder of the time that you were there until '62?

STEIGMAN: Once the U.N. force had come in and there had been at least a restoration of law and order, there was still constant political turmoil. I went back and forth. I was not only an economic officer. When I went out there to a consulate general, I would have been the economic officer but in a junior position, but with an embassy, a more senior economic officer was brought in, an economic counselor and a mid-level officer. So I became the number three in a three-man section. Because there were three economic officers in a very uncertain economy, I tended to be a float. I spent a lot of time doing political reporting plus some economic work. So I did a fascinating mixture of things. I wound up the principal political section contact with several of the Belgians who had remained on as counselors. One at the presidency and one at the foreign ministry became good friends, and they were invaluable sources, and I used to see them on a regular basis and feed their information into political calculus.

Q: How did we view, again at the time, the situation when Lumumba was killed and all? Was this a good thing from the embassy point of view?

STEIGMAN: The embassy's response, I think, was a sense of great relief. Lumumba was looked on by the embassy as a loose cannon on the deck, as the one man who could rally serious opposition to the relatively moderate government that we wanted to see installed. At the time Lumumba was killed, there was an interim government in place which we had been supporting. It was a few months before the summit which produced the Adoula government, but clearly as long as Lumumba was alive, he was the logical man around whom a number of Congolese would be likely to rally. With Lumumba out of the way, there was no clear successor, and it made the situation easier, if you will, to manipulate. So I think the removal of Lumumba, whom we did not trust, was regarded as essentially a helpful thing.

Q: How about our feeling toward the separatist movements that were developing in the Congo? Did we have a strong feeling about that?

STEIGMAN: We were consistently opposed to the Katanga and Kasai separatists. Those were the two movements at the time, and our policy was consistent in opposition to Tshombe in Katanga and to Kalonji in Kasai particularly once the U.N. force was in place. It took us a little while and it took the U.N. a little while to really exercise their mandate strongly enough to end the secessions.

LEWIS HOFFACKER
Principal Officer
Elisabethville (1961-1963)

Chief Political Officer
Leopoldville (1963)

Ambassador Lewis Hoffacker was born in Pennsylvania in 1923. He received his bachelor's degree from George Washington University in 1948 and then his master's degree from Fletcher's School of Law and Diplomacy in 1949. He then served in the US Army from 1943-1946. His career has included positions in Teheran, Istanbul, Paris, Algiers, and Leopoldville and ambassadorships to both Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. Ambassador Hoffacker was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 17, 1998.

HOFFACKER: I paid for my experience there by being assigned as US Consulate in Katanga during the turbulent "événements," as we called them. I might go into some detail here because we received a lot of publicity. There have been varying versions of what transpired during that period, 1961 to 1963. I might go into my version of how it looked from the foxhole, as it were. I started out in Leopoldville, now called Kinshasa, where I had about a week with Ambassador Gullion. It was the week that UN Secretary General Hammarskjold died in a crash in northern Rhodesia. One theory had it that allies of the Katanga rebels may have shot him down. As I was taken to my assignment in southern Congo, Elisabethville, we flew in a bullet ridden plane over the treetops to avoid ground fire. I landed in Elisabethville not knowing that the consulate had been occupied by UN troops after the first round of fighting. I did not think this was appropriate. I could not have a very open consulate with sandbags in my consulate windows and Gurkha troops throughout the grounds facing the presidential palace across the street. So, it took about a week for that to be disposed of and I settled down. My family arrived shortly thereafter, but just before a second round of fighting.

In the middle of all this tension and more than tension (in other words, military incidents) between the UN forces and the Katanga rebels), Senator Dodd of Connecticut arrived. He was regarded as the Senator from Katanga. He supported the very heavy pro-Katanga lobby in the United States. He wanted to see for himself what made this fellow, Maurice Tshombe, the president of Katanga, tick, and to see how our policy was going. It was a tightrope I was walking because our policy was clearly in support of Leopoldville as the central government, and was opposed to this succession initiative of Tshombe. I did my thing. I gave a cocktail party, which is what you do when a Senator comes to town. I was pleased that most of the government ministers and UN missionaries and others were able to gather in the neutral US consulate to meet the Senator and his wife. We were

heading for dinner that evening at the home of the Mobil Oil representative, Sherry Smith. I had in my car the Senator and his wife and my wife. As we approached the Smith house, we saw rebel troops dragging three men out of the house and putting them on a truck. I grabbed two of them, George Ireland Smith of the UN, and a Belgian banker, and shoved them in the front seat of the car, and tried to find Earkhardt, who was the UN representative there. He had been dragged off into the dark. By that time, despite my asserting my consular immunity, the rebel soldiers who were obviously high on some local weed, were aiming their weapons at us. I thought our time was measured and therefore asked the driver to take us back to the consulate. The rest of the night with Senator Dodd, his wife watching, I negotiated earnestly with the Katanga government, insisting that Earkhardt be brought back alive. In the meantime, the UN was losing patience. The military was losing patience because their civilian representative, Earkhardt, was unaccounted for. They wanted to assault the presidential palace across the street. I had to hold off this battalion to say that we were going to give diplomacy its chance. We did succeed after what seemed like an eternity. Earkhardt was brought in by two ministers of the government, bloodied but alive. We all went to bed. During the night, a UN military officer, an Indian by nationality, was shot just across the street from the consulate.

Senator Dodd had told them to take him to Kolwezi in the west of Katanga. We thought we should stick with the program. I gave my family to some American missionaries as I drove off into the countryside with Dodd, who was very pro-Katangan in his remarks, and anti-Washington at the same time. That was the way it was. Senator Dodd asked if he could commend me to President Kennedy. I said, "Well, please take it easy because the more kind things you say about me, the more difficult may be my Washington, with the State Department, with our ambassador, Leopoldville. I was glad that we came out alive on that one.

I still had the idea that we could negotiate some sort of a settlement between the central government and Katangans out there on the barricades as the second round of fighting appeared imminent. I tried twisting arms without instructions on the Iban side and on the Katangan side. I did not succeed. Fighting began. A lot of civilians were killed; some military and so forth. We had some missionaries with mercenaries in their garden, firing on UN. I had a great Vice Consul, Terry McNamara, who knew some mercenaries and was able to get them out of the missionaries' garden. We got through that. But the shooting was just too much. I was fearful for the lives of Americans. A Consul is supposed to worry about his people. So, I talked to the UN about this problem with the Americans. I said, "You've got to get them out of here." So, they provided armored vehicles. But I had only about a five minute window to get them alerted and out. I in the meantime was put under house arrest because of the Katangans being unhappy with Washington on a number of scores. So, as I said "good-bye" to my family at the consulate and put them in the armored cars, I did not tell them I was under house arrest because that would have added to their worries. They were taken to the airport and sent off to Salisbury for the duration. This included the missionaries as well as women and children in the consulate.

All hell broke loose there after. Of course, the foreign press had to be there. We got a lot of publicity as it were. I remember Halberstam of the *New York Times* came to see me at the consulate because I couldn't leave because of the house arrest label on me. He had been shot at and missed. He said, "I don't mind dying, but I'd rather not die here, if you don't mind."

The cease fire occurred finally and things settled down. I still believed that we could negotiate this thing. Somehow, my message got through. I was invited to come back to see the President, Kennedy, but not to tell anybody, which was sort of awkward as to why I was back there. But I did tell Mack Godley, the commanding officer in charge of Congolese Affairs in the Department before I went over to see the President, who asked me to review the situation, which I did. He asked if I would carry a letter from Senator Dodd back, asking Tshombe to agree to sit down with George McGhee and Wayne Fredericks to talk about rejoining the Congo. I saw Senator Dodd, who presented this letter, which I carried back. I sat in negotiations which, of course, came to nothing.

Then I was transferred to Leopoldville as head of the Political Section, which was flattering. While there, my wife became deathly ill and almost lost her life because of malpractice in the local hospital. Fortunately, the UN hospital took her in and kept her alive until we could fly out to Paris for proper hospitalization.

In the meantime, the third round of fighting occurred in Katanga and the UN troops succeeded in occupying all of Katanga. That was the end of the succession. It was the least attractive assignment I had, but it had. It taught me an awful lot. The communist threat, of course, was why we were there, to keep the Congo united and to keep the commies out. They were coming in the windows. Mobutu was an instrument in this regard. I never cared much for him. I felt he was lazy and he didn't run a good army. His charm was just that. He was convenient to our government though with heavy CIA support. So, I was learning on the job.

Q: You were there -

HOFFACKER: From '61 to '62 in Katanga and then from '62 to '63 in Léopoldville, which is Kinshasa now. But I remember when Halberstam came to see me in the consulate because I couldn't get out - I was put under house arrest - and he was shot at. He was very shaken and scared. He said, "I don't mind dying; I'd just rather not die here, if you don't mind." That's the way I felt too. I want to die back here. I had a good year there, but it was very painful in a lot of respects, particularly on the security side. My family was evacuated shortly after I arrived. But maybe I should start at the beginning.

Q: Yes, because we want to cover this rather thoroughly.

HOFFACKER: Okay, I was assigned to be consul in Katanga. I went to Léopoldville. Ed Gullion was the ambassador there. I spent a week with him. Hammarskjold went down in Northern Rhodesia.

Q: He was killed.

HOFFACKER: Yes, the plane went down and he was killed, and it was a mystery at the time about how it had happened. And so after about a week in Leopoldville, it was time to go down and take my post. I went down on Air America, I think it was called, one of those planes contracted to carry supplies. It was full of bullet-holes. We were flying very low because the Fouga plane that the Katangese rebels had was in the air and was trying to bring down our planes. I landed, and I was

surprised when I arrived at the consulate. Nobody had told me that the consulate was occupied by Indian troops, who had moved in there after the last round of fighting. There were sandbags in the windows and in the garden. It took me a week to get rid of them. You can't run consulate with UN troops - any troops. It was contrary to *my* way of business. The Katanga president's house was just across the street, and here we were with machine guns out the windows of the consulate trained on the president's house. That's no way to have a dialogue, and I wanted to have a dialogue.

Q: The president being Tshombé at that time.

HOFFACKER: Yes, and I developed a relationship that was workable.

Q: Could you explain what was the situation just before you arrived? Why were there UN troops in the Congo? What was the problem?

HOFFACKER: They were there after the first round of fighting. The UN troops moved in on the town and secured a line between the Katangese "*gendarmerie*," and the mercenaries on the Katangan side, and the UN. A cease-fire stopped them in those positions, but incidents continued - firing on each other, kidnaping, that sort of thing. It was explosive. I got the troops out and then I started my diplomacy - you know, bring the two sides together. And I was very determined not to have any more fighting. But the fighting continued, and I was standing out on the ramparts there between the two telling them not to fight. I had no instructions for that; I just didn't want to sit in a foxhole. There must be some way to keep them from shooting again, because when they shoot they kill a whole lot of people, civilians in particular.

Anyway, the second round of fighting began, and it was bad all over town, and I told the UN I was worried about my missionaries and other noncombatant Americans, and they said, "Well, we can give you a couple of armored personnel carriers to get them out of here, but you have to do it now because we can't hold off." So I sent word around the American community and said, "You have five minutes to go, and only five minutes." So they all came, all our women and children and the missionaries. We sent them out, and then all hell broke loose. More of the same, and a lot of civilians killed. Some UN killed. I guess before that, though, I should tell you about Senator Dodd, before it all blew up. I'll backtrack a bit.

Senator Dodd from Connecticut was a so-called senator from Katanga. He was subject to a lobby group that wanted us to support the independence of Katanga, which was contrary to Washington policy. And we wanted Katanga to be reintegrated into the Congo. We didn't recognize the secession of Katanga. Ambassador Gullion came down and tried to work out a deal with Tshombé, but it fell through. Tshombé reneged. Senator Dodd came to town, and we had a reception at the consulate, which we usually do for a senator. I brought in the government of the Katanga régime and UN people. It was the first time they had been together, so I thought I had accomplished something. We went to dinner afterwards at the home of the Mobil oilman, and the Senator and his wife and my wife and I arrived there, and we saw three European people being dragged out of the house. I grabbed two of them and put them into the limo, and the third one I couldn't see because it was dark. We had to get out, and besides these Katanga rebels, "*gendarmes*," who were doing the kidnaping and terror were aiming their weapons at us, and I thought it was about time to get out.

We raced back to the consulate, and all night long I negotiated with the government, the president's office, for the release of Urquhart, the UN representative.

Q: He was the other person.

HOFFACKER: Right, Brian Urquhart. We could see he had been hit in the face and was being dragged off into a dark... Finally two of the ministers of the government brought him in after several hours. Senator and Mrs. Dodd were sitting there watching all this; we had a successful conclusion. Urquhart was badly hurt, having had his nose bashed in by a rifle butt and having been threatened with his life. He handled himself very well. One problem was that the Indian brigade wanted to move on the palace to get the UN representative, but I said, "No, we can't have that. We're negotiating." There was great rejoicing when Urquhart was brought in. The other two people were the information officer of the UN and a Belgian banker. The next day, Dodd still wanted to see Kolwezi and the mines, the copper mines, so he and I and others went out to look at them. I put my family with some missionaries to protect them, because an Indian officer was murdered that night in front of the consulate. It was that sort of explosive situation. Dodd went away, and the missionaries and our families soon went away because of the deteriorating security situation. They were flown out to Rhodesia, where they stayed for a certain time.

Q: What was in it for Dodd? Why was he pushing for Katanga?

HOFFACKER: It is alleged that he was a pawn of Belgian mining interests. The Belgian mining interests were staunchly behind Tshombé. The Belgian commercial lobby was very strong in this country, and Dodd was part of that.

Q: How did he react to seeing this brutality on the part of the secessionists? Did that have any effect on him?

HOFFACKER: Not really. That little incident did not change him. In fact, he said to me as he left, "I want to talk to President Kennedy, because I think you did a great job." I said, "Senator, would you mind not overdoing it, because I have enough problems keeping the consulate open." There were some people who thought we didn't need a consulate there. They thought my reporting all this stuff coming out of Katanga was not necessary, that they could figure it out from Léopoldville. I never had any problem with my ambassador. He never called me pro-Katangan, and of course I wasn't.

The funny thing was that Douglas MacArthur III, our ambassador in Brussels, was usually agreeing with me. I said, it's very interesting: here's this little consulate (I was a second secretary when I was there), and I reported directly to Washington, the UN, Brussels, Léopoldville, and others, not going through the Embassy. So the stuff I wrote was sometimes dynamite.

Q: The world was really focused on this problem at that time.

HOFFACKER: I sensed - and I was right - that Washington hadn't made up its mind how they were going to play it. Are they going to let the UN play it their way, or are we going to play it our way, or are we going to have a secession? Dodd was very close to the President. So I will tell you

now, and this is something that has come out in other forms, so I can tell you. I didn't think it would ever come out, but it has. You know Freedom of Information has uncovered things that I didn't think would ever come out.

President Kennedy, at the behest of somebody in the department - I think it was George Ball, who was undersecretary - decided he wanted to talk to me. He had been reading some of my stuff; he was that sort of a president. He was reading all these Katanga cables. He shouldn't have been doing that, but he was. And so he said, "I want to talk to you. Come home and don't tell anybody." Well, I don't go back to Washington without telling somebody, so when I arrived in Washington I went by way of some places other than Leopoldville, and I did tell the Department that I was going over to see the President. I reported back what had transpired. Kennedy just wanted to know my views, and I repeated what I had already said. And he said, "Would you now go up and see Senator Dodd and carry a letter back from Dodd to Tshombe urging reintegration into the Congo." I said, "Well, of course, I'd be glad to" I went back and it resulted in another round of talks. George McGhee and Wayne Fredericks, who was an aide to Soapy Williams in African Affairs at the time, and I sat down with Tshombé around the table and talked. Tshombé said "Of course, of course" to everything we said. Of course, he didn't mean what he said, so we had to have another round of talks. At that time I had been moved from Elisabethville to Léopoldville, the embassy, to be head of the Political Section there, and we brought in new man as consul.

Q: I'd like to talk about this meeting with President Kennedy. How well informed did you find him?

HOFFACKER: Well informed. He said, "Do you really mean that?" about these things I had reported. He said, "Do you think there's hope?" I said, "There's always hope." I believe you should negotiate until there's nothing to negotiate. "Can you trust him?" I said, "Well, I'm not sure you can trust him." Of course, we found out later we couldn't trust him. If you get something in writing, it's better than nothing.

At that time we were living in Léopoldville, and my wife got deathly ill, and I had to go off to Paris with her. During that time there was a third round of fighting with the UN and then it was over. The UN moved out and did not stop, as they had done the two previous times, with cease-fires. This time they didn't stop; they took over Katanga and that was the end of the secession.

Q: One of my interviews, which is an ongoing one, is with Jonathan Dean, and he was there at the time and said at one point the Indian Brigade commander said, "What do you think I should do? Should I stop?" And Dean said, "Well, its up to you, but it makes sense to keep going." Later on, at the same time, whoever was secretary general of the UN, U Nu, was saying they wouldn't go on. But the Indians went on, took it over, and Ralph Bunche came out and with a smile on his face said, "You know you really shouldn't have done that."

HOFFACKER: Communications broke down. The restraint on the UN troops just didn't reach them. I think maybe we were handling their communications. I wasn't there, so I don't know precisely.

Q: Sometimes it's handy to have communications break down.

HOFFACKER: That was the explanation I got. I was in Paris at the time with my wife. Anyway, it was done, and secession was over.

Q: *Were you the only American there?*

HOFFACKER: Oh, no. Terry McNamara was the vice-consul.

Q: *I have a long interview with him.*

HOFFACKER: You'll enjoy that. He was heroic; he was just wonderful.

Q: *I knew Terry even before he went out there, and Terry is kind of a very quiet "war lover." He kind of likes that. I knew him in Danang.*

HOFFACKER: Ask him specifically, because he may not tell you. How did he rescue the missionaries from the UN? I'll tell you and you can verify it with him. He was vice-consul. He was always out there drinking beer with the mercenaries, with the bad guys, anybody who was down there at the Léo II Hotel. He was doing his job, sniffing around, so he knew the mercenaries, and one day the UN fired on the compound of the American missionaries. They called me and said, "Get the UN to stop." And the UN said, "But there are mercenaries among the missionaries. They're firing at us, and we're firing back at the mercenaries among the missionaries." Terry got in touch with the mercenaries to tell them to stop firing from the compound, and so he saved some American lives. Of course, the missionaries were sympathetic towards Tshombé. They were Katangans for all practical purposes. Terry was a godsend in situations like that.

Q: *What sort of instructions were you getting from Léopoldville.*

HOFFACKER: Not very many. When I went to Katanga I was surprised. I was given no instructions. So I went. I've been other places where I didn't have instructions. I looked over the situation and reported. I guess that was what I was supposed to do - report, but not add any legitimacy to that régime, because it was not a government; it was a secessionist régime. So I was careful about that. I developed good communications with anybody I wanted in that régime.

Q: *Was there anything resembling a central government representative in the area?*

HOFFACKER: No.

Q: *So we are trying to restore a régime that really couldn't project its power even within the area. Well, in other words, we're talking about...*

HOFFACKER: Kasavubu and Adoula, the president and prime minister, could not project their power in Katanga. They and that rabble army under Mobutu could not prevail against the Katanga mercenaries and rebels who were trained by Belgian officers and other officers and were reinforced with mercenaries, who were purely European. That was an effective military force which the Congolese army couldn't beat. But superimposed on that was the UN, which had Indian,

Ethiopian, Irish - you name it. They did have the overwhelming force; they just had to be unleashed. And when they were unleashed, the third time around, they took over and cleaned up.

Q: I think Jonathan Dean said something about "Well, for some reason," with a twinkle in his eye, "we didn't have communication with anyone else." So I think they probably pulled a switch so they could -

HOFFACKER: I wasn't there at the time. But we were very much part of the UN. Our military attaches were big offices. Our CIA was immense. And we were integrated, for all practical purposes, in the UN.

Q: What about the CIA at that time? I would have thought that the CIA being particularly accident-prone in the '60s would have almost brushed you aside and taken over.

HOFFACKER: No, they were there. I didn't pretend to know everything they did, but they were not a problem there; and moreover, they provided our communications. We didn't have our own. They were there and they did their little collection of intelligence. But in Léopoldville, where I was so-called chief of the Political Section, it was a different ball game. There CIA was very big and conspicuous. They were everywhere: in the government, in the military, and in the embassy. Everybody knew who they were; they were the backbone of the central government.

Q: The Congolese government.

HOFFACKER: Yes, to the extent that they even brought in public relations people to make the government look good.

Q: It was a time when the CIA worked very hard and in a way it was the high point of...

HOFFACKER: Also they had good Cuban pilots. You know the good Cubans. I forget where they were from, maybe Miami. They had Cuban pilots there running their contract airplanes.

Q: In Vietnam it was called Air America

HOFFACKER: Maybe it was called Air America there, too. Anyway, it worked. I had a year in Léopoldville watching Ambassador Gullion, who was a remarkable operator. I learned an awful lot from him.

Q: When you were in Léopoldville from '62 to '63 as chief of the Political Section, could you describe first how Ed Gillian operated.

HOFFACKER: He was very impressive. He had had a lot of experience. I think he knew Kennedy somewhere along the way.

Q: Yes, he was Kennedy's person put there inside.

HOFFACKER: I think so, and that made a difference. He had a good connection. But he was very professional in all respects and put together a good staff and ran a tight ship. We had a good relationship, and it surprised me that he never held Katanga against me.

Q: Why would he hold it against you?

HOFFACKER: Well, the fact that I was every day sending messages quoting Tshombé and all that sort of thing. Some people had the impression that I was pro-Tshombé. I just said give him a little more time to try to work something out with him. That's always my rule of thumb. Some people said, no, it's not worth bothering with him. I said it is worth bothering with him, just to see where it goes. And of course, it didn't go where we wanted it to go, so he had to go. Of course, he came back later as prime minister of the Congo.

A funny thing happened. He was then kidnapped on the way to Spain, I think, and incarcerated in Algeria, and I was there at the time as chief of the U.S. Interests Section. I said to "my" ambassador, the Swiss Ganz, that I have this problem with Tshombé there in jail. If he breaks out he'll probably come over here to my office and want asylum. I said I'll be calling him because I don't know what I'm going to do if that's the situation. I was under the Swiss flag. But of course he died there, which simplified things.

But to get back to Gullion. He saw the communist threat very clearly and he convinced Washington that Gizenga and those other guys who were flirting with the commies out in Stanleyville and elsewhere had to be put down, not necessarily physically. And Lumumba was regarded as vulnerable. We had nothing to do with his demise; I'm satisfied with that. He did meet his end in Katanga, in September before I arrived. But Gullion presented a case for keeping a unified Congo, that is, with Katanga, which had the biggest resources of the Congo, and the UN prevailing as opposed to the Soviets and the other bad ones, in those days Ghana and India, who were footsying with Gizenga and his little crowd wanting to balkanize the Congo, which was a no-no in Washington. You hold it together, for better or for worse. Gullion prevailed, and I liked the way he handled that. Washington was wavering; they were under pressure, not just from Dodd but from others, and the Gullion thesis prevailed. That was something impressive to watch.

Q: Looking back on it, and seeing what the Congolese central government did - they basically took a rather thriving industry and area of Katanga and ran it into the ground - it might have been better to have Balkanized it, considering what happened to all of the Congo.

HOFFACKER: Well, I should put in a word against Mobutu. I didn't like him from the first day. He came to have lunch with me in Léopoldville and all that, but he was a lazy lout. He was head of the army, which was a rabble. Rape and pillage was their first priority. They did not provide any security for the Congolese. They were just corrupt, ineffective and he was likewise, from the very beginning, just taking care of himself, and no great patriotism. And then he became prime minister and president and God almighty - whatever his title was - and we stuck with him until almost the end. He was a misfortune for the Congo, and it's a pity we were stuck with him. I think there must have been some way we could have found some other people. Little things keep coming back.

Q: I want to hear them.

HOFFACKER: This is a footnote. Let's go back to Katanga, where there was that régime, that government. The foreign minister - I liked him very much - Everest Kimba, who was eventually hanged, and hanged badly. He and I were talking about Lumumba, who had just been killed. And here's this secessionist foreign minister saying to me that there was only one person he knew who could hold the Congo together, and that was Lumumba, who was a sworn enemy of Katanga, who was killed in Katanga by Katangans. He didn't say Tshombé could hold the Congo together; he said Lumumba. Lumumba did have some charismatic and other qualities which were pluses. But he had the vulnerability which could have been for Soviet purposes and which could have been used against our interests. I wish we had been able to find some way to work with him. But anyway, it was too late. He had to go. But Mobutu was a big mistake all around.

Q: By the way, you did mention, when you were in Elisabethville, that you were at one point under house arrest. What was that?

HOFFACKER: One day the UN Swedish planes bombed a beer factory in Katanga. That's pretty serious business because the Katanga gendarmes didn't fight without beer, and Katangans didn't live without beer. Here's this only beer factory. And they held me responsible for that. I wasn't running the UN or the Swedish planes, and I wasn't bombing anyone, but they thought they'd put me under house arrest. This was when Tshombé was out of town. I don't think it would have happened if he'd been there. Anyway, Munongo, the interior minister - dreadful man - put me under house arrest. So I was there, doing my business, but people had to come to me. I didn't even tell my family because they would have worried. But one day the French consul, Joe Lambroschini, said we had enough of this house arrest. Why don't you come with me, we'll go over to see the president? We did that. We had a talk with the president, and that was the end of that house arrest.

Q: Being the chief of the Political Section in Léopoldville, you were dealing with a chaotic mess, weren't you?

HOFFACKER: It was sort of strange because CIA was running most of the show and I didn't expect to know what CIA was doing. So I had my little section, Tom Cassilly and a couple of others doing the usual biographical and minor stuff - and Ambassador Gullion doing most of the political reporting, and the CIA doing their thing. But the funny thing - do you want a funny one?

Q: I'd love it.

HOFFACKER: Well, you know the hierarchy in the State Department. When the ambassador is away and the DCM is away, then the next ranking Foreign Service officer is the chargé, despite the fact that the AID chief and the military chief were all big guys, but they're not FSOs - we had a lot of FSSs and FSRs. So one day I found myself, a second secretary, chargé d'affaires of this great big apparatus. So Senator Ellender of Louisiana came to town. He was an enemy of the Foreign Service. He said, "We're coming down there to have a hearing on your aid program." So he came down and had a hearing, and I was sitting there with all these great barons sitting around, and I did the right thing by letting him talk. He had prejudged the situation anyway.

Q: In diplomatic terms he was kind of a horse's ass who was mainly interested in traveling around throwing his weight around.

HOFFACKER: Yes, he was. I didn't tell him that, though. I learned on that occasion to let him talk. We made our little speeches, but we didn't try to teach him anything. This is a rule I remember. Don't try to tell a guy like that anything that he doesn't want to hear. Then he said, "I don't want to meet any of these Congolese. I want to stay with American families. I want to eat American food, and then I'll go away." Which he did for three days. And we entertained him, and he bored us to death with things like his life and his gumbo, which is the best gumbo that has ever been manufactured, according to him.

Q: It's a soup.

HOFFACKER: It's a soup. We had to listen to that and about himself and himself and himself. We survived. And he went off to (Ian Smith's) Rhodesia because that's where he'd feel more at home. He made a speech on arrival: These Congolese are savage, barbarian, or something like that. And the Congolese heard this statement, and they said, "If he wants to come here, we're not going to let him." We said, "Sorry, he's just been here." The moral of the story is: make them feel comfortable. You can talk to some but not all. The best person I escorted was John Kennedy, when he was a congressman. He came out to Iran, and I was the control officer, and I had him for three days. He was intelligent, curious, no problem. We had a good time. And he went away with something that he hadn't brought. And he was the only one I recall who ever sent a thank-you note. I remember a longhand note from the Raffles Hotel in Singapore to me in Teheran. Of course, it burned up when the files were burned. I didn't carry any files with me. I didn't take any correspondence or anything with me when I retired.

Q: Was your impression that the CIA knew what it was doing or was it, as the term has been used before, a bunch of cowboys running around operating

HOFFACKER: I knew the station chief, and I got along very well with him. But he didn't tell me anything. What evidence I saw of their activities left me with the impression that they knew what they were doing. They weren't just cowboys; they were professionals in their own way. In those days, you did that. The press were not going to give you a hard time. That's the way you dealt with the commies.

Q: Of course, the secret weapon of the CIA was money. I would think the Congo was wide open. Probably for a pretty inexpensive price you could get certainly a minister and maybe a prime minister.

HOFFACKER: We had virtually unlimited money. We were running the world, as we were in Iran. In those days you did just that. Now we don't have the money.

Q: What was your personal feeling towards Adoula and Kasavubu?

HOFFACKER: They were nice people, but they weren't effective. Let's face it, on their own they couldn't have survived. They had to be supported by us. There was no way they could have

prevailed on their own, even with our money. If we gave them money the money itself would not have been enough. We had to show them how to use the money. I don't know what's going on in the Congo now, but it's so sad that there's this new guy who has an opportunity to do better and he's not doing so.

Q: It seems a repetition of before. It's tribal. It's personal accumulation of wealth, and the country is just going down, down, down.

HOFFACKER: The Congolese are like the rest of us: they're good people, but they're badly led and abused.

Q: During this '63-'63 period, the media's attention moved away from the Congo. There was a time when Halberstam and others were sitting there, and then they began to leave.

HOFFACKER: The secession was over. There were little rebellions, which were endemic in the Congo. I was away, so I recall they were just rebellions.

Q: There's an interesting book - it's been a long time since I read it - by Madeleine Kalb called The Congo Cables...

HOFFACKER: It's pretty good.

Q: ...which gives somewhat of a flavor of the period, from the American perspective, records.

HOFFACKER: There's never been a good one on the Congo, on Katanga. At one time, I thought that possibly I would do something on that, but I would have to go into the Flemish files, and to know Katanga from Belgian archives. That's not easy. I'm not that much of a scholar. And I don't like to work with secondary sources. There's not been a proper book on Katanga. Now Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote one, which is fascinating, but from the point of view of Conor Cruise O'Brien - you know, the Irishman who was the UN representative. I saw him there just before Urquhart took over. O'Brien wrote *Katanga and Back*, I think it was. He had the overall Congolese perspective, but there really isn't another one that focuses on the province of Katanga. That's what I thought I might do some day, from the Bantu up to the present, but I don't have the materials or the motivation.

Q: It was a little bit later, wasn't it, not '62-'63, that Stanleyville blew up, Simba?

HOFFACKER: Mike Hoyt was the consul there. It so happened I was back in Washington at that time running the Operations Center. After I left the Congo I went to the War College for a year, and then I was director of the Operations Center. During that period, whenever it was, '64-65, Mike Hoyt was seized, along with other Europeans and Americans - the bad guys had taken them and they were held hostage.

Q: We have a long interview that was done with him.

HOFFACKER: Then you have the story. I guess he's back in New Mexico. I wanted to look him up. But we looked at it from a rescue point of view at the Operations Center.

Q: Yes, Operation Dragon Rouge and that whole business. Is there anything else? What was life like in Léopoldville during '62 to '63?

HOFFACKER: Local security was poor. It was not as bad as now, but you had guards at your house, and so forth. Frank Carlucci will tell you how bad it was.

Q: I've interviewed Frank, too.

HOFFACKER: You know how they cut the shoestrings off his shoes, that sort of stuff. Well, anyway, we had enough food, but it was terrible for the family. They couldn't go out, couldn't go anywhere.

Q: Was it the option to have the families go home or something?

HOFFACKER: No, it wasn't that bad. We sent families out of Katanga because of the shooting, but in Léopoldville it was just other things. My wife got hepatitis, which was misdiagnosed and misprescribed, and she went into "irreversible shock." Anyway, she somehow got out alive. You didn't have adequate anything there - adequate food, medicine. It was very rough on the families. We men coped; it was our job. But we worried about our families all the time.

Q: Was Allison Palmer there at the time?

HOFFACKER: Yes, I think she was.

Q: Did she work for you, or was she a consular officer maybe?

HOFFACKER: I did meet Allison. I think it was there, or was it back in Washington? She wanted to come to Equatorial Guinea, but that's later on. I don't think she ever forgave me for not supporting her request. That's where we lost our chargé d'affaires.

Q: Where?

HOFFACKER: In Equatorial Guinea. That's the Erdos case. She wanted to be an Erdos. She wanted to have that job.

Q: You left there in 1963, I take it with a certain amount of relief.

HOFFACKER: That's right. I didn't enjoy it the way I like to enjoy a post. There were so many negative factors there.

Q: Of course, there is the one plus factor. There's a lot of action going on, a lot of attention, crises, and the Foreign Service officer gets to prance a bit when you get that.

HOFFACKER: I didn't prance, but there was more publicity than I needed.

Q: *When you were in Léopoldville, did you have much contact with the American press?*

HOFFACKER: Oh, yes.

Q: *Did they seem very informed?*

HOFFACKER: Yes. There were some very good people. I'm trying to think of their names - Henry Tanner - all the biggies were out there. The guy who committed suicide in Boston a couple of years ago, who wrote a couple of books. They were very impressive, some of those guys. And I was very generous with information, everything but Confidential. And I learned from them. It was an exchange. They were looking for much the same as I was. We'd do a lot of drinking and eating together.

PIERRE SHOSTAL
Political Officer
Leopoldville/Kinshasa (1962-1963)

Pierre Shostal was born in Paris in 1937. He graduated from Yale in 1956 and from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1958. His postings include Leopoldville, Kinshasa, Brussels, Lilongwe, Moscow, Kigali, Hamburg and Frankfurt. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 16, 1997.

Q: *You were in Kinshasa. I'd like to put at the beginning of from when to when?*

SHOSTAL: I was there from October '62. I remember that on my way to Kinshasa was when the Cuban missile crisis occurred. I was supposed to be assigned to Stanleyville, which today is called Kisangani. But, the Embassy was extremely busy at that time and they told me that I would stay in Kinshasa for the time being. What was making them busy was the secession of one of the provinces, Katanga. The Ambassador at that time was very much the chief strategist for our policy in the Congo. It was a very busy place.

Q: *You were in the Congo at that time, October '62 until when?*

SHOSTAL: I stayed only until July '63, because I was Medevaced for hepatitis at that point.

Q: *Who was the Ambassador in Kinshasa at that time?*

SHOSTAL: Actually it was called Leopoldville at that time. It was Ed Gullion, who was a real favorite of President Kennedy. Kennedy had gotten to know him in Vietnam. Gullion had painted for Kennedy a very pessimistic view of how the French were doing in Vietnam at that stage, in the early '50s. Gullion's analysis so impressed Kennedy that he very much became a backer of Gullion

and when Kennedy came to the Presidency he made Gullion Ambassador to Congo. At that time this was a very important job, because it was one of the real hot spots of the Cold War.

Q: In this October '62 picture could you give me your impression of what you saw in Leopoldville and the government? I mean what was the situation then?

SHOSTAL: It was quite a confused situation. You had a very weak government. The Prime Minister at that time, Cyrille Adoula, was in some ways a very admirable man, somebody with whom Gullion had a very close relationship. But, he was in poor health and he was somewhat indecisive and unable to impose his decisions. This was well illustrated during a visit by the Assistant Secretary for Africa, Soapy Williams. It may have been late '62, early '63, somewhere in that period. This time I was the interpreter for Williams. We went to Adoula's office which was in a building overlooking the Congo River, very modern and well laid out. Adoula was asked by Williams to describe the situation, describe his problems as Prime Minister. Adoula said, "Well, I'll illustrate my problems very simply to you. You see this console here, these buttons. These buttons are all connected with different offices and people are supposed to come here and respond when I press these buttons." So, he put all ten fingers on ten buttons and said, "Now wait." And we waited three, four or five minutes, and nothing had happened. And Adoula said, "You see Mr. Williams, that's my problem. I can decide whatever I want, but nothing happens." That was symptomatic of the problem that the administration that had been left behind by the Belgians. Most or all of the senior jobs and the middle level jobs had been staffed by Europeans, so there wasn't anybody trained to take over. Therefore, you had the Congolese military always hovering in the background and ready to intervene to restore order and make things function. This happened in '65 when Mobutu staged a coup and started his rule.

Q: Had Lumumba already been deposed?

SHOSTAL: Lumumba had already been deposed. He was deposed in early '61 and was assassinated not long after that.

Q: What was life like living in Leopoldville at that point?

SHOSTAL: There was a rather hectic kind of atmosphere. The political uncertainties made for a rather nervous city. Also, a deteriorating law and order situation. There was a lot of crime and some murders. In fact, I was held up at gunpoint by a gang of murderers and was very lucky to escape that. So, it was certainly a city with a lot of tension, especially in the late months of '62, early '63 while the Katanga succession was still going on. You had the buildup to what became a short war in January, around Christmas, early January in '63, in which the U.N. intervened militarily and put an end to the secession there. After that, there was a kind of relief, I mean some of the tension in the air dissipated, because you weren't expecting the outbreak of war at that point. But, the sense of political malaise and drift continued.

Q: What was your job while you were away?

SHOSTAL: Basically, a Junior Political Officer. That was the reason that I was kept there, rather than being sent to Stanleyville. They needed some extra hands to work on the political reporting. That was really fascinating.

Q: You're talking about an absolutely inexperienced government. There were only three Congolese who graduated, college graduates or something, or some think there were five or six. But, I mean we're really talking about a handful. We're talking a very weak government. Was there political life and can you describe what was happening from your perspective.

SHOSTAL: There was a rather active, even hectic, but very superficial kind of political life. There were lots and lots of political parties. Most of them tribally-based. But, there also was an ideological divide. One of the legacies of Lumumba was that he had created the only political movement that was not tribally-based. But it was Marxist in inspiration and admired the Soviet Union. It was also influenced by the thinking of European socialists, Belgian and French in particular. With Lumumba gone, it was, however, on the defensive. It represented something different from the parties representing, say, the Bakongo peoples in the western part of the country or the Baluba from the Kasai, who all had their own political leaders and movements. Lumumba's successors were very second-rate people, and couldn't carry on effectively the movement he had started.

Q: How did you operate within this as a Junior Political Officer?

SHOSTAL: Well, largely carrying out the instructions of my bosses, the senior political officers.

Q: Who were they?

SHOSTAL: First, it was Tom Cassilly, who was very much an Africa hand at that time. He had been very involved in the African Bureau in the late '50s, early '60s and was very enthusiastic about African politics. Then later, Lew Hoffacker who became our Ambassador some years later to Cameroon. They were both very talented, energetic and demanding bosses from whom I learned a great deal. I mean about the basics of how to gather information, how to evaluate it, and put it together in a readable report. Most of what I did was report about the provinces, which was kind of hard to do, because it was difficult to get out of the capital. The transportation system had largely broken down. But, I did get out on a couple of very interesting trips. One to the tropical forest area North of the Congo River and another longer trip to Kasai Province, which was in the East Central part of the country. It had been an area with a lot of tribal conflict, a lot of bloodshed. My first really good in-depth political report was about the Kasai trip. I got a commendation for it from our desk officer whose name you would recognize, Frank Carlucci.

Q: Oh, yes. I started to say I've been interviewing Frank on his time over there.

SHOSTAL: Well, then you'd know many of the stories about him. He paid a couple of visits to Kinshasa at the time, so I did get to know him somewhat and learned a great deal from him.

Q: What was his reputation?

SHOSTAL: He was a real star. Everybody thought that he was just about the best Foreign Service Officer that they had seen in a long time. Somebody with a flair, a genius for understanding and analyzing the politics, but also for being a political actor. Before I arrived, and when Frank was still in Kinshasa as a political officer, there was an attempt to put together a legitimate government. They organized a political conclave to put together, first a Parliament and then having the Parliament vote for a government. By all the accounts that I heard Frank was really the key guy in making this conclave work so that if a government emerged from it that provided some stability.

Q: What was your impression of the people you'd be interviewing as you went out to get information?

SHOSTAL: On the whole, very inexperienced and not very educated, but with some exceptions. Some of the students who I met, either from the local University or in one case, somebody who had just returned from Belgium were very bright. There was a tremendous generational divide between the pre-independence, very under-educated elites, and some of the younger people. One person in particular who came back from Belgium and was assigned to the Foreign Ministry did a brilliant job of organizing an Organization for African Unity (OAU) meeting, on virtually no notice with few resources and he really pulled it off. I mean really a very impressive performance that any American FSO would have been proud of. I got to know him quite well. One day we were walking on the street and he stopped and started talking to an older man dressed in very shabby clothes, obviously a village person. Then my friend came back in my direction, "Well, that was my father. I didn't introduce you, because he doesn't speak French, he only speaks his local language." Then I thought to myself, "Here is this very well educated, bright young man and that's his father, living barely out of the stone age."

Q: In the embassy, was there an atmosphere of being almost a proconsulate by the Ambassadors and others?

SHOSTAL: There was. There was, I think, a feeling that we had to do this for a couple of reasons: one was that there was a very low regard for the Belgians' political and administrative performance and the way that they had handled independence. So, we didn't see them as a pole of power, organizational power. Where there was, at least, a potential of some power was at the United Nations, because it was trying to keep the country together. But, for much of that time, the chief U.N. representative was somebody whom our Ambassadors didn't trust. He was a leftist, Indian, intellectual and aristocrat, named Dayal. We thus saw the U.N. to a certain degree not a helpful influence. So, I think that there was a view at the embassy that we had to consolidate western influence in the Congo, because if we didn't try to build a nation then it would fall apart and would succumb to tribal warfare or the Soviets would come back in. Keep in mind that we felt very much in late '60, early '61 that we had blunted a Soviet power play, that had Lumumba stayed in power Moscow would have achieved a major victory. As one of the people in the Embassy said, "Look, the Ilyushins were landing at the airport and the Soviets were pouring in advisors. This would have become a Soviet satellite." I think there was also, as I know you know, a kind of missionary view at that time in the Kennedy Administration about Africa that the United States had a special role to play there.

Q: Could you explain what was going on in Katanga and the view from the Embassy of the situation of what they were up to?

SHOSTAL: I think the view at the Embassy was that the secession of Katanga, the richest part of the country, was being orchestrated by European powers and conservative political and business elements that didn't want to accept the winds of change in Africa, the independence movement. We thought they wanted to hold on at least to the choicest parts of the old empires for economic reasons. Strategically, the view or the concern was, that this kind of secession movement would prompt other such movements elsewhere in Africa, causing the breakup of these newly independent countries and give the Soviets tremendous opportunities for causing trouble. I think this view also reflected our own national experience in the Civil War. Ambassador Gullion referred to this as the Congo's Civil War and said it was imperative that the country remain together.

Q: Did you get any feel for the relationship between Soapy Williams, head of the African Bureau, and Ambassador Gullion?

SHOSTAL: I don't think Gullion had a very high regard for Williams. Gullion was very proud of the special relationship that he had with Kennedy. In fact, it was so special that he often by-passed Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State. Within weeks of Kennedy's death, Gullion was out as Ambassador. I heard from a number of people, who I think were well informed, that Rusk was deeply resentful against Gullion for by-passing him and working so direct with Kennedy.

Q: Did you get any high level visits, the Congo was really front and center at that time, other than Soapy Williams?

SHOSTAL: The only other one that I remember was a mission, I believe in early '63, headed by Harlan Cleveland who was Assistant Secretary for International Organizations and a significant player in the Administration. Also a member of this mission was a Lieutenant General named Truman who was, I think, a nephew or cousin of the former President. Their mission was to map out a plan for building the Congo as a nation. I remember, in particular, that we went to see Mobutu, who was in charge of the military at that time and this American three star general gave Mobutu a real tongue lashing about the need to discipline his troops. Mobutu was very irritated and obviously resented being talked to that way.

Q: And you were the interpreter?

SHOSTAL: I was the interpreter. To me the interesting thing is to recall the self confidence that we had at that time. We really felt that we could design countries, even those starting with the very low human infrastructure level that the Congo had at that time. We thought we could use the experience that we gained rebuilding Europe, and apply it to countries emerging from colonial rule. Well, things didn't turn out that way.

Q: What were you getting about the relationship of the U.N. with the Embassy during the period the U.N. was putting down this little Civil War in Katanga. You were talking about the relationship with the U.N. High Commissioner or what was he?

SHOSTAL: There was a U.N. High Commission representative, I've forgotten the exact title, but the man who was there just before I arrived was an Indian named Dayal, who was apparently very intelligent, dynamic, but didn't get along at all with Americans.

Q: Being the equivalent to a Krishna Menon?

SHOSTAL: Very much, from what I've heard. I can't even remember his successor's name, but he was clearly not a strong personality and I think that the relationship between the U.N. and the Embassy improved as a result. In Katanga there was a very close relationship. In fact, a sort of conduit was our Consul there who was Jock Dean, who later became a significant figure in the Foreign Service. Jock was suggesting military strategy to the U.N. during much of this period. Things calmed down between the Embassy and the U.N. by early '63. There was, however, a lot of frustration in the Embassy that the U.N. civilian operation was really very disorganized and chaotic. Simple communication problems were an irritant. English was the common language, supposedly, but it was spoken in very many different ways by different contingents.

Q: What about the media? Did you get any impression of the media? There was quite a few.

SHOSTAL: Yes, in fact there were some very talented media people. David Halberstam had just left, so I never met him.

Q: He wrote a book called, "The Making of a Quagmire."

SHOSTAL: Yes, that was it. He went from Congo to Vietnam and wrote his book about that experience. Tony Lucas, who killed himself the other day, was the New York Times correspondent in the Congo. I got to know him quite well and had a lot of respect for him. Jonathan Randal who still writes for the Washington Post, was there. He is somebody who really loves adventure and hot spots, and is also a very good reporter. So, there was quite a large press corps. The Embassy spent a lot of time sort of nurturing and briefing the press and we had quite a lot of give and take with them.

Q: I'm just wondering as a young political officer, what do you feel you were giving and what were you taking with the media?

SHOSTAL: I think that they learned something, because we had quite a large Embassy and had a range of contacts that they couldn't maintain, but I also learned a great deal in terms of their analytical abilities. So, it was, I think something of a give and take, keeping in mind that my role was a modest one.

JONATHAN DEAN
Consul
Elizabethville (1962-1964)

Mr. Dean was born in New York City in 1924. He graduated from Harvard and Columbia University. His assignments included posts in Germany, Czechoslovakia and Zaire/DRC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

Q: I was trying to nail this down at the beginning. You went to the Congo when and when did you leave?

DEAN: '62 to '64.

Q: When we are looking at things we should move it back. Rather than starting Czech in '60 you started in '59, so we'll just move that all back. How direct did you go to the Congo? Did you go through Washington?

DEAN: No. I got on a plane and went to what is now called Kinshasa. Ambassador Ed Gullion was in charge and he gave me about an hour talk on the subject which was fascinating new terrain for me. They then shipped me off to Elisabethville where I had a day's overlap with my predecessor.

Q: Who was that?

DEAN: Lewis Hoffacker. A very amiable fellow and I thought very knowledgeable. He apparently was regarded by some in Washington as being "too soft" on the Katangans. I had no way of evaluating such opinions. In any event, it developed that both Belgian government policy and American policy was completely disunified and operated by different groups. In the United States, we had G. Mennen Williams who was Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs with his principal deputy Wayne Fredericks, a very astute and goal directed man who knew what he wanted and was very much for African independence. We also had my later and also former boss George McGhee who was Under Secretary for Political Affairs and who thought that the group of people in Kinshasa were corrupt and the only Congolese leader of any stature was Moise Tshombe, who in his view was one of the few non-racist constructive people in Africa. Then we had Douglas MacArthur II, our ambassador in Brussels. He would call me up occasionally and give me his pitch on things. He too tended to feel that Tshombe was more promising than given credit for. The Social Democratic Belgian government was completely split. The industrial mining interests, Union Miniere, favored Tshombe, who was their creation. The Belgian government of Paul Henri Spaak supported the central government in Kinshasa in this situation where Katanga had seceded and declared its independence.

Q: What was the situation in Elisabethville when you arrived there in 1962?

DEAN: There had been one conflict, outright war, between the United Nations forces, which were in effect surrounded and beleaguered in Elisabethville, and the Katangan Gendarmerie. The latter were the remnants of the earlier Congolese armed forces – the Force Publique -- taken over by the Katangans. This force had retained some Belgian officers, and were much better disciplined, better paid than Congolese troops in the rest of the Congo. They were stiffened by quite a large contingent of European mercenaries. You had people who were quite well known later on: Mike Hoar was one, Robert Denard, a Frenchman who ended up in the Seychelles in the late '90s with an

attempted coup, a whole group of rather well known mercenaries. They had succeeded the past Christmas in defeating the UN's forces efforts to break out of the city.

The UN forces were composed mainly of an Indian brigade of dogra soldiers which was poorly led. The commander apparently took refuge in a dugout during the fighting. In any case, the outcome was that they were surrounded and penned up in the city. Subsequent to that a systematic program of insults to the UN forces took place. The Katangan equivalent of Nigerian market women beat up Indian UN soldiers and things of that kind. Shortly before I arrived, the UN had pulled out the dogra brigade and put in another very different one. The Indian army had been quite humiliated by the performance and put in troops with combat experience in the recent border war with China.

Two days after I arrived I was summoned at 4:00 in the morning by Madam Vermeulen, a red-headed Belgian and amateur parachutist who was Tshombe's secretary. Mme. Vermeulen told me that the president very much wanted to see me. I said I would be delighted to call on him the next morning. His so-called palace, his building, was right next to our very old fashioned colonial thatched consulate. She said that would not do. I had to come see the president right away. I said, "All right. I will come over." She said, "No, not here, to the hospital." I did go to the hospital at 4:00 in the morning. As I arrived in the hospital entry hall, it was suddenly illuminated by Klieg lights and Tshombe launched into a tirade about what the UN, backed by the U.S., had done to Katangan soldiers. At the end of this harangue, he pulled a blanket off two stretchers showing two very badly burned bodies. His claim was that the UN had dropped napalm furnished by the U.S. on a Gendarmerie position. I said I didn't know anything, didn't know about the circumstances, but would look into it.

The next day, I went out to the place where this action had taken place. I saw blood on the ground. Apparently these men had been trying to move into the city and had been intercepted and shot by a UN patrol. I also saw that the brush was still burning in a circle around the site, but that it hadn't reached the site yet, the place where the gendarmes had fallen, so it could not have burned them. It was rather clear that the bodies had been prepared by someone assisting Tshombe to make a television case; this was broadcast to Europe and to the United States. I received a telephone call from George McGhee. He said "what do you mean by admitting U.S. complicity or guilt?" I said, "I didn't do that. I said I was going to look into it and what I found out was this." He said, "That's all right, but it looked as though you were fighting back at him." Anyhow, that was my introduction to the Katangan scene and from there on it just continued right until the end.

Q: Tshombe's position at that point was what?

DEAN: Tshombe had been the governor of the province of Katanga. When the Congolese army mutinied in other parts of the country, he seceded and declared the secession of Katanga as an independent state, and became its president.

Q: As far as our embassy was concerned, you mentioned this divided policy; George McGhee was going one way, the embassy was going another way. What were you supposed to do?

DEAN: The embassy was strongly supporting the official UN and U.S. policy, which was to try to defeat the secession and to reunite the Congo. The U.S. fear was that if the Congo was “balkanized,” the term used at the time, it would become a sort of shifting, unstable center for the whole of Africa, or at least Central Africa, and create impossible political and economic conditions, which, the fear was at that time, the Soviet Union could profit from. At the time that Lumumba was deposed, several score Warsaw Pact advisors were arriving every day to take over various functions of the Congolese government. That was the fear of the time. Whether this would have really taken place or not, I don’t know, but the desire was to keep the country together.

Little or no progress was being made in resolving the secession. I gradually became aware of the fact that the UN force seemed to be preparing for further conflict. I reported this to Washington. Charles Whitehouse, a colleague from the Africa desk of the State Department, came to Elisabethville on a plane from Leopoldville (Kinshasa). I went out to the airport to talk with him, and he seemed to me to confirm this. Anyhow I just kept reporting. What did I know about this? Nobody had told me formally that anything was going on. On Christmas day, 1963...

Q: *Would it have been ‘62 or ‘63?*

DEAN: I believe it was 63. The Katangan Gendarmerie got their Christmas ration of Tembo beer, and a few of them climbed to the top of the huge center of tailings from the copper mine in Elisabethville (Lubumbashi it was later called) and started firing off their guns. Then they tipsily slid down this pile which I think was close to 200 feet high and their colleagues thought these soldiers were being fired on by the UN and they started shooting. The shooting went on all night, I think, sort of kept up, by the UN forces.

The next day the UN summoned Tshombe to a meeting with its civilian head, a man from Kenya, Eliud Mathu, and Major General Prem Chand, the Indian head of the UN force, with his brigadier, Noronha, a man from Goa. Tshombe insisted that his “corps diplomatique” attend him so Dodson and I went with him to the UN building. British policy at the time was to support Tshombe and not to push him. (Tshombe was assisted by Ian Smith in neighboring Rhodesia at that point.) The two UN officials told Tshombe that he had to give freedom of movement to the UN forces, they could not any longer accept being impeded. In fact the Katangan Gendarmerie had surrounded and encircled the UN force, not allowing them to move. Tshombe said he had to talk about this with his cabinet so they let him use the single side band radio. We did not have a Lunda language interpreter on hand at that time. Later, when the tape was translated, it developed that Tshombe said that he was just stalling and they should not move their forces back to give the UN free movement.

At the appointed hour, 3:00 p.m. that afternoon, the UN force did move out and they did a thorough job. They broke out with relatively few casualties and as a matter of fact they continued across the small Lufira River into the next mining town, a place called Jadotville, contrary to an agreement that Secretary General U Thant had made with the Belgian government. Unfortunately, at a UN roadblock in Jadotville, two Belgian civilians were killed. This had been the Belgian concern, so there was a big stink about it. The Indian commanders and our own military attaché who was there giving them informal advice asked me whether I thought it was desirable to go further. I didn’t know anything about the understanding with the Belgian government to stop at the Lufira River. I

told the UN commanders, you had better get them while the hot pursuit is going on because otherwise you'll have to cope with this guy for the remainder of time. The UN then defeated Tshombe's forces and drove them out of Katanga into Angola (where they hung around for quite some time). The death of the two civilians resulted in an inquiry by U Thant, a visit to Elisabethville by Ralph Bunche, and an interview that I had with him about this subject.

Q: Our policy to support Tshombe would seem to be moving in two different directions.

DEAN: The policy of some was to support Tshombe. For example the Union Miniere, the big mining company, was of course supporting Tshombe and paying for his support staff. It turned out that Van Der Walle, the Belgian consul general who had earlier been the chief of the Surete for the whole of the colonial Congo, was actually writing Tshombe's letters for him that he sent to the UN complaining about its behavior and so forth. That part of the Belgian structure was supporting him. Quite frankly, I did have an intelligence representative in the consulate and he was arguing very strongly against urging the Indians to pursue this conflict, and so forth. That again is a demonstration of divided councils and government.

I took a very straightforward and perhaps unrefined view that the concerns about the continued and successful Katangan secession were correct, and, moreover, that the United Nations would be in an impossible position if it failed in this mission. I thought the values were on the side of going ahead and doing the job fully. Ralph Bunche when he came on his fact-finding trip said, "Well if you have suggestions like this in the future, please send them to Washington and observe the right chain of command and don't give them directly to the UN forces." He seemed to have something of a smile in the corner of his mouth as he administered this reprove to me. I'm sure he was pleased with the actual outcome.

Q: What about the embassy? Edmund Gullion was the ambassador at that time?

DEAN: Yes, and he definitely supported U.S. official policy of ending the Katangan secession. Robert Gardner, a Ghanaian who was the UN representative for the Congo, and Gullion saw eye-to-eye. I guess they felt that there would have to be some military denouement in Katanga, but I didn't know too much about it.

Q: What about during the period before the UN troops moved out, what was life like for you trying to deal with this situation? You were consul or consul general?

DEAN: Consul.

Q: How did you work within this at that particular time?

DEAN: I had fairly good superficial relations with Tshombe. I would go and see him fairly often. His interior minister was a very menacing man named Godfroid Munongo, whose teeth were filed sharp; his father had actually been executed as a cannibal by the Belgian colonial administration. He was very threatening and everybody was afraid of him. Anyhow, he kidnapped the Italian consul general. Italy had provided some aircraft to the UN and on that occasion some Italian aviators were killed and ritually eaten in Kindu, in another part of the Congo. Then this diplomat

disappeared and Tshombe began to ask us whether he could expel somebody without his passport. It turned out that he had sent interior minister Munongo to the wife of the Italian consul general, Mrs. Natali, to ask for Natali's passport. She said, "No Natali, no passport" and faced them down. As it happened, Natali was being held in a bordello for the Katangan troops run by two Italians who finally told us about the entire matter. Natali was found in Rhodesia and restored to his wife.

Yes, we did have dealings with Tshombe. There were incidents with the UN forces. The Katangan Gendarmerie killed one or two UN soldiers from time to time. One Indian major was also cannibalized. There was an effort to negotiate between UN representative Mathu and Tshombe. The Belgian community, mostly business interests and so forth, were very strongly anti-UN. It was a fairly tense atmosphere, with all kinds of alarms and excursions. I had a good deal to do with the Indian brigade and the UN troops. I was honorary consul general for the Swedes, Norwegians, Irish and four or five other countries and celebrated their national days. Daily, I saw the UN people.

Q: You talk about Tshombe and his group and you talk about the UN, but what about the central government? Was there anything there?

DEAN: No, no one whatever. Tshombe had absorbed everything or expelled these other people. I talked with him and told him he had the qualities to become prime minister of the Congo. He told me that he might become prime minister again, but that he also would be killed. There was a long history there. In fact he did become prime minister after this, and then as you know he was exiled to Europe, to Barcelona. His enemies finally suborned the pilot of his aircraft and, while on a flight to Italy, he was landed in Algeria against his wishes. The Algerian government put him under house arrest and he was then said to have died from some internal ailment but of course there was suspicion he had been poisoned. In the meanwhile, his foreign minister, Everest Kimba, used to come around and he would ask me about my children. He would more or less blatantly threaten to kidnap these kids, as they had gotten Guido Natali. I would grind my teeth and tell him that the United States government was very vengeful. It was unpleasant but not a high degree of tension every day, but no progress and mounting tension, I would guess, in the overall situation.

Q: Were you and the rest of your consul corps really limited to this city of Elisabethville at that time?

DEAN: Pretty much. You could go to Rhodesia but nobody wanted to go out in the outer limits of the city because it was surrounded effectively by the Katanga gendarmes whose command and control was not very good, so people avoided that.

Q: Were there problems of, one hears about later of Katangan troops getting drunk and wandering around?

DEAN: It did happen from time to time and of course it happened at the dénouement there. For example Prem Chand, the Indian general was out on the golf course within the city limits playing one day. He happened to look up in a tree right in front of him where there was this Katangan gendarme drawing a bead on him. Fortunately, he didn't fire, but there was that kind of thing going on all the time.

Q: Maybe we better stop at this point and I'll put down here where we are. We have talked about your time in Katanga up to the time the UN broke out and we've talked about life under the sort of siege. We would like to talk about developments after that. I also would like to talk with you about your staff at the consulate and your relationship with the embassy. Was Stanleyville in operation in those days still?

DEAN: Yes, that had taken place just before I arrived, with Mike Hoyt and so forth.

Q: We will then talk about further developments after Tshombe and his troops had been pushed away from Katanga and we'll pick it up at that point.

Today is the 7th of May, 1998. Could you talk about the denouement with the UN and all?

DEAN: Yes. I may be repeating myself, but this was a very significant turning point in the Congo crisis. UN forces were encircled in Elisabethville, the capital of the free state of Katanga, the secessionist state of Katanga. They had been defeated in, I guess it was 1963, in their effort to break out of the city by Tshombe's Katanga Gendarmerie strengthened by quite a large number of well known mercenaries. The fate of the entire United Nations mission in the Congo was at stake. The UN was not able to have freedom of movement, not able to carry out its mission, and that was a source of great concern. Underlying it was the fear that the Congo would break apart not only with the secession of Katanga but with the secession of other segments and that you would have a communist dominated balkanization in the center of Africa; that was the main concern.

There was an incident in early 1963 (I'm trying to get the dates straight) in which Indian soldiers were roughed up in the market in Elisabethville intentionally. This was clearly prearranged. It humiliated the UN forces. Individual Indian soldiers were missing, some were killed. There was an episode which I believe I mentioned, where Indian soldiers killed some Katangan gendarmes in the periphery and I was summoned by Tshombe to the city hospital to be berated in front of television for this genocidal attack of napalm and so forth.

In any case, the denouement came when at Christmas 1963 (if my recollection of dates is right) when the Katangan Gendarmerie got their Christmas bonus of beer. Several of them climbed to the top of this huge sinder heap outside of the copper mill in Elisabethville, now called Lubumbashi. Some of them slipped down and started firing off their weapons. Their colleagues thought these men on the sinter heap were being taken under fire by the United Nations forces and started firing, and the firing continued through the night. As I understand it, the United Nations deliberately maintained the exchange of fire throughout the night so as to have the *causus belli*, so-to-speak. But the Gendarmerie obligingly fired back.

The next day the United Nations authorities summoned Tshombe to their headquarters. The civilian in charge was a Kenyan Kikuyu named Mathu who was a rather weak person. He found himself under great psychological pressure because the UN was pushing his fellow African, Tshombe. He also appeared to be quite intoxicated. However, General Prem Chand and Genera

Noronha, the two Indian generals, were present and acted as spokesmen. They told Tshombe that the UN would have to have freedom of movement or they would have to exercise it on their own and they gave him a deadline of 3:00 p.m. that day. He went to the sideband radio and allegedly talked to his cabinet. He was speaking in Lunda and there was no Lunda interpreter present but, as we later learned, he actually told them that he was just going to string on the UN and that they should hold out.

The UN forces did carry out a very successful, relatively bloodless operation with few casualties among the Gendarmerie and still fewer among the UN forces. The issue was whether they should proceed in hot pursuit. Unknown to me, Secretary General U Thant had promised the Belgians that that would not occur but the UN commanders asked me whether I thought it would be desirable to keep going. I had a very close daily relationship with them. Advised by the excellent military attaché, Colonel Knut Raudstein, an American paratroop officer, I told them that they should go ahead and do it.

Q: Where was this coming from, from you? Was the embassy involved?

DEAN: We had taken down our aerial because there had been riotous attacks by the Katangans on our consulate which was right next to Tshombe's palace so we weren't in any touch with them. The UN officers were asking me anyhow for my opinion.

Q: You're just somebody off the street. You were the consul general?

DEAN: Consul.

Q: Incidentally you took down the antennae because this was a provocation to crowds?

DEAN: Yes. They attacked us on two occasions, not with weapons but with mangoes, rocks and so forth. We had no compound protection or anything and it was suggested to me in our consulate that the Katangans did not like our aerials because they considered that we were communicating with the outside world through them and up to no good.

Q: When you gave this suggestion, obviously this carried some weight at the time. Looking at it, if the secretary general of the United Nations is saying nothing would happen...

DEAN: That they would stop at a certain point.

Q: From the local view, what was the purpose of pushing these people, where they wanted them to go, what was the idea?

DEAN: The issue was whether you should have so-called hot pursuit and end the secession and military action against the UN forces, or allow the Katangan forces possession of most of the territory of the Katanga and two big copper mines; the secession would have lasted forever. The UN forces did push further and they drove the Katangan forces out of the Congo into Angola where they hung around and were a source of difficulty in the future. The secession ended. In the process, two Belgian civilians made an effort to break through the roadblock set up by the Indian

troops in Jadotville and were killed. This naturally triggered protests in Belgium and then to U Thant.

The upshot was I may have mentioned it before, that Ralph Bunche was sent to the scene and urged me with not very solemn mien to confine my suggestions to the State Department in the future and not pass them on to the local UN command. I was by nature of position and daily contact, the main foreign support of these UN soldiers and although they did have their own communications and so forth, they did rely on us for advice. I was advised by our intelligence representative not to do this, but I felt that it was the right thing under the circumstances that there would be endless troubles if the Katangans were only pushed back a few miles and could continue the war against the United Nations.

Q: Where were the mercenaries at this point?

DEAN: They did have a few at this time, but I believe the quality of the Indian forces had improved greatly over the Dogra brigade which they had before. The commander of the Dogra brigade was a man who apparently believed in conducting the fighting from his bunker, whereas Brigadier Reginald Noronha was one of the toughest characters I've seen. He went up to a couple of machine gun posts the Katangans had established during the night and just pushed their weapons aside with his swagger stick and told them to take their weapons out of here and go home, and they did. The UN command had in my opinion carefully planned this, and I think quite rightly in the circumstances.

Q: Of course we are talking about something which comes up again, and again, and again and that is the finely nuanced responses 10,000 miles away in a headquarters of people talking and then you have the people in the field who pretty well know what they should do.

DEAN: That's right and you frequently get this type of situation during negotiations. Of course the headquarters try to control the men in the field and it is a perpetual tug of war. Unless you have a certain amount of creative addition at the field post, I don't think it will work. But, clearly, there is a possibility of things going seriously wrong. If these UN forces had not succeeded in their further push, yes, it would have been a major imbroglio. After all, the issue was the secession of Katanga, which was controlling the Congo's main source of foreign currency imports through its control over the copper production, and it was the future of UN peacekeeping operations in general.

Shortly after arriving in Elisabethville I received a rather cryptic call from the White House. I assume it was President Kennedy talking; I wasn't sure. They told me that this was a very serious affair and they were counting on me and I should call them if I had any difficulties. Then it became clear to me as I reported to the State Department that the UN was preparing to break out of its encirclement. I reported that at length in telegrams. I had a meeting with a visiting colleague, an officer from the African Desk, Charles Whitehouse who came out to the Congo. I met him at the airport in Elisabethville which was still controlled by the UN. He indicated to me that there was going to be probably a showdown. So it was in the air and then I guess I would say that the United Nations command, properly in my opinion considering all the factors, seized on this episode to bring about the denouement.

Q: When Ralph Bunche came he told you not to do it again but with sort of a wink and a nod?

DEAN: Yes, he seemed to be smiling to me. At any rate, he wasn't very solemn about it. I can only imagine that he was, together with Robert Gardener, the Ghanaian head of the UN operation in the Congo, thoroughly satisfied with the outcome. It did end the secession. It reunified the Congo and brought back the foreign exchange from the copper exports of Katanga. Of course the Congo's troubles were not over by any means.

Q: Did you have any communication thereafter on this particular subject with the embassy? Was Mac Godley the ambassador at that time?

DEAN: No, I think it was Ed Gullion still. I didn't have a very close connection with the embassy for a variety of reasons. I had just come from Prague and I didn't know anything about this Africa situation. I never had any briefing and I was told later that they wanted to have some tough minded person in there to try to deal with Tshombe. I went for a couple of days to the embassy and got a memo in two days briefing and I thought Ambassadors Gullion and Godley were fairly straightforward in their opposition to Tshombe. Naturally I tried to learn, read, talk and so forth, one does. I became aware that there were various pressures. George McGhee, the political undersecretary, was more or less supportive of Tshombe. Douglas MacArthur was ambassador in Brussels and he called me from time to time and gave me his ideas on what I should be doing.

Q: Was he fairly close to the Belgians as far as their side?

DEAN: The Belgian government was deeply divided, with the Spaak government opposing the secession. But the whole business apparatus, the powerful Union Miniere, which was represented on the scene, supported Tshombe. Of course the British were also more or less quietly supporting Tshombe along with the secessionist governor general of Rhodesia, Ian Smith. There was a real mess of divergent motives. Governor Williams, who was the assistant secretary, and Wayne Fredericks the deputy assistant. They had a very clear view and wanted to end the secession. Anyhow, I relatively seldom went to the embassy after that. There wasn't a possibility of it. Things heated up in Elisabethville as soon as I got there. I did have a one day overlap with Lewis Hoffacker, my predecessor, a very reflective person.

Q: I'm going to be interviewing him in July. He is coming in from Texas.

DEAN: He's a very good man -- but some thought, I wasn't privy to any of these things -- that he was rather indulgent toward Tshombe. But personally I don't know whether he was or was not.

Q: What happened after the UN basically pushed Tshombe's forces out? What happened with Tshombe and also sort of your relations with whatever passed for the government there and with the Belgian group?

DEAN: Tshombe was out although he later returned as prime minister of the Congo because he represented too powerful a group, an ethnic group, to be cut out completely. Mobutu summoned me to a house on the outskirts of Elisabethville, where lying back in this big bed, he demanded a report on the conditions there. He didn't trust himself to go into the city as yet; I don't fault him for

that. They did establish control. They did have a kind of election and a man named Edouard Balundwe became president. He was a very nice man and apparently quite inclined to be cooperative with the United States. I remember him coming to my house right near the consulate when President Kennedy was assassinated expressing his condolences. He later visited me when I was going to the War College. And he came to my home here in Great Falls. He was pretty good. They had UN administration which is not very memorable to me except that it included George Sherry, the American who was there also during this crisis.

In the Congo, we were soon swept up into the Simba uprising. It was a real uprising of disappointed expectations. There had been steady deterioration of the Congo economy since independence. It was not a mutiny of the Force Publique or any of these things. It was led by men with some education: Pierre Mulele and others. In any case, they took over several of the main centers in the Congo and they moved toward Albertville which was in the northern part of our consular district. The governor of that province, Jason Sendwe, was a Baluba chieftain but secularized so to speak. He was a school boy chum of Tshombe and from that day his rival. They both had been educated by American Methodist missionaries who came over from Rhodesia. Katanga was the part of the Congo where the American missionaries had more scope. The remainder was much more under the influence of the Catholic church and Protestants played a limited role. The Methodists supported Tshombe and thought the U.S. was very wrong in its support of the Congo central government. Bishop Newell Boothe was very vehement in his support of Tshombe and of secession. So that was a further strand in American policy.

The Simba uprising spread rapidly. The denouement came as we tried to help Jason Sendwe stabilize his Albertville government against the Simbas. We were talking about giving him some arms for his police but had not yet done so. Meanwhile, we were told that a Simba column was approaching Albertville -- this was shortly before we left the Congo. The British consul general, Wilson, and I got a local Airbrousse aircraft and put a load of landmines in it so we could defend the airport in Albertville. This was not a very substantial enterprise. The landmines were in the central compartment of the airplane covered with a baby quilt and tied with some twine. They kept sliding back and forth in the compartment.

Wilson, I and two Congolese officers, one a warrant officer, were the only ones on the plane. We went to Albertville, circled around. The pilot didn't want to land because he was taking some small arms fire from the Simbas who were apparently approaching. We did finally land and we were surrounded immediately by a company of the Congolese National Army which had moved into the Katanga to assert its authority. The soldiers said it is very nice that you've brought this plane because we will take it and go because the Simba are approaching. The Congolese army warrant officer told the soldiers that they could have the plane, but of course you can stay here because there will not be any room for you; it does of course have a dangerous cargo and you will have to work a bit to take it off because it wouldn't be right to fly with it. When the soldiers heard these key words, danger and work, they faded into the bush and were seen no more.

The Simbas started approaching and we did see them. They wore white armbands or white headbands, or both. They went past the end of the road to the airport. About 30 minutes later we heard a lot of automatic pistol fire in the town. They had killed Sendwe, his wife and family, and immediate staff. We then got back on the plane with the landmines and flew back to Elisabethville.

That was kind of the final act of our stay in the Congo. We flew over a big herd of elephants, eighteen or twenty, and thought, what a beautiful country the Congo could be given some decent government.

Q: It sounds like anybody who wanted to sort of have enough initiative to move could go anywhere they wanted in the Congo as opposed to those who were trying to oppose it? The Force Publique seemed to melt away at any...

DEAN: The Congolese army were not very good. Shortly after I arrived, I went to the funeral of their chief of staff, General Abeya, who had been killed on a patrol when he, because of the fact that the soldiers wanted to gravitate backwards, had to go up in the van and was killed by a poison arrow. It was a very loose situation. It's a very big country of only a few centers of activity, commerce, and minor industries like textiles. That was true of Albertville for example. I don't think I ever asked the embassy for permission to go on this flight. Wilson was interested in taking care of his citizens and I knew that we were trying to bolster Sendwe so it seemed to me to be logical to do this.

Q: What about the missionaries, this must have been quite a concern of yours?

DEAN: Most of them in the Katanga were Methodists, very courageous people. They flew around in small single-engine airplanes to very lonely missions. I thought they were people of very great character. They were strongly opposed to U.S. policy in support of the UN and anti-Tshombe. Many of them quite naturally had grown up with Tshombe as a friend, a fellow Methodist Christian so they believed, the U.S. government was trying to stifle the beginning of decent government in the Congo. They kind of tended to keep away from us and weren't terribly cordial. They'd keep to themselves.

Q: Were you concerned when the Simbas started moving toward your consular district?

DEAN: That was a concern of trying to stop them. It was feared that they would actually get as far as Elisabethville. Many Europeans and several Americans were there and this was the motivation of my British colleague. Even while the Simbas were going into Albertville, he wanted to go into the town to take care of his citizens. I held him back from this foolhardiness.

Q: Was this close to the end of your time?

DEAN: Yes, almost at the very end.

Q: When you left Elisabethville, what was your prognosis for the Congo at that point from your perspective?

DEAN: Things in Katanga were fairly calm. I went to the investiture of Tshombe's uncle as Lunda chief and he seemed to be cooperative with the central government. The government now had the copper revenues and there was still a pretty large, although smaller, Belgian infrastructure. I saw it crumbling around the edges when some very old Belgian women that were sort of the leftovers of the colonial period had to be shifted to Congolese social assistance, which was totally negligible. I

don't know what happened to these poor women. Anyhow it seemed that the Congo had at least a breathing spell and it looked not too bad.

The Simba affair did peter out throughout the rest of the country and it looked as though Mobutu had a fairly firm hold on things. His complete corruption was not evident then and he had achieved prominence by saving the life of the American station chief in the capital in a riot of the Force Publique. The embassy felt that they had considerable influence over him. It was not too bad.

Q: I've never served in Africa so I'm speaking from just sort of hearsay but I have the feeling what you say, opposed to what people who let's say served in Ghana or Nigeria and all, that by and large the Congolese, the various tribal groups, weren't very aggressive as far as management or mercantile skills or anything like that.

DEAN: Scarcely, since I think the standard figure is that there were four to six university graduates when Belgium gave them independence, four of them priests. The Belgian government was panicked by what they saw going on in Algeria between the French and the Algerians. They didn't want to have anything like that so they cut the preparatory period for independence from the three- or four-year program which they had in mind -- even so a negligible period -- they cut the period to six months and in effect cut the Congolese loose to shift for themselves. That was really the underlying source of the unrest. Nearly complete ignorance of the values and practices of civil administration.

With the exception of the Simbas I don't feel that there was a great deal of militancy on the part of the Congolese. They were willing to work and most of them had to work very hard just to maintain daily existence. With the exception of the Lumumba, party politics was not highly developed. The Congolese were not heavily politicized and they generally accepted authority, I think possibly, from the colonial period and also their own Congolese authorities. They showed great good humor in adversity. They didn't have a big network of roads but they did have a fairly good network of mining and other industries which the Belgians had brought and which they were still in effect operating. Given that things went starting from a low base, the Congolese weren't too badly off.

JOHN E. GRAVES
Cultural Affairs/Assistant Consular Affairs Officer, USIS
Leopoldville (1962-1964)

Consular and Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Bukavu (1964)

John E Graves was born in 1927 in Michigan. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degree from the University of Michigan, and served in the US Navy overseas from 1945 to 1946. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1962, he was assigned to Leopoldville, Bukavu, Antananarivo, Rach Gia, Lomé, Yaoundé, Tehran, Montevideo, Sidi Bou Said, and Rabat. Mr. Graves was interviewed by Richard Jackson on January 12, 1999.

Q: So, you completed your service there. Then you went ahead and into the government, into USIA. You must have gone back to Washington for some training and then were first posted as cultural affairs officer in Leopoldville arriving there in 1962.

GRAVES: Leopoldville was the beginning of my Foreign Service education. I remember the first startling experience: I was assistant cultural affairs officer and suddenly had to cope with a project which I wasn't supposed to know about. The U.S. was recruiting Angolan students to be sent to the United States for education. The students who came to see me had escaped to the Belgian Congo, which was in the throes of becoming independent and chaotic, what with Dag Hammarskjold and Patrice Lumumba being killed. The first UN peace-keeping operation. We were in the middle of the first big post-independence disorder in Africa with the UN playing a very large role.

To get back to my experience, because the Angolan students came to me and seemed perfectly legitimate, I sent a clear-channel telegram to Washington. It was about these students, their needs and their travel arrangements. I was severely chastised because this was a highly classified operation. So that was my first experience with the left hand not knowing what the right hand was doing. I had simply done what a cultural affairs officer is supposed to do and suddenly I was in trouble because I didn't know it was a classified CIA project.

Q: The whole world of cultural affairs officer in that kind of turbulent time in the Congo (later Zaire) must have made it perplexing to figure out what your role was and what you could do. It was certainly a different culture than you had experienced in Morocco.

It was very different. But the main thing I was learning about was the American Foreign Service and all of the other American entities that operate overseas. I had two other experiences that were rather revealing. One had to do with a newspaper which I was at great pains to cultivate and to place information in. I discovered belatedly that it was owned and operated by the CIA. The other thing was that at the university there were American students. I naively thought they were just students who were interested in African affairs and were on campus because it was a big university. However, when I had dealings with them, I found they were not much like typical American students. I eventually learned that the CIA planted Americans in foreign universities and subsidized American student organizations' participation in international gatherings.

Maybe the left hand should be told what the right hand is doing. The principle that we're all very familiar with, **the need to know**, needs to be reconsidered. Much later, when I was a senior officer and privy to a great deal of information which I could not share with my staff, I saw confusion and frustration sap the morale of good officers. I came out of university with the impression that our government was straightforward, honest, and doing the right thing and had to learn from experiences that our government is complicated, has many facets in conflict with each other, and that little is really what it seems.

One more example. When President Kennedy died, I remember being shocked and annoyed with foreigners, especially the French, who were cynical about it, and who, like most Latinos, whether they be in Latin America, Spain, France, Italy, or Portugal, see everything in terms of political plots. I argued, "No, no, even our graffiti isn't political. It's scatological or sexual, not political. Our

assassinations are almost always due to a single individual, oftentimes demented, just simply running amuck. We're not like Latin countries, where everything is political." Over the years, looking back at the Kennedy assassination and all the unlikely wrinkles, I just don't know. I would certainly not be willing to say as I did in 1963 in Leopoldville (now Kinshasa) to my contacts: "No, no, I'm absolutely sure the Kennedy assassination was strictly a matter of a single individual."

Q: 1962 was pretty early in our country's experience of Africa. There was a lot of misplaced optimism about democratizing and making Africa over. As cultural affairs officer, what did that really mean in Leopoldville? Were you bringing American culture and musical groups? What tools did you have?

GRAVES: I think we were well supported in the sense that we certainly had means. The most important were the lectures and the visiting professors at the university and all sorts of other visitors, including Assistant Secretary of State Williams, American astronauts, and Buckminster Fuller. I remember these people especially because I was their escort-interpreter. That was where I got my start being the principal interpreter, in French at least, for American astronauts. One of the astronauts, Conrad, liked to tell funny stories. Many funny stories are not translatable. There is a cultural input that makes it almost impossible. So, at one point, rather than try to translate, I said in French to my Belgian, French, and Congolese audience of several hundred people, "Mr. Conrad has just told a funny joke, so please laugh." Of course, Conrad didn't understand what I said. Everybody thought my ploy was hilarious and they applauded and laughed. After that, Conrad always wanted me as his interpreter.

Q: In promoting U.S. presence, was there a friction with the Belgians, the French, or others there?

GRAVES: I didn't find there was much friction. We got on well with the Belgians, even the Flemish. We didn't have any complaints about the Belgians. But we did have very serious problems. Our consulate in Stanleyville was taken over and our people were held hostage. I remember much later the nonsense in the American media, when I got to Iran and was taken hostage, about how this was the first time that American diplomats had been taken hostage, which was utter nonsense, another example of the media not knowing what they're talking about. There were several other examples. In Stanleyville, I was personally involved. By that time, I had been transferred to the eastern Congo to Bukavu to work with consular officer Bill Schaufele.

Q: That was a transfer in 1964.

GRAVES: Right.

Q: Before we get to Bukavu and that experience, you mentioned Shaba I, the first UN operation in the Congo, unraveling. It was a period of great turmoil. Was that the period of Mac Godley in the embassy?

GRAVES: Mac Godley was the ambassador at the end. Before that, it was Edmund Gullion.

Q: What sort of tone did they set and how were those embassies to work with?

GRAVES: Gullion had personal access to the White House and President Kennedy, which reminds me of an amusing incident. An American sailor had killed another American sailor aboard an American ship at Matadi, which is 100 kilometers from the sea. Therefore there was a problem of jurisdiction. I went with Ambassador Gullion to discuss the murder with President Kasavubu. The Ambassador used me as interpreter when he thought a discussion might be a bit sticky and he might not catch some nuance. The murder occurred clearly in the Congo and therefore it was Congolese jurisdiction. When the President finally understood that the American sailor only killed another American, he said, if I translate roughly, "I could care less (Je m'en fous.)." Gullion was very upset that this murderer was going to go scott-free. So he decided to prevail upon Washington to somehow take on jurisdiction. In the meantime he would keep the sailor in Leopoldville. For want of a better idea, he put him in an apartment with the most junior of the junior officers because junior officers in those days did all the dirty work. So Peter Leiden had to live with a murderer. I knew Peter well because I was a young officer. We were colleagues. I was lucky that I had an easier job as interpreter. By the end of the first week, Peter was feeling pretty jumpy, living with this murderer who glowered and didn't look at all as if he were friendly or safe. So, Peter finally asked, "Why don't you escape?" The sailor looked out the window. It was an apartment building overlooking the central market and there were several thousand Congolese down below. The murderer looked down and growled, "Are you crazy?"

Q: Mac Godley was sort of a different character.

GRAVES: He was less straight-laced and less concerned about such things. Besides, by that time, the sailor had been turned over to American marshals who had come out to escort him back to the United States for trial.

Q: The big events one thinks about in that period... Dag Hammarskjold died in a plane crash.

GRAVES: By this time, most of us were less naive about Africa and less certain that we knew what was going on. I'm not willing to say that it was an accident. I just don't know. Certainly, at the time, there was much speculation as to what had really happened. The same thing with regard to Patrice Lumumba only more so. We have a better idea of what happened to Tshombe whom I knew well. I was his interpreter and traveled with him. I had the job of reporting on what was going on around Tshombe.

Q: Tshombe was by then President?

GRAVES: At that point, he was a Governor and was very much in power in the eastern Congo.

Q: And we were backing him in the aftermath of Lumumba?

GRAVES: Right. He eventually became Prime Minister and then was shunted aside by Mobutu, whom I didn't like at all. But the CIA station chief was very friendly with Mobutu and may have been involved in the disappearance of Lumumba as well as other dodgy business with Mobutu later on. In any case, the U.S., along with France and Belgium, supported Mobutu. In my view, Colonel Mulumba would have been a much better choice. I've never been in sympathy with the American government's tendency to support despicable people. Our obsessive anti-Communism.

That's probably the single most important concern I had all through my years of being a Foreign Service officer and serving the government. I always had the feeling that we were wrong when we put anti-Communism ahead of everything else. In the long-term, it didn't serve our interests.

Q: Talk a little bit about Tshombe.

GRAVES: I found him delightfully open, not at all racist. He was interested in being served by able people and therefore many of his aides weren't black. They were an eclectic lot. He himself was certainly very intelligent, quick to learn, and had a good understanding of human nature, human psychology. He was a good companion in the sense that he was fun to be with, fun to have dinner with, and was full of piercing asides. A little excursion. Tshombe was a favorite of my wife. After a long trip (I as his interpreter because he had to cope with English speakers), we got back to Bukavu and the province of the Kivu, where the governor put on a big reception for Prime Minister Tshombe. When he came into the room, he took a glass of champagne from one of the trays and presented it to Madame Graves and thanked her for lending him her husband during the long trip. So she has a very warm spot in her heart for Moïse.

Q: The turmoil in the Congo that you mentioned was largely in the Stanleyville area and Leopoldville was a long way away?

GRAVES: You have to keep in mind that the Congo is enormous. It also has enormous natural resources. But most Africans who lived there had no idea they were Congolese. Almost all conflict was tribal. I would add that, despite what you might read in the newspapers, anyone who really knows Africa knows that almost everything that is going on in Africa, even today, all the conflicts are essentially tribal. I used to laugh thinking about the idea that the conflicts and turmoil had something to do with Communist or anti-Communist. The Africans couldn't care less. They want support. They will take it from anybody. Their whole concern is tribal. The entities that we refer to as countries are only important to a few leaders. The folks that actually live there could not care less.

Q: Being in the then capital, Leopoldville, you were conscious of the geographic disintegration.

GRAVES: Very much so. There was a huge inflow of immigrants that were not from that region and didn't speak Lingala, which is the language of the army, nor Kicongo, which is the language of the Leopoldville region. That was my first really good lesson on where the conflicts really are centered. In Leopoldville itself, the army regularly gathered up all the immigrants it could find and transported them into the hinterland. The government feared riots, for good reason, and wanted to get all the people out of town that it considered dangerous.

Q: I think I interrupted you when you were starting in on your arrival in Bukavu in 1964 where Bill Schauffele was the consul general and you were working with the Stanleyville hostage situation with Mike Hoyt, who was the consul general in Stanleyville.

GRAVES: Bukavu was involved in the Belgian military operation that eventually freed them, with American support. This was the time of the Mulele uprising. All that I've read in the newspapers recently about Rwanda and Burundi and genocide lacks historical perspective. Almost the exact

same scenario played out in the 1960s with such bloodshed that the Ruzi River that runs between the eastern Congo and Rwanda ran red.

Q: You saw that?

GRAVES: Yes, I saw hundreds of people killed. Two French friends with the UN were hacked to death in a refugee camp. I had intended to accompany them but was detained by urgent consular business. Shortly before the Mulele horde swept through Bukavu, I led some forty American dependents to Burundi over a road that had been built by the Germans before World War I. I returned to Bukavu the following day to find our cultural center riddled with machine-gun fire and hundreds of bodies in the streets.

Q: How did this extraction go? The Belgians took the lead. There were Americans in it. You were with them.

GRAVES: I parachuted into Stanleyville.

Q: You parachuted with the extraction forces?

GRAVES: Not literally. Because I knew the road, I traveled part of the way in a jeep with a bunch of newsmen. The actual assault was over before we arrived.

Q: So, by the time you hit the ground, the actual military operation was probably ended, the hostages were just freed.

GRAVES: Right, and they were all alive.

Q: How many were there?

GRAVES: Maybe nine, but that could be wrong.

Q: Then you took them under your wing to get them out of the country. How did that go? How long had they been held?

GRAVES: It was quite a while, several weeks. I was the last American out of Stanleyville before it was taken. For want of better, I had had my car shipped from Leopoldville to Stanleyville via the river. From that point on, to get it to Bukavu, I had to drive it. I flew to Stanleyville with my eldest son and we drove the car, not knowing how close the Mulele were, not knowing that only an hour or two after each of our stops for gas, each place was wiped out and most of the people were killed.

Q: Could you see the tension?

GRAVES: Not really. There was a lot of confusion and conflicting reports. It was certainly crazy to be driving through the eastern Congo at that point, but we weren't aware of how dangerous it was until we got to Bukavu. Bukavu was overrun and we had to evacuate all dependents. My family stayed in Burundi and then afterwards in Kampala. I stayed in Bukavu through the whole

rebellion. By that time, Schaufele had gone and Dick Matheron had taken over as consul. He was away at one point and I was in charge, which gave me another jolting insight into a world I didn't know. The CIA station chief was injured and had to be evacuated. People kept coming in out of the bush. CIA assets. Some of them, like missionaries, I was really staggered that they were working for the CIA and considered that I personally had to get them out of the Congo and that I was responsible. I also had the funny experience of the CIA being stuffy. When a couple of CIA technicians finally got back into Bukavu, they considered that I had no business in their section of the consular building. I listened to all their guff and finally said, "Fine, when you think you need your tumblers for the code system, which I happen to have in my pocket, come down and see me." After a few hours, they came down to see me with a different attitude.

Q: Before your family was evacuated, you had had some time in Bukavu before the thing deteriorated. What was that like? What was day to day life like?

GRAVES: Splendid. It's probably the most beautiful place in the whole wide world. Bukavu is on the tip of Lake Kivu, which is 100 and some miles long with a live volcano near Goma. In those days, no one really knew how deep it was, five or six thousand feet. Cold, cold water.

To fly into Bukavu was a problem. You had to climb to a minimum of 13,000 feet to get through the pass and then drop down to the lake level of 5,000 feet and land on what really was a flattened off tip of a mountain covered with pine and cedar. It's beautiful and almost everything grows there. At lake level where we lived, we had all the citrus fruit in our yard. You could go down, walk for 15 minutes, and you would be down where there were bananas and pineapple. You could walk up 15 minutes and there would be apples and cherries. The soil was rich, broken down lava. The climate couldn't have been more beautiful. It was cool and very pleasant.

Q: You were in charge of USIA operations there for a year.

GRAVES: Right. During that time, the place was overrun twice by the Mulele uprising. In each case, there were hundreds of people killed.

Q: So, you were really dragooned into doing any kind of work to support the consulate. It wasn't possible to do strictly USIA work.

GRAVES: No, it wasn't. I think we pretty well lost the idea that one was assigned to a particular job. We just didn't have time to think about those things.

Q: It was probably a six person post?

GRAVES: Two USIS, Paul Polakoff and I. In the consulate, there was the consul and a junior officer. There was also the CIA station chief. In addition, there were various TDY: American military, including two colonels, and various technicians.

Q: Did Ambassador Godley get out to check on you?

GRAVES: No, we had to fly to Leopoldville to see him.

VINCENT W. BROWN
Assistant Director, USAID
Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo (1962-1964)

Vincent W. Brown was born and raised in California. He attended the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) for one year before being drafted into the Navy. At the end of his service, he returned to UCLA and graduated in 1949 with a degree in business administration. In addition to Zaire, he served in Tunisia, South Korea, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Mr. Brown was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1997.

Q: I understand that there was still a civil war going on in Zaire when you arrived. What was the ambiance ?

BROWN: We (Françoise, the two boys, and I) arrived in Kinshasa in December 1962. The airport was filled with C-130 transport planes engaged in ferrying troops and supplies to Katanga to put down the rebellion lead by Moise Tshombe. We were met by Rob West, the AID Director (who was also Economic Counselor of the Embassy). He was a prominent development economist on loan from the Ford Foundation. It took us three hot and sticky hours to clear customs and head for the city.

Our early days in Kinshasa remains etched in my memory. On the way into town, we were informed that the house originally set aside for us had been given to another family, and we would be in a temporary apartment until another suitable one came on the market. Our apartment was downtown, reasonably comfortable and overlooked the local bordello which was frequented by many of the senior government officials. So we got a rather unique view of the ruling clique early on during our stay. Our refrigerator had barely enough food for our evening meal, and my wife was informed that she would have to be ready by 7 am the next morning to go to the local market to shop for food. (There was no commissary since the US Ambassador, Mr. Gullion, didn't want anyone on board who couldn't rough it.) Since there was virtually nothing on the commercial market except PL 480 powdered milk, life was very difficult until one's shipment from Ostermann Peterson arrived four months later with everything from toilet paper, to powdered milk, to canned beans, coffee, soap, etc. Once it arrived if one was missing something one could trade with our colleagues. There was a very large, well stocked, United Nations Commissary, but we were not allowed to use it. We were not moved into a full sized house for at least eight months. Survival during the first three months was indeed difficult. I don't think the Ambassador's decision not to have a commissary and to let the newcomers "rough it" added to our performances.

Actually, the basic infrastructure, streets, homes, business buildings, etc. in Kinshasa had been built for the long term, and were still in excellent shape. Unfortunately the Belgians had not judged it necessary or desirable to train an elite as the British and French had. So at independence, there were only 17 Congolese college graduates, and about 500 high school graduates (mainly priests). This was not enough to run a country larger than the US east of the Mississippi (one million square

miles). Before pulling out the Belgian colonial government had stationed some 5,000 professionals in Zaire. The UN staff which was running the country when we arrived numbered 2700.

The Belgians had not considered it necessary to educate the local women, so except for a few women educated by missionaries, none could read and write. A further problem was that apart from French (and a little Flemish), there was no common language. Most of the country was made up of village states with their own individual languages or dialect -- something over 300 to 400. Fortunately, many of the tribes along the Congo River (now called the Zaire River) spoke a composite language called "lingala."

Life in the early days was alleviated by the possibility of taking the ferry across the Congo River to Brazzaville. The Republic of the Congo, which had been a French colony, was well stocked with French foods and supplies. Food was very expensive, but a real treat. However, after we had been there for about six months, the two governments got into an argument and the frontiers remained closed for the rest of our stay.

In spite of this rocky start, by the end of the year we were well installed and enjoying the post.

Q: What was the work like under those circumstances?

BROWN: AID Director, Rob West, had his office at the Embassy, and I had my office along with the rest of the AID contingent in a separate building not far from the Embassy. Since there was no Deputy Director, and I was the only Assistant Director, I managed the AID staff on a daily basis. Rob West was mainly interested in the economy, major aid policy matters, and very important project decisions. The offices were comfortable and well kept. The major problem was that there was a curfew at dusk, and I often had to work late at night. It was really difficult driving home in pitch black darkness hoping that I would not meet military patrols since the soldiers were often illiterate and did not understand French.

Because of the value of our multi-million dollar commodity assistance program and the counterpart(local currency) it generated, the USAID was entitled to a seat on the United Nations run Economic Planning Commission (EPC). I used to attend their meetings, when Rob West could not make it. Everyone around the table of the Commission were foreigners. The Chairman of the EPC was a UN employee from Algeria, the head of Public Works (buildings, roads, streets) was a UN employee on loan from the French department of public works, and the Governor of the Central Bank was French, etc. Due to the lack of educated citizens from Zaire, the only Zairian national at the Planning Commission meetings (sitting in the back row) was a young man who had just graduated from Louvain University in Belgium, Mr. Endele. (About ten years later he became Governor of the Central Bank). I still remember one of my instructions from Rob West was to inform the Commission that import quota's for toiletries, fountain pens, and ladies brassieres were to be sharply reduced, and quotas increased for chemicals and industrial materials needed by the local factories. I also sat on the EPC subcommittee charged with allocating the counterpart. Most of it went for keeping the road network operational.

These were exciting times. I went up to northern Zaire with the Minister of Public Works (Mr. DelVaux), a Zairian, and the UN supplied operating head of the Public Works department, Monsieur Larchet (French), to participate in a ribbon cutting ceremony for a stretch of road reopened through work financed by our counterpart funds. The event was also attended by the local chief, the local witch doctor with his crocodile hat and parrot feathers on, the local priest, and the girls in uniform from a nearby Catholic school for girls. One week later communist supported rebels roared down the road in trucks. For a while they controlled the northern part of the country. With help of Belgian paratroopers, Nigerian police, and C-130 air transport provided by the US, the uprising was put down.

I remember meeting Governor Harriman at that time, and being very impressed. He was in his mid '70s and had come out to Zaire at the request of the President to work out the peace agreement. He was very polished, dynamic, needed very little sleep, and wore out the staff assigned to work with him. The necessary agreements were drafted, negotiated, and signed in just a few days.

By my second year there, things had settled down considerably. President Kasavubu had invited Moise Tshombe back as Prime Minister and most basic facilities were operational -- roads, railway and river transport. Rob West had returned to the Ford Foundation, and an experienced AID Director, Stuart Baron, replaced him. His last posting was in Cambodia.

Q: Did you get to know any of the Zairian Ministers?

BROWN: I got to know two of them fairly well. Mr. DelVaux, who was the Minister of Public Works, was one of the few educated indigenous people -- perhaps in his mid forties. He had been working in Belgium at independence, and was brought back to head this technical Ministry. On special occasions, like ribbon cutting ceremonies, he would wear his dark Belgian double breasted suit made of heavy 100% wool. Needless to say he perspired profusely, but was suitably dignified. He listened to his UN technical advisors and ran his Ministry well considering the circumstances.

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Bamba, had been the leader of the Kibangist religious movement in Eastern Zaire. He knew nothing about finance or economics, but he was a fine human being. He wisely left the running of the Finance Ministry to his UN staff.

His church used the Protestant bible, and its founder, Mr. Kibangi, believed that Jesus Christ was a black African. Minister Bamba invited us to dinner several times and also to a number of his Sunday morning church services which were very simple and austere with palm fronds as decoration. Unfortunately the year after we left Zaire, the Minister was hanged for some sort of alleged plot against the government. I find it hard to believe that this mild mannered religious leader deserved such a fate.

Q: Do you have any personal anecdotes of life in Kinshasa once you were settled in?

BROWN: Actually, we were quite comfortable, and all AID/embassy housing was fenced in. Our local guard was armed with bow and arrow. However, on most nights when we returned from a party or official reception, we would have to wake him up to open the gate. While petty theft was a problem in outlying areas, local police protection was assured by the Nigerian Federal police who

were excellent. Their headquarters were only two doors down the street from where we lived, and our two boys would “tricycle” down every evening to take part in the lowering of the Nigerian flag ceremony. As a result, we became quite friendly with the Nigerian Commander, and nothing was ever stolen from our house..

Our third child was born in Kinshasa at the Lovanium University hospital which was still manned by Belgian doctors and Belgian Catholic Sisters. Because of the curfew still in effect at dusk, when the time for the birth of our third child drew near, I began to study “home delivery” in case we could not drive the 12 miles to the University hospital. We also applied to Prime Minister Tshombe’s office for written permission to travel to the hospital at night during curfew hours should it become necessary. However, the value of such a paper was most uncertain since practically all of the soldiers patrolling were illiterate. Fortunately, one week before “Valerie” was born, the curfew was lifted.

The head nurse, a Mother Superior from Belgium, who had stopped counting after her one thousandth delivery, carried out the delivery with the Belgian doctor called in to do a little stitching up. (In those days, AID did not send one’s wife home to have a baby.) As it turned out the expatriate medical personnel who had stayed on at the University hospital after independence were excellent.

Q: What were the lessons learned, if any?

BROWN: Good question! Even though we all know from experience that each developing country has its own particular characteristics and set of problems, I think that Zaire was really unique, especially in 1962. Zaire was bereft of the educated indigenous talent needed to run the country. Except for the colonial rule of the Belgians, there was no history of any indigenous government except for small kingdoms in southwestern Zaire (the bas Congo), and southeastern Zaire (Katanga), and these existed a century or two prior to the takeover by Belgium. There were no dominant tribes in a national sense. Most of the country was thinly populated and ruled by village to county level leaders.

In those early years of independence, Zaire was completely run domestically by the UN staff, with the Belgians and the US having a strong say in any actions taken. I believe the US country team representing the information service (USIS), the economic/social (USAID), the military and political including the CIA, functioned well together under the leadership of the Ambassador. In the short term -- the first four to five years after independence, a functioning government was restored (albeit largely expatriates), rebellions were put down, and the economy was restarted. There was an ambiance of impending prosperity down the road. Our relations with the other major donors, the Belgians, French, UN, were excellent. When Mobutu took over in a military coup, no one prognosticated 35 years of despotic rule. In fact in the early years of his regime, before he nationalized all of the major industries, the economy did relatively well.

With 20/20 hindsight, perhaps our weakest point (and our partners’ also) was to have concentrated almost all of our energies in creating the stability needed to allow the economy to function, and to address the political/social needs only in “*dire circumstances*”. Could we have done more with “democracy programs”, private sector programs to encourage indigenous small businesses,

education of the population, public administration training in running a free market economy? It is hard to tell?

Would a firmer hand with Mobutu made a difference when he nationalized the private sector, started siphoning off most of the national wealth, and raised the corruption in his administration to new levels? Perhaps it might have. However, our failure to crack down should be evaluated in the context of the cold war. The US response to Mobutu's dubious, undemocratic actions was governed in large measure by our competition with the USSR during the cold war years. This is a case where the political factors were dominant, and a crucial drawback to the economic and social development of Zaire -- a country that should have become the richest country in all of sub-Saharan Africa . Some thirty five years later Zaire (Congo) is not just stuck at the goal line, it is substantially behind it.

Certainly democracy building programs are not easy. The current on-going experiment in a much smaller country, Haiti (with no history of democratic government and a literacy rate of under 30%), shows how difficult it is to train an effective police force, establish an effective judiciary, organize political parties, assure fair elections, keep corruption to a minimum, carry out the necessary reforms, etc. Even in those developing countries where carefully crafted stabilization programs have been worked out and cooperatively implemented with excellent results, there has been political instability -- military coups, civil disorder, etc. Having highlighted the lacuna that existed in 1950s through 1980s on the political side of many development programs, one must not fall into the trap of thinking that "democracy (political action) programs" are the whole solution. It is a question of balance.

Q: Overall, how do you rate your posting in Zaire?

BROWN: While serving in Zaire was tough, in the end my family and I thoroughly enjoyed the post. We felt that our tour of duty there was stimulating and rewarding. I learned a great deal professionally.

In September of 1964, I was transferred directly to South Korea as Assistant Director for Program and Economic Policy. I was delighted to have the opportunity to work with Dr. Joel Bernstein, who had been USAID Director in Nigeria, when I was the Nigeria Desk Officer in Washington, DC

MICHAEL P.E. HOYT
Commercial Officer
Leopoldville (1962-1965)

Principal Officer
Stanleyville (1964)

Michael P.E. Hoyt grew up in Illinois, New Mexico, and Europe. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956 after serving four years in the U.S. Air Force and finishing

his Master's degree at the University of Illinois. Mr. Hoyt's overseas posts included Casablanca, Karachi, and Douala. He is a recipient of the Secretary's Award for his performance as head of the American consulate in Stanleyville, Congo (now Kinshasa, Zaire) when he and his staff were held hostage by the rebel Simbas for 111 days in 1964. Mr. Hoyt was interviewed by Ray Sadler in 1995.

HOYT: I arrived just before the end of the Katanga secession. Of course, the focus of all activities at that point was on ending the secession in the Katanga. The other various secessions, like the one in the eastern province, Stanleyville, had ended more than a year before that. The Kasai secession had also ended. So for 6 months or so after I arrived, every focus was on ending the secession in the Katanga by Moise Tshombe. Ed Gullion became the ambassador when President Kennedy took office. He redoubled efforts to end the secession. This, in our minds, would have to be done by Indian, and Indian-led troops. They were, by that time, in the Katanga ready to move against Tshombe's forces, local soldiers and mercenaries.

I remember a story one of my good friends, Colonel Knut Raudstein told who was the Army Attaché. There was going to be the final push against Kolwezi where Tshombe's forces were lodged. At that time, the UN was headed by U Thant who had taken over when Dag Hammarskjold had been killed. U Thant was wary of having a war started down there and was trying to hold the Indians back. Knut very conveniently turned off his radio in his aircraft, a two-engined Beechcraft called Bugsmasher (we'll get back to that later) at the crucial time. The orders for the Indians to stop never came through. They marched and fought their way into Kolwezi and ended the secession.

I was concerned with several special projects. One was to terminate a contract, I assume a CIA-funded contract, to run Air Panama, an airlift program for the ANC (Armée Nationale Congolaise).

Q: *Presumably that was a CIA proprietary.*

HOYT: It was a contract with Air Panama, owned by Harry Winston, the jeweler. So I had to wind that down.

Q: *Who were they flying?*

HOYT: They were flying for the ANC.

Q: *But they were using DC 47s?*

HOYT: DC3s, C47s, shipping in an awful lot of beer and women, ammunition to keep these troops happy.

Winding down the contract was kind of acrimonious. I got a distaste for it. It was not known that the US was funding this. I did not know the background. The CIA had handled it, then they turned it over to me and didn't want to have anything more to do with it.

Q: How much money was involved?

HOYT: It wasn't much money at that point, a couple million dollars just to wind things down.

After the end of the secessions, we shifted our attention. I was in the economics section as the commercial officer. Presumably there was more trade, but there wasn't much trade to promote. Our concern then was rapid inflation -- a lot of money chasing very few goods. So we started import programs. First we just threw money at the importers and they bought everything in Belgium. We said they really needed to buy things in the United States. The Belgians just didn't understand. It was their country and they wanted to buy from their traditional sources. They didn't want any interlopers around. So we had to introduce this very carefully.

We had no USAID mission so I wound up heading the import support program, a \$40 million annual program. Each quarter I'd allocate \$10 million among specific products. First, they wanted capital goods, build factories, because the exchange rate was so favorable. What we were trying to do was sop up the excess liquidity. So what we wanted were consumer goods. So I wound up allocating a lot to such things as truck tires, goods I thought the US could establish a market for. I had dual purposes here.

I imported a lot of hops to make beer.

Q: Where were you getting hops? In the US?

HOYT: In the US.

Q: Upper Midwest.

HOYT: Malt and hops.

I just said: "This is what it's going to be" and the suppliers came.

And tobacco, a lot of tobacco to make cigarettes, to try to control the inflation.

Q: This was raw tobacco cigarettes. Did you do business consumer goods?

HOYT: Tobacco to make cigarettes. They had cigarette factories. Also, canned chicken. We financed imported canned chicken. One supplier developed what they called a "pili- pili chicken" made with spices popular in the Congo. So, they put the spice in the canned chicken and advertised it as "pili-pili chicken."

The problem was that the spices apparently caused some of the cans to burst open. The AID people launched a program to destroy all the pili-pili chicken" even though they had not detected botulism or anything like that. We were in the process of trying to destroy thousands of cans, and even before I was assigned there, I had planned a trip to Stanleyville to organize the destruction there. Later, I worried about this aspect when I was a hostage.

I had traveled all over the country looking at economic conditions, trying to figure out what it is the Congolese needed. I visited virtually every provincial capital, flying around in little planes and got very familiar with the country. I had been to Stanleyville several times.

Q: Is this the air attaché's aircraft?

HOYT: No. Whenever they went they would take some people, but mainly I used straight commercial planes.

Q: Air Congo.

HOYT: This was before Air Congo. There were some pretty strange planes that we flew in, but the pilots were very good. They knew their country backwards and forwards.

Q: How big was the embassy staff?

HOYT: I think in '62, '63 we weren't more than 40 or 50. By '64, when I left, we had about tripled that because we had USAID, military missions, and all that stuff.

Q: Did you have a marine guard contingent?

HOYT: Yes.

Q: How large was that?

HOYT: A dozen, just barely enough.

Ed Gullion then left. Kennedy had sent him there to end the Katanga secession. When he didn't get a better job, he accepted appointment as Dean of Fletcher School, Tufts.

Then McMurtrie Godley, who'd been director of the Central African office, came out as ambassador. He was a real charger. He knew how to organize an embassy, from the top to the bottom, to get the job done. The job to be done then was to rebuild the country, to get it functioning again.

Then towards the beginning of 1964, we had a series of rebellions. One was a Maoist type rebellion in Kikwit. It was relatively easily, not put down but contained by the ANC. But then there was a much more serious rebellion developing in the east around Bukavu on Lake Kivu and on south around Lake Tanganyika, the eastern region of the country. These rebels were former followers of Lumumba and tried to get the support of the Chinese communists who had their embassy in Bujumbura, Burundi. They were trying to get money from them and received small sums. Their orientation was very much anti-west, as had been the Lumumbist movement after the assassination of Lumumba.

By July of that year, Moise Tshombe was brought back as prime minister. The forces of Mobutu were not very successful in keeping back the rebel tied to the east, although they did hold on to

Bukavu. At one time when Bukavu was threatened, I remember that Dick Matheron, the consul, did receive orders from Mac Godley to stay if the rebels took the town. (Dick later told me he had no recollection of the cable, but I remember reading it in the reading file in the embassy in Leopoldville). However, the ANC repulsed the attacks with our logistical help. However, the ANC was retreating ignominiously everywhere else, and it became very evident their forces were not up to the job. As soon as Tshombe took office, he hired his former mercenary commander, Mike Hoare to begin recruiting mercenaries to come to the Congo.

We had also began supplying T33s training aircraft fitted with guns and bombs and some B26s.

Q: Flown by Cuban exile pilots.

HOYT: Yes, flown by Cuban exile pilots.

As a footnote to this, Che Guevara later came to the Congo to join the rebels, following the para-drop to save us, Operation Dragon Rouge. It was said that Che became so “disgusted” with the Simbas and their rebellion that he soon left.

The US, in the spring and early summer of 1964, was beginning to become more involved in fighting the rebellion, mainly supplying logistical support (C-130s and other aircraft) and with technical support from our military personnel. Meanwhile, at the embassy, my replacement, Mary Carmichael, had arrived in Leopoldville to be the commercial attaché. That kind of put me on the loose until the end of my 2-year tour in October. Mac Godley and Bob Blake, the DCM, asked if I were interested in going to Stanleyville to replace John Clingerman, the principal officer, who needed to leave but his replacement wasn't due until later in the Fall. The consulate in Stanleyville covered the entire northeastern third of the Congo.

Q: What did we have in Stanleyville? What was in the consulate?

HOYT: In terms of personnel, outside the consulate we had a 2-man USIS information library, cultural center. In the consulate proper we had, in addition to the principal officer, the consul, there was a vice-consul who was a CIA man running the operation in the Eastern Congo. I speculated that it was a very useful posting because of the leftist orientation in Stanleyville. When there was a secession in Stanleyville, the Russians and the Chinese came, using the airport they landed their planes there. Under the Lumumbist flag there was very much leftist orientation there. So he had access to a lot of leftist people who were recruited by China and Russia for training in their countries. They, in turn, could be recruited by us, giving us a window into those countries. It was a unique location.

There was a communicator working under the station chief. He had a secretary. In addition, there was a State administrative clerk. That was the extent of the American personnel who worked under the general authority of the consul, much as they did in the embassy under the ambassador. With as active a program as we had in the country, under an active ambassador in Mac Godley, the consul's job carried a lot of responsibility.

Q: How many African employees did you have?

HOYT: There were about 8 plus the household staff. The house was a duplex. Then the USIS people had local employees. Under Mac Godley, he was literally running the country, so in a sense, the consuls were pro-consuls. We had military assistance programs going on, police programs, economic programs, and it was our job to oversee that. We were very visible in supporting the central government.

My job was to see that our programs and our policies went forward.

Q: This is Michigan State police program?

HOYT: It might have been. The only thing that I saw...

Q: It was also in the agency operation.

HOYT: I think it was a USAID operation, as far as I knew. We had a whole shipment of teargas launchers there. I remember going in and inspecting them. With Tshombe coming in as prime minister, he immediately put in his police chief in the Katanga into Stanleyville, name of DeCelle..

Q: Let me just mention since you might get someone who doesn't...for 3¹/₂ months you and your colleagues were imprisoned by the Congolese rebels. While you were successfully extricated from this mess, and for your performance the Secretary of State presented you with the Secretary's award in 1965.

HOYT: The entire staff was given it. It's simply "The Secretary's Award". There is an award for valor and so on, other awards. It was brand new at the time, and subsequently only given posthumously. I believe we're the only living recipients of the award. People that were killed as hostages normally get this award. The inscription reads: "FOR OUTSTANDING COURAGE AND DIGNITY IN HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE WHILE A PRISONER AND HOSTAGE OF CONGOLESE REBELS AUGUST 5-NOVEMBER 26, 1964"

Q: The only non-posthumous recipients?.

HOYT: As far as I know. I guess from the department's view, we came so close we deserved it. When I came back most of the people I talked to had given up on us. They didn't think that we would survive. As I found out, they spent a lot of time and effort to extricate us.

Q: Let me ask a couple of things. Did the agency try to run an operation designed to extricate you?

HOYT: Yes. There were various designs for an operation. They thought of everything they could possible think of. One of the operations was to drop people up river from Stanleyville and have them come down on rafts. That is until somebody pointed out to them that the reason Stanleyville existed is because it just down-river from Stanley Falls.

Q: It would have been quite a raft trip.

HOYT: It would have been the raft trip of the century. Stanley made it but he made it by portering around.

Q: *It would have been quite a riverine operation.*

HOYT: My call sign on the SSB radio was River Rat, very appropriate.

Q: *Obviously your ambassador was quite pleased with what had happened, not just the fact that you all got out in time. You had done what you were supposed to instead of panicking which probably would have resulted in your getting killed. Isn't that probably fair?*

HOYT: Oh yes, I think we behaved well.

Q: *Was your wife back in the States?*

HOYT: My wife and youngest child came to Stanleyville with me. That was the main reason I hadn't gotten the posting in Stan when it came up in the Fall of 1962. The consul initially assigned there freaked out and needed to be replaced. I was told that I would have been assigned there except that I had 4 children, 3 of which were at school age. There was no schooling available. Clingerman, who had no children, was assigned. Now, our young son, Evans, who was 6 years old, and my wife, Jo, came with me. She was Madame Consul. We were enjoying our first time as head of the post and so on.

When it became very clear that the rebels were coming, I was going to have her evacuated with the others. I went to the airport the day of the evacuation. One of the vice-consul's contacts in the military asked me where she was. I said that she was going out in the afternoon. He said, "you'd better get her out sooner because there might not be time in the afternoon." I sent my car in for her and put her on the same Raudstein Bugsmasher plane I mentioned before in connection with ending of the Katanga secession. His pilot flew her out. I was relieved to see her go. Now, she was safely out of it, and I could concentrate on doing my job.

Q: *The CIA man's secretary?*

HOYT: She went out on the same plane. Jo wasn't on the last plane out, but there were rebels right around there airport as she left.

I had gotten to Stan shortly after the Fourth of July party at the embassy in Leopoldville. Mac Godley had said I could leave for Stan after I organized the 4th of July party. So I got there about the 15th of July and started my rounds of important people and tried to figure out what was going on. The news we received was not that the rebels were not advancing on Stanleyville but were taking towns 5 or 600 miles away, 1000 miles away, with the ANC fleeing before they even arrived.

Of course our sort of standing instructions, although not in any written form or given orally (mostly in the foreign service, you have to figure out the rules. You are rarely told) was that we were expected not to be the first to panic in situations like this. We were supposed to keep our cool.

Even reporting endangering situations was not considered “cool.” We weren't supposed to be reporting that, “The rebels are coming, the rebels are coming.” In fact the Belgian consul, who had been there a long time, who really knew what was going on had reported, and had told me, often that “the rebels are coming.” For that, he was fired, relieved of his duties. They sent up young Baron Nothomb from the embassy in Leopoldville to take over. He arrived a few days before the rebel takeover. He did a superb job. He was sent there specifically with the idea that if the town were taken over, he was to protect his citizens. I read in book -- just recently published (Dans Stanleyville, Ducolot, Brussels, 1993) that his job was to take care of the couple of thousand Belgians living around Stanleyville in the event the likely event the rebels took over. That was his job.

We had so few Americans in the area that I was never told anything like that. You understand that as a consul you are responsible for your citizens, that is no question. There were very few missionaries around and our interests in the Congo were so important, that the missionaries did not figure as important, at least not in any briefings I had (none were given to me before I left Leo). When I finally determined that the time had come, that the rebels were very close, on a Monday afternoon I called in airplanes to evacuate people. I did that on Monday, August 2nd. I called them that night. The next morning, Tuesday, they told me they were going to be there later that day.

I sent Jo out to talk to the missionaries, and I called who I could. I sent her with my driver to tell the missionaries who were in town that planes would be in to evacuate them. When she returned, she told me they all indicated that they wanted to stay. That said they had left before, their properties had been destroyed; this time they were going to stay with them.

The senior man of the missionaries, Larson, came to see me at the consulate that morning. He asked me, “Are you leaving?” I said, “no, I'd received orders from the ambassador that I was to stay with minimal staff.” (The ambassador had cabled us the night before that “Hoyt, Grinwis, and communicator were to stay in case rebels entered the city.” The rest were going to leave.) Larson said, “if you stay, we'll stay.” I said that I didn't think it was a very wise idea, but it was his decision. So not one missionary left on any of the planes that left that day.

Q: How many people were out there?

HOYT: About 40 in the immediate vicinity of Stan.

Q: Women and children?

HOYT: Yes. I would say several hundred in the entire consular district, in the outlying territory.

Q: Were any of these twin engine or mostly civilian [in the evacuation]?

HOYT: DC4s mainly. When I went out to the airport I did see that they had sent up a contingent of troops. I saw them unloading from a DC4, smart and proper, shirtless, black skin shining in the tropical sun, marching briskly off to fight the good battle. (I never received any work of their fighting the rebels)

Of course I was in very close contact with the military people. They seemed concerned with our safety but never did anything concrete about it. I was concerned that the town defended and did everything I could to encourage them to do so, in spite of my lack of any military training on those lines. I was not interested in having the rebels take over for a variety of reasons: our personal safety and for policy reasons, trying to keep the Congo intact and out of the hands of "leftist" elements. I must have been pretty visible in consulting with the military, with the police and with the other people commanding, which became evident later when the rebels accused me of constantly contacting army headquarters.

The actual situation at the time was to follow closely the situation at a junction 30 miles out of town. I had been told repeatedly that if that were taken, there would be nothing to stop them from taking Stan.

They took it on Sunday. Tuesday I had people evacuated. The ambassador had said Monday night that I was to stay with the vice-consul and the communicator. So we were busy Tuesday day destroying, burning, all documents, classified material. I didn't have very much in my files, but the CIA station had bunches and bunches of them. They burned all day.

Q: You didn't have shredders?

HOYT: Just barrels lined with incendiary material. You filled it, then lighted it. We had to keep refilling the things because we had so much material.

The consulate is situated right on the Congolese River, right next to the Falls. You couldn't see the Falls but you could hear them. That road, to Wana Rukula, the vital junction that if it fell Stan would fall, was right in front of the consulate. So we were right on the eastern edge of town. There was an army camp, Ketele, in that direction, but in a northerly direction. The road was clear as far as we could see. An ANC squad would come in front of the consulate, set-up a recoilless rifle and shoot into the jungle. They couldn't see anything, nobody was shooting back.

Q: How large was the contingent?

HOYT: Of troops there? In the town there were probably 1500 or so troops but these weren't all fighting troops. I think they had one unit with the recoilless rifle that they sent out.

That night the army withdrew. I called army headquarters. I said, "I feel pretty naked out here, pretty shaky. I think we ought to go into town to our staff apartments." There's a high-rise apartment, the Immoquateur. The USIS people and our staff people were there. If we went there, of course we'd lose our communication, but I thought we would be safer there. The army said, "No. You stay put. We don't want you moving around."

They didn't want to send troops for us. I didn't want to fool around with those guys either. So by that time I'd gotten everybody evacuated out who was supposed to get out, USIS people there remained an extra communicator and Ernie Houle, our State clerk. The communicator, who had just come a few days earlier to replace the present communicator, Jim Stauffer, the one we were

going to keep, had lost his way going to the airport coming down from the apartments, and had come to the consulate instead. We thought it too risky at that point to send him to the airport.

The State clerk, a retired Navy petty officer, I guess had become confused and wasn't dressed when the others left for the airport. So he was still downtown. There were thus 5 of us instead of 3 still in the city.

That evening, about 6 PM, at nightfall, I got a call from the airport. It was the Air Attaché from Brazzaville, who had been sent up to help in the evacuation. "I'm here to take you out," he said.

I said, "In the first place, I've been ordered to stay. Secondly, I don't think I can make it through." The airport was on the other side of town, another mile or so beyond, and I wasn't about to drive through that city with the ANC about. (Almost all the Congo's problems since independence stem from the indiscipline of the ANC, the former Force Publique, used by the Belgian administrations to control the Congo.) From my almost two years in the Congo, I knew when to stay away from these guys and that was at night, an even more dangerous time. You don't survive 2 years in the Congo with the extensive travel I had done in the interior without knowing the ANC and their ways. We had had problems with them even in Leopoldville. You just didn't go running around town at night. I knew that.

So this attaché said, "You guys are out of your minds, come out!"

I stopped to think for a moment. I knew it was foolhardy to stay. Grinwis and I had discussed it at length. The rebels had made it very plain in their public statements and to agents Grinwis had reported on, that Americans were on their list, on their shit list. In public statements that I had specifically targeted the Americans. We were flying T33s, strafing. They knew they were American planes. They weren't marked American planes, but they knew. It was a very definitely an anti-American movement. The leaders, Gaston Soumialot, one of the leaders, made that very clear in some of the interviews he had in Bujumbura and Uvira. David, the CIA man, had been in Stan almost 2 years. He knew it was foolhardy to stay.

Q: Were his orders separate from yours?

HOYT: We got the order back channel. In other words, a lot of communication, in Vietnam (as can be seen in the Pentagon Papers they did this endlessly), if you wanted to send a message which was not in the regular series to be published and entered into the open logs, you just handed it to the CIA station chief and he would send it through his channels. That's what we called "back channel." It's not a numbered message. It's usually personal messages between Ambassador and Secretary. The ambassador does have his own privacy channel. He can have his State man encrypt a message which then the CIA communicator will send out encrypted, but they don't have access to it. Normally what you do is you just hand them the message in the clear. That was the back channel.

His station chief in Leopoldville, I assume, knew that we were ordered to stay. (Whether David got his own message or not, I don't know. Given my knowledge of the station chief, I suspect he bowed to the ambassador) It's up to the ambassador, as head of the country team, and the consul, as head of the local consulate, to make such decisions. If I'd said to leave, he probably would have

left. I don't know. I never started the debate with him. Actually, we ran out of time. By the that time it was dark we were stuck. I told the attaché "we're not coming."

I heard something like "idiot" and the phone went dead.

Q: Did you have any arms yourself?

HOYT: I had one pistol, a loaded pistol in the house which I didn't think I'd use. I know that David had (one), I'd seen a pistol there. There was no question of our trying to defend ourselves.

Late that afternoon we saw a column of rattily dressed guys with branches and palm fronds attached to them, waving the palm fronds, go by from the left, from the jungle, in front of the consulate. This was after the army had left. They just filed by. A few moments later, we heard a lot of firing, this is towards the center of town. A few minutes later, the column marched back. We thought there were maybe a fewer of them coming back. They did notice the consulate because we'd see some of them pointing at us. They knew we were there. Of course we had the flag flying.

Q: You indicated that at this point you were in your apartment.

HOYT: No. We were at the consulate which is a duplex. The consul's residence is a part of the same building.

So I had one guy downtown, that was important. But the 4 of us were at the consulate. We spent the night there. The next morning was sort of a repetition of the day before. The army squad came and start firing again into the jungle.

In Conrad's trip to the Congo, in the Heart of Darkness, he describes his sailing off the African coast and seeing a French frigate sitting there firing into the deep jungle. Nothing happened. It just kept popping the guns into the jungle.

This is what they were doing. They just were popping their shells into the jungle.

We still had secure communications, sending back situation reports every 15 or 20 minutes, usually in the clear. They had destroyed their encrypting machine. Anything that was classified, of course, we didn't want to let fall into anybody's hands. Everything classified was destroyed immediately on reading or sending. We still had our teletype.

Q: What did you do with their money.

HOYT: I didn't see it. At that point I had never been in the CIA vault where the equipment was, where the communicator, where the CIA people had all their files and stuff. They generally won't let anyone outside in there. To communicate classified matter, they still had a one-time pad.

Q: To do it OTP.

HOYT: Yes. I did send some classified messages and others in the clear. I was still at that point trying to get downtown to our apartments. We were in a very exposed position where we were, and I wanted to move. ANC headquarters kept saying, "No, no, no. Just stay where you are. Stay where you are. We'll take care of you. Don't worry." So about noon it seemed to be pretty quiet so I called over to the residence.

Q: *The telephone system has not gone down.*

HOYT: The telephones worked fine. Actually the telephone system worked all through the rebel period. That never shut down. I called over to the cook to say we're going to come over for lunch. That Sunday I'd bought one of this big *capitan* fish from a fisherman who had just caught it. (The fishermen from Stanley Falls are famous. Stanley came back with drawings he drew of these fishermen.)

So I bought it. The cook was going to have it the day before, but everybody left before noon on the evacuation. So I said, "I've got a fish at home, come over." I asked one of the communicators, "if you come over we'll have lunch and then David and the other communicator will stand watch and come later." We felt we needed to have someone on watch. We'd planned that if something did happen, those several Congolese employees who remained at the consulate, they would go into the small State vault, and we would go into the CIA vault which had a metal frame with a metal vault door.

This is the 5th of August 1965. Jim and I are just sitting down to lunch at the residence. I hadn't eaten breakfast, we'd gotten up early, I was pretty hungry by that time. Just about to take a bite and the phone rang. It was David, saying that, "I think you'd better come over here pretty quick."

I said, "Okay."

I put the phone down and was just about to leave when, maybe, I hesitated a second. "I'm not going to leave this delicious fish, this food," I may have been thinking. The phone rang again and this time David was screaming, "Come now. They're attacking."

Without hesitation this time, I dashed out. In the back...

Q: *David is the?*

HOYT: Vice-consul, CIA. So I dashed out the back. Normally the back was closed off from the consulate so that we'd have privacy. There was a swimming pool in the back yard to the resident. When we were burning everything, we tore down the fence and opened the back door to the consulate. I ran out without telling Jim, the communicator, anything. He had apparently caught on and was right behind me.

I go into the back door of the consulate to the reception area. There was a burst of gun-fire, and I drop to the floor. Jim rushes by me, dives into the vault. On the floor, I saw 2 or 3 Congolese employees huddled in the corner. I said, "come quick." I motioned them to get into the State safe, the smaller safe. (A light tight box connected the two vaults so that messages could be passed from

the State-side to the CIA-side). I shoved the Congolese into the small vault and closed the door and then dove into the big vault.

All this time, I could hear shots being fired all around me. The others had been standing in the vault door shouting, "come quick, come quick." As soon as I got in the vault, they closed the door. They moved safes up against the door. David whispered to me that he had seen a group of what he thought would be the rebels. They were dressed in ANC uniforms but with branches and stuff attached to their uniforms, furs and stuff like that. They had automatic weapons and they were firing as they came.

We could hear outside of the vault still shooting, breaking into the front door, people stomping around and yelling and so on.

Q: *The vault is closed.*

HOYT: The vault door is closed. Normally in a room where you're doing encryption, you can't have a telephone. A telephone will pick up encryption signals. Since we had destroyed our encrypting machines, a telephone line had been strung in, so we had a telephone. I started calling around town telling them that we were in trouble. At one point David's driver came up to the message slot in the wall and whispered to us not to move, "*ne bougez pas.*"

We assumed they had cleared out the employees from next door because we heard nothing of them. We could hear them at our vault door. To hide the fact there was a vault in the room, a wooden door was installed in front of it. That was torn down and someone started firing at the door. Then the lights went out. (We learned later that David's driver had told them the door was electrified.) Somebody had pulled the main switch. Actually we had been trying to send out a message. Jim had typed a short message saying the consulate is under attack, connected the tape in a loop and put it on the teletype. It thus ran continuously, repeating the message. But, Jim said had said he thought the people he had on the line when the attack started were transmitting themselves and thus could not receive our message. As far as I know nobody ever got that message.

All our equipment went down because they pulled the plug. We sat there for several hours, with them banging on the door, shooting at it, sometimes with a fairly heavy caliber because it sure made an awful noise. They kept this up for several hours. We kept, on a low voice, trying to talk on the telephone, to reach somebody to tell them of our plight. The people we did reach later said they had tried to reach somebody but on one could do anything. Everyone was staying indoors and out of trouble.

Q: *Did you call long distance?*

HOYT: To call long distance you had to go through the central PTT. That wasn't an option.

We also had a single side band radio which was under my control, but that was outside the vault. So we couldn't get at that. Anyway, what could anybody have done?.

For several hours the pounding continued. There was an air conditioner in a blocked off window, and I could see a little bit of light coming through, showing that we were in no danger of suffocating. I could also begin to see a thin bit of light next to the frame around the vault door. Apparently the pounding could collapse the door with the frame. (We, in fact, had a construction project to strengthen it).

For no apparent reason, the noises outside the door began to subside. Soon we could hear the clink of glasses and bottles. We knew there was some wine or something that David had in his office, the anteroom to the vault. Soon there was complete silence. Had they drunk the wine and just left? But this was about 3 or 4:00 in the afternoon. Even though it was silent inside, I wasn't about to open that door.

After awhile, I could tell that it had gotten dark, about 6. We hadn't heard anything for a long time. We could hear some firing in the distance, but not much. I thought that when they were pounding on the door, if that door gave way they would just come rushing in, and fire as they came. I couldn't imagine them saying, "Livingston, I presume."

I had been deathly afraid if they battered the door down, that would be the end. I was convinced of it. I had asked Jim for a cigarette. I had stopped smoking but I started again, right then and there. If this was going to be my last hour, I might as well enjoy a cigarette, I thought.

Time went by, it got dark. I said, "well, let's bite the bullet. Let's do it." I told them to very carefully pull the safes away from the door and to unlock it. I opened it a bit, slowly and cautiously and peered out. I could see nothing. It was dark, and there wasn't anybody around. I opened it all the way walked into the room. I could feel the floor was covered with bullets that they fired at the door and into the building.

I told Jim to go outside and turn on the juice, the electric power. Very little happened because they had shut it off during the day so there weren't any lights on. We turned on lights. We saw that they hadn't really made a mess of the consulate. There were mainly a lot of spent bullets and cartridges on the floor (I still have a small collection of them), a lot of glass, broken glass. We could see the bottles of wine that they had left. There was nothing else disturbed.

Of course, we were thoroughly shaken by these events. We had our complacency just utterly destroyed, like being raped I guess. Here you are functioning, you're a consul, you're dealing with people, you're a fully functioning person, your days are filled, you have the authority, and all of a sudden somebody is trying to kill you. A brutal awakening. It was a real shock.

I went to the single side band radio, which was my means of communication, and told Jim to fire up his equipment so that I could send a message. I raised the embassy on the line right away; they had apparently been waiting for us. I told him (Monty Stearns, the political counselor), cryptically, because the radio is not secure. For all I knew, anybody could be listening -- the rebels, whoever they were, the Chinese.

So I had to be rather discreet. I had to explain, giving the gist of what had happened -- that we had been attacked and that they finally went away. I later saw the cable that Monty had written after he

received my radio call. I apparently had not told him we were in the vault because he said we had locked ourselves in a toilet room (which, later on, we actually were kept locked up in a toilet at the airport).

Then I sat down and typed out a message which give full details of what had happened. Jim encrypted it and sent it out. I had called around town and confirmed the rebels were at the airport and ANC had fled. Rebels were in control of the town. They were not much in evidence, but it was obvious they were in control of the city. I called the Belgian consulate located in this big high-rise Immoquateur. From there they could see the streets were pretty much deserted. There wasn't anything for us to do so we retired for the night -- some in the vault, some in the consulate, and I in the residence.

The next morning I got on the SSB radio. Monty said a message coming, "were planning an operation." The cable came through. It said a helicopter rescue was set for Friday, the next day. They were going to land on the consulate lawn and take us out. I told Monty on the SSB that the only problem was that "we've got a guy downtown." "Don't worry about that," he said. "We'll worry about that. Try to get him down."

There was no way we were going to go out of the consulate. We were in touch by telephone with Ernie but didn't know about the operation because we didn't want to tell anybody about it. But we had a message that outlined it.

Q: That was an encrypted message?

HOYT: It was an encrypted and had been deciphered on the one-time pad. We all read it and then destroyed it. We didn't want to keep it around since we had no security. As I saw the text of the message later on I had missed one thing, or at least it hadn't registered with me. The cable said T33s were going to provide cover. That just didn't register with me, I didn't realize there would be cover and what that meant when I read it. I realized later they meant they were going to come in firing, they were going to clear the area before the helicopter came in. I just had it in my mind that the helicopter would come in and ignored the T33 part. As I said, I destroyed the message and did not go back and study it before I made up my mind what to do about the operation.

In discussing the operation with Monty, I said, "if you see the green truck parked outside, you'll know it's safe, if not, you will know it is not safe." Jim said he had an antenna running across the big front lawn. At the last minute, he would cut it, but that would mean we would lose our teletype communications.

In the afternoon a couple of guys came to the consulate. For the first time we heard the word "Simba", Swahili word for lion. They called themselves Simbas. They were yelling, "Mulele Mai." Mulele being the leader of the Maoist rebellion in Kikwit which probably had no connection with this movement. It was just too far away and different styles and so on. Mai meaning water. To them it meant that they were protected by Mulele's water which made them immune to bullets. As part of the ritual to be observed, they made it very clear they would not accept being handed anything. One said to give him the keys to the cars. He indicated that I was to drop them on the ground so he could pick them up.

They took a couple of our vehicles. Every time they'd come in they'd yell "Simba" 3 or 4 times. So we had seared into our brains the word "Simba." That is a word I still have trouble hearing. I haven't seen the movie "The Lion King" where the word is used often.

We were on the night after the attack on the consulate, Thursday, when the "Operation Flagpole" was to take place the next morning. It was pretty peaceful in the early part of the night, but then suddenly the city was being bombarded. We couldn't figure out for a time what it was. Then, we figured out is that there must be some elements of the ANC across the river, on the left bank, and were lobbing mortars indiscriminately into the city.

Q: 81 mm mortars?

HOYT: I don't know. Anyway, nothing landed very closely, very close by, but they were landing around. So we got under our steel desks. It lasted maybe about half an hour or so and then stopped. Then there was silence for awhile. Then all hell started to break loose. What we could tell, what we were communicating with our friends in the apartment downtown, is they could see, they said, that the Simba rebels had broken into the stores and had gotten all the arms and ammunition and were firing in the air.

Q: The Simbas had no semblance of organization, by and large?

HOYT: We couldn't tell. A band had attacked the consulate, and some individuals calling themselves Simbas had come around and stolen some of our cars. They were in ANC uniforms, dressed up with twigs and animal furs. They seemed to know how to use weapons. I'd guess they were former ANC people, soldiers.

Anyway, we heard they were running around indiscriminately in the streets. I could hear what I knew were tear gas grenades going off. In other words they had gotten into those stores and they were firing off tear gas. This lasted a good bit of the night. We got some stories from the high-rise apartment that the Simbas had broken in and were chasing people up down the staircases. They were having a pretty rough time with the Simbas. There didn't seem to be any leadership. This firing lasted a long long time, and then I finally went to sleep. When I woke up...

Q: You had somebody awake, somebody at watch.

HOYT: Yes. But nothing happened, nobody came by. I woke up in the morning and thought about the situation and the helicopter rescue due that morning. I thought that here we've got all of these guys with arms all around, not hesitating to shoot anything that moves. I came to the conclusion that the operation was just too dangerous. I told David this, saying, "I've just got to call it off." As far as I can recall he didn't say anything against it. I got on the radio, raised the embassy. I told them that I thought there were just too many people around, it was just too dangerous. I recommended they call them in. I just received a terse acknowledgment. I found out later that they called off the operation. Everything had been in place, ready to go. They had made it clear that it was up to me give the go ahead.

I remarked to David that Godley had changed his mind in a hurry about wanting us to stay. I guessed he did that as soon as the attack came. I later saw that he had cabled to see if a nearby naval task force had the capability of going in to get us. He was given a polite turn-down.

This was really an in-house operation, they had their own people, the military assistance people, plus a couple CIA guys and so on. They had a team all ready to go. They were fully armed and would have come in guns blazing.

But the other thing in the back of my mind was one we had one guy downtown, I didn't want to leave him but what about all the other people? If they come in here killing people to save us, what are they going to do in frustration and for revenge? This Operation Flag Pole was never publicized. The Belgian consul's memoirs, in a book he published later, said that had been one of their nightmares. He had apparently heard a rumor that there was a rescue operation for the American consulate and was convinced there would have been a massacre of the European population. Of course, Ernie Houle would have been left behind. That fact had always been haunting me, in the back of my mind as I made my decision.

As it was, early in the morning the Simbas had taken a bunch of Belgian men from the apartment building and brought them out to Camp Ketele, the camp pretty close the consulate. Nothomb had gone after them and was told that the general had already let the guys go. Patrick was told to come back later in the morning and see the general. The rebel leader called himself General Olenga.

So the Belgian consul went to see Olenga. Olenga assured him that he wanted to work with the Belgians, that they would look forward to cooperating with them, that they wanted everybody to stay in place, they wanted everybody to work, everything was suppose to function normally. He promised that cars would be returned to the owners and that "there would be perfect discipline amongst the troops."

When Patrick brought up the attack on the American consulate, that all the consuls should be protected and provided the means to look after their citizens, the general made it very clear that the Americans were not included in all this.

Q: Was there anybody besides the Belgian and the United States consulates?

HOYT: The only other professional consulate...

Q: Is that the word?

HOYT: Yes. Besides the honorary consuls, because there were honorary consuls from businessmen, there were the French, the Dutch, and so on. The only other career or professional diplomats were the Sudanese. They had two or three employees in their consulate general. While we were in the vault and under attack, I called the CG. He simply said he couldn't do. When I called him a few days later, he told me he had received permission from the rebel authorities to leave by road, and he was about to depart immediately.

Q: When you were involved in making decisions of life or death, if your other guy had not been downtown in the apartment, would you all have thought about trying to slope out of the consulate, to get out of there?

HOYT: Well, you see, Stanleyville, being where it is, is the heart of darkness. It is all the way up river, it is in the middle of the biggest rain forest in Africa. It is literally in the midst of almost a thousand miles in every direction before you get anywhere. So where would we have gone? There is no place to go.

In Bukavu they are on the lake, Kivu, and they had a boat. So at the last minute they could slip down the embankment to the boat and they'd be in Rwanda in 5 minutes. But we had nowhere to go. There was no question of escape.

Q: And beside your single side band, you all wouldn't have any radio communication for support.

HOYT: Yes. We also had a portable one. I forget to tell you that there was a hand-cranked portable radio which was standard equipment. While we still had light they were trying to put it together. They found it require 2 handles to crank it and there was only 1 handle. So when the lights went out, we had nothing. So all we had was our regular teletype equipment, which is very good, and the embassy side band. We still had that capability, and I was reporting regularly up to the 10th of August.

I was disturbed when I heard on the Voice of America broadcasts that reported such things as, "The consul reports that the city is quiet." I knew these broadcasts were made in French and Swahili and was worried the rebels might hear we were reporting on the situation in Stan. Over the SSB I said there should be nothing on VOA about us, "Shut off VOA." (This same thing happened to me later in Burundi during the 1972 massacres. The VOA would carry our reports saying such things as "We've gotten word from missionaries." Again, I had them turned off.)

Q: Had you all become good friends [with Nothomb] within this short time?

HOYT: He had been in town only of 3 or 4 days before the Simbas arrived. I had known him slightly in April or May in Leo. He's a great guy, such an extrovert. He bubbles with energy and enthusiasm. Just an actually perfect guy. He did just an absolute fantastic job. He took care of the Americans just as much as he did the Belgians, with great distinction.

Q: Did you exchange some correspondence?

HOYT: I met him later and corresponded just recently, after I read his book. He is the Belgian ambassador to Tokyo. I sent him a lot of materials, including copies of the cables I had gotten through the Freedom of Information Act for my book. His reaction was, "Boy, there sure was a lot going on that I wasn't aware of." In his case, he had been sent out there to take care of the Belgians, and he did. He was ready to do anything he was asked to do, say anything he had to, if that would save lives, even for a few moments. Later, when we were held hostage together (for the first two months, the Americans were the only ones held hostage.), he wanted us to say certain things in the

messages being sent out that I had resisted saying in similar circumstances before. He told me: "I'd say anything to save these people one day."

It's a difference in perception of what our duty was. Mine was primarily political. We were there to help pull the country together. It was very much on my mind that our mission was to help rebuild the Congo.

Q: Before I forget, were they still producing uranium?

HOYT: I think so, but mainly copper, cobalt, gold and diamonds. At that point uranium was not particularly scarce (as it had been during World War II). Our interests were quite varied. I think if the rebels would have turned their attention down south and gone to Katanga they could have disrupted copper production, which was very important to us at that point.

Q: I was just curious.

HOYT: I think our interests were broader than that. The interests varied, as I found out later. Averell Harriman, who was the "principal" in charge of the State Department side of the Congo operation, could think only about was fighting the communists. He tried to convince the Belgians that we were fighting the communists in the Congo. (I later saw the CIA and the State Department analysis that these are not communists and were not receiving any significant support from the communists -- that is until just before and mainly after the para-drop.) When asked after I got back, that they weren't communists, weren't supported militarily by the communists, but that if they had taken over the Congo, they would have had a regime much more friendly to the East. There was some justification in that.

(I think that many of us working in Africa and interested in Africa development, often used the communist threat in order to get more support.)

Q: In terms of foreign aid?.

HOYT: Right.

Q: To rebuild the economy.

HOYT: When Harriman was opposed to us building the Tanzania railway, the Chinese built it. So I said, well the Chinese built the railway, why don't we build a road. So we did.

Back in Stanleyville, you can imagine the predicament the vice-consul was in, being the CIA. The communicators were also CIA, but they were of no value to anyone. A full-blown agent would have been a tremendous coup for the Chinese. The Chinese communists, in fact, were supporting the rebels. If they found out that there was a CIA agent trapped in Stanleyville, they would have given anything to get their hands on him. We had just gotten a cultural attachés out of Bujumbura who had defected.

Q: You have remained in touch with the vice-consul David?

HOYT: Yes. He's d now. He got to be a sort of “Chef de cabinet,” of several of the directors, an then a station chief.

Q: *Oh, he did. So he did very well. This helped his career then.*

HOYT: Oh yes, much more than mine.

What I think, over the years, the fact that this episode is no longer recognized by the department, is not even listed as a hostage situation or a situation of attacks against personnel, I think the reason is they didn't want to publicize the fact that there was a CIA agent. The book, The Man who Kept the Secrets, by Thomas Powers published in 1979 there was no secret made of the fact that there were CIA people captured and held hostage in Stanleyville. That was well known. There's a book out of Leavenworth, Combat Studies series called Dragon Rouge, Hostage Rescue in the Congo, 1964, identifies Grinwis. So there's no reason to keep it under wraps that I know of.

Q: *The CIA has a series of awards.*

HOYT: Whichever is the highest, he got it.

Q: *Dave?*

HOYT: Yes. We got the highest State one with the rest of us.

Q: *Did he attend your award ceremony?*

HOYT: Yes. He retired as a State employee.

Q: *No kidding. So they preserved his identity.*

HOYT: Yes, but he was identified elsewhere.

Q: *Were they still publishing the biography of register of the State Department at the time?*

HOYT: Until '74.

Q: *Did it identify him?*

HOYT: Yes, as a State employee.

I have before me now, and I will refer to in subsequent sections, a journal written by the vice-consul, whose name is David K. Grinwis. He was the vice-consul and CIA agent at the consulate at the time.

Q: *He has been previously publicly identified.*

HOYT: Right, there have been several publications including a publication of the Army Staff College in Leavenworth. A detailed book on the operation which I recommend to anybody.

Q: *That's on Dragon Rouge?*

HOYT: Dragon Rouge, the eventual operation which did extract us some 3 and half months later.

So, I'll pick up the narrative. This is the day the operation had been canceled, the morning of the 7th of August (1964). I don't just want to follow our journal, it is available in the State Department or Northwestern University Library and from various sources for those interested in it.

What happened over the next few days is that we have various attempts to arrange a meeting with the newly arrived rebels. We find out that the rebels are called Simbas, that's Swahili for lions. They have elaborate rigmarole's of rituals which are suppose to immunize the soldiers from bullets, the bullets turning to water if they go through proper procedures. Such as yelling "Mulele Mai" which is the Mulele's water. Mulele was a Maoist rebel who really had nothing to do with this rebellion which we will soon find out was leftist and very much anti-American.

Q: *May I ask you, you obviously picked up better Swahili?*

HOYT: No, just French. I knew very little Swahili. I spent almost 2 years in the Congo and the trade language...

Q: *was French?*

HOYT: No. The trade language used in the Congo, up to Stanleyville, was Lingala. That was the language of the ANC. Swahili was spoken east and south of Stanleyville. These rebels did come mainly from the southeastern region of the Congo, the Maniema, and were oriented towards the Katanga, towards the eastern Congo. They were mainly from the Batetela and related tribes, where Lumumba had his ties. If they spoke something besides their own language, they tended to speak Swahili and not French. They also spoke Lingala because a lot had been in the ANC.

Q: *Did any of you, how many were there? There were 5 of you?*

HOYT: There 3 administrative types, 2 communicators and the State clerk, and the vice-consul and, of course, myself. None of us spoke Swahili or Lingala.

Q: *Were you the only French speaker?*

HOYT: David and I were quite fluent in French. Ernie Houle, the State Department clerk, was originally Canadian so he knew some French. But the other 2 spoke very little French. Jim Stauffer, who had been the communicator for almost two years, I found out a little later, had Congolese friends, and I assume spoke some French with them.

We pick on with the narrative.

We still had visits from various passing bands, but we had made no contact with the rebel authorities, led by the self-styled General Nicholas Olenga. The Belgian consul had just met him and was trying to arrange a consulate meeting with him. After a few false starts, in which I accompanied Patrick to his office several times, finally came about on Monday, the 10th of August. All of our vehicles had been taken by the Simbas, so Patrick came to fetch me in his Land Rover, accompanied by two Simba guards, assigned by Olenga.

For the rest of the time, until all Belgians and Americans were taken as hostages in October, Patrick was free to circulate and was able to (and did a very able job) to protect his citizens. He also helped Americans and British, mainly missionaries and business people.

So on Monday afternoon there was a meeting at the Chamber of Commerce room at the high-rise Immoquateur. I met for the first time with General Olenga. He was seated at the end of the hall, behind a table flanked by 6 or 7 officers with plumage on their uniforms. Off to one side were about 6 women, enormous fat women wearing blue UN helmet liners, left over from the UN intervention days, almost three years previously. During those difficult times of the Stanleyville secession, I had heard that these women played a significantly brutal role in harassing civilians, Congolese as well as Europeans. They were known to be the most vicious against their opponents.

The meeting started with a discussion between the general and mainly the Belgian civilian leaders. They presented Olenga all the problems they were having, particularly with the undisciplined Simbas. They wanted to be able to circulate freely, they wanted to communicate with the outside world, and wanted to carry on their business as usual but were interfered with by the Simbas.

Olenga made it very clear that there were to be no communications with the outside world. The telephones were open, telexes could be sent, but they all had to be reviewed by his officers and censored and so on. But no one was to leave. The civilian leaders said that the city had to be supplied, so commerce had to go on or people would just starve. He promised that they would make the arrangements, he promised that he would discipline his troops, and punish anybody that harassed the civilian white European population.

After this discussion, the meeting broke up into a smaller group in which the consular corps was to meet with General Olenga. The consular corps consisted of myself, there were British, French, Greek, Cypriot, and Dutch honorary consuls. The Sudanese did not show. (We understood that within a few days the rebel rioters had given him a pass and he went back to the Sudan.) Nothomb started to make a presentation. As the Belgian, in the Congo, he is automatically the Doyen of the consular corps, as the Belgian ambassador is the Doyen of the diplomatic corps in the capital.

Q: Normally, it's the senior person.

HOYT: Normally.

Q: Was he senior in terms of length of service?

HOYT: No, he had just arrived a few days before.

Q: Because of the obvious relationship between Belgium and the former Belgian Congo.

HOYT: Later, when I served in Burundi that was not the case. Certainly in the Congo it is automatically the Belgian diplomat who is the Doyen.

He proceeded to make some points to the general what they needed to do, that consular premises should be protected. Then just to back him up, I started to speak and I said, "I'm the American consul, and..." On identifying myself, General Olenga rose up. Up to this point he had been speaking in a very moderate tone, in French, and had been very reasonable. Now he started at a shout, almost, it seemed, as if he were foaming at the mouth! He started yelling and screaming they had encountered thousands of Americans on the way to Stanleyville and had captured some hundred of them. He said he declared us persona-non-grata and wanted us evacuated as soon as possible. I asked if the missionaries could leave also. He said no, that they'd stay.

He said he knew that the American consulate was giving advice to the ANC headquarters there and had requested reinforcements from Leopoldville. (This was partially true in that we had called local headquarters many times to find out what was going on and to appeal for protection. I may have also said something about needing reinforcements.)

Q: Had somebody monitored your calls?

HOYT: No, I'm sure what happened is that some of the people in the headquarters there, either were rebels before or changed sides. Obviously somebody had been at headquarters whom had talked about us.

But I declared innocence to Olenga. I said that there were no American troops. He said that he had their ID cards and that he would turn them over to me. His entourage, women included, kept repeating "Etats Unis d'Amerique" every time they heard him say those words. At that point he marched off, taking his entourage with him, and the meeting was adjourned.

At the end of the meeting all the other consuls around me were congratulating me, saying, "Oh, you're going to be able to leave now." I thought to myself. "that'll be the day."

Q: You had read this correctly.

HOYT: I didn't think there was going to be any way we would be leaving.

Q: What did you colleague, the Belgian consul, what was his reaction?

HOYT: There wasn't much that he could do. I know that he had complained to the General that the American consulate had been attacked, shouldn't be attacked. The general had agreed with him and said at one point he would call me. He never did.

We were driven back to the consulate. I was still in contact with the embassy by single side band, open radio. I told them briefly what had happened, saying even though we were told to leave not to make any transportation arrangements. I wrote a situation report on this, a very brief one to be

encoded on a one-time pad, but Jim informed me that his main transmitter was not working and he couldn't repair it. In the back of my mind, I suspected that, in fact, it might not be unrepairable, because he exhibited at this point and subsequently, a marked reluctance to be sending messages out.

I suspect, and the rumor has never been confirmed to me, but it was generally thought that the communicators, although they fell under CIA jurisdiction, were not in fact CIA employees, but were NSA employees, National Security Agency. They were responsible not only for communications but also for electronic intelligence gathering. They did all the sweeping and had equipment to monitor and so on. In fact, they were quasi-independent. For now it was not a particular problem but later it did become a problem. From now until a good bit later we had no opportunity to determine if (1) that radio wasn't working or (2) needed tuning or repair.

This is the next day after Olenga had said that we were going to be evacuated. I was composing a commercial telex message to send out, to give to the PTT downtown to send out. I had requested the Belgian contractors to come around to the consulate and try to repair the windows and clean up the place from the attack. Also in the firing, at some point, the rope on the flag had been cut in two. The flag was still flying, but at half-staff. I asked them to bring it down, to climb up there. At that point, someone brought Ernie Houle down to the consulate, the first time we had seen him since the attack on the consulate.

They were in the midst of greeting Ernie warmly when a band of 4 or 5 Simbas dashed into the driveway in a jeep and started yelling and screaming at us. They started beating at us with their rifle butts. The Belgian contractor and those who had brought Ernie saw this and fled. I tried to tell the Simbas we were the American consulate, that we were not to be "disturbed," that General Olenga had said the consuls were not to be bothered.

Q: Was this done in English or French?

HOYT: This is in French. I was talking to them in French and, of course, they understood very little French.

They said, "Okay, sit there." They beat us a little bit. They said to wait there, and then drove off to Camp Ketele, leaving two behind to guard us.

Q: Were you struck at that time?

HOYT: Yes. They had rifles, they struck us a bit. Not viciously. I had seen ANC, other people, beat up people and they do it quite well. They're quite adept at it, and I had seen the sorry results of these beatings. What they were doing to us was quite gentle compared to that.

So we waited a few minutes and then a truck came in loaded with a platoon of troops led by a major who was later identified as Nator. He took me, as I was the leader, he took me into the consulate, and we started a search of the consulate. He was looking for ANC troops. I said there were none. Of course, he didn't believe me. He pounded on the terrazzo floor and said, "There are ANC here, there are troops here." I said, "No, no."

He pointed to my glasses. I took them off and handed them to him. He indicated I should throw them on the ground. He smashed them with his rifle butt. He pointed to the ceiling. I found a way to get up into it.

Q: *You're near-sighted?*

HOYT: Yes.

Q: *This is...*

HOYT: Yes, it's the end of my glasses, no more. (I did not get glasses again until I returned to the US several months later.) Anyway. We went all over the unfinished ceiling and found no troops. He motioned for me to come down. As I did, I scrapped my hand on a nail, and it started to bleed.

Then we came to the closed door of the vault. So he said, "Fungula, fungula." Swahili meaning key or open. I said that I couldn't do that. I tried to explain because what had happened, the outside dial on the door had been scraped off in the attack on the consulate. So we had no way of opening it once we closed it. We had made the decision to close it to avoid trouble over the vault. When we later decided we needed in the vault, Jim and Don (Parkes) knocked a hole in the ceiling and had gone back in. But then, when the equipment no longer functional, we had closed the door again. While I was in the ceiling with Nasor, I had succeeded in steering him away from the hole (it would have looked mighty suspicious).

My entreaties fell on deaf ears, and Nasor insisted open the door. I said there was no way. Somebody handed me a small sledgehammer and a wedge.

Q: *Chisel?*

HOYT: Chisel, yes.

Nasor ordered, "fungula" So I started desultorily chipping away at the door, I didn't imagine that I could open it. I was doing this when David Grinwis came up to me and whispered in my ear saying, "Hurry up, hurry up. They're doing quite badly with us outside. They're really being rough on us."

So I began more earnestly to attack the door. I put the chisel in the crack on the door, a few knocks on it and the door swung open.

Q: *Was there anything at that point that you all had destroyed?*

HOYT: All the secret stuff, all the encryptment materials, had been destroyed, I didn't know where the one-time pad was, that was the only thing classified. All the files and everything had been destroyed.

The door opened, and I stood back. The major said, “no no” and pushed me ahead. I could imagine what in the world they would think when that door opened and they saw all that communications equipment, and the desks, and everything like that. I thought, “my God, he'll think this is the headquarters for the entire CIA and the eastern Congo.” (Which in fact it was.) I didn't know what his reaction would be.

As I saw in, there was an eerie light in there, with rays coming through the hole in the ceiling and through the doorway. Everything was covered with the dust produced by breaking through the ceiling which shone in the light. It all looked very eerie to me. But the major, apparently his only concern was with ANC soldiers, looked in, and, seeing nothing unusual, motioned me silently outside. We joined the rest of the staff having a frolic in front of the consulate.

As I said, Ernie Houle had been brought down after being stuck downtown in the apartment.

Q: *The fifth guy?*

HOYT: Yes. So the fifth guy was with us at this point.

I find out that the platoon has the 4 members of the consulate inside a circle. They had formed a circle around them. They were inside riding on secretarial chairs, smashing into our poor fellows, who were standing with the flag staffs at their sides, the ends of the flags in their mouths. They were playing bumper car. They would rush up and then bang against the guys. What they'd done was to take all the flags out, the American flag plus the consular flag. There were I think 2 sets, one behind my desk and one at the reception desk.

They were being forced to hold the staffs and then they had the ends of the flags in their mouths. They were told to chew on the flags, to eat the flags. I didn't think much about this then, but when it was all over, I found out we were known as the “flag eaters.” When I meet somebody today that knows about our ordeal, I'm told: “Oh, you're the flag eater.” I'd have to explain, for some reason, that I was never forced to eat the flag or to chew on it, but my staff was.

When we came out, they stopped the bumper car routine. We were told to get into the truck, a big truck, a USAID truck with the hand clasped decal. I high stake truck. We climbed in, and they threw our flags in with us. We climbed into the back. They began to chant, “Lumumba, Lumumba.” It meant we were going to the monument to Lumumba monument. We had heard that this is where the rebels executed people, at the Lumumba monument. (It was a life-sized photo of a standing Lumumba encased in a concrete frame.)

So here we were driving in the back of the truck, out of the consulate lawn, told we were going to the Lumumba monument, and that meant to be executed. I noticed on the bed of the truck were bundles of dried fish, a staple food for the Congolese, but stale dried fish was not eaten by Europeans. One of the Simbas, apparently seeing me look at the fish, made it clear, I don't know how, that I was to eat some fish. I tore off a hunk and put it in my mouth. I didn't taste anything, I was too busy thinking about other things. What I was looking for was where they were the truck was going. If they continued on this road, it would go to Camp Ketele, headquarters now the

Simbas' and where we could find Olenga. On the way there is a turnoff to the left leading to the Lumumba monument. So, I was more apprehensive about where we were going than this fish.

When I had been in the ceiling with Major Nator, he had made me take my tie off. I always wore a tie while working. I looked down now and saw I had my tie clasp. I took it off and threw it down, thinking, "Well, I don't need this anymore."

As I said, I was looking where we were going and as we were coming up to the crossroads, where we would be turning left to go to the Lumumba monument. Much to my relief we went straight past it and right into Camp Ketele. I had heard that it was not a place for white men. As we drove in, an enormous roar went up from the Simbas milling around the yard. "*American! American!*" they bellowed. They brushed up against the truck, beating on the sides. Our guard fended them off, and we pulled up in front of the head-quarters building. We were told to get out.

Our guards started beating us, striking at us with their sticks, with their rifle butts. We were told to take off our shoes and socks to humiliate us. Major Nator actually did a second time what he had done at the consulate. He had a big FAL, a light automatic weapon.

Q: *It's Belgian?*

HOYT: Right, a Belgian light machine-gun with a little handle on the top.

He opened the breach to show there was a cartridge in it. He threw it at my feet and said, more in grunts than words, "I'm immune to bullets. Pick it up and shoot me." He'd done that at the consulate, and I had just ignored him. He did it again at the Camp Ketele. "*Je ne peux pas,*" I muttered. "So, that just proves it!" he said and stalked off.

So there was a few minutes of this sort of mild beatings, taunting and so on. It happened quite a few more times while we were there -- I never quite got used to it. Then, I saw a short distance away, sitting around a table, it looked like they'd been judging prisoners. I could see people lying in the mud all tied up, some alive and some dead.

Q: *How many?*

HOYT: 3 or 4, I don't know. These were Congolese. I saw the officers sitting at a table and it looked like they were sitting in judgment. I saw the bearded captain who on the previous day Olenga had designated to be the liaison with the consular corps at that meeting at the Chamber of Commerce. I shouted over and said, "Olenga told you to protect us." He didn't respond immediately, but very shortly thereafter he came over and motioned us into the headquarters building. Our flags were thrown in after us, and our shoes and our socks. He quickly closed the door and said, "Don't worry."

Inside we were then protected from those hundreds of Simbas outside in the yard. We put our socks back on. A Simba with commandant rank on his shoulder came in and introduced himself. "My name is Commandant Sengha, head of the general's secretariat." He spoke excellent French and started to talk to us in a normal voice, asking us how we were. He was interested in our being

Americans and asked about the American involvement in the Congo. I explained to him that we were trying to keep the Congo together and so on. He said, "Okay okay, don't worry, the General will see you pretty soon."

We were ushered into the general's presence. He looked at me and saw that I had this blood on my hand from scraping it at the consulate, and, having wiped my forehead, had blood on my forehead. The General said, "How are you? How are you? Are you hurt?" I started to say I was fine, then I realized I shouldn't be saying that. I said, "Well, it's pretty bad." He apologized for not seeing us sooner, that he'd been very tired and was very busy.

Q: This is General Olenga?

HOYT: This is General Olenga.

He said that he had changed his mind, that we were not to be evacuated. That we were to stay there but he would provide us with a guard at the consulate. Which, after some toing and froing, were taken to the consulate with a Simba guard.

Q: A single guard?

HOYT: A contingent of troops, some innocuous types with whom we had lots of difficulty communicating. Anyway, they were there and they were suppose to protect us. Back at the consulate, I sent another message through the PTT.

Q: You still had power at the building?

HOYT: Yes, we had power in the building and telephones, but our teletype was not working and we only had PTT which was still open.

I sent another message saying that the General had changed his mind about evacuating us. I still had our SSB, and told them what the situation was.

What happened is that they very next day...

Q: This is the 11th?

HOYT: I had just described the 11th, now we're the 12th.

Q: This is August the 12th

HOYT: Yes, okay, we are now the next morning, August 12. We heard of stories about people having what they call a "Phonie" which was the SSB. The Simbas called all radios a "phonie." Worried about it, I called headquarters to say I wanted to get rid of our phonie and wanted to turn it over to somebody. I didn't want it to be discovered by a wandering Simba. However, I got on the phone a fellow by the name of Kinghis who had just been appointed by Olenga as the president of the "Popular Republic.". David had told me about him. He had been in one of the Lumbumbist

secessionist governments and had been dismissed when the secession was ended. Central government troops caught him just as he was about to crucify one of his ministers. He headed an outgrowth of the Watch Tower society, a religious groups called the Kitawalists.

Q: *Jehovah's Witnesses?*

HOYT: Right.

Q: *No kidding.*

HOYT: The Jehovah's Witnesses Watch Tower people. It was an indigenous movement that took the trappings of Jehovah's Witnesses. He had spent a lot of time in prison. He answered the phone, and I talked with him. I told him I wanted to give up our phonie. He said, "No. You stay right where you are." A few minutes later drove up to the consulate.

I had not mentioned it, but Commandant Sengha, the fellow who had been so reasonable at Camp Ketele, had meanwhile come to the consulate. He said he wanted to rent the *vice-consul's residence*. We decided that would be fine. We needed a friendly face however we could find it. David said we should draw-up an agreement, make an inventory, and so on. That gets moving and he goes away.

Q: *Was this in the duplex?*

HOYT: Yes, we're in the duplex, the residence. At this point, over the radio, I tell the embassy to tell my wife, who is actually waiting as usual on the radio as she was always waiting at the Army pilot's house which had a SSB. I had talked to her several times before, very discreetly, of course. I told her to go to Jerome, that's where we were going to go, Jerome, Arizona, on home leave after Stanleyville.

Since the general had canceled our evacuation, which I didn't believe in anyway, that she should give up the Congo and go to Jerome. I found out later that this had caused a scramble in the embassy. They went to Jerome Anany, the ANC commander who I'd worked with in winding up the Air Panama contract.

Q: *The best laid plans..*

HOYT: So then almost immediately, Kinghis drives up to the consulate and demands to know where the vice-consul's car was. He obviously knew the vice-consul. I told him the Simbas had taken it. He said, "Well, come with me," indicating David and I were to come with him.

I had sent the other three staff to their apartments downtown. I thought there was no sense in their hanging around the consulate. We got in his car. Our guards let us offered no objection. He drove us to a brick building I had not seen before. David whispered to me that it was the central prison. Kinghis motioned us in the door of the prison. The director of the prison welcomed us, being quite chatty. There were no other prisoners (I assumed we were prisoners). He said everyone had been cleared out the night before. I could see a lot of dried blood everywhere.

He led us to a cell, which, we found out later, was the same cell Lumumba had been kept in when he was a prisoner in Stanleyville before independence. We stumbled into the room. Two Simbas lay asleep on a table in the middle of the room, the only furniture there. The director ordered them out and closed the door behind him and left us alone in the cell.

It would take a lot to describe my emotions at the time. Suddenly, a couple of days after being a consul and working the streets and so on of Stanleyville, and having suffered the attack, and all of a sudden, here we are locked up in a prison. Nobody there, nobody saying anything. I was devastated. All we could do was to slump down on the floor and sit for the next few hours. After awhile, I looked around the bare cell and saw there was a small courtyard outside. I looked out there and returned to sitting. Nothing happened, nobody came.

At 6 PM, the door opened. It was director of the prison. He said to me, "Come outside, there's somebody who wants to see you." I followed outside and there was Sengha in his car. He said, "Hey, come on, let's go out to dinner. I went by the consulate and they told me that you were in prison. I'll take you to dinner."

I said, "David's still inside."

So we went back inside and got David, "Wait a minute," Sengha said, "I'm going to stop by the Congo Palace and see if General Olenga had ordered you to prison."

So he went inside and returned saying, "No, he didn't order you to prison. Let's go back to the consulate."

At the consulate, we toasted our newly won freedom with drinks. Sengha agreed with my suggestion that we should all go to our apartments in Ommoquateur and join our other staff there. When we got there, we found the three were gone. Sengha had already left. We went to Nothomb, the Belgian consul, and he said he would go to try to find them. He said for us to return to the consulate and wait for him.

We went to the consulate. I was very worried about what had happened to the 3 guys. I thought that David and I had some understanding about what was going on, but that the other three might be terrorized about how they might be treated. How would they react to being put in prison? About half an hour later, Patrick comes up with them. He had found them also in the prison. In other words, Khingis had also ordered them into prison.

I said, "Oh my God, I'm so glad to see you!"

Here were these guys who didn't speak much French, who didn't understand. I had been terribly worried and then so relieved to see them safe. I greeted them like they had been gone forever. They said, "Nothing happened to us. They just brought us into prison, no big deal!"

Q: Tell me, you're near-sighted, they'd crushed, broken your glasses. Are you pretty near-sighted?

HOYT: Not that much.

Q: *Not terribly?*

HOYT: At that point I was 34 years old. Only one time, did I have difficulty in recognizing people. But usually they were dressed in such a way or something, that I could recognize them. David is even more near-sighted. He wore contact lenses. The problem with contact lenses is that if you are beaten about the face it could damage your eyeball permanently. So, he kept them off most of the time.

The consulate had not been looted. We had just brought all of Clingermans' supplies, the previous consul. So we had a good supply of food which stood us to good stead because we fed out of this for several months. We had booze but that went fairly quickly.

The next day, very early in the morning, a major comes to the consulate with a military police squad and orders us, again, into his cars. We go out again to the camp again. Almost a repeat of the previous day. Major Nasor came up and repeated his FAL trick. I could see Khingis standing off to the side. I was very disturbed.

What it was, was that somebody had discovered our messages of the past few days. I'd sent a message through the telex, PTT, that we were going to be evacuated. Then, I sent another message saying that we were not going to be evacuated. That apparently, I came to the conclusion later, was what they were very disturbed about.

So, we were waiting outside headquarters, waiting to see Olenga. We were having a pretty bad time, we were being harassed, mainly verbally, but that really put a strain on us. We were finally ushered in. There was a Simba, a certain Amisi. David whispered to me, "Hey, that's one of my guys." It was one of David's agents. He announced himself as confidential secretary to Olenga.

Q: *He's a paid contract agent for them?*

HOYT: David didn't go into details, but I assume he was one of his guys.

Amisi assured us that he would take care of us, that we would be all right. He spoke very carefully, he said that he would arrange a new guard for us. He was talking to somehow evacuate us still. He apparently hadn't gotten the message from Olenga that he had changed his mind. He said, "I'll take care of you, don't you worry."

We went back to the consulate with this new guard.

Q: *Chaos in the command structure.*

HOYT: It was very obvious to us that Olenga, who was a Batetela, from the very large tribal group in the eastern Congo, Lumumba's group. They formed the backbone of the Force Publique (and their defection from the Arab slave traders under Tippu Tib had led to the defeat of the Arabs by

the Belgian forces in the 1890s, and, at independence, had been the main ones to revolt of the ANC and caused all the problems.)

Amisi was a Batetela, and he brought some of his buddies to guard us. Amisi and Olenga departed that night to continue the assault on Bukavu and we saw no more of him. The rebels had been defeated once at Budavu, and they would try again. This would give them access to the outside world and possibly the ability to be supplied by arms from leftist countries. One of the guards was a former teacher. He didn't speak much French, he must have taught in Swahili. That was to be our trusted guard.

Amisi was thus lost to us. He could, of course have betrayed us. He must have known something of whom David was. It was a very touchy situation. My limited experience with recruited CIA agents is that they are very loyal. I found out later that he was probably killed in the attack on Bukavu.

During the next few days, there was much goings back and forth.

Q: *Prison back to the consulate?*

HOYT: No. At the consulate. We're not taken to the prison, presumably protected from Khingis by orders from Olenga and probably Amisi.

Q: *Did Amisi have a rank?*

HOYT: Commandant.

Q: *He was a commandant.*

HOYT: Commandant, same as Sengha. Sengha continued over this period to be very friendly. We are still kept in the consulate. We learned that the Red Cross is trying to get a Red Cross plane to come in to do whatever it could. We learned that the PTT had pretty much been closed down. We couldn't send messages. Of course we can't leave the consulate. We did get one message from the embassy but then when we tried to send one back

Q: *PTT?*

HOYT: Post, Telegraph, and Telephone.

Q: *It's a telex.*

HOYT: Yes, but you had to go there. You had no way of linking into it from the consulate.

Q: *I see.*

HOYT: We had people around us and there wasn't much that we could do. Things pretty well settled down until the 21st of August.

We were having a quiet morning. We had heard, we had radio receivers so we could hear VOA and BBC, that the rebels had attacked Bukavu and had been repulsed. So we were a little apprehensive.

On the morning of the 21st, late in the morning, Patrick, the Belgian consul, rushed up with his vice-consul, Duque and asked, "Do you have any last messages?"

He explained that there was a cable from Olenga (they were using the railway radio communications network), a long cable with a diatribe against the Americans, ending with an order to the military commandant to take the Americans "to judge them without mercy." That, everyone knew, meant we were to be executed.

Some of the guys went into the back room with the vice-consul to compose some last messages. But David and I stayed with Patrick, asking, "What are we going to do?" We sat down to discuss it.

Patrick said, "Why don't you send a message out to your ambassador, to the State Department, to President Johnson and tell them what predicament you're in."

I said that sounded like a good idea. At that point, Commandant Sengha also arrived. He also thought such a message was a good idea. Nothomb had met him in the street and told him about Olenga's message.

Patrick said he would go out to Camp Ketele because he knew the message was going out to the camp. He said he would try to find a Colonel Opepe who he had been dealing with. He had been left in command by Olenga and had proven to be fairly cooperative. Patrick and Sengha would try to get him to come to the consulate.

They left, and I started to compose a message. They returned with Colonel Opepe, a stout, older fellow who spoke almost no French. I couldn't communicate with him directly. Sengha started talking to him about sending a message. Sengha asked me if I really was against American military intervention in the Congo, something that had to be said in the message to save our lives. I mumbled something to the effect I could hardly say that. But he was translating for Opepe and, somehow or other, Opepe finally agreed to what we were doing. So, it was just a matter of composing the message.

At that point, another colonel comes in with a couple of officers, Kifakio. He is obviously coming to get us to go and "try us without mercy." There ensued a shouting match between the new colonel and Opepe. I didn't know which way it was going to go. Finally, the new colonel stomped out. Somehow Opepe, with Sengha's help, had prevailed.

Then, it was a matter to complete the message I had started. Patrick helped turn it into French as my French writing wasn't up to my speaking. The wording ended that American assistance to the Congo should be "reconsidered."

Q: A very diplomatic way to put it.

HOYT: Patrick, who, I learned later, had and would say anything to gain a few moments, encouraged me to lay it on thick. Sengha added some language about how well the “Popular Army” -- the official name of the Simba army, was behaving itself. We finally got a message to Opepe. He agreed, it sounded good to him.

I had no idea what we would be doing next. We were told to get into a car, the 5 of us. Sengha and Nothomb, Nothomb by that time had left (I learned later Patrick had some of his own citizens in trouble and went to help them). We drove up to the PTT building. It was closed, but they found somebody to open it up. We went up to the room, where all the teletype machines were.

Q: *This is PTT?*

HOYT: Yes, which was closed, but they started to crank up the machines.

My knees were pretty shaky at this point because I knew that we'd come pretty close to seeing our end. When they started up their machines, I could see that the first message that came out was tagged for the American consulate. (I don't know how it got into the PTT system). The message is in five group numbers which coded messages always come through as.

Q: *For your own OTP?*

HOYT: I assumed it was an old message stuck in the system somehow. “Oh my God,” I thought, “what are they going to think? It's so obviously a message enciphered.” However, they didn't pay attention, they were waiting for it to clear so that they could set up my message to send out.

Q: *Have you seen all the message traffic that you subsequently received?*

HOYT: Yes.

Q: *All the message traffic?*

HOYT: Almost all.

Q: *That's gone back and forth.*

HOYT: I don't know what this message, I never found it. At this point, my knees were shaking so bad I felt I'm going to fall down. I looked around desperately for a chair. Finally, I found one and just collapsed into it.

Q: *The consulate had enough food, this is canned food basically.*

HOYT: The consulate was well stocked. Up to this point, we had been living in the consulate. The servants could get out, they could get some food, whatever was on the market. We didn't have very much problem.

They finally got the message. I thought we'd go back to the consulate. Instead, we went across the street to the offices of President Khingis. I saw a group of Belgians being herded along, obviously with some force. Kinghis ordered us taken to the airport. At the airport, we were herded into the baggage room and were turned over to the airport guard contingent, headed by our old friend, Major Nasor.

I don't know what these guys were told to do with us, but the contingent turned out to be a pretty nasty bunch. They beat us and hurled us into what we found out was the women's toilet. Shoved us in there and there were already 5 or 6 Congolese. They turned out to be businessmen who'd been kidnapped and held there, waiting for their families to bring in ransom money to get them out of hock.

We were alternatively put in and taken to the women's toilet, beaten, shoved, and taunted. Where the door knob fits into the door, they put the point of the bayonet and twisted it to open the door. Anyway, it was in and out, in and out.

Q: *What day is this?*

HOYT: This is the 21st of August, in the evening.

So we get knocked about and so on. We spend a very bad night trying to sleep. There were, by this point, 10 Congolese with us, with the 5 of us in there. It was pretty crowded. We said nothing to the Congolese. They had their problems; we had ours.

We spent a few days in the baggage room, in and out of the women's toilet. When I finally asked one of the guard how we were to get fed, they drove me down to the consulate and the servants prepared some food and brought it back out to the other guys. They said our servants could come and bring us food, which happened only sporadically.

Q: *This is the evening of the 21st of August.*

HOYT: By this time, it was the 22nd. It's a pretty quiet afternoon, Major Nasor is gone and there's only one guard. Things are pretty quiet but things got awfully quiet. Then we hear, in the distance, the roar of a crowd. It's obvious to us that a crowd is coming. Pretty soon it gets very noisy. By this time the Congolese prisoners are gone. Our lone guard obviously knows something serious is happening. He says, "Be quiet," and he motions us into the toilet, closes the door without locking it and rushes to take care of the situation.

As it turns out, he did. He came back and told us to be quiet. Apparently he was told to guard us and he guarded us. He kept the crowd from us.

A few moments later, the door opens and there is Major Nasor with a white couple with 2 kids. He motions them into the toilet room. We take the woman to the back and sit her on the stool with the kids. I don't know whether they're Belgian or French or what since we haven't been able to exchange any words.

The man says his name is Charles Davis, a missionary. He says, "we were brought here, they told us we could see the American consul." I had to break the bad news for him, I said "I'm the American consul." That obviously devastated him, knowing the American consul was in the same predicament they were in.

There was a lot of noise going on outside. The door opens and Major Nator comes in. He motions for Mrs. Davis and the 2 kids to come out. Of course, Chuck Davis didn't want that at all. But, I sensed the situation -- that I didn't think they were going to harm her -- and said, "let her go." What choice did they have. She went out with Major Nator, and they closed the door. Of course, Chuck is devastated. His wife wasn't there. I really didn't think that they were going to harm her.

As a matter of fact, they didn't. They took her downtown and ensconced her with a missionary family. But, it was many days before we had any news of them.

We had another pretty bad night. In and out of the toilet room, some beatings.

Q: Did your guards stay with you?

HOYT: This was the airport contingent. Along about midnight the commandant said that we could come out of the toilet room. They had some chairs and told us we could stay outside. They even offered us beer. I wasn't one to refuse. I was the only one to accept the offer and had a few beers and the food of theirs which they offered. Our servants hadn't come out.

There was still a lot of activity right outside the door, outside the building for most of the night. Someone was beating on drums outside. I went to sleep, the beer helped me a bit. We were able to spend a reasonably quiet night and when eventually the drums stopped.

The next day...

Q: This is the 23rd.

HOYT: Yes. On the 23rd we were moved to the Sabena (airlines) guest houses. It's a term for the installation out there. What it is, is perhaps a hundred cottages there for transit passengers to stay.

So we spent a number of days there. We had visits, Kinghis came out one day and brought David and me downtown to write another message. He turned us over to his ministers. He sat with his gun to write a message condemning American policy, saying that they were interfering in Congolese affairs. I said, "I'm like you, a soldier, you can't go against your bosses." He lifted his gun up, as if to threaten me. I offered compromise language. He said, "okay, that sounds fine." We drafted another message and then were taken to the radio station where I read it into a tape recorder.

Q: This is the side band?

HOYT: No. They recorded it at the radio station; they've got a broadcasting station.

Q: Was it commercial or Belgian owned?

HOYT: It had some range. It was monitored from the outside.

Then one morning General Olenga came, the morning afterwards.

Q: *Everybody had been defeated at Bukavu?*

HOYT: He got back after sending the message that they were “to judge us without mercy.”

Q: *Did they feel a little besieged?*

HOYT: They were beginning to, not so much then, not yet, but they would.

Olenga was rather normal. He said that he was going to talk to Washington by radio, but his tone was normal.

Meanwhile we were asking about Mrs. Davis. We still didn't have any news of her. One evening a drunk Simba guard came in and knocked us about. The next morning they put the guy in prison. We were being fed by my servants.

Q: *This is the 27th, 28th.*

HOYT: The 30th. Finally, Mrs. Davis came out and told us that she had been taken downtown by Major Nator, found a missionary for them to stay with. We got some news about what was going on. Several doctors came to visit us and told us that when Olenga had left for Bukavu, Kthingis had organized a torture/slaughter of many many Congolese dissidents, torn open their hearts and ate them at the Lumumba monument. Doctor Barlovatz lived right around the corner of the monument and could see a lot of this stuff. It was pretty horrible. I thought that if Sengha and Olenga hadn't rescued us from prison, we'd probably be one of those guys.

Then there was a change in government. Kthingis was dismissed and another government was formed. Then, we heard that (we're now on the 5th of September) Christophe Gbenye had arrived. He was the head of the remnants of the Lumumbist party.

Gbenye was president, and Soumialot the Minister of Defense, in the new government. We heard that there was going to be a meeting with Olenga and the consular corps to present the new government. Patrick and Peter Rombaut, the British honorary consul, came to get us to take us to this meeting at the presidential palace.

We were just about to go into the door of the palace when Olenga drove up with his entourage. He was obviously very angry. He directed his soldiers to grab David and me. Somehow, he did not want us to be there. They beat us up and put us in a car and we drove back to the Sabena cottage. They picked up the other 3 members of the consulate plus Chuck Davis, still with us, the 6 of us. After some beatings, they drove us to the central prison. We were shoved into the prison and taken to a cell opposite the one that we had been in before. We were shoved into a bare room. They shut the door and that was that.

So, here we were again in prison. Obviously, Olenga did not want us free, did not want us to operate the way the Belgian consul was operating. For some reason, he felt uncomfortable with the American consulate personnel on the loose. We spent some days in there, with only filthy straw mattresses. Olenga did not come for a few days.

There were a lot of Simbas in the prison and other Congolese, who, for various reasons, were shut up in the prison by the rebel authorities for various infractions of discipline or loyalty. There were a lot of Simbas, and the Simbas, of course, didn't like us. They didn't beat us, but they would harass us.

At one point, Olenga came to talk to the Simba prisoners. He came over and said he had captured 108 American mercenaries at Bukavu. He had not killed them and would bring them to the prison. Of course, he never did.

One afternoon Olenga came over to us and said somebody had told him there was a missionary amongst us. I said "yes," that Davis was a missionary. He said that he shouldn't be in here and ordered him out.

Q: Did they really capture American missionaries?

HOYT: No, but that comes up many times.

Soumialot, who is the Minister of Defense and Interior and Information, came and talked to me, lecturing me on American intervention in Congolese politics. On the 15th of September, Soumialot said we were to be released from prison and asked us where we wanted to go. I immediately said that I wanted to go to the apartments at the Immoquateur. (This was a recurring and frustrated theme of mine. We never made it there.)

We were indeed taken out of the prison, and, after some hesitation, we were taken back out to the Sabena guest houses. We stayed there some days, each of us in individual cottage. It was a much more relaxed regime for us. Colonel Opepe, the one who had sent in the message to President Johnson, came by and asked us where we wanted to go, again. I said the Immoquateur.

Soumialot came and said he wanted to use our consulate offices. I said I agreed "in principle." Soumialot said that since we were to be leaving anyway (a carry-over from Olenga's original idea of evacuating us), he might as well occupy the consulate. He took me down to the consulate and we had some conversations. He was generally friendly. He obviously wanted to talk. Soumialot also mentioned that a Red Cross plane would be coming in soon.

On the 25th of September, we could see from our cottage that a Red Cross plane did land. From our cottage window we could see the terminal and the plane. We were elated with the prospect of seeing someone from outside our closed world. The occupants were driven away, presumably downtown. Nothing happened with us. I was beginning to get the feeling we would not meet the Red Cross officials.

The next day, the 26th of September, 2 Simba officers came to us, handing us Red Cross forms. They said to write 25 words, in French. After some hesitation, David and I decided not to. I said "No, we would not write anything." The Simba officers looked puzzled, didn't insist, and strode off.

We then saw the Red Cross people come back to the terminal. They got into the airplane. It taxied away and took off. This was one of the darkest day for us. Here we were, very hopeful that something might happen. We were utterly devastated. We knew we were there for the long term.

Q: How long, at this point, the 25th of September, you had been held?

HOYT: The attack on the consulate was on the 5th of August, six weeks.

Anyway, Soumialot and his people were getting serious about using the consulate. We went down to the consulate. I went down with David. The Belgian doctor, Barlovatz, who had described the massacres to us, came to visit and said that he had seen the Red Cross people. He said that he told them clearly what our situation was, that we were the only expatriates to be mistreated and imprisoned.

On the 28th of September, an officer from Colonel Opepe's staff came and told us to gather our things. We were taken down to the Congo Palace, the best hotel. We learned from them that Opepe and the other rebel leaders were very disturbed that we had not sent messages with the Red Cross. I was asked why we didn't. I just shrugged my shoulders and didn't go into it. It was too complicated a thought for them that we felt by writing we would legitimize our treatment.

Then we were taken to see President Christophe Gbenye for the first time. The conversation was weird. Gbenye had actually gone through Brussels on his way to Nairobi and Bujumbura on his way here and had seen the Spaak, the Belgian foreign minister. (In fact, the Belgian government had paid his way, I guess because they thought he would bring some sense into the rebel movement, having been a minister in Lumumba's and subsequent governments. How wrong they were. In the end, it was Gbenye who was most responsible for the massacre of expatriates after the para-drop)

He said that in Bujumbura he had seen Larry Devlin who had been the CIA station chief in Kinshasa in the Lumumba era and for several years after. Larry Devlin was the one who recruited Mobutu, who in turn had sent Lumumba to Elisabethville to be assassinated. Direct involvement of the CIA in that was suspected but never proved.

Devlin, of course, had been David's boss until about a year previous. Gbenye said they had discussed our situation and had about reached an agreement about what to do with us when they were interrupted by the news that Uvira, just across into the Congo, had been bombed by American airplanes. So, he broke off contact and was not able to contact Devlin again.

I don't know, but I would suspect he did or would have offered money for us. Gbenye had been bribed before by the CIA in Leopoldville. I also know there were some other people wandering

around East Africa, they had money in their jeans (one had \$50,000), that they were ready to give for us.

Q: Were the bombings going on all this time?

HOYT: Right.

We had been taken to the Congo Palace. We were told that Soumialot had moved in to the consulate. Soumialot came to us and said that he wanted to re-establish radio communications. I said that our communications equipment was down, that they had to be repaired.

David and I had a long conversation with Jim, our communicator, who, as I had said before, was reluctant to work on the equipment. I said, "why don't you just work on it, to see if you can get it back into operation. Before we actually get it into operation, we'll consult again. So on that basis he agreed. He went down and started working on the equipment. We were taken down there several times, then brought back, taken down.

Q: This is the single side band?

HOYT: No, this is the regular teletype. Actually, I'd miss saying that much before this, I had, in fact, given our single side band to one of the passing Simbas to take to headquarters.

On the 4th of October, we had been taken to the Congo Palace. We were each given a room, a nice big luxurious room. Next day we were moved from the second floor to the top floor, a little less luxurious. We were told that was in case the city were bombed.

Q: Then you were beginning to get nervous.

HOYT: The 2 communicators went down to the consulate to work on the equipment. On the 7th of October, Jim told me that, yes, he could put the transmitter back on. It was all ready to go. I said, we would wait and see what happened before we made a final decision on actually putting into operation.

We never got the opportunity. On the 9th of October, a Simba guard came pounding up the steps, very angry, and told us to gather our things. We soon found ourselves sent to prison again. This time we are put into a cell off to the right. The prison is a huge rectangle. If you'd seen the TV movies of the prison in Kigali, Rwanda, with all the Hutu prisoners, that is the same standard Belgian central prison.

Anyway, the VIP rooms were off to the left, at the front. Along each side of the rectangle were a series of cells all the way down to the end where the latrines were. They cleared out a bunch of people from one of the cells over to the right. We were put in there -- dormitory number 8. We spent the next month there.

Our servants were forbidden to feed us anymore. The people of a Protestant missionary library, just across the street from the prison, prepared food for us, sent it in twice a day. They're the same

people that took in Mrs. Davis. We established routines. The latrines were all the way down at the end of the prison. Of course to get there, we had to pass through other prisoners, many of which were Simbas. So it wasn't very pleasant. They very seldom would strike at us, but we were always harassed. The latrines were in miserable shape. Once a week they would clean them out but in between they filled up. A lot of our guys were pretty constipated by the time that we got through with that.

I was discussing conditions in the prison. This is the 3rd and, as it turned out, the last time that we were in prison. We were kept in a cell to ourselves, that is the American consulate staff, at this point.

Actually, very soon they put in with us 3 what we called "Pax-boys." These were fellows serving missionary duties in lieu of military service. We had 3 of them at this point.

Up to this point, I had been trying to work with the rebel authorities, not cooperating so much trying to deal with them. If they wanted something I tried my best to deal with them in as straightforward as I could.

Q: Develop a rapport?

HOYT: To develop a rapport with them and to ease our situation as much as possible, trying to encourage them to let us out of prison or being under guard. Mainly, I was trying to get into our apartments downtown, perhaps with a guard or something like that. I thought we would be safer, a little bit less close to them, and among other Europeans. Being so isolated, I feared that if anything drastic happened, we were too handy to be executed or something like that. Before being put into prison this last time had been a very frustrating time for me. I would start to deal with them, then there would be 3, 4, or 5 days they did nothing with us. I was quite concerned and worried about our predicament, but I was also frustrated in trying to work with them.

Then they put us in prison for the last time. Here we were, after all the cooperation I had tried, here we were, we were put in prison again. Essentially, it was because once again, Olenga had been repulsed from Bukavu. He blamed the Americans.

The low point came when someone, the prison authorities or somebody else, gave us prison uniforms and told us to put them on instead of our own clothes, short blue shorts and a striped wool jersey. I felt this was the ultimate humiliation. By removing our civilian clothes they were attacking our dignity.

At that point, I decided I would ask nothing more of the rebel authorities, that I would not try to negotiate or do anything with them. If this was the way they were going to treat us, I would be completely passive. If they asked something, I was going to do it. But, I would never, I vowed, would not ask them for anything. I wouldn't ask them even give us blankets. At that point, we had neither blankets or pillows, just hard wood planks laid out on a short wall in our cell. I wasn't going to ask for anything.

Q: Can we date this approximately, what date is this for the benefit of the transcriber?

HOYT: According to our diary, a journal, this was the 10th of October.

From then on, except one more time, I refused to ask them for anything. One time I did. There was another reason why I didn't complain to them about the absolute filthy conditions in the latrine. The floor would be covered with excrement. To get in there was a real experience. I feared if I complained, they would make us clean it up.

They began to put in other prisoners with us. We became the western cell. The various officials and so on who for one reason or another who had crossed the Simbas were put into our cell.

Finally on the 19th of October, in the afternoon, they brought us blankets and pillows. It was Dr. Barlovatz who had sent them.

At this point I'd like to go back to a point which I missed. This relates to the visit of the Red Cross plane. Of course we didn't get a chance to see them.

In doing research for my book, I came across a cable from the department written on September 20th to our embassy in Bujumbura with instructions for the ICRC officials on the airplane coming in. They said to discreetly as possible, if necessary verbally, to deliver the following message to me. The message was on how deeply they, the Department, was concerned for all our welfare, that they'd been in contact with our families, etc. Then they say that if the ICRC mission can effect an evacuation of the Americans in Stanleyville, including me and my staff, if only one American should be permitted to leave, Grinwis should come out first. If only a few Americans are allowed, "you should endeavor to arrange for the departure of Grinwis and women and children and missionaries." That's the second time that's mentioned. And then at the end of the message it reiterates the priority in evacuation of "the American consular official."

Q: Can you just cite the number of it for the benefit of the transcriber?

HOYT: This is the Department's message 692, 20 September to US MISSION Geneva and AmEmbassy Bujumbura. The message said, of course, that I'm expected to stay until the last leaves.

There were a number of things going on the prison at this time. Just to go to the highlights, on the 23rd of October, an American, slightly built, was put into our cell. He was Dr. Paul Carlson. Carlson had been the American missionary doctor in the northern Congo close to the border with the Central African Republic. He had stayed at his post too long and been captured by the Simbas.

I questioned him closely, as I had Chuck Davis before, asking them if they had been warned at all by the embassy there about the danger to the missionaries posed by the rebels. I had assumed the State Department and the embassies had issued warnings, particularly after the attack on the consulate. However, both said they had received no warnings. (Recall, that I said my mission in Stanleyville was a political one. Our concern for our citizens came second -- in contrast to the Belgian attitude). In Bangui, CAR, Ambassador Ross and the embassy consular people had not

expressed any concern for Carlson's safety. He had evacuated his family there and had returned to his medical clinic to care for his people.

Q: Upper Volta is the Emperor...

HOYT: Not Upper Volta, the Central African Republic. I stand corrected.

Carlson said he had been on the Missionary Radio Net and no warning had been issued. When he returned to his station, he was caught by the Simbas. This was some months earlier. He'd been picked up and beaten quite badly, then been left with Belgian Catholic fathers in Buta, just north of Stan. What had happened is that Gbenye visited Buta, his hometown, and was told there was an American there. He immediately seized on it, accusing Carlson of being an American mercenary. He was now "Major Carlson" in spite of the fact that he was told by a Simba, who had known before, that he was a missionary doctor. Carlson was bundled into a truck and brought to Stan and put into our cell.

Needless to say, Carlson was not a very happy person. He was somewhat confused. Of course, he did not know the politics of the country and just did not realize he was playing a role imposed on him.

In any case, the next day he was taken out of the cell and was taken over to the Congo Palace. He was killed in the para-drop.

Q: Was his view that being an MD would save him?

HOYT: I think so, yes, he thought that being a doctor, he was needed at his clinic. He was the only medical person there. They needed him, and he was very devoted to his clients. In my view, he should have been warned off, a general warning should have been issued after the attack on the consulate, and certainly after the August 21 message we sent to President Johnson. A general warning was eventually issued but well into August, too late for Carlson and the Davises and many other missionaries caught up in the aftermath of the para-drop.

Q: Somebody obviously wasn't paying attention.

HOYT: There was never a general broadcast put out until quite a bit later. There was a circular put out on August 29, circular 392 by the Department, which described our plight in Stan to all African diplomatic posts. I described how we were taken hostage and the danger we were in. It makes it clear, for the first time I could determine, that the Americans in the area were threatened by the rebels, that Americans were in danger. Even then there is not a specific instruction for people to evacuate areas threatened by the rebels, a warning I had issued to the embassy before the end of July.

By that time the rebels had pretty much reached the full extent, they had taken over by that time, approximately a third of the Congo.

Q: Was there a general feeling that we do not pay enough attention to the treatment of the American diplomatic personnel? That's World War II, insofar as American prison exchange by the Japanese, Germans, etc. were often very slow.

HOYT: The only previous American diplomat held hostage, that I know of, was our consul to Tripoli in early 1800s. There was also the situation created when the communist Chinese took over China. They did not imprison but held a Consul General and his staff for almost a year. Of course, they never threatened their lives. I would say that perhaps almost every single day, from the time since October 5th, our lives were threatened. At times we were physically threatened, but at all times there was no doubt in mind that our lives were in danger. We were told that sometimes several times a day.

Q: Did it depend on how slow the uptakes were? It's not like a situation where American embassies have been stormed. The events of the last couple of decades shows how much they are in danger.

HOYT: Right. It happened to us very quickly, as you recall. It was on a Tuesday that the evacuation airplanes came up. Actually, on Monday night we received instructions from the ambassador to stay, that we were expected to stay, not to be evacuated. In looking over the messages later, it was only the next evening, the day of the evacuation that Godley for the first time informed the department that we were, in fact, staying. He said, at the end of the message reporting on the evacuation -- without saying that he had given us instructions -- that "for the moment that I and the vice-consul were staying."

I remember talking to the members of the Congo task force later on, that the Department had immediately questioned that. I hadn't seen the traffic on this, but I was told that by the time the ambassador was asked on the wisdom of our staying, it was too late. There was no way then that we could be evacuated.

Certainly Stanleyville had been known to be the trouble spot of the Congo, the headquarters of the Lumumbists. Frank Carlucci had been in trouble up there. He covered Stan before a consulate was established, during the secession. In fact, Gbenye had held Carlucci a few days in his hotel room, threatening him. But the international furor over it developed so quickly that he was released. But he was held hostage, literally, for days.

Godley had been the Office Director at that time. He certainly knew the history of it. Of course, to evacuate our consulate personnel completely would have been, in hindsight, a great idea. The reason given to stay we heard verbally was "to report from behind enemy lines." That was assuming our communication capabilities were intact and that we could get around, an assumption that our diplomatic immunity would be respected. The other reason, only in hindsight, was to protect the American missionaries, just as the Belgians always assumed their consular people would stay. Our numbers were small, and I had given them the opportunity to leave. Not one of them had taken it.

I really had no reason to stay as distinct from the Belgian consul who was specifically sent there because he had just handled a similar incident with Simba-type rebels elsewhere in the Congo. He

had replaced the previous Consul General who had given warning of the impending rebel takeover. The Belgians had a couple of thousand people there.

Q: Let me pose a question. What was the agency role here?

HOYT: That may have been part of it. Knowing the personalities involved, and who happened to be the station chief at the time in Leopoldville, I don't think that he was capable of crossing Godley or playing an independent role. It has been suggested to me that Mac Godley had his ulterior motives in having us stay, that he deliberately ordered us to stay and become hostages which would provide him justification in calling for US assistance in fighting the rebellion. That's pretty far out. I heard differences of opinion on that. Some people said maybe, other people have said no. I doubt it.

Q: Have you already discussed this with the ambassador?

HOYT: I have not discussed it with Mac. I did discuss it with his deputy at the time, DCM Blake. His answer was equivocal.

Q: That's interesting.

HOYT: I discussed it also with the army attaché, Raudstein. He said that he just didn't know. Mac Godley runs a very very tight shop. He doesn't do anything that he doesn't want to.

Back in Stan, it was fairly quiet until about the 30th of October when the rebels decided to take all Belgians and Americans hostage. We found out when the Belgian consul, Nothomb and the vice-consul, Duque were brought to our cell. We found out that the previous day the order had gone out for all Belgians and all Americans to be taken hostage, a very large operation.

The previous night Olenga had summoned Nothomb. Up to that time, General Olenga had worked very closely with Nothomb. There had always been a cooperative spirit between them in trying to protect Belgians. Of course, the Belgians still ran things. This was 4 years after independence, but wholesale commerce was in 100% European hands, all manufacturing and so on. If you didn't have the Europeans the whole economy would just collapse, people would starve. Olenga apparently was furious. I think again it was due to either another defeat at Bukavu or the realization, on the rebels' part, that they were being defeated all the way around. Mercenaries had been recruited. The Belgians were providing large amounts of technical assistance, arms and so on. We were too.

Up to now we had been the only hostages. They made it very clear that we, the Americans, were to be hostages and if the town was re-taken we would be used as shields. That had made that clear to us on many occasions.

Now, the whole Belgian and American population was put into the same status. As a matter of fact, in regard to our personal safety, this was a welcome development. I immediately saw that before their fury would be concentrated on us, the few of us. If the town was re-taken, either a bomb or whatever, we would be killed immediately. But now we had numbers. We had now at least a

thousand people, hundreds of people. There was now “safety in numbers,” I thought. I saw a group of fifty Belgians being marched into prison with us. I welcomed them into the fold. This, I knew, would improve our chances of survival greatly.

Q: *Were you being well fed?*

HOYT: At this point we were still being fed twice a day from Leco, the Protestant library just across the street from the prison. After a few days, after all the Belgians were taken hostage, the Asian community and the Greek community, the people who were not being held hostage, organized feeding of all the hostages. They cooked up enormous pots of food, rice and stuff, and went around to all the places in the city where hostages were being kept.

What happened is during the day people would be released to go and make beer and cigarettes and make the economy work. We were cut off from Leco and got fed with the others.

Q: *But you weren't being starved.*

HOYT: Oh, no. That was the least of our problems.

At one point, one night, (we could see out in front of our cell from a little window high up on our cell,) a sort of a silence fell on the prison as when something extraordinarily ominous was about to happen. We looked out and saw about 30 or 40 prisoners were being hurried out the door. Silence. Something very serious was happening. These people had been kept in the *cachot*, the dungeon, the punishment cells which are very cramped cells, for the last couple of months.

They had been rounded up because their pictures had appeared on a poster for a political party which is known for backing the former prime minister, Adoula. [It is one] of the parties backing Belgians. The next day we found out that they had been taken out and thrown over Tshopo Falls and fed to the crocodiles down below. They wouldn't have survived the fall, it was very high.

So they were executing their prisoners. We knew that at one point the guards from Osio, where Khingis had been kept, came into the prison yard to collect prisoners. The place had a very bad reputation. The guards had rhino whips. As they passed us, they said, “You're next. You're next.” People rarely returned from Osio.

We stayed in the prison over the next several weeks. We heard many rumors. We communicated with a bunch of what we imagined were trustees who were in a cell right opposite the little window. We talked a lot to them. They had a radio and would tell us what was being said. We found out that there was an election. That Johnson had been elected President against Goldwater. We knew there was a campaign, but did not even know the candidates. That was one election I was forced to miss.

Q: *You didn't get to vote absentee.*

HOYT: I didn't send in my absentee ballot.

You learned from the BBC and the Voice of America that the ANC was approaching. The reports said they had taken Kindu and were approaching from the west and the south. We knew that there was no way that the Simbas could resist the advance of a well-organized drive, spearheaded by mercenaries, plus a whole contingent of Belgian soldiers who were suppose to be providing technical assistants, and supported by the Katangese gendarmerie that had proved effective in Tshombe's secession.

The only time we were struck in prison was by Martin Kasongo (a typical Batetela name, from the heartland of the Batetela, where Tippu Tib had met Morton Stanley and helped him on his trip down the Lualaba, turning into the Congo River, "discovering" Stanleyville.) David had known him as a long time Lumumbist around Stan. (Later on, the name comes up in the Hutu attack in Burundi which led to the 1972 massacres.) Kasongo, obviously drunk, went around the cell, striking everybody. Not very hard, but it wasn't a very pleasant experience. Kasongo was put in the *cachot* the next day for this.

The 16th of November was my birthday. Although they had stopped sending in food from the library, we got 2 boxes that day, one from Leco and the other from Dr. and Lucy Barlovatz. Each contained a birthday cake. It brought tears to my eyes.

Q: How many days had you been jailed up to this moment?

HOYT: This go-around was a month and 10 days.

Q: Plenty of days.

HOYT: Plenty of days, yes.

On the 18th of November, 2 days later, a hush went over the prison. You could tell something was about to happen as I had said when they brought out those 30, 40 prisoners and executed them, I remembered the same silence. The same when we were being held in the women's toilet out at the airport and the crowd descended on the airport with the Davises. Everything all of a sudden went silent.

And then we were aware of the noise of a very large crowd outside the prison. (I'll tell you about another noise later.) A Simba rushed up to our cells and said he wanted the Americans. He said the Americans were to come out. So the 5 staff members, the 2 Pax boys, and Dr. Carlson, the 8 of us, were told not to bring any of our "things" We were ushered into the anteroom leading in and out of the prison.

We were told to write our names on a sheet of paper. It was very ominous. It was the first time this formality had been required. Before this, it was always in prison, out of prison, no formalities. Outside the prison there was a legless midget pushing himself around on a little cart. He yelled and screamed what I guessed were obscenities, at least by the tone not very nice things. We were loaded into a jeep. Six of us in a jeep and the 2 others in a Volkswagen. We weren't told anything but we knew this must be "it."

In my heart I somehow felt that it wasn't. Likely, but not necessarily. I tried to tell an obviously nervous Carlson and the others to calm down. "We've been through this many times, maybe again we will survive." The jeep pulls up to the Lumumba monument where there is an enormous crowd filling the entire square. The other 2 guys in the Volkswagen were put in with us.

We were piled in the back of the jeep. The crowd gathered outside. Those close by started poking at us. Through gestures and yelling at us, they were describing what was going to happen to us. It wasn't very pleasant. They talked about which parts of our bodies they were going to cut off and eat. Some pointed to their genitals. We knew, very likely, what was to come. They managed to get through the curtains of the jeep and jab at us.

They talked about Carlson, Carlson all the time, Major Carlson. They didn't know which one of us was he. We were the major and his "cohorts."

Q: This is being done through these kind of local soldiers?

HOYT: Yes, but in the end, they were the ones who saw us safely through the ordeal.

Finally, we were ordered out of the jeep and motioned to move towards the Lumumba Monument, in a column led by me. I could see Olenga was there, right before the monument. He had a large crowd around him. We continued to move towards him. I could see the general talking vigorously to somebody. I don't know whether he shot him or he shoved somebody down. There was apparently a big argument.

Suddenly, on some unknown signal, our guard told us to stop, turn around and go back to the jeep. We all piled hurriedly and thankfully back into the jeep. The problem was that the person whose jeep it was, who had driven us there, who I had seen before on one of the security types, had taken the key with him when he left. He did not want anybody stealing his jeep.

Our guards, four guys, started pushing us towards the surete office to get the key. The crowd was still all around us, "*Mateka.*" *Mateka* means such things as rancid butter or dead flesh. That is what becomes of you when you are dead. Carlson knew Lingala so he understood it better than we did.

We get to the surete. Our driver comes out, acting surprised to see us. Maybe he hadn't expected us to survive the Lumumba Monument. He says, "okay, okay." and jumps into the jeep. However, it won't start. So our trusted guard got some of the crowd to help and they give us a push-start.

Q: Is this a US jeep?

HOYT: Yes.

Now, I'm on the bottom of 8 guys, being the first in. I am stuck down there with seven guys weighing on me. I'm pushed against something sharp, and I get claustrophobic. I'm just about to burst. I said, "guys, you've got to do something, I'm bursting." I was almost overcome with claustrophobia. Everybody shifts just a bit, and I can move a fraction of an inch. This relieves the pain and the feeling of closeness. "Okay, fellows, I'm fine," I said.

Then I realized that we weren't going back to prison. We were headed for the presidential palace, the driver told me. "You have General Olenga to thank for saving you," he said. At the Palace, there was another big crowd filling the vast lawn. We were unloaded from the jeep, lined up. There was a, it looked like a Portuguese or Greek, photographer. He's snapping pictures. We lined up and we get our pictures taken. These pictures later appear in Life Magazine.

They take pictures of everything. Maybe. I hadn't thought of that because there was a journalist around who we'll come to later.

Gbenye was giving a speech to the crowd. He said that we were suppose to have been executed that day. He spoke some in Lingala, some in French so I could understand only part. But he said that Kenyatta of Kenya had appealed for our lives so he was going to spare our lives until the next Monday. This was Wednesday. He was obviously playing the crowd, getting the crowd built up -- which had been assembled to see us executed -- I don't quite know. The eight of us were in two rows sitting in from of Gbenye. I looked at Carlson and he just looked absolutely awful. He looked like a man about to go out of control.

Of course, nobody had identified us, no one yet knew which one was Carlson. I saw one of the rebel leaders right behind Ernie Houle, our state clerk. What he was doing was raising his knife, reaching for Ernie's ear. He was bringing up his knife to cut off his ear. Gbenye saw this as he was speaking and made a sharp motion down. The man stopped.

Gbenye said we were spared until next Monday. Major Carlson and his cohorts were to be spared. We got back into the jeep to go back to the prison.

Q: *This day is the...*

HOYT: 18th of November.

The prison director greeted us as we came in and complemented us on "our dignified bearing." I recall that up to that point, no one had imposed his religious feelings on the others. Carlson, being a missionary and having been absolutely devastated by this, wanted us to pause for a moment of silent prayer. I respected his wish. It was the only time. Chuck Davis talk about religious topics, something about African masks being the work of the devil and how sinister they were. I didn't understand what it was all about, and the subject was dropped.

The 20th of November, the second day after this, Saturday the same driver who had taken us to the monument, and Palace, came to get me in a VW bug. He acted as if we were in some danger. He took to the presidential palace.

I was ushered in to Gbenye's presence.

What Gbenye had brought me there for was to translate a message of the usual sort saying that our lives were in danger because of continued American assistance to the central government. It was very similar to the one we had sent out August 21.

Gbenye left it for me to translate from French to English. (Copies of all these messages are available in our Journal.) Before he left, I told Gbenye that we were still in prison. A few days before, the Belgians had been moved out of prison, and Gbenye had promised us, following the Kasongo incident, that we, the Americans, would be moved out of prison. This was the only time, after my vow not to ask anything of the rebels, that I appealed to them for something. Gbenye said he would take care of it. I set to do the translation. Apparently my translation passed muster, and I was sent back to the prison.

A few hours later, some Simbas came to get us, the Americans, out of prison. Outside the door, the legless midget again harangued us. I ignored him this time. We were marched down to the Residence Victoria. When we arrived, all the Belgians were in the lobby being harangued by a Simba colonel. He was threatening to take everybody out and shoot them. Patrick took David and me aside to apply his usual remedy to such a situation -- another message. We wrote an even stronger message than we had before, laying it on thick, that Belgian and American interference in the Congo was putting at risk lives of all the citizens here. By that time, my thinking was, any message we got out like this was reporting on the desperateness of our situation. I was doing my job as a reporting officer.

Q: Certainly that was the assumption made by anybody in Washington.

HOYT: Not necessarily so. The ambassador in Bujumbura, Dumont, was very disturbed about this. From the cables I saw later, we were close to being traitors.

Q: Really?

HOYT: He offered a plan whereby he would come to Stanleyville and take our place.

Q: He's crazy.

HOYT: In the first place, he couldn't get a plane in any way. The Department was gentle in putting him down. They obviously thought him a bit tetchy.

But not everybody was very happy with our messages. But as far as I was concerned, it was getting the message out that we were in danger. I had no other way to communicate.

Q: What did they say later?

HOYT: Nobody ever complained to me.

Q: They hadn't the guts.

HOYT: Anyway, when we finished our message, somebody took it to the colonel. Apparently he was satisfied because the word came back that we could go up to our rooms. For the first time in 40 days I went to sleep in a bed with sheets. I took a shower and shaved off forty days of beard I had been photographed in a few days before.

After I shaved and showered, I heard the Simbas had passed the order that we were all to shave, to show our white faces in case the enemy came to attack and we could be identified to be shot.

In the morning, the 21st of November...

Q: *Sunday?*

HOYT: No, Saturday. The colonel of the night before came to take Nothomb and me to the airport control tower to read our message over the radio. By the reaction of the Simba officers, I could see that their main concern was to establish a cease-fire. That was the important part.

Q: *You did this in English?*

HOYT: I did it in English and Patrick did it in French.

I could see down below the control tower they were still training recruits. In the afternoon, about 100 of us men were ordered down from the hotel and loaded on to a bus. We were hurled onto this bus and we were taken out of town. We were told that since the Americans and the others were attacking the city, they would take us into the bush, for us to remain. Not a very good prospect, of maybe spending months in the bush, with no accommodations, no nothing.

The bus kept breaking down. Of course they asked for volunteers from us, the passengers, to go fix it. Nothomb saw to it was not fixed. We unloaded from the bus, loaded into...

Q: *There were a 100 of you*

HOYT: About, I would say, about 72

Q: *This is a bus?*

HOYT: A regular school bus, yellow school bus. We were jammed in there. So then they jammed all of us in to a Congolese hut. We had nothing to eat, to drink; we had nothing. I was wondering how we were going to relieve ourselves.

About 9:00 I heard somebody shouting, "The consuls, the consuls." Grinwis and the two Belgian consuls were with us. We were literally passed over the heads of all these guys to the front. There was our colonel of earlier in the day. He said a mistake had been made and ordered us back to town. They loaded us onto a truck and drove us back to town.

In town, the streets were deserted. At each corner was stationed a jeunesse, the youths. They had caused a lot of problems in the Congo with these gangs of youth. They were all lined up in the empty streets. We went back to the hotel and the others soon followed.

The next day, this is the 22nd; this is Sunday. I was brought out to go Gbenye at the Palace. He showed me a telex message Godley had addressed to me saying that he appointed me as official

negotiator with the rebels. For this, he asked that I be given a secure means of communication! Gbenye said he didn't think that was quite appropriate. But, he had their representative, Kanza, in Nairobi, who was their foreign minister and would negotiate with the American ambassador there, Bill Attwood.

As I left, I was introduced to a Trinidadian journalist...

Q: *What in the world...*

HOYT: He was a Trinidadian journalist, Hugh Scotland.

The next day, Monday, the 23rd, we four consuls were taken out, again, to the palace where there was a reception for Mr. Scotland. I recognized Khingis in the crowd. There was high-life dancing, and we were offered beer. Scotland said he was on a tour of rebel territory and was going back the next day to Nairobi. He wanted to interview each of us, to show, of course, that the hostages were in fine shape.

I was very circumspect of what I said. Later at the reception I managed to have a private word with Scotland. I said to him, "you'd better be careful. We and you are in a lot of danger here." We went back to the Victoria Hotel.

The next morning was the 24th of November. At 6:00 we awakened to the sound of airplanes flying overhead. We know this poses an immediate danger to the hostages. We all get up, get dressed, and have a quick breakfast of beer and sausages -- a typical Belgian working man's breakfast. We don't know anything of what was happening. We telephoned around town. All we heard is that airplanes were flying around. Somebody said they saw paratroopers.

Our usual guards had not yet shown up. About 7:00, a group of Simba soldiers come pounding up the stairs. They ordered everyone down onto the street. Some people hid behind closets, under beds and so on. But about 200 of us are gathered in front of the hotel. The Simba troop was led by our old acquaintance, Colonel Opepe. Nothomb had worked well with him and had saved our lives by letting us send the message out to President Johnson on the 21st of August.

We were told to start marching down the street. Along side the column was this security type who had driven us to the Lumumba monument. He told me, "we were trying to work with you. And, now -- this." What "this" was I don't know but I sensed I was targeted for whatever was about to happen.

We started walking down the street. A pickup with a machine gun mounted on the bed drove up, loaded with Simbas. A deaf-mute Simba, whom I had noticed before, and those with him began to argue with Opepe. It was obvious to us that they wanted to shoot us, right then and there. But, Opepe was able to persuade the group in the pickup to leave. We marched down the street a little bit further, and when we turned the corner another argument took place with some other group of Simbas. I heard something like, "but they're already here."

It was apparent that Opepe's orders were to take us to the airport and use us as shields against whoever was attacking. With that, we were to sit down while they decided what to do. We had been seated for a few moments when I heard gun fire and saw a chip fall off the corner of a building above us. I looked over and one of the young Simbas with a rifle still at his waist started shooting at us, shooting into the crowd.

Before I could move, Grinwis shouts, "let's go Michael." So we started running, going down a gravel alley. I fell down, picked up and ran some more. David also fell down. I looked around, and David was gone. I ducked behind a little wall and waited a few minutes. I heard the sounds of firing and yelling. I looked to the side. My rear was exposed to the whole street there. Anybody walking down that street would have seen me.

I waited about 15 minutes and then I saw a couple, looked like an Asian couple, come out on a balcony above me, looking down on the street. I think they're not African people exposed there. There must be something friendly there. So I got up, and then I saw a soldier across a field. Without my glasses I couldn't make out what he was. I raised my hands and he motioned me on, still his rifle pointed at me. I climbed over a fence, crossed a field and came to him. By that time I could see his beret and assumed he was Belgian. I said, "I'm the American consul, take me to your leader."

Q: This is a Belgian paratrooper.

HOYT: A Belgian paratrooper who took me to his commander, looking at a map on his jeep.

I realized that we were safe.

My immediate concern at that point was the American missionaries who were out on the outskirts of town. I said, "Look we've got some missionaries out there. Give me some troops and let's go find them and bring them in." The colonel said his orders were to stay right where they were, To secure the city. They weren't going to move, to go out of town or anyplace else.

One of the little three-wheeled jeep drives up. I could see that it was Clingerman, my predecessor as consul there, in fatigues, and a pistol strapped on his side. He didn't recognize me at first, then he did and we embraced. I again explained to him that we had to go out to Kilometer 8 and get those missionaries. He said, "Look, we've just spent 4 million dollars getting you out of here. You go out to the airport, get on the airplane and get out of here." Which we did, David and I.

Q: Was David down the alley?

HOYT: David came up almost immediately. He had gone into a different spot and had had some scares. I was behind a little wall that formed a stairway to the door of a toilet. David may have been in there. He said a cat had come up to him and he had tried to shoo it away.

Anyway, he was saved. I asked about our other people, our other 3. No one knew anything. Nothomb and Duque were okay.

David and I started on the road to the airport per instructions. There had been a massacre of our group in the street. There were probably 20 killed and another 40 wounded. A number of them died on the way to Leopoldville. I saw one woman with her baby in the street. Someone led her away. We went out to the airport. There was still firing heard around. Not all the Simbas had fled.

The enormity of it began to sink in to both David and me. This was a massacre of innocent people. Somebody told us that Carlson had been killed. He'd been the last to go over a wall and had been shot dead. Terribly sad not to survive the final moment.

When we got out to the airport, we went to the same baggage room where we had been before, in front of the women's toilet. We had to keep our heads down because bullets were still firing over us. One of the officers brought in Hugh Scotland. "This guy claims he's a British subject. He was in presidential palace with a bunch of Congolese. He showed us his British passport. Do you know him?" I said I knew him. David suggested he be put on the airplane, believing, he told me, he might provide information on the rebels. (I saw later that Tshombe's orders were that no Congolese be permitted to leave Stan.)

David and I were led to the second airplane out. We climbed up to flight deck and sat on a bench behind the flight crew.

Q: *Were these C54s?*

HOYT: No, these were C130s. The most beautiful plane in the world. Here we were, transformed. An hour earlier we had been in mortal danger, had been in prison, and now were here in this most modern marvelous equipment, flying back to Leopoldville.

It took some days before they cleared the Simbas from the runaway and from the city. In fact, it took the mercenaries and the Congolese army a full year to get the remnants of a few hundred Simbas confined to a small area in the Fizi Baraka hills on the edge of Lake Tanganyika.

It was during part of this year that Che Guevara went to the Congo to work with the Simbas.

Q: *Was there any cannibalism?*

HOYT: There certainly was some ceremonial cannibalism. But these were undisciplined troops. The para-drop had been finally decided on because we were being held hostage. Gbenye had made public pronouncements over the radio that all the hostages would be killed if the city were attacked. What they did, of course, they had to prepare a drop, of course they had held us as hostages. Over the next year, the Simbas would slaughter the white missionary hostages whenever they were threatened to be over run. Very few of the hostages survived, English, Belgians, Americans.

It wasn't just because of the paradrop. Before the paradrop, the Simbas said they would kill everybody if they were attacked. There was an international furor over the paradrop, led by the Soviets and radical Africans.

Once in the air, we were told that the other 3 staff guys had survived the massacre and had gotten out on the first plane. Ernie had just stayed right in the middle of the street until the paras arrived. Mac Godley was overjoyed to see me.

He took me to his residence, and before I knew it, there I was, still in my shirt with blood on it from the dead child, at the white linen dining table with the cream of the Belgian business community. I was, of course, the center of attention. The only thing I could say was that the devastation by the Simbas would make the task of the restoration of the Stanleyville economy a tremendous task. In fact, if you read Naipaul's "A Bend in the River," it never recovered anything of its former status. In fact, the Congo never really recovered.

Mobutu, after the Simbas were finally defeated a year later, dismissed Tshombe and took over as president. He used the excuse of the Simbas to brutally repress any dissidents. It set the whole tone of his regime. He was never going to let this happen again. He had been humiliated by the paratroop. Tshombe was in on the planning. Mobutu was told very late and wasn't asked his opinion.

At the same time the paratroop took place, the morning of the 24th, there was also a huge land column under Belgian Colonel Vanderwalle, spearheaded by the mercenaries, which was scheduled to arrive more or less at the same time. (There was some confusion as to when it was to take place.

President Johnson was reached at his ranch and had made the final decision for the rescue operation. Dean Rusk told me in a letter he had told the Belgian Foreign minister, Spaak, that it was really his choice. He had the most people involved.

Q: Were there US paratroopers and Belgian paratroopers?

HOYT: Belgian paratroopers flown in American C130s. The only Americans involved were the flight crews and the aircraft guards. Of course, the former consul, Clingerman, also went in with the planes.

The refueling took place at Ascension Island and the final jump-off was from Kamina, a big Belgian air base in the southern Congo. The final "go" wasn't given until early that morning.

It was almost an inevitable "go" because everything was set and, primarily, because the rebels had broadcast over the radio, and published in the papers, the very terrible things about what they would do to the Europeans if Stan were taken -- like making lampshades out of their skins. The land column, which eventually arrived just before noon, was certain to have taken the town, even without the paratroop, but it was thought they could not do it fast enough. As it turned out, the column stopped its progress at 3 am in the morning because the mercenaries -- Mike Hoare -- insisted they would go no further under the ambushes they were encountering in the dark. The main worry was that the rebels would hit the barrels of gasoline they were forced to carry.

If the column had arrived at dawn, they undoubtedly would have taken the town even more quickly than the paratroopers did. They had landed, cleared the runway, landed the rest of their troops, got

into their transports, and started into town. Then, unfortunately, although was not in their briefed mission, according to the Leanvenworth *Dragon Rouge* book, Clingerman they, not their mission order, but according to *Dragon Rouge*, the book, Clingerman directed the first contingent of paratroopers to the presidential palace, hoping to capture Gbenye. Meanwhile, of course, the massacre started in the street. (The three main rebel leaders, Gbenye, Olenga, and Soumialot fled in time, taking with them gold they had captured from a mine nearby. Gbenye and Olenga eventually -- some six year later, took advantage of an amnesty given by Mobutu and returned to the Congo. Soumialot eventually was slain by his own troops in Fizi Baraka)

In addition to the international furor over the rescue, when I got back to the States I found that among blacks were some who considered this simply as “whites against blacks,” killing blacks to save whites.

After the lunch at the ambassador’s residence, David and I had a press conference. It was then I discovered we were know as the “the flag eaters.” Somehow news of this early incident had gotten out. With the press, I tried to get through the character of the Simbas, making it clear that these were not the sort of people that should be sympathized with. Not only did they murdered whites, but they were very brutal to their own people. Of course, when Mobutu and his people flew into Stanleyville, there was a terrible massacre of all those suspected of being rebels or sympathetic to them.

That night after everything was quiet, and we had a few drinks, I finally had a chance to talk to Mac Godley. “Well, you know Mac,” I said. “One thing kept us going was the thought that if we got ours, you'd get it too.” He didn't say anything. I don't even know whether he heard me or not. We had had more than a few drinks. The DCM, Blake, tried to disappear in the sofa. I never had a chance to talk to Mac again.

Subsequently, he has told different stories. Sometimes he admitted he had ordered us to stay. At other times, he denied it. My wife remembers very well, that when she was still at the embassy after being evacuated, she met somebody in the hall who said, “Jo, isn't Michael so brave for staying.” Mac said, “No, I ordered him to stay.” Jo said, “Well, I'll remember that and I have witnesses.”

Q: Your agency colleague, did he stay there, did he remain?

HOYT: No, we flew back to the States the second day after the rescue. We went back to the State Department for debriefing. We were met in New York. The flight went Rome, Paris, New York, on Air France. We were met everywhere by the press. In New York they had flown our families there for our reunion on Thanksgiving Day. It was on all the news broadcasts. A DC4 Air Force plane took all of us to Washington.

In the State Department the next morning David and I had our only official debriefings, about an hour. There was some concern over the orientation of the Simbas, whether they were communists or not. I told them there was little evidence of this.

Averell Harriman was hot on this. His whole pitch to the Belgians was based on this, trying to gear them up to fight the Simbas. In fact, the Belgians were only interested in their citizens. I saw later many CIA papers saying that they were not communists. They were an indigenous people revolting against the terrible conditions of governance in the Congo. But, this was the big thing.

Harriman said we'd have a press conference in the afternoon.

Q: David was still posing as a diplomat.

HOYT: Yes, he was vice-consul. He was not revealed as CIA.

The Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs started to brief me on what we should be saying at the press conference. I said, "wait a minute, that doesn't sound right." Harriman waved him off, saying "never mind, Mike knows what he's doing, he doesn't need a briefing. Any questions about communists, David can answer."

At the news conference, the first question was why weren't the other three there. I was startled by the question, and brushed it off, mumbling something about our being the substantive people, the others were support staff.

There were questions like "what was your worst moment" and "what did you eat." They did ask about the communists. I answered that I didn't think they were communists. If they had won, they would have probably produced a regime which would have been more sympathetic to the East than the West.

Q: Continuing conclusions after the rescue in Stanleyville, Congo and the return to the US. What are your conclusions, Michael?

HOYT: I think the main lesson there is that you shouldn't leave your people in danger when you know that (1) of course, you might lose them. There should be concern for your people. When there's a situation where rebels can takeover, particularly when you know they're anti-American, you shouldn't leave your people there. It seems pretty obvious a lesson but one that hadn't been learned at that time. I may say that it was also not learned at the time our Tehran was left out of consideration when the Shah was admitted to the US for medical treatment. And, our embassy had been attacked a little while before!

I remember in Nigeria in the Biafra revolt when the rebels threatened Enugu. We had a consulate there and we got our guys out in a hurry. This is some years later.

Then there is the question of what to do when you do have hostages. I've been following this as hostage policy. How do you deal with your people taken hostage?

This was, of course, the first incident in modern diplomacy. Subsequently, in the years after, in the early 70s when terrorist incidents started in Latin America our Ambassador in Brazil, Elbrick, was taken hostage. We did everything possible to force the government to meet the rebel demands,

which they did. Later, our policy evolved into a very hard line against even dealing with kidnapers.

We finally commissioned the Rand organization to do a study on hostages. I welcomed this. However, they started the review with the Brazil incident and did not include our situation. In the end, the report showed up our vacillations and was suppressed.

In about 1983 or '84 the State department published a list of terrorist incidents in which our personnel were attacked or held hostage. Again, our episode does not appear. When I questioned the person who wrote it, he refused to do anything about it and did not return my phone calls.

So, I don't know, there's something about it. I thought that maybe because the vice-consul was CIA they wanted to ignore it.

Because I worked with hostage policy, subsequently, I had an obvious interest in this. I worked particularly under Kissinger where we developed a very hard line about not negotiating with kidnapers, not even talking to them. There's an excellent book out on the diplomats that were assassinated in Khartoum. President Nixon, in spite of being told not to address the issue, said that we would not do anything to help our hostages. Within hours of statement our people were shot.

So we tried to argue that there is something beside of refusing to do anything for our personnel held hostage. The argument of not doing anything to encourage future hostage-taking. I doubt there is any such thought in the mind of hostage-takers. They are intent on making a point and will do it regardless of past policies.

In domestic hostage situations the first principle is to talk. The longer you talk, the longer the hostages are alive, the longer something can happen to save them. In our situation, of course, is whether the paradrop should have taken place, which was the immediate cause of the massacre, or whether they should have left it to the ground column. I think in hindsight we probably would have been better off in letting the ground column take the city. There could have been Simbas who warned of the coming of the column, but that was a chance to take. In any case, for the column to stop -- all those hard-boiled men being afraid to advance, that was regrettable. Of course the paradrop did save us, so I shouldn't knock it. In the end, we ran in the right direction.

It's a difficult situation saving hostages in the middle of a city. Landing at the airport taking an hour to get downtown does not seem to me like a very wise strategy, tactic.

Q: Let me ask this kind of a general question about this episode. Did the Rand corporation people talk to you?

HOYT: No.

Q: Incredible.

HOYT: They were prohibited...

Q: From talking to you and your colleagues? That's crazy.

HOYT: Because I asked Brian Jenkins, who undertook the study, when he presented his conclusions, why he hadn't included us? "We were told not to," he told me.

As a matter of fact the Rand study, because it was so critical, I assume, it was never published. It is not to be found to this day. People doing research have not been able to find it.

Q: Incredible.

HOYT: Anyway, as a matter of general hostage policy, as a government, you are responsible for these people by placing them overseas. You are responsible for putting them in danger, and you should be doing everything you can to save them. At the same time, you don't want to play dead from the beginning and give in to all demands. It seems to me there's something in the middle, being a bit aloof, but in fact doing everything you can to save them. Maybe, even in some instances, ransom could be paid. I know that somebody was going around East Africa with \$50,000 in his back pocket, willing to give it to save us. I wouldn't have objected. Of course, you don't publicize such things. But, we have even gotten to the point where we discourage anybody paying ransom!

Q: The subsequent fate of the Stanleyville men?

HOYT: David wound up to be the Executive Director -- sort of Chef De Cabinet, or whatever they call them -- to several CIA directors. Then, he went on to be station chief somewhere. He recently retired.

Q: What about your own group, the communicators?

HOYT: Parkes was, I would say, disgruntled, mad at everything, all the way through. When he was to have left, he took the wrong turn and didn't get to the airport. He resigned immediately on our return. Jim Stauffer went on for a full career. Ernie Houle went on in State and died a few years later. When his obituary came out in the State Department newsletter, I noted they said nothing about Stanleyville. So I wrote a letter and I said that this guy has gotten the highest honor that the State Department awards and held up well and survived as a hostage. They printed my letter.

Q: Good. You think the department's kind of ashamed about what it had done in terms of remembering and learning from your experience?

HOYT: I think they never faced it. They certainly never faced the fact of why we were there, and, as far as I can see they're just trying to forget about the whole thing. I know that at one point the historical-legal section did a paper on this, reviewing the rights and laws of this kind of intervention to save our citizens. The word came down not to publish it.

Q: Well, I think that it's fair since it's a violation of international law, for god's sake, to threaten them.

HOYT: They did get the approval of Tshombe, the prime minister, for the rescue operation. I was in the ambassador's office, the day we got back, when Tshombe came in to get briefs on the operation. The only thing I said to Tshombe was to save the former governor, Aridjabu, as he was the only one I knew who could lead the province through reconstruction. I learned later Mobutu had him executed immediately for collaboration with the Simbas.

I didn't tell you about what had happened to Hugh Scotland, the Trinidadian. When he got down to Leopoldville, Tshombe recognized him as a leftist journalist he knew in Madrid and clapped him in prison. He eventually got out. Apparently he thought I had saved his life, as he told me so years later when I was at a UN General Assembly meeting in New York many years later.

Q: process

HOYT: ...in the process. I've said, and I'll say again, that the obvious lesson is that you don't leave your people when they are obviously in danger.

In Enugu, when it was about to be taken by the Biafra rebels, we evacuated our people in a hurry. But I think it goes beyond that. When you do...

Q: Was Enugu before Port Harcourt?

HOYT: It's in the interior to Port Harcourt, the capital of the Eastern region, where the consulate was. Later, the consulate in Ibadan, where I was principal officer, was closed and one opened in Port Harcourt in view of its importance to the oil to us.

But it goes to the Tehran hostage situation. We had had a previous attack on our embassy, very similar to the one that we had when the hostages were taken. All the right elements signaling danger were there. At the time of the first incident, we put a lot of pressure on to get our people released. But when the decision was made to permit the Shah's entry, there was apparently no preparation made to protect the embassy.

So in a sense...

Q: The lesson had not been learned.

HOYT: Well, yes. The Department should have been conscious of the fact that when you take certain actions that put your people in danger, you should be sensitive, to the possible effects on our people. It doesn't mean that you can always do something about it but, at least, you should be aware that your action can have certain affects on your people overseas. I think the State Department should again make a thorough review of our hostage policy.

There was no hostage situation for several years after ours. It was '69 that our ambassador in Brazil was taken. At that point we pressured the government to do everything possible to meet the demands of the rebels and we got our ambassador released. Then we slowly changed our policy until, finally, under Kissinger where we absolutely refused to negotiate, much less pay ransom. That was when our ambassador and DCM were killed.

After they were assassinated, the Sudanese government seized the assassins but released them a few days later. We broke relations over that. However, a few years later we re-established relations without getting anything in return, like at least an apology.

MCKINNEY RUSSELL
Assistant Information Officer, USIS
Leopoldville/Kinshasa (1963-1964)

McKinney Russell was born in New York, New York in 1929. He graduated from Yale University in 1950 and served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1951-1953. Mr. Russel's career included positions in Germany, the Congo, the Soviet Union, Brazil, Spain, and China. He was interviewed on May 10, 1997 by G. Lewis Schmidt.

RUSSELL: I was sworn in to the Agency at 9 a.m. on October 15, 1962. At 9:10 that same morning, I got my assignment to go as Assistant Information Officer to Leopoldville. Leopoldville, now known as the city of Kinshasa, was the capital of a country then called the ex-Belgian Congo, later as the Congo, then as Zaire, and now once again Congo. People who recall those years know well that after Independence was given to the Congo in June 1960, there has been a period of great internal upheaval, uncertainty about who was in charge, assassinations, tribal uprisings. It was a particularly dangerous time and a time when there was a great deal of world concern about Africa. Events in the Congo took several serious negative turns during 1961 and 1962.

Q: ...and we were evacuating, I think, a number of Americans and also people of other nations, by military craft about that time, weren't they?

RUSSELL: That evacuation effort was the serious and bloody event that came later in November 1964 when there was hostage-taking in the town called Stanleyville, now known as Kisangani. At that time, the Americans, the British and the Belgians collaborated to send in planes to evacuate some 300 hostages.

When my family and I arrived in the Congo in early 1963, the situation was already one of great uncertainty and disorder. As a first assignment in USIA, it turned out to be one that offered a broad range of experience in new circumstances. I should mention before going on that the entry into the White House in 1961 by John F. Kennedy and his designation of Edward R. Murrow as the Director of USIA were both important factors in leading me to want to work in the Agency.

That first assignment involved working with Congolese media that had just gained independence and the ability to write what they wanted after 70 years of colonialism, so it was a heady and interesting stuff. They were very inexperienced. One had the opportunity to assist them to develop journalistic skills and they were appreciative of that.

For reasons that I don't now recall, perhaps because of better transportation links and perhaps because the Congo was not a former French colony, the USIS post in Leopoldville at the time was the producer of a monthly magazine in the form of a tabloid newspaper 16 to 20 pages long, which was called "American Perspectives". It was published in 105,000 copies edited and printed in Leopoldville and then shipped by air to all of the French-speaking countries in Africa: Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Gabon, etc. I had had very little experience with the print media, although I knew radio quite well at the time I came into the Agency.

I recall that 2 days after my arrival the other Assistant Information Officer, a man named Don Miller, was first to return to the States because of illness or death in his family. He was the editor of the American Perspectives. When he left, the Information Officer informed me the same day that I had just become Acting Editor of the magazine. This was the time when I didn't yet know that you could take a photograph and make it a different size when you printed it. I recall being distinctly daunted and wondering how I had ever gotten into this business when I looked at a big 8" x 11" photograph and I only had a space 2" x 4" in which to print it. But you learn quickly in USIA and for the time that my colleague was away, I was editor of the American Perspectives and later contributed to it and wrote for it in the course of the next 2 years.

A demanding element of my tenure in the Congo was representing U.S. A.I.D. and explaining American assistance to the Congolese through working with the press. This was not always easy. For example, the corn that we sent as food aid was the kind of yellow corn that we grow and consume in this country. The corn that the Congolese were used to eating was a white variety, and there was a lot of resistance to consuming the food that was sent by the U.S. under Food for Peace.

They were interesting years because of the uncertainty and the feeling that what one did seemed very important. One imagined that it made a real difference. Here was this enormous country, the wealthiest in the continent, falling apart and in the news all the time. At the time in November 1964 when the hostages were taken by rebels in the Eastern Congo, in Stanleyville, I was the acting spokesman for the Embassy and learned a lot very fast about talking to the press, either talking to the press or not, and what to say or not to say. It was a very interesting and demanding time because, of course, the fact that the United States had provided the planes to fly in Belgian paratroopers from British Ascension Island in the South Atlantic, only a few years after Congolese independence, created very serious problems for the United States and the other two countries in public affairs terms.

Here was a new independent African nation, and the United States led by John Kennedy, collaborating with the former colonial powers to fly right into the middle of Africa and shoot the place up. Stanleyville was in a real sense the heart of Africa. It was the very part of the Congo about which Joseph Conrad had written his novel, "Heart of Darkness." For USIS and for me, there was one memorable event in the wake of the fly-in by the American planes to free the hostages in Stanleyville.

The Congolese Government, and particularly the United States Embassy and the American Administration, felt an urgent need to publish something to explain and justify the action. The decision was taken by the PAO, a rather famous PAO in USIA history named John Mowinckel, to

produce a so-called White Paper about the event. It would be written in English and in French with photographs, and would be distributed widely around the continent in both languages.

I was given the job in writing and editing and publishing that White Paper. It was a very interesting effort. We managed to get the text written and translated, and the photographs inserted, all in about 6 days time. The West German government had set up a printing press and was supporting the daily newspaper in Kinshasa. We worked out a quick deal with them for them to print it and we had something like 100,000 or more copies of the White Paper produced within less than a week. It was an exciting exercise and may have done some good.

I had met the Area Director for Africa, at that time Mark Lewis, on a trip he took to Leopoldville some time in 1964. When we left the Congo, I was assigned to go as cultural attaché to Warsaw. The end of our tour in the Congo was a rather tense and difficult time because my wife had to leave early in order to give birth to our third child, Kyle, who was born in Lyon, France, where her parents then lived. Her departure with the two small children with me behind in the Congo was a period of considerable stress for her and the family. We expected to be going back briefly to the States on home leave, and then going to Warsaw, but this was not to be. Agency leadership at that time was very interested in setting the same kind of management and personnel norms for USIA officers as obtained for State officers. A goal was that USIA officers should be designated Foreign Service Officers without any "R" for Foreign Service Reserve, or "I" for Foreign Service Information Officer, on a level of complete equality. Among other things, the standards for length of time overseas were limited, and at that time in the early spring of 1965 when we left the Congo separately to going to Warsaw, I had been abroad since January 1952, between military service and refugee resettlement and Radio Liberty and the Congo.

LAMBERT HEYNIGER
Deputy Principal Officer
Elisabethville (1963-1965)

Lambert Heyniger was born in New York in 1930. He graduated from Princeton University in 1953 and served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1953-1955. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956 and served in numerous posts abroad, including Jordan, Netherlands, Congo, Tanzania, and Algeria. He was interviewed on May 19, 1996 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

HEYNIGER: I went over to the African Bureau after I had been in training for three or four months. I had a friend who had been a year ahead of me in college named Frank Carlucci who ultimately went on to become Secretary of Defense among other things, head of the Peace Corps. At that time he was the Assistant Desk Officer for the Congo. Not the Desk Officer but the Assistant Desk Officer. Frank said, "Nick, we need a man in Stanleyville. How about it?" I went back and spoke to my wife. Her parents were Washingtonians, rather conservative. We decided that Stanleyville, it was after all, Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness. We felt that might be a bit of a stretch especially since at that time we had two young, small children. It might be kind of tough and her parents might be kind of concerned, so I went back and talked with the Bureau and said is

there any other place? They said, “we also need another officer in Elisabethville in Katanga. How about that?” So, we said, “fine!” In early 1963 my wife and two young children and I all set off for Elisabethville.

Q: You were in Elisabethville from when to when?

HEYNIGER: '63-'65.

Q: Incidentally Elisabethville today is called...

HEYNIGER: Lubumbashi.

Q: Who knows what it may be called in the future.

HEYNIGER: Yes at the moment it is Kabila's Headquarters, but who knows.

Q: How did you get there?

HEYNIGER: You have the feeling that you are flying over this sea of green for hours. We went Pan Am and flew Washington to New York, New York to Rabat. We had our two young children with us, also our dog, a Cairn terrier that we had in The Netherlands. We flew from Rabat to Liberia, Nigeria and a couple of other spots in between until we got to the capital of the Congo. At each stop, our daughter insisted on getting off the plane and going back to the cargo hold and making sure that the dog was there and all right. We stayed several days in, [it is now Kinshasa] Leopoldville being briefed, meeting the Embassy team there, and then on again via Pan Am from Leopoldville to Elisabethville. It took a good three hours in a big intercontinental jet just to fly from Leopoldville to Elisabethville. It is a huge country.

Q: We are going back to when you were back in Washington getting ready for this job briefing and learning the language. Can you give me a little feel from what you were learning about the AF bureau and others about “Whither Africa”. This was in the early 60's.

HEYNIGER: Yes. I think it would be more interesting to the listeners if I talk more about it after my assignment to Elisabethville. At that time, the African Bureau was really struggling because Africa was going through this traumatic period of independence and self determination. It was a new bureau; there wasn't that much background in African countries or officers with experience in Africa. The leadership of the bureau was political rather than career. In terms of the internal workings of the Department of State, at that time, the Bureau of European Affairs was rather predominant particularly because of our long standing ties with Europe as well as NATO. Parts of Africa were still either colonies or had barely become independent. The European Bureau had very definite interests in what our policies were toward parts of Africa, and their view usually prevailed which was kind of denigrating.

Q: When you were going out to the Congo, it was still the Congo then, what were you told to expect, and what was our concern that you were getting before you went out there?

HEYNIGER: Again, Stu, I have to say that it wasn't much. People sort of said "you have had several years in the service; you know more or less what to expect. Good Luck!" At that time you have to remember that going to Elisabethville was very difficult because Elisabethville had been the capital of an independent Katanga. I don't know if this independence was supported by the Belgian Government, but it was certainly supported by Union Minere and the Societe Generale de Belgique. America at that time had backed the central government in Leopoldville and was against this Katanga secession strongly. So, to some extent, my wife and I were moving into a hostile environment.

I remember particular little vignettes: my wife would go to town to buy food and would go to a store that would sell, for example butter, the lady in front of her would get a half kilo and then my wife would step up to the counter and the proprietor would say we don't have any. My wife would walk away and then the Belgian woman behind her would get her half kilo. Both the Africans and the Belgians were not happy to see us, and they were far from welcoming. It was a difficult environment.

Q: When you were in Leopoldville, you were sort of briefed before you went out, what sort of briefing were you getting?

HEYNIGER: Not too much. They were mostly focused on what life would be like at the post. They assumed you knew what American policy was. It was assumed that you knew all about the history and the background of the secession. I think that at least at that time and probably even more at this time, officers were expected to be familiar, to have read books, magazine articles, and newspapers, and to be abreast of the situation and the background of the situation before you left for post. We only stayed in Leopoldville for two or three days. It was mostly to get briefings from Embassy officers on what they would like me to do, what kind of reporting they needed and what they would like me to do when I got there.

Q: Could you give a quick summary of what happened. You mentioned a secession attempt at Katanga.

HEYNIGER: You recall that the Belgians decided to leave the Congo in 1960, and they left it in absolutely terrible shape. I think at the time they left there were less than a score of Congolese who had university educations. The entire economic and commercial structure of the country had been in the hands of the Belgians. There weren't even many high school graduates. There was no middle class. There were a lot of people who were trained for manual labor, machinists, plumbers, carpenters, things like that, but very few people who had any experience or training with management, running things or organizing things, so it was a very difficult time for the Congo. Things went very slowly in terms of nation building and economic and social development while I was there.

Q: When you arrived, what was the situation in Katanga at the time in 1963?

HEYNIGER: Well to go back for a second, you recall that when the Congo became independent more or less under a coalition government, the government was taken over by a young and fairly wild-eyed radical named Patrice Lumumba who installed or tried to install a semi-socialist

government and economy in the country. When he did that, the southeastern portion of the country, Katanga, didn't want to do this and seceded. The UN came in with thousands of troops. When I arrived in Elisabethville, for example, there were several battalions of Indian infantry; the MP's I think were Danish. There were wild-eyed Irishmen who were running the transport system. The airport control tower was being run by Canadian soldiers. This was a full fledged, flat out UN running of the entire province. There was very little if any political government at all, just the UN.

Q: Well now when you went there could you give me a little bit of the structure? Who was at the Consulate General, what were you doing, what were the jobs?

HEYNIGER: It was a small Consulate. There were no Consulate Generals in the Congo. There were only two State Department officers at Elisabethville. From that point of view it was a wonderful job and a wonderful experience because to use a term that I later learned in the Pentagon, we were a little "over challenged." We did everything, and we had twice as much to do as we could do. It was very interesting. For example, we had no courier service or classified pouch service with the outside world, and so the cable traffic between Washington and Elisabethville was greater than the cable traffic between Washington and Moscow. We did everything. We did political reporting, economic reporting, political military reporting, labor reporting. We did representation. I was a Consul, I was the number two at the post. I did whatever consular work needed to be done, taking trips around the African bush to meet with tribal chiefs. It was a wonderful experience.

Q: Who was the Consul?

HEYNIGER: I had two officers that I worked for, both of whom went on to notable careers in the Foreign Service. One was Jonathan Dean, who was basically a European expert, who ended up in Vienna with multi lateral diplomacy in Western Europe at which he was very good. The second was Arthur Tienken who ended up as Chargé in Ethiopia and Ambassador to a couple of African countries. These at this time were mid-career officers who were being broadened and were learning management and supervisory skills. Both of them very interesting officers with whom to work.

Q: During this time was the UN there more or less the whole time you were there '63-'65?

HEYNIGER: No. When I first got there the UN was there in force. There were thousands of UN troops, but by '64, it was pretty much over. The situation had returned to Congolese affairs. I remember a couple of really lovely vignettes. One time a delegation of Africans came to the Consulate, and I happened to be in charge. They said, "Mr. Consul could you help us in organizing political parties because we really don't know how." I sort of laughed and sat back in my chair and said, "I don't think that we diplomats are supposed to do that."

There were also really "hairy" times because while I was there and actually while I happened to be in temporary charge of the Consulate, there was the Simba rebellion in the Eastern Congo, the Gazinga rebellion. I was in Elisabethville and Mike Hoyt was in Stanleyville, and we sort of wondered which of us was going to get over run first. Both of us made contingency plans to get out. Unfortunately my wife happened to pick that particular time to back our car into a telephone

pole just when we were counting on it on an hourly basis to get out of the country and get to Northern Rhodesia.

Without any question the political and economic power in Katanga at that time was the Belgian mining company, Union Minere. Without the mines there would have been no Katanga. In fact, Elisabethville was never an African center. It was created by the Belgian mining interests because that is where the copper was. I went down and talked with Union Minere every day. We sort of had a pact that I wouldn't leave if they didn't and they wouldn't leave if I didn't.

I think the impression that I'm trying to give is that this was an extremely interesting period. It was extremely good training for a young officer, where I learned a number of aspects of Foreign Service work, but it was perhaps a little too "hairy." We had a third child born at a very rudimentary Belgian nun's clinic there, and it was a very nervous time. I remember one time for example I had been there for about six months or so and a Scandinavian couple came over to visit with us at our home. They said "we are leaving and you are staying, and we thought you should have this." They laid this parcel on our living room coffee table. We said "what's that?" They said "open it up and see." We opened it up and there was a full-fledged Thompson submachine gun, that fires .45 caliber slugs, and about 500 rounds of ammunition. I picked this thing up; it weighed a ton. They said, "you may need this."

Q: I'm trying to get a picture of were there any Congolese people you had contact with at that time?

HEYNIGER: Yes, starting in 1964, because then the government really became African again. You have to remember there were very few Congolese businessmen. The political, public officials were very poorly educated and poorly trained. We had a great deal of contact with the Congolese military; we were often in touch with them on a daily basis. We maintained contacts with the expatriate community there. The two basic things that were going on in Katanga during that period were number one, mining and number two, trying to emerge from a very turbulent post independence environment and situation and just sort of get down to the business of trying to develop a country with very few trained people.

Q: What was your impression of the Congolese military?

HEYNIGER: Very poor, but to be fair, not their own fault. For example, I had previous experiences as Vice Consul in Jordan becoming familiar with the Jordanian military who I thought were terrific. Well trained by the British, had been sergeants and sergeant majors and subalterns and junior officers for the British in Palestine and the Near East. Whereas, these men who were trying to be captains and majors and colonels had been perhaps corporals under the Belgians. They had never had any training, had never had any experience, had never been taught how to run a battalion, how to manage a garrison, how to patrol or to administer a territory. They had no idea, no training, no education.

Q: Was there concern, picking this latter part after the UN left with what the military might do? I mean among those things about troops that are not well led, looting and raping seems to be on the agenda if one isn't careful. These guys have got guns.

HEYNIGER: I don't think that was a particular concern then, but has become endemic in the Congo since then. At that time I happened to be in the Congo and in Katanga when there were thousands of UN troops there who effectively maintained order. Thereafter, I think people were too tired and too traumatized to get involved in overthrowing the government and looting or anything like that. The Belgian mercenaries had all left. Many of the European expatriates had left. The Congolese military were from the Western Congo, from Leopoldville, who were on unfamiliar ground and certainly had no interest in rebelling against the central government. Without the mercenaries and without backing from the Belgian expatriate economic and commercial structure, there weren't any Congolese who were going to rebel against Leopoldville. That was over. It was just that there was a great deal of social upheaval and trauma, and things basically needed to settle down.

Q: How was the economic function working? In many ways I would think when you are down in Elisabethville, you were really looking at the Rhodesians or whatever they are called. Southern Rhodesia was not independent; it was a white run country. Was this sort of the center of gravity there and also the extraction of minerals.

HEYNIGER: Very good question. The answer while I was there is that before and after the Simba rebellion, Union Minere continued its mining operations relatively undisturbed. They let me go down and visit some of the mines which I found absolutely fascinating. There were mines under Elisabethville where the mine shaft went down thousands of feet, and there were huge underground chambers with huge Belgian turbines working in them. Then they took me along some mine shafts and showed me what they were bringing out. The ore which they were extracting was so rich in uranium and other sexy minerals that the ore on the conveyor belt was giving off sparks and flashes as it went by. Just the ore; it was fantastic. But, the economy of then southeastern Congo and what was then northern Rhodesia was the copper belt. It was in the business of mining copper and other minerals and exporting them mainly along the Benguela railroad to Angola and from Luanda out to Europe. That continued. Northern Rhodesia was a British colony.

The British were having a particularly difficult time because their post in Elisabethville had both career British officers as well as colonials from Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia. There was an officer from Southern Rhodesia who maintained absolutely stolidly that Southern Rhodesia would never become independent, and that this self determination trend would stop with the Congo. So, there was a lot of discussion and tension with that.

We got a lot of our supplies, we used to send a van or station wagon or pickup truck from Elisabethville down to Kitwe every week to pick up supplies. We got a great deal of our supplies from the Northern Rhodesian copper belt.

Q: Could you talk about your perspective and what it was, the Simba movement?

HEYNIGER: I think it was basically a combination of two things. A great factor in African politics at that time was tribalism and the centrifugal force of tribalism as a feature in African politics coupled with sort of the socialist versus capitalist approach to the economy. The Gizenga Simba

revolt as we saw it was an attempt by eastern and socialistic Congolese to gain a measure of self determination from the, at that time, [I'll tell you a little later on how Lumumba was killed], more western, more capitalist government under Kasavubu. It was primarily an effort by the eastern Congo to become more independent from central government control.

Q: How did you view the Simba movement? On the ground, Gizenga was the man's name, How did you see this? Was this a normal political sort of movement or was this as far as you were concerned, you were talking about getting out.

HEYNIGER: Yes. I think the Embassy was very concerned about the Gizenga and Simba movement and saw it as a real threat not only to the country but to us Foreign Service people. Definitely it was my understanding that if the Gizenga forces really approached Elisabethville, we were not going to stay. The entire staff of the American Consulate would have evacuated to Northern Rhodesia without any question. We weren't just going to sit there and attempt to deal with the Gizenga forces. The Embassy had instructed us not to do that.

Q: I talked to Mike Hoyt and he was told to stay.

HEYNIGER: I think Mike was told to stay partially because there wasn't anywhere really that he could go except for getting on a river boat and trying to make it from Stanleyville back to Leopoldville. We in Elisabethville had the option of getting out of the Congo and getting to Northern Rhodesia in about an hours drive. I must say I don't think we got a lot of instruction from the Embassy as to what to do. I think that they sort of said "look, you are in charge." I was a young and junior officer but I was in charge. We were between Consuls. They just said "Nick, use your best judgment. You do what you think is best for your post."

Q: Essentially you were just sitting there. The people you could talk to were the Union Minere. This was sort of the other power there. Were there many other Consulates there, and what was their attitude?

HEYNIGER: When you talk about other powers let me just interject for a minute and say that we were also in very close touch with the Congolese military who were very nervous. They did not know what to do. They were in the process of psyching themselves up for a last ditch defensive effort. The British were the main ones there and they were also quite concerned and were planning to evacuate if Elisabethville were threatened. The Union Minere people, as I say we conferred every day. They were going to shut down operations and move their people out.

Q: What was the concern about the Simba movement?

HEYNIGER: In the first place that it was using violence to achieve its ends, and secondly that it sort of represented militant socialism. Union Minere was a very capitalistic enterprise. In effect, it was African rural revolution. At that time back in the early 60's, difficult to cope with.

Q: We had an interview and he's written a book where Mike Hoyt talks about this when he was taken over in a Consulate and they were lined up and threatened with death. These are pretty scary people. They finally had to be rescued by a military operation by the Americans and Belgians.

HEYNIGER: I happened to be in Leopoldville at the time. A new Consul had arrived, Art Tienken, and Ambassador Mac Godley wanted us officers who had been out in the field to come up to Leopoldville periodically to inform the Embassy about what was going on out in the bush and to get informed as to what was going on at the Embassy. Mac was very kind and put me up in his residence.

It was while I was at his residence in Leopoldville that the Belgian paratroopers, flown in by the American Air Force, landed in Stanleyville and freed Mike Hoyt.

Q: Along with a number of Europeans, and missionaries.

HEYNIGER: Exactly.

Q: Some had already been killed. They were all under great stress and great danger.

HEYNIGER: The Ambassador and the Embassy were under great strain too because they had told Mike that he should stay there, and then seen him taken prisoner and threatened with execution. When the paratroopers went in and found Mike alive and freed him and the other missionaries and expatriates, I think an enormous weight was lifted from Mac and the Embassy's shoulders. They said, "Nick, we're going to have a party tonight."

Q: What is made, because you know as we talk today a former Simba has just taken over the Democratic Republic of the Congo which has just been named in the last ten days or so, we are talking about current history of 1997, a man named Kabila. Much has been made of news analysis and all that we supported the Mobutu government during much of the intervening years because of the East-West conflict, and we were concerned about the Soviet influence. Could you talk a bit about the atmosphere? What were your concerns about Soviet influence here in the heart of Africa?

HEYNIGER: I'm not the best person to talk about this because I was a fairly young officer serving at a fairly isolated post, but the context, as you recall, was very much a Cold War context. An East-West struggle which was going on not only in Europe but in Africa, the Middle East, the Subcontinent, and in Asia. It really was a situation of us "westerners" versus them "easterners" in many different respects in terms of foreign aid, in terms of votes in the UN General Assembly, in terms of the education and outlook of the people who were beginning to take over the administration and the economy of these developing countries. Whether they went in a generally Western and free enterprise and pro democratic direction or whether they went in a more Easterly or socialistic, collective direction was extremely important. It was important in the Congo for decades. This was happening in many parts of the developing world.

Q: Were any reports coming in while you were down in Elisabethville of Communist agents working in there with the miners etc.

HEYNIGER: No I don't believe that was a factor in Katanga at that time. Union Miniere was too much in control for that. The context again is that shortly after the Congo's independence, Katanga

seceded with strong support from European financial and business interests, and defied the central government for several years necessitating massive intervention by the United Nations with military force. The United Nations was fighting in Katanga, and the United States strongly supported that. Thereafter, it was mainly a question of local Katangans, who had been politically powerful and important prior to the UN experience, who after the UN left were trying to reassert themselves and their interests, but without much success because the Leopoldville Congolese military and public officials were determined that there was going to be no further dissenting voices heard in Katanga and in Elisabethville. This is also in context you have to remember that this is the time when the Biafra war was gearing up in Nigeria.

Q: I think that was a little later.

HEYNIGER: Okay, but there were problems coming along in Nigeria. Although I never served there, Nigeria is a good example of a country with millions of people who belong to different and very strong tribes, thus creating political and social problems, difficult to deal with.

Q: Would you say and really correct me on this, I'm throwing something out and I want you to go back to the time and how you as a budding Africanist would feel in what you were getting from your colleagues. Would you say a strong article of faith of those dealing with it in Africa, that the boundaries may be awful, there may be all sorts of countries, but any attempt to try to realign the boundaries which had essentially been colonial boundaries would just result in such chaos that one, it would be bad for Africa and two, it would make for pleasant fishing for the Soviet Union.

HEYNIGER: I don't think at that time the American people or the American government and hence their representatives abroad were particularly interested in rearranging boundaries even in the interest of bringing tribes together. I think in some countries in West Africa half of the tribe is on one side of the border and half is on the other. Unlike Southeast Asia and Vietnam, I don't think the United States had that interventionist or even that active a foreign policy in Africa. We wanted to be there; we wanted to be represented; we wanted these countries to develop and to develop in a free and democratic and free enterprise way. I don't believe the United States ever had any real interest in playing post-colonial national politics in terms of re-doing countries.

Q: But on the reverse was there a feeling that we'd better keep it as it is and in opposition to any change in the boundaries by civil war or other methods.

HEYNIGER: Definitely. I think that this has been a significant feature of American foreign policy for a long time, sometimes honored more in the breach than not but I think that it is one of the basic tenants of American foreign policy, non-interference in the internal affairs of foreign countries, number one. Number two, being in favor of peaceful and orderly change rather than revolution, even though our own national history was based on the opposite, and of having politics in Africa be peaceful, democratic, and gradual, rather than violent and traumatic. I may be wrong, but I think this was true at that time almost everywhere in Africa. The exception is, as I mentioned, that under the Kennedy Administration, and I'll never forget President Kennedy was assassinated while I was in the Congo, we were strongly in favor of African independence and self determination. The independence of Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia and the difficulties that might have caused the British or the South Africans, we favored and they just had to deal with.

Q: Is it Moise Tshombe, was he a factor while you were there, or had he sort of passed from the scene?

HEYNIGER: By the time we got to Katanga, the more violent part of the secession was over. The UN was in control, and Tshombe had fled to Europe. Also you recall that the UN Secretary General at the time had been killed, Dag Hammarskjold, flying from Elisabethville over Northern Rhodesia and his plane crashed. But, in one of these twists of foreign politics, after I had been at the post for about 18 months, Tshombe came back, but he came back to Leopoldville, and in fact, became Prime Minister of the Congo.

Q: What was your impression of local government there?

HEYNIGER: Again I think that you have to look at this with some discretion and some experience in that the context was that the Belgians had not really anticipated independence. They hadn't prepared for it; they hadn't trained Africans in many areas. If I could make a contrast, not that this is an invidious comparison, but the British either in East Africa or in West Africa, whether we are talking about Kenya or we are talking about Nigeria, had trained many Africans as school teachers, as mid level public officials, as police officers. These Africans had been trained in their fields, and they thus had been public officials and administrators or lieutenants or captains in local armies.

There is a world of difference at that time between the King's African Rifles in Kenya and the Congolese Army. The same thing was true with regard to the educational system, the public service system, medical people. There were African doctors, nurses, pharmacists in East Africa. There weren't in the Congo. They just weren't there.

Q: What about corruption?

HEYNIGER: This has been something that Africans have struggled with perennially. It is a problem, you know, all of us struggle in life with different things. I can talk more about this when we get to Tanzania and Dar es Salaam, but it is a very difficult factor.

Q: We are talking about now when you were in Elisabethville.

HEYNIGER: Yes. Local officials were eminently corruptible. Not as much as I understand has become true now in places like Nigeria and Somalia. You have to put it into context. These were people who were very poorly educated, poorly trained, poorly paid, and they were trying to gain some measure of economic security for themselves, and they saw the way to do it was by using their office to make some money.

Q: This is true in many places including the United States where the office is poorly paid, and you are expected for services rendered to receive a fee. This is your first exposure to Africa. Keep strictly within the Elisabethville context, what about tribalism? As you were dealing with the Congolese, what was your impression of where loyalty lay with officials, military, others?

HEYNIGER: Yes, [and Stu, there are two things I want to mention before we leave Elisabethville, one of them involving my opportunity to get to know some African liberation movements, and number two, the dismay that I ran into in trying to help the Congolese toward economic development despite AID and US economic laws and regulations.]

Certainly tribalism was an extremely significant factor in African and particularly Congolese politics at the time. You always talked with people within the context of where they came from and what tribe they belonged to. The interesting thing was that, as I mentioned earlier, Elisabethville, unlike many other large cities in Africa, was entirely created by Europeans. It had never been even an African village, so it was not a tribal center.

You always knew when talking to a Congolese where he was from and what tribe and what allegiance he owed. For example, of the Africans who had led the Katanga secessionist movement, one was a particularly sinister man named Godefroid Monongo, one of the most chilling foreign officials I've ever met in my life. When Lumumba was overthrown, he (Lumumba) was drugged and put on a plane and flown to Elisabethville. My understanding is that Monongo met the plane, hauled Lumumba off the plane, and personally threw him in a vat of sulfuric acid at one of the mining processing centers. This is a man you wanted to be quite careful with! Tribalism really mattered.

Q: His position was...

HEYNIGER: Interior Minister of Katanga. On the other hand, I remember when President Kennedy was assassinated, without any invitation or any warning, Monongo and the other senior officials of the Katangan Government arrived at the Principal Officer's residence and said, "we've come to express our regrets," and proceeded to sit down in his living room. He offered them some refreshment, would you like a beer or a whiskey or what? They would only take fruit juice. They sat there for several hours with the Principal Officer and his wife, not talking, just sitting. So tribalism did not rule everything.

Two things I wanted to mention before we leave Elisabethville. One was at that time Elisabethville was either a headquarters or a branch headquarters for several African liberation movements, particularly in Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique. As the junior officer, not the Principal Officer, it was my responsibility to get to know these people and to represent the United States to the extent that was permitted. It was very interesting for me because I was able to get in on the ground floor with some of the young people who perhaps a decade later would become national leaders in various parts of southern Africa. It was very interesting; it had to be handled carefully because even if I invited them to my residence for a dinner or something like that, it had to be done quite discreetly.

The other thing that I want just to mention is that as a Foreign Service Officer, to the extent that we could we were trying to help the Congolese to develop. There were no AID personnel in Elisabethville at all. The program was entirely administered from Leopoldville, so we were supposed to be the eyes and ears and hands of USAID in Katanga and in Elisabethville.

I remember one time a middle-aged, up and coming Congolese businessman came to me and said, Mr. Heyniger, we grow rice. We refine it and sell it. At the present time, we are importing rice from the United States. It seems to me that this is too bad. I would like to be able to import some better, more efficient rice milling equipment from the United States. I will buy it from the United States under the AID program and set up a better rice processing factory to produce and manufacture and sell rice here in the Eastern Congo. But I've run into some kind of opposition from AID in Leopoldville, and I wonder if you could help me out with it. I said, sure I'll give it a try.

I contacted the Embassy and the AID people in Leopoldville and said, look, here is a guy who wants to develop a private business, who wants to make some money, who wants to help the country, all things we are trying to promote. He seems to be running into problems. What's going on? The word I got back from Leopoldville was that because of the influence of certain American Southern Senators...

Q: Oh yes. Rice. Louisiana particularly.

HEYNIGER: No rice refining equipment was eligible for sale or export through the AID program. To me this was a very difficult lesson to learn about America's foreign aid efforts.

Q: You mentioned the police. Was there a problem in trying to aid or help the police?

HEYNIGER: No. Unlike Jordan where the police were absolutely terrific, incredibly good police in Jordan, the police pretty much in Katanga and Elisabethville, didn't exist. I don't have any memory of them.

Q: If anything, it was the military.

HEYNIGER: Yes. Particularly since the police would have been Katangan, and the military was Congolese, and there was a big difference.

Q: Where did you go when you left Elisabethville?

HEYNIGER: I was reassigned after that back to Washington in 1965, and I was lucky enough, I think, to be assigned to one of the best jobs for a junior or mid-career officer in the Foreign Service, which was to be a desk officer.

WILLIAM E. SCHAUFLELE, JR.
Principal Officer
Bukavu (1963-1964)

Congo Desk Officer, Africa Bureau
Washington, DC (1964-1965)

Ambassador William E. Schaufele, Jr. was born in Ohio in 1923. He received a B.A. from Yale University in 1948 and a M.A. from Columbia University in 1950. He served overseas in the U.S. army from 1942 until 1946. His overseas posts included Germany, Morocco, Zaire, Burkina Faso, and Poland. He was interviewed by Lillian Mullin on November 19, 1994.

SCHAUFELE: So we went across the river to what was then Leopoldville, had a briefing at the Embassy, and then went on to Bukavu in March, 1963. The Embassy had asked Heather to work half time at the Consulate as a secretary, administrator, or whatever I wanted her to do. One of the things that we did right away is that we both had to learn to use the One Time Pad [OTP -- a classified cipher system]. There was no communicator assigned there. There was a small USIS Library, which had been open for about two months, but they didn't need classified coding materials. Heather was much better at handling OTP than I was. We brought our own OTP set to the Consulate at Bukavu.

I learned as much as I could in a few days about how to open and run a Consulate. Then we flew to Bukavu from Leopoldville. That sounds rather mundane, but one should realize that there was no way to go by land from Leopoldville to the eastern border of Zaire, unless you did it by Land Rover, native bearers, and that sort of thing. We flew across this great expanse of central Africa, covered with jungle, in a C-47, an old, World War II twin-engine plane. You could see an occasional river. It was a trip of 1,000 miles.

We arrived over Bukavu. I looked down and said, "There's the airport." It looked postage stamp size. It actually was in Rwanda, not in the Congo. There was a cliff at one end of the airstrip and a drop-off at the other end.

Q: We landed there once.

SCHAUFELE: It all went off all right. We were met by the man who was temporarily running the USIS library. We checked into a hotel, which was quite nice. The man who ran it was called "the Bodega." He eventually became -- what should I call him? The "chef de Maison" for the President of Zaire.

We looked for an office and finally found one -- about a block off the main street. I guess that originally we took the whole building, because I knew that we were going to have a communicator, who would need a place to live. We would also have a vice consul. Then we found a house down on Lake Kivu which is one of the two lakes in Africa that doesn't have crocodiles in it -- because the elevation is too high. However, the lake did have Bilharzia liver flukes, which made it unhealthy to swim in it.

Q: So you couldn't go near it.

SCHAUFELE: That's right. The house needed a lot of work done to it. It had suffered a lot as a result of the incidents of 1960 and 1961. I guess that we stayed in the hotel for, perhaps, six to eight weeks.

Q: What kind of orders did the Department send you to open the Consulate at Bukavu? Were you given a specific budget or any kind of instructions? You didn't go back to Washington.

SCHAUFLE: No. I didn't go back to Washington. I had no budget during the first year. All expenses came out of the budget of the Embassy in Leopoldville. I just charged everything to the Embassy. Then we gradually worked into our own budget. I would tell the Embassy that I was going to rent office space and a house, and they would send out a sample lease. I would negotiate whatever changes needed to be made in it and send it back for the Embassy files. I kept a copy, of course, for the Consulate files.

Regarding the renovation charges for the house, we didn't get an estimate. The necessary work was just done by a Flemish contractor. We slowly learned that most of the Belgians in the eastern Congo were Flemish [Dutch], rather than Walloon [French], partly because there were a lot of plantations out there. The Flemish didn't like the Congolese one bit. They didn't have the concept of a "mission civilisatrice." They didn't want the Congolese to understand what they were saying about them, so they learned Swahili. But the contractor was a very nice man.

Eventually, we moved into the house. It was a very nice place -- in kind of a Tudor style, with plenty of room. There was a big, two-story livingroom with a big fireplace. And, as I said, it was on Lake Kivu. At night, when you went to bed, you could hear the Congolese fishermen out in their pirogues, their wooden canoes. To attract the fish, they'd beat a rhythm on the side of the boat. You could hear that at night. It helped you to go to sleep.

The formerly Belgian Congo had been divided into six provinces by the Belgians. The Prime Minister at that time was named Cyrille Adoula, a former trade union leader. I learned a lot of things after the fact. He was considered "detribalised." He came from a certain tribe, but he no longer had any connections with it. He was a Congolese. That's the way he saw it. He broke the country up into 21 provinces -- partially, I suppose, to give more jobs to people. I don't know what his other reasons were.

However, we had enough inter-tribal conflict in what had been Kivu Province. When it was broken into three provinces, the situation actually was worse. For instance, Maniema was one of the provinces. There were two major tribes in it: the Warega had almost a majority of the population. They were a relatively peaceful tribe, if I may put it that way. The other main tribe were the Bakusu, who were related to the Batetelas, Patrice Lumumba's tribe. They always tended to be trouble makers. In the old Kivu Province there must have been 15 or 18 tribes. When you divide the province up and there are only two tribes left, which are inimical to each other, then something goes wrong all the time. And that was what was happening. Maniema was really a hot bed of trouble. I traveled all over the place. One of my first duties was to issue a visa to President Moley of North Kivu province and see him off at the airport. He had been given a "leader grant" to visit the United States. His capital was in Goma. He came down to Bukavu to get his visa. I was taking him to the airport when we were "arrested" by the President of Central Kivu province. Well, that goes back to a pre-independence dispute of some kind. Again, if Kivu hadn't been divided into three provinces, it probably wouldn't have happened that the President of one province would attempt to arrest the President of another province. Of course, I was released, and there was no problem about that.

It was kind of amusing. They held Mr. Moley in a hotel in Bukavu. With him they put the Central Kivu province minister of the interior, Mr. Boji. They had known each other before and had a very good time together. I think that they must have decimated the supply of Scotch whisky. They only held him for 10 or 12 days -- and then it was all over. Nothing happened to Moley, and I finally sent him on his way. However, that's the kind of thing that one used to see a lot of in the Congo and probably still does.

It was interesting, opening a Consulate, hiring people, and so forth. Essentially, the main function of the Consulate was political reporting, and this was understood right from the beginning. The Department didn't say in the telegram assigning me to Bukavu that it wasn't getting any reporting from the eastern part of Congo. However, given the tensions and the experiences, the Department felt that we should cover that area. There were also consulates in Elisabethville and Stanleyville. So for all practical purposes I could issue visitors' visas and nothing else. We didn't have that many people who could go and visit the United States.

The foreign community was rather small -- mostly Flemish and one German quinine plantation owner, as I remember. Because of the difficulties in 1960 there were UN personnel in a lot of technical positions, including doctors, engineers, and that sort of thing. It was a fairly interesting group of foreign nationals like those I found in practically all ex-colonial areas. There was a lot of "sleeping around," but that was all right. It made things more interesting.

We got along all right with Congolese officials, without too much difficulty. The President of Central Kivu province was a college professor -- not in our sense of a college. He had taught at a secondary level college. He was quite an articulate and interesting man.

Q: Where had he been educated?

SCHAUFLE: In Zaire. At the time of independence in 1960 there were only 13 Congolese college graduates. That was one of the things that everybody "fastened onto" after the secession of Katanga and all of those developments -- that the Belgians really hadn't prepared them for anything. So he had been trained in Zaire, and he may have gone to one of the other, French-speaking countries. Swahili was the vernacular language, so conceivably he may have been trained in East Africa, though I'm not sure. I studied Swahili, an interesting language.

Q: Did all of the different tribes speak Swahili?

SCHAUFLE: In eastern Congo, yes.

Q: Did they have another language?

SCHAUFLE: Oh, yes. There is a "literary" Swahili, which they might not speak. However, they could get along in Swahili. Across the border, in Rwanda and Burundi, they also spoke some Swahili. Our son Peter not only learned Swahili, he also learned Bashi, a tribal language in the Bukavu area. He had an ear for languages.

So I had no language problem. I did everything in French. I could speak a little Swahili, but I wouldn't conduct Consulate business in it. Some of the Flemish in Bukavu didn't speak very good French. They could speak French, but the Flemish are a race unto themselves, so to speak.

All in all, the situation was fairly uneventful. I was familiarizing myself with lots of things. For instance Bukavu was where the Marainckase, the Queen Mother of the Tutsis in Rwanda, had taken refuge. We used to see her walking down the streets. She was about six feet tall. There was a Tutsi element in the population there.

Some unhappy things happened to us there. Our son Peter developed what seemed to be a respiratory infection. The doctor we were using was not a UN doctor. He was Polish born. His name was Kackiewicz -- I remember the name. He did a fluoroscope of Peter and couldn't find anything. Finally, we took Peter to the hospital, where they had an expert in x-rays.

Q: A radiologist.

SCHAUFLE: Yes, a radiologist. He was also a little bit of an alcoholic. Our doctor gave us the results of the x-rays. He said that the Swiss radiologist thought that Peter had a "primo infection." I asked what a "primo infection" was. He said it was the early stage of tuberculosis. The doctor had diagnosed several people in the community as having primary tuberculosis. We weren't prepared to accept that, so we went to Nairobi [Kenya]. We left Bukavu on December 26, 1963, to drive to Nairobi through Rwanda. On the night of December 24 there was an uprising in Rwanda. We figured that, maybe, 200 people had been killed -- mostly Tutsis who were killed by Hutus, who ran the country. But we drove across Rwanda the next day and didn't have any problems. There seemed to be an ominous atmosphere in the countryside. There were a lot of soldiers with rusty rifles, ensuring order.

So we went to Nairobi. We had Peter examined. The doctor said, "Well, it's quite simple. He has an infection in his adenoids, which is dripping into his lungs. This is what caused the spots on the x-ray." He recommended that he have his tonsils and adenoids removed and that we put him in Gertrude's Garden Hospital. So Heather made the arrangements and took him over there. A gruff, British nurse asked my wife all kinds of questions and then said, "Well, he'll be operated on tomorrow." That was on a Tuesday. Heather said, "When should I visit him -- what's a good time?" The nurse answered, "Not before Thursday," because they don't believe in having the family around, and all that. They think that it just confuses the issue. So he stayed there alone for two days, and it worked out all right. There was no particular problem.

After Peter recovered from the operation, we visited the game park at Amboseli. Peter still talks about the game park, particularly the lions and elephants.

Q: So after you had been in Kenya for the tonsillectomy, you went back to Bukavu.

SCHAUFLE: Steven and I drove back to Bukavu, but Heather and Peter flew back a few days later from Nairobi. As a matter of fact, Steven and I visited a few game parks in Uganda on the way back to Bukavu. However, it was a fairly uneventful trip. We returned to Bukavu on a route that

went farther North than we had been on the trip to Nairobi. We crossed the northern end of Lake Kivu, instead of the lower end, where Bukavu is.

Q: So there was a Tutsi-Hutu problem some time ago?

SCHAUFLE: There was a problem, which was not resolved at the time. However, it died down. There were periodic things like that, often localized, in Rwanda. There hadn't been any nationwide uprisings or incidents since the Hutu took over control of Rwanda from the Tutsis.

Q: Could we discuss that a bit further? Were the Hutus more numerous?

SCHAUFLE: The Hutus were much more numerous. They accounted for about 80 percent of the population. In northern Burundi and part of Rwanda the Tutsis had become the masters of the Hutus, and the Belgians did very little to change the situation. In Rwanda, at the time of independence in 1962 the Hutus took over. They weren't so successful in Burundi, and the Tutsis still ruled there.

Q: I think that you told us that the Consulate began operating in 1964. How many people were working there?

SCHAUFLE: In the Consulate there was the Consul (myself), a vice consul, a CIA officer, and a communicator. We also had an American in charge of the USIS Library. My wife Heather worked at the Consulate half time. We had four or five locally hired employees of the Consulate. We had one Belgian woman, who was our receptionist and also drafted any French correspondence. Then there were some Congolese working at the USIS Library, as well. So that was about it. The great thing for us, of course, was when we went into direct communication with the Embassy. A young man who set up the radio. All of our telegrams were sent in code.

Q: Where were they picked up?

SCHAUFLE: In Leopoldville.

Q: At the Embassy?

SCHAUFLE: Yes. We were on a voice network. He was on it every day. I didn't use it unless I needed to. It was disconnected when it wasn't being used. The Embassy at Leopoldville, the Consulate at Elisabethville, the Consulate at Stanleyville, and the Embassy in Bujumbura [Burundi] were on the circuit. I don't know why Rwanda wasn't on that circuit. There may have been some technical reason for this. But all of the stations came on the air at the same time every morning. We passed messages to each other. We knew when somebody was coming to see us. We received information from the Embassy, for example that somebody was going to fly down to us.

Q: This was on short wave, I take it.

SCHAUFLE: Yes, on short wave.

Q: There was no telephone, then.

SCHAUFLE: Technically, there was a telephone, but it was 1,100 miles across the country to the Embassy. Even the Congolese used radio connections with the capital in Leopoldville. I don't know how good they were. They realized that we had our own communications. Sometimes they would try to get us to transmit a message for them. I always refused to do this, as otherwise they might become dependent on it. They had a pretty good idea when the transmitter went on the air. I suppose that they had listening posts at various places.

Q: Did you have diplomatic pouch service?

SCHAUFLE: Normally, a pouch could reach us via the Embassy in Bujumbura. Then there would have to be somebody going back and forth.

Q: How far was it to Bujumbura?

SCHAUFLE: About 90 miles. Every time people came down from the Embassy in Leopoldville, they brought a pouch with them. However, the pouch that came to us from Bujumbura really came from Dar Es Salaam [Tanzania]. That was the kind of communications we had. We had shipments of food and so forth sent in. Those shipments came from Dar Es Salaam, across Tanzania and Lake Tanganyika and by boat to Bujumbura -- and so on to Bukavu.

Q: That's a long way. Your food shipments and those pouches came in by sea? By ship?

SCHAUFLE: By ship.

Q: They weren't flown in.

SCHAUFLE: No, they weren't flown in. This was food which we ordered ourselves from Denmark. Before we left Casablanca, we put in an order. We were always able to "stay ahead of the game." It would take -- I'm guessing now -- six or eight weeks for delivery. And then you weren't sure. Sometimes the shipment would be pilfered. It was always interesting to talk to other people and find out what the thieves were stealing. In some places they would steal liquor. In other places they would steal cold cereal. [Laughter] But basic food was available in Bukavu. It was a very fertile region. There were strawberries all the year around. The meat wasn't bad at all.

Q: Could you get chicken or lamb or...

SCHAUFLE: We could get beef and pork, but no lamb. I don't know that we saw much lamb. We didn't need those shipments via Dar Es Salaam to live on. What we needed mostly were things like soap and basic essentials. We didn't get a whole lot of food. We got certain kinds of food, just to vary the diet.

I would say that the Consulate at Bukavu was opened principally because the Congo [now Zaire] was the largest country in Africa and a place of considerable interest to us. We got involved there early, after independence in 1960. Before independence we had posts in Leopoldville and

Elisabethville. We had a Consulate in Elisabethville mostly because of the mineral resources there. Then we opened a Consulate at Stanleyville. If you can think of Leopoldville on the West, you can trace more or less a central line running through the country. Elisabethville was Southeast of the line, Stanleyville was Northeast of it, and Bukavu was almost directly East of Leopoldville. As I said, Bukavu was a little out of the way. Due to poor communications, you could not drive from one end of the country to the other. You might be able to do so if you were equipped like a safari, but otherwise you would have to fly.

I think that the Ambassador, Edmund Gullion, recommended that a post be opened on the eastern border of the country. That was the reason for it. Our major responsibility was to report on political and civil unrest and that sort of thing, as a key to the stability of the country. Bukavu had also been a source of instability during the early days after independence. A man named Kashimura was actually national Minister of Information. He came from the area around Bukavu. He imposed a kind of reign of terror. So we saw Bukavu as a potential source of instability.

As I previously mentioned, the old Province of Kivu was broken into three provinces [North Kivu, Central Kivu, and Maniema] after independence. Bukavu was in Central Kivu. The capital of North Kivu was Goma, at the North end of Lake Kivu. Maniema, as it's called, is down on the Ulele River. It's very tropical there, not mountainous. It was dominated by the Bakusu, a fairly small but militant tribe which was allied with the Batetelas, which was Patrice Lumumba's tribe. That is one of the reasons why it was seen as a potential source of unrest. Our reporting was almost entirely on matters related to that.

Q: We are continuing to discuss his assignment as Consul in Bukavu, Zaire.

SCHAUFLE: We had a lot of official American visitors come to see us, because there was an Air Attaché plane assigned to the Embassy in Leopoldville. The people assigned to the Embassy welcomed a little relief from the heat and humidity in Leopoldville, down on the Congo River, not far from the coast.

Q: How was the weather in Bukavu?

SCHAUFLE: Not above 80 degrees and not below 60 -- and it was 5,000 feet above sea level. It was a very comfortable climate. When we would hear that the Air Attaché plane was coming, we immediately started collecting large quantities of strawberries. We didn't ask our visitors. They could always take the strawberries back to Leopoldville.

When the Ambassador came to visit us -- there were two Ambassadors while we were there: Ambassador Ed Gullion and then Ambassador Mac Godley. They would always call on local authorities and European residents who had long experience there in Bukavu. So we were never lonely. We had a good house. There was a pretty good hotel there. We had stayed there when we first arrived in Bukavu and until we moved into our house. The community -- both the Europeans and the Congolese -- was interesting.

It was an interesting and not overly demanding situation, except when I traveled within the consular district. When I traveled in the district, I went by car, by myself. Some of the roads I had

to take were often cut. You had to find ways around the break in the road. There was no maintenance of the road network. We could telephone within the consular district. Telephone communications there were all right. I could call a provincial president in neighboring provinces and tell them that I would like to visit him.

Q: How many provinces were in your consular district?

SCHAUFLE: Just three. There were originally six provinces in the Congo, of which Kivu was one. When Adoula was Prime Minister, he cut the provinces up into 21 entities. I think that was a mistake, because I think that it exacerbated tribal animosities. They could be subsumed in a province with a larger group of tribes. This was most noticeable in Maniema Province. There was one very large tribe there, the Waregas, who were considered to be a very peaceful people. There was a much smaller tribe, known as Bakusu. Under the new division of the country they were in the single province of Maniema, instead of the 20 or 25 tribes in the former Province of Kivu. There were incidents between them all the time.

I think I know why Prime Minister Adoula split them up. It was to be able to hand out more jobs. I suppose that I visited Maniema Province about every two months. Maniema, as I said, was on the river and was hot and humid. There was a UN representative there. We also had a UN representative in Kivu. There still are UN representatives in most of the provinces of the Congo because the UN and its affiliated agencies are working in the Congo. The UN representative in Kinshasa (capital of Maniema) was an Egyptian. He was very good, very well informed, and very hospitable.

I couldn't drive to Maniema Province. I had to fly there. So I always let the provincial president know that I was coming, asking him to help me get around. I think that Ambassador Godley went to Maniema once, although I can't be sure. Usually, the Ambassador just came to Bukavu, spent perhaps two days there, and then left.

There was concern at the Embassy about the potential for instability in the area. However, during most of the time we were there, there were rumors but nothing much happened -- until shortly before we left in June, 1964. There had been a revolt going on in the western Congo -- the former Province of Kwilu. It was kind of an ongoing thing. Nothing was ever settled.

The rebellion continued in some form or other. I can't remember the exact time, but a couple of months before we left, we heard that a man named Gaston Soumialot had been seen in Bujumbura [Burundi]. Soumialot was in cahoots with Kashimura, back in 1961. This reported sighting of Soumialot in Bujumbura immediately gave rise to rumors. The worst came about, eventually. There were already incidents south of Bukavu. These had started across the river in Bujumbura. There were a lot of Italian Catholic priests there, who had to be evacuated. They were teaching at schools and that sort of thing.

Colonel Mulamba, who was the Congolese National Army commander in Stanleyville and who was also responsible for the Eastern Congo, came down to Bukavu. He and I talked at some length, and eventually we sent him two American Army colonels trained in handling civil disturbances and that sort of thing. The two American colonels came to Bukavu. I can't remember how long

they were there before I left. The first outbreak of violence that affected Bukavu directly happened just about three days before we left. Opposition elements raided the southern part of the city. They got into some of the "native quarters," but the Congolese National Army fought back. They didn't always do so, but in this case they did, although it tired them out. They had never previously been in combat, I guess, except with each other.

At the same time, as it happened, there was still fighting going on South of Bukavu. General Mobutu [Congolese Army commander] had been in Europe and studiously stayed out of this for quite a while. People wondered about that. He finally returned and came to Eastern Kivu, where I first met him. The Congolese Army was very much inclined to accept the rebels' claim that they had "Dawa," that is, "magic powers."

Q: *Who were these rebels?*

SCHAUFLELE: It's hard to say. The group in the eastern Congo was not from a single tribe, although they obviously included the Bakusu. They became important, but were not initially significant. It wasn't until the rebels reached Kindu, in Maniema Province, that the Bakusu really joined them. I think that the rebels consisted of a mixture of tribes and people who were unhappy with the government. However, we didn't know which government they were unhappy with. Maybe they would have been unhappy with any government. They never had a tribal identity in the eastern Congo as a whole, but they did in Kivu Province. I can't remember the name of that tribe. On the "Dawa" issue, they claimed that they were impervious to bullets. That was their "spell." A lot of the regular Congolese National Army people believed them.

When Mobutu came back from Europe, he led a Congolese National Army unit in a counterattack against the rebels at a place called Kamaniola. There is a picture of Mobutu walking down the road, carrying a rifle. He didn't believe in this "Dawa" after the rebels retreated. This was Mobutu's first "victory," so to speak. The reason that Mobutu had stayed in Europe was that he was trying to gain a position where people would depend on him, more than they had in the past.

At about the same time, Adoula was "fired" as Prime Minister. Moise Tshombe was made Prime Minister, and this started the great "turnaround." Tshombe, the leader of the insurrection in Katanga, had become the Prime Minister of the central government. Actually, this made a lot of sense, because if there were a serious revolt building up, as appeared to be the case and as it turned out, you didn't want the Katangans to revolt again, because they had power and resources. So by appointing Tshombe as Prime Minister, this covered the "rear" of the government under President Kasavubu. This appointment was particularly useful in the Kivu area because Tshombe was a Swahili speaker. He could speak to the people in Swahili. Anyway, Tshombe became Prime Minister. As I said, there was an attack on Bukavu, and the rebels retreated.

All of this happened on the day before our farewell reception. I don't know how many people we had invited, but we needed to order beer and soft drinks from the local brewery. Nobody would go there to pick them up. So the Belgian manager of the brewery and I went up there ourselves, loaded all of the drinks onto a truck, and brought it down to my house. The President of Kivu Province came. I have a picture of him. He was armed. The rebels never did capture Bukavu.

Anyway, just before I left Colonel Mulamba came down. He was probably the outstanding field grade officer in the Congolese National Army. He later became Prime Minister. Colonel Dodd, an American Army officer, also attended. Another American Army colonel came later. We should have added that there was another vice consul at the Consulate, who came later -- a young man at his first post. He was a Swahili speaker. He and Colonel Dodd went out to some place in the tribal area before that attack on Bukavu. We didn't hear from them. However, eventually, they found their way back. Luckily, McFadden, the young vice consul, used his Swahili and got them into the area of the tribe that really dominated the Bukavu area. He knew some members of this tribe, Bashi, which did not participate in the rebellion.

Heather, my wife, was quite unhappy that this was happening just as we were about to leave Bukavu in a time of crisis. The man taking my place was virtually a relative of Heather's.

Q: Who was that?

SCHAUFLE: Dick Matheron. His mother and Heather's mother were very close friends. They had known each other for many years. Dick had been in the Embassy in Leopoldville. When we went to Nairobi, he came out to Bukavu to take over for me for a short period.

Anyway, Dick took over as Consul in Bukavu. They evacuated the post three times. Luckily, I had taken someone's advice and bought a power boat, because the single road going into Rwanda could be closed very easily. However, you could always go out over Lake Kivu, and this is what they used to evacuate the post. Also, not long after I left, the ultimate weapon arrived to battle the rebels, the Cuban pilots in their T-28 aircraft. Obviously, they had control of the air. However, that gets into my next assignment as Congolese desk officer -- although I knew that they were coming, and an advanced group was on the way. The air operations took place after I left.

Q: Who actually were these Cuban pilots that you mentioned? Was this a U.S. Air Force group?

SCHAUFLE: These were Cuban pilots who had taken refuge in the United States. I'm sure that we kept track of all of the former Cuban military people in the United States. When we decided to provide air cover for defense against the rebellion in the eastern Congo, we supplied the T-28 aircraft. The T-28 really was a training type aircraft. We brought the Cuban pilots over and provided the communications equipment because they needed communications with the ground forces, which would be led by Congolese, with the help of the two American colonels. Also, what turned out to be much more important, we had communications with the "white mercenaries" who eventually went down the Congo River to Stanleyville. Mike Hoare was their leader. I didn't know anything about that before I left Bukavu. I learned about that when I got back to Washington. There was talk about recruiting them from South Africa.

Q: So you were in Bukavu just about one year.

SCHAUFLE: Yes.

Q: Before you finish discussing this post, I wondered about your reference to the Congolese National Army. Could you explain a little about what that consisted of? How many years had

passed since the Belgians had moved out of the Congo and before they established this military force? I ask this because of the variety of tribal interests. It makes me wonder how they could put together an effective army if they had to...

SCHAUFLE: Of course, during the Belgian colonial days there was the "Force Publique," the Public Force, which consisted of Congolese and was led by Belgians. They had Congolese non commissioned officers. That became the nucleus of the ANC, the "Armee Nationale Congolaise" or Congolese National Army. Actually, the Congo was much more divided under the Belgians than it has been as an independent country. The Belgians didn't want internal discipline destroyed by fights among different tribes or representatives of different tribes. However, as time went on after independence, the armed forces became more mixed. One of the reasons for the lack of effectiveness on the part of the ANC was that its personnel didn't trust each other. Another reason is that they were not paid. For example, there was a battalion of the ANC up in Bukavu. Money to pay them was supposed to be sent from Leopoldville to Bukavu, but it was always held up along the way. The ANC couldn't be trusted because, in fact, they weren't being paid. They wouldn't fight. However, they did fight for Mulamba, who was, in my experience, the strongest Congolese officer. He could lift them up, organize them, and lead them. But he nearly always had to be on the spot. His influence with the ANC was not transferrable. The ANC was a pitiful army.

On the other hand, let me refer to the "white mercenaries" again. They had Congolese with them, but these Congolese had always been led by whites. They respected the whites. I don't know whether these Congolese ever knew that these "white mercenaries" came from South Africa. Perhaps it didn't make any difference. Those Congolese performed all right because they were well led. However, on their own, they never performed very well. I suspect that's still the case.

Q: Before we go on again, I wonder if you could talk a bit about the local political or government situation, after the Belgians left the Congo.

SCHAUFLE: Well, let's be clear about what the Belgians did and didn't do. At the time of independence there were 13 Congolese university graduates. The Belgians never felt that they had a "civilizing mission," as the French did. They weren't trying to make them into Belgians. So the jobs that were held in government offices by Congolese were pretty much menial, clerical positions. Very few of the Congolese had any great responsibility, unless they happened to be tribal chiefs. In that sense, because they didn't have a Belgian in every tribe, there was always somebody that they would work with. The tribal chiefs would usually "purchase" that allegiance in one way or another.

The Belgian Flemish, who dominated the eastern Congo in particular, had very little respect for the Congolese. In fact, they didn't even want them to learn to speak French or Flemish. The man who rehabilitated our house before we moved into it was fairly typical in this respect. The house had been badly damaged during the uprising in 1961. I saw him beat a couple of the workers, who were speaking to my wife in French, which was the only language that she could use to communicate with them. He beat them and told them that they should talk to him, and he would then talk to my wife.

There wasn't much of a "developmental" psychology, especially among the Flemish. There was among some of the other Belgians, but they were all in Leopoldville. They trained some of the Congolese informally. However, they couldn't get them into colleges, I guess, because that didn't seem to be national Belgian policy. Some of those Congolese college graduates went to college in France, not in Belgium. On the whole, the Congolese had very little of what I would call "background" in modern administration and management.

As it happened, the president of Central Kivu province, who was a Swahili scholar, had a pretty good sense of how to operate within the whole context, although he obviously was going to run into difficulties with people of different tribes. These people were also Swahili speakers, because that was the "lingua franca" of the area. He had fairly good ideas but couldn't control his own ministers. They depended for their positions on their tribal affiliations and whatever money they could get their hands on. It was a very corrupt society. That was true throughout the Congo.

The Belgians trained some Army officers after independence. They brought them to Belgium and gave them training there. Some of them turned out all right. Mobutu, who was the commander of the ANC, was a clerk in the Army. He hadn't fought, or anything like that. He was a "political animal," anyway.

So the Congolese really had less preparation for independence, in that sense, than any other country that I know of in Africa. The national infrastructure of the Congo was so limited. As I say, contact with people from the West and East probably existed but this was not very serious. That's why, when Lumumba escaped from arrest, he headed for his home territory. In the Congo that's always where you're protected. You could find some good people among the Congolese, but they were working under almost impossible circumstances, as we would see it, in terms of organization. There always was a problem of resources. However, the Congolese didn't make trouble for the Europeans in Bukavu.

The people who had plantations, stores, small manufacturing outlets, or the brewery -- technically belonged to some Congolese organization. However, every brewery in the Congo was run by a European. Even automobile repair shops were run by Europeans. There was a German in Bukavu who operated a quinine plantation. That was a big thing. It was not owned by him. It was owned by a German company -- I can't remember which one. It was very fortunate because we were just finding out that "Atabrine," which was used to suppress malarial symptoms, was no longer so effective as it had been during World War II. People had to go back to quinine. This plantation was a very profitable operation while we were there. I don't know what happened to it afterwards.

One thing I will say about the Belgians. They didn't have any depth. For instance, when the French carried out their "civilizing mission," they would have some depth in terms of French nationals. However, the Belgians, at least in the eastern Congo, had no Belgian "depth" in these various organizations. There were just a few of them. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why they learned Swahili.

Q: Could you repeat that point in case we haven't mentioned the extent to which Swahili was used? Would you tell us where Swahili was used as a kind of "lingua franca"?

SCHAUFLE: Swahili is the "lingua franca" of eastern Africa. It is used in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and the eastern Congo. It is less used in Burundi and Rwanda, which had a language unique to themselves, since they came down from the Nile River area. Their language had some relationship to the languages in use up there in the Nile River region. Swahili is not to be disregarded. It is a classical language with a significant literature.

I studied Swahili. You find English words in it and words from other African languages. However, it's the only language that I've ever studied which had not only prefixes and suffixes but "infixes" as well. That is, you put an "infix" in the middle of a word. I could "chat" a little in it, but I couldn't conduct business in it because it is a complicated language. If East Africans and people in the eastern Congo want to be known as learned persons and didn't have other opportunities, they spoke Swahili.

Maybe I should mention that the "lingua franca" in the western Congo is called Lingala. That used to be a mixture of European and other languages. I learned later that, even in Lingala, if you were talking to somebody in it, he would refer to a "train" as a "train" or a "locomotive" as a "locomotive." I'm told by scholars of Lingala that there are Lingala words for those things. I remember that one man told me what one of those words was in Lingala. It must have been about 15 letters long. A "locomotive" became an "engine that was driven by..." Swahili isn't that complicated.

Q: I don't think that I asked how large Bukavu was at the time you were there. What was the major source of income of the people living there?

SCHAUFLE: It's always hard to get reliable population figures, but I would guess that there must have been 15,000 people living in Bukavu when we were there. There may have been more because of the so-called "cites," or areas where the indigenous people lived, which were dotted around the center of the city. I'm not sure that they were always counted in the population figure. Although there were a lot of people from other tribes in Bukavu itself, the city and surrounding area was the territory of the M'Bashi. Each tribe had its "Mwami" or king. The M'Bashi Mwami had a certain amount of power.

Their major sources of income were agriculture and fishing in Lake Kivu. As I said previously, there were no crocodiles in the lake, so fishermen could operate there and were very useful and helpful to the economy. Then they had plantations -- most often owned by Europeans, like the quinine plantation. There was a Jesuit school in Bukavu, which our two sons attended. You have to remember that, before independence, Bukavu was a "hill station" where people came to visit from lowland areas farther West, so there was some semblance of a tourist industry. People still visited Bukavu for that reason, to a certain extent, to get out of the tropical climate. They would stay in Bukavu for a few weeks or months. It seemed very agreeable to them.

ARCHIBALD GORDON MACARTHUR
Program Analyst, USAID
Leopoldville (1963-1967)

Mr. MacArthur was born in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1926 and educated at Harvard and SAIS. He joined USAID in 1963 and served in Zaire(the Congo) and in Abidjan with REDSO. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1999.

Q: What was the situation in the Congo at that time?

MACARTHUR: It was absolutely frightful. It was terrible. There is a whole history of the Congo which I am not going to repeat because it has been documented, but it was fascinating and very insecure. Lumumba had just been killed and there was chaos. What happened was that the Force Publique of Belgium, which was composed mainly of Congolese soldiers, but headed by a white Belgian officer corps, revolted . They had kept the country together. Right after independence, this Force Publique rebelled against the white officers and they went on a rampage . The whole country was in chaos, and it was finally quelled with some 20,000 U.N. troops that went in there. This whole history is a fascinating one because of the U.S. involvement with the U.N. And, of course, the Russians were blocking us. They were calling us imperialists for supporting this effort. So, beyond any thought of development, we were faced with all of these geopolitical problems in the Congo at the time. Now what we were doing in the Congo, in my view, did not make sense unless set against this backdrop of the desire for containment; making sure the country would not go communist.

Q: What were we doing?

MACARTHUR: We were trying to make a nation out of a huge country that had some 400 ethnic groups and many languages; five basic languages, a population that had no university graduates except, when we were there, I always heard the figure to be about five, and I've also heard up to 13. But whatever it was, you could count them on your own hands. So, the Belgians had not trained them. You had a literate population only up to about the sixth grade level, and then nothing after that. The Belgians having left nothing behind, we had nothing to work with. You could go to the ministries, such as the Minister of Public Works, of Finance, whatever and their staffs. You would find Congolese with a sixth grade education who knew nothing. Consequently the United Nations established what they called The Civilian Operations. This was in addition to the military, the Blue Helmets, when we got there; they were all over the place to quell the big rebellion. On the civilian side, the U.N. went in there in storm with some 2,000 civilians to man all of the country's basic operating ministries and functions.

Q: Was this financed by the U.S.?

MACARTHUR: Absolutely by the U.S. and through, of course, the auspices of the United Nations. We were financing the United Nations and the Russians were boycotting it; the Swedes were providing an ambulance, things like that, there were a few tokens, but basically it was a U.S. financed operation. My job there was really fascinating and I was there with some interesting people. Gene Moore was our PL480 man, an old friend of mine, I had known him for years, was a great fellow.

My job was very responsible; I had just arrived. Within a couple of weeks of landing there, they put me on a small Piper Aztec airplane with an engineer by the name of Elliot. He and I traveled up the country, we went up the Congo River as far as Stanleyville (Kisangani) looking at Public Works projects that needed repair. With the rebellion, the bridges had been blown up, water facilities had been ruined, roads were damaged, the place was in chaos. So, I was sent with this engineer to make an assessment of the damage and report it back to the Mission. We flew from Leopoldville to Matadi and followed the Congo river to Coquilhatville (Bandaka) and Stanleyville. All these names were later changed after Mobutu took over. We looked at these projects and interviewed the Public Works officials who were totally incompetent. So how did we handle it? The U.N., as I say, had some 2,000 civilians. They were Haitians, Canadians, anybody who could speak French, got a job there. They filled the jobs of untrained Congolese.

Q: Were they technically trained people?

Yes, they were. For instance, the person we dealt with almost entirely, on anything that had to do with Public Works was a Frenchman by the name of Larcher, working for the U.N. He had built the airport in Tahiti; a young man, very competent. He worked with the Congolese Minister of Public Works, Delvaux. So, anytime you had to contact the Ministry to document or prepare anything, you would go through the formality of talking with the Minister, go through all of the protocol, and then sit down with a technician, and that was Larcher, the Frenchman. Whenever we had correspondence, we would write a letter, attach a copy of the answer. We wrote our own answers. It was an unbelievable situation and my job was to dispense the tons of counterpart funds we had. We had a big PL480 program; we had a commodity import program. Emmet Thomason, was handling our commodity import program where we were importing U.S. raw materials, things like raw plastics, tin plate, stuff like that, to try to keep the Congolese economy going. The local currency generated from those commodity imports was then used for budget support. It went directly into the Congolese budget. On the PL480 side, the food side, the counterparts were U.S. owned and U.S. controlled and we set up a tripartite committee. I was on that committee; it was composed of the U.N., the Congolese, and AID. We met every week and went through a list of projects that we agreed to finance. My job was to keep track of the budget. Larcher, the engineer, would say we are going to need so many millions to build such and such a bridge, and we would approve it, and so it would go.

Q: Who did they use since they were so short on technical skills?

MACARTHUR: They had contractors. For instance, road building was done mainly by Italian contractors. The big company was Parisi; they did an excellent job; they did the road from Stanleyville to Lubutu which Vince Brown and I visited at the time of the tape cutting ceremony. I have a movie of it. Shortly after our visit rebels murdered the nuns at the Catholic mission in Lubutu, captured Stanleyville and held our consul, Mike Hoyt, and others captive for 3 months.

By the time I left the Congo, the regrettable thing was a continued lack of trained cadres. Any trained person who happened to get caught by opposing rebel forces was usually murdered. I left very discouraged; I said I don't see this country going anywhere, for 30, 50 years. There was nothing to build upon.

Q: Were you training any people?

MACARTHUR: Yes, we had a participant training program, a fairly extensive one. We trained a few people and we had a pedagogical institute. We built a teacher training establishment outside Leopoldville and that was recognized as one of the critical things to do. But you don't create a nation in five years. I think that is another big failing; we were impatient and AID is not an in-and-out process. It is a long, long, haul. I don't know what the result of all that training was. I know that the chaos continued to exist in the Congo. Even when we were there, my family was evacuated to Brussels. I stayed back until my home leave. Pierre Mulele was another rebel, almost succeeding in taking over Leopoldville. We had a military mission there with helicopters to evacuate us in case of need and that continued throughout the time we were there. There was continuous rebellion. We had a store of weapons in the Astrid building, the USAID office—barbed wire and oil to block the stairways and baseball bats in case things really got bad.

Q: Any other projects that you recall?

MACARTHUR: We had agricultural projects. We had an agricultural research and training station in two places, in Gemena and up country in Sanga. After I had left, it all reverted to jungle; you couldn't see a thing; it totally disappeared. Most of our projects were in training and public works and then the big commodity import program, the PL480 programs.

Q: How was the distribution of those commodities handled?

MACARTHUR: We would do it through some of the religious missions; for instance, the PL480 commodities would be handled a lot through CRS and others. We would have to rely on some of the Congolese for this but it was pretty tough, the oversight part of it. Regarding the industrial commodities we were importing, there was a nascent industry in the Congo and many of the Belgians were still running the plants, those who had come back. Kasavubu, the President, recognized that he needed some talent in the country. The Belgians had left in one fell swoop after independence in 1960. By 1963 many had come back to run what they had been managing before; small industries. I visited one place where they were making hoes and agricultural tools; importing the iron and forging it right there. So, it was run by the Belgians.

Q: What was our relationship with the government and the U.S. Embassy, what was your sense of what was going on?

MACARTHUR: We were at odds with the Belgians and I would say even with the French. They felt that America was horning into their territory. This was the first U.S. foray into West Africa, historically a French-Belgian domain. One of my jobs, actually my idea, was to further donor coordination, to figure out who was doing what because we had no sense of the totality of the resources going into the Congo. Would it not make sense for us to get together on this? I actually spent a lot of time going to the various Embassies, the French, the British, the Belgian. We were very frank, we said "This is what we are doing, what are you people doing?" Where is the overlap? They were always very suspicious. The Belgians were behind a move to split the Katanga away from the rest of the country. This is today's Shaba province, the rich part of the Congo, the eastern Congo where the copper mines, gold mines, tungsten and other minerals are located. Belgium

supported a Congolese by the name of Tshombe who was totally in the pocket of big Belgian interests. The Union Miniere, the powerful Belgian mining consortium, used Tshombe to incite rebellion and to attempt to secede from the rest of the Congo. We, the U.S. were totally opposed to that. We saw Katanga 's resources as crucial to support the rest of the country; the Congo had to remain intact, we could not let it break up. So, there was this friction.

Q: Where were the French on that issue?

MACARTHUR: The French tended to side with the Belgians on that issue, the business interests. On the other hand, they were afraid that the situation also not get out of hand because they had a former colony right across the river. It was pretty tricky going, there. Finally, there was a change in government in Belgium. Henri Spaak, who was one of the early Belgian premiers, had a much different view of this whole issue and supported the national unification and it became easier to do.

I have many recollections of the Congo. In 1964, Mike Hoyt, who was a young political officer at our mission in Leopoldville, was sent up to Stanleyville to replace John Clingerman, the consul, who was going on home leave. Vince Brown and I had been there probably six weeks before, to look at a road, the Stanleyville-Lubutu Road. Rebels came in and they captured the consulate and took hostages, Mike Hoyt and five other Americans at the consulate there, plus a number of Belgians. They held them hostage for 111 days which caused a huge to do. President Johnson tried to keep the whole thing hushed because Vietnam was going on, he did not want another U.S. expedition to the Congo, reinforcing the image of U.S. imperialism. In addition we had our civil rights problems here. President Johnson did not want the image of Americans going in and beating up on the Africans. It was a very tenuous, tough situation.

Q: What were the rebels after?

MACARTHUR: The rebels were using the hostages as a way to put pressure on the U.S. and Belgium not to support the national government in putting down their own rebellion. They did not want U.S. planes to support the national government, the Kasavubu government. They said, look this battle is between us and the Kasavubu people, not between us and you Belgians and you Americans; stay out of our area.

Q: They wanted to become independent?

MACARTHUR: They wanted to become independent. It was a movement by the followers of the late Lumumba. Lumumba had been a communist supported by the USSR, who had been killed in 1961 and had become a martyr following his unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Kasavubu's central authority. Kasavubu was from Bas-Congo, the lower Congo, and enjoyed the support of the West. It used to be a kingdom of the Congo. It gets very complicated but the Congo is made up of so many ethnic tribes that the tribal warfare, basically, never stopped and so there were splinter groups from among Lumumba's followers in Eastern Congo who were against the Bas Congo represented by Kasavubu. The rebel who was trying to take over, Gebenye by name, came in from the east and incited young people, the Simbas or lions, to revolt against the central government. They were very successful in taking over almost one-third of the eastern part of the Congo. They came all the way across to Stanleyville and captured Mike Hoyt and those people. The hostages, by

then had ballooned to some 800 Belgians, a number were missionaries and they were all held, incarcerated in the jail up there or at times they moved them to the Victoria hotel. They made Mike Hoyt chew the American flag and beat him and the others up. It was a terrible situation.

This history is really quite fascinating on a number of fronts. The State Department and National Security Council formed a Congo task force back at the State Department. Ambassador Godley was in Leopoldville, Ambassador MacArthur and the Belgians were operating from Brussels. This trio of involved people got terribly complicated, how to orchestrate it all. But they finally succeeded, the U.S. providing some fifteen C130 war planes. They picked up Belgian paratroopers, flew to Ascension Island in the Atlantic, refueled, and went into Stanleyville at 6:00 a.m. on November 24, 1964. The rebels were taken by surprise. The Belgian paratroopers immediately captured the airport, cleared it of obstacles, so that the C130s could come in. The Red Berets of the Belgians got word that there was a massacre taking place in downtown Stanleyville, so they rushed down there, where the hostages all had been gathered on the street, guarded by the Simbas, these young kids. Most had spears and machetes, some had rifles. They shot one American, Paul Carlson, and killed him. Mike Hoyt jumped over a wall; he barely escaped with his life. Another American woman was killed; she was cut up and bled to death. There were some 25 to 40 Belgians killed and wounded and our C130s immediately evacuated them down to Leopoldville and took care of them medically. A problem then arose as the Russians at the U.N. were claiming neocolonialism. That made President Johnson very nervous; do we continue with the rescue operation and go to some of the other cities in the Congo where there were other hostages? It was a very difficult situation, it ended up with many more Belgian missionaries being killed in the eastern part. It was horrible. This kind of chaos was with us all the time. By the time I left some of the same bridges that we had paid for with counterpart funds were blown up a second time.

We put a lot of money into that country but there was no maintenance by the host government. The contractors would do a beautiful job of road building only to have roads fall apart from lack of maintenance. It was, really, for an AID program, I can't think of a more difficult one with virtually no results. One wonders what the consequences would have been if one had done nothing. Our fear was that it was going to be a communist country and the Russians would take over. In retrospect, that would have been impossible.

Q: Do you think that was what was so important about this place?

MACARTHUR: I think so, yes. Because when Mobutu took over from Kasavubu (Mobutu was the General of the Army) he took over as virtual dictator and just lined his pockets. He was however in the Western camp. He became a very wealthy man and did nothing to improve the situation at all. Once the Cold War ended we dropped Mobutu like a hot potato. I don't know what we are doing now, I haven't followed up. I suspect we have nothing going on at this point. Kabila is no better than Mobutu.

Q: Were you there when Mobutu took over? What was your understanding of how that took place?

MACARTHUR: Yes. Kasavubu was an old man, called the George Washington of the Congo. He was involved as a young man against the Belgian authorities and at independence in 1960 he

became President and Mobutu was the Army Colonel, later to proclaim himself Marshal. He took over from Kasavubu in a bloodless coup. We were there at the time. Quite simply one day, he pushed him aside, and said I am taking over. Fortunately, he did not cause any bloodshed at the time. He was very nationalistic; he was just not a nation builder. I think the tribal problems continued. Mobutu was not from the Bas-Congo.

Q: Where was he from?

MACARTHUR: He was from further north, up near where the Ubangi river enters into the Congo. As such, he didn't get along with the Bas-Congo people. Whenever you had a government like Kasavubu's all the people in the government were of his tribe. So, Mobutu once in power began to liquidate Bas-Congo people from the government. Under some pretext he accused the Minister of Finance, Emanuel Bamba, who was a revered, very intelligent, well respected individual, on charges of complicity in a plot and then had him hung. We were there, but certainly not to witness the hanging in the main public square. They made a big deal out of it, another example of the constant treachery going on. When a different tribal group came to power the old group would take all their files, all their papers, and you started from scratch; there was no bureaucracy with any continuity. How Mobutu was able to keep the country under his control for so long compared to others was that he was, after all, head of the Army whom he cultivated, gave them all great privileges. He just had the power, with support from the West who saw in him a bulwark against Communism.

Q: He must have had some ability to deal with all of these conflicting tribes?

MACARTHUR: Yes, he was a pretty ruthless man. It would be interesting to know, maybe 10 years after I had left, from some of the other mission directors, what the situation was in dealing with Mobutu directly.

Q: What was the U.S. interest, the Embassy and all during this time?

MACARTHUR: The U.S. interest was entirely in keeping the Russians or the Chinese out. I don't think they had any other interest. There was some trade interest. We were always accused of using our PL480 programs to export wheat and cultivating a taste for bread on the local market, introducing the Congolese to bread whereas before, they had always eaten manioc. This was a way to shore up our agricultural markets. Of course, that is what the French in particular kept thinking we were doing. I think, maybe naively, we really did have a humanitarian interest, at least on the AID side. I really think that. There was a lot of suffering; we did help in the medical area and certainly in the food area. With the AID people I dealt with, I never got the feeling that we had ulterior motives. We were rather myopic in our views. We thought, well okay, you have these people who are backward, uneducated, illiterate, poor, where do you come in to try to better them? I think there was a genuine feeling that that is what we were trying to do.

Q: Any other programs at that time, or when Mobutu came in, was there any change in the program?

MACARTHUR: I don't recall. This was 30 years ago. I don't recall that we changed anything as a result, not on the AID side, but the U.S. had a military mission, called COMISH, Congo mission, which was providing Mobutu with a lot of his hardware and support to keep at bay these rebellions. As I say, I don't think there was a month where rebellions weren't happening. There was one coming in from the east, there was one from the Kasai, from the south, the Kivu Province; Mulele was the rebel who came close to taking over Leopoldville.

One night, my wife and I were in our apartment, we heard this huge explosion and all the lights went out. It was the Mulele rebels who had gotten hold of the power plant, and blew it up. So, there was a lot of nervousness. We were there to help Mobutu quell these various rebellions. Our interest was to minimize the chaos in this country, to keep the country intact as one nation and not let it explode into a number of factions.

Q: How did you find living there?

MACARTHUR: You would have to ask my wife that. I love to travel, I love to see different things; I found it fascinating. I read again Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. He was right on. It is a most perfect description. When I was reading it I said, well that's it; both from the beauty of the country, the heat, it is indescribable. I found it interesting to travel about, to see the people, really exciting, but very, very hard to live. In those days, not like today, they didn't evacuate people for medical reasons unless it was really critical. Two of our children, Herbert and Edith, were born at the Lovanium University Clinic, which was about 15 miles from Leopoldville. When my wife was due, it was night and we had to go through road blocks. You had these Congolese soldiers who held you up at the road and usually they were drunk, with rifles swinging around. They would poke their head in the car, ask where you were going and that kind of thing. It was dangerous. There was no question about it, it was a very dangerous place. You had to be careful. You always identified yourself as an American, because when they would see a white man, they would think you were a Belgian; you played down the fact that you were not really associated with the Belgians. It was better that way.

They jailed our Ambassador because he failed to observe a curfew at one time. There was a lot of house breaking. We lived in apartments, intentionally. The Embassy had offered us a house for a family out in the suburbs, we said in no way. There were gangs that would go to houses and steal everything. Fortunately, we had no deaths, but we had a lot of break-ins and robberies. It was insecure as the dickens and if something happened, you had nobody to call, no police. It gives you a terrible feeling.

Q: You didn't have the Embassy's security?

MACARTHUR: Not much. The only thing you could do is try phoning a marine guard and tell him you had a problem if you could get through on the phone. That was another problem that impeded our work at AID. You could never get hold of people by phone, the Ministry and the government, you would actually have to go there. One thing I forgot we had, which I think was important, was a public safety program. This was in the days before they did away with the program. A lot of people say that the program was terrible and I guess it was implicated in alleged abuses in Latin

America or at least that was the propaganda. But I thought it was a good and sorely needed program in the Congo.

Q: What were they doing in the Congo?

MACARTHUR: Teaching the local police how to be policeman. AID was training them which was a dire need down there. When they closed down our public safety program I thought it was terrible. It was a good program, unfortunately it was tarnished.

Q: How was the hospital where your wife delivered your children?

MACARTHUR: Our pampered youth of today would never accept the conditions under which my wife bore our children. It was at a clinic associated with the University. All the staff was Congolese, all the general nurses. Fortunately, on loan from the German Technical Assistance Program was a gynecologist, a medical doctor from the University of Wurzburg and he was there to train the local people. So, my wife being German got along well with him, he was good and he took care of her. The head nurses were Belgian nuns who were also training the Congolese nurses. So there was a German doctor, and Belgian nuns and fortunately there were no complications. You still had to cope with cockroaches, endemic in Africa, and breeding frogs making a racket outside. We had two children born there, one just five days before Kennedy was assassinated. Gene Moore had one born there too. We had a standing agreement that when the time came, I would accompany him and his wife to the hospital and visa versa, so we went in two cars, for safety reasons, to get to the clinic. But we had no PX, we had to live off the local economy, you couldn't buy anything. I understand that several years after we had left the shops in the Congo were full of everything but when we were there, there was nothing; we used to go to Brazzaville on Saturday morning with our baskets and go shopping. It was quite an experience, jumping aboard the ferry with masses of people to cross the Congo river. We had a hard time when we got there, Vince Brown and Rob West couldn't believe we were coming to the Congo with a baby, because we couldn't get any milk. It was very difficult from that point of view.

Q: Anything else on that experience?

MACARTHUR: Not on the Congo. There are a lot of stories. As I say, it was my first post and quite an introduction and I would say in retrospect that I left it very discouraged as far as any impact we had made there. Maybe if all we can say is that we prevented the country from breaking up totally and having Communist regimes throughout the area, maybe that was a success.

Q: Did you provide a lot of relief assistance?

MACARTHUR: Yes, we provided a lot of relief assistance. We did help people, we prevented them from starving, we helped them medically. What this did to help build up a nation I have my doubts. I have often thought that in this and in many other posts, the NGO, the churches the missionaries, a lot of the Peace Corps did some wonderful things on a micro level. Their small projects really made sense but you could never replicate these to impact on the whole nation. We were always trying to attack things on a large scale to change the country, the nation, and we were always trying to do the difficult things. Other donors were doing visible things with high

propaganda value, the sensational things., stadiums as an extreme example. It is easy to build roads, we certainly did some of that, particularly farm to market roads. We got away from some of that type of infrastructure in my later years, the big road projects, for example. We did the more difficult things, the more intangible things; training people, helping agricultural institutes, these kinds of things that have a long-term payoff but are not very visible. Other donors didn't care to finance them because you couldn't put your label on them easily.

Q: *So, you left there in what year?*

MACARTHUR: The end of 1967. Just to finish up on the Congo, you were mentioning the conditions; it was not a very healthy post so we had to be very careful of bilharzia and malaria, among other tropical diseases. Every time you had a fever, you didn't know if it was something serious or not. It got kind of tricky. We finally got an embassy doctor there. I developed a skin problem on my feet and hands that almost forced my evacuation I was out of commission for a whole month. I had to stay home; I lost all the skin on both feet and hands. I went to the U.N. Indian doctor and he said, "Oh, that is something related to chicken pox." He gave me some creams, but he really didn't know what he was doing. Finally, I was about to be evacuated, my wife was pregnant at the time, and I went again to the Lovanium clinic to see an Italian doctor. He said it was some kind of fungus that I couldn't get rid of. He said, "We can do this once, but we can't do it a second time." He gave me x-rays on feet and hands, just zapped me, and it killed the fungus. But, I had reoccurrence of that years later, it took me 10 years to get rid of it. Even after we came back to the States, I just couldn't get rid of the problem. Finally, it did disappear after some more treatments; it was something the people there called jungle rot.

CHARLOTTE LORIS
Executive Officer, USIS
Leopoldville (1963-1967)

Charlotte Loris joined the USIA in 1950, after having worked in Hawaii at an engineering firm for four years. Her overseas posts included Saigon, Japan, Libya, and Korea. She was interviewed on June 8, 1989 by Max Kraus.

Q: *It was the good fortune of Max Kraus to have met Charlotte Loris because as I wrote in my book, and this is perfectly true, I and none of the USIS officers assigned to the Congo at that time would have survived without Charlotte Loris.*

LORIS: I think it was part of the job to welcome people. When I first arrived there, the local employee, who was a great man, Phil Mahein, met me at the airport. It was 4:00 in the morning. So he took me into town to this kookie hotel, not the big one, which was sort of closed, and I was to go to this man's house for breakfast at 10:00. Now it's 4:00, 4:30, 5:00 in the morning. And I thought, oh. So I go into this funny little room and dump my bag and I walk across the street to this other hotel which had a dining room. And I thought, well, maybe I can have a cup of coffee. Now it's about 5:30 a.m. and dawn, daylight. They don't have any coffee, it's not time yet. I said, what can I have? I had my choice between orange soda pop -- which I absolutely abhor -- or a beer. And I

thought, well, I'm hungry and I'm thirsty. And I'm sitting here by myself. So I thought, well, I'll have a beer. I never had a beer at that hour in the morning before. It was worse than having brandy at the airport with Wendell Blancke. So, I ordered a beer. And I don't get a little beer, they bring out one of these great big Congolese beers in a quart jug.

Q: *Premis?*

LORIS: Premis, yes.

Q: *I mean, it was the standard breakfast drink.*

LORIS: He uncapped it and I drank it, and I drank it all. That was my introduction. I decided after that, anybody that came in I would meet.

Q: *I don't whether it was the orange pop, I don't know whether it was the one that they gave you the choice of, but there was one that was quite popular in the eastern Congo, especially Bukavu, called Spit.*

LORIS: Oh, yes, but we didn't have it. This was just plain old, crappy old orange soda pop.

Q: *The Premis was better.*

LORIS: The Premis was better. But I had many adventures in the Congo, none of which I'm going to tell you. Max has said some in his book, but some of them were great stories. I had four years there. At first I had been reassigned but I made the mistake when I went home. I got malaria and I didn't tell USIA or the State Department. I just went home to California and recovered. Then I came back at the end of home leave and the travel section was checking my leave record. I said, oh, put me down for sick leave, I had malaria. They said, what? You can't go to the Congo. Oh, God. I said, listen, I'm leaving tomorrow. And I really was.

Q: *You mean you were supposed to round trip after -- .*

LORIS: The State Department and USIA did not know that I had had malaria in California, which was --

Q: *But you had been on home leave and you were supposed to go back to the --*

LORIS: The Congo. I had been reassigned. And I loved it and I wanted to go back. So anyway, USIA and everybody else in the State Department, doctors, everybody was on the phone. I felt very important. And they said, well, I could go back but if anything happened they said, "Charlotte, if you go back there and you have any recurrence you send a telegram and we'll pull you out immediately." I did have the bad type of malaria, but being strong, I recovered.

I went back to the Congo and I wanted to stay longer, but after almost another two years they put me on a direct transfer to Korea because they felt I should be in a cold climate.

Q: *That was when you left the Congo, was it in '65, '66?*

LORIS: It was January '67 when I left the Congo and went to Korea.

WILLIAM C. HARROP
Congo Desk, Africa Bureau
Washington, DC (1963)

Principal Officer
Lubumbashi (1966-1968)

Ambassador
Zaire (1988-1991)

Ambassador William C. Harrop was born in Maryland in 1929. He received an A.B. in English Literature from Harvard. Before entering the Foreign Service in 1954, Ambassador Harrop served in the Korean War. In addition to Zaire, he served in Italy, Belgium, Israel, and Australia. Ambassador Harrop was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

Q: *Could you give us a little sense of what you were dealing with?*

HARROP: In the Bureau of African Affairs at that time?

Q: *Yes.*

HARROP: We were dealing with the Katanga secession and how that related to the central government of the Congo, how it related to the Soviet-American competition for influence in Central Africa, and to the role of the UN in peace keeping. There was active intelligence component. Economic questions were of major importance. We had tremendous difficulties with the Belgians, reflected interestingly in bureaucratic friction between the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of European Affairs over policy toward the Congo, toward the United Nations, and toward the Katanga secession (which certainly had major elements of a Belgian hand in it). So it was a fascinating period, and the year and a half I spent there was one of the most interesting periods I can recall.

I went from there to be the middle grade economic officer and deputy to the Economic Counselor in Brussels, and continued to be the person in Brussels following events in the Congo.

Q: *Let's come back to the Washington side. This was a battle royal over Katanga, which was considered the "guts" of the Congo's wealth. It was very much [under the influence of] Union Miniere [Upper Katanga Mining Company]...*

HARROP: Union Miniere, or UMHK.

Q: Which wanted very much to keep this area out of the hands of whatever passed for the central government of the Congo. You mentioned before that you learned how battles are fought. Obviously, our people in the Bureau of European Affairs wanted to keep Belgium happy because it is part of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and all that. From your vantage point, you were watching this battle going on. How did things work out?

HARROP: There were really three different bureaucratic power centers and three different interests. One was, as you described, the European side, the NATO side, the sense that Belgium was an ally of ours in Europe, that Belgium was a kind of proxy for the British and the French in African, or colonial, terms. We had broader and more important American national interests in our relations with Western Europe and our principal allies than we had to any degree in Central Africa.

Then we had the Bureau of African Affairs, which tended to be, I would say, more idealistic, particularly under G. Mennen Williams during the Kennedy Administration. There was a feeling of morality, the importance of democracy and self determination, American responsibility for helping to free subjugated peoples from colonialism, and so forth, as well as deep resentment at what was perceived to be European self-interest manipulation of the tribal frictions that existed in Africa.

The third power center was the newly-created Bureau of International Organization Affairs...

Q: IO.

HARROP: The United Nations was playing a major role in the former Belgian Congo. This role led to the first deployment of blue-helmeted, United Nations forces to try to stop hostilities and actually, so people in IO thought, to end the Katanga secession.

There were these three major centers. The Bureau of International Organization Affairs was under Joe Sisco, who later became a major figure. "Woody" Wallner was his deputy. Then there was Governor [G. Mennen] Williams, who was not, himself, a powerful or effective bureaucratic infighter but who was a stubborn man well supported by some skillful diplomats. On the European side there was a group of experienced and tough Foreign Service Officers who saw policy through their own experience and wanted to defend their understanding of U.S. national interests. So there was much debate and much discussion. There were bitter fights over the wording of cables of instructions going out to the field and a repeated need for the Under Secretary or the Secretary to call the people involved together to try to reconcile differences and see if we couldn't develop a concerted American position on these matters. It was a fascinating time, my first of many experiences with efforts to resolve deep policy differences within the U.S. Government.

Q: Did you subscribe to the concept of a unified Congo at the time?

HARROP: Yes, I did. Whether this was a result of my coming under the influence of the culture that I was in -- "standing where you sit" -- or whether it was by intellectual analysis, I don't know. I was impressed, even on that first exposure to Africa, by the interesting argument that the actual, ethnic makeup of that continent is so jumbled that, unless you stay with the national boundaries

established almost haphazardly for quite irrelevant reasons, you're going to be in for chaos. You have to defend those borders. I found that a rather persuasive argument. If the Katanga secession had succeeded, there would have been no end to secessions elsewhere.

Q: We went through somewhat the same thing with Biafra. You were talking about our basic policy of considering the chaos which would ensue if we let Africa break down. Was this view pretty well agreed to by those in the Bureau of African Affairs at that time?

HARROP: I think so. It became even more of a doctrine in subsequent years. You mentioned the Biafra case -- and, of course, there have been others. I don't think that one should regard the Eritrea situation in quite the same terms, since that had been a separate, artificial combination [of territory] arranged by the Italians. However, the feeling right along, and I believe well founded, is that if you once let Africa begin to reorganize itself along ethnic lines -- and there will always be a tendency to do that -- it will be hard to retain any effective policy.

Q: Did you find yourself sort of "nose to nose" with people at your particular level in the Bureau of European Affairs?

HARROP: Yes, although I did not have enough seniority to be in the real struggles. The working level fellow in the Bureau of European Affairs who was the Director for the Benelux countries [Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg] was Bob Beaudry. He subsequently became a very good friend of mine -- in fact, he became Political Counselor in [the Embassy in] Brussels a year or two later when I became deputy to the Economic Counselor there. He and his wife are good friends of ours to this day. But there was a heavy ill feeling at the time in the Department.

There was a sense that there was a lot at stake. The Congo was the focus of world attention at the time, the stage of the Cold War. The United Nations was absolutely devoted to this question. Dag Hammarskjold [late secretary general of the UN] met his death, flying out there. We arranged American support for the transportation of United Nations troops. There was a big American investment in terms of political capital and funds. President Kennedy was personally interested in the whole subject.

Q: Looking at it from the economic side, how did you see the economics?

HARROP: The focus at that time was so much upon the [Katanga] secession [issue] that my work was mainly to do with the economics of Katanga, how Katanga would survive, how the central government would be able to survive without the resources of Katanga, which was the great center of the copper industry. There was also the major issue of what was known as the "Congo portfolio." Under Belgian colonial rule there was a huge portfolio worth well over \$1.0 billion of equity in many companies engaged in mining, agriculture, commerce. The most important investments included diamond, copper, cobalt, gold and tin mining companies operating in the Congo and marketing Congolese products outside. The question was under what terms would the new, central government of the Congo obtain the rights to this major portfolio of assets. It was a huge struggle and, of course, a lot of the assets were in Katanga under Katangan authority. There were several formulas put together for the strangulation of Katanga economically as well as

politically and militarily, to force them back into the country. In the end, of course, those [strategies] succeeded.

It was a great political problem for the United States because the central government, at least under [Patrice] Lumumba, before I got there, was seen as being to the "Left," heavily supported by the Soviets (albeit elected). It became a kind of a political Left-Right struggle, among other things. We saw a challenge to try to encourage a government in Leopoldville which was compatible with our views and with which we could work in trying to put down the [Katanga] secession and reunify the country. This brought us into inescapable confrontation with the Belgians, supported generally by the Europeans, who were "winking" at the [Katanga] secession.

Q: Then you found yourself assigned to the camp of the "enemy" in a way.

HARROP: Well, I didn't see it in those terms. I was still following these issues. In fact, it was while I was in Brussels that we had a visit from Governor Harriman, who was then Under Secretary for Political Affairs, or Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs. That [visit] involved organizing the major exercise that was called "Dragon Rouge" [Red Dragon], using U.S. C-130 [aircraft] to send Belgian forces to Stanleyville to rescue more than 100 hostages there, including the American Consul. What was his name? Hoyt, Michael Hoyt.

Q: You went out to Brussels in 1963. You were basically the "African" man in the Economic Section [of the Embassy]?

HARROP: No, I did more than that. I dealt with Belgian national accounts and I did a good deal of commercial work and followed Belgian economic relations with the United States and the EC. I was the number two man in a three-man Economic Section.

Q: Who was the Economic Counselor?

HARROP: Chris Petrow, who later became Economic Minister in the Embassy in Paris and Director of Mexican Affairs in Washington.

Q: You mentioned that you had never taken any economics courses when you were in college. Did this come up to haunt you at all or did you find that economics reporting and the work we did really didn't require that type of background?

HARROP: I would have been better served if I had had some basic economics. I took one economics course when I was in graduate school, when I thought I might be going into the Foreign Service. However, I regarded economics then as a specious discipline -- and still do, to some extent. I believe there is limited understanding of economic forces in the world. I took an 11-week "cram course" [in preparation for the Foreign Service examination], in which economics played a very small part. That was before I took the one course in graduate school. I got a grade of 88, or something like that, in the economics part of the Foreign Service exam -- higher than I received on subjects that I knew much more about. That persuaded me that economics was something of an artificial discipline, that by learning a little terminology one could pass as an "economist." I think that it would have helped if I had known more about economic definitions. The language of

economics would have helped me, particularly in doing the national accounts work in Belgium. That was fairly sophisticated work. I had some difficulty with it. However, on the whole, I think that the work on economics which you do in the Foreign Service up until recently -- it's changing now -- did not require an academic, economics background.

Q: Did you get a different perspective or did you find yourself the "African man" sitting in a sort of hostile field? Particularly coming from where you had been, in the Bureau of African Affairs.

HARROP: There was no sense of that, really. I may have overstated the degree of bureaucratic hostility. There had been tempers that flared. There had been some real feelings and fights. People were accused of disingenuous modification of language in cables. It had been heated at times, but not to the extent that I might have had any feeling of being in the "enemy camp" when I went to Brussels.

Q: I understand, but, after all, this is how issues are thrashed out. The Foreign Service has a tendency of trying to "smooth them over." Once in a while they don't get smoothed over. Did you see the Katanga issue from a different perspective when you were in the Embassy in Brussels?

HARROP: No, I don't think so. Several things occurred when I got to Brussels which did not lead to a change in my viewpoint. One was a confirmation of the cynicism of the Belgian financial interests in their whole relationship to the politics of Africa. I had a sense almost of horror when I realized that. The Belgian colonial system was the most inhumane and selfish colonial regime of any in the world. It was an appalling situation, to which most Belgian participants were able to close their eyes.

Q: Like "The Heart of Darkness."

HARROP: Yes, it was really appalling. So that feeling was underlined and confirmed in Belgium. Also, however, I developed a much better understanding of the way in which Belgians saw Africa and rather loved Africa. There was a real difference. The French, who had the most colonies and probably the largest presence in Africa, tended to go there for short periods of time. They still regarded themselves as citizens of Metropolitan France. They went to live there [in Africa] for a time and then returned [to France]. The Belgians also took a relatively short term view of Africa -- even more than the French. Most of the Belgians did not stay in Africa for any length of time. There always was a certain number that set out roots, but, on the whole, they would go to Africa, establish plantations, work in the mines or something else, frequently remain for most of their lives, and then return home. The British were very different. The British really had become Kenyans and Rhodesians. Of course, those parts of Africa have climates which are most attractive to people from the temperate zones. But the British attitude was very different. I think that the Belgian sense of impatience with the Africans was more marked. There was almost no effort in the Congo to bring the Africans into Belgian or European culture and society at all. Nor was there really an effort to develop the tools and machinery of government, as the British so emphatically did with their police forces, their judicial systems, and their administrative schools in all of their colonies.

The French really tried to make the Africans culturally French. They emphasized French culture, language and French law. There was a lot of integration under the French, less so with the British, and almost none at all with the Belgians. The Belgians, in my view, were the most paternalistic and, therefore, the most patronizing.

Q: Did you get any feel as to why the Belgians were so different?

HARROP: Well, I think it's partly the fact that Belgium is such a small country. A lot is explained by that. They don't think of themselves as a distinct culture or civilization, as the French or British do. The French and the Flemish languages are not "their" languages. It's a quite different psychology under which they live. They don't think of themselves as large enough or important enough to have that sort of influence, although, in fact, in many ways, the [Belgian] Congo was the largest and richest of all the European colonies in Africa.

Q: Your Ambassador [in Belgium] for most of the time you were there was Douglas MacArthur II.

HARROP: In Brussels, yes. But Ridgway Knight was also Ambassador for part of the time. Ambassador MacArthur was there for about a year and a half, and Knight, about a year and a half. I guess it was about half and half.

Q: What was your impression of Ambassador MacArthur?

HARROP: He was a man of extraordinary personal energy, dynamism, drive, forcefulness, and ambition. I would say that he was a man without the "ears" he might have had. He was not a sensitive person. That was a case in which a Diplomat's wife was really a liability to him because of her very erratic behavior.

Q: She was one of the well-known "dragons" of the Foreign Service.

HARROP: Well, I could tell you anecdotes about that, but there's no particular reason to repeat them. Some really extraordinary things happened to us there [in Brussels]. However, I did feel that Ambassador MacArthur was an accomplished professional diplomat. I remember, in particular, one incident in his office when we were trying to work out something which had to do with the Congo. We were at odds with the Belgians on an issue there, as we usually were, since, I would say, the world view of the Bureau of African Affairs was the one that prevailed generally in the end over the views of the Bureaus of European Affairs. We found ourselves increasingly in confrontation with the former colonial powers.

We were working out a way to express to the Belgians that we simply did not agree at all with their point of view and wanted to insist on its being changed. I remember watching and listening in great admiration as Ambassador Douglas MacArthur dictated a memorandum to Foreign Minister Spaak. This was diplomacy in its purest form: language which simply and completely rejected what the Belgians were trying to achieve, but with such grace that you couldn't say that here he was contradicting them, or there, he's thrown it back in their face. Not at all. It was a masterful draft. I felt that I had learned a great deal that afternoon.

Q: Then you finally got yourself off to Africa.

HARROP: Well, I visited there because I was following African affairs. At that time the Department of State had greater resources [for travel] than it has now. To make such a trip would be almost out of the question now. I was able to get official orders and spend about 15 days in the [ex-Belgian] Congo, where I had never been, to meet some of the people there and to see at first hand some of the economic and political questions I was following [at the Embassy] in Brussels. I stopped off and saw Ambassador Godley, who was then in Leopoldville. I had worked for him during my last months in Washington. I then went out to Lubumbashi and saw...

Q: Lubumbashi is the former...

HARROP: It was still Elisabethville at the time. I stayed with the Consul there, an old friend of mine, Arthur Tienken. Then I returned to Kinshasa to visit Ambassador Godley again. Godley invited General Mobutu to breakfast, and I first met him there. It was an interesting experience. I also met others. Moise Tshombe, former Prime Minister of separate Katanga, strangely enough, now Prime Minister of the Congo itself. He later, of course, was captured and exiled. Before I left, Ambassador Godley said, "Why don't you come down here follow to Tienken as Principal Officer in Elisabethville?" I must say, this possibility hadn't occurred to me, but it appealed right away. I said, "Sure, I'd like to."

Q: You went to Elisabethville in...

HARROP: 1966. I spent three years in Brussels, 1963-66, and then two years in Elisabethville, whose name was changed to Lubumbashi just as I arrived. It was a tumultuous period. We had a Consulate of about 15 people altogether, including a small military advisory sub-mission under the military mission in Leopoldville. It was a very difficult time. There were a couple of "cooked-up" invasions of mercenaries from Angola. There was a mercenary "rebellion" against the central government of the Congo, and periods of violence and harsh repression in Lubumbashi.

Q: These all show the fine hand of Belgian...

HARROP: No, not really. It was not entirely clear. The mercenaries coming up from Angola must have had public or private Belgian or other European backing, but it was becoming a very complex pattern by that time. Mobutu acceded to power while we were there and has been in office ever since. It was very dangerous for a time. The Second Paracommando Battalion from Leopoldville was sent down to discipline Katanga. The central government was always afraid of a renewed effort at secession by the regional ethnic groups, leaving aside anything that the Belgians might attempt. I don't want to leave the impression that the Katanga secession was a Belgian operation; the Belgians went along with, winked at, and somewhat supported an initiative that was going to happen anyway because of the tribal mix of the Congo. The Lunda tribe, of which Tshombe was the leader, was probably going to do that. And the central government were always afraid that it was going to happen again -- they still are, to this day. So they [the central government] sent this very rough group down, armed with the most modern weapons from the Fabrique Nationale de

Belgique [Belgian National Arms Factory] and just wrought havoc in Katanga, which became a perilous place to be. My family very narrowly escaped being shot in our own house.

Q: How did that happen?

HARROP: The Governor of Katanga at the time was a vicious villain named John Foster Manzikala, named after John Foster Dulles, amazingly. He came from a Presbyterian family. Wasn't the Dulles family -- I'm pretty sure that they were Presbyterians. Anyhow, this Manzikala, who was really unbalanced -- a bloodthirsty, cruel man -- declared a curfew for whites ("Europeans"). Furthermore, they could not have any lights on in their houses. There were several thousand Europeans living in the area at the time. So with this wild, heavily armed, and primitive battalion of paracommandos there, all of the white residents of Katanga were cowering in their houses with their lights out at night, hearing gunfire all over town with undisciplined soldiers parading around. A group of them, drunken and menacing, came walking up our driveway toward our house. These fellows were displaying their guns. We were just sitting there in the dark, looking out the window at them. I had a pistol, though I don't know whether I wanted to use it or not. They came up, drunk as lords, rolling around, brandishing their weapons. Then they decided for the better and walked away again. I think we certainly would have been dead if they had entered the house.

On another occasion, a night or two before that, one of our younger sons and I were out in the backyard. We heard the thud of a shell which landed a few feet away in our garden, a dud miraculously. It was an absolutely frightening experience.

This was a very, very awkward period. At one time a curfew was set from Leopoldville for a certain hour. The country is so large that there is a time difference between the East, where Lubumbashi is, and Leopoldville. So there was a knot of Belgians, Italians, and Greeks in a cafe about half an hour before the curfew was to begin. The security forces, the Army, thought that the curfew should begin according to local time, not Kinshasa time. So they picked these Europeans up, put them in a truck, and took them into the country and shot them. About eight people were just killed, which created a near panic. We evacuated our wives and children and most of the staff for a time and sent them down to Zambia. My wife and children stayed with the Edmondson's -- Bill Edmondson, who was then Deputy Chief of Mission in Zambia, and later Ambassador to South Africa and my Deputy when I was Inspector General.

Q: Here you were, chief of mission in a place where you've got...

HARROP: Principal Officer.

Q: Principal Officer. In this chaotic situation, what did you do? How did you operate?

HARROP: The United States is always a very important country, and particularly so in Zaire because of the role it played there. I was able to stand up to Governor Manzikala and got him to cancel the curfew for Europeans. I became kind of a folk hero to the Belgians and [other] Europeans there because they viewed me as the man who had been able to relieve them of some of their greatest concerns. We could do things like that because we were important to the Zairians.

Mobutu has always behaved as if the support of the United States was crucial. In recent years I've come to the conclusion that the United States was never as important to the politics of Zaire as he [Mobutu] said we were, whether he believed it or not, or as we thought we were. But that is a separate issue.

We also had C-130's, large transport aircraft, in Leopoldville. I'd arranged to have them come down to Katanga for a show of force during the period of greatest tension. They flew in. I remember driving out to the airport with Governor Manzikala and the chief of security for Katanga province, Major Mika. There was a dramatic incident on the way. It was night, and our car was stopped at a roadblock. The Governor decided a soldier was not sufficiently respectful to him. We were in his blue Mercedes-Benz. He stopped when challenged but would not continue until the soldier was taken out and beaten virtually to a pulp before him. Then we were able to proceed to the airport. The man at the roadblock had been instructed to stop all vehicles. Manzikala had driven up, and all the soldier could see were headlights coming toward him. He'd stepped out with his gun and said, "Stop!" Manzikala barked, "You're talking to the Governor of your province and you're going to regret that." Anyway, it was a great pleasure for me to hear those American planes overhead and see our soldiers jump out and take positions around their aircraft. It was a little show of force which served our purposes tremendously at that dangerous moment.

Q: Were there any United Nations troops down there [in Elisabethville] at that time?

HARROP: No. That period was all over. The United Nations presence had ended in 1962.

Q: I've conducted a fairly long interview which actually hasn't been completed yet with Terry McNamara -- about his time in the Congo. How about your relations with the Embassy? Were they supportive? Here you were in a very difficult situation.

HARROP: The Embassy provided full support. Ambassador Mac Godley's relationship with Mobutu was complex and difficult, as all ambassadors' [relationships with Mobutu] have been, including my own twenty years later. In late 1966 we had a particularly bad day and night in Katanga. It looked as though the central government's control might finally be dissolving, and the people might be rising up against the central government forces there.

I received an IMMEDIATE, NIACT [Night Action] cable from Ambassador Godley asking me please to go out and take a look around town. Mobutu was begging Ambassador Godley to let him know what was happening in Katanga. So I did. I was rather nervous, but drove around town to assess the security situation. In fact, it was rather quiet. I went back [to the Consulate] and prepared a report for Ambassador Godley to share with Mobutu. This was sent under difficult circumstances. My only communications person was a superb worker -- in fact, I was able subsequently to get him a double promotion. He had been out that night at a big beer party and was drunk. I had to call him back in -- it was a Sunday night, I think -- to prepare the message. He had the most terrible time with the old-fashioned, encryption system, punching out the messages. He was just drinking coffee, perspiring, and in agony over it. He had had no reason to expect that he would be coming in, but he shouldn't have taken on as much alcohol as he did.

Anyway, we finally got this message out. Godley went to reassure Mobutu that the situation was resolved. But then, within a few weeks of that time, Godley, under instructions, went in to put some new pressure on Mobutu. The lot of the American Ambassador's job is to put pressure on Mobutu about human rights and corruption issues, economic policy, UN votes and any of hundreds of other matters. Although it was never so announced publicly, Godley was expelled by Mobutu. Godley radioed me to say, "I'm leaving. I wanted to let you know that. Carry on." Then the chargé d'affaires for a long time after that was Robert O. Blake. Godley was finally replaced -- we allowed Mobutu to stew a bit, as we did later when he expelled Dean Hinton -- by Bob McBride, who proved a very uncomfortable -- I would say very unhappy -- Ambassador to Zaire. He'd always worked in Europe. His last three jobs had been as Director of Western European Affairs, Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission in Madrid, and Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission in Paris. The job was a grueling shock for him.

Q: When you left Lubumbashi, what did you feel about the direction of and all of that? This was your first real exposure to it on the ground. Certainly, it was a very difficult time.

HARROP: I felt that was in for extended crises. By that time Katanga had been renamed Shaba by Mobutu. Whether Shaba was going to remain within was unclear. While I was there [in Lubumbashi], the Union Minière was nationalized and renamed "Gecamines" although the Belgian engineers and administrators continued to manage the company, many now under contract to the central government. Their numbers were dwindling and their authority was circumscribed. Whether they were going to be able to continue [to work there] was unclear. In fact, no one really thought the mines could function for long. That picture has become more difficult over the years, with corruption becoming absolutely monumental, although for 25 years the mines kept operating and exports continued. Mobutu has been simply stealing money from Gecamines all the time, tens of millions of dollars a year. The situation has gotten worse, year by year. As of 1993 the company is hardly operating at all.

Q: How did you feel about Mobutu, as you saw it at that time? Was he considered to be the "hope" of...

HARROP: Well, he was the "hope," in the sense that he was the only person strong enough to unify the country, after a fashion, and keep the Army behind him. He appeared to be the most skillful and the most forceful politician, but it would never have occurred to me that he would last for 25 years more -- almost 30 years now. I never would have thought that. It seemed most unlikely, the history of political turmoil in that country in the eight years since its independence, the continual shuffling leaders, the insurgencies, assassinations and bloodshed had to have its impact. Mobutu's mastery of the political system of his country has been a phenomenon I would not have been able to predict.

Q: When did you go to Zaire?

HARROP: I went to Zaire in January, 1988.

Q: What was the situation in Zaire at that time?

HARROP: The economy was declining. It had not been doing well for a long time, under the failing leadership of President Mobutu. The copper market was weak at the time, copper being the major foreign exchange resource of Zaire. This was not helpful. Human rights problems were very serious in Zaire, as they had been for a generation. The Angolan insurgency was continuing. It was very active, and there was a major level of American support for one of the protagonists -- Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA. We had a substantial development assistance program in Zaire. We had a large mission, 150 people, of whom the largest single component was AID people. We had a major Peace Corps presence. It had come down from 300 to just under 200 volunteers because of a typical confrontation with President Mobutu, who had chosen to use the Peace Corps as a bargaining chip. It was a country with a deteriorating infrastructure. Zaire potentially could be extremely rich, since it has the most extensive natural resources. About 15-16 percent of the world's hydroelectric power potential is in the Zaire (Congo) River. There is excellent rainfall; excellent arable land; major mineral resources, including 65 percent of the world's industrial diamonds, as well as gem diamonds; 8 percent of the world's copper; 65 percent of the world's cobalt. There is enough oil for the country to be self-sufficient. It has wonderful, natural communications through the waterways. You could say that it is at the same time a country of breathtaking potential and one that is on its back, economically. It was then (and is even more now) in pitiful condition.

Q: I notice that you didn't talk about the political situation. Was there a political situation to refer to?

HARROP: General Mobutu dominated the politics of Zaire. There were always efforts -- part ethnically and part ideologically based -- to oppose him, to organize a more democratic system, or to assemble an opposition. However, by his genius for ethnic manipulation and utilization of the military he was able to contain the situation pretty well. But conditions -- both absolutely and from his point of view -- were troublesome and getting worse.

Q: What was our feeling, then, about Zaire? Here is a country with great economic resources, under an inept ruler who was nonetheless able to stay in power. But what about the people? Was there an educated group that, given the right leadership, could actually do something or were we really talking about a country that would need almost an "earthquake" to...

HARROP: The people of Zaire, as a group, are remarkably docile. This is an odd thing to say about the political situation, I suppose. However, the Zairians seem willing to absorb all kinds of abuse and hardship. They are essentially peaceful people. Mobutu has exploited these qualities to a fair degree. They have tolerated such privation, maladministration, and selfish exploitation from him without rising up that it's become a habit. Zaire may be one of the worse examples of this phenomenon in Africa, although I would not say much the worst. In Nigeria, Kenya, or other major countries, corruption has become a cultural reality -- political power corruption as well as money corruption. It seems difficult to develop a decent regime, a true opposition, or a sense of public spirit or national consciousness that would stand up to cynical, greedy leadership. This is because the opponents to the regime, unhappily, seem to become, over time, more motivated to get their hands on the levers of power, money, and spoils than to better the welfare of their fellow

countrymen. This is a sad African reality, to what extent created by the failures of colonialism I am not sure.

Q: Were there groups within Zaire that one would look to -- perhaps the entrepreneurial class? I'm not an African expert but I've heard about the Ibo's of Nigeria and people in the Ivory Coast. There are certain groups...

HARROP: It is true that there are ethnic groups in much of Africa which are thought of as being more entrepreneurial and more naturally adept at business or trade and commerce than others. One particular group or tribe from the central southern area of Zaire, the Kasai Baluba, in fact have been the heart of the opposition to Mobutu. A man named Tshisekedi, a leader of the Baluba people and a very courageous man, openly opposed Mobutu and was in and out of jail, over and over again. He tried to run against Mobutu and tried to arrange for elections. He actually acted as a prime minister for a time, during the past two years and is thus, again now. But he also is seen by Zairians generally, sadly enough, more as a Baluba than as a national leader.

Q: What about the Zairian Army?

HARROP: The Army is an implement which is used very much by Mobutu, himself a former Army officer and still commander-in-chief of the Army. He is an Army general as well as president of the country. He has shown as much skill in managing the Army as he has in managing ethnic politics. The two are combined, really. The principal officers of the Army tend to be from his own ethnic group, as do the heads of the intelligence system, the judiciary, the gendarmerie, and other major leaders. Despite difficulty in assembling enough pay for the military, they are the first in line when resources are available. He is able to keep their loyalty, more or less. He has problems with military units from time to time in different regions, but I think that his success, despite all odds, and his staying power over the last few years have certainly been due, as much as anything else, to his use of the military and their undoubted loyalty to him.

Q: So you were going out there in January, 1988? Particularly with Senator Helms to delay your departure, you had plenty of time to hone our policy toward Zaire. What did you go out with? What were American interests and what were you trying to do?

HARROP: We had a number of interests. The Cold War was still a major determinant, spoken or unspoken, of our policy there. I think that, looking back, historians are going to say, "How could the United States have been wedded to such a dictator for so long because there was a confrontation with the Soviet Union, a consideration which, in the end, proved specious?" But that was the situation. We did feel that he [Mobutu] was very useful. I say that he was a genius at manipulating the ethnic, military, and regional politics of his country. He was also a genius at manipulating the United States of America. Operating between and among the United States, France, and Belgium, and between and among the [U.S.] National Security Council, the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of Defense, he showed extraordinary political astuteness.

If we needed African support or help on issues before the UN, General Mobutu was always there. Our relationship was by no means just a one-way street. For instance, if there were a vote in the

Security Council about the exclusion of Israel from some body, or if we needed support in the Security Council to do with Korea, Puerto Rico, or whatever the classic issues of the day were, we could always count on President Mobutu to come, front and center, to cast Zaire's vote in favor of the American position. This comportment tends to develop a certain loyalty on the part of American administrations.

I was instructed to and did work hard on human rights issues, forever going in and complaining about people being in jail. We actually went to visit Zairian political detainees in jail on several occasions, a gross violation, I suppose, of diplomatic norms.

Q: Would these be Zairians?

HARROP: Zairian citizens, yes -- the opposition people who were incarcerated, beaten, mistreated, and all the rest. It was all true. It was a bad situation. We spent a good deal of time on that.

Then we were also interested in economic development and in the welfare of the Zairian people, and a large part of my day as Ambassador was spent supporting World Bank and IMF recommendations, pressing to free the economy.

However, as far as Mobutu was concerned, one of the main sources of leverage which he so cleverly used with the United States was cooperation on the Angola situation, which had become important to us in Cold War and political terms. It was essential for us to have access to Angola. And Zaire has a border with Angola over 1,000 miles long. Mobutu fully cooperated with the United States on that issue, at some little risk to his own country. That was another matter on which he was able to nurture his relationship with us. So there were a lot of reasons why the United States embraced this extraordinary, authoritarian, selfish, dictator. But these were the facts and that was the way we operated.

My own relationship with him was difficult. I was forever engaged in applying pressure on him to improve his record on human rights and the management of the Zairian economy. I regularly pressed him to accede to recommendations on the reform of the Zairian economy made by the International Monetary Fund, the OECD [Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development], and ourselves, in order to justify a continuation of economic support. These issues were not easy to handle, and the need to raise them regularly made the Ambassador's role in Zaire a very hard one. I was in repeated confrontation with President Mobutu at the same time that the United States Ambassador was probably the most important foreigner with whom he dealt.

Q: What was your evaluation of him? Was there somebody behind him, such as an advisor or advisors, or was he pretty much a one-man show?

HARROP: There were certainly advisors with him -- usually closely related ethnic brothers or colleagues. However, he was by far the predominant person. He had been in charge of the country since I had been there before, in 1965, when he acceded to power. He's been in power ever since. The period we have been discussing began in 1988 when he had been top dog already for about 23 years. He had learned a great deal about the role of a leader. He operated as a traditional, tribal

chief of the whole country, as well as a political president. He abused the country's treasury mercilessly to obtain money. He was personally dominant. Certainly, he wasn't anyone's "tool". Zairians regarded him with great fear and great respect. He was the decision maker but at once corrupt and self-serving beyond description.

Q: Was it with sort of a "sigh" that you would go to see him? It sounds as if you were asked by the Department of State and the U. S. Government, as well as what your job required, to go in and keep telling him to "clean up his act" or go in with a request to support this or that.

HARROP: That's right. Often the two would be almost simultaneous. [Laughter] He knew that. We were always asking him for things -- asking him for his vote, asking him to show leadership, to extend his neck politically for our benefit. In fact, when problems occurred in Chad, he would send his troops up there to support the American point of view. And then come to us to meet the cost of sending the troops. It was an awkward and difficult relationship. Strangely, I came to enjoy meeting with the man. I was fascinated by his skills and his absolutely amoral cunning. But it was a difficult assignment, distasteful to seek cooperation from a leader who treated his own people with such disdain.

The domestic political situation [in Zaire] was unraveling rapidly. There were demands for democracy. He was under a great deal of pressure as the economy came apart, particularly after 1990, with the breakdown in Eastern Europe, when there was a call for democracy everywhere. It was clear that the "Cold War" elements in our relationship were going to become much less important. The winds of democracy were sweeping across the whole world. He had to respond to them -- had to feel them. Things became very, very tense in Zaire after 1990.

I was one of those who underestimated Mobutu's staying power. During the last year and a half of my time there I had become quite frustrated because I could not get much of an ear in Washington for repeated recommendations that we disassociate ourselves from this man. I was convinced that it was not in our interest any longer to be so closely identified with him. I thought that we should not give him the kind of American support he had been getting. He used his American connection with great skill in domestic politics. The view he cultivated was, "You can't dispense with Mobutu. He's the American man." I wanted to get that view set aside but could not get cooperation at home for all of the reasons that I mentioned. Plus, I guess, another argument that was most commonly voiced in Washington. For instance, I put into our "Goals and Objectives Plan" for the following year, 1991: Primary Objective - Gradual disassociation from Mobutu. This came back crossed out, with the comment, "We can't do that, be serious. It's out of the question."

The feeling in Washington -- and this was finally articulated fairly clearly by the National Security Council and people near the top levels of the Department of State -- was that you don't lightly work to get rid of a leader without knowing who's going to replace him, particularly in a volatile situation. Mobutu was the devil that we knew, and so forth. Washington would challenge me to specify what would come after Mobutu. My answer would be that there were several possible formulations and several competent leaders who could step in. I could not predict which would prevail. I didn't know. But any juxtaposition of possibilities and people would be preferable, both for us and for Zaire, to the present situation. So therefore we should stop behaving in a way which helped to keep him in power. This analysis was not marketable in Washington.

Q: This involves both the Department and the Embassy and may be classified. What was the role of the CIA? Was this a CIA country?

HARROP: No, I believe that the role of the CIA can be exaggerated. The CIA historically had a long record of cooperation with the government of Zaire. CIA personnel had played a role in the early days of Patrice Lumumba, when the Congo was truly the cockpit of the Cold War. It was the first place where UN troops were deployed, in the early 1960's, during the Kennedy administration. This was where [then UN Secretary General] Dag Hammarskjold died in a plane accident in Zambia, traveling to a meeting in Zaire, or, rather, the Congo at the time. The CIA then -- in defense of American interests -- had played a major role in Zaire. CIA officers had formed bonds with the government and the power structure of the time. CIA officers continued to be significant "players" throughout the next 25 years, including the time when I was there. In fact, Mobutu liked it that way. It served his interest to underline our strategic and security cooperation, so he worked to maintain links with the American intelligence and defense communities as well as the State Department.

During my time as Ambassador the Central Intelligence Agency performed in a competent and responsible way, always in consultation with me, always ready to take policy guidance from the political side of the U.S. Government. The CIA has been badly maligned in Zaire and in some other places for doing its job to the best of its ability. I found the CIA to be a capable arm available to support me when I needed it, and a precious resource for advice and contacts.

Q: It seems clear that, as far as Washington was concerned, Mobutu was getting to be a heavier and heavier burden -- as seen in media and other reporting. The linchpin that was keeping him useful to us was the Cold War. Was it simply pragmatists in the NSC and the Department of State who wanted to keep up our relationship with him, or what was it? Why couldn't we figure out a way to begin to disassociate ourselves from him?

HARROP: There were several things. There's always an inertia in policy, a reluctance to take risky initiatives or sometimes any initiatives at all. "If it ain't broke..." One hears the plea of don't disturb a political system when what you may be creating is chaos -- more chaos than you have already, and you don't know who's going to replace him. It could become worse, the argument runs. You at least have influence in the present system, and you may not have some influence over what replaces it. Some people, I'm sorry to say, said, "Look, we do have certain obligations to this man who has cooperated with us over and over again, whatever you may think of him morally."

Furthermore, there was another significant element which some in Washington may have understood better than I did. I did not sufficiently appreciate the fact that our influence in Zaire, despite all appearances was rather limited. Just before I left Zaire, which was in May, 1991 -- I can't recall exactly -- I did a kind of valedictory, confidential report summing up my time there, my predictions of what was going to happen, and my recommendations for future policy. I had been on the scene three and one-half years. I reiterated very strongly that we must disassociate ourselves from Mobutu. I made it clear that, in my view, Mobutu was not going to last much longer. I think that I predicted he could last, given present internal and international pressures, between seven and 10 months longer. I wrote that the situation was falling apart around him, he had destroyed his

country, people were becoming hungry, and the opposition was growing. I expected there was going to be even greater chaos in Zaire and that Mobutu was going to be forced from power; if the United States was perceived as supporting the dictator against the will of the people, our influence with his successors would be attenuated, to put it mildly.

My prediction was largely mistaken, at least my time table was premature. It turned out that I both underestimated Mobutu and overestimated our own influence. Two years later we did finally disassociate ourselves from him, four years too late in my view. It happened a year or so ago, but Mobutu has held on. Part of his genius was utilizing the United States, explaining that one reason that he was in power was that he was America's man, America backed him, and so forth. Consciously or unconsciously, he himself exaggerated the influence of the United States. Mobutu's own skills and Mobutu's dominance of his own political system kept him in power -- far more than the support of the United States. During the last 18 months or so since we have disassociated ourselves from Mobutu the Belgians and French have gone along with us. They are the other two major powers concerned with Zaire. One of our problems in the past always has been a certain rivalry with them, a rivalry Mobutu manipulated quite brilliantly. At last all three governments have disassociated themselves from him, but Mobutu has held on. The situation gets worse and worse. There is now a serious degree of starvation in this wealthy, food-producing nation. It's a tragic situation. But Mobutu has still not fallen. Copper production and exports are finished, but the President has cornered diamond sales to field his needs.

Q: On the policy side in Washington one of the complaints which has been made was that, under Secretary of State James Baker policy making was pretty well concentrated within a very tight group, and the members of this group were very much involved in the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In this view, incidents like the Gulf War occurred because there was inertia in the system, and the system perpetuated inertia. Do you think that it is fair to say that this is part of the explanation or not?

HARROP: I don't know. Baker made a visit to Zaire in January or February, 1991. He came out for the independence celebrations in Namibia. We had played the lead part in ensuring independence for Namibia. Baker stopped in Zaire and saw Mobutu. I found him quite open to policy analysis and ideas. I thought that he handled Mobutu with great skill. I suppose that Baker's interest in Central Africa at that time, to the extent Africa was on his agenda, from a geopolitical or geostrategic point of view, was Angola, a Cold War theater, more than the domestic situation in Zaire. However, I do not feel that we suffered from lack of Baker's personal involvement. I think that the places where he was focusing his attention were, in fact, more important to us than Zaire. I don't criticize him for that.

Q: What was it like to work in Zaire at that time -- you and your staff in the Embassy?

HARROP: Do you mean was there a hostile or dangerous atmosphere?

Q: A hostile atmosphere. Was it difficult to operate there?

HARROP: No, it was not hostile. I think that the Americans have always appreciated the fact that the Zairian people have a certain tolerance, and perhaps a docility -- which may be too strong a

word. I wouldn't use that word myself. There was a deep resentment of the United States on the part of Mobutu and his intimates who were running the country -- a resentment of our pressures and of our apparent support for the opposition, for the so-called democratic elements that were trying to get at him, or lack of gratitude for their political support of American interests. That was deeply resented. At the same time there was some little bitterness against the United States on the part of the Zairian people for our tolerance of Mobutu, who was less and less popular. In fact, he was becoming hated as well as feared. So there were plenty of pressures on the Embassy, but none of these pressures was translated into violence or big demonstrations against Americans. This just didn't happen. When violence came, it was generalized, against the "haves" more than against a nationality.

Q: What about wandering troops, over-armed troops running around, terrorizing...

HARROP: Well, the worst days of that came after my departure. There was some of that in Shaba, formerly Katanga Province, during the last year or year and a half that I was there. There were some very difficult attacks on the university and some official murders -- a very bad business. But instances of marauding soldiers going around and attacking people were rare, although always a danger. We were chronically concerned about our widely dispersed Peace Corps volunteers and about the thousand or so American missionaries who were all over the country. This was always a worry to us, but there were many fewer actual instances of violence than we expected. Violence, depredations in the army, became very severe in September, 1991, after my departure. There were open riots. The economy was deteriorating to the point that it was inevitable that this sort of thing would happen at some point. In September, 1991, there was widescale plundering and gunfire in the streets of Kinshasa. The French Ambassador was killed, apparently by a stray bullet. Since that time it has gone from bad to worse, but it had not reached that point of crisis by the time of my departure. And even now, with the infrastructure, the economy, the currency hardly still existing, Mobutu remains.

PHILIP R. MAYHEW
Information Officer, USIS
Stanleyville (1964)

Philip R. Mayhew was born in California in 1934. He graduated from Princeton University in 1956 and served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1957 to 1959. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961. His overseas posts included Laos, Congo, Vietnam, Thailand, and Jordan. In addition, he served in various positions in Washington, DC. He was interviewed on May 26, 1995 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Where did you go?

MAYHEW: I was assigned to Stanleyville, now called Kisangani. I went up there by plane from Kinshasa, must have been late April, 1964, but I only stayed in the Congo about 7 months because we were chased out of Stanleyville by the Simba rebels. I was evacuated to Leopoldville and I have never been back. So that was an interesting short period.

Q: Can you describe a bit what was the situation in Stanleyville as you saw it, with the Simbas and all.

MAYHEW: When I got to Stan there was a revolt brewing further East which was led by the Simbas. The revolt against the central government took on east-west overtones though really at base it had more tribal overtones and plain old opportunism than anything else. In fact, it probably was a continuation of the instability and violence that attended independence -- the earlier violence which involved Kasavubu, Patrice Lumumba and all of the rest. In fact, I think some of these people in the Eastern Congo called themselves the successors of Lumumba. All the anti-government factions had adopted socialist or democratic forms of talk, but at base it was mostly tribalism, opportunism and power seeking.

Stanleyville, when I got there, was rather odd because it was in-waiting for something to happen. It had clearly been quite an attractive town in the Belgian days, but the Belgians were long gone and the real estate had begun to run down. Houses hadn't been painted, stucco hadn't been repaired, there was not much to eat in the markets. In fact we sort of lived on maniac leaves, which they called spinach, river fish, and supplies that we sort of scrounged from Belgians with connections. There was not an awful lot to buy. Near my house there was a 5-story Belgian supermarket that had virtually nothing in it except printed cloth that was used for women's clothes, and Blue-Band margarine which was a creation of some Belgian company. There were few westerners in Stan and little to do off the job.

The atmosphere was definitely one of unease, of events unfinished, and there was not an awful lot for a USIS establishment to accomplish. We had a librarian who maintained order in the library extremely rigorously, and would not allow books to circulate because he thought if you lent one it was very likely to be stolen; he was probably right. When we checked the records we found that there were only about a half a dozen books circulating from the library at any one time. The movie program was very good in terms of audience attendance because there's very little else to do in the rural Congo at night. So in those villages that you could get to, there was an enormous crowd. It was not quite clear whether they understood any of the film since film itself was relatively new to them, and many of the sophisticated production techniques, which we take for granted in our films, probably just confused them.

At any rate, it was a very strange place. The Congo is the only place where I've ever had contacts almost continually asking me for favors or money. Clearly, a rather demoralized kind of society, just sort of waiting for something to happen. There was no significant leadership from the government in Leopoldville.

Q: Were there UN troops where you were?

MAYHEW: UN troops were in Stanleyville when I got there. They departed shortly thereafter. I remember there was a UN police colonel, a Nigerian, who said to me that he just did not know what was going to happen to these "fellows" when the UN left because, you see, they're just not British. This, in light of law and order later in Nigeria, is somewhat interesting.

At any rate, Stanleyville when I got there was a very peculiar place. There were very few Europeans there, although there were still some Belgians. There were US missionaries in the area. My boss, Max Kraus, and I were in the USIS post. We had a Greek secretary whose father was a UN-sponsored judge. There were some British-American Tobacco Company people. Not a heck of a lot to do in your off-time. We played tennis nearly every day and played a lot of bridge. For part of the time we had a 4 p.m. daily curfew. Probably would have gone mad if I had been a whole 2 years there. We, of course, had a consulate.

Q: What was the consulate doing?

MAYHEW: Well, they were mainly keeping an eye on the security and the political situation. John Clingerman was the consul for the first part of the time I was there. Then he left and Mike Hoyt came in. Mike was taken prisoner by the Simba rebels and that's a whole long story. At any rate, up until quite near the very end when I was evacuated it was quite peaceful there. No one thought that the Simba rebels were going to get to Stanleyville. After all, they were way over in the eastern Congo, a couple hundred miles away.

But they began moving towards Stanleyville and their chief weapon was the telephone. They would call ahead and say that they were coming and they had big "Dawa," or magic. This usually caused a failure of nerve on the side of the government. I guess because they felt they didn't have as good a witch doctor as the rebels had on their side. So the Congolese Army would fall back fifty or eighty miles into the jungle to the next little town. There was, however, a major bridge over a very important river whose name I no longer remember.

We thought there was no real possibility of the Simbas getting across that river in numbers if the bridge were blown. Of course, in the event the bridge was not blown, and the Simbas entered. The last day was extremely confused. We didn't know what was happening until about 10 a.m., I heard voices outside and I looked out and all the Congolese were running in one direction or another. We knew just enough to be apprehensive.

We checked with the consulate and found out that the bridge had not been blown, the Congolese forces were falling back on Stanleyville, and they were mostly useless anyway, even at the best of times. So the consulate consulted with Leopoldville by radio, a single-side band, and it was decided in Leo that Max Kraus and I, and some of the people at the consulate should evacuate.

I sent home my servant, who was later killed by the Simbas. I packed a bag and went down to the consulate in one of the rickety old jeeps that USIS had, and by that time you could hear small arms fire. This was the middle of the day. The CIA communicator was out back with the burn barrels and was throwing in material. The consul, Mike Hoyt, had apparently been told to stay or rather not authorized to leave. Leopoldville was somewhat behind the curve, we should have all left. At any rate, all did not.

I went into the consulate and there were 2 American girl tourists there. They'd been told by the consulate that they ought to get out of Stanleyville a week earlier and they'd not done so. The consulate was on a curved street which made kind of a half-moon with the river passing by right in front of it. There was another street which joined the two ends of the half-moon and one end of that

street was being held, however briefly, by the Congolese Army. There was a lot of small arms fire going on against the on-coming rebels. I took the 2 girls into the jeep and we went off towards the airport, which fortunately was opposite from the direction of the fight. I floored it; it would go about 30, 35 miles an hour floored.

We came to one end of the half-moon and there was a Congolese army detachment. They were, of course, all armed. They stopped us and asked where we were going. We said the airport. They said, fine, that's where we want to go. About a dozen piled in on top of the girls. They were surprised to see the girls and I guess the girls were a little surprised to have all those guys in the jeep. We went off at whatever speed we could make to the airport. The airport was a confused place with 3 or 4 evacuation planes belonging to the UN, to the Brazzaville Congo attaché, and the Leopoldville attaché. From one C-130 an American military unit had taken up positions around the planes facing outward with virtually a whole battalion of the Congolese army surrounding them. So it was quite an interesting Mexican standoff the Congolese didn't seem interested in testing.

I got out of my car. Max Kraus had driven out by a different USIS jeep. We handed the keys of the jeeps to the Belgian vice consul and said, "Here they are, keep them. We won't hold you responsible if you lose these jeeps but it would be nice to have them back again." We got on a plane and flew to Leopoldville leaving behind Michael Hoyt, and three or four others who did not get to the airport.

All but one of these eventually locked themselves initially into the consulate vault room, leaving a case of whiskey outside. The consulate was under siege by the Simbas and finally was taken. Those in the vault had to give themselves up. They were in prison for 118 days. There is a Readers Digest published book called 118 Days in Stanleyville which retells some of this, now long since forgotten.

Q: Who were the Simbas?

MAYHEW: They were a ragtag group, which purported to be "socialists," but they maintained a staff witch doctor. They were led by the same sorts of people who were the leaders on the Congolese government side. That is, people who had been educated by the missionaries or perhaps half educated, but had ended up on the wrong side of the government either by tribal reasons or friendships or political mischance. I never believed that they had any kind of coherent philosophy

They were supposedly supported by the PRC, which had an embassy in Burundi. And maybe they were, to some extent. If so, it was opportunistic meddling with people who had no real ideology.

Q: Were you getting reports about what the Simbas were doing?

MAYHEW: There was a lot of intelligence reporting about the Simbas. A good deal of it was rather fantastic and not terribly believable. They were settling old scores and eliminating, apparently, a lot of the governmental people. In fact, when they did take over Stanleyville, they executed a great many individuals simply because they had some white blood, including the secretary general of the province. I remember that the burgermeister of Stanleyville was killed, executed in a park in front of the fine apartment that I had.

But a lot of this seemed to be resentment politics and tribalism rather than any coherent political motive. Of course, our people had a rather long and difficult imprisonment with lots of threats to their lives, guns held to their heads, triggers pulled on empty chambers, that sort of thing. Had the rebellion succeeded it's hard to say what political structure might have evolved. I think it would simply be African big-manism. That is, who ever accumulated the most power would run the place. It would be based, to a certain extent, on tribal structures; there would have been very little ideological content as we know it in the western world.

Q: I'm just wondering about, obviously you weren't in there, but this decision to keep people behind.

MAYHEW: Well, I'm not exactly sure why it took place. You'd have to ask the people who made the decision. But I'm not actually so sure it played out that way. I think rather that they didn't make a decision when they probably should have, or communications were not good enough to tell them in time to leave and therefore they got caught.

I was involved in an operation to rescue these people.

Q: Dragon Rouge -- was that it?

MAYHEW: No, Dragon Rouge is the rescue operation much later when Belgian troops went in and did rescue our people and other hostages.

What I mean was sort of an ad hoc operation that seemed to have been thought up largely by Ambassador Godley and various cohorts at the embassy. It took place the next day. It's a very long story, but basically was a rescue effort in which I participated because I was the only person who had ever been in Stanleyville. It was aborted in a place called Lisala because by the time we got to Lisala the consulate people had been moved to a military camp.

Q: We've got time. I mean, what happened? You came back to Leopoldville.

MAYHEW: I came back to Leopoldville on a plane. We arrived, I think, in the early evening.

Q: By the way, I take it that the 2 young girl tourists were gotten out.

MAYHEW: Yes, and they disappeared without ever thanking any of us for our efforts and for a free flight.

I arrived in the late afternoon. I was still on detail to USIS, and John Mowinckel, who was the head of USIS, was out at the airport, as well as other people. He invited me over to dinner and I told him the story of our evacuation. I think John was somewhat taken aback by the Congo, he'd never served anywhere outside of Europe so this was totally new to him. After Laos and Stanleyville I began to think the odd was normal.

At any rate, that evening I went back to a hotel and went to bed and was awakened, at perhaps 1 or 2:00 in the morning, by an officious admin type who said that he had been sent to summon me to an immediate meeting in the embassy with the ambassador. I went to the embassy, and found a meeting going on with Ambassador Godley, DCM Bob Blake, the CIA Station Chief, the Navy Attaché, the head of something called COMISH, a combined military mission, and my boss Max Kraus, as well as others.

What was under discussion was a rescue mission. The prisoners were all still in the Stanleyville consulate at this time. There was a possibility, it was thought, that they could be rescued. The idea was that we would land a helicopter on the consulate lawn and storm the consulate. We would have to take the personnel to be involved in a C-47, along with gas for the helicopter in 55 gallon drums. For our cover we would have 2 T-28s piloted by Cubans left over from the Bay of Pigs. Financed by the Agency, they had been assisting the Congolese Army against the rebels.

Q: T-28s were 2-seater, basically they had been trainers but we used them for ground attacks.

MAYHEW: We used them for ground and air support and for bombing in both Laos and the Congo. The thought here was that the pilots would first "hose down the area," as the military expression was, around the consulate with 50 caliber machine gun fire before the chopper landed. The mere appearance of the T-28s was supposed to panic the Simbas. We would fly in with the helicopter. We would land on the embassy lawn and rush the consulate, and rescue Mike Hoyt, and the rest. One of the big questions of the operation was: Where was the flag pole on the embassy lawn? Because the embassy lawn was surrounded by a low wall, if the flag pole was in the wrong place, the helicopter might not be able to land. As I recall, we never did establish the exact position of the flag pole, but it was decided to try this "Operation Flagpole" anyway.

So I found myself on the C-47 piloted by the personal American pilot of President Mobutu, a US Air Force officer. Since it's such a long way from Leopoldville to Stanleyville, we had to stop along the way. It was decided that a place called Lisala would be where we would spend the next night. It was now roughly dawn. And away we went. I don't know to this day if Washington approved all this.

At any rate, we got to Lisala in the late afternoon without any prior notice to the locals. We had a safe conduct pass from Mobutu, but it turned out that Lisala, which no one ever told us, was in an area which was hostile to Mobutu. His safe conduct was probably a negative rather than a positive. The Lisala area was controlled by a local warlord, and he seemed to think we were the first wave of an international contingent that was coming to take the Congo back for the Belgians. This was a rumor that had been floating around ever since independence.

We shortly found out that the airstrip we were on was surrounded by local troops whose garb was fatigue pants, bare on the upper torso, but with a monkey's skin over their heads and down their backs. Unfortunately, they were armed. As time went on, they kept getting closer and closer to the airplanes. Remember we had 3 airplanes and a helicopter there. There were various parleys in the town of Lisala with our leadership and their leadership. These were not very productive. The first parley opened with the opposite number pulling his pistol out and holding it on the top of the desk

in front of him, and it became obvious after a few moments, that he was drunk. So these parleys were holding actions.

We were there for the night. During the night the monkey-clad troops kept moving closer. We began to wonder how we were going to get out. Concurrently, news came from Leopoldville by radio that the Stanleyville prisoners had been moved to an army camp outside Stanleyville. There was no longer any purpose to our expedition. The question became, so how do we get out?

In the morning it was decided that the Cubans would make a rush for their planes, jump in, take off, and buzz the airport while the other planes got moving.

All of this happened and the Cubans are zooming up and down the field at an altitude of a couple of hundred feet. All the members of our party are armed, and we're all trying to hold our weapons in a nonchalant way as we jump into the C-47. The helicopter had gone off also. The C-47 starts taxiing and the locals started running for the plane.

At that moment, a young CIA type who had been with us all this time, who had been in the parleys, and who had with him a rather out of place briefcase, opened the briefcase. It was stuffed with Congolese francs. He began to throw the francs out of the door of the airplane, causing our monkey-clad pursuers to throw down their weapons and stuff their pockets with the cash. As we went off he was merrily throwing out bundles of cash, the bundles breaking up immediately. Hundred of thousands of Congolese francs were like confetti in the prop wash. We roared down the airstrip and took off.

Q: Oh how wonderful! Such are the aspects of diplomacy.

MAYHEW: That's right, that's money diplomacy.

Q: So you got back and then what happened?

MAYHEW: So we went back to reality in Leo and they had not even a desk for me at USIS there. So I hung around the office, did small tasks and things. USIS really did not have an awful lot of a function there. But the Congo was thought to be important in East-West terms. When, I guess, neither the East nor the West knew the Africans enough to know whether any ideology was going to work. USIS even at one point had the idea that it might open branch posts all over the Congo in the way that they had done in Southeast Asia -- in Thailand and Vietnam -- which was certainly a mad scheme.

Concurrently, USIS began to build up in Vietnam and USIS went around looking for people, volunteers and otherwise, to go to Vietnam. Since I was at loose ends and it did not look as though the USIS post in Stanleyville was going to be re-opened anytime soon, I was a prime candidate for Vietnam and off I went. I made it around the world from Bangkok to Bangkok in less than a year, considering that I had left Laos in '63, I made it back in '64 on my way to Vietnam.

MAX W. KRAUS
Press Attaché
Leopoldville (1964-1965)

Max W. Kraus went to Harvard and received an A.B. degree in 1941. He was in the Army from 1941-1945 and joined the State Department in 1950. Kraus served in Germany, Italy, Cambodia, France, Switzerland, and Zaire. He was interviewed by Cliff Groce in 1988.

KRAUS: ...it was a nervous two hours and when I finally did leave for Stanleyville, I felt I was being pulled out of the front lines and sent to a relatively quiet area.

Q: *You thought.*

KRAUS: I thought. I was supposed to serve a year in Stanleyville, because of the unfinished tour in Phnom Penh. But, after three months and ten days there, the Simba rebels overran Stanleyville and I was fortunate enough to be able to implement our bug-out orders and get on the last evacuation flight.

I arrived in Leopoldville, the capital, where Ambassador Godley and John Mowinckel, who was the PAO, were waiting for me at the airport and said, we are glad to see you, you are the new press attaché.

The Congo had become, after Vietnam, the principal crisis spot in the world. There were about 100 correspondents from all over the world with nobody to take care of them, except the political section, which was already overworked.

So, I was appointed press attaché and saw the further developments in Stanleyville and the Simba rebellion from that vantage point. Five of my colleagues in the consulate in Stanleyville were taken hostages by the Simbas and remained hostage, together with lots of other hostages which the Simbas rounded up from all over the Eastern Congo for 111 days, until we mounted -- together with the Belgians -- a rescue mission called Operation Dragon Rouge -- where a battalion of Belgian paracommandos jumped over the Stanleyville airport from American C-130 transport planes and rescued most of the hostages.

It was another very exciting tour. Not as pleasant as in Phnom Penh.

Q: *How long were you in Leopoldville then?*

KRAUS: Until July of 1965.

Q: *What other adventures did you have besides the handling of the Simba rebellion?*

KRAUS: One adventure that I had was when I was in Stanleyville at the beginning. Steve Baldanza was the PAO. Shortly after I arrived in Stanleyville, in the Congo, we were more or less the government's Ministry of Information.

We also put out a newsreel. We put out a weekly paper and really, the support of the local government, was the only theme in our country plan that had any relevance to the Congolese. Now, the local government was thoroughly inefficient and corrupt. I think, if I had been a Congolese, I probably would have joined the Simbas, too.

The Congolese had never really accepted the fact that they were independent. They simply felt that we had replaced the Belgians as the foreign power and would pull the strings on the Congolese government. Because the government was so corrupt and oppressive, the anti-government feeling reflected itself on the United States.

Also, after I had seen what was going on for a couple of weeks, I sat down with John Clingerman, who at that time was the consul and said, you know, John, the more active we are, the more anti-American sentiment we breed.

Therefore, if you concur, what I plan to do is to keep the center open, have our daily film screenings there, distribute the weekly paper. But, I am no longer going to send mobile units into the bush to show films and distribute the paper. He said, yes, I agree with you, that is the thing to do. That is what I did.

However, I made one big mistake. I never got Baldanza's agreement to this policy in writing and on Baldanza's staff was a man by the name of Cliff Hackett -- I do not know whether you know him. Cliff Hackett was the field operations officer and his job really was to make sure that we got the materials that we needed -- the films, the newspapers, the vehicles, and so on.

He was one grade junior to me. He was an FSIO four, whereas I was a three at that time. But Baldanza let Hackett write my performance rating, and I was stupid enough not to protest it. Hackett was a man who believed in doing things for doing's sake, whether it really made any sense or not.

Therefore, he wrote an absolutely devastating performance rating of me. I think he rated me one on about six factors. It was during the time when you did not see your rating until you got back to Washington. When I was in Leopoldville as press attaché, --

Q: The bad rating was in Stanleyville?

KRAUS: It was done while I was in Stanleyville. I think the deputy PAO, who was Martin Ackerman, a sweet guy, was wing officer. I think that he registered a mild dissent, but did not want to make Hackett look bad.

Anyway, in the summer of 1965, Big Dan Oleksiw, who at that time was the deputy to Mark Lewis as Assistant Director of Africa, came to Leopoldville with, among other things, instructions to ask for my resignation or otherwise -- told me that I would be terminated -- not with extreme prejudice, but terminated nevertheless.

Well, by that time, Mac Godley, the ambassador, and Mowinckel, thought I was the greatest thing since sliced bread, the way I handled the press attaché job, and told Dan Oleksiw so. So, Dan never carried out his instructions and I survived.

Q: *Isn't that infuriating?*

KRAUS: Yes.

Q: *I have been through something of the same sort.*

KRAUS: But, it held back my career considerably -- that rating. It was not until I was in Paris, where Burnett Anderson wrote an absolutely lyric rating about me, that I finally got my two.

Q: *How long were you in Leopoldville?*

KRAUS: From August, 1964 until July, 1965. Then, I was transferred back to Washington. Since my year-and-a-half in the Congo had stamped me as a French speaking Africa expert, I was put in charge of the French broadcast to Africa for Voice of America.

RICHARD C. MATHERON
Consular Officer
Bukavu (1964-1965)

Richard C. Matheron began his career in the Foreign Service in 1948 after graduating from the University of California at Berkeley. His posts include Cameroon, Ethiopia, and to Swaziland. Mr. Matheron was interviewed by Lee Cotterman in March 1989.

Q: *You were eventually assigned as U.S. consul in Bukavu, about 1964. When you were consul in Bukavu, I believe there was a protracted period of rebel warfare and rebellion against Premier [Moise] Tshombe's government perhaps about the time you arrived or shortly thereafter. Can you tell us a little bit about that? What was life like in an American consulate, for instance, at that time? What size staff did we have there?*

MATHERON: We had a very small staff. We had three American officers, a communicator, and one FSN secretary. The previous consul's wife had worked part-time, but we were not authorized a full-time secretary, so we did our own secretarial work, sometimes with the help of TDY personnel that would come up from Leopoldville, as Kinshasa was called at the time. There was a beautiful consular residence right on Lake Kivu. It's one of the most beautiful spots I've ever served in.

Within days of my arrival, a full-scale rebellion broke out in the Kivu. There was a Mulele rebellion going on, which had started in Kwilu Province in 1964, and this was the eastern part of it, both certainly radical rebellions supported by the Chinese. The Chinese had an enormous embassy in Bujumbura. I was just reviewing my reports the other day, and they took advantage of a lot of

ethnic unrest in the area to fuel a rebellion against a government which had really fallen apart shortly after 1960, at the time of independence. You remember that basically the central government in Leopoldville was not able to establish and maintain strong authority.

Q: With President [Joseph D.] Mobutu coming to power in 1965, did the area settle down then during the rest of your assignment there?

MATHERON: Basically the area settled down. After the onslaught of the rebellion against Bukavu itself in 1964, when the rebels actually entered the town, this was the first time that the Congolese Army had stood and fought its ground against the rebels. For this I give a lot of credit to an American military advisor who was there at the time, Colonel William Dodds, who had very good rapport with the Congolese commander, and got him to station his troops well. Bukavu is built on five peninsulas, and the American colonel showed the Congolese colonel that if he stationed his troops at the beginning of these peninsulas, the troops would have no place to retreat except into Lake Kivu. The Congolese Army stood and held its ground for the first time, and the rebels were not able to take over.

You recall that there was a lot of magic in this rebellion. The rebels believed, and a lot of the people believed, including the Congolese Army, that they had been bathed in Mulele water or Mulele medicine, and that they were invulnerable, that ordinary bullets wouldn't kill them because they had these magical powers. Well, these magical powers had never been properly tested before this day in August of 1964, and all of a sudden they discovered that they didn't have magical powers, and that the Army's bullets would actually kill them. This was a revelation to a very ill-trained army, as well as it was to the rebels themselves.

At the same time, we had C-130s stationed in the Congo that were instrumental in flying up Congolese reinforcements from other parts of the country, particularly Katangan militia. It was a victory purely on the military side, but it also had a psychological side because it showed that the rebels actually were being resisted and could be defeated. At that time, Mobutu was the chief of staff of the Army. It wasn't until a year later that he took over as president of the country.

ROBERT O. BLAKE
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kinshasa (1964-1966)

Ambassador Robert O. Blake studied diplomatic history at Stanford University and went to law school before entering the Navy. After the war, he returned to graduate school at Stanford University, then later to the School for Advanced International studies in Washington, DC. In addition to Zaire, he served in Russia, Tunisia, Paris, and Mali. He was interviewed by James Mason on December 29, 1988.

Q: And where did you go after that?

BLAKE: Then I was assigned to Zaire, then called the Congo, first as DCM. And I was DCM there through September 1966. At that time I was in the United States on home leave and had been, in fact, ordered to Saigon to take Phil Habib's place as chief of the political section. And I got a call saying that I should return to the Congo right away because the ambassador was going to be declared persona non grata. And, indeed, that happened shortly after I arrived back in Kinshasa. I remained chargé d'affaires until the middle of the next year. We had, in the meantime, told Mobutu that we were very unhappy with the fact that he declared our ambassador PNG and that we weren't going to send another ambassador. So that was a period of great interest and change for me..

Almost from the moment I got to Zaire it was very active. Indeed, it was a very dangerous place. The rebel advance started across the country almost immediately after I got to Zaire. And we were very quickly involved in trying to help to organize the defenses of the country, largely through work with the CIA. We arranged for airplanes, small trainers, T-6s, to be brought in for Cuban pilots to fly for the Congolese. We also arranged for European mercenaries led by Mike Hoare to come in to backup the Congolese Army. The story of the advance and then retreat of the Congolese rebels, and then the revolt of the mercenaries against the Congolese and their attempt to take over Zaire was the story of the almost four years that I was there.

Also, we had the fascinating and very worrisome time during the capture of the American consulate in Stanleyville by the rebels, the holding of our people, including the consul, Mike Hoyt, and the others as hostage. A high point was the complicated rescue operation of our people and the other foreigners being held by the rebels, which was carried out in the fall of 1964 by the Belgians and ourselves.

WILLIAM G. BRADFORD
Administrative Officer
Leopoldville (1964-1966)

William G. Bradford entered the Foreign Service in 1952 after having served in World War II. His overseas posts included Vietnam, Sierra Leone, and Chad. Bradford was interviewed on March 9, 1989 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: *What was the situation in the Congo when you arrived?*

BRADFORD: In the Congo, we talked a great deal about the hostages in Beirut. There were actually a group of hostages being held in what was then Stanleyville, who were all Foreign Service officers who had been captured by the Simba rebels. A good deal of the country was under the control of these Simba rebels, who were, in a way, reminiscent of the Iranians. They were fanatics. It was not really a political movement as much as it was a tribal fanatic situation. Our hostages had been held for three or four months when I got there, I think. There were other hostages, several missionaries, one of whom was later killed. It was very chaotic. We were involved in assisting the government in the war against these rebels. One point I'd like to make is that I think it was done very, very well, nearly all by the CIA, but it's a war we won. We set out to defeat these rebels and support the central government. The rebels were defeated, the central

government went on. There were coups within the central government, but never any overthrow by these various elements. That there wasn't, was largely because of our support of a mercenary force, our supplying that mercenary force, which won the war for the central government.

Q: Did you get involved in this supply operation?

BRADFORD: Only peripherally. I knew of its existence, but it was pretty well handled by the CIA.

Q: This essentially was an experiment, wasn't it?

BRADFORD: It was an experiment.

Q: This was called CAMO.

BRADFORD: CAMO -- Consolidated Administrative Management Organization. We put together a very successful CAMO in, which served all of the agencies there. It served what military we had there, it served the agency and all of its overt activities, it served all of AID, which was a very large operation, USIA, and ourselves.

Q: Was there resistance to this?

BRADFORD: It had pretty well been established in Washington, where Bill Crockett was still in power, that this would be done. So resistance was there, but there wasn't much they could do about it. In addition, I took on, as my deputies, some of the AID officers that would otherwise be unemployed. It worked quite satisfactorily.

Q: While you were there, the ambassador was Mac Godley. Can you describe, from your point of view, his style of operation and how you felt about him?

BRADFORD: He was very flamboyant, very likable, didn't want to be bothered with administrative details, but would support me completely in it, recognized that that was his role. He was a great man to work for in the capacity I was in. The people in the message center loved him. He had a refrigerator full of beer. There was only one thing: the last bottle had a tag on it, which said "Mac." They could drink all the beer they wanted, as long as they didn't drink Mac's last beer. (Laughs) He was a great man to work with. Now, if you had a policy dispute with him, that was different. Then he tended to be arbitrary. Some of the people from HE, whom I knew very well, the USIA chief, who originally was an old wartime buddy of Mac's, they got along fine, but the man that replaced him, they didn't get along at all.

Q: He gave the proper support on the administrative side.

BRADFORD: Right. He didn't want to be bothered with it, but he knew that if I had a problem, that he should support me in order to get the thing under control.

Q: How well was our aid mission managed, do you think? What was it trying to do?

BRADFORD: Let's put it this way. I'm a man who basically likes most of the aid people and dislikes the aid program completely. I have never seen an aid program that I thought it was doing anything.

Q: How did you find dealing with the government? Was Mobutu chief of state?

BRADFORD: When I got there, Kasavubu was the chief of staff, then Tshombe became prime minister, and then he was overthrown by Mobutu. In all honesty, we had very little dealings with the Congolese, except a handful at customs. We were in the position in those days, in the Congo, of largely running our own operation, which was supporting the government. Therefore, we didn't have to worry too much about what the government said. This wasn't true in the political field or military, probably, but on the management side, I just didn't have any of the normal headaches you would have in dealing with a host government.

Q: Administratively, it was a little bit colonialistic, wasn't it?

BRADFORD: Absolutely.

Q: We just said, "You can't handle it. We'll do it."

BRADFORD: That's right.

Q: You brought your own people in, so the normal services were done by the American staff.

BRADFORD: Yes. As I alluded before, the war was fought by outsiders.

Q: Did you use many local Congolese employees?

BRADFORD: Honestly, very few, except in jobs like chauffeurs and laborers. Most of what was called the local staff tended to be ex-colonials themselves -- Belgians, a few Brits.

Q: Was the safety of American personnel a major concern of yours?

BRADFORD: No, it never assumed the proportions while I was there that it had in Vietnam. There were incidents of armed robbery, there was a great deal of petty theft, but as far as real danger of an American being killed, outside of those who were being held by the Simbas, who were later freed and went to Belgian parishes, there wasn't any.

Q: How about corruption? You must have been in a position where this became a problem, the selling of America, the selling of your equipment.

BRADFORD: Oh, yes.

Q: Getting things through customs. Any time you ran across the Congolese authorities, it must have been a problem.

BRADFORD: I don't think it was quite as big a problem then as it has become. It's endemic in Africa of what we consider to be corruption, which is that you pay people for illegal services. This is before the Anti-Corruption Act later. I was not averse to paying people for those services if it made them run better. So, in effect, we tipped people at customs. We had no particular problems with tremendous takes. In addition, we had the fall-back position that we really ran the place, and if they really gave us too many headaches, we could pretty well go right to the top and say, "Take care of this."

JACOB GILLESPIE
Field Operations Officer, USIS
Leopoldville (1964-1966)

Mr. Gillespie was born in Illinois and raised in Illinois and Maryland. Joining the Foreign Service of the United States Information Agency (USIA), he served several assignments at USIA Headquarters in Washington, DC in which he dealt with various aspects of USIA's operations in the U.S. and abroad. His foreign assignments include Accra, Bujumbura, Leopoldville, Montevideo, the Hague, San Salvador and Madrid. Mr. Gillespie was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2010.

GILLESPIE: We arrived in New York on Labor Day, 1964. I was in Washington for some time, about three weeks, I think, and then I had to go back for some additional briefings just before I left in November. The most memorable meeting I attended was a gathering of the Congo Task Force under the leadership of Under Secretary Averill Harriman. My former boss in Ghana, Mark Lewis, was now the USIA Assistant Director for Africa. He took me along to the weekly meeting. Harriman was wonderful. His opening comments were pointed, his questions sharp. The he sat back and seemed to observe and listen. Mark said he heard what he came to learn and then turned his hearing aid off.

The Congo had become very difficult in the summer of '64. The rebels, who had gained a great deal of strength in the northeastern Congo, attacked and took the city of Stanleyville, the third largest city in the Congo, a major center of commerce and business on the Congo River, and in doing so they took hostage virtually every non-Congolese in the city, including our Consul, Vice Consul and two other personnel from the American consulate and were holding them. They continued to do this into November; on the fourth of November I went to Leopoldville. Susan and son Jim stayed back and were going to come in about a month.

I arrived during a very tense time. My job was as field operations officer. The Congo was an enormous mission. USIS in the Congo had 25 American personnel and about 75 or 80 Foreign Service nationals working for us, and that's just indicative of the whole mission. AID was very large and the embassy itself was big. The tension in the town- in the embassy was palpable. There's no question that the holding of the hostages in Stanleyville had affected everyone, from

the Ambassador, G. McMurtrie Godley, all the way down. I think Mac Godley felt a real sense of responsibility for Mike Hoyt and the other three American hostages. It was a very difficult time.

As we approached the middle of the month, after I'd been there about two weeks, John Mowinckel, the PAO, literally told me to keep my eyes and ears open because something is going to happen and I'll want you to go to work with Max Kraus, who was the Press Attaché. Max had been the branch PAO in Stanleyville, but went on R&R before the rebels took the city and was unable to return. In the middle of November, the U.S. Air Force picked up Belgian paratroopers, they landed on Ascension and based themselves there. There were third parties trying to negotiate with the rebels but nothing came of it. Just before Thanksgiving they flew into Leopoldville, refueled and flew to Stanleyville. They dropped some paratroops and then landed at the airport, unloaded the rest of the Belgian paras and retook the city in about 48 hours.

The freed hostages, including the four consulate staff, were flown back to Leopoldville. It was not a pretty picture. There were people killed, including a number of American missionary hostages, the most famous of whom was a Dr. Carlson, who, for some reason, the rebels had decided was the head of CIA in the Congo. He had been the basis for a Time magazine cover story about two weeks before the relief of Stanleyville. This was not a comfortable time for Susan, trying to deal with her parents and my parents at home.

I learned quickly what to do -- whatever Max Kraus told me to do. Max was a wonderful guy and he told me to stay at the Embassy, take his calls from the airport and write down everything I say. We will ask the Ambassador, DCM, PAO or others questions and find out what we can say. Most of the press was at the airport, waiting for the hostages to be brought out. This system worked pretty well. The airlift continued through Thanksgiving.

By the week after Thanksgiving things started to ease up. Even I could sense this. John Mowinckel, the PAO, called a staff meeting and said Ambassador Godley had declared the next week "get to know your family" week. This must have been the first week of December. The whole U.S. mission had been going at top speed since the summer. I'd sensed a bit of it because I'd been there about a month, a little more. Others had been there and gone through this from the time the hostages were taken and the Congo had been in a permanent crisis for months. In our office I noticed this from the day I got there. We worked normally from 7:30 in the morning to 4:30 in the afternoon. Well in fact, everyone showed up at 7:30 and somewhere at 6:30 or 7:30 they would go home. They'd all do the same thing on Saturday. I had nothing to do so I went on Sunday just to check the mail and virtually our whole office was at work. And so finally they cut this out. No one was to work on the weekends except duty officers and everybody was to be out of the office by 5:00 or 6:00. This was helped because both Ambassador Godley and PAO Mowinckel went on vacation for about three or four weeks. The pressure was off. It was especially nice for me; a chance get to know my family again, because they had just arrived.

I made my first big trip just before my wife came, a round robin to the posts I was supposed to help, Elizabethville, Bukavu and Luluabourg. My first impressions were interesting. Elizabethville was still a fairly thriving town. It was the capital of Katanga, the copper mining region. As you drove around town, you could see that most of the shops were open and busy. Luluabourg was a sleepy colonial regional capital and probably four out of five shops were closed. Bukavu was an

absolutely beautiful city, sitting on the shores of Lake Kivu. It had been the resort area for the colonial Europeans in the Congo. It still had some of that feeling, although there had been some fighting around there. At a higher altitude, the weather was much more pleasant. The markets were full of foods you could not get in the east. Whenever I went out there I was always charged to bring back a couple of big baskets of strawberries for the office.

I wrote to my parents on December 22, 1964, that “we live in a permanent manic depressive cycle with the emphasis on the latter. The slightest good news buoys us up but this is countered 10 minutes later by more of the normal stuff. The Congo lacks everything they need to end this two-bit rebellion that is quickly becoming a 10 dollar one.” What had happened was Stanleyville had been relieved but the rebels were moving through all of the secondary urban centers throughout the east and clearing them out was going to be difficult time. History has shown this to be true. Their brutal legacy covers the region.

In the first part of January, I made my first trip to Stanleyville. I went with Andre Navéz, who was, at that time, our Consul-to-be in Stanleyville. As it turned out, he never went there; he became Consul later in Bukavu. I went up basically to see what had happened to the USIS center. I was looking for our FSNs to see if they were around, if they were alive. We wanted to see what the Consulate looked like. We arrived and found that the Fifth Commando of Mercenaries, these were Mike Hoare’s mercenaries-

Q: Very famous in the South Africa- southern Africa.

GILLESPIE: I don’t know how famous he was in South Africa, but he was in the United States. Mike Hoare was a very interesting man. Famous, maybe. Infamous in many circles. He was a military logistics man by training. Shrewd rather than smart. I did not meet him on this trip, but did so later. We were under instructions not to spend a whole lot of time with him. He was not ours and we didn’t want it to seem as if they were one of us. For the most part, the South African mercenaries were a very unpleasant lot of people. They had been recruited out of the ports at Durban and Cape Town. They were vicious thieves, but they were disciplined. Hoare disciplined them with the firing squad. He wasn’t afraid to do it and he let them know that. On the other hand that meant they obeyed orders but it didn’t mean that they always behaved well. They had taken over the U.S. Consulate. To our great surprise when we walked in it was spotless. Everything was in place. The property that members of the Consulate staff had gotten into the Consulate was still there. Their own private things from home were gone, from their homes were gone. We were told that if we had any problems with the state of the Consulate we were to let the commander know. The USIS center was in pretty good shape. Someone had broken into the back; no one had done a great deal of vandalism damage, though. Someone had been in there, a few things were taken.

After two days I managed to locate the oldest of the three FSNs who knew where one of the others was and had no idea about the third. In fact, they all turned up eventually. I was helped a great deal by an American Catholic priest who had lived through the whole thing in the area, not in Stanleyville but had come back to Stanleyville. That part of the trip, I felt, was very successful. The distressing part was to go through Stanleyville. Stanleyville had been a city of 150,000 and now it was virtually deserted. There were, at most, 30,000 or 40,000 people living there. The signs of the rebels were everywhere. What they did was horrible. The rebels had held kangaroo courts

during their control of the city. At the Lumumba monument, the monument to the first prime minister of independent Congo, in the center of town, was where they held the summary executions. The base of the monument was coated with blood. It was inches thick. Months later a Congolese military officer ordered it to be scrubbed clean. I think psychologically, Stanleyville has never really returned to what it might have been.

I continued in the Congo. I had a number of jobs. In addition to Field Operations, I became Motion Picture Distribution Officer. We had a very large film program, showing them all over the country through the commercial film companies and with our own mobile units. We also produced documentaries including a regular monthly newsreel-like 30 minutes film. I worked hard.

Q: Well Mike Hoyt-

GILLESPIE: They all were saved. Mike Hoyt returned, came back to the States and stayed in the Foreign Service. I think all four did. I never knew any of them. The impact on the mission from Stanleyville was tough. A word about my impressions of Ambassador Godley, who I liked personally, although I think I might have disagreed with his own views. I believe he was devoted to his staff. He worked extremely hard and shared the work and the fun with the whole mission. As he came to the end of his tour – and at the end of mine -- he and Joe Mobutu, who by that time had become the President of the Congo after a coup, didn't get along. Godley came in and he said I am leaving rather than causing the problem of being declared persona non grata by Mobutu. He surprised us at an unusual meeting of the entire staff. There were a lot of damp eyes as he left the room.

At this point I have a little problem putting things together. My time in the Congo runs together. I continued to make frequent travels around the country. I traveled on C-130s when possible because Air Congo was very undependable and private charters were terribly expensive. The last year I was there I made contact with a manager of the Mobil Oil operation who was also their pilot. He flew the Mobil Oil plane frequently on business around the Congo. We would pay a cost share which saved a good bit of money and got me around more. There were those three branch posts plus Stanleyville and for a while we had a post in what then was Coquilhatville and now is named Mbandaka. There was no Consulate there, a situation like Luluabourg. We had one American working there with a small staff in a small center. A very good friend of mine, who had been a junior officer with me named Fred Hunter, was assigned to Coquilhatville for his second assignment. This was not what Fred had expected, when he was assigned from Brussels. But he actually ended up working very well there and he knew his way around. I arrived on my second visit in Coquilhatville, which sits right on the equator and on the Congo River, and Fred met me at the airport on the tarmac, and he said to hop in the jeep. He wanted to show you something before the rains started. We got in his car and took off and he said you've got to see this.

Fred was a writer and had published some and became the Nairobi correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor after he left USIA. We drove out of town and up the river outside of town. We followed the road along the Congo River and then we changed to the Ruki River, which is a major tributary to the Congo. We went up the Ruki for awhile and Fred turned on a dirt road. We drove down to the river. He stopped the car and he said get out here. We walked to a small dock out in the middle of the Ruki, where Fred announced, "This is where Graham Greene wrote "A Burnt-Out

Case.” Greene had written an article that Fred later sent to me, in which Greene wrote that he sat on that dock and wrote it while he lived at the leprosarium up the highway. Fred had found his own special Congo pleasure. We got back in the car and the noonday rain started and Fred said not to worry; it will rain until about 1:00, which it did. When the rain stopped the heat came up off of the pavement and it didn’t do much to refresh. This is the way it is all the time. This was my introduction, really, to the center of the tropics in the Congo.

Later, in 1965, I made a trip to Luluabourg that was great fun because Barry Ballou and Pete Synodis, both of whom worked for USIS in Luluabourg, took me to the city of Bakwanga, now known as Mbuji-Mayi. We had gotten special permission to visit the diamond mines. This was highly unusual but we drove in. There were two cities. One was a small fenced and gated city where the senior employees of the mines lived and then there was the rest, which was really very, very impoverished. We went into the mining area. It was amazing. There were gigantic pieces of earth-moving equipment. It was huge areas of strip mining. I remember doing the computations that they took several tons of earth off daily and out of that they got about 28 to 30 pounds of industrial diamonds.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Yes. The Congo was the world’s leading, and is still, I think, the world’s leading producer of industrial diamonds, including some gemstones. On our way back Pete Synodis pulled out a pad and did some computations on how much they got and how much per day and annually and of course it came into hundreds of millions of dollars that they were worth. And according to the company people the government got a quarter of this but in fact we knew that the Congolese central government only got about \$10 million a year and so we figured the rest was going in bribes to local government officials. It was a fascinating experience. They said they couldn’t protect poaching although they were supposed to. They said they did a pretty good job protecting theft but at the same time Congo-Brazzaville was the sixth leading exporter of industrial diamonds in the world, although there was no diamond mining in Congo-Brazzaville. The diamonds came from somewhere.

I picked up some other assignments, in addition to doing the field operations. One of them was exhibits, which I didn’t really enjoy. I hired a wonderful young exile, a refugee from Stanleyville, who was a talented art student. One day in late 1965, I think, John Mowinckel called me into his office asked for a special exhibit. He had some pictures here and wanted an exhibit of them. He explained that the exhibit was not for us, but for the Congolese government. He said to ask Joe Ensuki, the young exhibits technician, not to do this really well because it’s got to look like it was done by the Congolese Foreign Ministry. But anyway, it was photos of materials from Che Guevara and the Cuban episode in the eastern Congo and southeastern Congo. I knew exactly where they had come from and that it wasn’t the Foreign Ministry, but it was a fascinating collection. This is why when after Guevara’s death, when all of his diaries became available, people would say that all of these stories about what Guevara’s doing, this and that, really aren’t so. I know he was in the Congo, there was no question about it.

Q: How did the diamonds get across?

GILLESPIE: Ah. Well, the first question is how did the diamonds get out of the area of Bakwanga, out of Mbuji-Mayi? There obviously were some- in small streams, there were some people who panned for diamonds, this happens, and you can dig and pan for diamonds in that area and you're never going to become rich but you might hit some. But evidently most were stolen – by workers or their bosses. It's a long way to get there. I assume there were a number of middlemen, but at certain places you can walk across the border and you know, once you get across the Congo River and on the north side of the river in the Congo, you can walk into Congo-Brazzaville or get on a small boat and run down the river to Brazzaville. It was possible to get them in. I have always been amazed that somehow they did.

Serving at the embassy in the Congo was fascinating from the moment I arrived, even at the peak of the tension. A lot of this came from Godley, a big man, intelligent, full of life, politically very conservative, very dedicated to the Foreign Service. There was an incredible social life. Sometimes I sensed that we would work until 7:00 and then party until about 2:00 and get five hours of sleep. I first got a touch of this when I was in Burundi, and Ambassador Godley came on the Air Attaché's DC-4 with members of the embassy staff to Bujumbura. They had been in Bukavu and overnighted with us. There was a dinner party for Godley and then afterwards everyone went to the only nightclub in Bujumbura. And I remember Susan and I were hosting the Information Officer from Leopoldville Wes Fenhagen and his wife, Betsy. Godley came in and people were dancing, having a good time, He announced, in his deep loud voice, "Wheels up at 7:00 tomorrow morning." And everyone feared being left. But then he said, "No one leaves the nightclub until the Ambassador does." And he went and stood in front of the door. He was the life of the party for the evening but you didn't dare go, which drove my wife crazy because she knew that although we would be up to say good-bye to our guests, we would be up before that with one year-old Jimmy. But that's what the way it was in the Congo.

But there were many very enjoyable experiences in the Congo. Godley took members of his staff with him when he visited all over the country. He would go call on governors, he would go and usually spend a night and whenever he went he took one couple from each section in the mission with him. And he always tried to take husband and wife when he could. We went on one and it was a delightful trip. Although we ate at the governor's mansion and it was one of the worst meals that I had in the Congo- But we did things like this.

John Mowinckel asked me to find out if we could get into Parc Albert, the game park close to Goma in the Eastern Congo. The staff at USIS Bukavu inquired and found that we could although we would be among the first visitors since the war started. So we arranged a trip to Bukavu with a weekend to Parc Albert. John's wife and son and Susan came along in the Mobil Oil plane. He and I paid for their trips. When we arrived at Parc Albert, the name of which I do not know now, we were met by the head game warden who came up and introduced himself in English. It turned out that he had been one of the first AID grantees before independence and had come back. He was thrilled to see us. There had been no visitor to the park in a long time. He spent most of his time fighting poachers and the occasional rebels who came through, just doing malicious things. And he took care of us and it was, of all my visits to African game reserves over the years, this was really the most wonderful. The rangers knew what was happening. It's a beautiful area. It was a very exciting four day trip.

But life settled into a certain rigmarole and steady diet of certain scheduled work. We got fewer visitors than we had in Accra, of course. Although Leopoldville was peaceful, we rarely got visitors. One day in May of '65 we were told that the Woody Herman jazz orchestra was coming. Our Cultural Affairs officer, Hank Ryan, a wonderful man-

Q: That's Duke Ryan?

GILLESPIE: No, not Duke. Duke was a junior officer with me. Hank was an older African American, had taught for awhile at the University of Arizona or at Arizona State and served mainly in Africa. He was delighted because he loved jazz but he said this is rather strange to be sending what basically was a white jazz band to Africa. What had happened was that it was another one of the little twists of the Cold War. Woody Herman was supposed to go to Romania, Bulgaria and somewhere else in Eastern Europe but things had tightened up. Suddenly there were no exchanges in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We had this wonderful band ready to go and no place to go. They may even have been Europe already. So we were available and they came out. The band was terrific. Woody Herman was a delightful man, as was his wife, who spent a lot of time holding our new daughter, Betsy, fresh from her birth in the US. Ryan and the rest of the USIS staff had a great time showing them the wonderful Congolese popular music and dance halls throughout Kinshasa. That was our big cultural presentation in two years. We didn't have that kind of thing and I think all of us, the USIS bunch, missed it.

At the end of 1964 I got a second job. I was made the motion picture officer, which was very interesting for me. It was two parts. We had a large distribution operation. We put things on the commercial circuit which, believe it or not, was still working in the Congo throughout all of the chaos. There were one or two old Belgian colonials who had been there forever and had distribution networks. We would take a stack of USIA produced and acquired films to them and they would put them in the circuit and return those that had completed the circuit all over the Congo. They would loan us, as well, old Charlie Chaplin shorts and other things like this that we would use to go on the road with our mobile units. These were the famous USIS mobile units, a jeep station wagon that had a generator attached and was loaded so you could show movies from the top of the van. We had four mobile units, three of which would be on the road almost all the time. They would come back, spend four or five days at home and go out again. They showed movies all over the lower Congo area. What they would do, which was fascinating, was they would take light old popular cartoons or if they could get them, old Charlie Chaplin movies and things that everyone had seen 100 times, and they would show those to attract the crowd and then they would put our movies up and they would do, in addition to the French narration of them, they would do, through a microphone hook-up, their own Kikongo explanation of what was happening. I've often wondered what got through but they were appreciated and enjoyed.

One of the most enjoyable things I got to do was with George Stevens, Jr., who was the head of the USIA motion picture and television branch. He had been brought in by Ed Murrow and was still there, came to the Congo and we took him to see two or three- two films together. One was a film that had been made in the Congo in this one village and we took it to the village and we showed it. It was their premiere. And in addition to that, afterwards we showed them "Years of Lightning, Day of Drums," the famous Kennedy memorial film that Stevens had produced. It was a fascinating evening.

The other part, in addition to the distribution side of the film, obviously, was the film production side, and we had two American filmmakers when I arrived, one of them was transferred later and we worked with one, who had two Portuguese-Angolan cameramen and editors who worked with him and they produced a monthly newsreel that was distributed throughout the Congo and was extremely well received and they did that, I think, up until 1966 or '67, after I had left. I learned a great deal working with them. Up until then I had known nothing about the making of films and it was something that actually I appreciated very much. I never did it but I was able to watch, and I learned what they were doing and I learned what they were talking about. But I did this as well as field operations. I still was in and out of Leopoldville but we had limited Stanleyville to a small Cultural Center/Library run by the three Foreign Service nationals and we closed down the post at Coquilhatville so it wasn't quite as much work as it had been the first year I was there. I still had some responsibilities for Stanleyville and I went to Stanleyville with the acting American Consul and one other officer. We were assigned by Godley to be the Embassy's representatives for the Northeastern Congo as it was retaken by government forces.

In December of '65 we went on R&R. My wife was pregnant; we went home, were there for Christmas. I returned to Leopoldville in January and-

Q: Your wife was from where?

GILLESPIE: My wife is from Connecticut originally. And she stayed there. We had paid a visit to my parents who by this time were in Lexington, Kentucky. We stayed in the States for about five weeks. I flew back to the Congo; Susan stayed in Connecticut and our daughter was born March 30 and in late April she came back to the Congo. It was an extremely difficult time for me. I didn't like the separation. In a very- a relatively short period of time, certainly short looking back from where I am now, I had become a complete married man. I missed my family and I sort of put it into work and I worked a lot. I was busy; I traveled a good bit. We were still stuck with the lack of communication problem.

The baby was supposed to be born the first week of April. And so at the end of March, I went off on a weeklong trip, including four days in Stanleyville. There was a new university that was being built by Protestant missionaries and I wanted to see what we could do to work together. I had a number of other things I was working on up there and I left. Well, mail in and out was such that it took about 10 days for an air letter from the States to get to Kinshasa, maybe a week if we were lucky. I flew back from Stanleyville, as planned, the night of the 31st. I was driven home, probably about 7:00. I decided to drive to the office to pick up my mail. I went down and the mail was stacked on my desk and I started to read letters from the top one up and of course that was the most recent. And what happened was my wife's doctor decided that they should push the birth up, and so they picked a date. Well, the letter that told me the date was at the bottom of the pile. The one on top started with I'm going into the hospital tomorrow. And so I rushed around and I finally found, in the telegram file, the chronological copy of all the telegrams, I found the telegram that had been sent for me, telling me my daughter had been born. So there I was, there was no way I could contact anybody in the States. I tried to place a telephone call to my father-in-law with no luck. He tried twice and then on the third time finally got through to me. But it was, you know, it was a shock. I had had no idea whether Betsy, my daughter was a girl or a boy. I went home; there was a

case of beer that had been left on the front porch of my house. I hadn't gone in that entrance because I went in the back and there was a case of beer with a note on it saying congratulations to Miss Gillespie, signed by some friends. And so at about 8:00 or 9:00 I started- people started calling; they found out I was home and started calling me. It was a remarkable sort of a thing.

In any case, eventually I talked to everyone. I got a lot of letters and then my wife came back. I still think that she did one of the toughest jobs anybody ever had, one of the burdens of the Foreign Service, of course, was that flight from New York to Leopoldville, Pan American; it was about 18 hours with a new baby and a three year old.

Q: Tell me, looking at, particularly the film program and all, looking back on it, do you think this was very effective or not?

GILLESPIE: It's very hard to say was the film program effective or not. In the Congo, given the history, probably not. Perhaps in the short-term, somewhat.

Q: Well, let's put the performances, the whole-

GILLESPIE: Every film, of course not. But there were some very good, very purposeful films that were not only excellent films, but successful in reaching their goals. The films, there were a lot of films that were really quite good. Most of the films that USIA made and acquired and distributed were made with a real purpose. Did they all reach their goals, no. But who did?

Q: How to prevent malaria.

GILLESPIE: Well, yes, but also films to teach people about the United States, diversity in the United States, how this country works. The health films were acquired; the AID-type movies. Walt Disney made a series that were really quite good. The question still comes, how were they used, Stu. It isn't just was the film good, was the program good, but how, once it got there, it's still those last three feet. It's about getting that film, that book into the right hands. In this case, get the person, those eyes in front of that film, and that was- that's always difficult. I don't know.

Before I went to the Congo, I remember going to this screening for senior Washington officials of a film made for Africa. All of the top guys came in and sat down to basically say yea or nay on this rough cut of this film. It dawned on me later that we had there were men who weren't filmmakers talking about this should be cut so it's a little faster here and do this and this, not talking about the policy that was behind the film at all or the content, but trying to be filmmakers. That was often a real problem.

There were some wonderful and very useful films made. The film on John Glenn's first space flight was quite good. On the other hand, if you consider what it cost, it is a tough call. Was it useful or not? I will say this: George Stevens, Jr. put together at USIA probably the most talented group of artists that have ever worked for the government at one time since the WPA (Work Projects Administration). It was a remarkable group of young people who made films and a number of them, surprisingly, stayed for a long time. They were excellent. Now, basically, we just don't product anything. They do produce some programs.

Q: You know, I was thinking back to Stanleyville and the Simbas and all?

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: I interviewed Mike Hoyt and Mike was saying he was not a fan of Godley.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: Godley thought it would be a good idea for us to stay behind, which has never seemed to work out very much. I mean, I've talked to people who have stayed behind in China and in-

GILLESPIE: And Godley knew that that was a mistake.

Q: Yes. And Hoyt, I think at one point, he said that, you know, Godley was saying, you know, sort of sorry and all, and Hoyt said well, one consolation was, if I went down, in other words got killed or something, I know it wouldn't help you, you know.

GILLESPIE: Well, I'm sure there was that thought. I mean, I think among a lot of people, among Hoyt's predecessor, John Clingerman, who went to Stanleyville with the Belgian paratroopers because he knew his way around the city and could go find people, especially- he was looking to find Hoyt, find them. The question is, should these people have stayed, should it even have been close? A lot of people had left and it's- you know, I don't know. There were a lot of private Americans there – mostly missionaries. I think the real problem there, Stu, was no one really thought that the Simbas could possibly take Stanleyville, could possibly reach this area. Even though that was the heartland of the Lumumba supporters it was difficult; it was difficult.

There had been a threat to Bukavu at about the same time Stanleyville was taken. I was still in Bujumbura and we evacuated Bukavu. The PAO and his family came to Bujumbura and stayed with us. I remember they stayed with us because John Graves had six or seven children (only a few stayed with us.) It was our introduction to early teens and pre-teens who ate like crazy. We couldn't keep enough food in them. We were happy to have them but John said there's no sense staying there. He said if this isn't really going to be a problem, we'll be back there in another two or three days. And they were. They all went back. I think that's what we thought would happen up and down that area. But in Stanleyville, the rebels just completely overran the government forces when they took over.

The next event of importance, while I was there, was the coup. At that time, Joseph- Desiré Mobutu, later Mobutu Sese Seko, took over the country. It was Thanksgiving 1965. Joseph Kasavubu, the President, had named Moise Tshombe Prime Minister the year before. This was probably good internally for the country because Tshombe brought the Katanga support into the country finally but it was terrible internationally. The other Africans and Europeans had a very hard time supporting Tshombe at all. He had led Katanga's post-independence separation bringing the United Nations in and leading to a war. He was a fairly good leader, compared to the political leaders in the Congo, which had no real national political leadership. He was as good if not better than most but it wasn't good enough.

On Thanksgiving morning, keeping with USIS and Embassy habit, before dinner I drove down to the office. Wes Fenhagen, the duty officer for USIS, was there. The streets were virtually empty as I drove in. As I went into the office, and Wes said, "Have you heard? There's been a coup. Mobutu took over." Wes smiled and said I had the pleasure of calling Larry Devlin, the Chief of Station, and telling him that Mobutu had taken over. There weren't a lot of people around; it had been quiet for us. (NOTE)

Mobutu took over and during the time I was there I think it was a positive change. I was only there for another year and his corruption was not yet fully evident. There are a number of things in governing that a military can do and they do them rather well; things that demand order and precision and some control. The military does that fairly well. The Congo learned, as other countries have learned, that the military isn't really equipped at all to manage most of governing. They aren't great economists; they aren't by trade, doctors or health care specialists; and so this sort of thing falls to the side and that happened too, later on. But I think that first six months probably was rather positive, although during that time, as I said earlier, the Mobutu-Godley relationship fell apart. Godley left and at that time also there was a big turnover in the rest of the mission.

Q: Well you left around that time, too, didn't you?

GILLESPIE: I left shortly afterwards.

Q: When did you leave?

GILLESPIE: Maybe the middle of December '66.

Q: Sixty-six. Okay, what I'm thinking this is a good place to stop.

GILLESPIE: Fine.

Q: Where did you go after?

GILLESPIE: I return to Washington and take 16 weeks of Spanish language training and go off to Montevideo.

Q: Alright. Well, we'll pick it up then.

GILLESPIE: Good, that will be fine.

Q: Great.

Okay. Today is the 5th of March, 2010, with Jake Gillespie. And Jake, we had left, you were- you had some things- You were in the Congo from when to when?

GILLESPIE: I was in the Congo from late October 1964 until about the 10th, I think, of December; 10th or 12th of December in 1966.

Q: Okay. You had a couple things you wanted to add before we move on.

GILLESPIE: Yes. First of all, in September of '66, there was an attempted coup in Leopoldville. Mobutu had taken over in '65, in November of '65, and it was rather evident that he was loading the government with people from his part of the country. Mobutu was from a small tribal group in the northwest of the country but he was loading his government with cronies and colleagues and it didn't look like much of an improvement. He also was not treating well the people who were from the Bakongo, especially those working in government from the Bakongo area, which is the area around the mouth of the Congo River. Joseph Kasavubu, the first president of the Congo, had come from there. The coup was attempted, was quickly overthrown. The leaders were all arrested and could have been put in the courts. There was adequate evidence of what they had done and the Congolese courts would have handled it. It would have taken awhile; the Congolese courts were not the most efficient, certainly, and they weren't always the best. But Mobutu set up a kangaroo court within a week of the capture and rounding up of the conspirators. They were convicted in two days and executed the following day. What concerned me directly, struck me and concerned me, was not the authoritarianism, the way that Mobutu did it. I thought the kangaroo court was very bad for the Congo to do; it was another bad example of the Congo to the rest of the world when they needed to give better examples. But what really concerned me was the evident blood thirstiness of the man in the street in Kinshasa. Although I had seen evidence of the results of that, perhaps, in Stanleyville, where the rebellion had been so horrible, this was really the case, people parading through the streets, screaming for blood. It was something that concerned me; it concerned many of the Americans in the Embassy who had been there for awhile. We were seeing something that perhaps we always thought possible, given the history of this poor country, but we had never seen it ourselves. Then, on top of this, the FSNs were extremely concerned-

Q: You're talking about our Foreign Service nationals.

GILLESPIE: Our Foreign Service nationals.

Q: These were Congolese working for us.

GILLESPIE: Yes. And my own staff, with whom I had become quite close in some ways, was extremely concerned about this. They didn't like it at all. Of course, looking at it today it is evidence of a lot of the problems that we have seen in the last 20, 25 and 30- ever since I- throughout the history of the Congo and certainly in the last 20 years and the last five years in northeastern Congo.

Q: I have just finished an interview, some time ago, but with Aubrey Hooks, who was our ambassador to the Congo around the turn of the century, 1990- late-

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: And talking about the disintegration of the Congo, how at the head of it Kabila, the son of the guy that took over, controls maybe- controls being a very vague, not quite really correct word, about a third of the country and the rest being held by a variety of groups, including outside powers and here is probably one of the richest areas in the world with raw materials and all, and how it's just gone to hell, that at the beginning, when the Belgians may have- didn't educate their people but they left a very solid infrastructure; roads you could drive around there but-

GILLESPIE: There is some question. Since I was there closer to the beginning I might differ there a bit. There were no roads more than about 20 miles east of the Leopoldville, Kinshasa. This was a difficult area because then you begin to get into rain forest. River transportation was about the only way to ship goods or people. There was some rail but most of the rail went east to the port of Matadi but that was about it.

Q: You were there when?

GILLESPIE: I was there 1964-66 and it was shortly after independence. I was out in areas where you would get some finished roads, perhaps not paved but good finished roads, for maybe 10 and 15 mile stretch in some places but the copper all had to be shipped out in one of two ways, and this was always a problem. It either went out to the west through Angola on rails that the Portuguese had that went that way, or it went out through the east through what is now Zambia and down into Zimbabwe and up but it went out via South Africa or Mozambique. Of course that was not Zambia and Zimbabwe, it was Rhodesia. And so in effect the Congo was tied to colonial countries and, even worse, it went out Rhodesia and went further south and it was exported out of South Africa. So this was always a problem. There were some rail systems and they did work. The river system was good and it did work. This is very true. The education system was in the hands of the church and extremely limited. I have no doubt that the infrastructure has deteriorated since I left, but it wasn't great when I was there.

Q: Okay. Is there anything else you want to add?

GILLESPIE: Yes. The other thing I wanted to mention about the Congo; I mean, we can- you're right, it's a big rich country with enormous troubles and we could talk about it all day. But I did want to say something about the staff, the American staff. These were remarkable people who for a short time were brought together. While I was there, I say "remarkable," myself not included, but Ambassador Godley; Bob Blake, the DCM while I was there who became ambassador; Montague Stearns, the head of the Political Section when I arrived and for most of the time I was there, who became Ambassador to several major countries; Harvey Nelson succeeded him and had quite a successful career following. The Political Section had several remarkable characters; one, our friend Ken Brown, who went on to become Ambassador; Jack Davidson, who was an Ambassador in two other African countries, and Hank Cohen, who became a senior department official as well as Ambassador in several places and I think is considered one of the African experts in the United States today.

Q: Yes,, yes he is.

GILLESPIE: And the others were really quite good and although perhaps never achieved the heights of these people but Jim Farber, Andre Navé, Jay Katzen, who left the Service and was elected to the state senate in Virginia and did a great deal for- for Foreign Service officers living in Virginia. This was really a remarkable group of people. Larry Devlin, who is well known and John Stein, who was a young officer who came out there, later ended up Acting Director for a brief period of the Central Intelligence Agency. USIA, my own office, was headed by John Mowinckel, something of an unusual background, grandson of a Norwegian prime minister who fought with David Bruce's group in the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), came out, had spent seven years as a PAO, a deputy PAO in Paris before he came to the Congo because he was broke and he needed the money and went on to an interesting career. One of the deputy PAOs was Rudy Aggrey, who went on and was Ambassador in Senegal and Romania. McKinney Russell, who was an Assistant Information Officer, became the Consular at USIA, the third highest position there. I'm hesitating- But it was a remarkable group of people and a great pleasure for a young person like me. I remember, I was, I think- I left in '66, maybe all of 27 years old by the time I got out.

Q: Well, it also was a time when world attention was focused on the Congo. I mean, you know, I knew, like, Kasavubu, Tshombe. Lumumba; I mean, these are all household names to anybody interested in foreign policy and later moved to Southeast Asia. But at the time this was where the focal point- I mean, this was-

GILLESPIE: In any case, I left in December. I went home on a very welcome home leave with two small children. Susan and I had a good leave, settled briefly in a rented house we found in Bethesda and I went to Spanish language training.

Q: I want to ask you one question before we go on. Was there concern of you and your family during this coup, the aftermath of the coup and the blood thirsty crowds, were you afraid they might turn on you all?

GILLESPIE: No, because it was brief. It was brief; two or three days only. We did more or less clamp down and say everybody stay home, don't come downtown, don't go to the markets downtown, stay home if you need to. I discovered that the man who was probably the leader, Emmanuel Bemba, had been in my office two weeks before, where he had discussed with me and with two of the senior Foreign Service nationals, a film that we had made of a school that he supported three years earlier, and he said the school is finished, and he was trying to talk us into going back and making a follow up film to show. It was not a ridiculous request at all as we saw it; as I thought about it later I thought well, you know, he was trying to do a little self-promotion for things that he had supported, which is understandable, and would have been even if he had not been planning a coup. No, I don't think there was great fear at that time, to answer your question.

JAY K. KATZEN
Labor Attaché
Leopoldville (1964-1966)

Jay K. Katzen was born in New York in 1936. He graduated from Princeton in 1958 and then received an M.A. at Yale the following year and entered the Foreign Service in 1959. He served in Australia, Burundi, Romania, and Mali. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in June 1990.

Q: Well, then you went to Leopoldville -- it was Leopoldville, not Kinshasa. You were there from '64 to '66. What were you doing there?

KATZEN: My title was labor attaché. I was within the political section, and my function, among others, was to maintain liaison with the nascent labor union development. I also had responsibilities for following different parts of the country politically. And, as you'll recall, that was a time when a lot of names (which you and I remember but now have been forgotten) were on the world's headlines.

We had a government then headed by Adoula. Most of the country, though, was not in the hands of the central government. We had a rebel government in Stanleyville, now Kisangani. We had another rebel government in Elisabethville, now Lubumbashi. Another rebel government in Luluabourg. It was a period during which the central government, with U.N. backing, was endeavoring to reassert itself and bring the country under central control again. The names of the time included Lumumba and Kasavubu and, obviously, Tshombe.

Q: Well, Lumumba was dead, wasn't he, by that time?

KATZEN: Lumumba was dead. The rebellion in the north was being undertaken in the name of Lumumba.

Q: Was this the Simba group?

KATZEN: The Simbas were primarily in the northeast of the country, in Kivu Province. "Simba" is simply the Swahili word for lion, and the Simbas believed that they had a magic, which usually was common water, called adawa (again a Swahili word), which would make them oblivious to the bullets that were being shot at them. So you often had the Simbas running into battle with, ostensibly, their adawa on and getting mowed down.

Q: It didn't work.

KATZEN: It didn't work.

Q: Were you there at the time of Dragon Rouge, the rescue effort?

KATZEN: Yes, I was.

Q: Could you explain what precipitated this and how it was viewed from the embassy, because this was a very crucial situation, and what you recall about this period?

KATZEN: Sure. We had a very dynamic ambassador, Mac Godley, and a very energetic DCM, called Bob Blake, and the head of our political section was Monty Stearns. And they, quite correctly, conveyed to a very concerned Washington that the movement in Stanleyville, as unstable as it was and supported by external forces, could and would kill the many Western hostages which it had captured in its...

Q: Had the hostages already been captured when you arrived?

KATZEN: Yes, indeed. Among them, five people from our consulate in Stanleyville, who were being held captive in Stanleyville. And the north and northeast of the country also was being held by these same forces. It became clear to both the Belgians and to us, as well as to the French who had citizens there in greater numbers than we, that these people would be killed by the rebels if a rescue were not undertaken.

Accordingly, it was decided in Washington and in Brussels that an effort would be mounted, using American aircraft, C-130s staged out of Ascension Island, from which Belgian paratroopers would drop and serve to liberate the people on the ground. That happened in November of '64, and was followed by successive drops on Paulis and other places in the north and northeast.

A number of Americans and others, as you know, were killed, among them the Reverend Carlson, whom we had made an effort to free. The effort did serve to beat back the rebellion and to free the overwhelming majority of the captives.

Q: What was the embassy role? Were you involved in doing anything?

KATZEN: Yes, we were very active participants in the drop. The knowledge of it was very closely held, obviously, but we were active participants in the planning and the ultimate resolution of the liberation.

Similarly, thereafter officers were sent by the embassy, the original request coming from the Congolese, to go inspect villages and towns which had been liberated. Accordingly, there were a lot of activities in which career Foreign Service officers were sent out on military aircraft with weapons to visit recently liberated or, in several cases, not-quite-liberated towns.

I went with our air attaché to one of those, Lodja, on one occasion and found that the governor -- who welcomed us at lunch and brought us to the nearby cathedral (and this was a town that very recently had been "liberated," some two days before), where we saw a young Congolese boy who had been sacrificed on the altar at the Catholic cathedral -- entertained us at lunch and then took us prisoner, saying that they had located a radio on the aircraft and therefore we were spies and were going to be held captive. This was a gentleman who had not quite been liberated.

We were held in the slammer for several days and were ultimately freed when the Congolese struck a bargain that enabled us to go if two conditions were met: one, that we stopped eating quite as much food as we were of their prison stores, and secondly, that we took the nephew of the governor to Luluabourg with us in the plane.

We did that. The nephew literally had a pistol at the pilot's head during the flight. He did not, though, understand English. The fellow at the tower in Luluabourg did. The plane landed, the fellow was taken prisoner. And Mobutu, several weeks later, took the erstwhile governor prisoner as well.

But, as the Belgian press described them, these were Wild West days. At the same time, they were nation-building days. And I think that we can, as Americans, take a lot of satisfaction in what was a dynamic policy.

Q: You know, one of the great conflicts, and it was being fought in the United States, too, at the time, was with Katanga, which was really the mineral-rich area, with Tshombe. Tshombe was in his prime then, wasn't he?

KATZEN: That's right.

Q: And there were two schools of thought. One was: We've got to keep the Congo together and all this. The other one was: Let's be practical, fellas, we've got economic interests down in Katanga. We can work with Tshombe, he knows how to deal with Belgian and American commercial interests. Let's back him and the hell with the rest of this. I mean, this was almost an American ideological fight. How did we feel at the embassy? Were there these divisions within the embassy?

KATZEN: There were no divisions within the embassy. The fascinating part in that decision-making process was that it was literally made by so few people to start with. I was in the department thereafter, and it became apparent to me that the philosophy in resisting the Belgian wish to, as you say, accommodate a government in Katanga that was both rich and seemingly well administered was based on the ideology of a very few Africa policy makers who felt at the time, quite correctly, that if we were to let colonial borders change (and this was in the early Sixties) in the Congo, that they then could be changed all over the continent, with a lot of insurrection, revolution, bloodshed, and problems for the future.

And I think that we've seen, had that border changed, that that indeed would have happened in a variety of places: Biafra -- again it would have been a greater temptation to let Biafra go had Katanga gone, if you will. And as we look around the continent now, we can say the same of a part of Cameroon, certainly of Ethiopia, possibly of Sudan, and in a variety of other places. So this is a policy which may have not been entirely successful or liked (and we certainly hear now in the Middle East of these being artificial borders and let's change them), but in Africa, for better or worse, it's been a policy that has held countries together.

Q: Was this basically accepted within the embassy?

KATZEN: Yes, there was no difference that I heard, certainly among the people with whom I dealt. No, there wasn't. And Tshombe, as you know, came to power as prime minister and president during the period that I was in Leopoldville. So we were dealing with Prime Minister Tshombe of the Congo rather than president of Katanga, which he previously had been.

Q: I wonder if you could talk a little about your impressions of your dealings with the Congolese in the government and how you looked upon it at that time.

KATZEN: One of the characteristics, I think, of Belgian colonial policy at the time (which has changed dramatically with new generations of Belgians returning to Africa -- oftentimes the sons and grandsons of the Belgian colonialists originally there) was to place their African subjects, be they in the Trust Territory or in Belgian Congo, in a state of paternalism, if you will, unlike the policy of the French and the British.

As such, as you know, only a handful of Congolese were trained beyond the secondary level of education, basically because the Belgians thought this would all go on for much longer and maybe somewhere along the way they would extend that training process. Accordingly (and I think the Congolese would be the first to acknowledge this), basic concepts of running things simply presented them with a problem because they lacked the training.

In the early days of independence, Belgians were appalled that Congolese would go into the zoo in Leopoldville and kill the animals, and that the roads quickly deteriorated, and that the airplanes were not serviced, and that the Congolese would come at the last minute to doctors to get treatment, and that there was not an appreciation of a system of laws.

What they, I think, failed to respect was the fact that the parks had been closed to the Africans, who could not go in and appreciate what it was aesthetically to admire an animal behind bars, that there was no real appreciation of maintaining roads because there weren't vehicles to travel them, and insofar as maintaining an aircraft, very few Africans traveled by air. So there was no identification with the principal institutions that made the place work. Insofar as government went, during the early days of Congolese administration, votes were bought and sold as one watched a parliament in session. And yet there was not the basis for the Congolese to have an appreciation of how a democracy legitimately and honestly functions.

So that a lot of our dealing, as Americans, was to try to instill some sense of how things could and should work for their own benefit. I think that the embassy and Washington can take pride, with the Congolese, at the progress that has been made. Hell, we're talking about just a 30-year spectrum. And while Mobutu obviously is not everyone's angel, there's been an awful lot of progress that has been made.

There's an awful lot of progress that needs to be made: AIDS, the incredible cost of just living, the incredible cost of just getting enough food to eat, unemployment, rural education, transportation, communications and so on. They have a lot of work to do.

Q: How about when you went to, say, ministries or officials? This was a difficult role. I mean we weren't the former colonial power. We were there, we were Americans, and one can talk about, well, we try to train, but in your day-to-day dealing, this wasn't your job. I mean, how did you deal with these...?

KATZEN: Well, you had primarily to have a good sense of humor. It's a great frustration, certainly for current Foreign Service officers, and it's difficult for you and for me to understand as well, that

it's so difficult to do now what we did then. You have high walls around embassies now for, in most places, good reasons. What we did then was to get out with the people as best we could, slap backs, visit a lot of folk, go out to nightclubs at night, have a good time, travel a lot with the people and get to know their problems. In the daily life at the ministries, that sense of humor, though, was a requirement.

I remember being in a line to present a diplomatic note to a gentleman who was the foreign minister at the time, and I was in back of the papal nuncio, who was doing the same thing. And the foreign minister was very visible after awhile behind a screen, in bed with a lovely young lady. The nuncio turned and said, "Young man, perhaps you would do better to look the other way."

So there were moments like that, that were requiring of a lot of patience and not demanding a response such as we might expect elsewhere. Again, these were really pioneering times.

Q: Well, you were dealing in part with the labor movement. Was there much of a labor movement?

KATZEN: Interestingly, there was. And I think that that reflects upon your earlier question, as well. In each of these countries, as is the case in much of Eastern Europe now, we were prized because we were Americans. We were something different: we had different music, we had blue jeans, and we had a lot of things that differed in style, as well. We liked, and I think it radiated that we liked, what we were doing. We were not there because of any religious or necessarily patriotic cause; we enjoyed what we were doing.

The labor movement, when I arrived, had three forces: one, the Christian Labor Union, which was the creation of the Belgian Christian labor movement; the ICFTU-generated and AFL/CIO-supported union; and another union which was independent of both of those, along the lines of Belgian socialists.

When I arrived, the AFL/CIO and the Department of Labor's International Labor Affairs Office felt that it was important to bolster the AFL/CIO-supported man, Alphonse Kithima by name, to the detriment of an equally democracy-loving leader of the Christian Labor Union.

I had not had much training in labor movement affairs, and yet it seemed to me that our place was to be friends with both organizations and with the independent labor union movement as well. And it was a policy which I successfully was able to encourage Washington to accept, at the same time encouraging the Belgians to recognize that we were not competing with them on the labor scene. That we respected each of the movements, just as we hoped that they would respect the movement which the AFL/CIO was supporting.

Q: How about the role of the AFL/CIO, because they had a very aggressive policy, which in some ways almost bypassed the Department of State, or at least they had a veto on things. I mean, how did you find the hand of the AFL/CIO in your work?

KATZEN: I found that I got along just fine with the people from the movement. I went back to Washington early on for consultation, and went to each American labor union leader who was interested in international affairs, and who in turn played a role in decision-making with Irving

Brown and others over at the AFL/CIO, and said, "Look, I'm a new guy on the block. I can only learn from you, and I want to. By the same token, these are my observations after a few months on the scene. Let's keep cross-fertilizing and keep talking to each other about developments."

I found that that worked. I was thereby able to establish contacts for Congolese visiting the States to visit one or another labor union. And I encouraged American labor union leaders, when they came to the Congo, to meet with leaders other than the man whom they had been backing in the past, and for the Belgians similarly to speak to our people and our people to the Belgians. And it did work.

I must say I'm familiar with some animosity around the world that had existed. I did not experience any of that myself.

One of the reasons the labor union movement was appreciated and successful in the Congo was that it was one of the very few avenues along which the Congolese could advance. Teaching, and the Ministry were others. There were very few other areas where Congolese could expect to progress, and be recognized as progressing, from level to level within the Congo at that time. And so labor was one of them. And labor unions were relatively successful in getting a number of their demands met, which in their absence would have precluded workers from getting their demands filled.

Q: At that time, how did you and others in the embassy view what could best be described as the Soviet threat? The Congo again seems to have been a place where there was a focus of both East and West.

KATZEN: Very much so. And we were, there quite a bit more, I would say, than in Burundi, seized of that very fact. This was a battlefield of the Cold War, we felt. And there were Soviet arms and aircraft going to Stanleyville, providing materiel to the rebels. Similarly, materiel from other sources was coming into what still was Albertville and other areas that were rebel-held. And the prime object of the embassy at that juncture was the reestablishment of central government authority over the country, which also was the objective of the United Nations.

Q: Did you have any contact with the Soviets at all?

KATZEN: At that juncture it seems to me we saw few Soviets, and the Soviets were regarded as an adversary by the central government as well. We were on close terms with the Belgians, with the French, with the Israelis, with the Germans and British, and we worked together on a number of aid and obviously politically oriented projects.

Q: Mac Godley was your ambassador. What was his style? How did he operate?

KATZEN: Well, he was, and is, a perfectly wonderful man. He used his staff. He was very close to his staff, respected each one rather than trying to do the whole job himself, and called upon his staff to work together with him in implementing his policies. He was a charger, a leader. He wanted his policy, which was an embassy policy, to be accepted and acted upon by the department. So I would say that the embassy in Leopoldville under his leadership was the leader, if you will, in

the Congo policy at the time. It was the embassy policy which was accepted and implemented and encouraged in turn by Washington.

Q: You didn't feel a heavy hand from Washington then?

KATZEN: No, we didn't. There were feelings in some European capitals, Brussels obviously among them, that we didn't want to be terribly independent of what the Belgians were trying to do. And there were some rough edges in that relationship. But I think, all in all, it worked out very well, and certainly the relationship with Washington was successful. Governor Harriman liked very much what we were trying to do.

I can't say that there really were many problems. The joy of the whole exercise was the chance to work with the wonderful people for whom I worked at the time: Dean Brown, Bill Schaufele, Art Tienken and Roy Haverkamp, Charlie Rushing, Armie Lee. We had a super staff, again perhaps to a great degree mirroring the relationship we had had at one time or another in Leopoldville, once we were in the department.

I then (and this probably was the time of greatest stress within that office) became part of what was yet another edition of the Congo desk: the Congo task force, or working group, up in the Op Center, where we dealt with an effort encouraged by mercenaries to retake a part of and throw the government at the time out. These were, as you recall, forces which came from Northern Angola and tried to regain control.

One of the most memorable parts of that exercise was, literally every midnight when each of us was on the desk, having Dean Rusk call the desk watch officer at the time and ask how things were and wish him or her a good night.

Q: Did you have any feeling at that time that maybe the CIA was playing a game that you didn't know about in these mercenaries efforts?

KATZEN: No, I didn't, because I think that most of what the agency was doing within the Congo while we were there, and subsequently, was generally well known to us. Obviously there were a lot of operational things that were not, and didn't need to be, known by everyone. At least that was my impression. I always got along well with the agency, and so I had no great feeling of any conflict of interest to what various agencies were doing.

RALPH S. SMITH
Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Elisabethville (1964-1966)

Ralph S. Smith was born in Yonkers, New York in 1921. He graduated from Yale University in 1942 and then entered the Navy for four years. After World War II, Mr. Smith joined the Foreign Service and in 1959 he became involved with the

USIA. He served in Belgium, Greece, and France. Mr. Smith was interviewed on April 29, 1992 by G. Lewis Schmidt.

SMITH: I ended up in central Africa -- as Branch PAO in Elisabethville, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (now). This was four years after independence, and there was a considerable amount of upheaval in the country. The U.S. Government was still very much in its anti-colonial period then: African was good, European was bad. But after being there a while I came to feel that a European presence was absolutely essential, so I did what I could to encourage it. As it seemed to me, there was nothing wrong with central African tribal society as such: every man is his brother's keeper, and in some ways it's a more admirable and humane society than our own. But it offers no possibility for development, because any sign of initiative -- unless it comes from a paramount chief -- is stifled. Add to this that there were no written languages -- hence virtually no history -- until the Europeans came along; and that even the most basic ideas of cause and effect were different. (This was documented by a remarkable Belgian priest, Father Placide Tempels, who lived with one of the major tribes, the Baluba, for a number of years and wrote a book called La Philosophie Bantoue (Bantu Philosophy)). In other words, for development -- which is what all the Africans said they wanted -- a European-type education was indispensable. So, I spent quite a lot of time trying to arrange for the creation and endowment of a library of the humanities at the University of Elisabethville. And as the Cold War was in the forefront of everybody's thinking -- including my own -- I found apparent receptivity to this idea in AID, since a library of the humanities obviously would be a vehicle for the propagation of Western political philosophy. The rector of the university, a Belgian historian from Bruges, similarly was all in favor of the idea. But he was also a man of worldly wisdom, who said that frankly he didn't see this kind of thing actually getting carried out by a bureaucracy. And I fear he was right. Anyway, I was transferred from Elisabethville after only a year and a half, before the plan came to fruition; and since my successor apparently had other priorities, that was the end of it.

ROBERT F. FRANKLIN
Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Coquilhatville (1964-1967)

Robert F. Franklin, a native of San Francisco, graduated from the University of California and then entered the National Guard during World War II. He became involved with Voice of America in 1951. Mr. Franklin has been posted in Saigon, Berlin, and Manila. He was interviewed on March 4, 1988 by Earl Wilson.

Q: *You were ordered to the Congo which was called ?*

FRANKLIN: No, it was still the Congo then. It did not become Zaire for several years. And my new branch post was 400 miles up the Congo River from the capital of Leopoldville.

Q: *Good old Dick Barnsley.*

FRANKLIN: Yes, it was an interesting place.

Q: You were in Leopoldville?

FRANKLIN: No, I arrived in Leopoldville and then flew up to a town called at that time Coquilhatville which was later renamed M'Bandaka, 400 miles up river from Leopoldville. I had an assistant, a fellow by the name of Fred Hunter, a young man, a very religious fellow who was very serious about his work and did a very good job. By the way, my wife was taking a course at Philippines Women University and wanted to finish it, so I went on alone a couple of months ahead of her, which was convenient in a way; found a house to live in and all that sort of thing. For a two-bit sized post, we had a fairly effective program, I think. We provided a lot of materials to the schools. We had a daily film show which was very, very popular. Just anything we could get in films was popular. We had a library, a small library which, considering the number of people who spoke English, was very good. And we got very much into the good graces of the governor of the province who was located there. An intense young man named Engulu -- more about which later.

I can't remember the exact date. But a rebellion started in Katanga province shortly after my arrival. Bear in mind that the Congo is roughly the size of all of the United States east of the Mississippi River. We were in the northwest corner and Katanga was in the southeast, down at the other end, 1000-odd miles away I guess, maybe more. We were just south of Ubangi Province, the one where you find the dish-shaped lips, the Ubangis. They were just north of us. And it was very, very rural.

But we did have about 150 American missionaries in in the area for which I was responsible. Their church was the church to which Lyndon Baines Johnson belonged. When we found this out we notified the ambassador, and we suddenly got quite a bit more attention than we would have otherwise.

In any event, a very brutal rebellion was started by dissident Katangese and spurred on by Belgian interests who were loath to lose the country, in which they were losing commercial control bit by bit. This spread northward from Katanga first in a very brutal fashion to Bukavu which was on the eastern border, the border with Rwanda. There are a lot of stories that go with that which I'm not qualified to tell, where we had a young vice-consul lost in the hinterland and surrounded by rebel troops and all that. Quite exciting.

We communicated by short wave radio by the way. There were no telephones that were in any way reliable. And everything was done by short wave radio. And then the rebels got up to Stanleyville. You can get the story of Stanleyville from Max Kraus, who had arrived at the same time as I and was sent up there as PAO. I don't recall if Max was actually held prisoner or what. The consul was captured and held prisoner, I remember, for a time.

Anyway, this whole thing spread and spread and spread with very little resistance from the Congonese Army. And the point came to where they started toward us. When they were 50 kilometers away with trucks -- they had acquired a good many trucks -- they simply had stopped at a river because there was a little fording problem.

Q: This is now when they were trying to achieve independence?

FRANKLIN: No, they were trying to achieve control for commercial interests. Really. You'll get a dozen different stories about this. Tshombe, Moise Tshombe was in large part sympathetic to them. He later became President. However, these rebels called themselves Simbas. And they were quite inhuman. They'd go into a town and seek out everybody who could read and write. These were the intellectuals. The Simbas would take them all out to a field and gun them down. Just like that. They didn't want anyone who could do anything effective against them. And they committed many other atrocities, as well.

So anyway, they came through Boerde, west toward Coquilhatville, which is a couple of hundred miles. But they stopped at a river just 50 kilometers from us, as they were having a little trouble fording it. We had several C-130s at that time, large transport aircraft, in support of the Congolese Army. I called for a C-130, and asked my mission friends to call in all their remote missionaries by radio. We all met at the Coquilhatville airport. We took out 150 missionaries, my wife, who had arrived by that time, Ted Hunter, my assistant, and I guess one vehicle, the official USIA carryall. We all flew down to Leopoldville.

As it happened, at the same time that this was going on, the Congolese government had quite recently hired a bunch of mercenaries from Rhodesia and South Africa (who took a very contemptuous view of all blacks I must say) and they sent some of them up to Coquilhatville. I think there were only about 50 of them. They made a little parade. And the rebellion abruptly stopped at the river which the rebels never did cross.

Later Fred went back, but by this time I was due for leave, because I'd had no leave after Manila. And everything was up in the air. We didn't know if we were going to reopen there or what. So I took leave, went home and saw my grandson born, which turned out very well. I think also in that period I took the counter-insurgency course at FSI which was about a three week course.

Before taking leave we were just kicking around Leopoldville because nobody knew what to do with me, where I was going or anything like that. We had a change in PAOs from Steve Baldanza to John Mowinckel about that time. So anyway, they said, go take your leave and come back and we'll see what we can do.

I came back. Again, I kicked around for a little while. We were living in the houses of people who were on leave. It was a ridiculous situation. Then I was sent up as PAO to Bukavu.

Now, Bukavu was this town where they had had a very serious attack during the Simba operation, but they were recovering. It's actually a beautiful place; one of the most beautiful places in the world. It's comparable to Lake Tahoe, California. Somewhat larger, the lake. And the climate was just ideal. The average maximum temperature was about 85 during the warm periods. And the coldest night I ever saw I think was 58. Of course, we were near the equator, about 200 miles away, but we were high, just 100 feet short of a mile high, I remember. Bukavu is built on five peninsulas like fingers sticking out into Lake Kivu. Lake Kivu is the lake that's just north of the big lake, Tanganyika, which received fame as the last stand of the African Queen. They finally wound up on Lake Tanganyika in that film.

We got things going pretty well in Bukavu, an effective program: motion picture teams out showing films all over the area, materials to schools. I wound up publishing a little monthly newsletter in a local Swahili dialect, which I had translated by a friendly American missionary who spoke the dialect, which was quite effective. We called it "Habari za Dunia" which is Swahili for "News of the World."

We got our news from the Voice of America. Over the course of a month I kept making notes on the main things, and then cranked in whatever local news and pictures that we could.

So we were very happy. And in fact in 1967 everybody in Bukavu was very pleased. We had a Fourth of July party at the consular residence which was very successful. All the local official and para-official people came. And we had American hamburgers and that sort of thing.

At six o'clock on the morning of July 5th we heard gunfire from the other end of town. This turned out to be the start of a rebellion on the part of the mercenaries, who had not been paid by the Congolese government, with Katangese troops. And they had decided to take over Bukavu, this was just a local situation: Take over Bukavu and hold it for ransom, so to speak, until the government paid them. Mobutu was Congolese president then, as now.

Q: These mercenaries were from Rhodesia?

FRANKLIN: Yes. Well, there were a few of them from Europe. But the greatest number of them were either South African or Rhodesian, either northern or southern Rhodesia at that time.

And they came in firing. Well, the consul was Frank Crigler, T. Frank Crigler. Anyway, Frank ordered a convoy of all Americans that we could get. They were mistreating American missionaries out in the bush. We heard radio reports. So everybody who could get into the head missionary's house -- he had a nice big house -- and we formed a convoy. We went across the Rusizi River, the border into Rwanda.

There are two bridges across the Rusizi at Bukavu. One of them was blocked. The other one was down by the slaughterhouse. And for some reason or other nobody thought to block that one and we got across. And, mind you, we took only what we could carry in our cars. Everything else was left. At that time I had a little Volkswagen bug -- not much room for freight! So we got across the river. No sooner were we across than we were fired upon by Rwanda troops who thought they were being invaded and who were guarding the border.

Well, the reason we wanted to cross the border for one thing was that the airport that Bukavu used was in Rwanda. Well, I managed to intimidate the soldiers- that's the only way I can put it -- about the horrible things that would happen to them if they gave us a bad time. And they let us through. The consul, didn't speak much French at this point. He had come from Latin America only about a month before and was fluent in Spanish but had very little French.

Anyway, we got through. Nobody was hit by the firing. I'm not sure whether they were warning shots or not, but they were very, very close. We were maybe a car- length apart, and the bullets were hitting between the cars right in front on the road.

JAMES D. PHILLIPS
Consul
Elizabethville/Lubumbashi (1965-1967)

Ambassador Phillips was born in Illinois in 1933. He received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Wichita in 1957 and his Master's in 1958. After serving in the US Army from 1953 to 1955, he entered the Foreign Service in 1961. Postings throughout his career include Paris, Elizabethville, Luxembourg, The Gambia, Copenhagen and Casablanca. Mr. Phillips then became the ambassador to Burundi and Congo. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 5, 1998.

Q: After you finished your freshman year in the Foreign Service and your training where did you go?

PHILLIPS: The Department assigned me to Elizabethville, the Congo as vice consul. I discussed it with Ambassador Bohlen who said he knew from Stan Cleveland that I wanted to go to Brussels to become a specialist on the Common Market. But he said I should be flattered by the Congo offer because it was a hot spot where only promising officers would be assigned. He said he thought it would be more interesting and fun at that point in my career than Brussels. I agreed with him and went to Elizabethville in the summer of 1965.

Q: How long were you in the Congo for?

PHILLIPS: I was there for three years. I was in Elizabethville for two years. I served as vice-consul and then consul. But in 1967, Robert McBride, who had been in Paris when I was working with Bohlen, was named Ambassador to the Congo. Following my tour in Lubumbashi, the name Mobutu gave Elizabethville shortly after he took power, I was hoping to have a year of university training. I had it all worked out. I would go back to Cornell, drop the thesis on political theory and spend a year doing a thesis on U.S. relations with the Common Market. Ambassador McBride, however, asked me if I would come to Kinshasa to work for a year. He said things were getting very tense and he needed someone with my feel for the country. I reluctantly abandoned my plans for university training and agreed. But to back up a bit, on Thanksgiving Day in 1965 Mobutu took power and opened a new chapter on the Congo.

Q: Let's talk about Elizabethville or Lubumbashi? When you went there what were you told was the situation and how was work there?

PHILLIPS: It was an extremely interesting post. Lubumbashi is the capital of Katanga province. Its copper mines made it the economic heart of Zaire. There had been a civil war there during the early 1960s and the UN, with full U.S. support, had intervened to crush the Katanga independence movement led by Moise Tshombe. So Americans were very much resented by the Belgian elite who had backed Tshombe. About a year before I got there Americans were not allowed to join

Belgian- dominated social clubs. In 1965 there was still great resentment about the American role in Katanga because Belgians and Tshombe's Lunda tribesmen clung to the belief that Katanga could have been a viable state on its own. But the real agenda of the Belgian ex-colonials living in Katanga was to join Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia in forming a white-controlled buffer zone between South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

I spent my first year reporting on the evolution of the copper industry and Mobutu's tightening grip on the province. I also followed the conflict between the Lunda's aspirations for independence and the central government's determination to keep Zaire united, a goal shared by the United States because we wanted to avoid the "Balkanization" of the country. Of course U.S. policy was also tied to the cold war interest of keeping the Soviet Union out central Africa. In 1966 things got very tense. Mobutu brought in a group of French and South African mercenaries to protect the northern area of the country whose capital is Kisangani, formerly Stanleyville, from communist-led insurgents. While the mercenaries were being paid by Mobutu they were also conspiring with Belgian and Portuguese agents - remember that Angola and Mozambique were still Portuguese colonies - to rekindle the Katanga independence movement.

Q: Ian Smith was in Rhodesia?

PHILLIPS: Yes. And when he made his famous unilateral declaration of independence from the United Kingdom, the United States condemned the move and supported efforts to undermine his regime. Smith cut off rail links with parts of black Africa and countries like Zambia suffered severe oil shortages. The United States provided aircraft to fly thousands of barrels of oil into Zambia. The planes were routed through Kinshasa and Lubumbashi, and we at the Consulate helped with logistics. The airlift lasted several months until rail links were restored.

Q: You were saying that there was an unholy alliance between Tshombe, the Belgians and the mercenaries who were playing both sides.

PHILLIPS: Yes, and of course we didn't know until later the extent to which they were playing a double game. In Lubumbashi, by June of 1967, the focus wasn't on economics and copper mining but on the very real possibility of another civil war. This was the situation when I transferred to Kinshasa. I worked in the political section there and also had some responsibility for following events in Kisangani. You may recall that when that city was still called Stanleyville atrocities were committed against Europeans by the Simbas, a group of rebels financed by the Chinese communists. There was the infamous incident of a U.S. official being made to eat the American flag bit by bit. Belgian forces eventually liberated the town through a parachute drop.

Q: That was operation Dragon Rouge.

PHILLIPS: Yes. That all happened earlier. But Kisangani was now at the center of sporadic fighting and was the mercenary headquarters. Our Consulate was closed and Ambassador McBride asked me to go down there once a month to establish a presence. So part of my job description was "Acting Consul in Kisangani." 1967-68 was probably my most exciting year in the Foreign Service. When I would go to Kisangani, I always carried a sidearm. I would fly in on a C-130, which would be carrying rice and other food to be distributed by missionaries or the local

authorities, such as existed at the time. I would spend the day there and then fly back. I would meet with the mercenary leader, a Frenchman named Bob Denard.

Q: Where was the danger coming from?

PHILLIPS: It was just total anarchy. Denard had little control over his mercenary troops, which were drawn from the slums of Johannesburg and Marseilles, often ex- Foreign Legionaries, who were absolutely lawless. There was tension between them and the locals. Moreover, rebel forces infiltrated into the city at night. It was a very tense situation. At one of my meetings with Denard, I asked him if he had any message for Kinshasa and he said no that everything was normal. Well, three days later he moved his forces from Kisangani to Bukavu with the intention of going on to Lubumbashi to “liberate” the Katanga. He got as far as Bukavu when the United States made a symbolic gesture that stopped him in his tracks. We put six C-130s at Mobutu’s disposal so he could transfer an elite army corps from Kinshasa to the Bukavu region. Once Denard saw that the United States was prepared to intervene, he negotiated safe passage for his entire army of about three hundred men into neighboring Rwanda. They were picked up by Belgian aircraft and flown back to Europe. Of course that left a huge military vacuum because at that time, hard as it is to credit, a trained force of three hundred well-armed men could control hundreds of miles of that sparsely populated part of Africa. Shortly after Denard left Ambassador McBride asked me to fly to Bukavu on a relief plane carrying several tons of food, blankets and medicine. We flew into a Rwandan airfield near the border and went into Bukavu with a convoy of several trucks that came with us on the C-130. Bukavu was indescribable. The Zairean troops had come in when the mercenaries left and the two forces had pretty much destroyed the city. The only enterprise fully functioning was the brewery. By four o’clock that day, the food and supplies had been distributed via missionary organizations and I was ready to go back to Kinshasa. But by now all of the heavily-armed Zairean soldiers were drunk. By the time I tried to leave that afternoon the soldiers had forgotten that I had come with relief supplies. When I tried to get back across the border to Rwanda they thought I was the last of the fleeing mercenaries. The driver of my car was a local consulate employee. He prevailed on the soldiers not to arrest me on the spot, and after a tense hour-long stand off I finally made contact with a sober officer and was able to get back to the C-130 .

Q: Going back to the time you were in Lubumbashi, what was your impression of the Belgians?

PHILLIPS: The Belgians were in way over their heads. The world had changed since the 19th century when King Leopold conquered the Congo. With the addition of Rwanda and Burundi to the Belgian Congo after the first world war, Belgium was responsible for a huge expanse of territory nearly half the size of the United States. But post-World War II Belgium was a small power that did not have the means or the stomach to rule. So when trouble started in the 1960s they just walked away. They abandoned the country. Unlike the French who had made an effort to create a governing elite in their colonies, the Belgians had done almost nothing to prepare the Congo for self-rule. I think there was one Congolese citizen in the entire country who had graduated from university when the Belgians left. My impression was that some Belgians were racist, but there were many who really wanted to help the country. They had little power, however, and as a whole the Belgians couldn’t do much that was positive, but they could do a lot that was negative. I think they sensed rightly that their time had run out in the Congo. In the middle

1960s, Mobutu had nationalized the copper mines. He still needed Belgians to run the mines, but they were doing little more than milking them for their own, and of course Mobutu's, account.

Q: I understand that it just kept going down and down.

PHILLIPS: The Congo produced copper, but made no investment in infrastructure, upgrading, modernizing or even what you would call maintenance. I was in Lubumbashi in 1996 on a mission to try to determine if the Congo (and I am using that name instead of "Zaire" because that's what the country is now called) could hold free and fair elections. The copper mines, which were once the largest in the world, are shut down, the plant and equipment in ruins. It will take hundreds of millions of dollars to get them running again because you can't just neglect a facility for 30 years.

Q: How were relations when you left that tour?

PHILLIPS: By that time a lot of the Belgian colons had gone to Rhodesia. There was a new group that came in that wasn't as racist and anti-American, so relations were cordial.

Q: Who was the consul general?

PHILLIPS: There were two. Art Tienken was there for almost a year and then was replaced by Bill Harrop.

Q: How was Bill Harrop? He is a very serious, hard charger.

PHILLIPS: Yes he was, and the fact that he came to Lubumbashi shows that Bohlen was right when he said that an assignment to the Congo should be taken as a compliment. Bill was a very effective officer, very serious, but he also has a great sense of humor. He was delightful to work with and helped me a lot. He did some very courageous things.

Q: Were you there when there were threats and problems with the civil authorities in the Congo?

PHILLIPS: Sure. Mobutu's theory of governing was to divide and conquer. He appointed a governor from the far north of the country named Manzikala who, I am convinced, was criminally insane. Also, Mobutu would never allow soldiers who were born in the Katanga to serve there. So the army was like an occupying force that treated the local ethnic groups brutally. The American Consulate was next door to the Governor's mansion and we would often witness soldiers beating local people. One time when this occurred, Harrop had had enough. He got up from his desk and walked over to the mansion, pushed by the soldiers and went in and told Manzikala to stop the beatings, which he did. But Harrop could have been killed.

Q: What was your impression of the Mobutu regime in 1967, 1968 when you were in Kinshasa?

PHILLIPS: It was an extraordinarily corrupt regime from the beginning, although Mobutu did have a couple of good years. When I was first there the exchange rate for the currency, the Zaire, was two U.S. dollars for one Zaire. When I went back in 1996 it had changed to eight million Zaires to one dollar. The currency and everything else deteriorated over time. During the early years though the copper money was coming in and Chevron found some oil offshore. But Mobutu

was putting most of the money into his personal bank account. No money was being invested in even normal government enterprises like roads and schools. All Mobutu was doing was making sure he stayed in power. We did not see that until later, however. At first it seemed that Mobutu was keeping the country together. He was not a radical demagogue such as many believed Patrice Lumumba to be. I personally think we misjudged Lumumba, that he was more a sincere nationalist than a tool of Moscow. But what I think is irrelevant because he had been assassinated long before I got there and Mobutu was firmly in power. Across the river was a communist regime in Brazzaville. The Russians and Chinese were active and we knew that they - especially the Chinese - were arming the Simbas in the north and generally trying to unseat Mobutu. So the U.S. believed Mobutu represented the best option for the country. He was certainly a bulwark against communism in Africa and that was a serious consideration in those days.

Q: Did you have any dealings with the Zairean government?

PHILLIPS: My job in the political section was following internal politics, trying to figure out who was doing what to whom. I had a lot of contact with politicians and journalists but very little with government officials.

Q: What was the political life like then?

PHILLIPS: In spite of Mobutu's one party state, the Congo was fragmented and driven by ethnic tensions. There was no sense of being Congolese. If you asked a person what he was he would answer "Baluba" or "Lunda" or whatever tribe he belonged to, but rarely "Congolese." It is very difficult to create a nation state out of so much diversity, in a country where several hundred tribal languages are spoken. So there were tribal and regional politics rather than the kind of party politics that exists in a democracy. Mobutu did not tolerate opposition but he could not stop jockeying among ethnic and regional leaders for power within the ruling party. That is what constituted political life. One of the reasons the U.S. opposed the Katanga secession and stuck with Mobutu was because we believed the Balkanization of the Congo would create worse conditions for economic development and democracy than a unitary state.

Q: In Nigeria we were under a lot of pressure during the Biafran civil war just on that issue. We stuck to our guns on that and most of us in the Foreign Service believed in it.

PHILLIPS: The Africans had decided for themselves at the Organization for African Unity that a cardinal principle and iron rule of post-colonial life was to leave the old colonial boundaries alone. To do otherwise would open a Pandora's box because if you made changes in Zaire you would have to look at almost every other African country. The only time that I know of that this self-imposed rule was broken was when Ethiopia let Eritrea go and become an independent state, and there is still a Pandora's box potential in that arrangement.

Q: And Eritrea did exist on its own before. I thought we might stop at this point. Unless there is something else we should talk about.

PHILLIPS: I would just say on my career story at this point that I had two great first assignments. First I got to know Paris, saw how diplomacy works at a very high level and observed a major

Embassy's interaction with Washington. Then I went to a completely different world. Lubumbashi could not have been more different than Paris. Among other things it was a small post where we were "the United States." Our reporting was largely all that Washington had to go on and we felt a tremendous responsibility to get it right. During the rest of my career I alternated between these two extremes, between Europe and Africa.

Q: How much did the Soviet Union play a role in the thinking at the embassy in Kinshasa?

PHILLIPS: It was all-pervasive. Why else would the U.S. give massive aid to Mobutu when we knew that at best it was only partially used the way we wanted it to be? The question wasn't whether these funds would produce short term improvements, although we always hoped they would. The question was was this a good long term investment, a wise insurance policy. With twenty/twenty hind sight the answer is less clear, but at the time we believed Mobutu represented a lesser evil than a Soviet style dictatorship that well could have replaced him.

THEODORE A. BOYD
Communicator
Leopoldville (1965-1967)

Theodore A. Boyd was born on October 9, 1941 in Terre Haute, Indiana. He served in the U.S. Army from 1959 to 1964. Throughout his career he has held positions in countries including the Congo, Kenya, Ethiopia, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Iran, Nigeria, Ecuador, Togo, and Cameroon. Mr. Boyd was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 29, 2005.

Q: So you were in Leopoldville from when to when?

BOYD: Let's see, Leopoldville, I arrived there the day Mobutu took over, it was November, I think it was the Wednesday before Thanksgiving; it was either November 24th or 25th of '65. When I got up on Thanksgiving Day and there was no one on the streets I said, "Oh, that's OK because it's a holiday." Then it dawned on me subsequently that the Congolese didn't observe Thanksgiving so I went over to the embassy and they said, "Come on in we need you, we've just had a coup." I was in the Congo for 18 months.

Q: What was life like there?

BOYD: Well it was pretty good for a single man with no responsibilities and a raging libido. It was to have been a two-year tour but if you chose not to take an R&R (rest and relaxation) you could get out in 18 months because it was harrowing at the time. It was in crisis because that was back when Mobutu was our guy.

Q: Also the Congolese army was not a very safe organization was it?

BOYD: No, no but I didn't feel uncomfortable because at that time I had a certain protective coloring that many of my colleagues did not have in the Congo.

Q: Did you sort of fade into the population?

BOYD: No they figured I wasn't American.

Q: Well this is it I mean African Americans who have gone back to Africa often and are sort of surprised that the people there, you know each locality, doesn't know their role...

BOYD: They do not welcome them with open arms — that is true. But again I said I look more African than most Africans, as we go on we will get down to that too. I was there for 18 months and didn't venture outside the city limits of Leopoldville (it became Kinshasa in 1966).

Q: Well how did you find the embassy?

BOYD: Oh well it was quite active; everybody was quite busy because everybody had a lot of things to do. Lots of ambassador's came out of there.

Q: How did you find communications work?

BOYD: I found it quite interesting because as a communicator everything came through you. Whatever reporting there was, the communicator was the first to see it going out and the first to see it coming in. It was quite a learning experience.

Q: Did you find it almost a two-track system, where the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) had its own communicators and you were State or how did that work?

BOYD: That's how it worked. There was a hole in the wall. The company had their stuff, no the company got their stuff and our stuff and they threw our stuff through the window.

Q: But we sent out our stuff?

BOYD: In Kinshasa... It was Leopoldville when I got there and Kinshasa when I left. the CIA was both the transmitter and the receiver, everything went through them. They received our stuff and passed it to us.

Q: But you would type it up and put it on tape.

BOYD: Yeah.

Q: And then they would take it from there?

BOYD: And they would take it from there and send it out. If we had stuff that they weren't supposed to see we would encrypt it.

Q: What about if, I mean the communicators sometimes get really put upon at a busy post like that. Did you feel that? I mean on call a lot more?

BOYD: Yeah, but a grateful government reimbursed appropriately. The overtime was good and plus the fact I did not feel that put upon because I was there by myself; I had no family and was not looking to create one.

Q: Did you get out at all much around or was that not a good idea at the time?

BOYD: I hit the clubs; there were several clubs within walking distance of my house.

Q: These were Congolese clubs?

BOYD: Just regular clubs where the expats met because there were a lot of expats because there was the UN (United Nations) group and all those things there, everybody was there, not unlike the way things have become or have always been where a country is in crisis and there are mercenaries of all types there.

HARVEY F. NELSON, JR.
Political Officer
Léopoldville (1965-1967)

Ambassador Nelson was born and raised in California. He was educated at Occidental College, The University of Stockholm, Sweden and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. After serving in the US Navy and teaching at Bowdoin College, Ambassador Nelson joined the Foreign Service and served in Washington and abroad, primarily as a political officer dealing in Scandinavian and African affairs. In 1985 he was appointed Ambassador to Swaziland. Ambassador Nelson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: Did we have an expert on tribes in the political section?

NELSON: No; I suppose we should have, but it would have been a daunting task because there were about 200 languages in the Congo. Tribalism was a terrible problem in Africa, especially in the Congo. I did have some good meetings with tribal representatives when they would gather together. The issue is a very delicate one. They don't like to talk about it. They don't like to be accused of tribalism, but indeed that is their society. We did discuss the problem of all of the various languages in the Congo and the barriers that this created to bringing the country together. We did discuss the necessity for a country to have one language if it is to be at all governed. They had adopted French as that one common language, but that was a foreign language which had no relationship to their cultures. That was the only solution to the language problem.

Q: Did Mobutu's tribe gain from his assumption of power?

NELSON: I can't really remember. I am sure he favored his tribesmen; that was the only way for him to have some peace of mind. But I don't think his tribe took over as much power as the leading tribe in Kenya did, for example. The standard approach was that one tribesman could not trust members of another tribe. According to local customs, your house doors were suppose to be opened to any one, but that does not mean that you could trust him.

Q: How were Leopoldville's relationship with Brazzaville, which at the time was the capital of a completely Marxist country?

NELSON: At least, so it proclaimed. Some proclaim their loyalty to Marx to this day, but it is mostly a hollow statement. The relationships between the two Congos was not good. The ferry traffic between the two countries was stopped because they were concerned about infiltrators. That may have been a legitimate concern. On occasions, there used to be an exchange of gun-fire across the river. But this situation resulted in a very profitable smuggling trade.

Q: Was Mobutu involved in that trade?

NELSON: I wouldn't be at all surprised.

Q: Did we still have relations with Congo-Brazzaville? Did you have contact without people there?

NELSON: I think we severed them in 1965. We had a telephone line and a radio connection with Brazzaville, and we used them periodically. That was useful at times, particularly to our folk in Brazzaville who felt very beleaguered. When we did break relationships, I thought it was a great idea. It saved all the costs of keeping that embassy going. But then the U.S. couldn't wait to open it again. I could never understand that. Why would we wish to have representation in Brazzaville?

Q: By the time you left, was there still fear that the civil war would get to Leopoldville?

NELSON: No, that feeling had passed. That fear had been laid to rest.

Q: You left Leopoldville in 1967. What was your feeling at that time about the future of the Congo?

NELSON: I am not sure that after two years and a day there, that I really cared. It was an interesting experience. I think that as in the case of most, if not all, Foreign Service people, by the time I left Leopoldville, I was really focusing on my next assignment. Sometimes one feels desperate about leaving his or her present assignment.

Q: Were you surrounded in the embassy by Africanists or was there a wide representation of different backgrounds and interests?

NELSON: I didn't feel surrounded by Africanists. The embassy people came from everywhere and many would go outside of Africa in their next assignments. I think by 1967, the optimistic view of Africa's future was fading and people were beginning to look at our assistance levels. On

the other hand, Africa was one of the few geographical areas where we had not been the guilty party.

STANLEY ZUCKERMAN
Information Officer
Elizabethville (1965-1967)

Mr. Zuckerman was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and educated at the University of Wisconsin. After service in the US Army, followed by newspaper reporting and a position with the Governor of Wisconsin, he joined the USIA Foreign Service in 1965. He subsequently served as Information, Press and Public Affairs Counselor in Congo, Belgium, Mexico, Canada and Brazil. He also had several senior level assignments in Washington at USIA and the State Department. Mr. Zuckerman was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Had you ever done any film stuff before?

ZUCKERMAN: Never. All my background was in print media, in newspapers. That was the only thing I ever wanted to do. This was an interlude between the political work that I had done and my planned return to newspaper work. My interest was in getting some additional overseas experience, learning something about the Foreign Service, and perhaps then, together with my German experience, being able to find an overseas assignment with some news organization. In the course of my stay on the African desk, I was regularly getting notices from Personnel that I had been given an onward assignment first to Lagos, Nigeria; then to a new post in Port Harcourt, Nigeria; then to Bamako in Mali, and after a suggestion that it might be Tanzania, finally to Elizabethville in the Congo. I was sent to study French at the Foreign Service Institute. I had had some Spanish and some Russian, but I was not a particularly adept linguist. This was a challenge. I spent five months and got qualified in French. I was to leave in October to go to what was then Elizabethville which, after Maurice Tshombe was deposed by Mobutu, became Lubumbashi.

Q: This would be October '65.

ZUCKERMAN: October '65. They had wanted me to take my first assignment in Washington. I said, "No, that isn't why I came to the Foreign Service. If I wanted a job in Washington I had had offers of several, (including one to work for Sergeant Shriver's new Office of Economic Opportunity), but I had no desire to work in the domestic bureaucracy. They acquiesced, and sent me to Katanga, the former breakaway province of the Congo, as the number two man in a three man information post. That is how important Katanga once was in our plans. I flew into Belgium. I was in the air on my way to Elizabethville, stopping first in Leopoldville, when the then prime minister Moise Tshombe was overthrown.

Q: Who was a creature whose power base was...

ZUCKERMAN: He had been the president of the short lived Republic of Katanga. I guess in a move to reconcile disparate factions he became the prime minister. He was displaced by Joseph Mobutu. I got to Leopoldville, I stayed a couple of days, and got some briefings. The PAO was a very colorful officer named John Mowinckel, among whose achievements during WW II was liberating the bar of the Hotel Crillon when Paris fell to the Allies...

Q: Along with Ernest Hemmingway.

ZUCKERMAN: I think Ernest Hemmingway took the Ritz. He took the Ritz and Mowinckel took the Crillon. At any rate I finally arrived in Elizabethville. I remember getting off the plane and by chance, along with the consul, Art Tienken and Ralph Stuart Smith, the PAO, the provincial minister of information was there, and I was introduced. All I could remember to say, after all those months studying French, was "bon jour." Whatever French I had just disappeared as if you had erased a blackboard. It was not an auspicious start. They took me to a moth eaten hotel, which I got myself out of after one night, and moved into the Grand Hotel Leopold II, which was also in disrepair, but at least I had more than a sheet of cloth for a doorway. I settled in for three months there while I looked for a house. My wife and my two stepchildren were to join me in about six months. I found a house that had been the home of Moise Tshombe's radio operator. There had been a machine gun nest in the back yard which overlooked the river and a badly damaged bridge. The contractor was deepening the machine gun nest and making it into a swimming pool, which could serve as a source of emergency water supply if need be – a traditional Foreign Service justification.. The house was in an area that the local European residents – who numbered about 15,000 at the time -- regarded as dangerous because it was across the river from the city. But it turned out to be a lovely place, especially once I forced the contractor to abandon his plans to put broken glass on the top of the walls, which was a common feature on the walls of most of the houses lived in by Europeans.

Elizabethville's name soon changed to Lubumbashi once Mobutu started Africanizing the names of cities in the Congo. There was a Congolese village near us. My stepson Chris was then about eight years old and liked to play soccer. The kids living in the village had some rolled up rags for a soccer ball, and he joined them out in the dusty fields. We soon became very welcome in the neighborhood. We never had any security problems, but when we left three years later, a Belgian family took the house and they were shortly thereafter bound and gagged and robbed. We were never touched. At any rate, the post was quite active. There were three daily newspapers in that town, as well as the Official University of the Congo. Most important, and in fact the reason that Lubumbashi existed, was the presence of the Union Miniere, the mining company owned by the Societe General of Belgium, that was the major source of foreign earnings for the Congo, bringing in about 80 per cent of its foreign exchange..

Q: This was a copper mine.

ZUCKERMAN: Copper was the principal product of the mines but there was also cobalt and silver and uranium, and probably other valuable minerals. The uranium for our first atomic bombs came from the Kipushi mine outside of Kolwezi, north of Lubumbashi.. So there was quite a bit to do. Whether there was enough for three people to do was questionable. With my press background I got to meet the people who ran the newspapers very quickly and got along very well with them. Not long after I got there, however, there was a staffing problem in the capital and they wanted to

transfer me to Leopoldville. I had just about gotten the house in shape to receive my wife and kids, and I really didn't want to go there because they wanted me to act as assistant information officer. The officer in charge of the information section had come on a direct transfer from the middle east and didn't speak French at all, and by this time after several months, I was fairly comfortable in it. Ralph Smith who had been transferred to the Congo from Paris with his lovely French wife, wrote a persuasive letter to the main post saying that I had started so well that it would be a shame to take me out now. He was so convincing that they decided to reduce us to a two man post, made me the branch PAO, and transferred Ralph back to Washington.' He was delighted. I found myself running the post with no background in the administrative work at all. Luckily the third man at the post was Bob LaGamma, who went on to a terrific career in Africa except for a long stay in Italy. He became a PAO in Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, and Director for African Affairs..

Q: Is he still around?

ZUCKERMAN: Bob is retired now.

Q: Do you know where?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, he is living in Reston, Virginia.

Q: How do you spell that?

ZUCKERMAN: LaGamma. He is in the phone book. I was at his 65th birthday dinner Saturday night.

Q: I will give him a call.

ZUCKERMAN: You should. Bob knew a lot more than I did about Africa. He knew slightly more than I did about administration but neither of us were very familiar with Agency administrative regulations. However we had a first rate Executive Officer in Kinshasa, the new name for Leopoldville, who was Charlotte Loris, who passed away not long ago, who was a great help to us in managing our finances. She also helped us solve a problem we had because there was a very loud bar next to our American Cultural Center, and it would disturb our visitors to the library and our programs.

Q: The American Cultural center was what?

ZUCKERMAN: The American cultural center was a USIS library. We could hold lectures there. We didn't have a suitable facility for showing films, which were important in Africa. The center of the city was European except for Congolese government officials who lived in good houses We used to take a jeep out to the African living areas that surrounded the city, which contained housing built by the mining company for their workers. We would go out several times a week to different *cites*, as they were called, in our truck which carried a projector, other equipment, and a generator, and we'd attach a big sheet to a wall. We showed films with three or four thousand people sitting in the square. There was very little other entertainment available to the people in the *cites*.. There was no television available to them, although there was a tiny station run by the Franciscan fathers that

reached houses in the center of town. There was radio, but little else except the bars. They loved the cinema. When we rolled into town kids would run alongside the trucks crying *cinema, cinema!!!*

We wanted to be able to show films in the Cultural Center, but the bar next door was so loud it became impossible to consider. It opened about noon, and by afternoon was a terrible nuisance. We couldn't do anything at night. The landlord of the bar was a Belgian named Mr. Levy, from whom we rented the Cultural Center.. I told him it would be a boon to our relationship if we could annex that bar and break through the wall separating the two spaces. We could make it a theater, and because it would be at sort of a right angle to the rest of it, we could have a sliding wall so we could enlarge the library for a conference area. We worked out an agreement. Charlotte Loris came down to help us negotiate with this Mr. Levy, who was head of the Boy Scouts in Lubumbashi. We reached agreement and took over the bar, and built a very nice little theater..

Q: Were our films in French?

ZUCKERMAN: Everything was in French. The Congolese spoke, had to actually speak, at least three languages. The Belgians made sure that everybody had at least a third grade education. Some went on further than that. They had to speak their native village language, of which there were some 350 in the Congo. Then they had to speak a vehicular language. The three vehicular languages of the Congo were Swahili, Lingala, and Chiluba.. In our area and right up the eastern half of the Congo it was Swahili. And they had to learn French. So the youngest kids at least could get along in three languages.

Q: What about the Europeans?

ZUCKERMAN: The European population was divided almost like guilds. The Italians in town were the contractors, who built the houses and office buildings. The Greeks were smugglers. The Belgians worked for the Union Miniere, the great mining company on which the prosperity of Katanga province and, indeed, the Congo was built. Then, very surprisingly, there was a significant community of Jews who had come down starting early in the century, trailing after an adventurous young man related to them from the Isle of Rhodes. His name was Sol Benatar, who left Rhodes at a very young age and amassed some money selling trinkets to workmen digging the Suez Canal. Then he came down to Elizabethville when the Belgians had discovered the enormous deposits of mineral wealth in Katanga and were building the railroad in from the port of Lobito across Angola, the Benguela railroad.. Benatar bought land, made more money, and eventually started a textile company called Solbena with mills which I believe still exist all over the country..

Q: I was wondering. I have never served in Africa, but I understand most of the stores are little ma and pa stores in much of Africa were Lebanese.

ZUCKERMAN: My understanding is that that's true in West and East Africa, but it is less so in Central Africa., although there were some very capable Lebanese businessmen where we were. The Jews were not principally store owners. They were selling goods on a wholesale basis to merchants in the interior of the country. The community grew so large that the Benatars had a synagogue built in 1921 and brought down an Italian rabbi. They were very much part of the

community. I imagine the Belgian community there is very scarce now. I really don't know what has happened to them. At the time there were some excellent restaurants in Lubumbashi, and it enjoyed one of the finest climates I have ever lived in, 4,000 feet high and nine degrees south of the Equator.

Q. What were your other activities?

I originally approached the work down there from the standpoint of my journalistic background, thinking the most important contribution I could make was with the press. But I soon realized the long term effect was going to be realized by whatever contact we could make with the students at the university. They liked basketball, so we put together an American basketball team and played against them. I am not sure whether that helped the relationship along or not. They were tough kids and there were a lot of elbows. I don't know if it was better for us to win or to lose. It cuts both ways. If you lose, you lose something besides the game, since basketball was our game. If you win, you lose something because no one likes to lose. But the students played well and I finally concluded that that was the best outcome; we won, but they were proud of having made it close. And so we played more matches, and we began to establish a good relationship with them.

We had a Fulbright professor at the university who was quite ineffectual, who was teaching Romance Philology, but we wanted him to teach English. We got AID to put in a tape laboratory into the university, and we started teaching it ourselves. The university was quite open to our participation. There was a Belgian rector and an Italian vice rector. Bob LaGamma and Bob's wife, Anita, who is a wonderful poet, had no children at the time (they have five now), and handled a lot of the teaching. I was also teaching, and we also involved a couple of other people from the consulate. The students were extremely excited about learning English, and we were interested in trying to identify bright kids who we could submit as candidates for graduate study in the United States. You sit in a classroom, and look around and every once in awhile you see a kid whose eyes were shining, who absolutely would just be leaning forward on every word, ingesting everything. We identified eight of those kids and went to the vice rector with a list of those we meant to propose, and he shook his head and said, "You are stealing my diamonds." So I guess we put our fingers on the right students. As in all cases, not everything turns out as we had planned. Some of those young men who did well went to work not in the Congo, but for international organizations. I am told that some who came back from the various programs we had were not well received when they returned to the Congo. Some did not survive.

Q: Well this is always a problem. I mean I saw this in Yugoslavia where doctors would come back with the latest techniques and the doctors in Yugoslavia would try to shove them to one side because they were challenged.

ZUCKERMAN: We had a young European man who was studying physics at Princeton. This was when the Apollo program was being designed.

Q: You had better explain what the Apollo program was.

ZUCKERMAN: The Apollo was a NASA program inspired by President Kennedy's challenge to send men to the moon and return them safely within 10 years. He was very conversant with the

intricate plan that was being developed. We arranged for a bus load of students to come to the center for this young man to lecture them before a black board and explain to them what the plans were. As he showed the configuration of the plans, the three stage launching, the separation of the lunar module from the mother ship, the landing, the separation of one part of the lunar module from the other, reconnecting with the capsule which would then re-launch itself back to earth, they broke out into peals of laughter. I realize now that the Rube Goldberg nature of that plan would seem to encourage skepticism, and let me tell you these kids were not totally naïve. I was told by the rector of the university that there was an uncanny ability in theoretical logic among members of the Luba tribe. They would eat up advanced mathematics, calculus and symbolic logic like peanuts. It was a gift. So these were not kids who were necessarily cut off from advanced thinking. But to them at that time they thought it was a joke. Later when we had films to show of the earlier Mercury program and the like, they were enthralled.

There was something though, when you showed films in Africa, not to these kids but to village people, there were very strange and unanticipated reactions. After Kennedy was shot, we had a prize-winning film that was produced by USIA that was called *Years of Lightning Day of Drums*. It was shown around the world. At one point in the film there were images of grief-stricken people from around the world reacting to the news of his death. The camera was fixated briefly on an old Greek woman in a black shawl with a very lined face. Invariably the audience would break out into laughter. I asked our projectionist, whose name was Gerard Yumba, why in the world they were laughing at such a sad moment. He said, "Because she is ugly." In other cases we would show a film where there was a transition of the seasons when leaves would drop from the trees and snow would fall. They had never seen snow for one thing, but they couldn't interpret the falling of the leaves as representing the changing of seasons. Seasons didn't change. It might change from rainy to dry, but leaves didn't fall; snow didn't fall, wind didn't come and blow things away, and so the language of film, the western vocabulary of film didn't make any sense to them. And as it turned out, the Congolese who saw the film, which consisted of the funeral procession to Arlington Cemetery intercut with scenes from Kennedy's presidency, concluded he was truly a great man, because he died and came back to life so many times. We would converse with the agency film division about these things, but they would shrug their shoulders and couldn't handle it.

Q: What about the university. So many universities including our own ended up with sort of a theoretical Marxist faculty or at least significant portions. It seems as if students, this remains the last resort of Marxism. How about that there?

ZUCKERMAN: There was a vague collectivist ideology floating around, some of it drawn from the village socialism that was part of African tradition. But it wasn't the kind of systematic Marxism that was found in Latin America. Octavio Paz, the great Mexican poet, once said the only place in the world that Marxism existed was in Latin American Universities. But, when Mobutu took over, there was a strong transition in the political atmosphere. Young people were sent in to take over the newspapers that were "progressives." But what "progressive" meant was absolute loyalty to Mobutu, and to a very strident nationalism. They renamed the cities to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism.. Even Mobutu changed his name to Mobutu Sese Sekou followed by a very long series of names that no one could remember.

Q: And the Congo became Zaire.

ZUCKERMAN: The Congo became Zaire, which didn't seem to make any sense at all. Zaire was a river. I am told that Zaire is a Portuguese word, but when the Portuguese first came to west central Africa and came to what is known now as Angola, that territory overlapped with what was then the Kingdom of Kongo. That was the name, and to return to the name of the Congo makes perfect sense. Getting back to your question, it wasn't Marxism as such, but there was a great attraction for what was going on in China, what was going on in the Soviet Union. Lumumba was apparently a Marxist, but you know, it was our coloration really, attempting to throw one blanket over all such political concepts that really led us astray. We sent one very progressive, outspoken, leftist student leader to the U.S. on a student leader grant. He traveled and, when he came back, wrote the most remarkable things in the newspapers. Of course he had some critical remarks to make about the United States, but he described the US as a genuine democracy, where people speak freely and do not get punished for it. He even gave a lecture to his fellow students, some of whom treated his remarks with derision, but others of whom were clearly impressed. I have never since observed such a remarkable payoff from one of our student grants.

Q. Why was the Congo such a mess then and now?.

ZUCKERMAN: It is a huge, wealthy country, and at the time I was there it only had 16 million people in an area the size of the U.S. east of the Mississippi River. There are nine different countries on its borders, almost all of which were doing better than the Congo. So it was a source of frustration, and of course everything was usually blamed on colonialism, on the loss of nationhood. But there couldn't have been a strong national identity in the Congo before colonialism since tribal loyalties came first, and in many ways still do. We had a very great interest in making sure it didn't break up and that still remains our principal interest, since it would result in enormous instability in the heart of Africa and have repercussions in every one of the bordering nations.

Q: And what was living there like?

ZUCKERMAN: It was usually very comfortable. My kids, then 6 and 8, went to the Lycee Kiwele, a school with a student body about half Congolese and half European. Not speaking French, they struggled quite a bit, but working with a tutor after school they managed to squeak through. I found a great difference between the Belgian approach to education and our own because, starting with first grade, each class was assembled at the end of the school year to receive certificates to advance to the next grade. The kids, even at that age, were called up in order of their standing in class. When I went to Belgium on my next overseas assignment, I realized that must have been the explanation for the Belgian driving habits. They had an urge to pass the car in front of them even if there were a solid line of cars on the opposite one lane road, and wherever you were going, you couldn't get there more than ten seconds sooner. But they would risk their lives in the face of an oncoming car in the other lane to gain one car length. I thought it had something to do with being called up in front of their parents to receive their certificate in order of their rank in class, and having to beat out the kid in front of them, that was imprinted firmly on the Belgian driver..

My wife was pregnant in our second year there, and one of the periodic uprisings in the northeast broke out. The former police of Katanga, the Katangese Gendarmes, had fought the central

government during the secession of Katanga from the Congo after independence was declared in 1960, and were suppressed finally by UN intervention. They had been sent by the central government as far away from Katanga as possible, far up into the northeast. But, led by some South African mercenaries, they were making their way back toward Katanga. It was thought that it would be better for us to leave, so I was pulled out a couple of months short of the end of the two year tour and went back to Washington with plans to submit my resignation, along with thanks for a very stimulating couple of years in which I was able to do some traveling in Africa, learn French, learn to appreciate the work that USIA was doing, and it was time to go back to my newspaper career. When I got back to Washington, I told this to David Dubois, who was then deputy director for African affairs and a wonderful gentleman. He said, "Well that doesn't make any sense. You did well there." At one point I got a commendation for work I did during the blockade placed on Rhodesia, once they announced unilateral independence.

Q: UDI, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

ZUCKERMAN: That's right. The copper belt in northern Zambia was cut off from the supplies of fuel needed to keep the mines going. The Anglo-American copper mines, which were more Anglo than American, were in desperate need. It was going to affect world copper supplies and destabilize the Zambian economy. So the US government set up a fuel airlift by chartering one Pan Am 707 and one TWA 707, and flew them down to Leopoldville. Ships would come up the Congo from Matadi on the Atlantic coast carrying drums of diesel fuel. They would be loaded on to these planes, each of which was configured completely, except for the cockpit, to carry cargo. It was 1000 miles from Leopoldville to Lubumbashi. Each of those planes could make three round trips a day. The fuel would be off loaded in Lubumbashi and trucked to the railroad, loaded on railroad flat cars, taken down to the end point in Ndola or Chingola in Zambia, offloaded and sent to the mines. There was a need to make sure that Africans knew what we were doing to help Africa survive, because many of them, particularly in east Africa, were skeptical about our intentions. So somebody in Washington got the very bright idea of taking journalists and politicians from east Africa, but mostly journalists, and flying them to Leopoldville, putting them on the plane to sit in the cockpit because there was no where else to sit, and accompany the fuel to Lubumbashi. I or Bob would meet these journalists at the airport, and take them to dinner, give them a briefing, and we would then get them on the train that was carrying the oil to Zambia. They would see the whole process, and then they would fly back to their home in Kampala or Nairobi or Dar es Salaam. It became quite a chore. I was spending my life at the airport.

One day a fellow was to arrive who was really more a politician than a journalist, a member of the Ugandan parliament, but he had a newspaper column as well and he talked himself into one of these trips. While he was in Kinshasa, Milton Obote was overthrown as president of Uganda, and this fellow was in no hurry to get back to Uganda until he found out how the dust settled. So I made perhaps four trips to the airport, having being told by Kinshasa each time that he was on the arriving plane. The plane door would open and each time my man wasn't there. We had no telephone communications, so I sent a telegram to the main post saying I really didn't want to go back to the airport again, because it was really quite a drive from down town, until I was assured that someone had seen the visitor get on the plane, seen the door close, and the plane taxi out with him on the plane. And a couple of days went by, and finally I got the telegram saying, he is absolutely on the plane and you can go to the airport without disappointment. He will be arriving in

the plane about five or six o'clock at night. I went out to the airport. All of us were so fed up with this guy by now that I thought the best thing was to get him back to Uganda as soon as possible. Otherwise I would probably never get him out of Lubumbashi, and if I did, the people in Zambia were going to be driven crazy trying to get him to return from there. As I waited, I spotted a British Air Force plane on the ground. The crew was eating dinner in the airport restaurant and I asked them where they were going. They said, "We are going to Nairobi." I said, "You know I have got a dignitary coming in who has to get back to Kampala through Nairobi in a hurry on this fuel plane that is coming in, a jet coming in from Kinshasa at about 5:30. Can you wait until then?" "Well, mate, we don't like to fly over the Rift Valley when it gets dark and it gets dark here you know, by 6:30." I told them I had been assured he was on the plane, and they agreed to wait. At about 5:45 the plane came in, the door opened, and once again he was not on it. The worst thing I had to do was to tell those guys I had made them delay their takeoff for nothing. They didn't say a word; they just walked slowly to the plane and took off as the light was fading. I was furious. I sent off a rocket of a message not only to Kinshasa but to Nairobi and Kampala as an immediate telegram, which has to be opened immediately, even if it meant calling a communicator into the embassy in the middle of the night. Somehow, the distribution got to be Africa wide and I still don't know how that happened. People in communications were awakened all over Africa with my wailing and my insistence that this guy would never again see the light of day if he pulled that stunt again. The next week I got a letter from the redoubtable John Mowinckel, who directed USIS operations in the Congo, telling me if I ever sent a telegram like that again I'd get both of us fired. My visitor arrived a couple of days later. I bought him dinner and put him in a hotel. Somehow the train down to Zambia was held up for a couple of days, so I hired a taxi and sent him off to Ndola. I presume he made it.

Despite my having awakened an entire continent, when I got back home I was congratulated for my work and encouraged to stay for another tour. I was offered an assignment to the US Mission to the European Community, preceded by a year at the Johns Hopkins Center in Bologna to study international economics. I said it sounded wonderful, but I had found that there were no English language schools there, and I couldn't subject my kids to diving into Italian when they had barely acquired enough French. So they decided I could do the work at the School for Advanced Studies of Johns Hopkins here in Washington, and it seemed a good idea to spend a year in Washington improving my grasp of economics, go to Brussels and improve my French, and only then return to journalism. We found a house in Virginia, our daughter Jennifer was born in September, and I spent a very enjoyable year at Johns Hopkins. I spent a lot of time with a wonderful professor, Isaiah Frank, who not only was the man who wrote the basic text on European integration, but was also very interested in developmental economics. There was a lot of reading, a number of papers, but at the end of it, the job at USEC was abolished during a general draw down of overseas personnel for balance of payments reasons. But I still went to Brussels, to the Embassy as Information Officer..

Q: This is balance of payments.

ZUCKERMAN: Balance of payments, that's right. They were eliminating the new job that was being created for me at the Common Market Mission, but they still wanted me to go to Belgium at the embassy, and I did.

Q: Well before we leave this, just a couple of questions about Katanga. You were there before the Shaba business came. There were two invasions of that area by people from I guess the Shaba area.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, well Shaba was the new name for Katanga. But we had left before the general evacuation of the post because my wife would not have been able to fly if we had waited longer. Bill Harrop was then the consul, having replaced Art Tienken in the middle of my tour. We became good friends. Harrop, as you know, returned at some point as ambassador to the Congo after serving as ambassador in Conakry, and later became ambassador to Nairobi and then Israel. He was very interested in what came to be called public diplomacy, which sometimes works and sometimes fails. There was one of many threats of an attack on Lubumbashi by former Katangese gendarmes from the far north and the Congolese government wanted us to send troops, but President Johnson opted instead to provide American aircraft to move Congolese government forces down from the capital to re-enforce Katanga. The planes, C-130's, would fly in with troops and supplies early in the morning, and leave almost immediately. The local population was not really aware we were doing this, that there was an American presence helping to defend them. So with Harrop's consent I asked the air force guys if they could delay their departure until the African market downtown opened and then come in pretty low so the Congolese could see the American insignia on the planes. It was my introduction to the law of unintended consequences. C-130s flying at a couple of hundred feet make a terrific noise, and the ladies both shopping and selling in the market fled in fear, but as I recall the papers called it a helpful gesture.

During this period, by the way, we lived under a strict curfew. Everybody was confined to home from 8:00 p.m. until daybreak. Restaurants were going broke. We were told to put American flag posters on our front doors. We were in good standing in the Congo, and an American flag on a car would guarantee easy passage through any blockade. But in this case we were warned, the airport was shut to all white people; no Europeans could go to the airport, and most flights were cancelled. We were in a jam because we had obtained scholarships to graduate school for two of our best students at the University of the Congo in Lubumbashi. We had to get them on a plane to Kinshasa to get on a boat to the States, which was to carry scholarship students from all over central Africa to go to the U.S. I thought this was a nice idea; they could mix and attend lectures preparing them for life in the United States, a nice interlude instead of just flying into a different culture without preparation. As the date for the ship's departure got closer we were getting more and more desperate. Then we heard a radio report that the curfew had been lifted, and that there was a flight out that day. We picked up the students, who had been all packed and ready to go for days, and loaded them into our office truck and drove out to the airport. Before we got there we were stopped at a military blockade. I remember the young soldier who was aiming the biggest handgun I have ever seen directly at my head. What worried me most is that his hand was shaking. Luckily, both of the students came from the north, where the soldiers came from, and spoke Lingala along with the local language of Swahili. The students gradually talked him down, and he finally put his gun away and, with misgivings, let us proceed. The chief of security for the region was a man named Stanley Mika. When journalists used to come down during the occasional periods of stress – I remember that Anthony Lewis of the New York Times came down once -- I would brief them and help them get in touch with the appropriate people. Lewis asked me what the usual drill was, and I told him that he would meet with people in the governor's office, at the Union miniere, the Belgian consulate and the US consulate, and pretty soon he would be picked up and arrested. Then Stanley

Mika would come and get him out of jail and take him home for dinner. That was exactly his experience. Anyway I get out to the airport with these kids and take them to the plane and get them on, and Mika comes over to me. He said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "Well there was an announcement that the airport was open." "The airport is not open", he said. "All of my men have orders to shoot to kill." So that was probably as close as I came to trouble, although I still find it hard to believe that that young soldier would have followed that order, because there was still a post-colonial mentality in the country, and there was a tendency to associate white people with authority. So not being confident of what to do without a senior officer around, he probably wouldn't have been able to carry that out. At least I like to hope so. But the persuasiveness of the students was undoubtedly the deciding factor.

Q: You mentioned you found that radio, film projections and teaching at the university were key means of reaching your contacts. What was the problem with the press?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh it wasn't very professional. One of the papers had a Belgian journalist down there as an advisor who tried to develop some journalistic professionalism. But the level of journalism was very parochial. Although they had a reasonable audience, with three papers in a town of a couple of hundred thousand people, circulation was restricted to interested Europeans and the small percentage of educated Congolese who occupied the political and administrative levels. For working class Congolese, even literate ones, buying a newspaper was a luxury, and radio was by far the main source of information among all, probably including the political elite. As a consequence none of the papers could make any money. They were largely supported by political factions or businessmen, and perhaps by some of the consulates. Congolese music was popular all over Africa and you heard it on radios all over the center of the town and in the *cites* – the towns surrounding the center of the city built by the Union Miniere to house their workers. Strangely enough there was a very good classical music station as well, run by monks of the order of St. Francois DeSalle. There was a polio outbreak in the 1950's when all the schools were closed and the school run by the Franciscan fathers inaugurated a radio station and started conducting classes on the air. Its founder was a wonderful priest named Pere Richard, and after the polio crisis had passed he continued to operate the station with good music and news. It was a little island of the western world in the heart of the Congo, and was a good source of information. We picked up VOA of course, and BBC. The French had a strong signal coming in from Brazzaville, and the Paris Herald Tribune came in a couple of days late. Together with our cable traffic and the Wireless File we kept pretty well in touch with events. At one point the Franciscans put together a six, not 60 not 600, but a *six watt* television station that could cover the center of town. They began to broadcast films that they were getting from the French embassy, and we began to offer films from our own library. Interestingly they reached a lot of African officials who immediately had television sets shipped in from either Belgium or Zambia. But most of our film activity was sending those crews in our jeep to the *cites*. It was the only entertainment, beside drinking and dancing, that they had.,

Q: The Congo had a reputation for practically the entire post colonial period as being a CIA province. I mean as far as CIA had a lot of influence there, and I think helped Mobutu. Did you find that the CIA influence penetrated to what you were doing and that?

ZUCKERMAN: Not much. We were good friends with the representative there, as one would expect in a small post. I probably helped him more than he could help me, just by the contacts we had in the university and by giving him some idea of what was going on there or among the media. But I was very hesitant to turn over any contacts to him. USIA drew a pretty firm line as far as providing any kind of cover. I guess there had been some in the past, but if there had been any kind of justified suspicion on the part of journalists or the university faculty that we were in fact not what we seemed to be, we would lose all influence and credibility. The credibility I had with the press came from their knowledge of my past newspaper experience. I knew what their problems were and what they were dealing with. They were putting out a newspaper under roughly the same conditions that we put out our student newspaper at the University of Wisconsin.

RUDOLPH AGGREY
Deputy Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Kinshasa (1965-1968)

Ambassador Rudolph Aggrey, whose father immigrated to the United States from Ghana in the early 1900s, entered the USIA in 1951. His career included positions in Nigeria, France, Zaire, and ambassadorships to Senegal, the Gambia, and Romania. Ambassador Aggrey was interviewed by Jack O'Brien in 1990.

Q: Well, then finally back to work. And I believe that work was in Kinshasa.

AGGREY: Finally, I went to Kinshasa after the year at Harvard. In fact, I had done a paper at Harvard, which they wanted to publish as a book. But the Agency was anxious for me to return to work. And I was to have several assignments, but for various reasons, I ended by going to what was then Leopoldville, as the deputy public affairs officer in one of USIA's largest programs in Africa.

And there I worked, first, for John Mowinckel, who was the country public affairs officer, who had been the deputy public affairs officer during a part of my service in Paris. He was succeeded by George Hellyer, whom I had met in Brussels on my way to Kinshasa. They were men of different styles, but both effective and experienced public affairs officers. And I must say that both of them gave me great scope for operations and for work. And I didn't feel frustrated by not being "number one."

Q: Well, then it was back to the States, was it?

AGGREY: Yes. I was married while I was in Kinshasa. And as my wife was a foreign national, it was necessary for us to return to the States on our next assignment. When we returned to the States, I was appointed as program manager for USIA's motion picture and television service.

Q: Now, was the Agency just getting into television about that time? Or was there already a foundation?

AGGREY: There was a foundation for it. In fact, we had a motion picture and television production unit in Kinshasa while I was there, more motion picture than television. But I worked with that unit and I developed an interest in film while I was there. So when I came back, it was a pleasure for me to continue and develop that interest.

ROY T. HAVERKAMP
Deputy Chief of Mission
Leopoldville (1965-1966)

Congo Desk Officer, Africa Bureau
Washington, DC (1966-1969)

Roy T. Haverkamp was born in St. Louis Missouri in December, 1924. After graduating from Yale University in 1949, Mr. Haverkamp studied law at Cambridge University and entered the Foreign Service in 1952. His posts include Seoul, Stockholm, Tokyo, and Phnom Penh. Mr. Haverkamp was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April, 1994.

Q: You were in Leopoldville from 1965-66. What were you doing there?

HAVERKAMP: I was a deputy chief of the political section. At first I was supposed to go to Stanleyville as the consul, but a guy who was in Leopoldville wanted that job and by the time I got there he had it. He wasn't resident there, but he went out there. It was still very interesting because you had the Simba rebellion going on.

I tried to follow general politics in Leopoldville, the other Congo and also cover Brazzaville. People would come over from time to time from Brazzaville and I would talk to them. I did some Foreign Office reporting.

Q: What was your impression of how the embassy was run?

HAVERKAMP: I thought it was a very good embassy. We had Ambassador Mac Godley, who was very able, very shrewd, a good judge of people, was very quick and had a very good understanding of what the situation there was like and what you could and couldn't do. He had the discipline and foresight, the quickness to do what could be done without trying to achieve something that was unachievable given the situation at the time. Zaire was important because of its size and location and its relationship with some of its neighbors, particularly Angola and Sudan.

Q: Did you feel that you were part of the Cold War?

HAVERKAMP: Yes, but also trying to reduce chaos, to bring some order into a chaotic, violent, dangerous, disintegrating society.

Q: Did you feel the Soviets were meddling or was their influence by that time pretty much dissipated?

HAVERKAMP: Their presence was felt in the sense that many of the Lumumba people had been supported by them. There were still Congolese being trained in the Soviet Union. Zaire was certainly a prize that either the Soviet Union or ourselves would have liked to have because of its size and location. It is as large as the United States east of the Mississippi. And because of its resources. The copper mines then were still going and there were diamond and gold mines. Things were moving into chaos but the copper mines were the big thing at that time.

Q: You were in the political section?

HAVERKAMP: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of the Congolese government and what was the Congolese government at that time?

HAVERKAMP: When I first went there it was the Kasavubu government that had been elected by... I can't remember if Tshombe was Prime Minister then or not.

What we were trying to do, we had a MAAG mission there, we had an AID mission there...we were trying to help the government to organize itself into some degree of efficiency and to build up a military that could handle the rebellion without wanting to take over the government, and through our AID program to bring in some form of help in economic growth and development. But the big problem was that there was chaos in the countryside. The government's writ did not run outside of Leopoldville. You had an alternative government in Lubumbashi, as it was then the Katanga area. That is where the riches were and where the Tshombists were. So, you had these two forces with chaos in between. The contending forces were just controlling little areas. But there were things that were working like sugar mills, rum distilleries, palm oil plantations, etc. They had large deposits of cobalt there.

Q: What was the role of our consulates at that time?

HAVERKAMP: We had one in Stanleyville, but the consuls lived in Leopoldville traveling frequently to Stanleyville. We had one in Lubumbashi and one in Bukavu.

Q: Were they under the gun there?

HAVERKAMP: They were always under the threat of chaos. Later when I came back to Washington and worked on Central African Affairs, they had to evacuate Bukavu.

Q: How did we see the Congo developing at that time? We were aiming for peace, but in your heart-of-hearts, what was the impression that people had at that time?

HAVERKAMP: I think people were so busy patching things up, keeping it going from day-to-day...sure you thought in the long term in training a military and your AID program, but

propping up the government from day-to-day and hoping that chaos didn't break out even worse in Kinshasa...there were drunken soldiers setting up roadblocks shaking down people. One amusing incident. They stopped one of the European ambassadors one night and said they were going to shake him down and he said, "You can't do this to me. I am an ambassador, a diplomat." The soldiers were supposed to have said, "Ha, ambassador diplomat, we have too many of those around here."

And nothing ever really worked. There was one good hotel where they put up visiting firemen and business people, but in the middle of the night they might throw all the guests out because some delegation from some place in the provinces that the president wanted to be in that hotel were there. This happened fairly often. I can remember going to the Foreign Office and the plate glass of the door was out. They hadn't bothered to open up the door so you just walked through. Then you had to step across sleeping messengers who had their feet stretched out in front of the door when you left.

Later, when I was in for a couple of days, the embassy had a note that had gone around to all embassies asking the embassy to tell the Foreign Office how much money the government owed to that government because they didn't have any records. Everything was in a mess.

You also had mercenaries fighting against the Simbas at the time. They had some AT6s and were also undisciplined. They were people who if you told them the bank hadn't taken the money out of a town up ahead they would advance, otherwise it might be a little difficult.

You were just trying to save the place from going into nothing. The nearest thing to chaos that you could imagine.

Q: Did you feel Washington properly recognized the situation?

HAVERKAMP: Yes. As I said, we had a crackerjack ambassador who knew what he could do and worked very hard at getting it done. He had influence and entreé and effective relationship with Mobutu and Kasavubu. Through our AID program and MAAG program we did have influence with Mobutu. The ambassador, I think, was also respected in Washington. He was an extremely honest man in reporting without going overboard. He never ridiculed what was going on. He is one of the few people in the Foreign Service who even put his own career on the line to do what was right. There are not many people like that.

Q: What did he do?

HAVERKAMP: This came about because the ambassador had been instructed to tell the president, Mobutu, something that Mobutu did not want to hear. Mobutu subsequently told another embassy officer that Godley might as well go because he, Mobutu, would not see Godley again and he would have no role or influence in the country. When that officer told that to Ambassador Godley, Ambassador Godley sent back a message saying that he would have to be recalled because he could no longer be effective. He was recalled and went to EA and later became Ambassador to Laos. He saw that if Mobutu would not have anything to do with him, and realizing that we needed

to have somebody there who did have *entree*, he felt he had to leave. He paid a heavy price for being an honest man.

Q: *Yes. You left there in 1966.*

HAVERKAMP: ...I was called back here and they had a task force on the Simba rebellion. The guy who was there was transferred and I joined the task force.

Q: *The Simba rebellion at that time, what did that consist of?*

HAVERKAMP: Oh, that consisted of some wild people who were mostly Muletiste and the remains of the Lumumba people. They were kind of scattered. There was another rebellion going on around the Albertville area, Lake Albert; around Stanleyville area, and they were being worn down by the mercenaries.

Q: *Was this before Operation Dragon Rouge or afterwards?*

HAVERKAMP: I can't remember.

Q: *This was when the Belgian paratroopers went in. That was probably before your time. How did you find Washington? Did they have a pretty good idea of what was happening or were they living in a different world about the situation?*

HAVERKAMP: No, I think there was a clear understanding because most of the people had been there and because, I think when Ambassador Godley was there he sent a very actual picture of what was going on back to Washington. No, we were living in the real world.

Q: *Was there much you could do within the task force?*

HAVERKAMP: No, it was just keeping the Secretary and the White House informed about what was going on and to deal with all pressing, timely things going on. It dissolved shortly after that and went back to a regular operation.

Q: *And then what did you do?*

HAVERKAMP: Then I was the desk officer for the Congo. While I was in the Congo, in fact, Thanksgiving Day of 1966. Mobutu took over, there was a coup about 5:00 in the morning. Subsequently he changed the names and gave African names. Elisabethville to Lubumbashi, Leopoldville to Kinshasa. And he changed his own name to Mobutu Sese Sekou from Mobutu Joseph-Desire.

Even after the task force was dissolved you still had incidents. I remember at one point there were rebellions going on in two or three places and the question of evacuation of foreigners came up and we were back again on a task force made on a Saturday afternoon. We were discussing with our

allies, Europeans, about evacuating civilians. Secretary Rusk came in and very straightforwardly said, "Look, we will take out our people. They have planes and can take out their own people. We are not going to be responsible for everybody when they can do it themselves."

HERMAN J. ROSSI III
Rotation Officer
Kinshasa (1966-1968)

Mr. Rossi was born in Florida and raised in Idaho. He was educated at Gonzaga University and Washington State University. In 1965, he entered the Foreign Service, specializing primarily in economic and African affairs. During his career, Mr. Rossi served in Kinshasa, Blantyre, Rome, Pretoria, Monrovia, Kingston and Libreville, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. He was Economic Counselor at several of his posts. In his Washington assignments, Mr. Rossi dealt with both African and Economic matters. Mr. Rossi was interviewed by Peter Eicher in 2007.

ROSSI: When I got there, it was the Congo, specifically the Democratic Republic of the Congo. President Mobutu changed it to Zaire in the early '70s' as part of his program of Africanization. I'll talk about that later on. It nearly destroyed the economy. The name of the country was changed back to the Democratic Republic of the Congo after Mobutu was overthrown in the 1990s.

I had a consular course and started a French language course, and I got married. I had dated and was semi-engaged to a wonderful lady, Mary MacFarlane, pretty much through my college career. We broke up at stages and got back together then got married a few weeks after I started language training.

Q: How did she feel about the assignment to the reassignment to the Congo?

ROSSI: She didn't express great reservations about it. She probably would have preferred to go to Europe or something like that. Her mother certainly would have preferred that we went to Europe. When we finally did get to Europe a couple of tours later, my mother-in-law looked on it as a great promotion that I'd finally been accepted in the Foreign Service.

One of the things they stressed to you in those days was that you would go where you were assigned, especially in your early tours. It was a much more disciplined system then. There no negotiation of assignments and, except for medical issues, little prospect of successful appeal of assignments at the junior level. We had an officer in our course whose name I don't recall, but who spoke fluent French and had good Arabic, having studied in Lebanon for a couple of years. He wanted to go to a middle-eastern country. They sent him to London. Most of us saw this as a message that we should not get used to getting our first choices on assignment, especially as a junior officer. In later tours, your preferences seemed to carry more weight. .

Q: What was your reaction to your assignment in Kinshasa?

ROSSI: I didn't mind it. I knew it was a Third World country, and I also knew there was a civil war going on there and there had been a lot of political turmoil in the Congo since independence in '60. It seemed like an interesting place to work. That was my strongest reaction - it sounded like a very interesting place to work. I had heard stories about young officers who had been sent to nice European consulates and then found things were very quiet. Kinshasa sounded like a place where the action was which was certainly true.

Q: How did you get to Kinshasa in those days? Was that the Pan Am flight?

ROSSI: That was my one old Foreign Service voyage to post. We took the USS Independence from New York to Lisbon which was the one time I got to take a ship to post. That faded out, too, shortly thereafter. We laid over in Lisbon for a day or so and then took a Pan Am clipper going from Lisbon down to Monrovia. We got off in Monrovia and then spent a day in Monrovia waiting for another Pan Am flight that came through and hop scotched down the coast of Africa to Kinshasa. In those days, Kinshasa looked a lot better physically than Monrovia. I subsequently served in Monrovia. It was and still is a rather shabby looking town; it did not have a colonial power to build wide boulevards and monumental buildings and install an urban infrastructure.

By comparison, Kinshasa was much more physically impressive. It was fraying at the edges, but it definitely was a more interesting and better looking place. We got to Kinshasa in May of '66. It was a fascinating country at the time. There had been a lot of political turbulence as everyone knows after its independence in '60. Just before I got there, there had been a civil war in which the western-backed government, such as it was, was fighting the Simba rebels who were backed by to some degree by the Chinese communists and a various other eastern bloc countries. That was the height of the Cold War.

I got there in May '66. This was a year and a half after the liberation of Stanleyville. If you recall, the Simba rebels had taken Stanleyville, the main city in the northeastern part of the country (now called Kisangani), in 1964. In the process, a number of Americans, mostly missionaries, were taken hostages and held in the city. The hostages included the American consul. They were held there for a couple of months, and a relief effort was launched, partly made of Belgium paratroops and partly of white mercenaries. The operation was successful and most of the hostages were freed although a few were killed by the Simbas as the Belgian troops approached. When I got to the Congo, the civil war was in its final months. The rebels had been driven out of the towns and cities were largely just holding on in the jungle but even that was tapering down.

I found the Congo is a fascinating place, particularly at that time. It was sort of a mini-Vietnam in that it had become a focus of cold war competition in Africa. The West was supporting one side, the Mobutu government, while the Soviet bloc supported various rebel groups. The size of the country, the weakness and corruption of the Mobutu government, and chronic discontent in the eastern part of the country meant that it was chronically instable and a fertile ground for rebellion and subversion. At that time, there was a widely accepted theory on both sides of the cold war that the size, resources, and central location of the Congo made it the key to dominating or at least heavily influencing all of Africa.

The U.S. was heavily involved in supporting the Mobutu government in many ways. There was a large assistance program run by a large A.I.D mission, a military assistance mission, and even some USAF transports to fly the Congolese army to trouble spots around the country. We never put combat troops there but did about everything short of that. The Embassy was quite large and functioned in a constant crisis mode.

The Congolese army was fairly incompetent at that time and had been unable to stop the advance of the Simbas rebels in 1964 even with US and Belgian assistance. There seemed nothing that could stop the Simbas from taking Kinshasa. The two groups which had turned the tide of battle were the white mercenaries and the Katangan gendarmes. In the desperate days of 1964, Moise Tshombe had been brought back into the government as Prime Minister. He had been the leader of the copper-rich province of Katanga which had broken away in 1960-63. That succession had been suppressed by the UN, troops but Tshombe still had some Katangan soldiers in Angola. Anyway, he brought back with him six hundred or so Katangan gendarmes. They were good fighters - better than the Congolese army. At the same time, he also brought in mercenaries. The first group was the Fifth Commando, an English-speaking unit led by Mike Hoare, a South African.

Over the course of 1964-65, the mercenaries and the Katangan gendarmes were successful in defeating the Simbas. These two fascinating military units were still in the northeastern Congo when I arrived in 1966. However their situation and become precarious because six months earlier, the commander of the Congolese army, Joseph Mobutu, had staged a military coup and overthrew Tshombe's government. Mobutu did not trust either the mercenaries or the Katangan troops (and the feeling was mutual) but for a while a least he still needed them. However by the time I arrived in mid-1966, this need had diminished and the confrontations came during my tour.

Q: This was Joseph Mobutu at that time?

ROSSI: Yes. It was still Joseph Desire Mobutu. He changed his name later on to Mobutu Sese Seko as part of his Africanization campaign in the early 70's. I had to follow it more than I wanted to because when I left Kinshasa I spent two years on the Congo desk in Washington. We'll get to that later on. It was still Joseph Desire Mobutu. The war was still going on. He was still being more of a moderate than he was before.

The first summer I was there (1966), the Katangan gendarmes in and around Stanleyville decided they wanted to go back to Katanga. Mobutu's government did not want them back there because they were afraid they would start a new secession. One large group of Katangan gendarmes revolted and started marching south. They were eventually corralled with the heavy use of air power and cut off from Katanga. Some of them were captured, but a lot of them ended up with a mercenary named Jean Schramme. He was one of those fascinating characters you found in the Congo. He had been a Belgian planter who had become a mercenary and leader of small force in the course of the civil war. He had a stronghold south of Stanleyville (Kisangani) and some of the refugee Katangan troops ended up with him.

My second summer in the Congo, the mercenaries from the Sixth commando in Kisangani and Schramme's mercenary/Katangan force all revolted. The Sixth Commando was a French speaking unit; Mike Hoare's unit had been disbanded and had left the country by this time. There were

various Congolese army units in Kisangani also but they were driven out of the city by the mercenaries. The army harassed them from the outskirts of Kisangani, but they couldn't defeat the mercenaries. The mercenaries were in an untenable position, however, because they didn't have any source of supplies. Thus they retreated southwards first to Schramme's stronghold and then moved east into Bukavu, which is a major town near the eastern border of the Congo. The mercenaries/Katangans held that city for three or four months until lack of supplies, air attacks by government planes piloted by expatriates and other things caused them to go into the neighboring country of Rwanda and be interned there. The white mercenaries eventually got back to Europe. However, the Katangan gendarmes were turned over to the Congolese government. A few were executed and the rest were left to die in prison camps in the jungle. I always felt sorry for them since they were doing their duty as they say it.

Q: What were you personally doing during while all this was happening.

ROSSI: There was a system then in the Foreign Service of junior officer rotation, and it was still working when I came in. A first-tour officer would rotate from section to section around the embassy. Kinshasa was quite a big embassy so there was lots of opportunity for this.

Anyway, I rotated around the embassy. My first five months were in the economic/ commercial section. It was quite interesting. I enjoyed that work and eventually ended up in the economic cone. From there I went to the administrative section. I found out I was not cut out to be an admin officer! That was good. I was learning what I wanted and what didn't want and what I was good at and not good at. It was and is very necessary work; I just did not feel I was cut out to be a good admin officer.

Q: We'll step back a little bit. I think the last intelligible portion of our conversation, we had just finished up as administrative trainee junior officer, and we're moving on to the ambassador's office. You're going to tell us who the ambassador was and what you were doing there.

ROSSI: The ambassador when I arrived in the Congo was Mac Godley, who was quite an impressive figure. He was a big bear of a man who had been in the Congo as DCM a couple of years earlier. He knew the place very well, knew all the people very well. He was a very good guy to work for. He had been deeply involved in the post-1960 U.S. relations with Congo and was very knowledgeable. He had led the embassy through the Stanleyville hostage period.

Just before I became the Ambassador's aide, Mac Godley and Mobutu got into a disagreement. Mobutu could be very mercurial and irascible at times. He wanted to make a friend with the American ambassador but at the same time he didn't want any hard advice. Of course, we were pouring huge amounts of money and other things into the Congo to support Mobutu, so we felt we had some rights to give him some strong advice. He really didn't take this well. After one particular disagreement, Mobutu ordered Godley to leave the country. One reason Mobutu felt able to throw the American ambassador out when he was getting so much U.S. aid was that he had another channel of communication to the U.S. government. However, I am not able to discuss the details of that in an unclassified document.

That was shortly before I became the ambassador's aide. Robert O. Blake, who was the DCM, became the Chargé d'Affaires for about the next nine months. Thus I worked for him during my time in the front office.

In the period prior my tour in the front office, I had been able to do some traveling around the country. I had gotten up to Stanleyville (Kisangani) and to Lubumbashi in the copper region. I also visited Albertville which was the headquarters of the Fifth Commando which was then in its final months in the Congo. I met some of the mercenaries; they were a fascinating and rather diverse group, not all thugs as you might expect but a mixture of young men looking for adventure and others looking for a stake to buy a pub somewhere. Of course, there were a few thugs too.

A few months after I became ambassador's aide, the mercenaries of the Sixth Commando in Kisangani revolted. The mercenary revolt was a very traumatic experience all over the country, not just up in the northeast. In Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and elsewhere, the Congolese army, which was never well disciplined, reacted to the revolt by directing their suspicion and animosity toward all whites in general. White civilians were hauled out of their cars at army roadblocks. Some were let go, some were beaten up and some were arrested. In Katanga, several civilian expatriates were actually killed. It was quite dangerous all over the Congo for all whites for several months. The anger was not directed at Americans. If you could persuade the soldiers that you were an American, you were probably all right. The problem was that relatively few of the soldiers spoke French. They spoke Lingala which is the trading language of the western Congo. Not infrequently, they had been drinking while manning these road blocks. There were a number of rather hair-raising passages through army roadblocks for all Embassy staff during that period including my wife and I.

From the American government's point of view, it was a very much a crisis period over the next few months after the mercenaries revolted. The U.S. was deeply involved in helping Mobutu's government defeat the mercenaries and Katangese. It was fascinating time to be an Ambassador's aide as I got to see crisis management close up. Bob Blake reveled in crisis management.

Q: Did find that to be a static job? Did you stay in the Embassy and hold the fort or were you out and about town with him as well?

ROSSI: I was not out and about town with Blake. He liked to handle everything personally. I stayed more towards the office and manned the fort while he rushed from one meeting to another.

I did various jobs to support and assist Blake, classic staff aide stuff. Because Blake and I were the only ones in the front office with decent French, I arranged many of his high level contacts including with Mobutu. I also remember that was one of my jobs was to write what was called the Weeka. It was a weekly summary of all the important events in the country for that week. It was mainly useful for those people in the Washington bureaucracy who were not following the Congo on a daily basis. There was plenty of grist for the mill. During the mercenary revolt, there was almost too much grist.

After the six months as Ambassador's aide, I had been scheduled to go to Bukavu. A junior officer would normally rotate around the embassy for 18 months and then for the last six months would go

to the consulate in Bukavu. The problem was at this stage of the game, Bukavu was held by the mercenaries so obviously I could not go there. Thus the Embassy sent me over to USIS. I spent some five months there which I found valuable as an insight into another agency at post.

After the mercenary rebellion was over and things had become quieter, we had a number of high level visits. Hubert Humphrey was then Vice President and came to the Congo with a large entourage. It was the first of many high level visits I was been involved in. He also brought a large press contingent which I helped look after in my USIS role.

Q: You escaped having to do consular work?

ROSSI: No, not really. Normally consular was not a first-tour rotation. Kinshasa had a one-man consular section, and consular work was relatively limited. However, the consular officer was transferred away on short notice so I spent the last three months being the consular officer there. It was not the best situation because while I had had the consular course, I was inexperienced in consular work. However I had to learn fast since I was the entire consular section and the cases we did have always seemed to be tough ones. (Everything seemed to be harder in the Congo than elsewhere.) There were a surprising number of immigrant visa cases there. There were a thousand or so contact teachers from Haiti, who were trying to get to the US on immigrant visas, which formed the bulk of this work.

We left the Congo in April of '68 as I recall.

Q: Before we move on to the next question, I'd like to ask you about life outside the professional aspects. Did you have good housing? Did you meet a lot of Congolese? Did you make friends with them and other diplomats?

ROSSI: Let's talk about housing. We were first in an apartment downtown; then we were able to finagle a small house up in the hills on the edge of town, an area called Djelo Binza. Housing was okay. The problem was the infrastructure in the whole city was decaying rapidly and was not being maintained. The electricity and water and things like that were frequently going out.

Also, the availability of food was unreliable. Various foods would come in for a while and then vanish. I'm certain this was far harder on wives than it was on officers. The officers had all the excitement going on at the office. It was tough to live in Kinshasa in those days, but there was a great *esprit de corps* among the whole American community including the spouses. They'd help each other out.

I remember in those days the embassy would only air condition occupied bedrooms. The climate in Kinshasa ranged from hot to oppressively hot and humid - the later being some six months of the year. I remember one occasion when had a few expatriate friends over for dinner. We started the dinner party in the dining room in the normal manner. However it was so hot and muggy that we actually moved the dinner party into the bedroom and the air conditioning! We would of course not do that for a representational dinner. We and our guests just endured; the heat of course bothered our Congolese guests far less.

It was hard to get the Congolese to come out for dinners. Many had transportation problems, and I lived well away from the city center. Also I didn't have much in the way of representational funds. I learned that lunches at restaurants were normally the best but that ate up what little representation money I had. The more senior officers were obviously more active on representational functions than I was, and I attended many functions of at their homes.

There was little outside entertainment in the Congo then so the American and other foreign community tended to pull together and entertain each other. I made some good friends among the expatriate community particularly the British and German embassies. I have lost track of them, but still consider them friends.

In October 1967, about eight months before our departure, my first son, Christopher, was born.

Q: Was he born in the Congo?

ROSSI: Yes. My wife Mary could have gone up to Germany, but she wanted to stay there. She had natural childbirth in a hospital with some Belgian nuns. It was a very long painful labor. After that, she got seriously into natural childbirth training. This story is a little bit down the road, but she actually later became a nurse-midwife.

Q: In '66 to '68 the big issue in U.S. foreign policy was in Vietnam probably. Did that have any impact on you at all in the Congo?

ROSSI: Not really. The Dept was looking for volunteers for Vietnam by 1967, and they were dragooning some officers. A few officers from my A-100 course eventually went to Vietnam. One or two volunteered and a couple of others went less willingly. The big push on Vietnam came around 67-68 but by then I was married with a child on the way and the Dept was not forcing married officers with children to go to Vietnam.

Q: Politically, was Vietnam an issue at all in the Congo?

ROSSI: No, it was not really an issue. It was considered just another part of the battle the Western countries were fighting in the Congo against the worldwide communist movement. We had been supporting the government against the communist-backed rebels in the Congo, and Vietnam seemed just another example of communist rebels trying to overthrow a democratic government on a bigger scale. I did not hear a single Congolese criticize our Vietnam policy during my tour; some of the Europeans expats occasionally questioned the war but they were not being particularly vocal about it.

Q: In '68 you went back to the States?

Yes. I am afraid I have spent a lot of time on the Congo but it was the most politically active and complex of my many tours. I will try and keep the others shorter. One personal footnote is that we left the Congo in the nick of time in one respect. I had acquired a used MG Midget just before I entered the FS (a young man's yen for a sporty car). It was our only car in Kinshasa. It was a fun car to drive up the curving, hilly roads to our house but it had very little room inside it. By our

departure, our son was six months old and growing fast. We could barely get the three of us in the car when we left.

Anyway we left the Congo in April, early May of '68, and I had been assigned to the Congo desk in Washington at the Central African Affairs office (AFC). It turned out to be a difficult tour because junior officers did not get paid very much in those days (around \$7,000 a year), and living in Washington was rather expensive even then. So, we were relatively poor in the two and a half years we spent in Washington.

It was also the period my other three children were born. I ended up having another son about six months after I got there, and then the twins were born another two years later. The twins were born toward the end of the tour, so we had three children in a little over two and a half years in Washington. My wife was of course not working because of the small children. We did not get the overseas housing allowance in Washington and, for a junior officer with a growing family, that was the difference between a decent standard of living and near poverty.

The financial difficulties of living in Washington made such a strong impact on me and my wife that we did not come back to Washington for 10 years after that tour. It was however rather interesting to work on a country desk. It's the heart and soul of the State Department, and everybody comes to you who needs anything relating to your country.

In retrospect, it would have better to do that Washington tour two to four years later when I was a little more knowledgeable on the bureaucracy and in better financial shape. I had to learn the ins and outs of a rather complex bureaucracy in a short period. I spent a lot of time writing briefing papers.

My period on the desk was a time when the Congo had become much quieter politically. The assumption around the U.S. government was that the political problems were over, and therefore the intrinsic economic strength of the Congo would come to the fore. Copper prices were good, and it was thought that the plantation agriculture of the colonial period would recover, and the Congo would again be a prosperous country.

Of course, that didn't happen. Mobutu badly mismanaged the economy. He started out by nationalizing the vital copper industry and later on "Africanized" many more industries (e.g. forced the foreign owners to sell all or part of their companies to Congolese for little or no money). This policy got going in earnest after I left the desk but I spent a lot of time dealing with Mobutu's nationalization of the main Belgian copper company, UMHK. After I left the desk, he nationalized many more companies. Not surprisingly the economy of the Congo went into a nosedive before long but in the period I was on the desk (1968-70), there for still a lot of hope the country.

It was also shortly after my tour in AF/C that Mobutu changed the name of the country from Congo to Zaire and then pressured all Congolese to change their names from a Christian name to an African one. Mobutu changed his own name at this time. Also Congolese were not to call each other Monsieur or Madame but citoyene (citizen). Mobutu had been a student in Belgium at one point, and I think he must have been fascinated by the French revolution.

This was also the one time that I actually got to participate in a White House visit. Nixon was president, and Mobutu came in mid 1970 for a State Visit. I worked like a dog and did a lot of briefing papers which were still reflecting the party line that with the Congo's political troubles behind it, the country had great promise economically. They were rather optimistic briefing papers but in fairness most of us thought the Congo had a better economic future than turned out to be the case.

As one of the working stiffs on the State Visit, I was invited for the after-dinner entertainment for the White House state dinner. After the dinner, we were allowed to join the main group for the entertainment and dancing. My wife came with me. She was about seven months pregnant with twins at the time—we didn't know they were twins—but we both had a good time. That was our one opportunity to actually to attend a state visit in the White House. That was also my one chance to actually talk to Mobutu in person. That was my two plus years at AF/C. In retrospect, I didn't find it enjoyable because of the financial strain, but I did learn a lot about the operation of the Washington bureaucracy.

HERMAN J. COHEN
Labor Attaché/Political Counselor
Kinshasa (1966-1969)

Ambassador Cohen was born in New York, New York and graduated from City College of New York. He served in number of posts including Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Zaire. In 1977 he was named ambassador to Senegal. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Q: You left Zambia in the last quarter of '66 and went to Zaire. What was your job in Zaire?

COHEN: In Zaire, I went back to being a full time labor attaché. Apart from being a big rich country, Zaire was important in Cold War terms. Since the country had so fallen apart after the Belgians left, there was a vacuum in which the Soviets and Americans were essentially competing for influence and power. The United States had jumped in and become virtually a proconsul there. We had a big AID machine, a big military machine. We had people in virtually every ministry telling them what to do. We had a major CIA operation that was even running its own airline. It was a totally different thing from anything I had ever seen before. The labor union was an important element in our overall strategy.

Q: When you talk about the labor union, what sort of labor union was there?

COHEN: Like the Belgians, they had both a Christian labor federation and a socialist labor federation, and they were pretty well organized. It was a very highly industrialized country under the Belgians. There were copper mine workers, a lot of textile factories, shipyard workers, and many others. So, you had a lot of union members and people who trained outside to be union leaders.

Q: As the labor attaché, what did the ambassador look upon you to do outside of keep track? As you say we were running sort of a proconsul stewardship there. Did you have any more than just reporting?

COHEN: Well he saw me mainly as a political officer to contribute to the embassy's political analysis. Also try to influence the political situation there, keep them pro-west and report on their relations with bad guys, the Soviet embassy, what have you.

Q: What type of activity were the Soviets doing as you saw it?

COHEN: They were trying to do a lot of education, bringing Zairean students to Russia for training at Lumumba University. They were inviting people for short visits just like we were doing, giving money, all sorts of projects, health projects, agricultural projects.

Q: I was doing an interview this morning with Ed Horowitz who was sort of talking about the other end being in Moscow at this time about how many of the students from foreign countries particularly the Africans became very disillusioned because the Russians are good solid racist people and are not very subtle about it. Were you seeing any reflection from the people coming back from Lumumba University and how they were? I would have thought they would gravitate toward the unions.

COHEN: We did see some of them coming back. In Africa in those days anyone coming back with a college degree was getting a government job, so they didn't have to worry too much about employment. We did find that people trained in the Soviet Union were viewed as second class citizens. Returning students who had a degree from Europe or the United States received good jobs. A guy who got a medical degree from Bulgaria or any school of the Soviet Bloc, became marginalized pretty quickly.

Q: How did you find your contacts with the unions; was it a problem ?

COHEN: No they were very warm. They were very pro-west and looked to the Europeans or the Americans for support and for projects. They were very pro-American thanks to people like Irving Brown.

Q: I would have thought it would have been a bit difficult dealing with the problem of separatism particularly in Katanga. This was a huge copper area that was trying to separate itself from the central government, and also this was being pushed by some Belgian commercial interests. Did you find yourself caught up in that?

COHEN: By the time I had gotten there, the UN operation had been there for five or six years and they had sort of settled that issue. But, in the middle of '67 we had what we called the mercenary rebellion, because there was still the Zairean regime and President Joseph Mobutu and the army were still employing foreign mercenaries, mainly South African whites and Belgians to pacify certain areas. In June of 1967 there was a rebellion in the town of Bukavu on the eastern border near Rwanda. These mercenary battalions took over and started marching toward the center of the country toward Kisangani. It used to be called Stanleyville. It was obviously designed to topple the

regime, and we suspected that Belgian business interests were behind it because once you topple the regime, then you can go after Katanga and other rich areas. We had to evacuate our consulate there. We had a small consulate in Bukavu, and we had to evacuate everyone, so it was a tense moment. This unleashed a lot of anti-white sentiment that was fanned by the regime. By that time by the way, I had become political counselor because the previous counselor left on transfer. The ambassador said that I'd rather have you become political counselor than get someone I don't know.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

COHEN: The ambassador was Mac Godley replaced shortly thereafter by Robert McBride. Godley and his DCM, Robert Blake, offered me the job, so I left being labor attaché after one year. So, we were coping with this anti-white sentiment being fanned by the regime. We had a lot of work to do saving missionaries from the interior because people were attacking them. Bill Harrop, our consul general in Lubumbashi, was responsible for saving a lot of Belgian lives down there. So we had the very interesting phenomenon, lots of country team meetings deciding what the U.S. reaction to this mercenary rebellion should be, and we decided to ask for U.S. military assistance to the government to deal with this mercenary rebellion. In our telegram to Washington, we said that we had always sent military assistance to defeat pro communist rebels in Zaire and other countries. This would be the first time we would oppose right wing fascists, and we think it would show a nice balance. This was the Johnson administration and they bought that. They really liked that idea, and they sent out a joint task force of four C130 aircraft that were used mainly to transport Zairean troops around the country. That was very successful. This was the first operation of that type that I was involved in and had responsibilities for.

Q: What was the outcome of it?

COHEN: Very successful. The mercenaries got the signal that the U.S. was against them, which was disappointing to them. They would think we were on the right wing side of the fence as well. So, they quickly got the signal and retreated and left the country but after having caused a lot of damage and hatred and what have you. I was very proud of that operation.

Q: Were you able to notice a difference in the attitude of the Zaireans? Were they aware of what we had done?

COHEN: Yes they were, and the president gave it a lot of publicity. Actually the C130 which was flying all over Zaire carrying troops and what have you became the symbol of power for Zaire. You see a C130, it means that help is on the way, you are safe.

Q: A C130 is a standard four- engine transport plane.

COHEN: Yes and they are very wonderful planes. A couple of years later when I was back in the department as Director for Central African Affairs which was mainly Zaire, Mobutu came on an official visit, and Nixon said, "Can we help you with anything?" Mobutu said "I want C130's." Because he realized that the one who has C130's has power.

Q: What was our impression of Mobutu at this period, '66'69, what was our impression of Mobutu at that time?

COHEN: We liked him although we saw there was tremendous incompetence you might say, but we liked his attitude. He was sort of a can-do, I want to get things done. He was an army sergeant who became a general. He had a certain intellectual base; he had gone to school. We liked talking to him, and of course, he was very anticommunist. He took our advice, but there was tremendous incompetence, inability to get anything done. He was very quixotic, make a decision one day, and reverse it the next, a lot of crazy things going on, but we liked him personally.

Q: What about the problem of corruption? How did we see that?

COHEN: We didn't let it worry us too much. It was an African cultural phenomenon, and it wasn't that big in those days. This was not America, you know. We could not apply our own standards then. It is no longer the case today.

Q: Did you have a problem with young officers coming in of dealing with as you say a rather chaotic political system, decisions would be made and then not made. Sometimes it is hard to get young officers to not get very righteous about things. It sort of spills over into the attitude of writing and all that.

COHEN: No we didn't have that problem. In fact, the guy who worked for me when I was political counselor was a guy on his first tour, Kenneth Brown, who just retired after being ambassador in Ghana. He was very cool, treating it analytically.

Q: You were there sort of at the beginning. Were you seeing a solid cadre of Africanists being developed?

COHEN: Yes. I was one of the early African specialists. Slowly but surely, we were developing a good group.

Q: What about the African Bureau during this time you were in Zaire; did you get any feeling for the direction of the African Bureau?

COHEN: It was very good. They took good care of us administratively. They seemed to have a lot of clout within the State Department with people like Dean Brown, Sheldon Vance and Assistant Secretary Palmer. They were very powerful people, They were all very supportive, intelligent people.

Q: Any high level visits to Zaire while you were there?

COHEN: Vice President Humphrey came. It was an Africa visit. He was going to about seven or eight countries. The trip was related to U.S. domestic politics, designed to demonstrate an interest in Africa. He had a lot of African Americans on the plane, also trying to shore up our relations with Africa to make sure they did not go communist. He spent about two nights in Zaire. That was the

biggest. Apart from that, I don't remember the Secretary of State ever coming. We had, of course, numerous visits from the Assistant Secretary of State.

Q: How about from the Department of Labor of the AFL-CIO, Was there much of a tie with the labor unions during this period?

COHEN: Yes, there was a lot. The AFL-CIO considered the Zairean unions among their best friends in Africa, so there was a lot of interchange, a lot of movement back and forth, a lot of training for example. The AFL-CIO concentrated on very practical things, a school for typists, machine tools, and basic skills. The Africans really loved that.

Q: Did you have any role to play in saying you know it would be good to have a school for typists? Is this the kind of thing you would be doing from time to time?

COHEN: Yes, they consulted me and we would work with AID and see what the needs were. I was intermittently involved with that.

Q: What about the labor ministry there? Was that a...

COHEN: That was very ineffective; it was not operating. We preferred to deal with the labor unions.

Q: How about when you were a political counselor on the side of dealing with the media; was there much of a Zairean indigenous media?

COHEN: There was a very big media before the government established a one party state that came during my time. There were only three newspapers allowed to publish, and each one was part of the one party state. There was a very flourishing media and we had a very strong USIA. The USIA used the political officers to brief the press, to lecture to the press, to have meetings that the press attended. It was a very strong relationship there.

Q: What happened, how did the one party state come about?

COHEN: Well, there was a trend in Africa. It started with people like Kaunda and Nyerere. They said that Africa could not afford multiparty systems; it was too expensive. That was just copying the white man. We have our own more appropriate African way that is consensus. We all sit around the tree and have a palaver. That is what we should have, a one party state and we settle all our differences within the one party. So Mobutu, not wanting to be different and seeing that it would consolidate his power, decreed that there would be only one party and everybody in Zaire would belong to it by birth. If you were a Zairean citizen you were a member. Everything would be coopted into it, labor unions, women's groups, youth groups would all become branches of the party. So, that was the clamping down of a totalitarian system disguised as an African democratic system. That was a trend all over Africa. They changed their constitutions in most countries to allow for only one official political party that became synonymous with the state.

Q: Since we had such a role there, did we try to do anything about it?

COHEN: No, we had no interest in promoting our brand of democracy. Our main interest was that Zaire should remain pro-west, good for U.S. business, supporting the United States in the UN and other forums around the world. Also we wanted stability. If a one- party state could bring an end to chaos, so much the better. We were not on a pro- democracy kick in those days.

VICTOR D. COMRAS
General Officer
Kinshasa (1967-1969)

Victor D. Comras was born in New York State in 1943. Comras graduated from Georgetown University in 1964, the University of Florida Law School in 1966, and promptly joined the Foreign Service. While in the Foreign Service, Comras served overseas in Zaire, Nigeria, South Africa, France, Canada and Macedonia. He also worked on the Law of the Sea negotiations. Comras was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: You went to Kinshasa when?

COMRAS: I arrived in Kinshasa in July 1967.

Q: And you were there until when?

COMRAS: My assignment continued there until September 1969. This included rotation tours through the embassy in Kinshasa and at the Consulate in Lubumbashi.

Q: Was it the Congo or Zaire?

COMRAS: It was already known as Zaire when I arrived. I arrived during the final phase of the 1967 Mercenary Rebellion. The rebellion was led by a Belgian Soldier of Fortune, Jean Schramm. He led a group of mercenaries who had been hired by the Mobutu regime to fight against rebels in Katanga. When Mobutu dismissed them, they turned on his regime.

Q: Was this Shaba I or Shaba II? There was a war going on.

COMRAS: Right. Because of the first stages of that war, I was slowed down in actually going out to my assignment because the border was closed. I took the SS Independence from New York to Naples and then flew out of Naples to go down to Kinshasa. The border had just reopened and one could sense the insecurity of the place. Subsequently, I was sent down to Lubumbashi where there were still a number of Katangese gendarmes. Many had again rebelled and were operating in various groups, or as bandits. Because of the poor security situation in Lubumbashi, most dependents had been sent out. The men were housed together. We were each issued side arms and trained how to use them.

Q: Lubumbashi was old Elizabethville?

COMRAS: Yes. We did have one incident where the house that I was living in was taken over by the Katangese gendarmes. There was a short gunfight. I was cornered in the garage by one of the Katangese Rebels. He robbed me of my watch and then tried to shoot me. Fortunately for me, the gun misfired. I didn't hang around for a second shot. I just dove into the bushes and he ran away. That incident was subsequently reported in a message to the State Department by one of my colleagues.

Q: Did you go right to Lubumbashi when you arrived?

COMRAS: No. At the time of my assignment to Kinshasa, the State Department had inaugurated what it called "The Junior Officer Program." The program was meant to provide "on the job" training. Each new junior officer was supposed to rotate between various sections of the embassy. My first tour was in the administrative section. They had a hard time figuring out how they could use me. Finally, I was told to run the Motor Pool. Imagine that, 7 years of college and a rigorous examination and entry screening, and I was going to run the Motor Pool! I decided I wanted out - so I wrote a letter volunteering to go to Vietnam. The Department never responded. I stayed in the Motor Pool for almost 2 months. Then, Hubert Humphrey came along and saved my career. Humphrey, then Vice President of the United States, announced a visit to Africa and one of his major stops was going to be Kinshasa. So, the embassy finally needed me to do something. They were short-staffed on something. So I got put under the direction of the Humphrey visit control officer. I became "Deputy Control Officer." I never looked back. And one advantage of working the Motor Pool was that I knew all the drivers on a first name basis. We had all become good friends!.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

COMRAS: The Ambassador was Robert H. McBride. He had quite a reputation. He later became ambassador to Mexico.

Q: When you're talking to your junior colleagues, what was the feeling about Mobutu at that point?

COMRAS: The embassy was very friendly to Mobutu. He was a young and upcoming leader in the 1960s. He was viewed as pro-western, pro-American and progressive. The U.S., provided him with some of his closest advisors. We were worried about communist influence in Angola at that time. Mobutu was our perfect ally. This was a very good period in the relations between Mobutu and the United States. That relationship soured later, after Mobutu began to nationalize many of the local businesses.

Q: When you were sent to Lubumbashi, what were you doing down there?

COMRAS: I was sent to Lubumbashi as a rotational economic/commercial officer. That was the first time I started doing some real economic and commercial reporting. It was a small post. It was

what I really envisaged I would do when I joined the Foreign Service. The CIA was a major component of our small post. I worked closely with them.

Q: Who was the consul there?

COMRAS: The consul at that time was William Harrop. He later became Director General of the Foreign Service. John Stockwell was also with us in Lubumbashi. He later gained notoriety for his book criticizing the CIA.

Q: On the Humphrey visit, how did it go?

COMRAS: Mission accomplished. The Humphrey visit went quite well. I got into exciting discussions with the pilot of Air Force II at that time about making sure that everybody got on board the plane in time, but that worked out all right.

Q: Down in Lubumbashi, what were our interests there?

COMRAS: The consulate was our eyes and ears regarding the situation in the important copper belt of Africa. We reported on the economic and security situation. We also monitoring events regarding Zaire's mining industry. And we watched carefully what was happening in neighboring areas of Angola. Katanga was a very important source for copper, cobalt, and certain other strategically important metals.

Q: You had these Katangese rebel groups, or bandits by this time. Who was keeping them out of the city?

COMRAS: It was supposedly the task of the Congolese or Zairean army to provide for local security. The local military government - his name was Paluku, I think - was a young and energetic fellow. He confronted an enormous task in pacifying the region. In our view he was doing a creditable job. There was still a very large expatriate community in Katanga. They had begun to return and to bring the mines back into operation. The price of copper and cobalt were high on the world market, providing important economic incentives to getting the mines back in operation. In fact, through that whole period of time that I was in Zaire, things appeared to be getting better. The low point seemed to be the time I arrived. When I left Zaire there was a perception of increasing optimism. Things were getting better economically and politically. Stability had returned to most regions of the country. But it didn't last long. Right around October of '69, the students at the university revolted against Mobutu and new pressures and new problems came along. The Mobutu government became more repressive and turned more nationalistic and radical. They began a program known as Zaireization - turning local business and industry over to Zaire nationals. While the goal might have been laudatory, the methodology was appalling bad. It amounted to nationalization and led to a dramatic exodus of the expatriates who were still needed to keep the business and distribution system operating. The program also brought a halt to new investment. Within a very short time, the economy was spiraling down. I was probably there during the best years of the post-independence period.

Q: Then did you come back to Kinshasa?

COMRAS: Only once in 1973 and that was to present my new son to his grandparents - my wife's parents.

This may be a good place for me to tell you about my own personal situation while I was in Zaire. I met my wife-to-be in Kinshasa. She was the most beautiful girl I had ever known. Her name was Sara. She was of Jewish Italian background. Her family had settled in Kinshasa in the early 1950s. They had fled Cairo, Egypt after the Nagib revolution. Her father ran a local import/export business. Sara was a student at Lovanium University. I was drawn to her the first time I saw her. That was at a garden party at the residence of the Israeli Ambassador on the occasion of Israel's national day of independence. I had to find a way to meet her.

As the most junior officer at the American embassy, I was assigned many of the most routine tasks. One of these was to organize the American Community showings of motion pictures we received weekly from the Armed Services Motion Picture Program. The embassy paid for these films, and had to gain reimbursement by charging admission. I was responsible to preview the films and to advertise and collect admissions. I also organized the showings. This was well before videos or satellite TV. These twice weekly films were a great morale booster.

I quickly realized that these responsibilities could be turned into a great asset for a single guy. I had Hollywood movies and I had a projector. I could get people to come by and visit just to see those movies. So I would organize parties around them for side showings. I used this as a way to introduce myself to Kinshasa's university population - and to meet and make contacts in the local business community. I had such an evening party coming up - so I invited Sara and her family to come.

Q: What was her background?

COMRAS: My wife, Sara, was born in Egypt. Her parents were part of the Italian Jewish community living in Heliopolis. They traced their own roots back to the Island of Rhodes, which had been taken over by Italy for a short period in 1912. Following the overthrow of King Farouk, they left Egypt and settled in Kinshasa. Her father had relatives living there and they had invited him to join them in business there. This was in '52. At the time Kinshasa had a sizable expatriate community. Sara grew up there. She stayed on after high school to attend the Lovanium University, which, at the time was run by its sister university in Louvain Belgium.

Q: Was there a Lebanese community... A lot of Lebanese were in West Africa. Was your wife's family part of this Middle Eastern commercial thing?

COMRAS: There was a small Lebanese community in Kinshasa. The expatriate community was made up mostly of Belgians, Italians and Portuguese. There were also a number of Jewish families that had come out of the Egypt and other places in North Africa. Many had settled in Kinshasa during World War II, or during the post WWII period. There was also a substantial Portuguese community. Many had come to Kinshasa from Angola during the Angolan War period. Altogether there were about 150,000 expatriates lived in Zaire during the period I served there.

Q: At that point they felt relatively comfortable?

COMRAS: Yes, they seemed quite comfortable during the years I was there. That was 1967-1969. Many had left just after independence. That was a very difficult time. But, many came back once the situation settled down. Life was relatively comfortable for the expatriate community in Kinshasa all through the late '60s and early 1970s.

STANTON H. BURNETT
Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS
Kinshasa (1967-1969)

Stanton H. Burnett entered the USIS in 1967 while on leave from his university teaching position. In addition to Kinshasa, Mr. Burnett served in Brussels and Rome. He was interviewed in 1990 by Pat Nieburg.

BURNETT: It was important that I got out there fast and so it was a whirlwind. I don't even remember the number of days, but they were very few. I felt like it was almost that week that I was sworn in. I was given no training. I had no idea what a country plan was or quarterly budgets or going rates, or anything like that.

I didn't know anything about the Agency, how it worked. I had the feeling that largely they wanted somebody out there to show the flag. It was a share-and-share arrangement at the post. That is, in Bukavu the USIA man stamped passports for State, and I think it was up in Kisangani the State man ran a little cultural center. They were obviously just interested in getting somebody out there.

At National Airport I was paged and was told on the phone that my family couldn't accompany me because things had gotten worse in the Congo and they would have to go to the R&R address. I didn't even know what R&R was, let alone an address, which was somewhere in Europe. Since my wife's parents lived in The Hague anyway, we decided that they would simply go there.

So I flew off to Kinshasa alone, which was the first surprise, and landed -- this was really the end of the turmoil in the Congo. It was the Joseph Schramm rebellion, which was the last gasp of old Belgian planters and Mike Hoare and a few mercenaries plus the Katangese Congolese mercenaries raising hell around the interior of the Congo.

I got to Kinshasa and they gave me a drafting job. The first diplomatic cable I ever wrote announced the loss of my post because the rebels had gotten to Bukavu before I could -- I probably should have known at the time that the signs weren't with me -- which led to an immediate discussion as to what they were going to do with me.

The Agency graciously said that they would pay all the expenses. It appeared that there was no job and they didn't have assignments for me and, you know, would I mind terribly -- this just hadn't worked out. I had to explain that somebody was now teaching my classes, living in my house. It

was all agreed. I said that it would be awfully decent of the Agency if they could keep me on the payroll for a year somehow because it would be embarrassing and difficult to go back.

Q: Let me interrupt with just one question.

BURNETT: Yeah.

Q: When they sent you off what was your charge? Were you an information officer, a consular officer? What were you supposed to do?

BURNETT: I guess I was a Branch PAO because I was the only person there, State or USIA. It was one person and four or five Congolese employees. That was it.

At the post at the time were some of the great names of the Agency. The PAO was at that time one of the highest ranking men in the Agency, George Hellyer. George had come in as a 1 at the beginning of the Agency. He was the second Director of Asian Affairs.

He was the PAO. He had already come from his adventures as JUSPAO in Vietnam, throwing leaflets out of airplanes while lying on the floor of the airplane and all.

Rudy Aggrey, who went on to a distinguished career in the Agency and then as an ambassador, was the Deputy PAO. But important to my situation was that the CAO was somebody who I hope gets in on this project -- Hank Ryan.

Hank Ryan had left his post as Dean of Students at Howard University to come with the Agency. A very distinguished gent and particularly for Africa, just an outstanding CAO -- I learned that later because I didn't have any powers of judgment at that time.

Hank said, "Wait a minute. Hang around just a little bit. A guy is about to leave. Let me talk to Hellyer and all because I think I can use you as a Deputy CAO," or Assistant CAO -- ACAO -- in Kinshasa. Then, if things open up in the east, you can go in.

That was the deal that was eventually consummated, although my family still had to stay out. I spent the first seven months -- I think it was -- of my foreign service career with my family in this refugee status. There was nobody at the post except -- of the women and children who normally accompany an officer -- Dotty Frey, the secretary was the only woman at the post, a friend of so many of ours. It was like wartime conditions at the time.

So, I worked with Hank in the few things you could do. There wasn't a lot you could do under those conditions. We'd pop out to the university whenever we could and tried occasionally to run a bit of a program. The Agency wasn't putting many resources into that situation right then.

The people that were of interest to us as exchangees were unwilling to leave the country because as soon as you left the country all sorts of terrible things happened to you politically under the Mobutu regime.

So the program was fairly limited. But there were some things to do. We did maintain a presence and occasionally, in the face of all the difficulties, we did, I think, stage some awfully good things.

Q: What kind of good things did you stage, though?

BURNETT: We actually -- and Mobutu was insisting we try to treat it as business as usual. Would you believe that in this war situation we brought in, for the first overseas performance of something that became an Agency staple, the Alvin Ailey Dancers. There probably isn't an officer in the Agency that hasn't programed the Alvin Ailey Dancers at one point.

This was their first overseas performance and it was important because Alvin and I had at one point been the two-man faculty of the Clark Center for the Performing Arts in New York. So, it was partly my doing. So he came out.

It was an interesting period. I remember also showing up at the post was the daughter of Walter Washington, the first black mayor of Washington.

It was a time when a lot of American blacks were going to Africa to discover their roots and in many cases finding that they were more American than anything else. They had great trouble adjusting to conditions in a place like the Congo. We became close to many of them because they tended, frankly, to huddle up to the American community when they saw, frankly, how little they had in common with the Africans there.

The Ailey Dancers, I remember, flew into town, checked into the only working hotel in Kinshasa. We finally checked them in at about 8:00 in the evening. I drove out to my house, which was up on a hill called, Jelo-Binza. About an hour and a half later this group of about five taxis pulls in front of my house with all of the Alvin Ailey Dancers. They were so appalled by the accommodations at the hotel that they said, "Look, this won't work. Can we stay with you?"

I had a pretty big house. As I remember, there were thirteen or fourteen dancers. So, the first night overseas of this great group that did so much for the Agency was spent on every couch and chair, and some on the floor, of my house. But we actually staged some performances.

We also brought in Buddy Guy, a blues group, at that time. We did a lot of things with the university in the way of Hank and I just simply making a lot of personal appearances, the things you do out there -- talking about the country.

Q: What did you try to accomplish with these programs in terms of a policy objective? Or, was a policy objective just an elusive dream at that point?

BURNETT: Pat, I don't know what the policy objective was. It was only later in my career that I realized you had to have a policy objective, and began trying to think strategically about public diplomacy.

I don't know what Hank had in mind. It seemed that the things we were doing felt like good things, that they were helping some Congolese to understand a little bit about the United States. That seemed like a good thing.

We were writing some interesting cables. We were doing a lot, I think, of some interesting political reporting about what was happening in the Congo because we were in touch with sectors that the embassy wasn't.

But I have to tell you that I don't recall a single meeting or paper from Washington or from the PAO that gave a serious sense of direction to the program. Maybe it was a wartime condition, maybe showing the flag and doing anything we could was considered good.

Your point is an important one because I thought back about that later and decided later that I never wanted to repeat that experience or have other officers repeat it, of feeling as much at sea as I felt.

Then you add to that the fact that as you drive out to the university there would be the American military assistance program off in the field teaching the Congolese gendarmes how to break heads. Clearly having more to do with keeping Mobutu in power than defending the country against rebels or outside aggression, which left a bitter taste in my mouth.

I had serious substantive doubts about the program I was executing and about the American presence and about the extent to which we were getting close to Mobutu. He clearly was the American -- Tshombe was gone -- he clearly was the American preference because it was thought that the alternative -- Lumumba was dead by then but the alternatives were still the Lumumbaesque radicals.

Q: Let me interject just one question. You give me a key word, "wartime conditions" in 1967 and '68 -- the height of the Vietnam conflict -- and you were somewhat at sea in the way that your original job fell through or was captured --

BURNETT: Right.

Q: -- by political circumstances. Was there any effort to kind of sequester you and send you off to Vietnam? I mean, were you aware of that or was there talk of that?

BURNETT: Aware of the possibility. I'm sure it weighed on other officer's minds. But you have to understand that my mindset was that I was still a professor on vacation intending to have my time in the Congo and go back. The Agency was talking about two years. I, frankly, wasn't sure that it would be more than one.

Q: So you didn't think of joining USIA as a career opportunity?

BURNETT: Absolutely not.

Q: Rather, as an interlude or a sabbatical --

BURNETT: Merely for --

Q: -- *for the experience?*

BURNETT: That's right. That's right. I had pretty much leveled with Mark Lewis about that. He was so relieved to get a warm body willing to go to Bukavu that -- because I really think he had a problem. I don't think he had any officers that were willing to go. And while we're to be available for worldwide assignments and officers accept orders, there is a point at which the guy you're sending is so unhappy about it that you worry about whether it's a reasonable assignment.

Q: *What happened to you after Africa, after that rather interesting experience?*

BURNETT: Well, let me tell you that eventually things calmed down. About seven months later families came in. Although it was a bizarre period.

I still remember that Mobutu insisted on business as usual and when he heard that we were scheduled for the Marine Ball, the annual Marine Ball, without families or anything, I remember he prevailed on the ambassador -- he insisted that the American Marine Ball go ahead. But there weren't any women.

I have to admit that Hank and I went out and got the dancing partners for the Marine Ball down in the Cite'. I don't think anybody really wanted to know what these ladies did for a living. But we had a Marine Ball with a cake that the ranking Marine officer cut.

Q: *The gunny cut, yes.*

BURNETT: The gunny cut it and we did the proper thing, but with a very strange bunch of dancing partners for it. So, it was strange period.

Things did settle down and the families came in and we had something more like a normal program. I was running the exchange program. But I was itchy to get into the interior and see to see what Bukavu was.

About ten months in George Hellyer invented a job called Field Program Officer and added that. So I was ACAO and Field Program Officer. Because they cut a deal with Mobil Oil. Mobil Oil ran a small Piper Aztec plane in the Congo but couldn't afford to run it every week. We agreed to pick it up every other week.

My job was to load it up with some films and a couple of projectors, some books, and go out and do an "America Week." I asked, I remember, for a set of priorities as to what places in the interior were most important. They didn't have any idea so I'm afraid I picked my own places out of such policy guidance journals as National Geographic to decide where I wanted to go.

Bukavu was still occupied so I couldn't get in there. But we started going into some of the small towns that the rebels had recently left. We would fly in and we would do the America Week. Usually the only Europeans that they had seen would be if there were some monks that had stayed

around doing some teaching. You would hit these tiny towns in which the only two Europeans left would be two Belgian priests who were there teaching the African kids in the middle of the jungle Flemish, teaching them Dutch. A more absurd enterprise couldn't be imagined.

But when we would roll in, it would be a big event. I remember at one point two priests with tears in their eyes. They were so happy to see us, the first outsiders that had come in. Actually, we landed in the ruined field of a plantation to go in there.

They said, "We're going to have something special for dinner that we've been waiting to break out at this moment." So we finally agreed to have dinner that night with the priests. When we did, one of them excused himself to get this. Of course, I had heard the stories and I figured that they had a cellar and they had some fine wines that they had put aside for just this moment.

The guy came back -- tears once again in their eyes -- in fact, more so because I think what they were getting meant more to them than to us. The guy came back and what he had was a jar of jam. So we had bread and this jam that they had been saving through all the several rebellions of the Congo.

They were kind of tough trips. Often we were sleeping in lean-tos and the sorts of places where you pound the wall in the dark in frustration and then turn your flashlight on -- just pounding blindly on the wall -- there's blood on the wall from all the mosquitos that you've crunched just by striking out at random.

Q: Did you have local employees with you and what was the language -- the lingua franca?

BURNETT: The lingua franca was French to the extent -- and it was not always comprehensible where we were. We had to look for places where at least some of the senior people in the village would have some French.

We didn't have, because it was a two-seater -- so, it was a Belgian pilot and me -- a lot was done through interpretation and we had to find one person in the area who had French and the local language. There's about 250 distinct languages in the Congo so that could be anything. It wasn't any use taking along somebody from Kinshasa who spoke Lingala because that guy wouldn't have been any help in the interior anyway.

Eventually I did get into Bukavu when that opened up. There was no field there and I had to land in Bujumbura and take about a six-hour drive in a pickup through gorilla -- gorilla not guerilla, fortunately -- country; that was very exciting.

The road, you know, had room for just one vehicle, so that they had pygmies down from the north whose job was to be at places along the road with oil cans. They would beat on the oil cans to announce that a vehicle was coming one way so a vehicle couldn't start coming the other way because there was only room for one. I remember arriving in Bukavu and I was beige colored, covered with the dust from the road throughout.

Bukavu itself was a gorgeous place. Why they had trouble getting somebody to go there, I can't imagine. It was like Switzerland in the middle of Africa.

Q: Nobody knew what it was like, I suppose.

BURNETT: That may be. I remember that the one European left was a barkeep in a hotel. I still remember that he had this picture window that overlooked Lake Kivu, this incredibly beautiful scene. But he had turned his bar around so that he faced the other way. He faced a huge photo of Lake Geneva. So, he was hanging on.

One thing we wanted to do was to pay the Congolese employees who hadn't been paid at the time that the last American left. Even though I'm sure they hadn't done anything in the meantime, they had been on the payroll and so we were honorable men and we were going to pay them. I had the names -- I forget what the name was of the senior employee -- but I had more than 90 people claiming that they were him. Sorting that out got difficult because I didn't have a photo or anything. So, there were some complications.

I spent some terrific months running around the interior. Off and on the boat on the lake, which was the way you went to Goma, which was the other way out of the area -- Goma had a landing strip up in the volcano country and it was great.

But, to go back to your earlier question, Pat, I left the Congo feeling that I had had a wonderfully romantic time, I couldn't have asked for anything better, a feeling of almost no accomplishment because the generation that we had been talking to at the university -- Mobutu felt that they were a source of dissent and rebellion and he took that entire generation of university students and conscripted them into the Army and fanned them out around the Congo. He destroyed a generation of university students.

Most of the people that we sent on leader grants to the States were removed from office while they were in the States. Mobutu used them that way -- of getting them out of the country -- so we almost stopped having that kind of program.

I felt that we were kind of building on sand. We were getting increasingly close to a dictator and I felt that historically we would regret that association. But you could understand it, Brazzaville went Communist, to use the journalistic phrase, during that time -- right across the river, we could even hear the gunshots from Kinshasa.

But we were there. For example, the OAU Summit was held in Kinshasa at that time and it was a treat. We got to meet all the great leaders of the African states at that time, Obote and Senghor, and all of that. So, there were some thrills during that period.

DONALD S. BROWN
Mission Director, USAID
Kinshasa (1967-1970)

Donald S. Brown was born in New York. He attended Cornell University for one year and then joined the Army for two years. After his service in the Army, Mr. Brown attended Antioch College. He became involved in the Foreign Service in the early 1950s. His posts include Iran, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, and Algeria. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in December 1996.

BROWN: As noted, I went to Leopoldville (Kinshasa) in April, 1967, leaving the family to follow me at the end of the school year. The Director at the time was Joe Mintzes, for whom I had once worked on an Antioch College job assignment with ECA (the Economic Cooperation Administration). Joe and I had gotten on well in ECA and had the same good relationship in the Congo these many years later. However, our time together was relatively short since Joe was getting ready to end his Congo tour. Joe amused me by one of his habits-he had the New York Times Sunday edition delivered to him, but it always arrived several weeks late. No matter what day of the week it arrived, he and his wife put it aside and then read it in leisurely fashion over Sunday breakfast-just like back in Washington.

Micheline was to join me during the summer. But just as she was traveling from Paris to Rome to catch a flight, another mercenary rebellion broke out in the Congo and no dependents were allowed to arrive. She was informed of this just as she was about to board her plane from Rome to Leopoldville. She had first to return to Rome itself (with hardly a penny or lira in her pocket) where she waited several weeks to be told the suspension of travel would be indefinite. She then had to scurry back to Paris, get the children installed in school, find housing and all the rest. It was amazing how well she survived all of that. Finally the travel suspension was lifted and the family joined me for Christmas, 1967. I was fortunate during this period that my brother, Dean Brown, was in charge of Central African affairs at State - one of only two times our career paths crossed-and he was able to add substantially to the sometimes difficult communications between Micheline and me through this uncomfortable period.

Those first months in the Congo were very difficult. The country was still reeling from a series of mercenary rebellions and from the efforts of secession by the copper rich Shaba region. Foreign exchange was virtually unavailable and shops were bare (I lived next to what had been a very impressive supermarket which had aisles and aisles of shelves - all filled with nothing but plastic buckets and sandals). Foreigners were leaving, and since few Congolese had benefitted from adequate education or managerial level experience, the kingpins of the economy were in peril.

But in 1967-1968 there was the beginning of limited political stability in the form of Colonel, then General, Mobutu, who emerged from the chaos of the Congo to become its Prime Minister and then President. While the effects of this last gasp (at that time) of mercenary activity were still being felt, over the next few years insecurity decreased and some form of central government control took place. Even Lubumbashi and the copper region seemed gradually to become secure. While Mobutu proved himself over time to be a scandalous dictator who stole vast amounts from the Zairois treasury and people, in this 1967-1968 period the growing stability that he represented was well recognized (and rewarded).

And while the Congolese Government suffered from a severe lack of trained officials at all levels, it was blessed by an outstanding Central Bank Governor and by a small group of very able officials at the top levels of the Ministry of Finance. Some thoughtful IMF officials as well as two or three excellent Belgian Government officials worked closely with these key officials as did we in the AID mission, seeking to build new strength in the overall economy. Together we developed a package of reforms, including a major devaluation, which the Congolese officials then had to sell to Mobutu. He finally accepted it when together they concocted a clever political approach. They replaced the Congolese franc with a new currency, the Zaire. Although the exchange rate between the Congolese franc and the new Zaire actually represented a major devaluation, it was given a new and positive twist by making the Zaire equivalent to two U.S. dollars, or 100 times as much as the Belgian franc and announced proudly as such by Mobutu. This reform movement did work for several years, and launched a period of important growth in the Zaire economy - destroyed later, of course, by the thievery and peripatetic changes introduced by Mobutu over time (when also those outstanding Congolese officials had left the country). From then on it has been largely a case of chaos.

This was a very exciting time for me. While I had dealt with some economic policy issues in the Sudan, I was here deeply immersed in these extremely complicated deliberations, which had to be conducted in deepest secrecy because of the impact that such a steep devaluation was expected to have. With the growing effectiveness of the reform program and as political and financial stability increased, the need for a strengthened assistance program also meant a large growth in our activities. Increases in Commodity Import and PL 480 programs provided Zaire needed financial backing during this period of transition. Important new resources were devoted to educational programs at all levels. Efforts were made to strengthen agricultural education and research; while there were several reasonably well trained and well motivated Zairois agriculturalists, the very limited ordinary budget resources devoted to agriculture along with the great distances and transport problems meant our programs had only limited impact. In a country as vast as Zaire, improved transport was a major necessity. Starting in this period and for many years afterwards AID (and later the World Bank) devoted substantial resources to maintenance and upgrading of roads and to better river traffic; as far as I can determine, the long term impact of these efforts was very limited, again due to the lack of consistent support, and financing, provided by the central government.

Q: In your discussion of the program in Zaire, you did make a few comments about the activities that you were supporting: like educational programs and so on. Could you elaborate any more about what you were trying to do in those programs? Were there any new institutions being created or any new...?

BROWN: No. The institutions with which we worked were in existence if in often a moribund state of existence. There was an agricultural service and there were regional agricultural centers and offices but they were very weak and our concern therefore was not to try to introduce any new organizational structures but to first get more resources into the agricultural system and to work with people to try to plan better the way they use the relatively small resources they had available.

In the general field of public administration there was a nascent new public administration institution which had been organized primarily by a combination of Ford Foundation and United

Nations assistance. And we certainly supplied a lot of support to that because we considered it particularly important.

Q: Was it effective? How did it do?

BROWN: It seemed to me at the time that it was the beginning of a very good institution. I was there through three graduating classes and I was impressed by the kinds of people who were coming out of the school. And having looked over its' relatively short history-it was in existence perhaps five or six years when I got there-it seemed to me that it was coming along pretty well. And the people it was turning out were pretty good.

You have to remember this is a country which had a terrible shortage of able and trained people. And this was an institution which was beginning to do something about that. We did work, as I mentioned, in the financial field. Which was largely technical assistance worked out in very close conjunction with the International Monetary Fund as well as representatives of the Belgian government. Certainly I felt during the period of time we were there that was extremely helpful and...

Q: We were able to have effective policy exchanges and policy reform efforts?

BROWN: We participated along with those others. I must say we were not the lead but we participated with the IMF and the Belgians and the Zairians in a major economic reform. An economic reform which involved a major devaluation and cleaning up of the financial and fiscal system. And yes, we played an important part in that.

It was difficult because in these types of circumstances, you had to be very, very cautious-very secret-frankly when you are going to introduce a major devaluation it is not something that you talk about in the newspapers. But it was very successful. The country's financial situation quickly stabilized. Investments began to flow in again. And that was also associated with the fact that Mobutu, in his early days, represented political stability and political dynamism of a positive nature.

So that there was this combination of political and financial stability in a country which has enormous resources. It helped bring new investment in. It helped open up and legalize a range of exports which had been taking place but had all been going through illegal channels and so forth to increase the foreign exchange earnings. And therefore permit greater liberalization on the import of goods and vastly broadened the access and availability of resources of all kinds to all levels of the society. I would say, in its time, it was extremely successful.

Q: Was corruption still prominent at that time?

BROWN: The corruption issue became prominent later. I mean it was growing. It was nascent. We certainly saw examples of it. We had a team, I can't remember from what company, but one of the major consulting firms that was trying to negotiate with the government to provide broad services in a number of different sectors. It fell apart at the end when the Zaire minister made a huge

demand for payment by the company to him personally. So corruption was there and it became much worse in the years following.

There wasn't much to be corrupt about frankly when we were there-until after the financial reform. It was only after a little while that people really got into this and of course, President Mobutu led it from the very beginning.

Q: Did you meet President Mobutu?

BROWN: Two or three times but on a limited basis I must say. I did not...

Q: Any impression of him?

BROWN: An interesting person. Strong personality. Intelligent and quick witted but certainly not intellectual. And with relatively little real understanding of how the world as a whole works. It was understandable given his background. But there were some real limitations...

Q: Did he have any interest in the development of his country as such, as opposed to...?

BROWN: False interest. False interest in the sense that it was the promotion of some silly programs which did not really have any impact-in the name of the people-but did not really have any impact.

Q: He wasn't really concerned about their welfare?

BROWN: Let me give an example. There was an American doctor there who was doctor to Mobutu and had a lot of influence. And together they dreamt up this scheme of river hospitals which sounded nice. And they put some boats on the river and ran them up and down as hospitals. But they never dealt with the problems of preventive medicine at all. And so to me this was a farce. This was a showboat of development.

Mobutu was interested in the big schemes. The Shaba Power Program and things like that. Frankly there were also the activities where you could rake off the largest amount whereas programs for people didn't matter much. Those are impressions and they are certainly partly impressions from that period and partly impressions that came from later on.

Q: Anything more on the Zaire experience or programs?

BROWN: No. I think that between them things are covered.

Q: Ok. But you were economic counselor as well as AID director.

BROWN: Yes. I was economic counselor which is in part why, a part of my involvement in all these financial discussions was in that function and part of it was in the AID director function.

Q: Well that is quite unusual, isn't it?

BROWN: Yes it is. Very unusual. And I had insisted under the circumstances that my formal deputy be the person who would otherwise have been the senior economic officer in the Embassy.

Q: How did it work?

BROWN: He was a deputy on both sides. I think it worked very well because of the number of the personalities that were involved in it. The Ambassadors in particular were supportive of this and willing to give it a good, hard try.

People from State in the Economic Section were open to it and willing. Obviously the most senior person would prefer to be counselor himself. But we worked well together. A lot of the day to day economic section work that was involved, I just turned to that deputy to do. And in many of those areas, the economic section was working as an economic section without any relationship with AID as such. But when it got down to major policy considerations, we worked together. And we had joint staff meetings of senior staff from the economic section and AID. We talked these issues out together. We made joint presentations to the Ambassador and back to Washington and so forth.

Q: This apparently worked reasonably well from your observation of the relationship between AID and the Embassy. Is that a pattern that you thought was generally applicable or unique to this situation?

BROWN: It is partly unique because of the particular circumstances of Zaire. It is also workable it seems to me only if you have an important AID program. People in the State Department are not about to be subordinate to an AID director if the program with which he is working is not a particularly important one.

But I think that in a number of countries it is a workable thing. Now would it have been workable in Egypt when I went there? I don't think so. Only in the sense that the management of the Egypt program was such an enormous affair in itself. Also to worry about commercial affairs and other issues in the economic field would have been impossible. In any event, it is essential that the Ambassador assure that the senior economic officer or the senior economic counselor and the AID director work very closely on the economic policy issues. But it is not necessary to bring them together in a single institutional unit. For that to work in Egypt took some very able senior State officials and I was glad I had the right people to work with.

Going back to Zaire, it can be said that AID programs of the period certainly contributed sharply to the initial financial reform efforts and provided the basis for modest stability, greater investment and political consolidation for a period of time. They also contributed to training of a range of officials who have worked mightily to try to improve the economic well-being of the country against heavy odds. But over time Mobutu's economic mal-leadership, the squandering and waste of resources, the exceptionally high levels of corruption and the breakdown in meaningful political development have led to a Zaire today which is a chaotic morass. Throwing resources at development problems may have favorable political impact (and that was true in those first critical years in Zaire), but there is little chance of having a real effect on bettering the lives of poor people if the leadership and the will are lacking.

Charley Mann was Mintzes replacement. Charley's background had been mainly in Asia, but he relished this new assignment. He was smart and generally quick thinking, although somewhat stolid and Germanic in his personal relations. We got along well enough but I must admit that I was not unhappy when, after a while, he was asked to take over the Laos Mission and I was named as his successor as Mission Director, but also as Economic Counselor of Embassy.

We had a good if small mission with some excellent staff members. I deeply admired the way Ambassador Bob McBride presided over the American community in a difficult and sometime dangerous period. In my combined role, I worked even more closely with my Embassy colleagues. I traveled a good bit of the country, often to visit agricultural programs with Leroy Rasmussen whom I had known in Algeria. Travel was always difficult due to unmaintained roads, limited and poor railroad connections and a substantial breakdown in river and air transport, circumstances we sought without much success to overcome.

During this period Dave Shear was head of the Central Africa section of the AID Africa Bureau and we worked closely together. I quickly recognized his admirable abilities and his strong and consistent support to our work in the field. We built a relationship then that flowered even further when later we worked together on overall Africa development issues.

We were fortunate to find a somewhat odd but pleasant house right on a bend of the Congo (Zaire) River which had good entertaining space and which again became a center for lunches and dinners with our Congolese and international community friends. The children had good schools and thoroughly enjoyed some of their outings into the countryside. We had a parrot who adored women and children but hated men. The rest of the family loved that beast, but he made a special effort to come pecking after me whenever I would settle down in comfort at the end of the day. Our youngest, Christopher (then about seven) adopted (or was adopted by) a chimpanzee who belonged to neighbors and they took happy walks down our street, hand in hand.

While we had several Zairois friends, there is no question that many Zairois had been deeply affected by the often cruel and highly racist Belgian regime and settlers. As a result, it was often difficult to know how individual Zairois might react to situations which were fairly normal in other societies. This was particularly upsetting to mission wives, who were too often faced with confusing and sometimes unpleasant situations related to the households.

As a whole, we all enjoyed our stay in Zaire. Certainly I had an exciting job and learned a lot during our time there. But the sense of tension made us feel it was time to move on.

LUCIAN HEICHLER
Chief, Economic Section/Deputy Director, USAID
Kinshasa (1968-1970)

*Mr. Heichler was born in Vienna, Austria in 1925 and became a US citizen in 1944.
He served in a number of posts including Germany, Zaire, Cameroon, Italy,*

Switzerland, Belgium and Turkey. He was interviewed by Susan Klingaman in 2000.

HEICHLER: I was assigned to Kinshasa, Zaire, as head of the Economic Section, and at the same time deputy director of USAID.

Q: All right. Tell me a little bit about the size of the embassy at that time.

HEICHLER: It was quite a large embassy, maybe 200 people or so. It had an unusual feature in that USAID, itself quite a large mission of at least 60 Americans or more, was integrated with a four- or five-officer Economic Section in such a way that the AID director was also the economic counselor, and the head of the Economic Section automatically served as the deputy director of USAID.

Q: Right.

HEICHLER: For me that was a very interesting and educational experience. I was fortunate to have an excellent chief, with whom I became very close friends, Donald S. Brown.

Q: He was the AID Director.

HEICHLER: He was the AID director, yes, and the economic counselor of the embassy.

Q: How well did that integration work, actually, combining State Department economic officers with AID in one section? Was it a smoothly functioning section, or were the bureaucratic lines evident?

HEICHLER: I quickly came to the conclusion that this was entirely a function of personalities. If the two people involved at the top got along well together and wanted to work well together, it worked fine. If they didn't, if they were jealous of their prerogatives, if there were personal animosities, the system broke down completely - which it did, in fact, shortly after I left, after both Don Brown, my chief, and I left and new people took over who did not get along with each other. And as a result of this, I think, the entire integrated setup was abandoned a couple of years later.

Q: Yes, I haven't heard of too many AID and State Department Econ Sections integrated in that way since that time, so that's very interesting. Who was the ambassador at that time, do you recall?

HEICHLER: Sheldon Vance, who later retired and took up a practice of international law in Washington. I don't think he's living any more.

Q: So what was going on in Zaire at that time?

HEICHLER: It was actually, in relative terms, a fairly good period for Zaire. Zaire had come under the financial policy direction of the International Monetary Fund. The central bank was run by a senior functionary of the IMF, who rather restricted the excesses and incompetence of the people who otherwise ran the bank and the finance ministry. In addition, copper prices - the main

income-producing export of the country - were fairly high and fairly stable, so that the Congolese economy as a whole was not doing too badly. That did not benefit the individual Congolese at all, to be sure -- they were as dirt-poor as ever -- and foreign assistance endeavors to improve things, to restore, for example, the transportation network left behind by the Belgians, which had fallen apart completely, got nowhere. Corruption, indifference and incompetence reigned supreme.

Q: Who was leading the Congo at that time? This was after all that turmoil with Lumumba and Tshombe and all that. That was all cleared up before that.

HEICHLER: It was well after that. By this time Joseph Desiré Mobutu (who later called himself Mobutu Sese Seko) was firmly entrenched as president for life and dictator of the Congo as the head of a one-party state. I did not personally live through some of the more violent rebellions--like the attempt on the part of Katanga, later called Shaba Province, to break away - or the Simba Rebellion in the north of Zaire, the terrible troubles in Stanleyville, later known as Kisangani. So the country was relatively stable and relatively quiet, and in relative terms it was not a terribly bad time to be there. But I found the atmosphere difficult, poisoned by deep divisions and mutual hatred. The memory of Belgian treatment of the Congo, especially the atrocities committed many decades earlier under King Leopold, was still very much alive, and all whites were lumped together as "Europeans," whether they were American, Australian, or what, and despised in much the same way as the Belgians.

Q: So interacting with Congolese was not a pleasant thing?

HEICHLER: No, it was not. Interacting with the upper class of Congolese bureaucracy was civilized enough, normal, and there were far more opportunities for American business and American investment than there had been in the former French colonies. The Belgians had left behind their advisors, but they did not run the country from behind the scenes the way the French did in their former colonies. Under an 1884 treaty concluded in Berlin, which had sort of divided up Africa, the Congo Basin was declared a free-trade zone, and that was respected up until the time I was there. There were no tariff barriers to trade. Thus American firms were able to compete on an equal basis and did fairly well.

Q: What kind of industries or enterprises were the American firms engaged in?

HEICHLER: What comes to mind mostly are enormous construction companies like the Bechtel Corporation. The Congo was very interested at that time in developing a huge hydroelectric dam, the so-called Inga Dam, ideally capable of providing electric power to the entire country. And the contract for building this mammoth project went to the Bechtel Corporation. I think there was also a fair amount of business for communications companies, telephone links, that kind of thing. So there was more opportunity for the economic officer to assist American business and potential investors than there had been in Cameroon. I had one officer who served exclusively as commercial officer, another officer whose field was more theoretical economics and analysis.

Q: What other countries had significant business interests in the Congo?

HEICHLER: Germany, the Federal Republic, did. Belgium, of course, retained a great deal of its former influence and predominance, France some. I think the British as well, to some degree. There was so much raw material to exploit and to explore - not just copper but just about any kind of strategically vital mineral you can think of - and enormous quantities of diamonds, mainly industrial quality diamonds, but also some gem quality diamonds, mined in the Kasai and smuggled at a tremendous rate. There were strong links between South African and Congolese diamond mines. Interestingly enough - and I throw this in as a footnote - I came to know Maurice Tempelman, the later companion (de facto third husband) of Jackie Kennedy, quite well because Maurice was a diamond dealer who worked with De Beers in South Africa, kept an office and a permanent representative, a Belgian, in Kinshasa, who was part of the social scene, and Tempelman himself visited the Congo at least once a year, when I always saw him at embassy functions, usually at the ambassador's home. Of course this was years before any of us ever dreamed that he would end up as the non-official last husband of Jacqueline Kennedy.

Q: Yes. What was the United States trying to accomplish, or what were our policy objectives in the Congo at that time? If we had an embassy of some 200 people, we must have considered it to be important to U.S. interests for some reason. For example, what was the AID mission doing in the Congo?

HEICHLER: The AID mission placed its main emphasis on the transportation sector, for example, restoring the fleet of river boats which plied the Congo River from Kinshasa northwards toward Kisangani. In theory this was definitely the right thing to do. The Congo is an enormously long river but is not navigable everywhere. It is not navigable between the Atlantic Ocean and Kinshasa, for example. There are the Stanley Falls. Then after Kisangani, again, there are rapids that interrupt it. But there are a couple of thousand miles of navigable river between former Stanleyville and former Léopoldville. Otraco, the Congolese company running its so-called "mail boats," was an important part of the transportation sector, and we supported that effort materially and technically. And we also tried to improve or restore the road network and the rail network, providing rolling stock, trucks and the like; but I found this all terribly frustrating because whatever was not absorbed in some way by corruption was defeated by indifference and incompetence.

Q: On the part of the Congolese.

HEICHLER: On the part of the Congolese, who would, for example, unload trucks from the port of entry and drive them away without any oil in the engines, whereupon they would, of course, immediately burn out and be left to rust behind the nearest tree in the rain forest. And I found all this quite discouraging.

Q: Yes, to say the least. Were there many American citizens in the Congo at that time?

HEICHLER: Yes, there were, for the most part missionaries, thousands of them. I don't remember the exact figure, but I think we had some 3,000 American missionaries scattered around the country.

Q: And how did they fare?

HEICHLER: They fared fairly well, and they differed quite a bit in their outlooks. Some of them were very, very conservative, not to say reactionary and racist, who saw their role entirely as paternalistic, treated the Congolese as children who would never advance beyond a certain level and who considered it their job solely to teach the Word of God, rather than to teach the people anything useful to earn their living. At the opposite end of the spectrum there were people who got things done, who didn't worry too much about church and more about teaching efficient farming and the like. So we had both kinds. We had all kinds of missionaries covering a wide spectrum of American Protestant churches, not too many Catholic missions, as I remember. The children of these missionaries, to a large degree, lived in Kinshasa in huge hostels supervised by missionary couples who served as host parents.

Q: I see, while their parents were off in the country somewhere.

HEICHLER: And these kids constituted about two-thirds of the population of the American school of Kinshasa, and they were the wildest bunch you can imagine. Talk about adolescent rebellion, smoking pot, and all the rest!

Q: Missionaries' children were wild?

HEICHLER: Yes, they were the wildest bunch. They were far wilder than the embassy kids or the business community kids who made up the other two-fifths of the school population.

Q: It might be interesting for you to comment... I assume you've read The Poisonwood Bible.

HEICHLER: I'm in the middle of it, actually.

Q: Yes, well, it's a very interesting commentary on... Actually, that took place in the Congo before your time-

HEICHLER: About '58-59.

Q: Okay, so anyway, missionaries' children. That's a wonderful book.

HEICHLER: I am quite fascinated by the book because I knew missionaries just like that and little communities in the bush just like the one that's featured in *The Poisonwood Bible*. But you asked me another question before, which we left by the wayside, and that was what of the American strategic objective? I would say it was mostly to keep the Russians out of Zaire; rightly or wrongly, the U.S. considered the country an important Cold War battlefield, and for this reason we supported Mobutu even though we were well aware of what a ruthless crook he was.

Q: So it was in the context of the Cold War.

HEICHLER: It was a Cold War battlefield more than anything else.

Q: And were the Russians there? Was there a large Soviet presence in the Congo at that time?

HEICHLER: There was, I think, but it was not overwhelming, and I must admit I don't really remember it. I remember the Soviets in Cameroon so much more clearly because they were our next-door neighbors and we had some social contact with them.

Q: *What were the Soviets trying to achieve in the Cameroon?*

HEICHLER: Well, I think, like us, they felt they had to fly the flag. They didn't seem to have any practical objectives that could easily be fulfilled, and their people didn't seem particularly competent, linguistically or otherwise. There seemed to be something rather pathetic about the utter futility of the Soviet presence in Cameroun. At one point my son was given a school assignment to write a report about one country, and he chose Russia. He walked over to the Soviet Embassy to ask whether they had any useful material for him in English, and they fell all over themselves, loading him up with cheaply printed books and brochures about the USSR, some of it propaganda, some of it objective fact. I think he may have been the only customer they had in years.

The Soviets in Zaire I don't really remember. We had, I think, a large CIA presence, which was there to watch the Soviets, not to concern itself particularly with Congolese politics. But my knowledge of that whole part of things is rather fuzzy and limited.

Q: *Okay. Did you have the opportunity to travel much in Zaire at that time?*

HEICHLER: Not a great deal, because there were no passable roads or waterways. You couldn't travel more than a few miles outside of Kinshasa in an ordinary automobile, and beyond that, even travel by jeep or Land Rover became difficult. We did have an arrangement for a while with the Mobil Oil company, which had a two-engine Piper Aztec with a Belgian pilot. They had been just about to give up the plane because they felt it wasn't cost-effective, and the embassy made an arrangement with them whereby we would have use of the plane one week of the month and thereby help defray its expenses. That wasn't a bad arrangement. It worked for a while, and I went along on a number of these flights into places in Zaire that I would otherwise never have been able to see. In addition to that, our military had its own little air force.

Q: *I was going to ask about that.*

HEICHLER: We had an old DC-4, nicknamed the *Bluebird*, which was reserved for the use of the ambassador. The military attaché had a small plane, nicknamed the *Bug Smasher*, and the U.S. military assistance mission to the Congo, COMISH, had an old cargo plane, I think a C-123, which was called *The Gray Ghost*, used for taking supplies to the Congolese Army and for larger embassy excursions.

Q: *What did you have in the way of military attachés - Army, Air Force?*

HEICHLER: We had an Army colonel who was the senior military attaché, and the above-mentioned sizable American military mission called COMISH.

Q: *Which was doing what?*

HEICHLER: Helping to train and supply the Congolese army. Their *Gray Ghost* sometimes flew us to places the ambassador wanted to visit along with his staff. I remember going along on some of those trips. But almost all the travel I ever did in Zaire was by air, and it was not that frequent.

Q: *And what was the ambassador doing on these trips? Speeches?*

HEICHLER: Speeches, ceremonies, book presentations.

Q: *Was there a significant USIS program at the time?*

HEICHLER: Yes.

Q: *Okay.*

HEICHLER: I remember that we made much of our space program in those days, but we found it difficult to convince our Congolese audience that the Apollo Program was not a put-up job. They suspected us of having made these moon landing films in Hollywood and then pretending that they were the real thing.

Q: *Did any of the Congolese leaders go to the United States at that time? Was there any kind of an exchange program going on?*

HEICHLER: I think there was some. Mobutu was a regular guest at the White House. I don't have any details.

Q: *It just seems now reading the papers right now, recently, there have been several large articles on the Congo and the sorry state that it's in now with all kinds of rebellions, and other African countries muscling in and so on. Do you have any comments on that in the light of there we were back in the late '60s and then what has become of the Congo now?*

HEICHLER: Well, it was well on the way downhill then, and I'm not at all surprised that it's gone further downhill. I don't have any great hopes for it. I don't think that Laurent Kabila, the current president, is any great improvement over Mobutu. He may be more honest, but I don't see any indication of greater democracy or freedom or any move toward a more open society. I'm not sure, in fact, that the country is even ready for it as yet. Mobutu used to visit the United States regularly, because he was, you know, at that time considered a friend and a trusted ally against the Soviets, with Zaire considered a key piece on this great chessboard.

Q: *Well, it certainly has a lot of resources.*

HEICHLER: Yes.

Q: *But it's also cursed with many neighbors now who, I guess, would like to have a piece of all of those resources.*

HEICHLER: Sure, yes. Their great tragedy was having these resources and never being sufficiently organized to exploit them effectively, or at least to their own advantage. The Belgian society, the Société Générale and its subsidiary, *Gecomines*, that ran the Katangese copper mines before independence was enormously efficient at becoming enormously rich and making Belgium enormously rich. Well, then it was nationalized. Zaire didn't get much out of all this, though. Zaire continued to sell its raw copper on the world market and had to buy back the far more expensive finished products, the usual problem between the developed and underdeveloped world.

Q: Okay, so do you have anything further to say about your time in Zaire?

HEICHLER: It was an unhappy time for me, and I think for just about everybody except the kleptocrats at the top. As I said before, I felt uncomfortable there. I felt frustrated, professionally frustrated. I felt that personally I wasn't accomplishing much of anything, that I was not in a position to accomplish much of anything. I remember one moment of particular frustration, when Congress had voted a \$10 million loan to Zaire that we had lobbied for long and hard, only to have Mobutu announce on the very same day that he was going to spend \$10 million on a monument to Patrice Lumumba in the center of Kinshasa, in the form of a kind of space needle, *à la* Seattle, with a rotating restaurant in it. And I hit the roof.

Q: Understandably. And what was the reaction in Washington when they heard about that?

HEICHLER: None that I'm aware of. There may have been some, but it didn't get down to me.

Q: And Mobutu no doubt said this was essential for national unity or some such thing?

HEICHLER: Yes, whatever.

Q: Okay. And what was it like living in Zaire? I mean daily life.

HEICHLER: We lived fairly comfortably. Kinshasa was really two separate cities, the old Belgian *Ville* and the *Cité*, which is black Kinshasa, the two quite separate. We lived on a lovely tree-lined street, about a block away from the ambassador's residence. We were allowed to use his pool. We had a big, comfortable old house and really lacked for nothing.

Q: And how was personal security? When you mentioned that Congolese did not care for Europeans, which included Americans, was there ever any sense of personal danger at that time?

HEICHLER: Yes, there was. We personally did not experience any violence, but there were far more burglaries, holdups and violent crime than there had been in Cameroon, and also one had to be very much concerned about the lack of discipline on the part of the army and the police, who were corrupt and not well disciplined, especially Mobutu's elite corps, his paratroopers, to be considered a real menace if one ran afoul of them. We had constant horror stories about harassment by the traffic police, who would use the pretext of the slightest infraction to hit somebody up for bribes, or else then pretend that the bribe was another crime and drag the victim off to the police station and goodness knows what.

The following story does not lend itself particularly well to oral history, because you have to see rather than read it, but we had a wonderful tale about a young American secretary, recently arrived, who while driving on the Boulevard Trente Juin -- the main drag of Kinshasa -- stopped six inches beyond the white line. And the policeman promptly pulled her over and lectured and lectured and lectured, and she cowered in her seat and finally the policeman said to her, "*Mademoiselle, quelle couleur est-ce que je suis?*" (What color am I?) And she said, Oh, my Lord, now he's going to start on the race business. And so she said, "*Ô Monsieur, vous êtes marron clair.*" (You are light brown). And he replied, "*Imbécile! Quand je suis comme ça, je suis vert. Quand je suis comme ça, je suis rouge.*" (Idiot! When I stand this way, I am green. When I stand that way - [at a 90 degree angle] - I am red). A favorite story. It probably wasn't true, but-

Q: *Well, interesting, but that sounds like a relatively peaceful incident. I know you weren't in the consular section, but were there any interesting consular cases at that time that you remember, I mean with all those missionaries out there in Zaire, anything dramatic happen?*

HEICHLER: I'm afraid I don't remember any of this.

Q: *There probably were, but we'd have to interview a consular officer for that. All right, so you left Kinshasa in 1970, was it?*

HEICHLER: 1970, yes.

HARIADENE JOHNSON
USAID Assistant Desk Officer
Zaire (1967-1972)

Hariadene Johnson received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from University of Texas at Austin prior to joining USAID in 1967. Her career posts included Ghana, Liberia, Tanzania, Zaire, and Djibouti in addition to serving as Office Director of East Africa for USAID from 1977-1982. Ms. Johnson was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.

JOHNSON: Ambassador Korry wrote a report in which he essentially argued that you should have your core countries and then you could have these other countries that you provided some assistance to, but you didn't really make a major effort. I think at the time we had eight countries that were considered core countries. You had, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan on the east coast; and then you had Nigeria, Liberia and Ghana. Zaire was not one of the original Korry countries, because when I was Assistant Desk Officer on Congo, we had an exercise where we, well back up a second...

As part of the Korry report, you could do bilateral programs in these core countries, and then you did regional projects everywhere else. Regional became almost a question of how many angels can one fit on the head of a pin. They wound up with the definition that regional was working through a regional institution; regional was working with a project that benefited more than one country

that it crossed a national border; or regional was something that had regional impact, even though it might be totally confined within one country. At one time when I was Assistant Desk Officer for Ghana and Liberia, they had an exercise of moving Zaire from the Regional list to the bilateral list. The request for approval went up to the Administrator and all the arguments were laid out as to why we should have a direct bilateral relationship with Zaire.

Q: But, this Regional Mission in Washington was a part of a regional approach, was it not?

JOHNSON: Right. It was the, well yes, I think the African Bureau was fairly creative. You could have said regional projects are only going to be programs through regional organizations and we will work with Paris and London to work with these countries, and you need a Mission in Washington to do that. The idea, I think ...(without having been there for the original arguments,) essentially the idea of a Regional Office in Washington was to bend the rules as far as you could. But, most people in Africa felt that it was a major foreign policy mistake to cut back to so few countries and essentially stop being active in others, and that some other countries that we were ceasing to be active in were very important in terms of what happened on the continent of Africa and also in terms of working with the other donors. You couldn't just have some being just American clients and others being the French clients. That was the wrong way to carve up Africa. So, the Washington Mission was in order to give somebody in Washington the same authority they would have had as in the field and then let them try and push the envelope as far as they could with the people in PPC (USAID Program and Policy Coordination Bureau) or the State Department.

Q: What was your first assignment then, regular assignment?

JOHNSON: First regular assignment was on the Ghana desk, working initially with a man on detail from State Department. His name I think was Smith and then later with David Shear and Steve Christmas.

Q: This was in 1968?

JOHNSON: '68-69. I stayed on the Ghana desk. Well, first of all when I was working, it was Ghana-Sierra Leone Desk; then it was the Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone Desk.. It sort of kept getting reorganized. With the core activities, for me anyway, were on Ghana, where I worked on the Ghana program. That was primarily working on the Commodity Import Program and Program Loan, which in an interesting sort of way was a precursor to the policy reform issues that the Agency as a whole discovered in the late '70s '80s.

E. GREGORY KRYZA
Administrative Officer
Kinshasha (1968-1970)

E. Gregory Kryza became interested in Foreign Service after his tour of duty in the Navy during World War II. He entered the Foreign Service in the late 1950s and

served in Kenya, Zaire, and Mauritania. Mr. Kryza was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1988.

Q: One often says that looking at our profession, which is not only Foreign Service but diplomacy, you really don't need diplomacy with other countries but you sure as hell need it --

KRYZA: You do.

Q: -- within any Embassy on how to deal with these other sovereign powers, i.e. AID, CIA, military and all the American outfits. Would you agree?

KRYZA: I agree with that wholeheartedly. But turning back to, it was still called the Belgian Congo when I arrived. The name changed while I was there. Once again, I was blessed. I was lucky. Sheldon Vance -- when I first arrived the late Bob McBride was the Ambassador. I hadn't known him before. He left a few months after I arrived. And Sheldon Vance who was an old friend of mine from days in Brussels became the Ambassador. And we had excellent people. The AID Director was first class. The number two man in AID, Don Brown, who later became the AID Director succeeded his boss. He's the brother of Dean Brown. Really a first class person. The USIA guy. He's dead also, the late Aldo D'Alessandro. We had a great country team. We got along extremely well together. By that time I was an FSO-2, fairly senior officer, and was given a lot of latitude by the Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission, and the other agencies.

It was also the golden period in our relations with the Congo. The wars had been settled; Mobutu for better or for worse was firmly in charge. This was the time of our first trip to the moon and celebration, the astronauts Armstrong and Collins and what's the third one's name? It will come to me in a second. In any event, they did a jubilant victory around the world trip. The only place they stopped in Africa was Zaire. You know, that gives you an idea of how safe it had become in our eyes. I was the -- what do you call that? the Program Officer, for them, arranging everything there.

We then decided to have an African Chiefs of Mission Conference, in Zaire. The astronauts' visit had gone so beautifully. And Mobutu had built a marvelous conference center. The year before that he had hosted the annual OAU meeting. So he built this at great expense -- probably to us, indirectly -- this great facility. And we did hold the Chiefs of Mission Conference, and for the first time in the history of the United States, to my knowledge, the United States Secretary of State set foot on Black African soil. William Rogers.

Q: William Rogers.

KRYZA: Headed this group.

Q: Really? Before that time --

KRYZA: I was told that that was the first time the U.S. Secretary of State had set foot in sub-Saharan Africa.

Q: Outside of the normal going up to Egypt.

KRYZA: Well, that's not sub-Saharan.

Q: *That's not sub-Saharan.*

KRYZA: That's right. Even Morocco.

Q: *Well, what was our policy towards Zaire when you were there? I mean, what did we feel we were doing then?*

KRYZA: I think that Sheldon Vance's philosophy was: this is the time in the history of our relations where things have reached the point where the private sector, the United States private sector, can and should become involved. There's lots of incentive. The Lord knows that this country needs all the help that it can get. And he encouraged the private sector. I think that was one of the breakthroughs. In other words, he's been criticized during and perhaps even after that he downplayed some of the corruption, some of the things that one finds in government such as Mobutu or disregarded them. But Sheldon Vance is a good politician and he had good friends well placed in Washington in those days. He had, for example, Frank Carlucci was then in the White House, the job that Hank Cohen has now is the African man on the NSC. Frank Carlucci had served in the Congo and knew some of the problems. So Vance was able to flatter Mobutu by getting him appointments with the President every time he came to the United States. Vance was able to convince the United States government that it was in our interest to keep providing military and economic assistance and so on.

Now, whether this period of good will was created by that policy or whether it just happened to coincide with Sheldon Vance's tour of duty there, these were the golden days, the only golden days in Zaire. Everything has gone, has deteriorated.

Q: *Because everything seems to have gone down hill.*

KRYZA: Down hill.

Q: *You were both with your role as the head of CAMO -- you were in the position where within your purview we were spending a lot of money and having a lot of projects. I mean, both the upkeep of the Embassy. Did we have a consulate at that point and a staff?*

KRYZA: We had one in Lubumbashi. Once again we did some creative thinking. USIA had an interest in -- once again, the country was opening up. It was safe for --

Q: *Lubumbashi is the old --*

KRYZA: Lubumbashi is the old Elisabethville.

Q: *Elisabethville.*

KRYZA: And that had never closed. That had been there. We closed Stanleyville, which is now called Kisangani, after the incident that I recounted. After the Stanleyville, or during the Stanleyville drop, which is what that Dragon Rouge was called. There was one other consulate. USIA wanted to have reading rooms in Kisangani and one other place. It will come to me sooner or later. And so we worked out a deal. We said we'll pay for one and you pay for the other. We'll send one man and wife team.

Q: *Who'll pay? You mean --*

KRYZA: USIA will pay for the operations of one of these outposts. The State Department will pay for the other. We will cross-train our people. We will make our FSO-7, we'll train him in what you people do. He'll learn something about running a library and answering and showing films. And we will train your guy to be a vice consul. We'll give him -- this is before ConGen Rosslyn. But we'll give him some training so that he can issue visas when required and answer the questions that are required of a Vice Consul. And that worked reasonably well. This is creative thinking. This is in pursuance of the policy. And after a great deal of reluctance the Peace Corps accepted Vance's rather rosy picture of life in . Then the Peace Corps came in in large numbers.

Q: *Well, now with all your administrative responsibility obviously you were dealing with the Congolese of Zaire all the time.*

KRYZA: That was difficult.

Q: *How did you deal with them?*

KRYZA: Very gingerly. There was lots of give and take.

Q: *Who was giving and who was taking?*

KRYZA: That's right. You had to make certain that -- not out and out bribery. But you had to make certain that gifts were given at Christmastime. It's a different mentality. And one had to be -

Q: *I'd like to examine this a bit if you don't mind. Because I know, I'm speaking from my experience. There is a different attitude in many countries. And one can call it corruption but at the same time it's sort of, if you don't do me a favor of some kind -- I mean, maybe not necessarily a deliberate payoff, but give me a present -- I'm not going to do something for you. And how did you deal with it?*

KRYZA: First let me state that we didn't need too much help from the locals. We were pretty much a self-contained -- I use the word being mayor of a small town. Now, there that was really the case. We literally had our own fire department. We had our own police department. This was something we arranged. There were still large numbers of U.N. personnel who'd been there during the war, you know, during the various wars. They had certain assets including people who were trained in police type activities. We had some vehicles, jeeps. They had some vehicles. And we signed an agreement with the U.N. to provide police protection literally for the people of our respective organizations. And then I think other embassies bought into this thing, either in kind or in cash. So

we had round the clock -- the U.N. provided the communication center. So in the event there was any problem there was a quick reaction, just like running a 911 number here in Washington, D.C. And it was extremely effective.

Q: *Was there much crime?*

KRYZA: There was pilfering. There was crime particularly up -- people liked to live up in the hills in a place called Jellabinga, lovely big houses. But, you know, kind of isolated. And very, very tempting too. Yes, there was a lot of pilfering.

Q: *So this was not a precaution.*

KRYZA: No.

Q: *This was a necessity.*

KRYZA: A necessity. And we provided so-called sentenelles, that is watchmen. Every single house had round the clock. These were the dregs of society. They're probably always asleep. Of course, we could not arm them. We gave them a club and a whistle. And their job was to sit or stand or sleep outside the house and to patrol it. But when we formed this police force with the U.N. we were then able to supervise these sentenelles on a regular basis. So at least we knew that they were awake most of the time. So the answer to your question, we did not have to depend very much on the host government.

Where we needed their help was in the administrative part of it, the Office of Protocol, the clearing through customs and so on. And there we had to rely on our good, usually Belgians who had been there for a couple of generations who knew exactly what had to be done. And we didn't ask too many questions. When something had to be brought in through customs and someone raised questions we turned it over to our so-called expediter. The same thing was true with the airport. It could take the neophyte forever to work his way through the airport, the formalities, passport, health, all these things. This is leaving the country, to say nothing of getting in the country. So you really needed an expediter who could handle this. My only claim to fame is once after -- I think when I was an Inspector I happened to come back into -- no, when I was Executive Director of the Bureau I happened to come back into Zaire. And for some reason or other the Embassy's expediter, a new person, had fallen asleep. And it was an early morning arrival. He wasn't there. I had to make my way through. I did all by myself and I felt that I'd accomplished something. My problem is I didn't have any money. I didn't have any. I had U.S. dollars and large bills and I wasn't about to part with \$20 bills at every stop. But I made it without giving anybody a bribe and that's a real accomplishment.

EVERETT L. HEADRICK
Agricultural Officer, USAID
Kinshasa (1968-1971)

Everett L. Headrick was born and raised in Idaho. He received a degree in agriculture from the University of Idaho. Working as a vocational agriculture instructor, he became interested in overseas work. In addition to Zaire, he served in Libya and Nigeria. He was interviewed in 1996 by Sam Butterfield.

Q: So, tell us about Zaire and how long you were there and what some of the main agricultural thrusts you were working on were.

HEADRICK: My Zaire assignment lasted three years. The main operating funds were from local currency from PL 480 generated funds. My role was the assistant Ag officer or deputy in a two man post. I spent much of my time traveling around Zaire checking local currency projects, reviewing proposed projects and acting as a co-project manager on a seed production project. I believe field travel was required to improve project development. Projects were proposed by Zairians, other donor groups, missionary groups and others. We had considerable local currency funds and USAID Kinshasa policy was to generate a large number of projects throughout Zaire. At that time very few hotels were in existence. Once I made the circuit I knew where I'd be staying and the families I'd stay with, French, Belgian, and in one case Zairian family. So I'd carry two suitcases with me on trips such as this, one filled with my clothes and one with brandy, because if I tried to pay these people with money it was an insult, but brandy was something they all liked. So I set my payment at a bottle of brandy per night of stay, which worked very well. I always had a place to stay.

We had a lot of projects in Agriculture. We were trying to do too much in Zaire with too little. It was following the rebellion. I got there in 1968. The rebellion and fighting had stopped only months previously. We had over 50 small projects scattered throughout Zaire. Projects were in the areas of rice production, by Taiwan University of Lubumbashi, construction of classrooms, seed production, improved seed made available, support of agricultural research stations, water supply to villages, area development, etc.

Q: Remind me, the rebellion and fighting between?

HEADRICK: This was the time of the Zairian independence. They had all sorts of people vying to take over the government. Patrice Lumumba was head of the government. Following his assassination, we helped to put Mobutu in power. In retrospect, this was probably one of the gravest errors we've made in Africa.

We were trying to do too much with too little. We had piddling little local currency projects all over the country. Using local currency, limited technical resources, limited direction of the projects. They were based more on our political desire to show activity, than it was on a focused development program. (*Show the flag.*) I think in the long run that type of program can come back and haunt us all too easily, because of failures, or poorly managed, and poorly developed. The host government people or other nationalities can say, "Well there's another American project." Whereas, had we had fewer projects with more focus and more technical attention, we would have had greater accomplishments, perhaps. Given the way the Zairian government acts, I don't know.

Q: It would have had a better chance. Zaire as I recall was woefully deficient in persons trained above the high school level in my recollection.

HEADRICK: You're absolutely right. The training was lacking. Also the way the government squandered resources and wealth (the government of Zaire.) As one traveled through Zaire you could see some of the best agricultural land in the world. Tremendous agricultural resources, tremendous mineral resources, tremendous human resources, waiting to be developed. But the government of Zaire squandered it all. The main operating procedure seems to be graft and corruption and steal what you can. Until the government changes and the whole concept of getting what you can while you're in office is thrown out, it's going to be a waste of resource for anyone to invest in Zaire. Yet, on a personal level my wife and daughters and I thoroughly enjoyed living in Zaire. There are some great people living in Zaire, Zairians. I had one couple I stayed with up-country come down a couple years in a row and spend Christmas at our house with us. We just had tremendous relationships.

My observation is that we're going to pay long term in Zaire for our association with Mobutu. Individually, Americans are liked and appreciated, however, as a government, when you get down talking to people in the native quarter, leaders, schoolteachers, etc., they detest us for supporting Mobutu. I don't know what else to say on this.

RAYMOND MALLEY
Program Officer, USAID
Kinshasa (1969-1971)

Mr. Malley was born and raised in Massachusetts and was educated at Boston University, the University of Geneva, Switzerland, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. After serving in the U.S. Air Force and engaging in private business, Mr. Malley joined the Treasury Department. He later joined AID, where he worked in senior level positions at home and abroad until he retired. During his career Mr. Malley was posted to Karachi, Rawalpindi, Kinshasa, and Paris, as well as in Washington, where he worked on economic development projects of AID and with international organizations concerned with foreign assistance and development. Mr. Malley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: Very interesting. Now in 1969, you were off to where?

MALLEY: Zaire, in the midst of Africa. At the time it was named the "Republique Democratique du Congo" (Democratic Republic of the Congo). The name was changed while I was there.

Q: How did you find working there?

MALLEY: The USAID program was smaller and less complex than those I had worked on in Asia, although I believe it was the largest in Africa. But I was at a higher level, and there were different challenges. I went as the number two man – responsible for all program and operating

matters – reporting to the USAID director and the ambassador. The USAID director also served as economic counselor of embassy for a time. Don Brown was director when I arrived, but he soon left on reassignment. Tim McLure took his place, but soon was called back to Washington to head the office dealing with humanitarian assistance. After considerable time, Herman Davis was named to replace him. The result of all this shuffling was that directors were absent for long periods, and I was acting director and economic counselor for half or more of my two year stint. The ambassador was Sheldon Vance. He and I got along very well. Foreign aid – the economic aid provided by USAID and military assistance provided by DOD – were major diplomatic tools he had to influence Mobutu and his government.

We were providing hundreds of millions of dollars of economic aid money to Zaire. Much of it went to finance the ministries of the central government, which were being administered, formally or informally, by United Nations advisors – Americans, Canadians, French, etc. There were few Congolese who could run anything of scale – the Belgians had deliberately avoided educating them. We also made large annual commodity import and PL 480 commitments to keep the economy running and people fed. And we financed technical advisors, had project loans, and conducted many smaller activities through grants to private voluntary organizations. It was a very extensive program, spread over the whole government and country.

Our USAID mission was also responsible for the limited amount of aid activities in Rwanda and Burundi, former Belgian colonies like Zaire. Later separate missions were established in those two countries.

The total USAID direct hire staff, American and local and other nationals, was in the neighborhood of 50 people as I recall. In addition there were that number or more consultants on our payroll. Professionals that I recall include John Doerr and Joe Svoboda, supply officers who played major roles in administering our import commitments (it may be that Doerr also worked for me in Pakistan – my memory is not clear). They had to pay intense attention to possible corruption. I don't recall the names of the project officers, engineers, and agricultural and education experts. Dino Mastrantonis was our economist. I often argued that his balance of payments forecasts were too pessimistic – but in the end he usually turned out to be more accurate than me. Ted Lewis was another economist. Bob Keating headed our very important group of advisors working on roads and ferries rehabilitation and development. A person named Moody was head of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Zaire; we provided them with local currency to support their network of schools and clinics. Pierre Sales, an American, was head of the many United Nations advisors; I had extensive contacts with him.

Q: Very interesting. Please continue.

MALLEY: Yes. The U.S. was undertaking a very important policy initiative when I was posted to Zaire. We were trying to reduce our presence, our footprints so to speak, and our expenditures, by getting other donors and more Congolese involved. We succeeded. The French, British, Germans, Canadians, and others increased their small aid programs or started programs. We persuaded the World Bank to form a consultative group of donors of the type I mentioned for Pakistan, to call periodic discussion and coordination meetings and twist arms for more money. The U.S. could have formed this group – but we did not want to take the lead. We also persuaded others to join us

in the education and training of Congolese; some did, especially French speaking countries like France and Canada. We put some Congolese at the head of ministries in place of the UN advisors, although the advisors remained as their assistants. And in such manner, over the course of years, our prominence in Zaire diminished, although we remained the largest single donor.

I played my role in this successful policy shift, but I don't want to exaggerate. It started before my arrival, and continued after I left. Other USAID officials and our ambassadors were of key importance. And representations by U.S. diplomats in Washington and European and other capitals no doubt were helpful.

Q: Did the roads program go anywhere?

MALLEY: As you well know, Zaire is a huge country, most of it consisting of the Congo River and its tributaries, with vast and almost impenetrable jungle. Only the south, where the major mines are located, is geographically different, consisting of the large plateau of Katanga. Considering the obstacles, the Belgians had constructed and maintained a decent transportation system throughout much of the country. Roads, most unpaved, and ferry systems connected many parts. There were many small river ports and airstrips, and some large airfields. Maintenance depots were located in important centers. But unfortunately, almost all of this network had deteriorated or been destroyed during the civil wars of the 1960s. The Belgian managers fled and local workers dispersed.

USAID made a major effort to rehabilitate the roads and ferry network and organize and train Congolese to maintain it. Under project loans, we financed advisors to work with the roads division of the Ministry of Public Works. Upon their advice, we financed the import of large amounts of equipment – bulldozers, graders, trucks, etc. – and the establishment of maintenance facilities and depots. And we supported training of Congolese at all levels of operation, from senior managers to equipment operators. This program moved along slowly but reasonably well while I was there and thereafter. But it was ruined when civil strife resumed in later decades. It is a good example of a sound foreign aid development activity ruined by outside circumstances.

Q: What was your impression of Mobutu and the people around him?

MALLEY: We liked Mobutu at the time. He had been selected and supported by the U.S., and helped the West win the contest with Moscow for orientation of his country. Although certainly not a democrat, he was not as oppressive a dictator as he later became. His government seemed to control most of the country. Corruption was a problem, but not on as large and blatant a scale as later. Overall it was a relatively good period in the history of the country – relative calm, political stability, and economic rehabilitation.

Q: I would think that you would have a real problem, as you mentioned before, of not having Congolese who were well enough educated or experienced to do the technical tasks required in these programs.

MALLEY: That is certainly true. You cannot educate and train people quickly. That was a constant problem, and is now. We did find some in the military with training – Mobutu himself for

example. Some modestly educated people came from religious schools. And we and other donors found and hired some non-Congolese who had stayed in the country after independence – Belgians, Portuguese, Asians.

Q: Did you feel in the Congo at that time that you were in competition with the Soviets and their influence?

MALLEY: No. That battle had been won before I arrived. We were able to carry out our aid activities with relative freedom. My staff and I traveled to many parts of the country without much danger.

Q: I would think that getting around the Congo was a problem. It is a huge country, and there are those tribal divisions.

MALLEY: All of that is true. Fortunately the DOD people running our military assistance program had an airplane with crew which we could also use. I went on several inspection trips, sometimes with the ambassador, in that way. I also delighted in visiting villages with a driver and aide by jeep over tortured roads and run down ferries – but I did that only from Kinshasa in the western part of the country. As I said, the times were relatively peaceful, and such travel reasonably safe.

Let me mention the change of the country's name to Zaire. Mobutu declared a three-day holiday to celebrate this. There were great parades and elaborate celebrations. And not only was the name of the country changed, but also that of the great river, from the Congo River to the Zaire River. However, other countries on the river, such as Congo Brazzaville, did not acquiesce to the change – it remained the Congo to them. Mobutu also proudly introduced a new currency called the Zaire, worth two U.S. dollars. It held near this value for a time, but in subsequent years deteriorated markedly.

Q: I talked to someone later on who was very critical about a massive project we got involved in -- taking power from near Kinshasa and running it to the copper fields of Katanga.

MALLEY: Only preliminary work by private interests was going on when I was there. It involved harnessing the water power of the Congo River as it falls in rapids to the Atlantic Ocean, and delivering it to the mining areas of Katanga via massive transmission lines. A costly, complex project. It exists in some form today, but I don't believe that any foreign aid was ever involved. I could be wrong.

Q: What was your impression of the copper business? Was it good for Zaire, or just for the foreign owners?

MALLEY: I think the business was profitable for both while I was there. There were continuous tensions between the government and the Belgian owners, and between owners and workers, but nevertheless most of the mines seemed to operate most of the time. They provided lots of local employment. Royalties flowed to Mobutu's government, and some – I have no idea how much – were used for good works. Of course the country's leaders also profited personally.

Zaire has great natural resources – not only copper, but many other minerals plus forests and agricultural riches such as palm oil. It is one of those countries that are resource rich but mired in continuous poverty. The people do not benefit from the resources. Nigeria and Brazil are other examples. This phenomenon has been called the curse of minerals wealth. A country's best resource is educated people. Japan, Switzerland, and Denmark are wealthy despite having few natural resources.

Q: Were there any great crises or problems you were dealing with?

MALLEY: No. It was a period of political stability and economic recuperation, with a lot of help from the West.

But I do recall some interesting matters – not crises, but interesting matters – concerning our PL 480 program. One year we were negotiating with the Zaire authorities the quantities of grains and rice we would provide over the coming period, and under what conditions. Then Washington told us that Zaire had to accept a certain amount of tobacco as part of the package. They protested – they did not want tobacco. We supported them. But Washington insisted, and Zaire had to take tobacco to get the grains and rice.

In another case, we were late on conclusion of a PL 480 agreement. Time was running out. I had to get it signed by the Zaire authorities before our June 30 end of fiscal year, otherwise the food set aside would be committed elsewhere. I had the finance minister's signature, but on the last day we could not locate the agriculture minister, whose signing was also necessary. Even his immediate staff did not know where he was. We spent hours driving between his offices and two or three government houses in the countryside. Finally we located him in one house, upstairs with "friends." I carried on a shouting conversation with him. He came down in a bathrobe, signed, then went back upstairs. We cabled Washington, saying something to the effect that we had successfully completed difficult negotiations and gotten the necessary signatures before the deadline.

Q: Oh boy! Regarding the tobacco, I suppose Jessie Helms was involved. On another point, it must have been difficult to ship things in and out of the country. What sort of port did they have?

MALLEY: There are the port cities of Matadi and Boma, situated near the mouth of the great river on Zaire's narrow Atlantic coast. They are 150 to 200 miles west of Kinshasa, which is located on a plateau. A rail system and road connect the cities; they follow the steep, tortuous rapids by which the river falls to the ocean. The railroad originally was built by the Belgians in the 1880s and 1890s, at tremendous financial and human cost. It has been much improved and expanded since. Imports and exports move over this system – it operates reasonably well most of the time. Kinshasa itself is the eastern terminus of a vast water network of barges and boats moving materials and agricultural products to and from the many ports on the river and its tributaries. In much of Zaire produce and people move significant distances mainly by water, not land.

There are other transportation networks independent of Kinshasa in Katanga and the eastern part of the country. Copper and other minerals mined in Katanga are shipped by rail and truck through

Angola and Zambia. In the east there is extensive trade with and through the countries of east Africa.

Q: You left Zaire in 1971?

MALLEY: Late 1971, via Kenya, where I tried to climb Kilimanjaro. I didn't make it – got within a couple of hundred feet or so of the summit, but couldn't continue because of lack of oxygen. That is the main reason so many climbers don't make the top.

Anyway, I requested a Washington assignment for two reasons. First, I had spent many years running operations and specific programs and projects. Now I wanted, if possible, to work on broader policy and programming matters, to go from the microeconomic to macroeconomic so to speak, and in the center of power, Washington. Second, it was time for the family to get to know their own country better.

THOMAS G. WESTON
Rotation Officer
Kinshasa (1969-1971)

Ambassador Weston was born and raised in Michigan and was educated at Michigan State University and in France. Entering the Foreign Service in 1969, he was posted first to Zaire, after which he began assignments in the Bureau of European Affairs and abroad. In his various assignments, Ambassador Weston dealt primarily with matters concerning US relations with the European nations and organizations. His overseas posts include Zaire, Germany, Belgium and Canada, where he served as Chief of Mission (Chargé d'Affaires) from 1996 to 1997. From 1999 to 2004 he served as the President's Special Coordinator for Cyprus with the rank of Ambassador. Ambassador Weston was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: You were in Kinshasa from when to when?

WESTON: From '69-'71.

Q: What was the situation in '69 when you got there?

WESTON: Probably better than Zaire.

Q: Was it Zaire in those days?

WESTON: It was the Democratic Republic of the Congo when we arrived and it changed to Zaire a couple of months after we arrived. It was probably in terms of stability and economics probably the best it had been in the post-independence period. Remember that '69 is only five years

removed from '64 where disemboweling took place in the streets of Kinshasa. From everything I know since, probably the best period since.

That being said it was still a pretty rough place, especially outside Kinshasa. Mobutu, was of course in power, had been since '65. Our policy was very supportive of Mobutu given our history with Lumumba and everything else. Mobutu was seen as the only one who could hold his place together and avoid Soviet influence and so on. He seemed the only prospect for stability and economic development even though he was obviously robbing the country blind even then. But it was an interesting place.

Brazzaville had a very leftist government then with which we did not have diplomatic relations and the border was actually closed between Congo Brazzaville and Congo Kinshasa. Angola was still Portuguese so all of the rebel movements basically went between Brazzaville and the lower Congo into Angola in what was called the Bas Congo and that was the area where we used to do a lot of camping because we got out a lot. We actually weren't supposed to. I think it was against the security regulations but we did it anyway. It was very unstable in the lower Congo because of the revolutionary movements and so on. There were still two active rebellions going on, one in Shaba and one in Cebu. Just the most tenuous sort of authority and control and stability in large parts of Congo and the army was very effective in keeping control in Kinshasa by killing people. In fact, we arrived in the summer of '69 and the summer before there had been the killings at the university, Revaning University in the Congo, by the military and students were getting a little uppity about democracy and things like that but large parts of the Congo were still very tenuous. I luckily was in a rotational assignment and my second rotation was with AID doing self-help programs so I got to spend a lot of time throughout the country.

Q: So now, was this Shaba I or Shaba II or...

WESTON: Well, it was still Katanga then, it hadn't changed to Shaba. But you're talking just a few years after the UN effort and Hammarskjöld's plane going down and all that sort of thing. The rebel activity in Katanga Shaba then was in the extreme northeast of the province and the leader of it was Kabila, the father although he is dead now. So it, I guess, was Shaba II or II ½, this is long after Shamba.

Q: Now what was your job?

WESTON: I was rotational officer so the first six months I was in what was a combined Economic/Commercial Section and the second six months was with AID where I was the self-help officer. This was great because I got to do self-help projects all over the Congo. The whole second year I switched with Ruth Davis and became the only consular officer in the Congo which was quite an experience.

Q: Well, let's talk about the economic side. One of the stories of the Congo is the deterioration of the economic structure. How were things, what were we seeing as far as whether the Congo economically?

WESTON: This is only a couple years after Mobutu took power and we had a huge assistance program which even though I did self-help that was a small part of it. We were involved in these huge projects like the Inga Dam hydroelectric project. It was at a different period of American development assistance and a very different philosophy with it.

In the Econ Section, I was a junior officer first tour. I found myself doing two things. One, it was a combined econ/commercial section; there wasn't much actual commercial action. What little there was kind of came to me or a fellow named Shirl McArthur, who was supposed to be the commercial attaché. And it was basically exploratory activity of consumer products, companies from the United States, that sort of thing looking for agency distributors, what have you. So, I did a lot of that which was commercial work. There was a macro-economist who reported on macro-economics for the Congo on the basis of obviously flawed statistics and I helped him with some of that, some of the writing. But, you asked the question of what was the economic situation like. I think it was a time of transition in which Mobutu was the only alternative to chaos and economic chaos but a great deal of the kind of damage to the infrastructure such as it was had been done. There was massive American assistance to restore some of that infrastructure. There was consolidation by the government of its control over the resources of the Congo, copper, uranium, diamonds. Supposedly for the good of the Congo we stayed, but we knew at the time and everyone in the embassy knew also for lining of the pockets for Mobutu, his family and his tribal colleagues.

Q: Looking at Africa now sitting in the middle of it in the heart of Africa, as compared to being a PhD candidate looking at it from Lansing, was it Lansing?

WESTON: East Lansing.

Q: What was the difference for you?

WESTON: Remember my work was almost political anthropology centered on East Africa but it was tribal government and Congo is as tribal as they come centered among tribes linguistically every other way. So, on the one hand both my wife and I loved it and what we loved about it was kind of its richness culturally that the tribalism, the language and the art and even the physical features of people were so rich in their diversity. Of course, it is such a spectacular environment physically, savannah, jungle that the place itself and the people we found extraordinarily appealing. We really wanted to be with them and really got to be on our camping trips where we bought food from the villages, so on and so forth.

On the other hand, it didn't take long to realize what was really going on and what the cost of "stability" was. Mobutu was a very brutal authoritarian autocrat and that was clear then. He was fully supported by the United States. I think some would argue for cold war reasons I think even more because he was successful. He was the only person who could hold the Congo together. He would avoid even worst chaos and there is probably some truth to that. There was some truth to that but it was a blow to my earlier romantic ideas about Africa and socialism and the role of authoritarianism both political stability and economic development in Africa. I remember we had something called the junior country team meeting which was junior officers not on the first tour but first and second tours. There were five or six of us and we would get together and talk about these things. I can remember at one of these making the point that we are living in a fantasy world.

The more we, as the United States, say that this country is moving in the right direction, under Mobutu, we are creating a fantasy world which is bound to collapse some time. No one wants it to return to chaos but it is going in a direction here which cannot ultimately be good. Mobutu was building palaces all over the place. The place is utterly poor; you just couldn't believe that that kind of disparity could continue to exist. So I came up with a very different kind of assessment of what Africa wanted and its possibilities that I thought about intellectually.

Q: Was there a sense would you say among your fellow officers or was there a division between the more senior and the more junior? Often the more seniors say well this is what we have to deal with, let's deal with it and let's not fuss around worrying about this and that and the junior officers are more idealistic.

WESTON: Yes, well I think that division was there but it wasn't a sharp one. One because I think the senior officers, starting with the ambassador...

Q: Who was the ambassador?

WESTON: Sheldon Vance. You know, we're not blind to what was going on but I think, believed and supported the policy that this support for Mobutu was the only real path to avoid utter chaos. I think that sentiment was shared by a lot of the junior officers and so it wasn't a sharp division at all. If there was a division it was more in, I guess there was more hopefulness that the policy would work out in the end on the part of the senior offices and more cynicism on the part of the younger officers that it could ever work out.

Q: Well now when you moved over to self-help, what sort of things were you doing? It sounds like it was very interesting.

WESTON: Oh, it was great. It was classic self-help projects that we had in Africa in those days. There was the provision of small grants of money for projects developed by either a village or a church or some social organization. It was individual Congolese organizations getting assets from the United States to help themselves. Examples could be the provision of a water system for a village, creating pumps for water supply and assistance so that you could have water in the village and people didn't have to go all the way down to the river and carry the water back. There was another one in Kisangani about a cooperative had formed to process coffee so the self-help money went to buy a coffee roaster and package the thing. There were others involved I remember with all three universities in Congo, one in Kinshasa, one in the Katanga and one in Kigali and all of them had put in for projects. One was to build systems for external farms. Another in Kisangani was to restore the swimming pool which had been used to eliminate Belgians and others a few years ago before they put them in the pool and shot them all. It was a wide variety of projects but what was fun for me is we would get a proposal which would come in and I would go out and talk to the people and see if it was viable and make a decision. Basically, it was my decision whether or not to do it and then do follow up and monitor it in other words whether it had come to fruition or not. So that got me all over the Congo, more so than almost anyone except the ambassador, I think.

Q: How were these decisions, I mean not decision but ideas cropping up. I mean, were these self induced....

WESTON: They would be submitted. Someone would come up with an idea, say this coffee roasting thing was a group of people actually, coffee farmers in Kisangani, which was devastated then. I mean this was the old Stanleyville. They had gotten together a group of coffee farmers and decided that if they could do a little more processing of the coffee bean, they could earn more income. So, by themselves, we called it a cooperative, I think they just called it a village society or something like that and the letter came in from them saying we would like assistance in getting a coffee roaster and a packaging machine, that is basically what it was. What would happen is you would have a group proposal come in, submitted by individuals but not necessarily, and you would go and talk to them and I would go up to Kisangani and I would have four or five of these different things and I would go talk to the people and decide which seemed viable.

Q: How did you find the Congolese authorities?

WESTON: They were very easy to deal with if you were with the American embassy and even very easy to deal with when we would go off camping because we would always, I mean we were still embassy. We would have to rent a Land Rover from the UN (United Nations), so we were in a UN Land Rover the whole time but we were still from the embassy. It was at a time when you didn't touch anyone from the American embassy so they were cooperative. That was less the case when I was a consular officer for a year because some of the things I did changed drastically.

Q: Yes, let's talk about that time. What were the things you were dealing with?

WESTON: In those days I was the only consular officer in the country. There was only one consular office in the Congo and I had two attachés working for me. We serviced the needs of the then pre-consulate as well. We did consular work in Kinshasa because they were all one person posts in Katanga and Kivu. There was very little visa work. Visas were basically either diplomatic or UN for the most part, very few immigrant visas, obviously. Very little passport work. The big part of the work and the most interesting was protection and welfare of American citizens because it took so many forms. One of the more unfortunate forms was a lot of American citizens dying from infants on up. I remember one of the people in the office of the MAG (Military Assistance Group) got eaten by a crocodile, a missionary dying of snake bites, someone committing suicide. Not a lot in quantitative terms in numbers but all of them incredibly complicated because of where we were. There were no embalming facilities or anything like that and we had to form a search party to find the remains of the guy eaten by the crocodile, things like that. So there were very kind of dramatic sorts of things. I think the only what I got through a lot of them was because back all through college I worked in emergency surgery in a large hospital to earn money, so I had had a lot of experience with shattered bodies. But, it was interesting both because obviously you were trying to help people, the relatives of those who had died in most extreme circumstances. You asked the question of Congolese authorities. To deal with the death of an American citizen in the Congo was very, very difficult. You were dealing with authorities who were, if any were ever bothered to get a death certificate who was Congolese, I mean, you would have to bribe these authorities. So they were not used to the normal sort of bureaucratic practices which were required by the United States.

There were also a couple of very interesting cases of assistance. We had an American, who was really a graduate student but they called him a professor up in Kisangani at the university and he was teaching introductory political science. As part of that, he was teaching political theory and he mentioned Karl Marx. Word got out that he was teaching Marxism so the authorities wanted to arrest him and send him off to jail because you can't do that sort of thing in the Congo. I basically had to creatively deal with the situation. He really wasn't doing anything at all unusual in terms of academic freedom or anything else, but you knew you were dealing with a situation that it would only take one trip to a Congolese prison and we'd never see him again.

Q: Yes.

WESTON: So, it was one of those situations where you are creative and you bend a lot of rules and we got him out of the country before he got arrested. But, I had to talk him into it and make sure he was really aware of the danger he was in and manage it. Fortunately in those days we still had a twice a week Pan American flight.

Q: Had they taken his passport?

WESTON: They had, so we issued him another one. We bent the rule. That was the only way you could protect American citizens, sometimes from themselves. Yeah, in that particular case because a lot of it was talking, he obviously didn't want to leave. He was teaching, he thought he was doing good work and did not want to realize the real danger he was in. Eventually he did but you know we were young people about the same age. I'd been pretty much in academics six months before, a year before. But it was those sorts of things; it was a great year as a consular officer. It was the only time I had directly done consular work in the Foreign Service. It was protection of American citizens in a kind of a daily basis in a way that you really saw results.

Q: Did you get any real impression of the American missionaries? And their work there?

WESTON: Yeah. The American missionaries tended to be from what I would consider to be relatively radical sects, Mennonites in particular. We had one guy who had a braided beard which went down to his knees and he basically ran by foot around the Congo disseminating bibles. We had a few like that but most of them were organized groups, Mennonite in particular. Most of them I had a very favorable impression of the work they did especially compared to European missionaries who tended to be Catholic. They related whatever development work they were doing, or educational or health care or anything else to the quality and the amount of development work in education directly to the saving of souls and if you didn't come to mass you didn't get the vaccinations which I found appalling. That was not the case with the vast majority of American missionaries. I'm not a very religious person but I guess I have some questions about the more extreme religious sects which I place Mennonites in but my experience with Mennonites and missionaries more generally, most of them were Mennonite in the Congo, was a really positive one. I think they did really good work and are really dedicated people and underwent a lot to do some very good things.

Q: Well then you left there when? In 19...

WESTON: In 1971. We had a two year tour and we left, I think it was two months early because by then we were pregnant with our first kid and there was an embassy doctor and he didn't think a first child should be born in the Congo. There was not a hospital or really adequate medical care especially for a first birth. So, in those days the airlines had a rule that you couldn't travel after seven months of pregnancy, so we left just before hitting the seventh month.

SHELDON VANCE
Ambassador
Zaire (1969-1974)

Ambassador Sheldon Vance was born in Minnesota. He attended Carleton College and Harvard Law School. In 1942, Sheldon Vance began his 35 year career in the Foreign Service. His posts include Brazil, France, Martinique, Belgium, Chad, and Zaire. Ambassador Vance was interviewed by Arthur Tienken in 1989.

Q: Let me interrupt you for a moment, because I want to take you into your time as Ambassador in Zaire, which began in 1969, skipping over the period of time when you were DCM in Addis, followed by your first ambassadorship in Chad, then a tour for a year as Foreign Service inspector. You also did a side job as African Affairs advisor to the U.N. General Assembly in 1968. In 1969, you became ambassador to Zaire, and you lasted in that job for almost five years, which is something of a record in terms of ambassadorial appointments. When you arrived in 1969, the cast of characters had changed. Mobutu was already president. Territorial integrity had been preserved. What were the problems you inherited then? What are your feelings about what came after you arrived?

VANCE: One of the first problems we faced after I arrived was what to do about Mobutu's nationalization of the Union Minière. When Mobutu seized power in his coup of November of 1965, one of the first things he did was to nationalize the Union Minière. We could recognize that that was an understandable human reaction, because the Union Minière, as I indicated earlier, had helped Tshombe and encouraged Tshombe to mount his secession.

Q: Union Minière was the giant Belgium-based mining company in Katanga.

VANCE: A huge subsidiary, but nonetheless a subsidiary, of the Société Générale, which was as powerful in many respects as the government in Belgium. An amusing footnote is that the Place Royale in Brussels has, as a rectangular park, four sides, at one end is the royal palace. At the other end is Parliament, the opposite end. Then of the two sides, on one side there's the Société Générale headquarters, and on the other side is the U.S. Embassy. People would giggle about the juxtaposition of the relative powers in Belgium.

The Union Minière had been nationalized by Mobutu, and the Congolese simply did not have the trained manpower that it took to manage a huge mining operation of that nature. Obviously, they could have turned to other countries to recruit leadership, but we believed that notwithstanding the love-hate relationship which always exists between a former colony and a former metropolitan

government, that the people of the former metropolitan country are much more likely to be successful, or be willing to come out in sufficient numbers and go into the distant corners of the former colony and do what has to be done.

So we certainly did not, although some Belgians criticized the United States' intent to try to "steal" the Congo from them during this earlier period that we've been talking about that I was in the AFC, but we kept assuring our Belgian friends, many of whom I knew personally from service in Belgium, that all we were trying to do was to take the albatross of neo-colonialism, a term which was invented by the press to describe what certain Belgians were doing in the Congo, off their backs so they could play their appropriate role.

So we recommended to Mobutu that he strike a deal with a Belgian company called Gecamines, and not inquire too deeply into how Gecamines used the proceeds of its management of former Union Miniere property, because being a corporation related to Société Générale, quite possibly some of these funds would find their way to former Union Miniere shareholders. That would take the curse off the nationalization. Nothing is more injurious to a developing country's reputation amongst foreign corporate investors than a major nationalization. We thought that we saw that the Congo should get correct its reputation by making such an arrangement. They did.

Mobutu did gulp a couple of times and make an issue to agree to a management contract with a company called Gecamines, General Mining Company, in English, which brought Belgian operatives in and has been a successful operation ever since.

We also, at the same time, helped the Congolese Government revise their initial investment code to govern foreign investments, because we thought that the potential wealth of the Congo could be developed more rapidly, not only if the Belgian private-sector position was restored, but if other countries' private sectors, particularly that of the United States, could be encouraged to go there. We did that. Our Department of Commerce spread that word around.

Very shortly, about less than a year after I arrived, we were able to arrange an official visit by Mobutu to the United States, and we urged him and our government to use this occasion to encourage U.S. private sector to see the opportunities for foreign investment in the Congo. This, indeed, happened. Pan American built the first international hotel, the Intercontinental Hotel, and got the management contract for Air Zaire. Meanwhile, Mobutu had changed the name from the Congo to Zaire. City Bank opened a branch. A major grain company opened a flour mill in Matadi, and General Motors and Goodyear Tire both opened plants in Kinshasa. There was a considerable American private sector.

The Congolese economy, because of the very find, excellent prices obtained for its raw materials like copper, cobalt, uranium, and diamonds, its economy was so successful that we moved from grant assistance to loan assistance in this period. Eventually, shortly before I left, at the beginning of the collapse of the economies of most of the developing world, which were the direct outcome of the formation of OPEC and the incredible driving up of oil prices, which destroyed the economies of most of the developing world that didn't have its own oil supply, and damaged even the developed world, in my opinion, and was not favorable in the long run, even for the major oil producers.

I haven't been able to understand why we appeared to, in some ways, support the creation of OPEC; we should have done everything possible to prevent its creation.

I think that on the whole, most Congolese now, education is widespread, there's free public education, there are many thousands of Congolese university graduates.

Incidentally, our gift at independence to the Congo -- I've forgotten the number, but several hundred university full fellowships. We found that once they had been chosen carefully, they still had to be put through a year or, in some cases, two years of preparatory training in the United States before they could cope with university studies.

I think, on the whole, as I look back on our policy with regard to Mobutu, it wasn't all that bad. He certainly is not perfect, but I think we could have, and still could, do much worse.

Q: Mobutu, of course, is still president of Zaire. His relations with our chiefs of mission have been rocky at times. They were not during your time. I'd be interested in hearing your judgments about Mobutu himself and what it was that you were able to accomplish in terms of personal relationships that led eventually to your receiving a decoration at the time you left, the Order of Leopard, the Order of Leopards.

VANCE: I think that I was able to develop a special relationship with Mobutu because he knew of my considerable background in Congolese affairs and of the helpful role I had played in previous assignments. We got along very well. I saw him often alone. Some of the things that I endeavored to advise him on were not successful. For example, I saw that foreign investors were coming in. One of the foreign imports that I feared would become all too acceptable and received in a developing country was the question of corruption. I tried to explain to Mobutu that he should do his best to strongly discourage this on the part of his subordinates, because I pointed out that he should be interested in having the support of the real best judgment of his supporters, and not the views of those who were currently renting the favorable views of his supporters. I regret to say that that effort was not widely successful.

Also, I noted that as years went by, most of the time I was there, Mobutu paid great attention to detail and really tried, by travel throughout the country, to build a stronger and more viable country for his citizenry. But I gather that more recently, as I've seen him on occasion when I've gone back or seen him here, I understand that he's paying less attention to detail. After all, he's been absolute ruler since 1965, and that's now 23 years. That's a long, long time to be busy seven-plus days a week and 24-plus hours a day. So it's understandable.

Currently, I think he has a pretty good Cabinet. He's delegating, in effect, authority to that Cabinet, and things seem to be going reasonably well.

Q: During your time beginning in 1969, the fevered pitch of our interest in Zaire had died down somewhat. Did you feel that the development of policy and, indeed, the carrying-out of policy was, in effect, being carried out basically between yourself and the Bureau of African Affairs? To what extent did you feel that you were able to develop and influence our policy there?

VANCE: I had the impression that high-level interest in the Congo was very fleeting in our government. Therefore, in effect, I was doing a lot of evolving of American policy towards the Congo myself, with the very excellent staff that I had working with me in Leopoldville. Although the backup of the African Bureau was always very friendly and very effective and very helpful, my old friend David Newsom was Assistant Secretary for a good part of this period, and our views on what should be done coincided almost invariably.

Q: One question I wanted to explore a bit with you in the earlier period we were talking about, and can apply, in fact, to both periods of time when you were intimately involved with Zaire, concerns the role of other agencies in the developing and carrying-out of our policy in. Would you like to comment on that?

VANCE: The problem that is faced by ambassadors, especially in countries where there is a very considerable presence of a variety of U.S. Government agencies and a large staff, is a problem for any given ambassador, and it has gotten worse over the years as management of foreign policy in Washington has become more and more difficult, with the explosion of different agencies, each of which thinks that its view of what should be done in a given country should predominate, and also the explosion of staff in the Congress and the great increase in the congressional impression and belief that each one of them is qualified to decide and announce American foreign policy.

This was beginning during my period in the Congo, but had not reached alarming proportions, I didn't think. I had the feeling that I had very little difficulty in coordinating the positions of activities of AID, CIA, USIA, and our military in the Congo.

Q: Returning a moment to itself, the period while you were ambassador was a rather quieter period in terms of internal unrest, I think, than your earlier experience. Did you find that Zaire, while territorial integrity had been preserved, had advanced under Mobutu in terms of a nation state? Were the tribal divisions sufficiently still serious enough to be at least a threat? In other words, had Zaire evolved considerably from the very divisive period of time when you were there?

VANCE: It definitely had evolved. Mobutu continued to fear that there might be some threat especially from the Katanga. For that reason, for a long time he kept, in my opinion, an unwarranted suspicion of Nguza, who was a senior Lunda tribal figure, a very able man, and who was twice foreign minister and twice charged by Mobutu with high treason. The first time, Mobutu caught him. That was while I was ambassador in Zaire. He was sentenced to death. I believe I made some contribution when I urged Mobutu, the next time I saw him, just talking alone, that it would make a very unfortunate impression if the execution was carried out. In fact, it was commuted to life imprisonment, then it was commuted to enforced residence in his native village, and then the next thing we knew, he was foreign minister again. He later became prime minister.

I think that by the time I left Zaire in 1974, the Zairians were basically regarding themselves as Zairians. Certainly there were older Zairians who still regarded themselves in a tribal way, like we in the United States think of ourselves -- in my case, from Minnesota. There are still local loyalties. I think that, on the whole, they've done an excellent job of building a nation.

Q: Mobutu, of course, had consolidated power in himself and, as you mentioned, was a very strong leader. Had he retained some of the cast of characters of the period of time when you first became involved with , such people as the bomber, Justin Bomboko, or had they disappeared entirely from the scene?

VANCE: He was particularly close to Justin Bomboko at the beginning, and Bomboko continued to be foreign minister for a period of time, including the beginning of my sojourn as ambassador. But then they had a falling-out, and Bomboko withdrew to his native province up river, and now he's become a private businessman. This is what has happened to move of the original characters, but not all.

Mobutu continued to work with most of them for quite a period of time, and some of them are still with him. For example, his leading financial advisor while I was there and governor of the national bank, Jules Sabwa, is now, I believe, prime minister.

Q: By and large, I may be overstating the case a little bit, has more often than not supported us in interests elsewhere in the world. That is, their vote in the U.N., for example, relatively speaking, anyway, has been more with us than, say, the socialist or communist world. Was there a reason for that? Was Mobutu naturally conservative? What do you think?

VANCE: I think both. He was naturally conservative, but also his great friend at every stage of his life had been the United States. So it's a natural outcome of that.

Q: Did Mobutu ever try to play the United States off against Belgium?

VANCE: Oh, often! That's really the favorite outdoor sport throughout the whole period. I referred earlier to the love-hate relationship between the Congolese, the Zairians, and the Belgians. I understand that there's currently a great breakdown in the relationships due to something that someone said in Belgium. I haven't heard all the details. It was at a high level, and it just infuriated the Congolese, the Zairians, and they almost stopped talking to each other. But it is still to be noted that whenever a Zairian leader's child is ready to go to the university, if he can arrange it, he arranges to send the child to Belgium to study. That's where they travel on vacation. The Belgians continue, of course, to take enormous interest in the Congo, because many, many Belgian families have had members who lived in the Congo, so they are very well informed about Congolese developments and follow this very closely.

Q: Mobutu, at least in Western eyes, did one or two bizarre things which I'd like you to comment on. For example, there was a time when he changed his own name. He also proscribed certain holidays that he decided would no longer be celebrated. Could you comment on this aspect of Mobutu?

VANCE: Even before I arrived in Zaire, when I was still in Chad, Mobutu had launched a program of Africanization of place names and people's names, and even of dress. He abandoned the coat and tie of Western Europe, and wore what really looks like a Nehru jacket, with either a scarf or no shirt at all, nothing behind the V-neck of the jacket. He called it à bas coats, which is "down with coats" in French. He wore a leopard-skin hat shaped like the overseas hat of our World War I

uniform. As you indicated, they changed the place names and personal names, all of which had been chosen by the Belgian colonials. He persuaded President Tombalbaye of Chad to bring these things about. Tombalbaye explained to me that his capital city was called Fort Lamy, named after a French explorer, and the second biggest city was called Fort Archambault, and he said, "Neither of them is a fort. Why in the world should we keep those names?" So he changed them to the capital of N'Djamena.

Mobutu even changed the name of the river, the Congo River. It's called the Zaire in the Zaire. He claimed that the Congo tribe that inhabited -- and still inhabits -- the mouth of the Congo River, when they were found there when the first Portuguese arrived in the continent, he said they called this river "Zaire," which means "the river" in the Congolese tribal language. He said, "Being primarily a Catholic country, all of us have Christian first names named after the Christian saints. What in the world have we got to do with Saint this and Saint that? Joseph! I'm Joseph, which is the husband of the Virgin Mary, which seems a strange name for a Congolese to have." So he changed his name to Sese Sekou, and it goes on to maybe 15 or 20 more words that describe him.

All of them changed their names by his orders, all of the Congo, except his wife. Her name was Marie Antoinette, and she obviously was damned if she was going to give up Marie Antoinette and take on an African name. Yet the press and the radios could not continue to call her Marie Antoinette, so from that moment on, she was always referred to as "Mama Mobutu."

Q: What about the holidays?

VANCE: Oh, yes. He had a great falling-out with the Catholic Church and banned the use of all Christian holidays, including Christmas briefly. That's nonsense now.

I had a very amusing encounter with the Catholic archbishop in Zaire. He finally became a cardinal -- Cardinal Malulu. He was complaining to me during this real breach between Mobutu and the church. He was complaining to me, and I said, "But your church is responsible for Mobutu having reached the position he has reached."

"What? What do you mean?"

"Well," I said, "I've been told by Congolese and even confirmed by Mobutu that he attended a church school up river, and the church had a rule at the time that if a student who had been so fortunate as to be accepted into a church school, had the nerve to misbehave to the extent of visiting that den of sin and iniquity called Leopoldville without proper authorization of his teachers, he was immediately dismissed from school and put in the Army as a private. I've been told that that is how Mobutu got into the Force Publique."

My partner in the conversation looked aghast and changed the subject. (Laughs)

Q: You mentioned Mobutu's adopting a leopard-skin hat. I believe it's correct to say that you have such a hat. How did you acquire that, Mr. Ambassador?

VANCE: It's one of my cherished possessions that was given to me by what's referred to in French as *le guy*. It was after I had been decorated with the Order of the Commander of the Leopard. I was instructed by the president that whenever I wore that decoration, I should wear the hat, whether it be indoors or outdoors. Once in a while I do so. Not often. (Laughs)

Q: *Looking back now on your close to five-year tour as ambassador in Zaire, what gives you most satisfaction?*

VANCE: I think the degree of success that we had and the United States had in that period in helping the Congolese leadership create a nation. It certainly was not a total success, but as developing countries in Africa go, it is certainly not amongst the worst. That is a source of satisfaction. As I said today in this interview, I put a lot of years off and on, either directly or indirectly, into Zaire. It's been very interesting.

LEONARDO NEHER
Principal Officer
Lubumbashi (1970-1972)

Ambassador Leonardo Neher was born in Ohio in 1922. He received a B.A. in 1948 from Green State University and an M.A. from the University of Chicago in 1952. From 1943 to 1946, he served overseas in the U.S. Army. He joined the State Department in 1954. His overseas posts include Morocco, Vietnam, Syria, Zaire, Chad, the Dominican Republic, and Burkina Faso. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: *We move then from the Department of Defense to your next assignment which was from 1970 to '72 as Principal Officer in Lubumbashi in Zaire. What was your main job there?*

NEHER: A presence. Lubumbashi, capital of old Katanga.

Q: *This was the old...*

NEHER: Elisabethville, and this was Katanga province, the Shaba province, and with the one tribal group down there that had given the country its most serious problems -- the Lunda. Moise Tshombe's family had come from there. These are the people who had the closest relationship with the so-called Katanga Gendarmes who had gone over to Angola and operated from there, and were always a threat to Katanga, which became Shaba province. There was, in effect, a mini mission there in Lubumbashi. We had an AID program, a military assistance program, the Peace Corps, and they all had representatives there. We were a thousand miles by air from the nearest Ambassador, and he expected me to be in charge.

Q: *The Ambassador was?*

NEHER: Sheldon Vance. He wanted me to take charge but wanted to be sure that he knew what was happening. He wanted me to be fully informed and to be the head of the American community in the province. It was a busy job, and an interesting one because of that character as a mini mission. I had to make decisions there on program content, to do the political reporting, to establish productive relations with the authorities and the foreign community and to be responsible for the behavior of official Americans. I had to do all those things.

Q: What were American interests in that area?

NEHER: The political interest stemmed from the legacy of the Katanga independence movement from 1960 to 1963. The United States had played an active role in ending the secession and in bringing Katanga province back into newly independent Zaire. So we needed to follow political developments related to that period. We also needed to keep Washington informed of the quality of governance, of dissidence among tribal groupings, especially the Lunda. And there was always the presence of the so-called Katanga Gendarmes in Angola, a sleeping menace to Zaire's integrity. We had to keep reminding an over-sensitive Embassy in Kinshasa that the secession tendencies were overstated. Kinshasa kept noting little things that it interpreted as signs of renewed interest in secession. We were constantly having to deal with the Embassy's exaggerated reactions to the smallest hints of revival of the secessionist feelings in Katanga. To do that, we had to have good political feelers throughout the Zairian and foreign communities and had to keep the wires humming with information about what was really happening, or, more likely, what was not happening. Because we were all new in a new country, we had to do heavy biographic reporting. We needed to identify the governors, military personnel, businessmen and others who might become important in years to come. Those were the main political responsibilities.

We also had economic interests in the area. Katanga province, later called Shaba, sits atop one of the richest mineral deposits in the world. There were U.S. interests in copper. A consortium led by Americans had come in and got a big concession in the province and wanted to establish a mining operation very fast, on an accelerated scale. There were a lot of visitors coming in. Maurice Tempelman was one of the principals, acting for himself and, probably, for President Mobutu in putting the consortium together. There were Japanese, French and British interests involved in addition to the American ones.

We had an AID program that Mobutu wanted very badly: patrol boats on Lake Tanganyika to control what he described as rebel activities up along the lake. Some of those areas were inaccessible by land but could be reached by water. That project was in my consular district, so I was responsible for establishing relations with local authorities, and hosting and briefing people who came through Lubumbashi in connection with that project. That also meant travel to the port city, Kalemie, from time to time.

All in all, Lubumbashi was a miniature diplomatic mission and I enjoyed being head of it. None of us doubted the need for the post to be there. But now, of course, the consulate is closed and in the changed situation it apparently isn't yet needed.

Q: ...how did you find dealing with the Zairians, the government and the people in that particular far off province?

NEHER: Very difficult. There was a lack of discipline, very often in the administrative structure of the country. There was a lot of free-wheeling by authorities, military, police, governmental authorities, and some of it pretty scary.

Q: *How do you mean, scary?*

NEHER: For example, one time the local commander of the military base in Lubumbashi decided that he would have his men go around and confiscate stolen vehicles. He wanted it to be a secret operation so he told his men they couldn't be in uniform, couldn't carry any identification, couldn't explain who they were when asked. But they were to confiscate all stolen cars. Most of these soldiers were illiterate. They hadn't any way of looking at pieces of paper and deciding which were stolen cars. Well, one of the cars they picked up belonged to Gerard, one of the local employees of the Consulate. They hot-wired the car while he and his friends gathered around and objected, but the soldiers would not identify themselves and would not tell where the car was being taken. There was a big fight and that consular assistant got beaten. He was thrown into the car that had brought these people to the scene, and taken away. I got a call at home immediately saying that Gerard had been beaten and taken, probably, to the military base, but no one knew for sure. There was a history of abuse by military and civilian authorities, very serious abuse of people who were picked up and held. So I asked one of the young men who had reported this to me -- one of Gerard's friends -- if he would come with me to the base. I would call on the commander of the base and see if we could get our man released. He was very reluctant to do it, but he did get in the car, and we went to the base. I didn't have a driver on duty so I was driving myself. This was on a weekend. I drove to the gate and identified myself at the gate. The guard was a non-com who had no authority to let me in, but I was determined to get on the base. I had this friend of Gerard's sitting on the seat beside me, and while we were talking to the guard to get onto the base, the car that had been used by the men who had arrested Gerard was coming out. The men inside jumped out, opened the door of my car, dragged my passenger out and started beating him. Then they threw him in their car, turned around, and went back on the base. At that point I convinced the guard that I was going to go on the base and see the commandant. I asked where his residence was, and drove there. His orderlies -- that's the wrong word for those people at that time, they were chaotic, disorderly -- said he was there, he would see me, would I sit down. I sat on a chair on the terrace and waited, declined a drink. I said I wanted to see the commander of the base, a Major newly assigned there. Finally he came out, drunk. A real mean S.O.B. I had seen him in action before. He started off with a menacing tone but I just sat and waited, talked, and said I had reason to believe that my employee was there and also Gerard's friend who had been with me. I said, "I'd like very much to have you release them. The car that was taken was not a stolen car. I can give you papers on that." I asked him why his men carried no identification papers and he told me that if they identified themselves the operation would not be secret. Finally, my waiting paid off and he released Gerard to me but I refused to leave until Gerard's friend was also released to me. Eventually they brought the second one. It took a long time, but they brought him. I put them in the car and left the base.

That kind of thing was happening. There were road blocks manned by soldiers in rag-tag uniforms, often drunk, and they were very dangerous. Sometimes I heard they would stop a car and ask the driver for his driver's license. When the driver would hand them his driver's license one of them would put it in his pocket and say, "Where is your driver's license? You don't have a driver's

license?" And the driver had to pay to get the license back. There were other similar cases of people being beaten, or arrested on a pretext. For the most part, the authorities were unhelpful in such cases. In fact, they were the instigators in most of them. So, dealing with the authorities was always a challenge.

The General who was in charge of the Karanga military district had a taste for Remy Martin cognac, maybe because his middle name was Remy, and somewhere he had a taste for Remy Martin cognac. He very often would finish a bottle of it by himself while we were together talking, making intelligible conversation difficult after a time. An amusing incident occurred the first time I called on him at his headquarters. His luxurious salon was lined with shelves and on them was a collection of electronic gear of all kinds -- that is, record players, amplifiers, turntables and all sorts of sound equipment. It was obvious that he hadn't bought them, had found them somewhere, probably in a Belgian household. Background music was playing, sort of a dirge, I thought. I couldn't identify the music but there was something familiar about it. The General finally came in, and as we talked I mentioned the music. He implied that he was a man of some culture and Beethoven was one of his favorites. It turned out that he had a 3-3/4 IPS Beethoven tape but was playing it at 1-7/8, half speed, and didn't know the difference.

Q: Tape recorder at half speed.

NEHER: ...at half speed. That's the kind of officer we had to deal with. We had to deal with him on security problems, on the people who were being stopped at night in the streets, and we had to get access to the General in the most important cases. The governor in office when I arrived was a very rational, educated and able governor. The second one too; his wife became a friend of my wife. We cultivated them very quickly as we had the first governor, and were sure to invite them for dinners. They liked to dance, so we gave dancing parties pretty much organized around them in order to strengthen the social contact and make access easier when we needed it. We identified some of the more enlightened military people, invited them in for those social functions, and got to know them pretty well. But it was always tricky. The last governor they sent in while I was there was not reachable. There was no way to communicate effectively with him. He was from a different part of the country and a different era of Congolese history. It was difficult to have rational give-and-take at any time. He was bejewelled with gold rings, wore more than one gold watch. It was very difficult to do business if you had a problem of some kind, or if you had to develop a program for high level visitors coming to the province. It was very hard to find out what he...

Q: I'm thinking of a researcher whose looking at this, hasn't dealt with the Foreign Service. Here you are, you've got these things, I mean its a pretty chaotic situation. How did you feel about reporting it back both to the Embassy, and to Washington? Because there's always the problem if you make it too vivid ,you really are hurting your whole program there and everything else. How did you deal with that?

NEHER: First of all, you have to be honest about it, but situations like that existed all over Africa. Nobody back in Washington, none of the professionals who back you up, needs to read about them, or wants to. You talk about corruption in your area, putting it in perspective. When you have problems, obviously you've got to report them. If you have any consular staff who's arrested or anything of that sort, you've got to report it. And you have to say what action you took. So you do

all that but you assume that as long as things are progressing, and our policies are being effectively implemented, and we're getting what we think we can from that government, you just let it go. It's very practical, very pragmatic. I suppose if you were to report factually what happens on, say, the zoning board meetings in Albuquerque, New Mexico, you'd be arrested and put in jail. So you have to select what people need to know, and you have to do it with relative candor. But you've got to be very selective, and you've got to understand what the effects will be from your reporting. From a little post like Lubumbashi you probably could write a kind of report that would leak to Congress, and risk getting aid blocked to the country because of some little local disorders. You can't do that. You have to know the effect you want, and you have to present the material in an African perspective. If there's a question of protection of American citizens, your Consulate staff, you may have to weigh in with words that nobody in Kinshasa or Washington wants to hear, but you may have to do that. But you sure can't remake the world, and you can't say, "We want a perfect government here in this African country, and we want the people to be correct." You can't do it. You're not going to accomplish anything.

Q: How far in Lubumbashi did the writ of Mobutu run? Did you feel there was a strong central control there, or not?

NEHER: The ultimate authority came down from him, appointments and so forth. He could dismiss, he could do that, he would discipline his military forces. He actually went down to Lubumbashi some months before I got there, and lined up some *malfaiteurs* and shot them -- evil doers, bandits, robbers -- and had them shot right there. He had the ultimate authority, over the Army, over his security services. The authority was limited because of limited funds available, but the authority of appointments was an important one, and he had that authority. But when you left the urban centers, like Lubumbashi, and you went out into villages, the thing that you were immediately conscious of was, the pull of the traditional tribal administration. If these were diligent people, if the chief was a good person, a hard worker and honest, the village would be clean, there would be flowers around houses and the children would be well clothed and well fed, indicating abundant harvests. You'd go into another village and you'd find that the chief was a drunk, or was not interested, or was diseased, and you'd find weeds growing everywhere, and roofs not being repaired on the houses. So you realized that the writ of the central government didn't reach these people. It was the local, the tribal, that was the big thing in their lives. In the Lunda area in particular, where the Lunda are the main tribe.

Q: L-u-n-d-a?

NEHER: Yes, which is a corruption. In many languages, an "r" is hard to pronounce, and people pronounce it as an "l". It happens in Chinese and Japanese and in some parts of Spain. In the Lunda tribal area of Zaire, neighboring tribes are used to terminating most words with vowels, so in referring to these people, who are really called urund, that's the best rendition, the "r" is converted to the "l" and then they put a vowel on the end. They are trying to say urund and it comes out lunda. The Lunda in western Katanga province have had a long connection with the Methodist Church. The missionaries got there many, many years ago. They keep very strong ties. There is a fine hospital and leper treatment center at the Lunda's chief town of the Lunda, Katanga, and the tribal leaders have been diligent, hard-working, God-fearing people. You can tell that immediately. Their towns are clean, the harvests abundant, the kids are healthy. They've got a good, simple

system of justice that's fair, and you ask yourself, "Where's the central government in all this? Where's Mobutu? Where are the ministries?" Nowhere.

Q: How did you deal with the problem of corruption? Zaire is known as one of the great corrupt states in some cases. Maybe I'm being unfair.

NEHER: No. It's true.

Q: You have AID, you have Peace Corps. You had all sorts of things going and here's corruption. How did you deal with that?

NEHER: It didn't affect us very much because we didn't have program funds that we administered except the small Self Help Program. There we had problems. Corruption was pervasive. For example, we had a very small project with the boy scouts. I think it was only something like \$80.00 to put a heavy plank across a ditch that separated a growing, sprawling community from the marketplace. Well, the scout master ran away with the \$80.00. Corruption penetrated right down to pretty much the lowest levels. So in our Self Help Program we had to watch very carefully.

And within the Consulate we had a problem. I noticed that the gasoline consumption seemed to be out of proportion to the amount of driving we were doing with our vehicles. So I got the records together -- unfortunately our administrative officer was not very resourceful at the time -- and took a look at them, and when I checked the mileage on these vehicles, and it was just incredibly small. I tried to straighten that out and nothing seemed to work, so then I simply assigned one of the vehicles on weekends to each one of the responsible Americans in the Consulate, and had him do a mileage check. Then I established mileage goals for each of the vehicles and told the drivers, "That's what you're going to get in the way of mileage, and the driver who doesn't get that mileage, is fired." And we stopped it. Corruption did come right into the Consulate. You had to be just on your toes, but luckily we didn't administer funds except for a very small Self Help program.

PHILIP W. PILLSBURY, JR.
Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Lubumbashi (1970-1972)

Philip W. Pillsbury was born in Chicago in 1935. He received a B.A. from Yale University in 1957 and joined the Foreign Service in 1959. His overseas posts include Spain, Italy, Mali, Madagascar, Zaire, Iran, and Argentina. He was interviewed by Charles Kennedy in 1994.

Q: What was the situation at that time in Zaire. Lubumbashi, that was what? That was Elisabethville?

PILLSBURY: All the cities had been renamed.

Q: Lubumbashi, Stanleyville. But anyway, this was the heart of Katanga? At that time what was the situation?

PILLSBURY: Well, my wife and I were lucky to be sent there in 1970. The horrible period really extended from independence in 1960 to 1965, and saw the ascension of Mobutu, Jean Joseph Desire' Mobutu, who was a sergeant in the army at the time in 1960 and then moved his way up with our help I think, it saw the death of Patrice Lumumba under curious circumstances, and saw the ascension of Moise Tshombe in the Katanga, and his effort to engineer the secession of the Katanga from the Congo. Dag Hammarskjold died in a very mysterious circumstances. There was general chaos for five years. Mobutu consolidated his power and in 1965 nationalized the great copper company Union Miniere du Haut Katanga, it became (GECAMINES), a Congolese company. He recognized that he didn't have the technical expertise to run it. So the Belgians stayed pretty much, technical people and the administrative heads stayed in Lubumbashi to run the mines. The copper prices were high at the time, worldwide, and so the Congo was on a roll. Shortly after we arrived, Mobutu as did many other African leaders went towards Africanization. They changed the country's name to Zaire, they changed the Congo River's name to Zaire, not recognized by its neighbor across the river. In Brazzaville they still call the Congo the Congo River. Lubumbashi had changed its name, but many of the cities were renamed at the time. The currency was changed and Mobutu pushed for Africanization of names including his own. He became Mobutu Sese Seko. Our interest there in Zaire was again the concern of penetration by the communists, the Russians and the Chinese. There's no comparison between Zaire and my other African posts in terms of national security. Zaire is exceptionally rich in terms of strategic minerals. It's been said many times that who controls the Congo controls the heart of black Africa. So that we had a huge mission in Zaire at the time. Everything that goes into a US mission was in Kinshasa. We had consulates all over the country. There was a large consulate in Lubumbashi. I was the only USIA officer, but there had been two officers at the time. We had a big center there and a good budget ...

Q: Who was Consul General at the time?

PILLSBURY: It was Leonardo "Nard" Neher. A fine man. An African hand. He knew Africa very well.

Q: What was your job there?

PILLSBURY: That was my second assignment in a consular district. So, we, in the Consulate and the USIA carried out the policies that were established by the Embassy. My boss was in the capital. That said, the distance of two thousand kilometers and sketchy internal transportation kept us pretty much isolated from Kinshasa. We were much closer physically to English Africa, to Zambia, which was only a hundred kilometers away. We would go there to buy food, as a matter of fact. It was that close. As I said the concerns were in one line. To keep Mobutu happy. We recognized that he was the man for better or worse who controlled things. We had very large economic interests there, centering on the strategic minerals especially. There was a vacuum there as differentiated from the situation in Madagascar where the French had remained very strong. The Belgians had pulled out, absolutely pulled out in 1960 with the exception of running things like GECAMINES, the copper mines. They started to come back in terms of their aid mission which was quite strong, but as far as infrastructure and political assistance, they'd left very little in terms

of educated or trained Congolese or Zairois to run things. So there was a vacuum. The Mobutu government was very open to United States assistance efforts to help them. He recognized that himself, and we knew he was important to us. He played that card pretty well.

Q: Now Mobutu is considered a pariah of the first water. But at that time in 1970 You were there from 1970 to 1972. How was Mobutu considered?

PILLSBURY: Well, it was kind of two levels. We knew and the people knew that he was a master politician in the African sense. He was a master at shifting people around in different jobs so that the cabals could not build up against him in particular areas. He had a fantastic ability to sniff things out before they started to get serious. One of his sources of power is of course the fact that in African society the chief is important and he is regarded as the maximum chief. Often in a country the people like the chief to act like one and Mobutu played that to the hilt. We at the time as I said looked at him as the person who would keep order and control and not let things get out of hand and certainly not let our opposition penetrate too much. Given what had happened during the civil war in Stanleyville and places like that where the cold war struggle was being played out on a daily basis, we didn't want that to happen. So I think that our policy was one of swallowing our distaste for the man and the way he ran things, the human rights violations, etc. putting that in the background and just saying: "Well, we have got to work with him and support him." I'm sure that for the people who dealt personally with him in Kinshasa, it was a somewhat and sometimes distasteful experience to have to swallow that knowledge that he was a person who one wouldn't want to have necessarily as a good friend. The one thing that we found in the Consulate that was hard to deal with is that we saw things, (and it was true in other consulates too) we saw things in the interior that our Embassy didn't see on a personal basis. I traveled a good deal in the interior of the Katanga at a time when it was allowed and there was no danger of being ambushed or anything like that. One trip in particular was three weeks into the interior. I know that I was the first official of any western embassy to be on some of those roads in ten years. The infrastructure that had been built up by the Belgians prior to independence was totally gone. There was a level of the things we said we were doing, distributing medicine, food, and clothing, and things like that very often didn't get to the people intended. There was a lot of graft. A lot of medicines that were coming in rather than being given were being sold. This kind of thing we would report and because of larger interests, especially wanting to bring in American business investments, the Embassy didn't want to have too much negative stuff going back to the United States on the actual condition in the interior of Zaire. That was a frustration for us, because there was one reality that we saw in the interior and then the reality that was being told to the American private sector to bring them in to invest in the country that was different. That of course came out later. After I left, there were the rebellions in the copper belt. The Angolan war broke out and disaster and chaos returned.

Q: What about the Katangan government, the Zairian government in your area? Did you have much dealings with them?

PILLSBURY: I didn't really, because my area of unimpeded access was the university. We did a lot of work with the university and had a lot of programs at the center with students and professors. The Consulate did have quite a bit of work with the government. There was a fellow, the governor, a not particularly impressive fellow who had been named by Mobutu and things were run ... They didn't do anything without asking Mobutu or the central government first. There was not a whole

lot of independent action. With the exception of the Tshombe family. I mentioned Moise Tshombe who was the leader of the Katanga opposition and for a time Prime Minister. His brother David Tshombe succeeded him as the appointed director of operations for the government in the northwest in the Katanga. But he was also the emperor of the Lunda, a tribe which reflects the problems of the colonial division of Africa in the nineteenth century. Then they didn't take into account the tribal or ethnic lines. Rather they just drew lines on a map and said this is yours and this is mine. The Lunda are a very strong tribe. They are present in Zaire, and in Angola and in Zambia. So the Tshombe family ... David Tshombe was the emperor of the Lunda and the prefect of the northwest and he was the only one with both governmental and tribal authority... maybe. There was one other case in Zaire in which Mobutu permitted that to happen. He recognized that in the Tshombe family it was better to let Tshombe stay and have both jobs. So that again it was a centralized government. Mobutu's party the MPR, Mouvement Populaire Revolutionnaire definitely was the one that was in control.

Q: What about the university? What was your impression of the university, the professors and students, and what were we doing there?

PILLSBURY: The university again was the creation of the Belgians prior to independence. Very good facilities that they created by 1960. But in the five years' civil war, a lot of them had been shot up and destroyed. There was a very good director at the university, very talented and capable. He brought in good professors. We had an effective, small, but effective exchange program in which we brought in Americans to teach on short term basis, much appreciated. The student population was avid to learn. To learn about the US. They recognized the technological and administrative and business superiority and the way of doing things in the United States, and wanted very much to have access to that, which we provided. In those two years I'd say that our relationship with the university was as good as any I've had anywhere in my career. The problem of course was that it was short lived. Everything started to fall apart again. The brief shining light of those two years again started to fall apart due to the chaos in the country and the fact that the central government couldn't or didn't want to leave the university or those students alone. It's now back I guess to an anarchic state. While we were there it was a very gratifying experience to work with them.

Q: You were there then two years?

PILLSBURY: Two years.

Q: Then was your status moved back to regular FSIO?

PILLSBURY: Yes. I'd gone there on the understanding that it was a limited reserve appointment and that I had to

Q: We were talking off a microphone about the things you did with Mobutu. Could you describe it again?

PILLSBURY: Sure. I'd indicated that basically we wanted to work with Mobutu because of the strategic importance with which we regarded Zaire. Mobutu made a trip to the United States on an official visit and among the places he stopped at was in New Orleans where he visited the

Swiftboat Company. The Swiftboat being descendants of the PT boats of World War II, he decided he wanted to have six of them.

Q: They're about 90 feet long?

PILLSBURY: About 90 feet long and armed. They were widely used in river warfare in Vietnam. This was not by the way military assistance on our part. Mobutu bought them with the money that he made. The Congo was then a rich country. These weren't given to him. There was no facilitation at all. He bought them. But there was very strong opposition in the Consulate, in our Consulate. The Consul General and everyone felt that this was a dumb thing to do, because what Mobutu wanted to do was put the six boats on Lake Tanganyika allegedly to stop the communist infiltration from the socialist states across the lake. But I always felt that it was more for status and to establish what we regarded certainly as a dangerous maneuver, displacing any kind of military balance of power in that part of Africa. I used to think of the African Queen ...

Q: I was thinking of C.S. Forester's book and then the movie the African Queen.

PILLSBURY: Exactly. It was that same kind of thing. That German ship controlled that lake. So that we were very opposed to that, but Mobutu wanted it very much and our policy on the whole was to go along with what he wanted. The fact that he was buying them with hard currency also had a certain impact that didn't hurt the Swiftboat company in any way. At any rate, the decision was made that it would come and the next problem was getting them there from Louisiana to the shores of Lake Tanganyika. The procedure was extraordinary. Just the procedure, they used a ship. They shipped the boats by sea to Accra and then used the plane that was affectionately known as the Guppy. It had been developed to ship the Apollo spacecraft from California to Cape Kennedy. They used that plane to fly the hulls across Africa. I think all of the parts, some might have gone by sea around the Cape of Good Hope, and then all of it flew, was flown across Africa. Then a retires Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, working with the Swift company, constructed a little narrow gauge railroad of about 200 yards from the airstrip to the lake and reconstructed the Swiftboats on the lake and launched all six of them on time. I went and saw him before he launched the sixth and asked him what his prognostications were for how long they'd last and what they'd be used for. He said: "That's not my affair. My job is to launch them, get them into the water. Given what I've seen with the four that are there now, I don't think they're going to last very long, because ..." He gave an example. He found that a big wind had come up and he had just happened to go down to the dock where these things were moored and found that they weren't moored properly to deal with any kind of a wind. If he hadn't been there they would all have come out of their moorings anyway. So in effect what happened was that over a period of one or two years, maybe three years, the boats were cannibalized. One part would go down, then another one that they would take from another boat. A problem that was not faced at the time was the fact that all the instructions were in English, and that none of the Zairois assigned to the boats spoke English or read it. So there was an accelerated English training program to try and get that done. It was a misguided, we always felt, a very misguided venture.

Q: Were there any protests from Tanzania?

PILLSBURY: Yes, very strong ones as a matter of fact, but really not listened to, at least not from my perception. I don't know what was going on relationshipwise between Nyerere, our Embassy in Dar-es-Salaam, and the Bureau of Foreign Affairs. I was not involved in that at all.

LEWIS D. JUNIOR
Consular Officer
Lubumbashi (1972-1974)

Lewis D. Junior was born in 1925 in Kansas. After serving in World War II, Mr. Junior became interested in the Foreign Service. He graduated from Texas Christian University with a double major in French and Spanish. He joined the Foreign Service in 1950. Mr. Junior served in Nigeria, Italy, Germany, Ethiopia, and The Netherlands. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: *Well then, you went to Lubumbashi. What were you doing there?*

JUNIOR: It was a consulate. Why it was not a consulate general, I never knew. But it was not important on the ground, because the American consul was certainly, in all respects, the equivalent of, or in a sense senior to, all the other consular officials simply because of American clout in Zaire. The Belgian Consul General, in his own way, was better plugged-in because of the Belgian community, but it wasn't necessary for the American principal officer in Lubumbashi to be a Consul General.

Q: *What was the name of Lubumbashi under Belgian rule?*

JUNIOR: It was Elisabethville.

Q: *And it's way off in the...*

JUNIOR: It's in the finger of Zaire that points down into Zambia, very much in the center. What did I do there? Had I wanted to sit on my hands, I would have improved my golf game considerably more than I did, but in fact there was a very substantial American commercial opportunity, in the sense of vast mining enterprises there.

Q: *This was the old Katanga Province, wasn't it?*

JUNIOR: That's right, where they have copper in vast quantities, and where, by the way, the uranium for the first atomic bomb was originated, also in the mines of Shinkolobwe, which is not far from that end of the country.

In short, I saw a number of opportunities to try to crack the Belgian monopoly on the total exploitation of the copper. That is, the sales, the purchases of large trucks and all kinds of equipment, air compressors and so forth. But that was all monopolized by the Belgians, and sort of

shared by the Belgians with others, such as the Swedish, who had some very fine air compressing equipment.

After much kicking and screaming and some help from the embassy in Kinshasa, we finally got a fairly substantial American trade mission that came out and gave it a good shot. But in the end, the longstanding relationship between the Belgian colonials and the Zairian authorities prevailed, and we didn't ever get any major sales opportunities in that part of the country.

That's essentially what I did. But of course there was a certain amount of looking after American commercial interests, looking after American citizenship interests, and some visa work, some consular work.

Q: Well, what about dealing with the Zairian authorities, how did you find them?

JUNIOR: They were rather relaxed, friendly, and had a good deal of respect for the United States. But we were unfortunate in having a governor of the province who was extremely erratic and didn't really do a hell of a lot in terms of moving the province along in any particular direction. And he was long suspected of having tortured various individuals who might have crossed him in one way or the other, but I could never establish that as being true.

But there wasn't a hell of a lot going on, and Washington was not terribly interested in the post at that particular point in time, because all was relatively calm. Later on, when we had the second invasion of Shaba...I was there between the first and second, and we Shaba Two, which was a rather major international fracas wherein mercenaries came out of Angola and were advancing toward Lubumbashi, to the great panic of a lot of folks, particularly the Europeans, who in the end provided forces to go in and chase the mercenaries out, and the U.S. provided the airlift for them to get in there and to perform the military operation.

Q: Can you characterize sort of the feeling of the Belgians and the Americans and the other Europeans who were there towards the Zairian authorities and all? How did they get along?

JUNIOR: I'll preface what I say by pointing out that generalities are always tricky and not much to be relied upon, and there were many highly ethical and moral individuals in that part of the country, of all nationalities. But the fact was that the Belgians had a commercial lock on that part of the world, and their contract with the government of for running the mines, which were owned by the government of Zaire, was said to be far more profitable than had been the enterprise when it was Belgian-owned and Belgian-operated.

Corruption was rampant. It took bribes everywhere to get anything done. Except for us, because our own mass, our own political weight, allowed us to get things done without paying bribes. We never paid bribes. At least as far as I know, I don't think we ever did.

The white resident in that part of the world at the time, excluding at least most of the missionaries, was there for exploitative reasons. He was there to make as many big bucks as he could make, and had no concern whatsoever for the physical, political, or other aspects of the well-being of the Zairois. He didn't give a damn.

And the Zairois have an unmeasured capacity to suffer. I was just totally amazed that they could suffer under the white man and the colonial exploitation and, worst of all, the exploitation of their own leaders, without rebelling. I continue to be amazed, because Mobutu and his cronies have ripped them off and done every conceivable thing to keep these people miserable, impoverished, starved, uneducated -- the most backward, primitive kind of society -- and yet all they want is to be left alone and to have enough money to buy some cassava and a bolt of cloth and their bicycle tire, and if people just stay away from them and let them do that, they apparently will live forever without rebelling.

Q: How about the American missionaries, what sort of role were they playing, from your perspective there at that time?

JUNIOR: Well, first, there were not very many in Katanga. Those I knew best were actually in Lubumbashi and were American and Irish priests and monks. And their primary role, almost exclusive role, was doing good, and not proselytizing; helping medically and helping with education and so forth. But there were so few that they made very little difference. There were Protestants, who lived out in the bush, largely also devoted to the same kind of medical aspects, and not doing much proselytizing. But, again, I'm not aware that they made much of a difference at all in that part of the world, made no impact at all except maybe for a few nominal Christians.

Q: At that time, was Sheldon Vance the ambassador?

JUNIOR: Yes.

Q: Was the embassy just plain far away, or was there much contact with it? Did you feel much direction from it, or, things were quiet, let it stay so?

JUNIOR: The consulate in Lubumbashi was about as far away from the embassy in Kinshasa as Miami is from St. Louis, and the road connections were almost impossible -- were impossible during the rainy season. The only non-radio communications between the two cities was a single -- repeat, one -- skinny little telephone line that led all the way across the country, and was therefore broken or static-laden or busy all of the time. We had a Collins single-sideband radio to communicate with the embassy, but the atmospherics were such that it didn't work most of the time. So I was left pretty much on my own. Rarely did the department have anything urgent to say to me. Probably just as well, because I remember once, inadvertently, a flash telegram was sent to Lubumbashi and some other posts, and it got to me five days after it was sent. So most of the things with any time flags on them that were sent to me were overtaken by the time they got to me in the first place.

MICHAEL NEWLIN
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kinshasa (1972-1975)

Ambassador Michael Newlin was born in North Carolina in 1929. He received both his bachelor's degree and master's degree from Harvard University in 1949 and 1951, respectively. His career has included positions in Frankfurt, Oslo, Paris, Brussels, Leopoldville/Kinshasa, Jerusalem, Vienna, and an ambassadorship to Algeria. Ambassador Newlin was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on October 10, 1997 and by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Excerpts from 1997 interview

Q: In 1972, your tour of the United Nations came to an end. And you moved then to Africa, Kinshasa, as DCM. Was this a post you sought, or how did this come about?

NEWLIN: While I was there, 1972 I guess, the Security Council met for the first and only time outside of New York. George Bush was our representative and so a small group of us went to Addis Ababa for the meeting. While there, I accompanied him on a side trip to Somalia along with other Council members. Bush persuaded the White House to let him have a plane for a goodwill tour of Africa. He was the highest ranking U.S. official at that time ever to visit Africa. We went to Sudan, Kenya, Zambia, Zaire, Ivory Coast and Chad. We were warmly received and Bush made a very favorable impression at each stop. In Kinshasa, I was impressed with Zaire--a vast country with many natural resources. Although I had never served in Africa at USUN I had worked on African problems--negotiations on the independence of Rwanda and Burundi, Angola, apartheid. When it was suggested that I put my hat in the ring to succeed the departing DCM, I did. George Bush told the Ambassador, Sheldon Vance, that he thought I'd be a good DCM, and so that's how I got that job.

Q: How large an embassy did you have?

NEWLIN: Pretty big. It was a big operation. Very big. I guess, in total we had some 400 employees when you consider all the contracts that we had. A big AID mission as well as a Defense Attache. When I arrived, we even had a military plane to take us around to the constituent posts.

Q: Yes, I was going to ask you about those.

NEWLIN: We had three consulates. The most important was Lubumbashi in Shaba, the copper mining region. Another was in Kisangani, in the middle of the country and one in Bukavu, not far from Rwanda and Burundi.

Q: Were the Peace Corps asked to volunteer in the country?

NEWLIN: Yes, we did have the Peace Corps. Our first contingent was held hostage in Uganda by Idi Amin for several days when their plane stopped to refuel. It is hard to assess the benefit of AID and Peace Corps operations in a country like Zaire.

Q: How did you and the Ambassador divide the work?

NEWLIN: The Ambassador looked to me to coordinate the day-to-day work of the embassy. We worked very closely together. He would take responsibility for meeting with Mobutu or the Foreign Minister. He thought I should be aware of everything that was going on. He made that clear. He said, "If I'm ever gone, you should be in charge, and there will be no second guessing when I come back." I did the day-to-day work of coordinating all the various sections, and they reported through me to the Ambassador. He then exercised sort of overall oversight. While he was on home leave I took part in the negotiations on the at that time the largest EX-IM loan--\$700 million to build a transmission line from the Congo River to Shaba, several hundred miles.

Q: I call that the ideal relationship between an ambassador and a DCM.

NEWLIN: That's the way it should be.

Q: Did it work that way with Dean Hinton?

NEWLIN: No. It did not work that way with Dean Hinton.

Q: Quite a different individual.

NEWLIN: Quite a different individual.

Q: He was on top of everything, as I recall.

NEWLIN: Yes. And certainly not telling his DCM everything he was about to do.

Q: What were some of the problems we had in Zaire, or did we have major problems?

NEWLIN: We had major problems at the time. You've got to remember this period was during the Cold War. I think there was a tendency to turn a blind eye as to what was really the reality. Sheldon Vance certainly was a decent, God-fearing, upright person. Yet we didn't at that time really dig into what was, in effect, going on. All of the shipping out of the gold and the diamonds to Switzerland. There was no investment in the country by Mobutu and his rich relatives and cronies. They were skimming off everything. I think we could be criticized for that. Sheldon occasionally informed Mobutu of egregious malfeasance but Mobutu was almost certainly aware of such cases and probably profiting. The rationale was that Mobutu's support was an important African leader who generally supported United States policy. He was genuinely anti-Communist.

Q: When others weren't. But certainly the CIA people must have known what was going out if they were worth their salt.

NEWLIN: Oh, yes. Things were somewhat complicated by the fact that one of the CIA Africa hands who helped bring Mobutu to power came back to Kinshasa as a representative of Tempelsman on a huge new copper mine project.

Q: What were your impressions of Mobutu as a leader and as an individual?

NEWLIN: Extremely capable leader. Brilliant. Charismatic. I've been at a sports arena where he could galvanize the people. At the same time, he was certainly robbing the country blind. He and his ministers.

Q: During that time there were Americans involved in a plot against Mobutu, at least that was the story. Did that cause the Embassy any problems?

NEWLIN: I don't remember that happening while we were there.

Q: Obviously then, it didn't cause any big problems.

NEWLIN: No, it did not.

Q: What about the break in relations with Israel?

NEWLIN: That did cause some problems because I was there at that time, and we had had indications that he was signaling that he was going to choose at the UN between a brother and a friend. The choice was obvious.

Q: Presumably, we tried to dissuade him.

NEWLIN: We did, in New York, Bill Schaufele was sent to warn Mobutu that there would be repercussions.

Q: How strong was the Belgian influence there?

NEWLIN: Strong. The Belgians were certainly there. They were involved in administrative and technical positions. For example, in the national bank.

Q: Were they resented by the Zaireans?

NEWLIN: I don't think so. I think the average, everyday Zairean was easy going. It was during this period that various foreign business interests were taken over by the Zairean.

Q: Did that cause headaches for our Embassy?

NEWLIN: No. Not really. I think the administration remained Belgian.

Q: One of the great events of that period was the Mohammed Ali-George Forman fight.

NEWLIN: We were there and it was everything it was cracked up to be--one of the great shows of the century.

Q: Now, at one period our Ambassador, Dean Hinton, was PNGed. How did that come about?

NEWLIN: Dean replaced Vance during my third year. I'm very fond of Dean--and he is certainly an extremely bright individual. But Dean was not suited to be Ambassador to Central Africa. From the very beginning, the chemistry between Dean and Mobutu was not good. Dean did do things--he didn't ask my advice and called for his Lincoln Continental and went off into what they called the cité...where the Zaireans lived and called on the Cardinal--Cardinal Malva, who was the political opponent of Mobutu. Jeune Afrique had an article called "Our Man in Kinshasa." The implication was that Dean wanted to oust Mobutu. When that came out, Dean said, "That's nothing. We don't have to report that." I said, "Oh yes, we do!" (Laughter) We found out through intelligence sources that the head of the Central Bank, a Mobutu crony, planned to send the bank's silver deposits to a store front someplace in the U.S. Dean warned Mobutu that this was about to happen. Of course, this was all part of a Mobutu operation although he professed to be shocked. He said, "The head of the Central Bank will explain this to you." Of course, he never got around to it.

My tour was up and I left on home leave. I was in North Carolina and my sister gave me the morning paper. She said, "Oh, it looks like the Ambassador to Zaire has been declared Persona Non Grata!" (Laughter) Dean escaped Kinshasa and went on to greater things in Nicaragua and Panama.

Q: Were you there when Sheldon Vance came back on his mission?

NEWLIN: No. Sheldon was sent back for a while to repair relations.

Q: Were we aware of some of the military things that were going on there--the support for rebels in Angola?

NEWLIN: Oh, yes. Dean was particularly peachy keen for that. (Laughter) He urged Washington to make the AID director, who spoke Portuguese, a generalissimo to coordinate military assistance to Savimbi in Angola. The Political Counselor and I opposed the idea and Dean was big enough to include our opposition in his telegram. The AID director was not consulted but he would have been appalled.

Q: Were you able to travel around in Zaire?

NEWLIN: Yes. I visited the entire country and was overwhelmed by its beauty and potential. Bukavu is like Switzerland--now devastated by fighting and hoards of refugees.

Q: Went north and south. You've been there, haven't you? When you left, did you have the impression that Zaire was going to make it, or that it was on the slippery road down?

NEWLIN: Things were not as bad when we were there. The people were certainly poor, but they had enough manioc to eat. Mobutu gave them a sense of pride and everything. They were running their own affairs. It was worrying that they had a dictatorship--a sort of benign one, but it was a dictatorship. We had no real evidence of serious human rights abuses at that time, and there was no effective political opposition, so I sort of expected that things would perk along pretty much for an indefinite period, which I guess they did.

Q: If I read history correctly, or modern history, it took a push from the outside to throw Mobutu out.

NEWLIN: Yes. Mobutu made a mistake of trying to get rid of the Tutsis in eastern Zaire. I guess it was really the Rwandans and Uganda that overthrew him, with the help of the Tutsis and some others.

Q: So it was Rwanda and Uganda?

NEWLIN: Yes. In the Bush administration when Mobutu steadfastly refused our urging to implement reforms, the U.S. suggested he step down. He hung on until cancer and the unwillingness of the Army to fight for him caused him to flee.

Excerpts from 2006 interview

Q: Where did you go after '72?

NEWLIN: Well as a result of while I was there, George Bush and the security council decided to have a meeting outside of UN headquarters. Since Africa was so important in those days, we met in Addis Ababa of all places. After the Addis session he got permission to go on a tour of certain African countries. I went with him. One of them was Kinshasa, the former Belgian Congo renamed Zaire. When my tour was up, George Bush tried to help me get an onward assignment. As a result I wound up being deputy chief of mission in Kinshasa.

Q: Ok we will pick this up in '72 when you are off to Kinshasa as DCM.

Today is 17 November 2006. Mike you were saying you had some recollections, so go ahead with recollecting.

...

Q: OK well you are off to Kinshasa. You were there from when to when?

NEWLIN: I am off to Kinshasa. I was there from '72 to '75.

Q: That is a good long time.

NEWLIN: Three years. I figured it was time for me to have a hardship post since I have had most of my other tours either in Washington, New York or in Europe. It taught me a lesson that is useful and that is that one should not personalize, if you can avoid it, negatively personalize this officials that you may have to work with later. Because when I was in the United Nations affairs in the Department and I was in charge of dependent area affairs, people in African countries and others becoming independent, we had a great deal of difficulty at that time with Rwanda and Burundi with the Tutsi and Hutu and the Belgians were dying just to cut and run and get out. We wanted to make sure there wouldn't be an outbreak of sectarian violence. Sheldon Vance at that time was the head of the Central African area of the African bureau. We had a great deal of difficulty, I had a

great deal of difficulty with Sheldon Vance. Clearing telegrams with him was difficult. Sheldon Vance happened to be the ambassador that I was later going to be working for. It turned out while he was there Tasca was the assistant secretary. Tasca fired Vance because Vance adopted what I thought was a very reasonable position on an issue for once, and Tasca fired him. So I filed that away, Vance can't be all that bad if Tasca fired him. So it turned out that we had a very wonderful working relationship. He told me when I first got to Kinshasa, "Mike the way I believe this should work is you should know everything that I know. When I am gone, you will be in charge, and when I come back I am not going to try to second guess any decisions that you made." He lived up to that. At that time I mentioned before how pervasive, and this is something that you would really have to live through, the cold war was. Mobutu was basically put into power by the CIA at the time that the Belgians panicked and pulled out in '61. There were only two Congolese then that had any significant training under the Belgians. One was Mobutu who was a sergeant in charge of Congolese troops and the other was Lumumba who was in the mail department.

Q: A postal worker or something like that.

NEWLIN: In the competition for who was going to take over as president of this new country, it turned out that the CIA and the United States decided to support Mobutu, who was a charismatic personality with political ability. But the regime was pretty corrupt. We had diamonds there in addition to the copper and other resources. The diamonds would be flown in and they would then just be flown off to Belgium for Mobutu's account. His relatives, all of the food, most of it for us had to come in from outside, and a relative of his was in charge of food imports. You can imagine the possibility for kickbacks and stuff like that. And his relatives were salted as well as close cronies. Sheldon gave Mobutu credit, more credit than I thought he deserved, for being a sort of honorable steward of the country. On the other hand, during the time that we were there, the country did stay together, this vast country with all of its ethnic diversity and huge natural resources. You could travel freely. I traveled all around the entire country and no problems whatsoever. When it came to our attention that some of his relatives were involved in some egregious activity, Sheldon in one of his one-on-one meetings with Mobutu would say, "Mr. President. Can I speak to you as a friend?" Mobutu would always say, "Mais oui, mais oui." Sheldon would say, "We have indications that this is going on." Mobutu would say, "Oh well I will have to look into that."

But Sheldon and I and his wife, Jean, and my wife, we were very close and we had a very good working relationship. That lasted about two years.

Then we had Deane Hinton, he had been working I guess, on economic things here in Washington. Deane was a different kettle of fish. Before he came everybody said how brilliant he was. I guess economically he was certainly brilliant. He also must have learned from his experience in Zaire politically because he went on to be ambassador in Nicaragua and I think, Panama as well. Deane was not suited to be an ambassador in Africa. I will have to say. He told me once, he said, "Mike, I don't know how you tell them apart. They all look the same to me."

Q: He was a Latin American hand mainly.

NEWLIN: He was a Latin American hand. He had been in Chile, that's right.

Q: In Central America.

NEWLIN: Yes, that was his beat. So he managed to get on the wrong side of Mobutu in the final year that I was there. He didn't ask me, but he called for his Lincoln Continental official car, and drove off to the center of Kinshasa where the Congolese population was, called Lecité, to call on the Cardinal, Cardinal Molongo at that time, who was not a friend of Mobutu. Mobutu took this very badly. So it wasn't too long after that that an article appeared in a Belgian paper called Jeune Afrique (Young Africa). The headline read, "Deane Hinton, our man in Kinshasa," Picking up on the Graham Greene book "Our Man in Havana." It was in a staff meeting when the public affairs officer came in and said, "Have you seen the latest edition of Jeune Afrique?" So Deane looked at the article and said, "Oh that is nothing. We don't have to report this." I said, "Oh yes we do have to report it." So my tour came to an end and I went off. I was back on home leave between assignments, and my sister came in with the morning newspaper, and she said, "Mike, I see here that Deane Hinton had been declared *persona non grata*." So I thought thank heaven I was spared, got out of there two weeks before this happened. Of course Sheldon Vance came back temporarily to smooth things over.

Q: Well while you were there, in the first place, did any of the Shaba things down there...

NEWLIN: No it did not. The Shaba province is rich in copper ore; Lubumbashi is the capital. The Belgians had built this fantastic copper mining and smelting operation there. It looked like a diminutive grand canyon with these enormous trucks going down to bring out the ore. The copper ingots were shipped out through Angola at that time. That was the shortest distance down to the Atlantic port. Lubumbashi had been the scene of fighting between rival factions at the time of independence after the Belgians left. It was there that Lumumba was murdered and Frank Carlucci, the consul, was stabbed (fortunately, not fatally). By 1972 the Belgian holding company, Société Generale, had returned and Belgian experts ran the copper operation. The local population seemed content.

Q: How did you find working with, Zaire was known as an enclave of the CIA. How did you find dealing with that.

NEWLIN: Well by that time the thing had become more or less regularized. The famous CIA officer, Larry Devlin, who had helped Mobutu at the time of independence had retired from the agency but kept in touch with Mobutu. When I got there, the CIA station chief was very much integrated with the embassy. He would go and see Mobutu, and he would brief the ambassador on what was going on. He didn't go off on any tangents in doing things that we didn't know about or approve. There was a scary moment towards the end of my stay, Sheldon Vance was still there. Mobutu decided that he had to have a presidential airplane. So he wanted a DC-10. McDonnell Douglas were just thrilled. They came to Kinshasa and negotiated what the plane should look like. The actual signing was to be done in Washington. Mobutu sent his minister of commerce, a man named Eketebbe, to Washington to sign the final contract. Sheldon then sent a classified telegram to the Department informing Washington what was happening. He said, "I think you ought to insist on a cost-benefit analysis about what it is going to cost to run this plane." When Eketebbe got to Washington, somebody in either the State Department or Commerce or someplace tipped off

McDonnell Douglas. So McDonnell Douglas went to the Zairian and said, “The ambassador in Kinshasa thinks we ought to have a cost-benefit analysis first.” Mobutu was furious. He summoned the CIA station chief and said, “I am not going to declare Vance *persona non grata*, but tell him that I have lost confidence in him.” Well, Sheldon was devastated by this. When Mobutu made one of his trips to his villa in Brussels, Sheldon wanted to go up there and talk to him and explain this was sort of standard operating procedure. I persuaded him not to go. “You were entirely right to ask for the analysis. This is an over reaction. I don’t think you ought to go hat in hand to Mobutu.” So he didn’t. Eventually things calmed down, the plane was bought and Sheldon was awarded the Order of the Leopard prior to his departure.

Devlin came back to Kinshasa as a business representative, he was somehow associated with Morris Tempelman, the diamond merchant. We were wondering if we were going to have any problems. As far as I know he stuck to his diamond thing.

The biggest thing that happened on my watch there was the contract for building of the world’s longest electric transmission line between a dam on the Congo River to Lubumbashi, several hundred miles south to carry the electricity down there for an expansion of the smelting operation. Ex-Im Bank was in charge of the overall project which was to cost about \$700,000,000. It was the largest thing at that time that Ex-Im Bank had agreed to oversee. I was chargé. All of a sudden the thing threatened to come apart at the very last moment over some of the other people that were to participate in this consortium for the Inga-Shaba line. So I stepped in and managed to get the parties together. It was a shortfall of \$270,000,000 which we were able to put back together. That then enabled the thing to go forward. The legal documents were voluminous and provided for benchmarks before funds would be released.

Q: How did you deal with the corruption situation. I have varying accounts. One that Mobutu was just robbing the country blind, but other accounts that actually all of the so-called robbed money was playing the typical tribal chieftain and taking and spreading it around.

NEWLIN: I would say both of these. There was no question that the country was being robbed blind. But I happened to be in the office of the foreign minister Nguza who came from Shaba. Mobutu called him up. I could tell whom he was talking “Oui Monsieur Le President.” I said, “Do you want me to leave?” Nguza said, “No, you stay.” It was Mobutu telling Nguza what presents he wanted sent to his governor in Kisangani up the river. I could tell from the things he was writing down that it was household things, bolts of cloth, this, that, and the other thing. He did spread favors around, that is true. That was an effective way of maintaining their loyalty. I don’t have any impression that there were any great human rights abuses or anything like that. Mobutu was such a charismatic person. He embodied the “Revolution.” One thing again that Deane Hinton did. This was before he made the visit to call on the cardinal. Through I guess intercepts, he found out that the central bank was about to ship the silver deposit, the entire silver deposit in the national bank to a storefront in Jersey City. Deane got permission, with a lot of back and forth, to tell this to Mobutu. So he called up Mobutu and said this is what is going on. Mobutu said, “Je suis shockée.” “I will immediately put a stop to this. The president of the central bank, (who was a Zairian) will explain it all to you.” Of course we never got any explanation of what was going on. This was one of Mobutu’s things. It was one of the things that was a black mark against Deane and helped lead to his being PNG’d.

Q: Well one of the things I have heard about Mobutu was that rather than some of the other dictators in Africa, he tended rather than sticking his opposition in jail to give them jobs and move them around and bring them back. I mean you were in power; you were out of power but you didn't necessarily end up in jail. You just lost your job, and maybe after a couple of years you were back in with another job.

NEWLIN: I think that is how Mobutu operated. An American businessman was out in the interior and he called on the local governor. When he went into the outer office, there was a radio on, and it was tuned to Kinshasa. It was playing loud enough so it could also be heard in the governor's office. The governor mentioned this. He said, "You probably wonder why I have that radio going all the time. The reason is that when Kinshasa says that I am being transferred, I want to know it at the same time those bastards outside my office know it." People in important offices could profit from bribes and kickbacks. An embassy family lived next to Minister Eketebbe who did the DC10 deal. For some reason Mobutu sent the police to arrest him. The diplomats heard a great commotion next door and boxes of cash were thrown over the garden wall. The Americans threw them back..

Q: What were you getting from the Belgian business community?

NEWLIN: Oh they were very important. There were a lot of Belgians that did the technical work in things like the bank. The operation I must tell you down in Lubumbashi was just mind boggling when you saw that. Not only was it this vast reserve of copper ore, not far from it was one that was just as big that even had more copper content. Tempelman and Devlin were interested in developing a second mine near Lubumbashi but it did not come to fruition.

Q: Well how about the Congo which has been replete with missionaries. How did you find the missionary population. American missionaries and the foreign service are not exactly cuddly close. I mean they have different agendas.

NEWLIN: That is well said. Depending on the country it can be quite a problem. During the time that I was in Kinshasa, we for some reason, I don't know why. We did not have a great many missionaries. They were mainly in the interior far from Kinshasa. I don't know whether it was because of the French language or what. Mobutu, even though he and the cardinal had their differences, Catholic churches operated freely throughout the country.

Q: Did you find that American missionaries who would just by nature be protestant, did they have any problems there?

NEWLIN: Not that I know of.

Q: You didn't have any great evacuations which we had during some of its earlier days.

NEWLIN: At the time of independence things were very dicey. A group of American journalists was arrested by newly formed Zairian troops and were about to be shot as communists when the consul, Alison Palmer, arrived, called Mobutu and got them released.

Q: What about along the Burundi Rwanda border. Did you find that the rift of the central government ran very much. The Congo was such a huge place; were there sort of local warlords?

NEWLIN: No. We went up to visit what used to be the Albert National Park, Burundi. It was at that time one of the great nature reserves in the world. We had a consulate in Bukavu. The consul had a wonderful Belgian villa, and the peace corps was there. You can't imagine the difference in that and what happened later.

MARSHALL P. ADAIR
Economic/Commercial Officer
Lubumbashi (1974-1976)

Mr. Adair, son of a United States Foreign Service Officer, was born in Maryland and raised at Foreign Service posts in the United States and abroad. He was educated at Middlebury College and joined the Foreign Service in 1972. During his career Mr. Adair held a number of senior positions at the State Department in Washington, DC, dealing with a variety of areas, including relations with the US military Commands, Economic and political issues in Europe and Department personnel matters. A Chinese language specialist, his foreign posts include Paris, Lubumbashi, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Beijing, Rangoon, Chengdu (China), and Tuzla (Bosnia). Mr. Adair was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2011.

Q: Then where?

ADAIR: I went to Lubumbashi, Zaire.

Q: Was this a request or did you want to go to Africa?

ADAIR: It was not a request, but I did want to go to Africa. Halfway through my tour in Paris I had actually been given the opportunity to break my assignment and go to Benin. The man who had been the Department spokesperson had just been made ambassador to Benin and he was looking for an economic officer. I loved Paris, but at the time I was feeling pretty down about working at the embassy, so I seriously considered the request. I was at the embassy late one evening and I finally decided, "I'm going to do it." I picked up the phone, put the call through and the line was busy. As I hung up the phone, all of a sudden I had this horrible feeling. What was the matter? I swiveled around in my chair, and looked out the window. I had an office that was in the front of the building right above the ambassador's office. I looked out through the trees, and the lights had just gone on, lighting up the Place de la Concorde. It was gorgeous, and I asked, "I'm going to give all this up to go to Benin?" I realized I didn't want to do that. So I put the call through again. This time it went right through and I said no thanks.

About a year later, maybe two months before I was supposed to leave Paris, I got a letter from personnel.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: Not a telegram, a letter, saying, “Dear Marshall, I have recommended you for the post of economic commercial officer in Lubumbashi, Zaire. I hope that the board will look favorably on this because I think it would be good for your career. Sincerely, Ed Stumpf, Career Counselor. I had never heard from this person before, and never heard from him again. Letters took about two weeks to reach Paris from the Department then, so by then the board had probably already acted. I looked at the letter and thought I had never heard of Lubumbashi, Zaire. I thought it was probably in Africa so immediately went downstairs to the library. We had this great library at the embassy in Paris under high ceilings and huge table. I took out an atlas, put it in the middle of the table and opened it to Africa. There was Lubumbashi, not just in Africa but right in the middle of the continent, absolutely smack in the middle of it. It was the old Elizabethville of the Belgian Congo. Now, I knew what that was. I told myself this was just too good to pass up.

Q: Okay. So you're off to Lubumbashi; 1974?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: You were there how long?

ADAIR: Two years.

Q: What were your friends telling you? Good idea, bad idea? What was sort of the core of your reputation?

ADAIR: Well my friends from Paris, the people I worked for in embassy's economic section, called me up from Washington and said, “We just heard about your assignment and we think we can help you out because we've got a job for you back here.” They were in Economic Bureau's premier office, the “Office of Fuels and Energy”. The energy crisis was still front and center. My friends said they believed they could have my assignment to Lubumbashi broken and redirected to Fuels and Energy. I replied that I actually wanted to go to Lubumbashi. They thought I was crazy, but if that was what I wanted..... so I went. I had a month's home leave in the U.S., and then about six weeks with various kinds of training. It was primarily commercially related, and didn't teach me anything about Africa. I didn't receive any area studies for Africa or Zaire. I had to do that on my own.

Q: Well what were you hearing about Zaire at that time? What was going on?

ADAIR: I read about Mobutu, I read about the economy, and the copper. I was going to the place that produced all the copper that produced almost all of the revenue for the government. I heard about some of the problems they were experiencing but I really didn't know much. I tried to read some of the history but it was more difficult then to research that kind of stuff than it is now. It was more difficult to find stuff written about Zaire than it is now; and there was no Wikipedia.

Q: Had the book “The Congo Telegrams” come out?

ADAIK: I don't recall that.

Q: This is about our involvement during the Kennedy period there and-

ADAIK: You mean Lumumba and Tshombe?

Q: Yes.

Who was the ambassador when you were there?

ADAIK: When I arrived the ambassador was Deane Hinton, who was a really, really good Foreign Service officer. He had a reputation for being really tough. He was gruff but he certainly wasn't mean.

Q: Did the Simba rebellion take place at that time – in Elizabethville or Stanleyville – when Michael Hoyt was taken hostage?

ADAIK: No, the Simba rebellion took place ten years earlier, in Eastern Zaire and Stanleyville. Michael Hoyt was Consul in Stanleyville and he and his staff were taken hostage and held for almost four months, I think. They were eventually freed by U.S. supported Belgian paratroopers.

When I was in Zaire we didn't have anything like that kind of danger or violence. That was behind us and the invasions from Angola had not yet taken place. There wasn't any really serious violence other than the "rumble in the jungle", which was the Cassius Clay/George Foreman fight. There was a lot of crime in Kinshasa and there was always a feeling of precariousness, because the economy was deteriorating steadily. The military weren't getting paid regularly, and they would often set up roadblocks and pressure people for donations. They were often drunk or stoned so you never really knew what was going to happen. I think Kinshasa was more uncomfortable than Lubumbashi, and it became more so after Ambassador Hinton was declared "persona non grata" and expelled. He had been the first American ambassador to speak frankly and critically to Mobutu. I think that Hinton concluded fairly early on that Mobutu was a big part of the problem, and consequently Mobutu did not trust him, and wanted him gone.

Q: Was there talk there about the role of the CIA? It was considered that Mobutu was in the CIA's pocket or something like that.

ADAIK: Well he did have a close connection.

Q: Larry Devlin or something.

ADAIK: Yes, he was sort of "discovered" by Larry Devlin who had been the senior CIA official in Kinshasa in the 1960's. At least, Larry Devlin told us that he had discovered him. Larry was no longer working at the embassy, but he was in Kinshasa as a private citizen. He was a very interesting guy, really smart and he had clearly been through some exciting and difficult times.

Q: What the copper side? You were going to be the economic officer, right?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: So did you get a chance to go through Belgium and talk with people there?

ADAIR: Yes, I asked to go through Belgium. Before I did that though I had a course at the Department of Commerce on export promotion and they sent me out west to visit copper mines, copper companies. I went out to Utah and visited the Kennecott operation out there, a big, open pit mine. Then I went down to Tucson and visited an underground mine. That was a particularly interesting experience – because it was a Stone Age operation compared to what I later saw in Shaba Province.

Q: What was the situation copper-wise in the world at that point?

ADAIR: I think the copper prices were going down. In fact there was a serious drop while I was there.

Q: Well what did you find when you got there? Were the mining operations really better equipped?

ADAIR: The mines in Lubumbashi, Likasi and Kolwezi were much more advanced than anything I saw in the U.S. They had an underground mine in Kolwezi that looked like something out of a James Bond movie. The underground mine that I visited in Arizona was one where you got into a little cart on rails, and meandered slowly down through narrow low-ceilinged tunnels lit only occasionally by small wattage lamps. We drove into the Kolwezi mine in a bus! The tunnel had huge, 30 foot high ceilings and it spiraled down as far as you could see. At each level other large tunnels would branch off sort of like a gargantuan underground parking lot. They weren't using little trains and cars, but enormous trucks with wheels as big as this room. They would just drive straight in and get the stuff and drive out. It was a whole different ballgame.

Q: What was Lubumbashi like when you got there?

ADAIR: Well it was a very cute little city. It was beautifully laid out with tree lined streets. The trees were jacarandas, which had beautiful purple flowers in the spring. The houses were attractive and the climate was pleasant. The foreign population was a mixture of Belgians, French, British, Greeks, Americans and some Japanese. The Zairians were both local and from other areas of Zaire. The Europeans worked in all different sectors. The biggest, of course, was the mining company, which was called GECAMINES. Elizabethville and most of Katanga Province had originally been sort of a “company town” or province if you will. The Gécamines residential area was a little like an American military base – very neat and orderly. Europeans were in most aspects of the economy. By the time I arrived the Zairians had been given senior posts in all of the government industries, the railroads and post office and stuff like that; and the government had just required all European business owners to have a Zairian partner.

It was clear that the city had once been a beautiful place, but it was deteriorating - you could actually see it deteriorating. The roads were getting potholes in them; the trees that lined the streets

were being cut down for firewood; the roofs weren't being fixed; the buildings were becoming shabby and there was often nothing on the shelves in the stores. Before I arrived Lubumbashi had been surrounded by farms. The farms were mostly European-owned, and produced most of the food for the city. What they did not produce was produced farther out in the African villages and was brought into the city on buses and trucks. By the time I got there most of those farms had shut down, and their owners had left. The farms weren't producing anything; and the people further out were no longer producing for the cities either, because the roads weren't being kept up and the villages were less accessible. Everything was going downhill, if not collapsing.

The day I first arrived at the airport in Lubumbashi there were only two planes at the airport: the Air Zaire plane that I flew in on and a huge DC-10 that was painted black - no markings, no anything. I asked the consul, Ed Marks, what it was. He smiled and he said that was the weekly food plane from Rhodesia. I had recently spent a year at the UN. I knew about UDI (Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence), and the resulting international embargo on trade with Rhodesia that was taken quite seriously in the U.S. and Europe. Here I was in Africa, in a country that was a vocal opponent of colonialism and apartheid – and its economic heartland was getting virtually all of its food from Rhodesia - including flour which Katanga used to export.

Q: The consul was Ed Marks?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: What were the major concerns of the consulate there?

ADAIR: The primary interest was the engine of the Zairian economy. The copper mines in Shaba province produced the wealth that allowed Zaire to function as a nation. We needed to watch that, keep track of how healthy it was, evaluate its prospects and their implications for the country as a whole. We also were charged with looking for opportunities for American business - to sell equipment, buy copper and so on.

There was also interest in the state of Angola next door. There was a civil war going on there, and Cuba had sent doctors and some troops. The United States was very concerned about the danger of Angola becoming a client state of the Soviet Union.

Q: Well how was the copper market and Zaire's response to it? They were, what, transporting it out by truck or train?

ADAIR: When I arrived in Zaire, getting Zaire's copper to market was becoming increasingly difficult. The roads were essentially impassable. The copper had always gone by train. There were basically two routes that were being used at the time: one was out through Zaire to Kinshasa and the port of Matadi. That route was partially by railroad and partially by barge along the Zaire (Congo) river. The other one was through Mozambique. There was a route through South Africa that was functioning, but it was very, very long. The original route had been the Benguela Railroad that went through Angola. It was the shortest and most direct. However, it had been cut by the civil war so it wasn't functioning. Eventually the one to Mozambique stopped functioning because of

instability and war there, so all they had was the long one through South Africa and the one out to Matadi.

Q: I speak with ignorance; how do you extract the copper?

ADAIR: The ore was mined, and concentrate was produced at the mines. The concentrate was then moved to smelters at Likasi and Lubumbashi. I can't remember if they actually had one in Kolwezi. The smelters would produce copper ingots, which were then exported.

Q: So this would be done before it left the African continent?

ADAIR: Yes. There was also a relatively new Japanese operation that was a little bit further away from us but still in Shaba Province. They shipped their concentrate directly to Japan. They had all kinds of problems and I think they eventually shut down some time after I left.

Q: Yes, I was wondering, how was corruption?

ADAIR: Everything was corrupt. Corruption was a plague, but the process of bribery and everything that went with it also seemed to be the only thing that made the country functional. Everybody had to do it. We – at the Consulate and the Embassy - did it less than anybody else. It was our policy not to; and we had a certain amount of status as Americans that allowed us to keep our distance from it. We would explain to those who demanded it that we simply were not allowed to do it; and many would sort of shrug their shoulders and accept it. But it also meant that we didn't get certain things that you could only get by paying people off. If you wanted to make a telephone call it was impossible. The phone system was effectively dysfunctional without bribery. Those who knew the right people and were willing to pay a price could pick up the phone and call Brussels or Washington just like that. They would call a contact in the company, make the call, and then their contact would come by a few days later to the house or the office and call on them. The same thing went for plane tickets. You could buy your plane ticket; and you could make your reservation but you never knew if you were actually going to get on the plane. When you arrived at the airport any number of things could happen: the plane wasn't coming after all, or they didn't have seats, or they would just stall, waiting for the bribe. We would sometimes wait until that last minute and then they would finally let us on.

Q: Well how did you find the local officials?

ADAIR: Not very impressive, certainly not very interesting to talk to. I didn't have that much dealing with the actual government officials, the political officials. The head of the copper company, Gécamines, was a Zairian. He was very impressive. He was smart, and had studied at the Colorado School of Mines. He was also very pleasant and courteous. He would see the Consul, he would even see me, and we could have reasonable conversations with him. However, he was also very, very careful. He had to be, given the political climate at the time. He could not be friendly, but he knew what he was talking about and he could make sense. He also knew more than what he would or could say and you could tell that.

The man who was head of the national railroad out there was also very competent. I got to know him because I did a study of the different rail transportation routes. I used to go and talk with him fairly often. He really knew his stuff, and he was very pragmatic.

But it was difficult to get to know them beyond their professional responsibilities. They had to be very careful because at that time the relations between Zaire and U.S. were going downhill - particularly after Ambassador Hinton got PNG'd. Zairians could get in trouble if they saw too much of us. Many of them also had very limited education. Most of them hadn't been to college; if they had it was only for a few years. Some of them hadn't had even a high school education. They were not very aware of what the rest of the world was like. They were desperately concerned with building their own career, their own security, and providing for their families. Our presence there did not have much positive to offer many of them. So, for a variety of reasons, it was not the most interesting group of people in the world to interact with.

Q: How'd you find the embassy? Did the hand of the embassy rest heavily on your shoulders?

ADAIR: No, not at all. We were very far away. It was difficult to get to Lubumbashi by plane, and that was really the only way to get there. We didn't have cable (telegrams) communication. We had a telex that sometimes worked and sometimes didn't. The only thing that we could really count on was a two-way radio, and sometimes even that didn't work. So sometimes we had no communication at all. The embassy knew that so they pretty much left us to our own devices - and that was great.

Q: Did you find the missionaries a good source of information?

ADAIR: I did not. One person in the consulate had contacts with the missionaries. He talked with them, got some stories and information; but I never found it very useful. Part of the reason was that my primary responsibility was learning about the economy. The missionaries that I met were not focused on that and seemed to have little interest or understanding of it.

The rest of the ex-patriot community was another story. They were often better informed than we were. They were much better plugged in, with friends or professional colleagues working in the government and other places of influence. One of the reasons was that many of them spoke the local language, or languages, fluently.

One of our weaknesses was that we didn't have the local language. We could all speak French, that wasn't a problem, but a lot of the Zairians didn't speak French at all. The officials all spoke some but even my French was better than many of theirs. Most of them spoke local languages like Kiswahili or Lingala. We had no training in those languages and that made a big difference.

We were in Lubumbashi because it was the economic center and engine of Zaire, and we were to report on it. But we were also there to report on the general conditions, the politics and the region's overall impact on the way Zaire was going. Most of the ordinary African people in Shaba province didn't speak either English or French, or only in the most limited way. Nobody at the consulate, at least none of the Americans at the consulate, had any understanding of Kiswahili at all. There was no Kiswahili language training provided by the Foreign Service Institute for people going to

Lubumbashi. I believe it was provided for some people going to places like Tanzania and Kenya. This was one of the places where I served during my career where the absence of that training was obvious, and I think it inhibited our ability to get very deep into what was going on.

Q: Kiswahili was not really a local language. It was sort of the travelers' language, wasn't it?

ADAIR: Perhaps originally it was limited to travelers – a long, long time ago. I think it is more than that now.

Q: How about this large war that was going on in Angola; how did that affect where you were?

ADAIR: It had cut off the Benguela railroad which had been the main source of exports and imports so that complicated life in our area. However, most of the actual observation and analysis of what was happening in Angola took place from the embassy in Kinshasa rather than the consulate in Lubumbashi. It was being watched because there were these two opposing factions, one was the socialist government that was supported by the Cubans and the Russians and one was Jonas Savimbi, who was supported by the West. Savimbi was considered to be this quite pragmatic person who understood how free societies and free markets worked. At that time everybody seemed to think that Savimbi was a great guy. Afterwards I think that changed. But we didn't get many people coming in from that area.

We did have some contact with Zambia, because we could drive down to the border, drive across and go down to Lusaka and places like that. It was a whole different world because Zambia had not yet begun to really go downhill. We would drive through the jungle on a track that had two concrete strips, one for each set of tires, with huge holes. Sometimes we weren't sure we could get through at all. On the Zairian side of the border there were a few little huts and rarely anybody around. The road ended completely and it was necessary to drive down into this big ditch and up the other side to get to the actual border. There was a bar across the road and it was locked, so it was necessary to get out of the car and go banging on doors to find somebody to open the gate. Once found, we would have to negotiate with them until they understood they weren't going to get a bribe. Finally they'd open it, and we would drive across, up onto pavement with perfect manicured sides and even lines down the middle of the road. At the Zambian customs office they were all dressed in uniforms, very polite and efficient. It was a totally different world. So we would go down, stay in nice little hotels and stock up on supplies. The expatriates in Lubumbashi kept saying, "Just wait. The same thing is going to happen in Zambia that's happening here, and it's going to be worse." Eventually it did get worse, but never worse than in Zaire.

Q: What was the process; what was happening?

ADAIR: Things were just falling apart. Everything was falling apart. The physical stuff was falling apart. The roads were deteriorating because they weren't being maintained; and they weren't being maintained because they didn't have the organization or the resources. Well, they did have resources; but they didn't allocate them to infrastructure. The commercial and business environment was deteriorating because there was nothing to depend on. People didn't know when things were going to change. A decree would come from Kinshasa that they had to do this or change that. It was just a constant process that interfered with the ability to do business and to lead

life in any kind of an orderly fashion. The businesses went to extraordinary lengths to get the money they had earned out of Zaire. The foreign exchange controls were severe, and the Zairian currency was vastly inflated in value - worth very little outside the country. They had some very imaginative techniques to get their money out. Since investing in Zaire was becoming more and more risky both expatriates and Zairians were trying to establish their security outside the country.

Q: After this exposure did you feel that you wanted to be an African hand or not?

ADAIR: No. It was a wonderful adventure. I loved going out into the country. I met people who had grown up there and knew the bush. We'd go out and go camping in all kinds of interesting places. That was very exciting. It could be a pretty good life if you got yourself oriented properly to it, and that was a fascinating intellectual challenge. However, I didn't think that Africa had what I was looking for. I wasn't really sure what that was, but I thought I was looking for some kind of wisdom about life and human organization. What I was seeing in Africa was the antithesis of that.

JOHN O. GRIMES
Counselor for Labor Affairs
Kinshasa (1974-1976)

Mr. Grimes was born and raised in Alabama and educated at Notre Dame University. After service in the United States Marine Corp he joined the State Department and served as Diplomatic Courier until being commissioned as a Foreign Service Officer in 1962. A specialist in Labor Affairs, Mr. Grimes served in Glasgow, Valetta, Port of Spain, Kinshasa, Brussels, Tunis and Paris (twice). He had several tours of duty in Washington, DC and a year of Labor Studies at Harvard University Mr. Grimes was interviewed by James F. Shea and Don Kienzle in 1996.

Kienzle: Anyhow, after your job in the International Organizations Bureau, you went to Kinshasa in 1974. Could you describe your assignment there?

GRIMES: That assignment really wasn't a labor assignment, although it was sold to me as a labor assignment. Maybe it had been at one time, but when I was down there, the labor movement was dormant. The government just smothered it. There was an AALC guy down there named Peter Robar, of German extraction.

Shea: A great tennis player; did you play him?

GRIMES: I couldn't play him. My son could. I played him, but I couldn't beat him. Peter stayed in touch with the unions but it was a *pro forma* kind of thing. He didn't spend much time with them. He spent most of his time on the tennis court.

Shea: It must have been a time of great turmoil there.

GRIMES: Well, the interesting thing that was happening while I was there was what was happening next door, over in Mozambique. That is the old Portuguese colony on the west coast.

Shea: Mozambique was on the Indian Ocean side, and Angola was on the other side.

GRIMES: I'm sorry, Angola was the country. The Portuguese had just let the thing go, and a civil war had developed between the Savimbi and the communist forces. The Agency had a big operation in Zaire supporting Savimbi. As far as labor there was nothing. I listed a couple of trade unions, but they were asleep. They had to be. The government was on top of them, and they had no way to do anything. The only possibility of organizing would have been down in Katanga where there was mining and the diamonds and that kind of stuff. They were not active down there, either. I was down there.

Kienzle: You were the number two person in a three-person political section. How was that structured?

GRIMES: Yeah, that is what I would have been. There was a counselor and three of us; I wasn't very junior, but I was the second guy there.

Shea: Who was the ambassador there?

GRIMES: Dean Hinton. Before him was Sheldon Vance. After him was Walter Cutler.

Shea: Was that a complete dictatorship by that time?

GRIMES: Oh yeah. The United States continued to prop up, and continues to prop up Mobutu. He's not a very palatable, but is an alternative, to chaos. That is what it would have been if he were out of there. You know the Belgians. When they left that country, it was a fairly rich country. It was an agricultural country, and they had big herds of cattle. They were pretty well off.

Kienzle: They had mining too.

GRIMES: Yeah, the mining produced all of the revenue, but the agriculture part of the country was in pretty good shape. When I was down there, I used to fly around the country with these missionary pilots in these tiny planes. They would describe to me – “You see that grazing ground there, that used to be covered with beef. But they ate it all up. The trees are all chopped down. They just used up the country.”

Shea: It is a huge country.

GRIMES: It is a mammoth country.

Shea: Did you get out a lot?

GRIMES: Quite a lot but by plane. Because, you know, I took a couple of trips by car, but it is kind of hard to get around by car. Flying in, the only way to do it was with the missionaries. I used to try

to find out from them what the attitude was toward the government. Everybody wished they were gone, they said, but nobody knew what the alternative would be.

Kienzle: You mean Mobutu?

GRIMES: Yeah. I guess he had begun as pretty good, well he had begun as a peacemaker. He brought peace out of chaos at the time of the revolt down there, but then he became so damn authoritarian that it made life miserable for the people.

Kienzle: How about corruption? Was that a problem?

GRIMES: Oh, terribly corrupt; a lot of crime.

Kienzle: Were the labor leaders on the take at all, or were they not powerful enough?

GRIMES: I don't think they mattered. They just really weren't in the picture. It was business people who were corrupt, and they did a lot of smuggling and that kind of thing.

Kienzle: How about personal security in Kinshasa, was that a problem at all?

GRIMES: It was getting to be as we left there because people who were really hungry. I remember walking with my wife, one time. We were just walking from where we lived up to an apartment building where other embassy people lived. A car came up and this guy slipped out of the car, and grabbed my wife's purse. Before I could do anything about it, he was back into the car, and gone! Once, right in front of the Embassy, somebody tried to get into her car while she was waiting to pick me up. So, yeah, personal safety was a problem.

Shea: Was Allison Palmer there at that time?

GRIMES: I know who she is; no, she wasn't there.

Shea: She was there before I guess.

Kienzle: Any other observations you would like to make about your tour in Kinshasa?

GRIMES: No, it was just a, I mean I was glad to see something of the west coast of Africa. As a courier, that is the one area of the world I hadn't, well that and China, I hadn't gotten to see. So I was glad.

Shea: You saw all of the rest.

GRIMES: Yeah, I got to see it in my courier trips.

EDWARD MARKS

**Principal Officer
Lubumbashi (1974-1976)**

Ambassador Edward Marks was born in Chicago in 1934, and received his BA from the University of Michigan. He served in the US Army from 1956 to 1958. Entering the Foreign Service in 1959, his postings included Nairobi, Nuevo Laredo, Luanda, Lusaka, Brussels, Lubumbashi and Colombo, with ambassadorships to Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 12, 1996.

Q: Okay, how did the Lubumbashi assignment come about?

MARKS: I received a telephone call from Hank Cohen, who at then Director of Central African Affairs, who asked if I wanted to go to Lubumbashi as Principal Officer.

Q: Which was formerly Elisabethville.

MARKS: Yes. Elisabethville was the capital of the old Katanga province and both were renamed: Lubumbashi for the city and Shaba for the province. It is the southeastern part of Zaire, the farthest part of the country from the capital, lying on the great central African copper belt and bordering Zambia on the south and Angola on the west. Stretched along the Zairian/Zambian border were three or four Zairian copper towns paralleling the Zambian copper towns. I was, therefore, returning to the other side of the mirror which I had known when I was in Lusaka.

Q: You were in Lubumbashi from when to when?

MARKS: From 1974 to early 1976, about 18 months.

Q: What was your job?

MARKS: I was principal officer, the American Consul. We had a lovely little American consulate, with three FSOs, including myself, one USIS officer, one State Department secretary, and local employees. These were mostly Africans but included a couple of ethnic Greek residents. The Consulate had been established in the 1930s, largely I suppose because of the copper mines but also because Elizabethville was the economic center of a large swath of Central Africa. The Consulate building was an old one-story colonial villa, located not far from the Gecamines headquarters.

Lubumbashi was a classic European colonial town, albeit becoming a bit rundown. Although established in the last century as a regional administrative and commercial center its primary virtue was as center of the Congolese, now Zairian, copper mining industry - one of the three or four largest in the world. This was the great source of the wealth of the old Belgian Congo and of the largest company in Belgium - Union Miniere. Lubumbashi, and its consort mining towns - Kolwezi, etc - had first of all a relatively large number of people who worked for the mining company. It was also the seat of provincial government, as well as the commercial and social center for eastern Zaire. At its height in the colonial period it had a European population of

between 15,000 and 20,000. Even as late as 1974 when I showed up, 14 years after independence, there were still over 6,000 European residents, divided between those working for the mining company - now nationalized and called Gecamines - and the private sector of merchants and some professionals.

Lubumbashi was a well laid out little town with a commercial town center of restaurants and shops, European colonial residential neighborhoods, and a surrounding belt of African residential areas know as the Cite. Further out around the periphery were a series of farms which had been developed to feed the tastes of the colonial market, fresh produce, chickens, cheese, and even frog legs. The number of these farms had declined with the departure of the their European clientele, but two or three were still operating in my day. Of course, the new African elite had partially replaced the departing Europeans, but only partially in a commercial sense.

The city had been founded in the in the 1890s or so with the development of the cooper industry and the expansion of effective Belgian colonial administration to all parts of the Congo. The colonial or expatriate community had a number of basic components: Belgian officials including military and police; missionaries; copper industry executives and technicians; Belgian commercial and professional types; and two rather exotic communities of Greeks and Jews. The officials were gone of course by 1974 and the others had shrunk but were all still represented. Having come from Belgium I was amused to find that the Walloon-Flemish squabble had been carried into Africa during the colonial period, to the degree that there were Flemish and French speaking missionary establishments. However with the coming of independence this "gulf" had been bridged as the shrinking expatriate community closed ranks.

The Greek and Jewish communities were interesting relics of an earlier period. As a small country owning a very large colony the Belgians had encouraged outsiders to settle in the Congo as the commercial and professional middle class. Greeks and Sephardic Jews from Rhodes had responded and as the colonial period came to an end in the 1950s, each community numbered between 5,000 and 6,000. They each had had their own clubs and places of worship, although by the time I arrived only the Greek club was still in operation and the synagogue no longer had a full-time rabbi. While keeping aspects of their ethnic background, they also adopted Belgian citizenship and other characteristics, especially French. It was these two communities which created the commercial sector of the eastern Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi. Most commercial firms had their headquarters, plants, and warehouses in Elizabethville (now Lubumbashi) and built distribution and sales networks radiating across central Africa. These two communities fulfilled the same roles economically that the Indians did in East Africa and the Lebanese in West Africa, although they were better accepted socially.

I found the Jewish community more interesting, maybe partially because I am Jewish but more I think because it was a more sophisticated group. It was a Sephardic community, built around five families whose protegenitors had arrived in the Congo around the turn of the century. We are still friendly with many of them, and in fact attended a marriage in the community just last September in Paris. I met members of this community my first night in Lubumbashi, at a cocktail party arranged for me for my arrival. The next night I was invited to dinner by Aron Franco, an American businessman who was a longtime resident of Lubumbashi and a member of one of those five families I mentioned. Afterwards a few of us continued the evening by going to a little bar for

a nightcap. Standing at the bar I heard two of the young men speaking to each other in Spanish. Using my Mexican Spanish I said something in we started chatting away in Spanish. It soon turned out they were actually speaking Ladino or late Medieval Spanish because the Jewish community of Zaire and Central Africa was a Sephardic community from Rhodes who continued to speak Ladino at home.

This, of course, was great fun to discover. Solly Benetar lived across the street from my residence and became one of our closest friends - it was his son's wedding we attended last year. Solly is the grandson of the first Rhodesian Jews, as a young man of 18 or 19, who had come to settle in Elizabethville. He had left Rhodes in about 1890, gone down to South Africa, heard about this new town being founded up in Central Africa, and walked up through the Rhodesias, and arrived here as the Belgian provincial the governor was laying out the town. He was given a some land which is now central Lubumbashi. He later brought out his brothers, and that was the beginning of the Jewish community in Central Africa, in Elizabethville in the province of Katanga. Over the years the Benetars and the others had prospered, the Benetars owned the largest textile factory in the Congo, and the children went to school in Belgium. Now all their property and business has been expropriated or destroyed, and the family members are living in Belgium or in the south of France.

Q: What was the situation during this 1974-76 period in Lubumbashi? I am not an Africanist, but there was this Shaba I and Shaba II business.

MARKS: Okay, let me run through that. First, I want to make a point which has probably been made by many of your interviewees over the years, which is to note the sheer professional and personal pleasure of being the principal officer of an American diplomatic or consular post. It doesn't matter where or when. The personal gratification of being a principal officer, however small the post, is very real. I have never enjoyed myself so much. To be alone, representing the United States with a couple of, in this case, congenial colleagues, which I had there, was a marvelous, professionally satisfying experience and one of the dreams which impel many of us to join the Foreign Service. We were all quite young, I had just turned 40 and the others were in their late twenties. We were far away from the ambassador and the capital city, an communications in those days were primitive by today's standards: air pouches, telegrams through the local system, and radio for emergency. I was there for 18 months, and did not want to leave.

Zaire was an interesting place which has always been somewhat out of sync with the rest of Africa, although cynics might say that the Congo (Zaire) was only out in front of the rest of Africa in its troubles and deterioration.

Zaire, the old Belgian Congo and now renamed Congo again, had collapsed in the Winds of Change in 1961-62 as a new Belgian socialist government responded to the new mood by reversing government policy and offering immediate independence. The Congolese had no choice but to accept although they had been demanding (and planning on) a more deliberate policy of decolonization over a period of years. Instead the process took six months and produced complete demoralization in the colonial administration, and did not provide time for the Congolese to sort out among themselves who would be in charge of the newly independent country. The resulting complete collapse led to the myth that the Belgians were the worst European colonists, while the other Europeans had done a "better" job. The British were given credit (mostly by themselves) as

really knowing how to run a colony and how to bequeath functioning governmental systems. The French had followed a policy of cultural assimilation, at least for the educated, in an attempt to turn their subjects into Frenchmen. They claimed to have left behind an educated leadership class, and a viable cultural heritage as well as a functioning governmental system. These claims are been forgotten nowadays, because although the British and French colonies lasted a little longer, most of them disintegrated just as badly the Congo. The Belgian Congo, however, did it first and during the early heady days of independence and became the horrible example. In the terrible years of the sixties, the world read about army mutinies, the killing of Europeans, mercenaries, the Katanga Rebellion, Moise Tshombe and the murder of Lumumba, and the first United Nations peacekeeping operation. Then it culminated in the rise to power of once Corporal, then Colonel and later General Joseph-Desire Mobutu. With our support, he put down Tshombe and the Katanga secession, the Simba rebellion and the threat of Communist Chinese influence. By 1970, Mobutu was in power and had reestablished - more or less - law and order, installed a more or less a functioning government. While this achievement was often discounted by foreign observers, it was widely appreciated throughout Zairian society. The Congolese had had the unfortunate opportunity to experience Hobbesian chaos - catastrophe and anarchy - and they had hated it. Mobutu, by reinstating some sort of law and order, earned wide support among the population to the degree he had restored order. He received Western support, had of course the enormous revenues from copper in addition to foreign aid. He was launched on the process of putting the country back together again.

By 1973 he had done a fairly reasonable job. The U.S. was generally please with his performance, and supported him quite openly. He then began playing the role of an African leader by inventing his version of indigenous political culture which he called "Zairianization." With this concept he was going to transfer the economic assets of the country, still largely in the hands of foreign, mainly Belgian, colonials into the hands of the citizens of the country and thereby make the Zairians masters of their economic fate.

Despite his bid for a role as a political thinker, Mobutu never used leftist ideological rhetoric like almost all other African leaders, maybe because as an enlisted soldier in the Force Publique he had not had the opportunity to mingle with "radical" society. Also his relationship with the U.S. precluded too much leftist rhetoric. Instead he used a perverted form of capitalist rhetoric, and appropriated all the commercial and industrial firms in the country and then gave them to Zairians. The big copper company was taken over in the name of the state, but everything else he gave to individual Zairians. Guess which Zairians he gave it to? His brother, his nephew, his generals and colonels, his regional governors, and their sons and wives and nephews. Everyone who was anyone had their hand in the pot. It was the most incredible redistribution of wealth you have ever seen. By fiat he handed over every private business entity - down to butcher shops, baker shops, dry cleaner establishments, and farms. Suddenly title of businesses and property went from Mr. Colon, the expatriate who had lived in the Congo for many years if not generations, Citizen Zaire. (Mobutu also eliminated the European Mr. and Mrs. honorifics and replaced them with Citoyen and Citoyenne. He also outlawed the European suit and replaced it with a tailored version of the Nehru jacket.)

How much the individual Zairian was directly related to how important you were in the system. The Governor of Shaba Province, for instance, picked up 30 or 40 companies. He suddenly owned

two bakeries, three restaurants, four farms, one importing company, one automobile dealership, etc.

This reform was introduced in 1973, the year before I arrived in Lubumbashi. The chaos it produced was not surprising. First and foremost the new owners cleaned out the cash box. The second stage was evolving when I arrived in 1974, as people were adjusting to the situation. In many cases the establishment of partnerships between the new Zairian owner and the old foreign owner in an attempt to get the companies going again. Although some of the new Zairian owners were too greedy and stupid to do anything but loot their new property, others were smart enough to get the former expatriate owner back into the business, thereby creating a regular cash flow.

The net effect of this on the economy was obviously pretty bad. Although justified on the grounds of justice for the former exploited Africans of Zaire, in reality it was the blatant sort of corruption. The demoralizing affect on an already shaky political system was horrendous. Meanwhile the government was trying to nationalize the copper operations while the Belgian owner, Union Miniere, played a delaying game while continuing to operate it as best possible. But we could see the beginning of the decline, as the number of skilled technicians dropped, maintenance declined, and reinvestment disappeared. Like most governments running state economies, the failure comes in long term management. Today the Zairian copper industry is barely turning over, almost as bad as the Zambian industry. Two major world producers have pretty much disappeared from the world markets. In the early 1970s we were there watching the beginning of that process of running down inherited industry.

That period was about the high point of Mobutu's prestige. Nevertheless there was already dissatisfaction with him, and about his corruption and arbitrariness. At that point he introduced a number of other nationalist concepts. As I said he got rid of Mr. and Mrs. replacing it with Citoyen and Citoyenne, and replaced the European suit with an invented Zairian national dress...for women a sort of flouncy African semi-Victorian long skirted dress plus a fabric turban; for the men a long-sleeved Nehru jacket suit. He renamed himself with a long name in Lingala, meaning - according to some - "the cock who covers all the hens in the village."

Living in Zaire in one sense became very funny. For instance, unlike East Africa, everyone was wearing little Nehru or safari jackets tailored in cotton or cotton-mixture, the Zairians were having their new suits tailored out of good English woolen material in Brussels or silks in Thailand. Also they were wearing them with French sleeve shirts and gold cuff links, and lovely silk squares in the pocket. It was something to see.

And, of course, there was the phenomenon I noticed previously, what I call the history lives phenomenon. You never get away completely from your history, it is absorbed and lives on. For instance, in Belgium, the northern frontier of the Roman Empire lives on in the language "war" between the Dutch Flemish and the French Walloons.

Q: Like in Yugoslavia, the Croats and Serbs. It is the Ottoman empire.

MARKS: Yes, so in southern Shaba Province there was a clear cultural divide between the African inhabitants and a their African neighbors a hundred miles down the road in the northern Zambian

copperbelt. In Zambia the Africans spoke English, drank beer, ate terrible British food, including bangers and mash, and dressed badly. Just north of the Zambian-Zairian border a continental atmosphere prevailed with the men wearing suits tailored in Brussels, the women wore their African dress with European style, the language was French and even in the worst times one could get a decent meal with frog legs, nice wine, salmon, etc. Ethnically they were similar, but a serious cultural difference had been inherited from the colonial period, and survives.

Q: But, you are really talking about a very thin group, aren't you?

MARKS: Yes, as the case with most Third World countries and these are the people I dealt with. The new African elite or leadership class consisted of certain levels in the military and police, government officials, the people taking over the private sector, and a small class of academics, professionals and intellectuals. In addition there were some African Catholic clergy - including a Cardinal. Not really a part of the new elite but still important were the leaders of a Zairian syncretic religion called Kimbanguism, which had two or three million faithful.

One interesting, and generally forgotten, quality of the Belgian Congo was that it had the highest literacy rate in all of Africa. Belgian colonial policy had emphasized primary education and had produced the most literate population of any African colony. Many of these products of the colonial education system were wiped out in the Simba Rebellion of the sixties. The Simba Rebellion was left, populist and nativist and followed the Shakespearean injunction to kill all the lawyers. For the Simbas this meant all educated i.e. literate people and until their rebellion ran its course it wiped out a good percentage of the African literate class; those who had been clerks, small merchants, clerks in the military, etc.

Q: Would one go out in the bush and see villages where it is a completely different life or had this penetrated as far as you could see out there?

MARKS: In the bush, which began not too far outside the city, one could find fairly undisturbed traditional village life, but even in fairly isolated areas traditional life had been affected by the colonial experience. The people in the bush knew there were cities and a different way of life and were flowing into them. All African cities were, and still are, growing by leaps and bounds. Even with a declining monetary economy, Lubumbashi had reached a population of 300,000 and was still growing. When I went to Nairobi in 1960 - the biggest, most important, most sophisticated, and most prosperous city in Eastern Africa - it had about 300,000 people, while today it has something like 1.5 million. Not all of that African urban population is in the modern economy - occupying jobs in the new bureaucracy or private companies or running computers. Many if not most are living in the African "Cites" or bidonvilles. In the villages, of course, life remains hard and short, not yet touched by changes-, but most of all boring. Villagers, especially the young, are increasingly aware of an outside world and are rapidly drifting to the city. However, I was the American Consul, not a missionary, and so dealt with the new African elite.

Q: What were our interests there and how did you operate in this society?

MARKS: First and foremost was our interest in the copper industry. Zaire was a major producer of this world traded commodity, the supply of which had both security and commercial/industrial

implications. Copper was the original justification for the establishment of the post and the interest remained. Not only was there the original mines, but two new, and quite large, operations were in the process of being developed - one by Japanese interests and another by a group of European and American investors.

We had a small, and declining, American business community in Zaire and some missionary activity. (The Public Affairs Officer in Zambia when I was there had been born and brought up in the Belgian Congo, the son of missionaries.)

Copper gave the Consulate a core reporting subject. But in the 1970s we were also preoccupied with the two political subjects I mentioned earlier: anti-colonialism, and the Cold War. In Lubumbashi we were sitting in the capitol of the old Katanga Province, just across the border from Zambia and the Tanzam railway coming down from Dar Es Salaam to Central Africa.

Q: And the Chinese.

MARKS: Not specifically in Lubumbashi as the Mobutu government - with out backing - did not play footsy with the Chinese as did so many African governments. Still we were all in the same neighborhood so to speak. You may remember that there were many critics of our intimacy with, and support for, Mobutu, many of those critics were in the Congress. In preparing papers to deal with the critics, we would begin by referring to the map of Africa, pointing out that interest in Africa meant interest in Zaire. It is the largest country in Africa, located in the very center of the continent, and is the core of black Africa. In a sense it really is the heart of Africa - bordering and participating in the politics of every region.

In pursuance of that perspective we had a close and special relationship with Mobutu. His ties to us were common knowledge. For instance, it was generally assumed that he, if not still on the payroll, still had a relationship with the CIA. He was part of a handful of assets which the CIA later referred to as the family jewels. He was one of the chiefs of state with whom they had a direct relationship dating back to before they had achieved high office. The Chiefs of Station in Kinshasa had a special relationship, probably better than the Ambassadors, with Mobutu and everyone knew it.

In sum, we had the usual mixture of interests and concerns: an old-fashioned commercial interest, overlaid with the new politics of the Cold War and the independence movement in Africa. I personally was sitting out at the edge of this large country, 1200 kilometers or our embassy in Kinshasa. We had a huge embassy in Kinshasa, and three subordinate consular posts...Kisangani (Stanleyville), Bukavu, and Lubumbashi. All had had recent and dramatic history; the Katanga secession and the first UN peacekeeping mission; the death of Lumumba in Lubumbashi; the Simba Rebellion and the rescue of our consul in Kisangani, and the mounting of that rescue out of Bukavu.

Q: Yes, Operation Dragon Rouge.

MARKS: Yes, that's right.

Q: Michael Hoyt was the consul and we have his account of the event in our files.

MARKS: Therefore by the early 1970s we had been wrapped up in Zairian policy for over ten years. So had everyone else: the Soviets, the Chinese, the French, British, etc. If you were involved in Africa you were mucking around in Zaire one way or another.

Lubumbashi was one of the major poles in Zaire: with Kisangani in the north, Bukavu in the west, and of course Kinshasa as the capital. Actually with the end of the Simba Rebellion and of the European mercenaries, Lubumbashi was the second most important point: it had the big money in the copper industry and there was continuing concern about the old successionist tendency. The Consulate General was there with classic provincial reporting responsibilities. What was going on in the copper industry? What was the political mood, especially with respect to separatism? Was there anyone or any influence coming over the borders with Zambia or Angola.

In addition to this major responsibility, we had a few other ongoing duties. There were Peace Corps volunteers in the province, and some USAID programs, although both programs were managed out of the Embassy. There was a major university in Lubumbashi, and usually an American Fulbright scholar in residence. The ConGen did have a USIS Branch Office and an active USIS program. As I noted before, we were three State officers - myself and two vice consuls - and a USIS vice consul. It was a nice well rounded, fairly busy little establishment. The Consular Corps in Lubumbashi numbered six: apart from us, there were the Belgians (of course) the French, the Greek, the Italians, and the Zambians.

Q: One of the questions I like to ask of people who served in a place where we had both interests and strong ties, but is essentially falling apart, particularly because of corruption is how did you find reporting on the corruption? It does not behoove one to over dwell on the corruption because it was all pervasive but at the same time it makes your area look kind of chaotic and looks like we are backing the wrong horse or we should be doing something.

MARKS: There was a sort of tradition in Zaire which all of old "Zaire" hands laugh about.

About the sixth month after arrival in Zaire, substantive officers in the Embassy and in the consulates, would come to the conclusion that Mobutu's regime was corrupt, falling apart, and could not last much longer. I certainly began to write despatches which presented that view. In fact, "generations" of FSOs wrote cables and despatches of that sort for over 20 years. However, it is now 1996 and he is still in power.

To specifically answer your question, yes, we noted the corruption and reported it, endlessly and without pulling any punches.

Q: Here is this African country which is absolutely ruining its heritage and what it could have done. I think it would be very easy for an American to look at this and become very cynical about the Africanization, whither Africa and all this. Did you and your officers have to deal with this?

MARKS: Yes, although some of us became more cynical earlier and faster than others. I don't think I ever became quite as disillusioned as some as I had not start out as idealistic, so my mood swing over 20 years was limited. Some people started out highly idealistic and became very

cynical and others just walked away. I had never bought into the "Noble Savage" or the theory of the virtue of uncorrupted natural man, so I was not as disappointed when Africans turned out to be no better than anyone else. I always thought you had to keep a historical perspective on this. For instance, I remember a day trip we took once, outside of Lubumbashi. We traveled by road vehicles (the old short wheel-based Land Rovers) about 100 kilometers to a riverside colonial country hotel well known in colonial days. It was located on a curve of a river, a lovely spot, the resident of Elizabethville (as it was called in those days) would go to picnic for the day or to spend the weekend. The hotel was now completely deserted and falling to pieces, and was inhabited by African squatters. Looking at the place, I had the sense of a scene which must have been common northwestern Europe about 30 years after the Roman legions left and Romanized Gaul was heading into the Dark Ages. I had a sense of Africa heading the same way.

Q: You mentioned a military attaché.

MARKS: Yes. Relations with Mobutu had gotten a little tense as he pursued his economic policies. Our ambassador, Dean Hinton -a man of some character and strength of will - was leaning on Mobutu who was getting very irritated. Dean Hinton is a hard charging type but also a consummate professional, and he wasn't pressuring Mobutu all on his own initiative. This was 1975 and Washington was trying to rein in Mobutu a bit.

Apart from air pouches and telegrams sent via the PTT [post, telephone, and telegraph], our communication with the Embassy was either by telephone or our own single side-ban radio - neither of which were very secure. The situation kept deteriorating as Hinton obeyed his instructions to rein in Mobutu.

As the situation deteriorated, I was notified of the travel to Lubumbashi of the new military attaché, an army colonel, and the new air force attaché, a full colonel as well, on an orientation tour of Eastern Zaire. They would travel in their own aircraft, a C-12, and would be accompanied by their wives as a couple of crew, for a total of six.

The morning of the day they were due to arrive, I was called to the radio by Ambassador Hinton who notified me, in very guarded and elliptical language, that he expected to be PNGed [declared persona non grata] later that day. And this indeed did happen, and we were so informed officially several hours later.

Meanwhile two colonels and their party arrived. The trip, of course, should have been turned off, but somehow it wasn't. We met them at the airport and brought them into town, putting them up at a hotel. The next day they were planning to do some flying around the area. I didn't think that was a very good idea, given the situation with the ambassador being kicked out of the country, but the Colonel was a very big, very aggressive full colonel, and I gave way. (Maybe the fact that I was an ex-corporal had something to do with it.) He then winked at me, and hinted that he would probably have some trouble with the aircraft and would have to land at Kitwe, the copper town up the road where he didn't have clearance to land. In other words, he was going to do a little unauthorized snooping. I remonstrated with him, but he insisted and I gave way- a decision I have always regretted. I should have flatly said no and told him he wasn't going while he was on my turf, and offered him the radio if he wanted to call the Ambassador and get me overruled. Instead, I registered my objection and let him go.

So he went off and pulled his stunt by landing in Kitwe. The Zairians were furious and tried to arrest him there, but he got into the plane and flew back to Lubumbashi. When he arrived his whole group was arrested and taken to the hotel. I was hauled into the governor's office and raked over the coals; the governor was furious with me, demanding to know what these people were doing. He said the two colonels and their wives would be kept under house arrest in the hotel, and the crew at a currently unoccupied Fulbright house.

When I returned to the Consulate to try to sort things out, police guards showed up and blockaded us. Then my wife called, somewhat in a panic, asking why there were military guards around our residence. We did a bit of checking and were told that the police at the residence were there to direct traffic for the reception planned that night for our visitors from Kinshasa, the Defense Attachés.

However the guards at the Consulate were there to keep us in, and I was busy trying to call the embassy for information and intercession at the central government level but I could not get through on the radio or the telephone. As the afternoon wore on and the frustration level rose, the telephone suddenly rang. It was my mother calling from Los Angeles. Having heard on the TV that there was some sort of trouble in Zaire, she called to find out what was happening and got through with little trouble. Meanwhile I still could not contact the embassy.

Over the next few days we provided food to the airmen under house arrest, and I would visit the Colonels every couple of hours or so, while we tried to get them released and returned to Kinshasa. By now, Ambassador Hinton had left the country. About the second or third day, I was at the hotel when the Air Force colonel took me aside and said that there was something I should know. The Army colonel, the Defense attaché, had a bag in his room at the hotel containing a pistol, two maps of Zaire, his daily journal in which he recorded what he saw every day. These notes included possible targets, intelligence information, and usually uncomplimentary comments about people - including Mobutu. Taking the hint I went to the Defense attaché and asked if he had any materiel or equipment which ought not to be kept in his room as Zairian intelligence people might well check through his room while he was at meals. He thought that was a reasonable suggestion and I took a bag back to the Consulate where I locked it up.

After three or four days, things began to calm down. We made the necessary apologies and the Governor agreed to release the attachés' party and his airplane. They flew off to Kinshasa and we turned back to our normal business including the follow-up to Ambassador Hinton's dismissal. Hinton's dismissal turned out to be fortunate for Walter Cutler, who was the Director of AF/W [Office of West African Affairs] at the time. The Department immediately wanted to replace Hinton and repair the damage in the relations with Mobutu send somebody so they which was certainly a lucky break for him. He was in the right place when they needed somebody.

Q: We have an interview with Walter Cutler, too.

MARKS: He was a first rate officer and probably would have done all right anyway. But this way he went from office director to head of a class II embassy overnight.

But now comes the joke line in this long story. A month or two later, I was home reading a book entitled The Military Attaché, a study of the American military attaché system. I was reading the chapter about military attaché operations in the early post-Cold War period, and the author was discussing the sensitivity and difficulties of the attaché business and the thin line the military attaché walks between overt and covert intelligence collection. To illustrate his point the author recounts the story of one of the more embarrassing examples involving the American military attaché in Moscow in 1951 or 1952. This attaché, a brigadier general, traveled around the USSR [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] when he could, recording notes in a diary, these notes included potential targets, weapons, and comments on the Soviet system and leadership. That diary was stolen from his room and the Soviets published parts of it, complaining bitterly about the attaché's unacceptable "spying." The Attaché was PNGed and the story made the front pages of the New York Times. It was actually only a minor scandal of the early Cold War but it ruined that officer's career. When I reached the end of this story in the book, I almost fell out of my chair. The name of that Military Attaché in Moscow was the same as my Colonel from Kinshasa, and in fact they were father and son.

Q: Shows that knowledge is not necessarily passed on from one generation to another.

MARKS: I submitted a confidential report on this incident, and I understand that the Colonel retired shortly thereafter, not necessarily because of my report but largely, I believe, because he could not satisfactorily explain why the hell he went on the trip at all given ongoing developments including Hinton's dismissal and the deteriorating atmosphere in the capital.

Q: It sounds like a very difficult government with which to deal.

MARKS: It was. We were dealing constantly with people sitting behind desks or in chairs, in fancy suits with imperturbable faces and black sunglasses. Whether they were imperturbable and difficult or just imperturbable because they didn't know what was going on was very difficult to figure out. There were, of course, some very sharp guys but we had a quite a few promoted way above their performance competence - at least in Western terms, although not necessarily by local political criteria. Try as we might, we never became very well informed as to what was really going on behind those glasses, behind the facade. We did have a few people we could talk to, but I cannot claim that I was ever able to bridge the cultural gap to become open and intimate with any Zairian.

To a large degree I depended for intelligence on the local expatriate community. I was directly tied into the Jewish community, and to some degree into the Gecamines (copper company) senior Belgian management. Some of the other consulates, particularly the Belgian and the Greek, mined their communities extensively and we all exchanged information. We had a Fulbright exchange scholar at the University of Lubumbashi who was knowledgeable about student and faculty attitudes. He was a political scientist by the name of David Gould, who was unfortunate enough years later to be on PanAm 109 which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988. USIS also had a lot of contacts with academics and university people, one of the benefits of running an academic exchange program.

Q: This often is the case and it isn't necessarily bad.

MARKS: No, you do what you can.

Q: It sounds fine if you can reach into the local community, but often outside observers can give a better perspective of what's happening. What about the CIA?

MARKS: There were no resident CIA in Lubumbashi, although there had been a largish station at one time, during the Katanga secession. The Consulate itself formed interesting little compound with the this lovely little villa in the center and right next to it was a fairly nondescript empty building with a huge vault area which was once full of CIA people. Later after Shaba I and Shaba II, the CIA station was re-opened I was told there were suddenly 10 or 15 Agency types running around, in addition to the 5 State/USIS people in the Consulate itself.

That experience with the CIA raises an interesting point. After the end of the Katanga secession two or three thousand members of the Katanga Gendarmerie - Tshombe's army - fled into Angola and been granted refuge by the Portuguese authorities. They came with family and were settled as a community; reportedly the Portuguese even used them in the war against their own insurgents. They were settled in eastern Angola, thereby continuing to pose a potential military threat to Mobutu's government. Nobody knew much about them, except that they were there. I had heard about them when I was in Angola but information was scarce. In Lubumbashi in 1975 I tried to put some information together about them, again information was scarce. I sent in what I had by despatch, but there was no reaction from Washington. I left Zaire in January/February of 1976 and the first invasion by the Katanga Gendarmes occurred about two months later - catching everybody completely off guard. It would seem to me that the Katanga Gendarmes was exactly the sort of situation calling for CIA activity but it turns out they had no contacts or information. It was another example confirming what some of us have long suspected, that is, that the CIA's reputation was seriously overblown.

Q: Did you see Chinese coming over the horizon with their railroad, or the Soviets?

MARKS: No, not really. We kept watching as Washington of course was very exercised about the possibility but that was happening more in Kinshasa than it was in Lubumbashi. There was not any resident Chinese or Soviet missions in Shaba Province and we never saw any.

Q: How did the ex-colonialists, the Belgians, fit into the picture during your Lubumbashi time?

MARKS: The old colonial regime had been a mixed bag, although largely Francophone although many of the missionaries and some of the businessmen were actually Flemish. Then there the two "immigrant" communities, if you will, Jews and Greeks, most of whom were now Belgian citizens. At one time the European community in Lubumbashi alone, not to mention Shaba [province], had been 16,000 or so, and we were now down to 6,000 [persons]. Those remaining were doing very well economically, but it was a declining situation and they knew it. The Zairian pressure to take over completely was evident and constant. Meanwhile, the deteriorating situation both economic and political - made it less and less worthwhile to stay, although many did very well through contacts in the government. But it was becoming harder and harder, and there was a slow drifting away of people. Each year there would be a few hundred foreigners less. Nevertheless the

expatriate community was the world in which we mostly lived. Efforts to connect into the African world were just not very successful. However many of the expatriates themselves had close contacts - built up over the years and now - through the business relations - which provided some insight. Still it was "through a glass, darkly."

The invasion by the ex-Katangan Gendarmes in the spring of 1976 was repulsed fairly quickly with the help of the Belgians and the French. It was followed in the spring of 1977 by what was called Shaba II in 1977, a more serious invasion during which some Europeans were killed, which was a severe blow to the morale and sense of security of the remaining expatriate community of Shaba. Many left permanently, or did not return, and I would guess that there are less than a thousand left now.

Many of my closest friends from Lubumbashi moved back to Brussels, and we have remained in contact. The young Belgian Vice-Consul - a brilliant young officer and scion of a distinguished Belgian diplomatic family - later was on duty in Washington as Political Counselor when he died - at a young age - of a heart attack while doing his morning jog around Chevy Chase.

Q: Why don't we stop now. If there is anything you want to add about Lubumbashi we can do it the next time.

MICHAEL A. BOORSTEIN
Personnel Officer
Kinshasa (1974-1977)

Mr. Boorstein was born in Washington, DC and was raised in that area. He was educated at Beloit College, the University of Colorado, Harvard University and the University of Turku in Finland. Entering the Foreign Service in 1970, Mr. Boorstein specialized in administration and personnel, serving in Palermo, Rome, Ottawa, Warsaw Curacao, Moscow and Beijing. In addition, Mr. Boorstein played a major role in the planning and construction of US embassies in Moscow and Beijing and in the renovation of consulates and embassies throughout the globe. He spoke six foreign languages. Mr. Boorstein was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

BOORSTEIN: So, I was assigned to Kinshasa. We went back to the States, had a nice home leave. Went and rented a townhouse in Springfield, Virginia and I went off to study French. My wife took French language training with me. French language training was not nearly as effective as Italian. It was a whole different linguist. French instructors tended to be French. A lot of the cultural baggage and transfers and they weren't as laid back or Latin as the Italian group. There was one particular incident. There was a French instructor. Her name was Kitty. I don't remember what her last name was. She was from Monaco. We were talking language training as Thanksgiving approached and the cafeteria at Main State as they always do had a Thanksgiving lunch Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of that week. Our whole class decided we were going to take the shuttle over to have the turkey dinner in the cafeteria and come back all within an hour. Well, we missed

because of the lines in the cafeteria we missed the shuttle to get back to class in Roslyn by 2:00. She was so mad that she canceled our break between 2:50 and 3:00 and my wife was incredibly incensed over that and it was towards the end of the language training so she quit. Now, she's sort of shooting herself in the foot to look back on it. This was sort of the attitude of the French instructors. You had to tow the mark. The training was good. I think I got a 2+ in speaking and reading.

Off we went to Kinshasa. We arrived there in January of 1974. We had heard of course that the place was rampant with crime and being our first time in Africa coming out of a European assignment, albeit, Palermo, Sicily was a port area of Italy. Relatively speaking it was heaven compared to what you would find in Central Africa. I remember being quite uptight about the whole security thing because I had my wife and daughter and we stayed in temporary housing and somebody at the embassy recommended that we get a dog. This guy came out to our hotel with a young German Shepherd that was basically trained to lunge anybody with a black skin. I just looked at that and I said I cannot do this. I cannot do this. We'll just make sure, that whatever house we get the embassy will make sure it is secure.

We were assigned to a house with a swimming pool. Very nice, the first embassy as a FSO-6. I was 27 years old. My wife got a job as a teacher's aide at the American School of Kinshasa. We arrived in the middle of the year so she couldn't get a full time job then, but she got one the following fall. Our daughter at that point was enrolled in first grade, no kindergarten. The admin counselor's name was Richard W. Berg. Dick Berg had been an executive officer in USIA for many, many years and at some point he converted over to the State Department. He had I think he was the Supervisory GSO in Jakarta. He had been deputy admin officer in Brussels and from there he went to Kinshasa. His wife's name was Cecily and they had a daughter named Alix, who was the same age as my daughter and they became very good friends. So, in addition to him being my boss; we had a social relationship. The deputy chief of mission was a gentleman by the name of Mike Newlin, who went on to be ambassador to Algeria. Bob Andrews was the political counselor. Charles Stephan was the consular officer. I don't know if you ever knew Chuck Stephan in your consular years. He had four kids and we became very friendly with that family. As a matter of fact his eldest daughter is married to, a fellow that just finished his assignment as ambassador to Lithuania.

Q: You can fill this in.

BOORSTEIN: I'll fill you in later, but anyway, her name was Sherry Stephan. Marie was Chuck's wife, Sherry was the daughter. So, she would babysit for us. I was the personnel officer. I had a deputy personnel officer named Eloise Robertson who was from USAID. I had a staff of, I supervised the travel clerk who was French, the protocol officer who was from Belgium, a senior FSN was also from Belgium, one was Walloon and one was Flemish, so they hated each other. I had a Belgian who was the airport expeditor. I had a secretary who was Portuguese. No, she was French, her husband was Portuguese. I had one Zairian employee who was a junior ranking clerk. In those years the bulk of the Foreign Service National staff were third country people because really they constituted the bulk of the educated class in Zaire. What can I tell you about Zaire? I enjoyed the job. I enjoyed the people. We were never personally affected by crime even though we were nervous about it. We had night guards first just for the evening hours 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM

and ultimately when local crime became so great we even had day guards. The windows all had bars on them. You'd lock yourself in at night and hope there wasn't a fire. You keep all the keys by your side to unlock yourself to get out. Your kitchen was like your, your bedroom was your safe haven. We had one attempted break in during our time there. We were very social in Kinshasa. A lot of activity. The embassy was large, had a very large USAID mission, the U.S. Information Service was quite large. They had a whole separate building on the other side of town. Jim Tull was the public affairs officer. He was quite a character. He had a parrot. I think he's still living somewhere down in Louisiana. He must be around 80. The AID mission was quite large as I said and they were integrated into the admin section, so the deputy administrative counselor was from AID, his name was Chuck Herter. One of the GSOs was also from AID and my number two in personnel was also from AID.

The challenges of Kinshasa were not internal in the embassy. It ran pretty well, but there were a lot of challenges for us as an embassy because there were a lot of political issues in Zaire that impacted on our operations. Vance was the ambassador when I arrived.

Q: Sheldon Vance.

BOORSTEIN: Sheldon Vance. He left within a couple of months of my departure and then Deane Hinton came in as the ambassador and he didn't of course, it was sort of like Tom Pickering was ambassador to a lot of places. He had a very acerbic personality, but he was a good ambassador. His wife I believe was Chilean and they had had children from previous marriages so they were collectively raising eight kids not all of whom were at post, but they had four or five maybe living with them. A lot of care and feeding for the residence.

In my job I don't recall a lot of huge issues. We had, I helped administer a very large contract force of Zairian employees that were under a contract through the commissary association, which was very common in those years and I would have to help set the standards for benefits and salaries and talk to the supervisory contractor who was a Greek fellow. His English was very limited, but he spoke Italian quite well. I would speak with him in Italian, but I used my French quite a bit, mainly to my senior FSN from Belgium. Her name was Annie De Wulf and she was Flemish so her first language was Flemish, but her French was flawless. She overheard me speaking French one day and she said to me, "Mr. Boorstein, your French is pretty good. Why don't we just speak in French and it will help your language and will be a little more comfortable for me and we'll see how it goes?" So, I agreed. We would conduct all our business in French for two and a half years and it was such a gift that she gave to me because it increased my confidence because I was so comfortable speaking Italian and I hadn't gotten my French up to that level, but certainly when I went home on R&R I tested very easily 3/3 level in French. She was quite good.

The main objective for me as the personnel officer was to make sure that every Foreign Service National who was not Zairian who left was replaced by a Zairian employee. We were trying to improve the ratio of Zairian and non-Zairian staff. By policy. So, the Belgian airport expediter was fired because he clearly was a racist and he didn't take care of the wife of the USAID mission director. The AID mission director was named Fermino Spencer, who was black. He was originally from Cape Verde and his wife also was black. One night she was flying out of Kinshasa and he just simply didn't show up. He showed up later and he refused to help her. It was reported

and we fired him. We replaced him with his substitute, with his number two who was Zairian and he performed pretty well, except when he drank too much beer and then he was a problem. I remember going to where he lived one day and there was no phone, no running water. Going out to his small little hut with dirt floors to counsel him on proper behavior. Even though the hut was fairly new it was built under some public housing program, the rest of it was still pretty rudimentary, so it was the first time I saw the way the locals lived and it was quite an eye opener. That was pretty much the main challenge of my work there.

I traveled too, in those years we had a consulate in Lubumbashi and a consulate in Bukavu. We did have a consulate in Kisangani, which used to be called Stanleyville and it was closed during my time there. The trip to Lubumbashi was just wonderful. The administrative officer there was Bill Hudson who is still in the Foreign Service. He's our ambassador to Tunisia and he and I became very good friends and we're close to this day. While I went to Lubumbashi and he was single at the time with the Peace Corps director, his wife and daughter and myself, the five of us took the Peace Corps director's Land Rover and went into the game park. We had a guide and saw all kinds of wildlife although it was very limited because so much of the wildlife has been decimated during the period of revolution in the mid '60s. A lot of that game was just eaten and hadn't quite returned. I took some fantastic pictures, wonderful pictures. Later when I went to Bukavu, which was one man post, the Consul's name was Mike Adams who had been an assistant GSO in Kinshasa and transferred out to Bukavu to be the Consul. I went on a visit to the game park, which was a gorilla reserve, and there again I took some fantastic pictures, very close and we had a French speaking guide. He took out a machete and would whack his way through the dense jungle underbrush went up hills, down hills and sweating like crazy, but we had a great time. Encounters very close with the gorillas.

Yes, I know I told a huge amount of stories about Palermo. In Kinshasa there was one incredible story that I can tell you. Again like I said we were quite active socially, the commissary and recreation association had a lot of activity. Of course these were the years before you had the community liaison officer. There was an arrangement to go out on the falls on the Zaire River for a picnic. We went out in a group and some of the local staff went out to help us haul the stuff. There was a young USIA officer, a woman who decided oh this would really be neat to do a little bit of rock jumping in and among the rapids. She took off her shoes and she went and stepped onto a stone that was surrounded by swirling waters not realizing that the stone was wet. As soon as she stepped onto the stone her feet went out from under her and she lost her grip and fell into the rapids. She had the presence of mind to find a tree, a small tree that was growing out of the end of another rock. She grabbed onto it and so we all then got energized to try and figure out how to save this woman because if she was swept away from that tree she was holding onto and could not get any kind of a hold elsewhere she would have gone over the falls and would have been killed. There was a third country national named Santos who was Portuguese. He was the senior plumber, basically as a guest with his family at this picnic. He spoke in addition to speaking French and English, he spoke Lingala. He'd been in Zaire for many years. Lingala was the native language of that region. He managed to grab a bunch of the Zairian men who were fishing in the area who knew every rock and every foothold and we agreed we would pay them money to help and they had some rope in one of the cars. They went down and fetched the rope and he basically supervised a rescue of this poor woman. Well, we couldn't reach her from where she was. It was just totally out of reach. We had to persuade her to let go and float with the rapids down another rock. There was

another outcropping that she could grab onto. She didn't want to do it. She was scared I was certainly witnessing it. She finally agreed to do it and she let go and calmly went down there grabbed onto the other thing, held on and at that point they were able to, with her holding on with one arm were able to throw her the rope which had a loop in it, she put it around her body nice and snug. The rescue took a couple of hours. Of course when she got onshore she went into shock. She was cold, wet and basically the women took her off and got her clothes off, got her wrapped up in blankets. She obviously lived to tell the tale. I don't recall her name. I don't have any idea where she went after that in the Foreign Service, but she was a first tour junior officer for USIS.

Q: Oh boy.

BOORSTEIN: It was something else.

Q: Did you get involved, what was happening in Zaire at the time, I mean were there any of the Shaba incidents or any of the insurrections that went on?

BOORSTEIN: No. What was happening politically internally in the country, there were at least two things I can comment on. Number one, Mobutu Sese Seko was the president of Zaire as he was for many years afterwards. He decided that to consolidate his power he had to show that foreign commercial interests were no longer welcome. The country was able to fend for itself without the presence of the Indians, the Pakistanis and the Lebanese primarily. They basically were running the small businesses in the country. They were the shopkeepers, hotel clerks, ran the restaurants. There were a few Italian and French restaurants, but a lot of the commercial infrastructure was run by Pakistanis and Lebanese. The Lebanese were primarily Jews. The little hotel that we ran through the commissary association was known as the Aladeff Arms because Mr. Aladeff was a Lebanese Jew who came to the former Belgian Congo years and years ago and his family was still involved there. Mobutu basically kicked out a lot of those people.

Well, the country went to hell in a hand basket economically. The crime rate skyrocketed. People were hungry in the countryside starting to come into the big cities including Kinshasa and they were living by robbing the white people. That's when we got the 24 hour presence in the house, our post differential rate went up and then eventually Mobutu saw the error of his ways and invited the people to come back. A lot of them did. Now, again, at the same time the Belgians were still a huge presence. They were running a very large technical assistance program, had their own schools. My senior FSN's husband was a teacher at the Belgian school. That was a time of internal political turmoil.

There may, I believe, '74, '75 sometime during that link there was an attempted coup against Mobutu. Mobutu blamed the CIA, totally unfounded as far as I knew. In the midst of all of that our defense attaché who had his own aircraft decided he was going to fly to Lubumbashi and failed to file a flight plan with the local aviation and military or whatever. He simply got on his plane and flew. He landed at the airport in Lubumbashi and was promptly arrested and thrown in prison. Well, Bill Hudson who was the admin officer, and he did consular work, too he became the prison visitor. He would bring the guy food and newspapers and was the liaison and basically help convince them not to beat this guy up and was instrumental in helping get him released. For his

efforts he got a meritorious honor award and in the midst of that alleged attempted coup, Mobutu blamed the CIA and Deane Hinton was declared persona non grata and had to get out.

At that time Mike Newlin had left as DCM and our new DCM was Lannon Walker. Lannon Walker became quite a senior figure in African affairs because he had been the ambassador in three of four African countries before he retired. Ambassador to Nigeria, the Ivory Coast and several other spots. I forget where he was before, but he came to Kinshasa fairly young as the econ counselor, very energetic and really took charge. He was the Charge I venture to say for six months at least and then Walter Cutler came in as ambassador and is now head of the Meridian House. During the inter regnum with Lannon Walker as Charge, he took the country team and subdivided it. He had the big country team where the large group, all the agency heads that he met with once a week. Then he had the core country team, which he expanded to include several of the admin unit chiefs and I was then included in the mini-core country team meeting which was a real boon for me. I was in my first embassy, as a second tour officer, being the personnel office I was still an FSO-6. I wasn't promoted to 5 for another few years after that. I remember going to meetings twice a week in his office to deal with a lot of the problems of the embassy from a more of a senior management perspective.

Part of what we had to deal with before Cutler arrived was the spillover of the civil war in Angola. In 1975 at some point late '75, early '76 the Portuguese announced their intention to leave Angola and I don't know whether they formally left during the time that they were planning to leave, civil war broke out and there was Savimbi and all those different factions that were fighting each other. If you look at the map you'll see how close Kinshasa is to the northern border of Angola. The Agency brought in maybe 50 temporary duty personnel and they were assigned to the embassy as temporary duty people, but they really were observers and they would go out to the front everyday. They'd take vehicles and they'd drive maybe 50, 60, 70 miles whatever it was to that northern border area. Maybe they were doing advising one faction or another and certain things they never told you that they did and at night they'd come back and they had been leasing houses and the administrative officer of the Agency became a real force to contend with because doling out money and doing this and doing that and I don't know whether Lannon Walker, the Charge, lost control, but it was a bit of a wild time in the embassy with all these people running around. That was a particular focus of the embassy to try and deal with all that. Again, those were kind of the political forces that impacted on embassy operations.

Q: Did you as personnel officer, did you run across problems of the discrepancy between administrative support for two other elements, AID and CIA?

BOORSTEIN: AID was more of a problem because they would be independent, but yet they wouldn't. In other words a part of the shared administrative arrangement, the administrative section of Kinshasa was called CAMO, C-A-M-O, Consolidated Administrative Management Office. With that arrangement, AID as I said had several of their American staff as officers within general services and personnel and like I said my immediate supervisor was an AID officer, Chuck Herter. They were sort of in bed with the State admin section if you will, but yet they had their own controller Art Thompson and they were able to dispense funds and they didn't seem to want to follow the same rules as we did when it came to regulations governing R&R travel and so there was a bit of friction in that area. It was never resolved. We had sort of a problem and everybody

agreed to disagree. With the Agency, they had their own little pool of housing with the station chief. He of course had a car and driver. Particularly when their numbers increased dramatically, they became a more of a force themselves. Yet, by and large at the working level and again I was not a senior officer by any means at that time. A lot of our friends were from AID and from the Agency. The Agency had its own film circuit and it was really great to get invited to their houses to watch the movies.

Another source of social contact for us was the American School of Kinshasa because my wife taught there. I was not involved as I was later on in my career with the school board, but we just had a lot of friends who worked at the school. Again, at that point we were in our mid to late '20s and we would hang around with the younger crowd. Our daughter had a lot of friends. To this day at my retirement reception on Friday I've invited a couple of gentleman, one named Ron Bitondo who was the English language teacher and his wife, Pat, because their daughter, Barbara, was also my daughter's age and she's going to be there as well. She works now at the World Bank. For my first embassy, it was a great experience.

Q: Was there much contact with the embassy people and the Zairians?

BOORSTEIN: Not on the social level because it was such a poor country. I would for wage surveys to help the medical unit; I had a lot of contacts, local, the clinic that was part of the Organization of African Unity. The actress Glenn Close, her father was Mobutu's personal physician. Of course Glenn Close was not a famous actress in those days, but Dr. Close, and his son was also a physician. I remember knowing his son and daughter-in-law and they were part of a square dance group that we had. No, there really was, the ones that you would know the best would be educated Zairian staff in the embassy. We had a number of those folks who worked for AID who were educated in Europe. They spoke excellent French, spoke English and were helping on the program side. Those were the kind of people whom we could relate to. Frankly I don't mean to sound racist at all, but the reality was that in those years, perhaps even worse today it is an extremely poor country, very rich in minerals, but very corrupt. The Belgians did not do a very good job at all as a colonial power to prepare that country to govern itself at all. There was still very much of a dependency factor I think. You could still hear when the Belgians would talk to the Zairians; they would invariably use the "tu" form in French. Very condescending. The Zairians would refer to the white people at "Patron." That's the way they were raised. I doubt today you would hear that. They were trying to move into that area of more an egalitarian approach and under Mobutu, the common reference where one Zairian would refer to another because almost like the Soviet Union, the equivalent of comrade. They would call each other "citoyen" meaning citizen.

Q: Yes, well, this happened during the French Revolution, too.

BOORSTEIN: Yes. There was that aspect of it that was an effort to try to make it more egalitarian, but they had a long way to go.

Q: What about, I mean, in your job in corruption, did you, was this a problem?

BOORSTEIN: Well, yes as the personnel officer, I don't recall any concerns that I personally had. I do know I'm not sure it happened while I was still there, but I remember as part of the effort to

increase the number of Zairian staff in the embassy that the European cashier's assistant either left, I don't think she was fired, but she left and was replaced by a Zairian gentleman who went on the take and when he was caught he committed suicide. That happened after I left. There was that aspect. We even had a number of employees, local employees who were Africans, but not from Zaire. Our senior Foreign Service National in budget and fiscal was from Nigeria. That's a country with its share of corruption.

Q: I was just going to say.

BOORSTEIN: He was sophisticated. He knew his stuff quite well. In those years Kinshasa was a regional budget and fiscal office and we had two or three of the American staff who flew quite a bit throughout Central Africa on the regional budget. During my tour there other than traveling to Lubumbashi and Bukavu, my wife, daughter and I took a vacation trip to Angola. This was in the spring of 1976, a couple of months before we left and the civil war was still going on. What we had in Luanda was still a consulate general. The administrative officer was a gentleman named Ed Fugit who is now retired. He rose pretty high in the ranks of the Foreign Service, did a lot of service elsewhere in Africa. Through the consulate general we arranged for a hotel to stay in and after the Portuguese left and while things were still in a state of flux air links were established directly from Kinshasa to Rwanda. Before that, if you wanted to go from Kinshasa to Luanda you had to fly to Johannesburg and change planes. It was prohibitively expensive. We were able to afford to take a trip there and we spent a lovely week in Luanda going to the beach everyday. The economy was essentially living on the black market. We even went into the consulate, turned in a check for \$100, left the "pay to the order of" line blank and later that day came back to get our supply of Angolan Escudos at whatever rate the black market would have that day and then later on the check would show up later "pay to the order of Jose Gomez" or whatever, you just didn't know who it was. The consulate general allowed that to happen. That's the way they dealt obviously with Washington's permission with their financial operations. We lived quite well for that week. We had wonderful lobster dinners with good Portuguese wine. We would hear gunfire at night from our hotel. We were very circumspect on where we went and what we did. It was a wonderful vacation. We went to the market the morning of the day that we left and filled up an entire ice chest full of fresh fish, clams, lobster tails and whatever and brought it back on the plane. When it landed in Kinshasa I immediately got off and went down to the belly of the aircraft and talk about a lack of security in those days as they were unloading that crate, saw that cooler and I said, "That's mine" and I immediately took it because otherwise I would have never seen it. It was such valuable cargo.

My trip to Bukavu, I flew there directly, but on the way back I couldn't get a flight when I wanted to because the direct flight was booked to return, so they had to drive me to the airport in Bujumbura. I had to get transit visas for Rwanda and Burundi, and the consulate driver took me in the Land Rover and it was like going through a circuitous route because that part of far eastern Zaire had been a real hotbed of the hostilities during the '60s. We went near the area where the aircraft that carried Dag Hammarskjöld, the United Nations Secretary General crashed and he was killed. We had to drive around bombed out bridges and dry riverbeds. Those bridges that were bombed out in 1964 and '65, 10, 11 years later had not been repaired. I went through all the checkpoints. A very memorable trip.

I also got sick, something I ate the night before. It was not the place to get stomach troubles when you're driving across the country or flying. It was a fairly long flight to get to Bujumbura to Kinshasa. It was about a three-hour flight.

Q: While you were dealing with personnel, just to get a feel for it, did we have cases of people having to leave because of marital problems, alcoholism or just couldn't take it, an adjustment?

BOORSTEIN: By and large for an embassy of its size, the morale was pretty high and I think you would find that was the case at a lot of the hardship posts. As long as you had good leadership in the embassy and you had the right mix of personnel. It's been certainly my experience. The housing was good. There were a lot of good recreational facilities. There were periods of tension like when the crime rate rose and when the Americans were being looked on as the cause of the problems and the ambassador was declared persona non grata.

There were a number of cases. We had one officer who was medically evacuated basically for mental illness. The doctor detected this and I'm not sure, but he was flown back to the States with his wife. He was given treatment and some kind of medicine, drugs, came back to post and he was fine. We had a visit while I was there by someone from the Office of Medical Services who was a reformed alcoholic and his job was to fly around the world and give lectures.

Q: I remember this, yes.

BOORSTEIN: He was an Irish American, tall fellow, gray hair and I'll never forget this because I was his control officer and I went to the airport to meet him. I forget where he was flying in from, but his suitcase didn't make it. He was well over six feet tall. I remember lending him a pair of my pajamas to sleep and I'm sure they came halfway up to his knees or whatever and so the next day his suitcase arrived. I think his name was McGuire, a very friendly guy. There was one communications officer whom he met with as having had a drinking problem in the past. I was privy to that information as personnel officer, so I made sure that the two of them met and they talked privately. This particular communications officer did not exhibit any signs of relapse, but I think he appreciated the counseling, and even hosted a dinner for him.

We had one woman who was the wife of the defense attaché who came down with sort of like a jungle fever and she died. She was evacuated to Europe and she died in the medical evacuation aircraft en route to Europe. I certainly didn't have any health issues. My family didn't have any health issues.

Charles Grace was the doctor who recently passed away and oh, I know I can tell you about this and it was kind of scary. The house we were in had a swimming pool. One day I decided I was going to light up my barbecue and I had some local charcoal. It was not like buying those briquettes and throw a match on them and they automatically light or buying lighter fluid that is not as flammable. I did something that wasn't very bright. I had a mayonnaise jar full of high-octane gasoline. I poured a little bit of it on the charcoal, threw a match on it and it started to light. It didn't catch and I decided, well, what it needs is some more fuel, so I dribbled a little bit in and of course being so high octane the flame came right back into the jar, the jar exploded and the flames went onto my shorts. I had on shorts and a tee shirt. My wife was outside; I don't know where my daughter was. I literally was on fire. I had fire on my leg, on my shorts and I'm doing

this and that and jumping around. My wife says, "Mike, jump in the pool." She probably saved my life. I did not have the presence of mind to jump in the pool. Well, I was severely burned on one leg. My shorts had little holes of fire in them in a very ominous place, but thank God it didn't get any worse. It was on a Sunday and we called in the doctor. At that time we didn't have our regional medical physician. Our doctor was the Peace Corps doctor. His name was Bob Morris, a young fellow. We met at the medical unit. He treated me and he was so excited because he had done his internship at the UCLA burn center. He was like, "wow, look what I have here." He knew exactly what to do and I literally had damages all up and down one leg and I was out of the office for an entire week where I really had to lie in bed with my leg elevated in a very cool room. He was very concerned about infection because it was the tropics. I just sat there with all kinds of books to read because there was no good local television, I don't even know that we had a television. Everyday my wife would drive me to the medical unit for him to change the dressing. Afterwards I was able to work half a day. That was my encounter with the hardship conditions and to this day whenever I light a charcoal fire, I get a little skittish.

Q: Your mentioning of Mr. McGuire, the man who came around and talked about alcoholism and as I recall it this was really the first time that the Foreign Service faced up to the problem of alcoholism and was making before it you either didn't mention it or you didn't treat it as something. The effort was to almost bring it out into the open.

BOORSTEIN: Well, when you think about what was available to individuals with families and what the social attitudes were towards the Foreign Service and the families, they really mirrored and continue to mirror the way these things are viewed by American society as a whole. I mean think about how it was when you came into the Foreign Service and when I came into the Foreign Service 15 years later when, if you were a single woman, you could not go to the Soviet Union or anywhere in Eastern Europe. If you were even a single man I don't think you could go to those places. They really feared a compromise. If you were a homosexual you couldn't even get into the Foreign Service and you basically kept that sexual tendency to yourself. You stayed in the closet. As I mentioned before, there was no social safety net if you were sitting at a post and you abandon your family, yet alone considerations for treatment for mental illness, emotional disturbances, alcoholism and things of this nature. These were things that were just not dealt with in society as a whole; they also weren't dealt with.

Q: This is tape three, side one with Mike Boorstein. Yes, go ahead.

BOORSTEIN: Anyway, to answer your question, these things evolved and they continue to evolve. When you think about it, I'm sure you've interviewed a number of women officers who were in the Foreign Service, they got married, they had to resign and then they came back when the rules changed. I don't know if you've interviewed Joanne Jenkins for example.

Q: No.

BOORSTEIN: She's another person you should add to your list. She retired about four years ago. She was a senior administrative officer and came in as a single officer, got married, had to quit and then came back again after the rules changed. I witnessed that among my own colleagues over time. I told you the story about I believe Anne Sigmund from the officer class who was a Soviet

specialist, couldn't go to the USSR as her first tour, but may have been there 10 years later. Again, Kinshasa was pretty much a positive experience. It was my only tour in Africa. I was just looking for broader experiences and I didn't necessarily shy away from going there again. I just never ended up there again.

At the end of our tour we took a wonderful trip. We took a photographic safari. In those years, Pan Am had pretty much a daily flight that left New York and depending on the day of the week it had a number of intermediate stops, Abidjan, Dakar, Lagos, Kinshasa and then went down to Johannesburg and then once or twice a week for a while they actually puddle jumped down to Kinshasa and went straight across to Nairobi. We left and took that Pan Am flight from Kinshasa to Nairobi, got off and had arranged through help with the American Embassy in Nairobi, in those years, there was no e-mail. You picked up the phone and called a travel agent. You relied on telex and informal cables and other things that people did in those years to get things done. One of the regional security officers arranged for a lovely photographic safari through Thorn Tree Travel. We got a Volkswagen bus, a driver guide and a went to a number of the game parks in Kenya and in those years we could cross the border into Tanzania and back to Kenya, took some wonderful pictures. You're going to see some of them on Friday because my wife put together a memory book with two pages of Kinshasa that shows a number of really good pictures from Africa, I think a couple from our trip to Kenya and Tanzania. We spent some time on the beach in Mombasa. Then we flew on to Greece and had a lovely cruise through the Greek Islands. We saved so much money we could afford all of that. It was great. Then we went to Paris and went to the States.

My next assignment was again as personnel officer was in our embassy in Ottawa. Any more questions about Zaire?

Q: No, not now.

G. CLAY NETTLES
Economic Counselor
Kinshasa (1975-1978)

George Clay Nettles was born in 1932 in Alabama. He attended the University of Alabama for both a bachelors and a law degree after serving in the US Army. Nettles joined the Foreign Service in 1957 and served overseas in Japan, Vietnam, Venezuela, Lebanon, Pakistan, Zaire, Turkey and Saudi Arabia as well as attending the NATO Defense College. Nettles was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 1997.

NETTLES: I was getting ready for a new assignment and wondering where I might go when I received a telephone call from personnel and was asked would I like to be economic counselor in Kinshasa? I said, "That's in Zaire isn't it?" They said, "Obviously, you're an African expert." I said, "Do I have any choice about this?" They said, "Oh, yes, the ambassador-designate, Dean Hinton, has given us three names and you are one of the three. One of the officers will be offered a DCM job which he will probably take and you have French and the other officer doesn't so if you

want it, it's yours. Just left us know within 48 hours." The job was ranked two grades above my rank at that time. It was the only assignment I ever took that I thought would be good for my career, but I realized that that was an opportunity which I really couldn't say no and besides I was really intrigued about going to Africa so I said, "Yes" and spent three years there. I enjoyed it, but it was my least favorite posts in my 36 years in the State Department.

Q: We probably should put on record that Dean Hinton was at that time probably one of the preeminent senior Foreign Service officers in the economic area with great experience and for you to be sought after to be the economic counselor I think alone besides the stretch aspects of the assignment was a real kudo for you.

NETTLES: It was and I realized, as I said, I couldn't afford to say no for that among other reasons, but life is interesting. The week before I was to arrive, Dean Hinton was declared persona non grata. It wasn't anything that he did. He was a victim of circumstances between the U.S. and Mobutu. Mobutu was a very, very clever politician. We wanted to reduce, cut off, or eliminate our assistance to him and at the same time the U.S. government wanted to be active in Angola. Mobutu was clever enough to realize that we needed his assistance to be active in Angola. So he discovered a "plot" in which the U.S. was involved - of course, this was all fiction - but he said Dean Hinton was involved in this plot and had him declared persona non grata. Instead Walter Cutler was sent in as ambassador.

Q: So you never actually worked for Dean Hinton in Kinshasa?

NETTLES: No, and I worked for Lannon Walker, the DCM, and Walter Cutler. Both are outstanding officers and had distinguished careers, but neither one had a background in economics. Therefore, it was an entirely different job working for them than it would have been had I worked for Dean Hinton. I would have learned more economics working for Dean Hinton, but it probably wouldn't have been as much fun.

Q: Why do you say that it was your least desirable or least favorite assignment— was it the living conditions or the people?

NETTLES: The living conditions were superb. Maybe that's why they had some of the economic problems they did, because they built such lavish places. I would compare life in Kinshasa to life in an Eastern European formerly communist country. The government controlled all Zaireans. You knew it would be very difficult to become in anyway friendly with anyone. They knew that it could be dangerous for them. I had a number of African friends, but friends from other embassies, not Zaireans.

Q: It's the 28th of August, 1997. This is an oral history interview being continued with G. Clay Nettles. My name is Raymond Ewing. We are at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. I think when we stopped before which was some six weeks or so ago. You said or were about to say that one should not judge all of Africa by Zaire.

NETTLES: That's correct, Ray, but that was not my observation, but what other African diplomats told me. The reason why they said that was Zaire, at that time, was essentially a police state and very similar to the Eastern European countries in the old communist system and it was, therefore, impossible to get to know the local people.

Q: You were there from 1975 until '78. Mobutu was well ensconced. You were the economic counselor? The economy was in good shape, bad shape, terrible shape?

NETTLES: The economy was beginning to deteriorate. When I arrived, we saw the first symptoms. Zaire had been hailed as the most promising country in southern Africa other than South Africa itself. The word you heard most often was potential. Zaire had enormous potential in minerals and agricultural land and energy, you name it. However, they didn't take advantage of their potential. They abused it and corruption was rampant. By the time I left, it was obvious the country was in serious difficulty and it continued to go down hill ever since.

Q: Had at that time they rescheduled their foreign debt or was the United States continuing to provide aid at the time you were there?

NETTLES: That's a very interesting story. I was selected for Zaire by Ambassador Dean Hinton and two weeks before I arrived, he was declared persona non grata by Mobutu and I'm sure it was due to the fact that the United States had decided to suspend or cut off economic assistance to Zaire. Mobutu was corrupt, but he was extremely clever. He realized that the United States could not become involved in Angola, which it obviously wished to do, without his assistance. So he discovered a "plot" in which he accused the United States government and specifically Dean Hinton of being involved and declared him persona non grata. The United States government immediately sent back a former ambassador for a visit and resumed economic assistance to Mobutu and it continued the entire time I was there.

Q: We sent a new ambassador?

NETTLES: No, we sent a former ambassador, Sheldon Vance, who had served there before. He was just there to "investigate" and he recommended resuming aid.

Q: He was not sent as an accredited as ambassador?

NETTLES: No, Lannon Walker was the chargé for about six months and then Walter Cutler came out as ambassador.

Q: The reason that this could happen, as you say, was related to Angola and to the key strategic position that Zaire occupies in central Africa.

NETTLES: That's right. We couldn't have assisted factions in Angola without using Zaire as a base.

Q: Zaire is, of course, a tremendously large country. You were able to travel extensively around the country while you were there?

NETTLES: Yes, I was - fortunately, the military attache had a plane and I could go along with him. The internal transportation system within Zaire, air, road, and river, was terrible and was deteriorating rapidly.

Q: American business community was extensive or large in Kinshasa or more in other parts of the country?

NETTLES: The American business community was concentrated almost entirely within Kinshasa. General Motors, for example, had an assembly plant. Firestone manufactured tires. Citibank had an office. Compared to Europe, it was small, but for Africa it was extensive.

Q: I doubt it any of those things still exist 20 years later.

NETTLES: I doubt it also, Ray, but then again, of course, I haven't been there since I left in 1978.

Q: The mining industry - copper and other mineral extractions - was in the eastern and southern part of the country. Were there American interests in that as well at that time?

NETTLES: Not directly. An American Company, Morrison and Knudson, had been awarded a contract to build a power line from Inga which is between Kinshasa and the sea. They built an enormous dam. Morrison and Knudson did not build the dam, Italians did that, but Morrison and Knudson had the contract to build an eight hundred mile power line to take that power from Inga to Shaba, the former Katanga province. That was a five hundred million dollar contract. When it was awarded to the U. S. company, which was before I arrived, this was considered a real coup, because again the word was that Zaire had this enormous potential. Later when economic conditions turned sour, there was a lot of hindsight quarterbacking and it was said that the line shouldn't been built in the first place.

Q: Was it built by Morrison and Knudson?

NETTLES: The power line, yes, but it never really went into operation, because the economy had disintegrated to such an extent.

Q: Was it World Bank financed? Do you remember?

NETTLES: I believe so, Ray, maybe partially ExIm Bank supplied a major portion of the funding, but I don't recall the exact combination of the financing.

Q: Other than general economic reporting, were you involved with any complicated problems or issues at the time you were there or was, in the terms of the work of the economic section pretty standard?

NETTLES: Basically standard. Of course we did a lot of economic analysis to justify the economic assistance we were giving to Zaire. As I said before, the real justification was for political reasons. We did work very closely with Morrison and Knudson trying to help with their problems and they

had many of them installing the line. All of the American companies that were there had problems. They relied (in a country like Zaire) upon the embassy to assist them much more so than had they been in Europe. They really did need our assistance and we tried to supply it.

Q: They probably had problems that if they were in Europe, they wouldn't have had either.

NETTLES: Exactly.

Q: I think it is a great credit to you, Clay, to have been selected to be head of the economics section by Dean Hinton. Dean Hinton, certainly, was one of the most brightest and most active economic officers in the Foreign Service. He went on to be an ambassador many times, but I think he always thought of himself as an economist and an economic officer, but he had been forced to leave by the time you got there?

NETTLES: That's correct. He left two weeks before I arrived. The State Department held up my assignment and also that of the political counselor because we had both been selected by Ambassador Hinton, but after a week's review, they sent us out anyway. I'm sure I would have learned a lot if I had served under Ambassador Hinton, but I thoroughly enjoyed working under Lannon Walker and later under Walt Cutler although they didn't have the economic expertise that Dean Hinton did.

Q: But, as you say, much of the rationale for our presence, our activities and our interest in Zaire at that time and subsequently was largely for political reasons, and a lot of it was related to Angola.

NETTLES: That's true, Ray, but it shouldn't be overlooked that in the early '70s, Zaire was seen to have enormous economic potential. They simply didn't take advantage of it, but as a result of my three years there, I hate that word "potential" after what I saw in Zaire.

Q: What was the major problem— was it corruption and inefficiency or was it something else? Or, can you put your finger on just one problem?

NETTLES: There was a severe shortage of trained personnel. Corruption was a major problem, but Mobutu made one decision which, I think, had more to do with the situation than anything else. He nationalized everything in the country, even barber shops, that was owned by foreigners. It included all the stores and businesses of every type. These were then given to his cronies. It gave him immediate political support. In the majority of the cases, the people who were given these businesses didn't know how to operate them. A few of them brought in foreign partners and continued to operate. Most, once the stock of goods were sold, simply closed. Thus, the government so the government was not getting the revenue to maintain basic services such as transportation. The roads quickly became impassable and, I understand, the river system now is no longer open to regular motor boats. Air Zaire ceased to operate as an effective carrier. The infrastructure simply collapsed.

Q: How much of that was happening the three years you were there - '75-'78? The nationalizations had taken place earlier?

NETTLES: About 18 months prior.

Q: So you were really seeing the impact of decisions taken not too long before?

NETTLES: But, Zaire was a wealthy country so it didn't collapse and still hasn't completely collapsed. I understand it still functions in a certain fashion. For example, copper production while I was there was approximately 500,000 tons a year. I believe last year they produced 12,000 tons so you can see what has happened. And, copper was the main source of foreign exchange.

Q: At the time you were there? It was mostly exported out through where?

NETTLES: Originally the main route for export was the Bengala Railroad, which went through Angola, but, of course, that was closed due to their fighting in Angola. Some copper was exported via the river system within Zaire and some went through Zambia and then South Africa. That was also the main route to bring in supplies to that area.

Q: So mainly through South Africa? How about Mozambique? Probably not.

NETTLES: I don't think so. Mozambique was having its own problems.

Q: At that time, yes.

NETTLES: There was a good rail system which ran from Lubumbashi through Zambia and through South Africa and that was the principal way after the Bengala Railroad was closed.

WALTER L. CUTLER
Ambassador
Zaire (1975-1979)

Ambassador Walter L. Cutler was born in Boston and attended Wesleyan University, and later Fletcher University. He joined the Foreign Service in 1956. Ambassador Cutler served in the Cameroon, Algeria, Korea, Vietnam, Zaire, Iran, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

CUTLER: ...so I think that there has been a great appreciation for the fact that Mobutu has been able to run the place and to keep it from splitting apart, because I think that all along we've thought that secession, a breaking up of that artificially created country, would not be in our interest, so even today I see people are protesting the leadership of Mobutu. Last summer, I went to a reception here in Washington, and I had to thread my way through the demonstrators out front, who were shrieking for Mobutu's downfall.

There are still members of Congress who think that we should cut off aid, because it's so misused, and the people are abused, the human rights record is poor. I don't deny any of this. All the time I

was out there, this debate raged. And my position was: Look, it's not perfect; it's far from perfect, but it's what we've got, and we'd better be thankful that we've got even that out here in the way of leadership.

Q: You can't defeat somebody with nothing, or change something with nothing.

CUTLER: Well, it's not just that. Yes, you can't replace something with nothing. And the concern was that if we were in some way to oppose, or even actively seek to remove, the leadership of that country, by doing so we would assume ourselves a huge responsibility for what would follow. And there was *no* prospect of anything or anybody following. And if the country had returned to the bloody state of anarchy that it had been in, and that we had worked so hard to resolve, then we would have been responsible, in large part, for doing that.

Q: The whole time you were there in dealing with it from Washington, this was very much on your mind then?

CUTLER: Oh, sure, sure. For example, Steve Solarz was the Chairman of the Africa Subcommittee in the House of Representatives, and he was very, very upset about what he perceived as Mobutu's failure to lead the country in an effective way, and he thought we should cut off aid. He used to come out there, and we used to have long discussions about this.

And my position was, as I just told you, I said I could not recommend this, because there's nothing viable that we can recognize to take the place of the current leadership. Better to work with what we have and what we know than to simply launch off in a totally unknown and uncertain direction.

Even members of my own staff at the embassy were upset by the deterioration of social and economic conditions in the country and felt that we should put greater pressure on Mobutu. And some thought that, regardless of how much pressure, it wasn't going to change anything and, therefore, we should withdraw our support.

Q: Were you able to make any inroads, or were we basically giving aid and being almost an observer? Did we have any control over events?

CUTLER: Oh, yes. All the time I was there we sought to utilize what limited, quite frankly limited leverage we had. By that I mean a very limited aid program.

And don't forget, when I went out there we had just made the decision to stop our involvement in Angola. And by doing so, we had left Mobutu in a rather delicate and vulnerable situation. But even our aid was not of such significance that it could be used as an effective lever.

What was important, I think, to the leadership there was the public perception of American political support. Critics of Mobutu argued that if we cut off our aid and made it known that we were doing so because of our unhappiness with the way the country was being governed, very quickly the word would spread among the populace that the Americans were abandoning their close friend Mobutu, and that this would, in turn, stimulate opposition to him.

Or, put another way around, Mobutu might fear this perception of diminishing US support spreading within his country, and, therefore, he would do things that we wanted him to do to improve the economy for fear that we might cut off aid.

Basically, what we did was to try to work closely with the IMF in putting into place a reform program. This was our goal. We tied our aid, to a certain extent, to implementation of that program. And the program was not easy, because, like all IMF stabilization programs, it required the government to make certain decisions and take certain steps that are politically difficult. Like cutting back on the subsidization of bread, things like this, things that a good politician doesn't want to do. But we tried to recognize the political importance of this and, therefore, we tried to work closely with both the Fund and Mobutu.

Q: How did you get along with Mobutu personally? How did you find him as a person?

CUTLER: I got along quite well, I thought. Let me just say this: I think that nobody lacks respect for Mobutu as an astute political leader. Anybody who knows Zaire and its history I think appreciates the fact that, one way or another, this person has managed to hold the country together.

Anybody who has met Mobutu comes away rather impressed by the person's charisma -- he has it, no doubt about it. He's charming. He's articulate. He has a very, very strong sense of humor, sense of irony. He's a real African leader, and you sense it in his presence.

I saw a great deal of him. We communicated a great deal; we had a lot to talk about. Not all of it was pleasant, and so it required a fair exercise in diplomacy.

In almost all cases, I saw him alone. It was his call. Normally his Foreign Minister was not there. Nobody was there; therefore, I didn't take anybody. Consequently, I spent many hours alone with Mobutu.

And I went back and spent many more hours composing my own messages back to Washington, because there was no note-taker or anybody else who could help out.

All our conversations were conducted in French, often at his house, sometimes in his office, sometimes on his boat, and that's up the river. I met with him in Switzerland. I met with him in the Ivory Coast, where I had to deliver messages, presidential messages or whatever. And all of this over a period of four and a half years. So I got to know him quite well. And, while we had a lot of problems, I never lacked respect for his political prowess.

Q: How about when the Carter Administration came in? I was in South Korea at the time, and the human rights business (which I now think probably stands as a real monument to Carter), I must say, at the time we just thought: My God, this is really muddying up the waters. We have other problems here in South Korea. So this must have hit you particularly hard in Zaire. How did you handle this, I won't say sudden, switch, but obviously tremendous emphasis and focus on human rights in a country in which we were interested in keeping the man in power, and yet human rights were pretty low on his priority list?

CUTLER: Well, "sudden switch" is just about what it was.

Q: *How did you handle it?*

CUTLER: It was no surprise to Mobutu. He follows the political scene in the United States very closely.

Q: *He's well informed, then?*

CUTLER: He's very, very well informed. He starts his day with *Voice of America*. As a matter of fact, I learned that very quickly. I learned that I had to start my day early with *Voice of America*, because if there was something on the air that was of interest to the President or of concern to him, my phone was going to ring at 7:15 in the morning. So it was very difficult keeping ahead of Mobutu, with respect to developments in our own country. He has a very, very strong interest in media. He was a reporter once himself, before becoming President.

And it was very evident in the case of our presidential elections of 1976 that he had followed them closely enough so he knew very well that if Carter were elected, human rights was going to become much more of a center-stage issue than it had been before.

So it was not much of a surprise that I showed up on his doorstep after the election talking about human rights. It was good that he was already aware of this, because it made my job a little easier. Because we began to factor human rights into our policy in a way that it had not figured before.

Mobutu, of course, didn't think it was necessary, and he didn't think it was well advised. He would sometimes humor me about this new-found obsession with human rights. He would say, "Look at all the problems I have out here, what do you expect of me? Why don't you lean on some other countries, particularly ones that are not so friendly as I am? Why don't you concentrate on them?"

I remember at that time we were not having a very good time with Algeria. He picked something out of the press about human rights violations in Algeria and wondered why we hadn't addressed that problem in a more vociferous way, as we had with him. So he would sort of make light of it sometimes, but there was no question that our points were getting across, because he kept referring to human rights, even though sometimes in a fairly joking way.

But it was on his mind, it was very much on his mind. And that was good, because he knew that we cared, and that he couldn't go on doing certain things without our taking notice and perhaps factoring it in to our own approach to his needs.

Q: *Do you think it had any effect?*

CUTLER: Oh, yes, I think so. And I would like to think so.

Q: *Sort of my looking in some reflection, I think that probably more than almost any President, Carter, in his short time, by focusing on this one point, really did have an effect.*

CUTLER: These things are difficult to measure. I think that in the case of Zaire you probably would have to measure them in terms of what abuses there might have been, but did not really occur, because of the leadership's knowledge that we cared. And you can't measure things that don't happen, really, very easily.

Certainly, I would like to think that we had an effect when Mobutu arrested, tried, and convicted, and gave the death penalty to his Foreign Minister. This was a highly respected individual, and he was accused of treason. They had a trial, which was partly public. (I was in there pressing for a public trial, incidentally, and they put it on the radio, at least portions of it on the radio, which surprised everybody.)

But then the court gave the Minister the death penalty. I, along with a couple of my other colleagues, appealed for human rights considerations, and, in fact, he was not executed. As a matter of fact, he was made Prime Minister a year later! I don't take credit for that.

Q: There was a flare-up, wasn't there, in the old Katanga, which is now called Shaba, at the time? How did we view that, and what was our involvement with that?

CUTLER: That came out of the blue. That was, oddly, the first major foreign policy crisis of the Carter Administration. It was in the early spring of 1977, when, suddenly, reports came in that a fairly large, heavily armed military force had crossed the border from Angola and was marching on the capital of Zaire's copper belt, in what you said is the old Katanga Province.

And, don't forget, this was at the time when a new Marxist regime was being established in Angola, right next door, with the help of a fairly sizeable force of Cubans. So there was a lot of concern about what had happened, finally, in Angola.

And now, all of a sudden, it looked as if that new Marxist regime might, in fact, be attacking its neighbor and going for Africa's jugular right off the bat. Going for the copper belt to close down the copper mines, which, given Zaire's rather precarious economic situation, might actually bring down the government rather quickly. That was the perception; at least that was what, in the worst-case scenario, might be happening. As a matter of fact, there were reports that Cuban troops were among the attacking force.

It was in a very remote area of Zaire. Communications were difficult. Washington was screaming for information on this. It was very difficult for us to know what was going on, even for Mobutu's government, really, to have a good handle on what was going on way down there on the border. All we knew was that there was a force moving into the copper belt.

The whole question, for us, was how serious a threat was this, and was this, in fact, Soviet-inspired, supported. Were there Cubans, surrogates and so forth? It was a challenge to our intelligence community, and one which was only partially met, simply because of limited resources. We just didn't know what was going on.

Anyway, what happened was that this drive was finally blunted. Mobutu, in his own very adept political way, appealed not only for our help, but also for help from other African states. The Moroccans responded with troops. It was viewed somewhat in a Cold War context, yes.

It turned out that most of the invading force were what were known as the Katangan Gendarmes, and these were those who, back in the 60s, had tried to set up an independent state of Katanga, had seceded from the newly-created Congo state, and had fled to Angola. They had been living in Angola for a number of years, having taken sanctuary there. They saw their chance to come back. Angola had become independent. Zaire had become economically weaker. And so in the hope, I think, that this would cause an uprising in Kinshasa, as well as elsewhere around the country, they attacked, with the idea of cutting off the copper belt and, therefore, bringing down the government. It didn't work.

Q: What were you doing during this? Were you conferring with Mobutu and getting instructions from Washington? Was Mobutu asking us for things?

CUTLER: Oh, yes. He wanted military assistance. And for the new Carter government this was very difficult. Very difficult to respond, because, as you recall, the platform that Carter came in on was one of reduction of conventional arms, and peacefully resolving regional disputes, and all the rest. It was just a terrible headache for this new Administration.

Everybody in Washington woke up one morning to reports of an invasion of Shaba. Nobody knew even where Shaba was. Who were these people, anyway? And there were some rather wild reports about Russian tanks and Cuban infantry and so on.

I think, to our government's credit, we resisted a total knee-jerk reaction. Nobody wanted to see Zaire suddenly come apart; but, at the same time, people weren't satisfied that we had a good picture of what was going on. And so we waited.

And, yes, we worked very closely with both the Zairian government and our own in trying to create that picture. Mobutu obviously wanted help, major help. Our government decided that we would respond with limited assistance, particularly logistical and non-lethal.

That was quite an issue then: What is lethal and non-lethal? Is it fair to make it just non-lethal? In other words, we wouldn't ship in guns. We would help out with airlifting and so forth. As a matter of fact, I think we mounted the largest airlift that we had ever undertaken in Africa, in support of Moroccans and others who were actually sending in troops.

Yes, the embassy was fully involved. And we had a consulate in Lubumbashi, which was even closer. But you couldn't really get down into that area safely.

And so, through various means, intelligence and otherwise, I think we probably gained the best possible picture of what was going on, in a matter of days, which enabled us to determine, for example, that the reports of Russian and Cuban direct involvement were suspect at best and maybe not at all accurate. So Washington, eventually, was able to give a positive response, but one that was not an over-response.

Q: So you found yourself in a position of trying to keep things cool while we found out what was happening. Were you inundated by the international media at that point?

CUTLER: Yes. But I must admit to you, Stu, that I now tend to get the two Shabas mixed up a bit. You see, there was Shaba invasion Number One, and then there was Shaba invasion Number Two. Number Two came a year later.

Q: This would be '77.

CUTLER: Shaba Number One was a force moving across the border toward the capital of the copper belt, Kolwezi. But it moved slowly and it never quite made it. It eventually receded and the crisis passed.

Shaba Number Two was probably even more of a surprise, when, suddenly, overnight, Kolwezi was occupied by a force coming again, the people thought, from Angola. A force that had apparently learned a lesson from the previous year.

Rather than making a conventional military attack, going up one of the main roads with trucks and all that, they had infiltrated through a more circuitous route and, all of a sudden, using guerrilla tactics, had invested the capital and controlled it, and had literally taken this copper-mining town hostage and cut off all communications.

They had a large number of Belgians, French, and some Americans held in that town. So people woke up and, suddenly, Kolwezi was in the enemy's clutches.

This was even more of a crisis, in a way, particularly since, as you pointed out before in this interview, there was great concern for human lives.

Well, there were a lot of civilians there who were being held captive. And, in fact, there was one particularly gory scene, where a number of civilians, I've forgotten how many, dozens, were slaughtered in a school house. For one week, the world was riveted on how to rescue these hundreds and hundreds of Europeans and some Americans being held captive in Kolwezi. And, of course, copper production was shut down along with everything else in the region.

This was crisis management in its ultimate form, as far as I was concerned. Here, again, we learned something from Shaba One, but this was a different kind of scenario. I worked around-the-clock with my Belgian and French colleagues. We met in the middle of the night, I don't know how many times. It was a rescue. It was how to rescue and liberate this town, and particularly after the reports came out of a major slaughter.

I remember an American missionary had managed to escape. He came to the embassy and we debriefed him. We wanted to know who were these people who came into his house. They were armed, they were in uniform. Were they speaking Spanish? Were they Cuban? From what we could divine, these were, again, the Katangans, the Gendarmes.

Again, the whole question of Russian-Cuban involvement was very key to our own government in determining how to respond. But we had a humanitarian concern that we didn't have before, and that was rescuing these people.

Well, it was a major political issue for the Belgians, and their parliament debated it rather intensively and endlessly. Meanwhile, the French took action, with our help. We and the French mounted an attack, a paratroop drop on the city. Within a day or so, the whole place was liberated. We, and particularly the French, took a lot of credit for this.

We had dozens of American press in Kinshasa, who were not permitted to go into the "war zone." I went to Mobutu, I remember, and told him that keeping the whole press quarantined in the hotel and not allowing them to go near the war zone, or even to be briefed by the government, was a mistake. They were beginning to file very negative stories.

I would like to think that I helped persuade him to do what he did the next day. He routed them all out of the hotel at five in the morning and loaded them on a couple of C-130s, and he, personally, went with the press and landed at Kolwezi Airport to show that the airport, at least, had been liberated. The town was still occupied, and that was a mile or less down the road. And then he flew them back at the end of the day. It was a rather courageous and imaginative way of doing it. But, I'll tell you, it did the trick.

See, Mobutu's concern was that he didn't want everybody, including his own people, to think that the government was about ready to fold and that this was a fatal blow to Zairian security. And by landing the plane (he was at the controls himself, along with the pilot) right at the airport in the middle of this siege (it's typical of the kind of imaginative politics which Mobutu undertakes, very effective), it reassured everybody that the government had things halfway under control: Don't worry, it will be taken care of. And, in fact, it was.

Q: We had this Dragon Rouge business, back in the old Stanleyville time, when the Belgian paratroopers came in, in which we gave them airlift support, too. This was, what, '65 or something like that. The response usually seems to be: The Americans will supply airplanes, and the French or the Belgians will drop down in there. Did you sort of keep a paratroop plan tucked away? This seems to be a major response. Before this happened, were you in consultation with, say, the French or the Belgians about: If there is another problem?

CUTLER: Yes, I was, in a general way. But, quite frankly, the failure of the first Shaba invasion led us to believe that it was unlikely it would occur again, although it was recognized that that force had retreated back across the border intact. There was never really much fighting. So it was there.

I think we tended to relax a bit when we determined that it was really not a Soviet ploy. The Cubans were not involved, to any extent that we could determine. It was a local thing. As I recall, there were communications at high levels. The Soviets said: "Look, we're not behind this, and we don't have any interest in undermining Zaire in this way and so forth."

So we tended to doubt that it would happen again. And we doubted the viability of the force, with respect to attacking, because the area had been fortified to a great extent during the intervening year. But I think you would probably have to call it an intelligence failure of sorts, because they changed their tactics, managed to infiltrate, came right into Kolwezi and took it in one night. So there wasn't an awful lot of contingency planning during the time between the two invasions.

Q: Were you involved in the contingency plan once it started, as far as arranging for the airlift and all that?

CUTLER: Yes.

Q: Things must have moved very rapidly, didn't they?

CUTLER: Oh, yes, round-the-clock, round-the-clock. And it was a race against the clock. Because, after those first reports about this slaughter, we had no assurance the Katangans (who were making demands, they wanted the government to surrender and all this sort of thing) wouldn't undertake a major slaughter of the whole population. And, as I say, there were Americans there, not many, but it was a major concern of how to handle this. It was really a hostage kind of situation.

Q: Absolutely. Did you consult with your French colleague on this?

CUTLER: All the time.

Q: Was this more or less determined, really, in Washington and Paris?

CUTLER: Well, no, it was going on in both places. We had a lot to do with it there. I was in constant touch with the Zairian government leadership. It was all worked out.

Q: So they were pushing for this as we were, too.

CUTLER: Not necessarily. There was a tendency, I think, for the Zairian government to try to convey the idea that: Look, we can handle it. Because, when you think about it, any sovereign government is a little sensitive about having an operation carried on by outside forces, which it, in effect, cannot do. So some of our internal talks there were rather extended and delicate.

Q: So I wonder if we could talk a bit about some of the other things there. In the first place, how well did you feel you were served by the CIA, as far as in this fast-moving situation there? This is an unclassified interview, of course.

CUTLER: As to how well I was served from the standpoint of their utility of input in providing information that was necessary for policy decisions, I think their performance was satisfactory. I guess I'd say that. I don't really recall any particular problems along that line.

Q: What was your impression of the aid program there? In many ways, we're looking at aid in underdeveloped countries, and there is some sort of revisionist feeling about it. Did it do more harm than good? Or was it really working, as far as you saw it, in Zaire?

CUTLER: Well, I think it did some good. I don't remember the exact figures, but considering the size of the country, the size of the population, and the needs of the people, it, obviously, was not very large. I suppose if you made a list of dollar amounts that we were providing to African countries, the aid program in Zaire would be among the larger ones. And yet, when you look at the population and the expanse of the country, it wasn't really that significant.

It was important in our bilateral relationship for political, as well as economic, reasons. And I think that's true of many African countries. They look at our aid program probably with disappointment that it's not much larger, considering how rich we are. But, at the same time, they attach a fairly high political significance to the continuation of the program, because it shows that we care. I think that it was of political significance, particularly since there were harsh critics of the Mobutu regime, particularly in our Congress. I know that there were members, including the Chairman of the Africa Subcommittee of the House...

Q: Who was that?

CUTLER: Steve Solarz, who at the time was the Chairman of the Africa Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He was very concerned about the nature of the government in Zaire, primarily from the standpoint of human rights. He felt that much more could have been done and should have been done by the government for the people there. That this was a country which is far from destitute; a country with tremendous resources. That the country, basically, was being mismanaged by the government, and that there was corruption at the top. This was his view of it, that there was corruption and mismanagement of resources, a lack of concern for the individual.

And I know that he was one of a number in the Congress who were skeptical (to put it mildly) of the utility and the advisability of our continuing to support the Mobutu government with an aid program. So, in other words, there was a very definite and discernible political dimension to our aid program to Zaire.

The Administration looked at it in a different way. While recognizing deficiencies in the way the country, and particularly the economy, was being managed, the Administration tended to look at the hard options involved.

One option would be to cut off aid, as recommended by certain members of the Congress and other critics of the Mobutu regime. This option was rejected, with respect to how U.S. interests would or would not be served by cutting off aid.

Is this the way to induce political, as well as economic and fiscal, reform? Do you threaten to cut off aid? Or do you actually cut off aid in order to get something more out of a government which feels that, while it's not perfect, it's nevertheless doing better than we think it is? This option was not adopted.

I, as Ambassador, recommended against adoption of that option. I could not see how American interests could be served. In the first place, our aid program was not that significant. So if we cut it off, it wasn't going to really hurt the people that much, and it wasn't going to hurt the government that much.

There were other sources of aid. The Belgians and the French and others all had programs, which, I imagine, were larger than ours. But, beyond that, the political signal which a cutoff of aid would have sent, I don't believe would have been heeded in a helpful way.

Mobutu certainly cared about his image in the United States. Certainly, some of the opponents of that regime within Zaire would have seized upon a cutoff of aid, and this might actually have increased the amount of opposition.

But, basically, I could not see anything but negative results of such a move. There were other ways to encourage and try to induce reform, which I thought should be tried first, and that the cutoff of aid should have been left as the ultimate and last step if all else failed. So I argued against that. I did not agree with Congressman Solarz on this point. I saw it in a different way, and so did the Administration.

Q: Isn't this a rather typical thing that happens, that Congress thinks in drastic terms? We're going through the same thing today in regard to the Soviet Union and Lithuania. It plays better and it's emotional and all, but it's up to the Administration to say: Ok, but what will this mean, and what will this accomplish?

CUTLER: Oh, precisely. The Administration really has the responsibility for carrying on relations over the long term with a country and looking after U.S. interests.

I think some members of Congress fully realize that they can advocate this or that step, but they don't really take responsibility for carrying it out. It was an easy thing to say in those days: We disapprove of the way the country is being run. We disapprove of our money being used to contribute to the running of the country in that wrongful way. Therefore, let's put it someplace else where it's more useful.

You can say that and take your seat, and you know it's not going to happen, because that's not the Administration's view. But you've made your point. You've gone on record as having stood up for what's right, as against what's wrong. And life goes on.

I think that had we taken that step, we would have risked exacerbating an already difficult situation in Zaire. And I think anybody who remembered the early days of the old "Congo Problem," back in the early '60s when we, together with the United Nations and other governments in the West, worked so hard to put together anything that looked like a government in this very anarchic and chaotic situation, would be sobered by the thought that it wasn't so long ago. And that if you actually take steps that might be construed as trying to bring down the current government, then it might not be far-fetched to think that this could be a return to anarchy. If we want to flirt with the return to the anarchy of the early '60s, we'd better think long and seriously about doing so.

Q: So you're saying we had this country of the different tribes, the different languages, 80 more languages and all.

CUTLER: And all of that. Like most African countries, the boundaries had been artificially drawn. It had been catapulted into independence probably with less preparation than in most other African countries. There were a handful, if that, of Zairians who had had any higher education at the time of independence.

In other words, what I'm saying is that it was a very difficult birth, and the country is still young. Because of this, I think that we had to temper some of our unhappiness with the way it was being managed by the realization that it was still young, that it's not an easy place to govern.

And that for whatever faults he may have (and certainly he does have them), Mobutu has been a political genius. I think I mentioned that the last time. I think everybody recognizes that he has been an absolute political genius to retain leadership the way he has, given that situation and given the difficulties that country has gone through. On the economic and financial side, yes, sure, I think that much more could and should be done.

Q: When you say the Administration, did you find yourself sort of in accord with the African Bureau and the National Security Council? Everybody was pretty much feeling that this was what you really had to do to go along, but try to improve in increments how the Zairian government dealt rather... Or were there sort of opponents within the Executive body who were saying we should...

CUTLER: I don't recall there were many opponents of any consequence within the Administration. I think that there was a realization that it was a very touchy time in Central Africa. Angola had just come into being as an independent state, but with a Marxist government. We were still concerned in those days about Soviet intentions in Africa.

We realized that Zaire was vulnerable, was economically weak. It wouldn't take much to touch off a fire there, and nobody wanted to start playing around with matches, such as trying to undermine the existing government in Zaire, particularly in those circumstances.

We had some very direct interests in Zaire. It was a source of minerals, particularly cobalt. It was, I think, our chief supplier of cobalt, and it had a lot of other minerals; if these were in some way to fall into what was then viewed as the Soviet orbit, it would be very contrary to our interests.

So I think that, if you will, there was a certain Cold War context in which people looked at Zaire in those days and thought: You know, this country's too important not to support. And, basically, Mobutu's global orientation was very much in accord with ours. As I said, we were concerned about Soviet intentions in adjacent Angola, where there were a fairly large number of Cuban troops. In Africa it doesn't take much in the way of a military force to cause trouble and instability. So I think there was pretty wide recognition within the Administration.

Where you found your opposition to our cooperating with Mobutu's regime was primarily in certain pockets among the liberal Senators and Congressmen on the Hill, particularly on the House

side, among certain academics, human rights advocates. Even a few people on my own staff in Kinshasa had grave misgivings, on human rights grounds, about our continuing to cooperate and support a government. Yes, as I recall, also in the State Department's Bureau for Human Rights there was perhaps...

Q: *Patt Derian.*

CUTLER: Yes, Patt Derian. That was probably where the most outspoken expression of concern came.

Q: *During this same period, I was in South Korea and we were having exactly the same thing in a way. You know, human rights were there and we were concerned, but we had other fish to fry concerning the very definite military threat from the North.*

CUTLER: But even our human rights people were not going to the extent of saying: Let's cut off aid. It was a fairly genuine and responsible kind of concern. It manifested itself more likely in such things as: How far in the annual human rights report do you go in detailing human rights violations?

And, of course, that's always an interesting exercise. The use of one word or another, or even an adjective, becomes almost a question of policy. I do recall some interesting discussions with the Department with respect to that report.

But nobody within the Administration that I can recall was advocating any of what I would call drastic action, such as cutting off aid. They were more concerned about: How can we be most effective in convincing the leadership to move fairly rapidly toward fairly extensive economic and political reforms in the country? That was the challenge for our policy, and that was the challenge to me personally out in Kinshasa.

Q: *How successful do you think the mission was in bringing about some economic administrative reforms?*

CUTLER: I think we got a good start, because we encouraged the leadership to cooperate with the IMF in adopting a stabilization program.

Now what this meant was some pretty tough decisions, taking some specific actions, which in the short run would be unpopular and which risked creating some political instability. You've seen this around the world. Some of the pills were pretty bitter. President Mobutu was reluctant to take any steps that he thought were ill- advised or were rash.

So it was a cooperative effort. Our government, along with the French and the Belgians, British and so on, were working to support the IMF's effort to put in a stabilization program that meant something, and, eventually, that happened.

We also discussed certain political reforms. That was a much more sensitive matter, and there, perhaps, we made less progress. One of my jobs was to make sure that the leadership there knew

that we cared about how the country was being run, not only economically and financially, but also politically. In other words -- human rights.

I think I mentioned last time, Stu, that when I went out there, I was appointed by Gerald Ford, and then a year after I got there, Jimmy Carter came in, and there was a much greater emphasis on the human rights element of our foreign policy, particularly in Zaire. So I found myself addressing this human rights issue much more frequently, directly, and forcefully, on instructions from Washington, than I had when I first came out there.

Q: How well do you find you were served by your staff? What was your impression, both at the consulates and at the embassy?

CUTLER: Quite well, in general. Kinshasa was not a popular post from the standpoint of people volunteering to go and serve there. We always had trouble recruiting people, but once they arrived, they found the substantive issues challenging, and they found personal life much better than they thought it would be.

In other words, I think it's one of those posts (and there are many in our service) that have a reputation which is not altogether positive. It's probably because of all of the stereotypes and images which we acquired earlier. And, here again, I'm talking about the blood and anarchy of the old Congo, the Civil War and so on. It was a hellhole for quite some years. I think that we remember those images, and then when an assignment is suggested to Zaire, we tend to resist.

So one arrives with low expectations. And, because those expectations are so low, I think one tends to be pleasantly surprised. We had a lot of people who asked to extend. The Peace Corps (we had a very large Peace Corps contingent in Zaire) had one of the highest extension rates of any country in Africa. And life was tough on those volunteers, because conditions in the countryside were not very good.

But, coming back to the question of staff, I had a good staff. I was blessed with competent and effective country team members, including the DCMs.

I think that if there was any problem, that related to one particular Political Counselor I had who disagreed, honestly disagreed (I think, "honestly") with our policy. And he was one of those I mentioned earlier, who felt that we should do a lot more to induce reform, and who frankly felt that Mobutu was incapable or unwilling to effect reforms and that, therefore, we should start thinking about alternatives. In other words, a rather extreme position. He, in effect, disagreed with me with regard to policy.

I suggested that if he disagreed, he should use established channels that we have for sending in differing views to the Department, which he did. He used the dissent channel, and I think he was disappointed that he didn't get more of a reaction from the Department. Eventually he left the service. Most of all these problems came out on the front page of *The Washington Post*. You know, this happens.

Q: Well, isn't this difficult? After all, we call it a "country team," and it is a team, and at a certain point there may be a dispute about how we should go, but after all, your Political Counselor is in charge of your Political Section, and if, after a rational discussion and looking at it, the Political Counselor feels we should go right and we feel we should go left, or whatever you want to call it, it really doesn't work very well to have such a person there, does it? I'm not talking about authority, I'm just talking about management.

CUTLER: No, it's very difficult. It was very difficult. And, frankly, it meant that I had to do a lot more work myself, because I could not accept some of the work that he produced. As you know, every message that goes back to Washington from an embassy goes out over the Ambassador's name. And some of his views and recommendations I disagreed with, and would not send out over my name. So I suggested he use the established channel for sending out over his own name, which he did.

Q: But this does hurt the effectiveness of a mission, doesn't it?

CUTLER: It doesn't help it.

Q: How much use did you find the efforts of USIA there, in that type of situation and country with basically a one-man rule and all, in a sort of terribly fragmented society? Is there much it can do?

CUTLER: I think there is a lot that can be done. Probably one of the most effective operations that USIA carried on was in the area of English language training.

We had an organization called ZALI, the Zairian American Language Institute, I think is what it was called. It was right downtown on the main street, and that place was just humming with activity. A lot of our spouses were there teaching English. There was this tremendous thirst for the English language from Zairians looking for a way of getting ahead and all the rest. I thought it was a very effective way for the United States to be represented, and it brought a lot of Americans and Zairians from all walks of life together. I'm a great proponent, anyway, of teaching English abroad. I know that USIA has moved away from that a bit.

Also, I'm a great advocate of USIA libraries, and many of those have been closed down for security reasons or whatever. I think that's unfortunate. I thought the libraries were always very useful. In general, I thought that since you had such a large population, and, given the centralized nature of the government, that there was a real challenge for USIA, but a real role to play reaching out to the people. You had to do it carefully.

We had two consulates there, incidentally: the consulate general in Lubumbashi, in the copper belt, and then another one in the Kivu area. That one was sort of opened and closed. I think, at the time I was there, it was in the process of being closed for budgetary reasons, but I understand it opened again. But it was the more marginal of the two constituent posts.

But certainly the one in Lubumbashi was very good. We have had an extraordinary string of Consuls General who have gone through that post. By that, I mean they have gone on to higher and very significant jobs in our Foreign Service. Our current Ambassador in Zaire, Bill Harrop, was

the Consul out in Lubumbashi way back when. I think it's interesting: If somebody were to just look up the names of all those Consuls who headed up Lubumbashi, you would find that nine out of ten of them have gone on to be Ambassadors.

Q: One I can think of, when I was in INR, was Terry McNamara, who went out there at the height of the troubles.

CUTLER: Dan Simpson, Parker Borg. It's a whole Hall of Fame, really. I don't know why. It's always had the reputation for being a difficult post in an important area, that part of Zaire having been in a secessionist mode during the civil war, and, as I say, that's the heart of the minerals. But, anyway, that post, during the Shaba invasions, was key. A lot of our information came from that post, because it was there on the front line. So, basically, I think that it's been well staffed and I was well served.

THOMAS N. HULL III
Public Affairs Trainee, USIS
Kinshasa (1976-1977)

Ambassador Hull was born in New York and raised in Massachusetts. He was educated at Dickenson College and Columbia University. After service in the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone, Mr. Hull joined the United States Information Service Foreign Service, serving both in Washington, DC and abroad. His foreign posts include Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Pretoria, Ouagadougou, Mogadishu, Prague, Lagos and Addis Ababa, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. In 2004 he was named United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone, where he served until 2007. Ambassador Hull was interviewed by Daniel F. Whitman in 2010.

Q: Well fascinating. You were assigned to Kinshasa.

HULL: I was assigned to Kinshasa, went to Kinshasa as a public affairs trainee, which meant that in those days in USIA the idea was that you would rotate among all the offices of a USIS operation and of the embassy as well, which rarely worked out because there were usually vacancies and you had to plug people in to fill vacancies. But in my case it actually did work out pretty well. I had my very first PAO was a fellow named Jim Connolly. Jim was a fast track riser in the foreign service. Kinshasa was a major post at that time. There were two great civil wars in Africa in the 60's: Biafra in Nigeria, and the Congo civil war. The U.S. had put Mobutu in power pretty much and strongly supported him. So we had a major USIA operation there with a lot of branch posts in places like Kisangani and Lubumbashi. The intention was for me to be a public affairs trainee for one year in Kinshasa and then move on and become the Branch PAO in Kisangani. We had a pretty good and interesting staff. We had a CAO by the name of John Keller, who was a dedicated cultural affairs officer and then left and became a professor at Penn State in American studies. We had a vacant ACAO position, so I spent more time as the exchanges officer than anything else while at post there. but I also worked with our AIO, who I guess was acting IO for a lot of the time. Her name was Rosemary Crockett. So we got to become good colleagues there. Eventually an IO came in, a

fellow by the name of Fred Lasore. We had a great program officer, a guy by the name of Jim Hogan. I got to know his brother pretty well, John Hogan who was a Peace Corps director in Ouagadougou later on when I served there. He became chief of staff with the Peace Corps which gave me a nice connection with the Peace Corps for awhile. These were wonderful people to work with, great colleagues. But Jim Connolly was pulled from post because they wanted him to be PAO in Moscow which was really a big job in USIA in the 1970's. They sent him off to learn Russian. He had no aptitude for languages. He never succeeded in getting his 3-3 in Russian, so they decided to break his assignment. He decided to retire from USIA and go work at his alma mater Notre Dame. He was replaced by another PAO by the name of Robert Dumas. Robert Dumas claimed to be an illegitimate descendant of the great Alexandre Dumas, and was quite a character. He came from DCM in Ouagadougou to be PAO in Kinshasa. He always felt he had been stabbed in the back and was always resentful that he was not made ambassador even though he had what was then one of the major USIA PAO positions at a very substantial post. We also had a regional librarian there, we also had an American secretary, Adele Sorentino. It was a very active post. In fact my programming highlight while I was there was John Hope Franklin coming out as an academic specialist. I was very attentive to John Hope Franklin and by coincidence my mother-in-law was visiting. John Hope Franklin, if you know him at all, he loves orchids and is a real naturalist when it comes to plants and everything else. I remember since both he and my mother-in-law were from Illinois, sending them off to the botanic gardens a couple of hours south of Kinshasa. You could not imagine two people more unlike, but they really hit it off and had a great time. But that was one highlight of working there, We had a very interesting ambassador, Walt Cutler. Ambassador Cutler went on to become ambassador to Saudi Arabia and other things, a very distinguished career. While I was there I learned of some of the agency sensitivities. We had a USAID director there, very substantial organization. They had a mission director by the name of Fermino Spencer, who always felt he was more important than the ambassador, one because he had a lot of resources and a big operation, but two his personal foreign service rank was higher than the ambassador's foreign service rank. This was always a tension but it really became a tension that drew everyone's attention in the mission when Fermino decided that because he outranked the ambassador he should start flying the American flag on his car driving around town. Whereupon Fermino was called on the carpet and told that he could take the flag off his car or he could leave post. So that was an introduction to the USAID-State Department tension which as a USIA person was interesting to watch from another dimension.

Also very memorable was my first weekend there. I had a friend from the A-100 course who had arrived a couple of months before me as one of the junior political officers. Our first weekend there he and his wife decided to take my wife and myself on a picnic to the countryside along the Zaire River. At the time the Shaba war was going on, and the borders were closed to the country. What we didn't know is he was driving us to a place that was under the control of Mobutu's notorious paratroopers. When we showed up in our embassy vehicle without a driver, just sort of on our own, they sort of took us hostage until we would pay them off. Of course neither of us or our spouses really wanted to pay them off, but my friend's spouse was very pregnant, so that was a consideration. So we spent hours, at least a couple of hours with these guys haggling with them. They said, "Well you must have something for us, otherwise we will probably arrest you as spies or something." "I am sorry we don't have anything for you," we said. At the same time unfortunately a Zairian commercial truck came wandering down the road into their area. Once the guys saw the soldiers he immediately did a u-turn because he saw these guys were going to steal all

of the goods out of his truck. So they grabbed me and they told me follow that truck. With a gun pointed to my head I was told to drive the vehicle and catch the truck. I knew that it probably wouldn't be a good idea to catch the truck because if I did they probably wouldn't want a witness to what they were doing. So I very slowly drove, and they drove off. But anyway they eventually brought me back. I think in the end my friend had a couple of packs of cigarettes, and so for the price of a couple of packs of cigarettes they ultimately gave us our freedom. I thought nothing of it. I thought this happened all the time in the foreign service.

Q: It did happen to me in Kinshasa in 1980 just as a visitor, but did this change your thinking about a future in the foreign service?

HULL: Oh no, I thought it was part of the great adventure of Africa.

Q: Would you have given the cigarettes up front knowing what you know now?

HULL: No, absolutely not. I was kind of miffed that he gave them anything personally.

Q: Wait, they would have killed you but for a couple of packs of cigarettes.

HULL: Well we were the Americans and if they had thought of it they would have been in bog trouble. But at the time the day was moving and the sun was settling down. That was problematic. So much so, I thought nothing of it. My friend reported it to the Ambassador or the DCM or something. After that they decided that people would not be allowed to travel outside of Kinshasa without notifying their RSO or their section head as to where they were.

Q: so you were the cause of...

HULL: So that was my first weekend overseas in the foreign service. Enroute to post I stopped in Sierra Leone to work on my doctoral dissertation research because I hadn't given up at that point. I had a good time with Ambassador Michael Samuels who I still keep a little bit in touch with. He was oddly a political appointee of the, which administration, it must have been the Ford or the Nixon. In '76 that would have been Ford. Ford was until '77 so he was still in office. I don't think Carter was in office. Anyway, Michael Samuels then left because he was a political appointee, and went to work for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce running international programs I believe it was. But anyway, two other highlights of my time in Kinshasa which was only one year. Because I was a public affairs trainee and I was supposed to become BPAO in Kisangani. The consulate up in Kisangani had actually been closed a couple of years before. But we kept the USIS branch post going. We also had a branch post in Lubumbashi where there was this terrible BPAO by the name of Neil Walsh who tried to right things.

Q: I think there is a note of irony here. Neil is a good friend and very much active.

HULL: But Neil and I looked a bit alike in those days. I had my hair and we were both about the same age. Whenever he would come to Kinshasa, the Economic Counselor would say to me, "Hello Neil." "No I am not Neil; I am Tom." So I guess we looked somewhat similar back then. But I was sent up to Kisangani to close the post. They decided who is the most appropriate person

to go up there and face the wrath of the FSNs and fire them all, and I think they decided it was the public affairs trainee. We had an executive officer at post who could have done it, but in point of fact they sent me up, and Jill and I lived in Kisangani for a month because it took that long to destroy everything that should be destroyed, give away the books to the university there, sell the new furniture for the library and the office (which were purchased, I believe, by a local casino), and to fire the employees, So it wasn't a happy experience, but it was an interesting experience. We would go down to a local bar because there weren't a lot of places to go. There were places run by Greek Cypriots in town, mainly casino bars. And we would hear from old Belgians at the bar about what it was like in the 1960's when the American consul had to eat the American flag in town square or else be at risk of losing his life. They would show me where the priests and nuns had been shot. Across the river there had been the massacre of the Belgian priests and nuns, the rape of the nuns. So, about the only touristic highlight was to go over and see the bloody wall where everybody had been lined up and shot. It was a pretty depressing place to be. There was a very active program of the Rockefeller Foundation at the university there, so there were a number of Americans still in Kisangani. We would hear about all the former BPAO's and I must say one who they spoke very highly of always was John Archibald whom we saw yesterday. I could tell from the records at the post that John had been a very active and excellent Branch Public Affairs Officer. Of course, Kisangani was old Stanleyville which is why they had all those massacres. If you were to teach a course in African literature I always felt you could do a course called the Novels of Kisangani with Heart of Darkness, A Bend in the River, and other novels that have been written about this exotic place. So I was glad to have a month there, but I think that a month was enough. There were always overtones of tension, and I think I told you I had to tell the regional governor that I was closing the post. That meant no more official American presence in Kisangani.

Q: No fun.

HULL: So I had to do that, and went over to tell him, but not being entirely confident in my French I took my French and English dictionary with me in case I had to pull it out. I also took my supply of presentation books and such materials from USIS to sweeten the message. But it turned out Mobutu's wife had died the night before, so actually I sat cooling my heels for a few hours while they dealt with that emergency because of the real fear the country would dissolve. Because she was always seen as the brains behind the throne in Zaire, Mama Mobutu, as she was known, was the cleverer of the two. I did see him. I gave him the unfortunate news, but the Government was preoccupied with the death of Mama Mobutu. It was written up and I probably have some newspaper articles from the papers at that time about how Monsieur Jill had come and announced that the office was being closed. That was because it was my wife's French English dictionary, and it said Jill Hull on the cover where she had written her name lest she lose her dictionary. In Zaire your first name is always your family name, so they assumed that must be true for Americans as well. So I became Monsieur Jill. I felt this is great. I am anonymous. I have given this horrible message and if anybody resents it they will be looking for Monsieur Jill.

Q: Something you might have done on purpose.

HULL: Right. So having achieved this unfortunate task, we went back to Kinshasa. I was hoping to take the boat down the river, but I ended up on Air Zaire which was also known as air scare. And it was fascinating. I remember the pilots coming on and saying, "Monsieurs et Madames Nous

avons un problem.” We wondered what kind of problem there was, but we were half hour out. They said, “We are going to have to circle back. We don’t know what the problem is.” So we circled back for about 15 minutes, and then they came back on. It was in French. “We think we solved the problem, so they turned around again and went to Kinshasa.” We thought, we sure hope so. Travel by air in Zaire at that time was fascinating. Parker Borg was the consul general in Lubumbashi. He later became an ambassador. He wrote a famous report. In those days we did what we called airgrams as well as telegrams that were sent back to Washington. He sent an airgram on fear of flying as he called it about traveling in Zaire where you had to go through an internal passport process, where you have technically left the country and could not come back in until your flight was finished. People would check in, and they always overbooked flights. So there was always a mad dash for the airplane and if you got a seat, you got a seat, and if you didn’t you went back to the waiting room and waited until the next day for another flight for Lubumbashi. So you would always bring a blanket and pillow with you and food. There was no place to eat if they had to stay overnight. Then they would try again the next day. Then there was always the danger when you got to Lubumbashi that nobody would be in the control tower. This was quite common. Either they were asleep or absent. Usually the pilots would just land until one day a plane ran off the runway. Nobody was killed, but it was a serious enough incident that the pilots refused to land unless there was somebody in the tower. They would fly in and buzz the control tower to try to wake up whoever was there. If nobody was there, then they would turn around and fly back to Kinshasa which was a considerable distance because it was a huge country, and they would land and everybody would get off and they would wait until the next day in the waiting room until they could get on the plane again. Those were the hazards of flying. I remember when we would send grantees to the United States, we always had to explain to them you don’t have to take your own food with you on a flight, because they were accustomed to going to the airport and having to have their own food in case they were stuck there overnight. They didn’t know how they were going to eat on the airplane on this long trip.

So the last highlight I will mention from that tour of duty was I was sent to Brazzaville. We had not had diplomatic relations with Brazzaville for about 14 years. They were re-established. It was known as a communist government which was one reason why we did not have those diplomatic relations. They sent a chargé d’affaires there, and they sent him about four people, somebody who was basically an administrative officer who came with his wife who worked as the secretary. And then I guess somebody else who worked as an all purpose political officer, and six U.S. marines. So the marines actually outnumbered the embassy. They had this magnificent old embassy building that we had there before. When they opened the old building they wanted to make sure it was not bugged so they sent in the Seabees who jack hammered around the outside of the building to make sure there were no wires. It looked like a perforated building that should say tear here so you could tear it off. But somebody had come through from Washington, Chuck Bell the desk officer, and promised them a public affairs officer and some programs. Well, lo and behold, the program materialized before the PAO did. So they needed to send somebody over to Brazzaville to be the PAO. The fellow who was the chargé whose name is slipping me at the moment but will come back to me later, and my Public affairs officer, Robert Dumas, hated each other’s guts. They had been together in Rwanda or Burundi at some time and for unknown reasons they just disdained each other horribly. So, Washington told the PAO he had to send somebody over to Brazzaville because they were getting a rock and roll duo led by Mickey Baker, who was at one time famous as part of the Mickey and Sylvia duo and had a hit song called “Hey Mickey, Hey Sylvia” or

something. I think it was called Love is Strange. It was a top of the charts hit in the late 50's. He had emigrated to Paris where he actually wrote some very famous guitar books. Everybody who studied guitar in that time wanted to read Mickey Baker's books. So they were sending Mickey Baker there, and needed somebody to program Mickey Baker and his sidekick Alec Sanders, who was originally from the Caribbean, to do a concert. So we figured it was a concert in Brazzaville and my PAO very begrudgingly, because he hated this chargé, said, "You go over there, you set up this concert. You come back and when Mickey Baker arrives, you go do the concert. So having just been back from Kisangani I said to Jill, "Well Sayonara. I am headed off to Brazzaville." Which I was looking forward to, and as it turned out it was a wonderful place to go. The communists were very efficient. The people were very positive and very wonderful, and a total contrast to Zaire where everyone was very glum living under the Mobutu regime. I got over there. The Chargé said, "I am so glad to see you, Pat" I said, "I am not Pat; I am Tom. Why do you think I am Pat?" He said, "Well all the cables say you are Pat." I said, "No, that is public affairs trainee." He said, "I am so glad you are here because we are going to do these concerts that are really dynamic, and we are going to do them here in Brazzaville and Pointe Noir, and a little town called Ouessou, which is a regional capital up on the Cameroon-Brazzaville border. I said, "Well that is not exactly what my PAO said. My PAO said I should come over here and spend a couple of days setting up a concert in Brazzaville, and then go back, and then he will send me back again." The Chargé said, "No, you belong to me now." You are here TDY. You are here in my country, and I am keeping you." I had to communicate this back to my PAO and the only communication we had was by Walkie-Talkie across the river to the embassy. And everybody could hear what was going on in the Walkie-Talkie traffic because everybody kept their Walkie-Talkies on in the embassy for security reasons. So I simply told him the Chargé says I am his and I am staying. The PAO said, "No, you are mine and you are coming back." I said, "Let me put the Chargé on the radio." So they had this screaming match back and forth across the river with everybody just listening in. It was terribly embarrassing. So finally the chargé sent a cable back to Washington and asked, "Is he mine or is he not?" The State Department came back and said when an officer is TDY in another country he belongs to that country and is under the instructions of that person. So that meant I had to stay.

Q: Did Dumas hate you for this?

HULL: No, but it really didn't matter as we will get to because I was sent. He understood that it was Washington's decision. Dumas was a nice guy in a lot of ways. He had some interesting ideas, one of which he required everybody on his staff who did not know how to play bridge to come to his house and have bridge lessons. So that is how Jill and I learned how to play bridge. We still love to play bridge.

So I had to fly to Pointe Noir. I thought this is really exciting, I am going to be the first American to go to Ouessou and establish anything in 14 years. Not to Ouessou, to Pointe Noire on the ocean. I fly to Pointe Noir, walk into my hotel and lo and behold there are all these screaming Americans and Brits and their bratty children because they were oil workers from Cabinda and this was their R&R point to come up to Pointe Noire. So even though we had not had relations, we had Americans go up there for years. So all right, but then I got on a slow aircraft to Ouessou on Air Linga which was the airline in Brazzaville, and we landed on a dirt airstrip in Ouessou. I was taken to the regional governor. They were delighted to see me and everything as this was the first American to be in Ouessou in all these years. They were delighted to have me and delighted to have the concert. They

had one generator that worked up there so there was the possibility of the electric guitars actually working. I flew back and everything was set up, and we set up the concert in Brazzaville. The most famous female singer in the country was going to join the concert. It was just going to be a wonderful thing inviting the elite. Because I needed my visa extended the communist government or the socialist government was happy to extend it. By the way they were delighted to have the Americans. The only difficulty was there were so few hotels and the country was opening up so that almost every night I had to move from place to place to stay. But anyway it was all set up.

Q: Dumas was in Kinshasa at this time.

HULL: Right. And one of the problems was with Washington. I kept saying no you have really done nothing to set up your USIS post here except to send a camera which I am happy to use if you will send the film. But you have not given me a budget. So I was there in Brazzaville and the chargé said go to Ouessou, go to Point Noire. I said I have no money. So they had their acting PAO but nothing else. So they sent the program, and then they sent the PAO, and eventually they sent money. I went back and things started working out. Of course being a public affairs trainee the first months I knew absolutely nothing of what I was doing. I went back and eventually came across the river. We had a good concert in Brazzaville and a so-so concert in Pointe Noire. In Ouessou it was the most memorable programming of my career. These guys just rocked out, and there actually were people who had played rock and roll in Ouessou, and they joined in and the whole town joined in. It was just the most wonderful experience. I did have one problem when I was setting it up on my first trip. I was having lunch with the regional governor and we sat and had lunch with all the leaders in town, and sat and had lunch and the sun is beginning to go down. It is just a dirt airstrip with no lights. Well where is the airplane? I do have to go back. Oh, it is going to come. So eventually the plane lands and nobody is on board. I got on the plane and we take off, and then we made another stop and somebody came on with their chickens or whatever. We made it back to Brazzaville. Actually waiting in the airport in Brazzaville was one of the highlights of my foreign service career. I was talking to this Frenchman for about half an hour. They turned around and said, "Are you French?" I said My French is 3-3. But we got off the plane after that first trip up to Ouessou and I walked back to the embassy, because when I worked in the embassy we all ate communally, six marines who lived on the top floor of the embassy and the rest of us in the embassy all ate together because the marines would cook and that was how we lived. So I got back to the embassy and the marine guard looked at me and said, "What are you doing here Mr. Hull?" I said, "well I went to Ouessou and took the plane back and here I am." He said, "Oh no. You didn't know that they cancelled all flights and discontinued service to Ouessou after your flight that you took there." It turned out that the chargé had to go to the head of the airline to get them to continue flying for a couple of more weeks. They had to send the plane up just for me, and then they had to continue the service so we could have the concerts up there. After the concerts ended, that was the end of air service to Ouessou. But fortunately the chargé d'affaires made wonderful contacts including with the head of the airline and was able to get me back.

PARKER W. BORG
Principal Officer
Lubumbashi (Zaire) (1976-1978)

Ambassador Borg was born and raised in Minnesota and educated at Dartmouth College and Cornell University. In 1965, after a tour with the Peace Corps in the Philippines, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. During his career he served in Vietnam and Zaire, and in the State Department in senior positions concerning Vietnam, West Africa and Counter Terrorism. He served as US Ambassador to Mali (1981-1984) and to Iceland from 1993 to 1996. Ambassador Borg was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: So then what happened, June of '75?

BORG: Larry Eagleburger, before I had taken the job, said that when I left I could sort of have my choice of jobs at my level that were open and that I should identify a job that I liked. I had a terrible time over this and had a couple of meetings with him. He said, "Well, how about being a deputy economic officer?" I was in the economic cone. I hadn't known for a long time what cone I was. I was not very traditional in doing these sorts of things, but the system informed me at one point that I had been transferred from the administrative cone to the economic cone, and that was fine. As long as I got an interesting job, I didn't care what cone I was in. So I looked at all of these jobs, and I was perhaps sufficiently burned out that I looked at a place in Africa and I said, "I want to go to Africa." I decided I was not going to go back to China, that the world is much bigger than just East Asia, that I was going to try to expand my horizons, and I'd like to do it at a small post where I'm my own boss, in a place where there isn't much happening and I could just sort of meditate on all the things that had been going on for the last couple of years. So I selected Lubumbashi in Zaire, down in the southeastern corner, the former Elizabethville near the camp of what had been Katanga now, then known as Shaba. But that didn't open up for a while, so I was going to take an economic course and then I was going to learn French, and I thought that was just fine. I was very pleased with that.

Q: Lubumbashi, you got there when?

BORG: I got the assignment by going to the designated ambassador, Walt Cutler, and telling him that I would really like to come out and be his consul in Lubumbashi. I think he was somewhat flabbergasted. We had met and I had worked with him when I was in the Personnel Office, but I had no African experience, I didn't speak French, and I don't think he was very enthusiastic about this assignment of someone whose main qualification was to have recently been Henry Kissinger's assistant to come out and work in one of his consulates. He responded, "Well, let me think about it," at first but then came back and perhaps realized maybe he didn't have too many choices.

Q: You were out there from when to when?

BORG: I went out there in late June of 1975, just before the July Fourth celebration which would have been the 200th anniversary of our independence. That was a big deal, and I thought that would be...

Q: '76.

BORG: '76, yes, and I stayed until June or July of '78.

Q: I've talked to people who were there early on, like Terry McNamara and all, in the era of Shaba I and Shaba II.

BORG: I was there for Shaba I and Shaba II, so that was my principal activity probably, but let me give a little background first on the place and why I thought it was going to be an interesting place to work. Shaba, the former Katanga, is really the economic center of Zaire. It is the place where the mines are located, where they produce probably 70 or 80 percent of the foreign exchange that's earned by the country. It also is a traditional area of rebellion or opposition to the authorities in Kinshasa when it had been Katanga and the secession in the early 1960's. Also, because of its remoteness, the Mobutu government had located the liberal arts sections of the university down in Lubumbashi so that the kids who go out into the streets to protest the government were nowhere near the capital. So as a result we had a much more lively intellectual community. We had a very vibrant economic and business community. Not only the mines were there but there were all of the companies that produced whatever it was that the mines needed. So it was an opportunity to observe how an economy cut off, as the area was, from much of the rest of the world was able to operate in this remote environment.

Q: What was the situation in the Congo overall at that time when you got out there?

BORG: Mobutu had run the country since about 1965. This would have been 10 years that he'd been in power, and he was not even by this point considered a very impressive leader from the international perspective, but he played his international cards well. He would suggest to the United States on any possible opportunity that he was the hold-out against the Communist threat, that the Tanzanians were leftists, the Angolans were allied with the Soviet Union, and that all of southern Africa would be cut off if Congo collapsed, if he collapsed. Likewise, he played the French against the Belgians. Zaire had been a Belgian colony, and the French were unhappy in a sense that this largest Francophone-speaking country in Africa looked to Belgium as its home in Europe rather than to France as the other Francophone countries did. So there were rivalries on at least these two levels. Mobutu also had proven to be a master of internal politics, of keeping all of the different Congolese ethnic groups off guard and irritated with each other so that there was very little opportunity for them to think about lining up together against him. His government was essentially his cronies from his home province of Équateur up in the northern part of the country. Zaire is a country that is the size of Western Europe, and the distance between Kinshasa, the capital, and Lubumbashi is sort of like the distance between Saint Louis, Missouri, and Miami, Florida. There's a big, big distance there. It took two hours to fly by commercial jet between the two cities, and there were no roads, there was no access otherwise, no railroads.

Q: When you arrived what was the state of government that you were dealing with in...?

BORG: ...in Shaba province. Each of the provinces of Zaire at that point had military governors appointed by and loyal to Mobutu, and they functioned on his behalf. There was a judicial system,

and I knew a number of the lawyers in town and a number of the justices. They attempted to operate somewhat independently and dispense justice, but that was questionable. It was still very much of a segregated community. Even though Zaire had been independent for 15 years, there were clubs and institutions in Lubumbashi where blacks were not invited and where, if they did show up, they were not appreciated. I remember convincing a Zairewa to participate as my partner in a golf tournament and go to the banquet afterwards. He was the only black African at the whole dinner, and one felt cold shoulders looking at him and looking at me for having brought him along. It was nonetheless a very vibrant economy, and there remained a very large foreign community of French and Belgians but most interestingly a very large community of Sephardic Jews who had settled in Lubumbashi probably in the 1930's and had essentially established all of the factories that produced clothing, produced steel, produced whatever it was that was needed by the mines; and there was a community of Greeks and a community of Italians.

Q: How about Lebanese?

BORG: Lebanese are much more common in west Africa, but in this part of Africa the Sephardic Jews played the principal commercial role. There were even Sephardic Jews who had U.S. citizenship who ran small export-import businesses the way the Lebanese do in west Africa, or further east it's the Indians.

Q: I have heard about how over the years the mining operation has sort of practically collapsed because of lack of maintenance.

BORG: When I was there, it was in the heyday of the mining community. A Zairewa was the head of the mines. He was a well educated individual who was assisted by a number of expatriates that ruled each one of the subordinate sections. The copper mine at Kolwezi was probably the most sophisticated mining operation anywhere in the world at the time. We took many delegations up to see how they produced copper. They had made the entrance to the mine so broad that you could drive a bus down six or seven stories into the ground where you got off the bus to look at the mining operations. None of this cheap ride down the mine shaft. The miners went down in buses each day. They did their mining, and they brought up the copper. There were three major mining areas and many subordinate mines in each one of these places. This was the third or fourth largest producer of copper in the world, the largest producer of cobalt in the world - 90 percent of the world's cobalt at the time came from there - and it had large quantities of lead and nickel. Even the uranium which was used for the atomic bomb at Hiroshima had come from the mines in Shaba, and there were huge slag heaps where the leftovers, the tailings, were located. People said if the price of gold went up high enough, they could go through these again and begin to take out the gold that was in them. It's an incredibly rich mining area.

Q: You're right in the middle of nowhere. How did they get the stuff out when you were there?

BORG: There were two ways that they sent things out, and both of these ways went through South Africa. This was a time when there was great concern about what was happening in Southern Rhodesia, and the struggle against the apartheid government there. Nonetheless, the materials went almost exclusively out through Harare and down to Durban, South Africa. Likewise, the foodstuffs came from the south. Wheat, cattle or beef all came up from Rhodesia, South Africa.

Q: Was Rhodesia at that time, Southern Rhodesia, going through the...?

BORG: This was during the fighting, during the confrontation.

Q: During the time of so-called - I want to say SDI but it's not.

BORG: One rural government and there was a coalition of countries that border Rhodesia - Zambia, Tanzania, Angola was independent in '74, Mozambique, Malawi - which were involved in a confrontation against Southern Rhodesia.

Q: UDI is what I wanted to say, Unilateral Declaration of Independence, by Ian Smith and white government.

BORG: That's right. I think that was in effect. I forget the exact dates, but I think that was in effect then, and Zaire had declined to participate. They went to various summit meetings but they would always back off on signing any documents because so much of the economy of the southern part of the country depended on Rhodesia and South Africa. When the UDI, when the confrontation, became most extreme, there were unidentified airplanes that would be flying into Lubumbashi on a regular basis bringing in loads of meat and taking out other valuable commodities down to the south. I had mentioned a second route. There was an effort to build a railroad that would go from Zambia up through Tanzania to Dar Es Salaam, the Tanzam Railroad. This was there in principle but played no role whatsoever in reality. There was a third possible route out of there and that was by train from Lubumbashi across Angola, but because of the government in Angola and the civil war that had been going on there, that route had been closed down, so it was almost exclusively the route to the south.

Q: What was your both role and task when you got there? In the first place, maybe you'd better describe what the consulate - was it the consulate general?

BORG: It was a consulate; it was not a consulate general. The office consisted of myself and one other officer who worked as my assistant, an administrative consular officer, one American secretary who doubled as a communicator. So it was a very small operation.

Q: Were you married?

BORG: I was not married, no. I was a single person. We also had a USIS officer. It was not the sort of place one would recommend for a single officer, but one made do. When I arrived there, we had a very good community of Americans in the embassy and a couple of people around town.

Q: Were there other consular representations of other countries?

BORG: There were representatives of other countries. The French and the Belgians were there because of their strong economic interests and their rivalry. The Italians and the Greeks were there because of the large number of their citizens that lived in the area. And the Zambians were there, but there were no other African consulates in the area.

Q: The Brits weren't there?

BORG: The British were not there.

Q: At that time Zaire was considered in sort of our lingo as being a CIA country. The CIA was doing a great deal to keep Mobutu in power. How about you?

BORG: Our job in the consulate was to report what was happening in that part of the country and to represent the embassy at whatever function they might need representation. We did visa service; there were American citizens that had problems from time to time; but almost exclusively we reported on the economic situation, the health of the mines, the trade routes for minerals in and out of the country; and had really little concept that we were there supporting Mobutu. Now, we were told on a regular basis by the Zairewa that we'd meet that, "This is your problem. You brought him in. You should be getting rid of him." Our response at the consulate was that, "No, he is your problem. He is your leader; he is not our leader."

Q: I'm wondering now at the Agency shutting down a station in an area which was prone to rebel.

BORG: It had been quiet for a couple years, and I guess they were having resource shortfalls and they needed to put their resources somewhere else. As we do with embassies when resources are tight, we decide to close up our field operations and consolidate everything in the capital, and that's what they had done.

Q: Did you feel that you had a brief to keep an eye on possible rebellion?

BORG: Yes, but we were criticized by the inspectors when they came out that we weren't doing an adequate amount of political reporting, and our response to that was, "There's not much happening of a political nature. This is a police state. This is a military state. It is run by the governor who is Mobutu's buddy. There are soldiers all over. The university is in total disrepair. The classrooms that people are studying in are absolutely disgraceful. Nobody is out on the street. Nobody's talking about any sort of political change."

Q: Then how did you find your relations with, say, the military governor?

BORG: Correct but not close. Again, since there wasn't much happening of a political nature, since he didn't do much other than hold the office and keep things under control, the idea of calling on him to go and talk about political developments or what his plans were, because I knew he didn't have any plans other than try to rake off as much money as he might get. I was more than totally occupied with the people at the mines, the people at the banking community, and the others.

Q: How did you find this economic community? As you put it, they were basically all expatriates.

BORG: It was heavily expatriate. They were a fascinating community because they had become over the years incredibly self reliant, and if they needed something, they attempted to produce it there, and they often produced it quite successfully, so that everybody bought and sold things that

were locally produced to the extent possible. The raw materials came in from South Africa and other places, but they were smuggled in. I had a Zairewa friend who had a shoe factory. He was one of the few entrepreneurs that I knew at that point among the Zairians. He brought me a sample of one of his shoes one day, and I said, "These shoes say 'Made in Belgium' on them," and he said, "Yes, we put that on all of our shoes. Nobody would buy them if they said 'Made in Zaire.'" So here was a Zairewa manufacturing shoes and putting 'Made in Belgium' on the label. There was an industrial section of the city where there were two plants that spun cotton, made cloth, made clothing. There were places that fabricated iron into steel. There were places that manufactured things out of iron. They manufactured bus springs, railroad car frames; whatever it was that was needed at the mines or in the local community, it was produced there. So you have a sense of how an economy fits together.

Q: When you arrived there, did you find people in a sense saying, "We're here for today, but we always keep a suitcase packed"?

BORG: No, the people who had their suitcases packed had left sometime before. Now, many of the most prominent members of the economic community had citizenship in another country and often homes or family in the other country, and they spent two months a year at least in the other country, which was most often Belgium, sometimes France. But it was, "We're here to stay. We are Africans" - some of them - "we have lived in this area as long as the local people, and so we consider this our home and we'll never leave. This is ours." It's the same sort of mentality that one heard further south, that this was really an adjunct of the talk that one heard in Johannesburg or at that time in Harare. But Zambia was quite different. Zambia was far more Africanized than Shaba was at that point.

Q: What about the missionary community?

BORG: We spent a good deal of time getting to know the missionary community. The principal missionaries in the area were Methodists, and the largest church in the city was the Catholic church, which was run by Zairewa. The second largest was the Methodist church, which had a Methodist pastor, a Zairewa pastor, but there was a field of maybe 30 or 40 missionaries, mostly Methodists, in the countryside. The third largest religious institution in the area was the synagogue, and there was a rabbi who had been there since 1939 and he ministered to the large Sephardic Jewish community who, I was surprised to find out, had all migrated from the same place. They'd all come from the island of Rhodes in the 1930's, and many of them still spoke Ladino in their homes. Their first language was Ladino; it was not French, it was not English, it was Ladino. They didn't speak Yiddish or Hebrew.

Q: Was there any Israeli interest in the area because of this?

BORG: Not at that time, no.

Q: What happened in '76 to '78?

BORG: There was no advance knowledge that there was any kind of problem, and one day an invasion began from across the border in Angola. We learned of it because the railroad went up to

the border with Angola and they maintained a presence on the border at the railroad. The rebels attacked this railroad station and took it over, and so suddenly the word was back in Lubumbashi that someone had taken over the railroad station at the frontier. From there they began moving throughout the villages in the western part of Shaba.

Q: When you say "they"...

BORG: Well, it wasn't clear who 'they' were. I can't remember what they called themselves, but they were trying to take Shaba back. They were the Katangan rebels, they claimed to be the Katangan rebels, from the '60s with elements from other rebellious groups who had been in Angola. While Mobutu's allies were generally in the part of Angola right next to the Shaba border, we knew that there were Katangese who had been supported by the dos Santos government, the anti-UNITA factions. Again, the civil war was very heavy...

Q: This was in Angola.

BORG: ...in Angola, and Mobutu supported one faction and the United States tended to support that faction, but the Cubans were with another faction. I'll put all this down eventually. The anti-Mobutu faction did hold remnants of the Katangese, and this group came into the border area.

Q: When was this?

BORG: It was in March-April of 1977. They moved from one town to the next. There were questions from the beginning of exactly who they were. The reaction from the journalistic community was suddenly representatives of almost every single newspaper that had foreign correspondents had their correspondent in Lubumbashi, largely not because this itself was so important but because there wasn't anything happening of great significance anywhere else. This was the first years of the Carter Administration, and this was one of their first foreign policy issues. They had made a point, I believe, at least in internal discussions, that we were not going to be as close to Mobutu as we had been in the Nixon Administration. So here we are with a crisis in Zaire at the early part of the Carter Administration, and what is it that we're going to do? We were five hours, six hours, different from Washington DC, and we provided a daily report, daily sitreps, back to Washington about what it was that was happening. The ambassador did not insist that my reports go first through them, because he knew that they were interested in them right away in Washington, so I was sending my reports from the consulate directly back to Washington with a copy to Kinshasa and other places. So every morning we figured we had until about 11 o'clock each day to figure out what had happened and get a report on the wires. Well, the first reports we had to send over one-time pads because we didn't have modern communications.

One of the first things I got was better communications and a full-time communications officer. We went out and essentially we found that there were a couple of good sources of what was happening. This was all taking place in very remote areas, but the railroad officials knew how many railroad stations were reporting back. Since the main line of attack was along the railroad, we could sense where one of the fronts was. Then the missionaries, the Methodist missionaries, had their morning radio checks, which they had had all the time anyway for people to report particular problems that they might have had, so they went to the missionary radio headquarters

and found out from them what the reports were from all of their different mission offices. Since they had missions in all of the little towns along the western part of the province, we could find out which sections had been taken over.

Q: Were the missionaries reporting any problems when they were taken over?

BORG: It varied from one place to the next, but several missionaries were kidnaped, one was eventually killed. We had Peace Corps volunteers out in this area, and one of the first things we did when the fighting began was to bring the Peace Corps volunteers back into province headquarters. So none of the American Peace Corps were affected, but I think there was one American missionary who was killed. He was a medical missionary, if I remember correctly, and they had a trial in which he was accused. The anti local people and others recognized that it was someone who had been fired by the hospital that was making the accusations against him, so it was a local vendetta which was translated into something that the rebels could use as a reason for executing a person. The Agency was also very concerned, we were concerned and Washington was concerned, about a possible Cuban connection behind all of this. We had a lot of TDY people coming down. We had people listening in on radios trying to pick up any communications that might be going back and forth. I made it a point, and the other reporting officer, when we talked with people, we tried to get communications. "Have you seen anybody that doesn't look like a Zairewa that's participating in this? Is there anybody that's speaking Spanish? Is there any reason to think that there might be a Cuban participation?" The Agency, I believe, wanted to find a Cuban role, and I think Washington wanted to find a Cuban role. I don't know what they reported, but I consistently reported that I could find no evidence of any Cuban participation. I said, "There may be people doing training across the border, but there is no evidence that any of them have ever entered the Shaba area."

Q: What was the response that you were reporting or observing of the Zairian government?

BORG: The Zairian government, for the most part, proved its ineptitude there as it did in almost everything that it did, and we felt that the greatest threat to our safety and anyone else's safety was if the Zairian soldiers would panic, leave their posts, run out of food and decide that they were going to leave their quarters, and start stealing things from anybody that they could. This was the sort of thing that kept people awake at night, not the fear of the rebels.

Q: How did this play out?

BORG: The rebels held the dominant position for about 90 days, and they were essentially quite scattered throughout the region. The Zairian military were totally incapable of dealing with them. An international force led by the Moroccans came in and essentially led the fight to take back these areas and push the rebels out. The Moroccans were supported by the United States, and we provided the lift to get them down there. It was a curious situation, because the FAA...

Q: Federal Aviation Administration.

BORG: ...Federal Aviation Administration, had recently determined that the airstrip at Lubumbashi was unsafe for 737's and anything larger than that, so we were theoretically not

supposed to fly out of this dangerous airport because the runway was not adequately safe. Of course, there's no other way to get out, so people continued to fly in and out on, I think, DC10's that we were using, so we had bigger planes that were going in and out.

Q: They're big planes.

BORG: Every day there was a DC10 that came in and went out. It was Air Sabena. There were no local airlines. Maybe it was Air Zaire, but I don't think we took Air Zaire. I think we took Sabena whenever we could. Anyway, this airstrip that was considered unsafe was suddenly going to take American aircraft, so we had an airlift communications team that arrived, and suddenly we had C130's and the big one, the C5A's. These things were coming and they were landing, these huge planes. Some came down on just exactly the place that was unsafe for any aircraft to land, but they all came in safely. They brought the equipment, they brought the Moroccan troops, and the Moroccans over the course of a couple weeks, maybe a month, pushed the rebels out of the country. They stayed around for a while and then they left.

Q: What was your impression of Moroccan troops?

BORG: The Moroccan troops were incredibly well disciplined. They did an outstanding job of establishing security. There were no problems reported of any kind. I'm a little mixed up here on details, but they may have been supported in this operation by Senegalese and Togolese troops also. So it was a multinational African force, led by the Moroccans and very skillfully implemented by the Moroccan military.

Q: When they were starting to do this, they must have been able to sort of identify who was doing this.

BORG: Never. They were the Katangese rebels. They came in, they attacked, they melted into the forest, they left.

Q: There was no Mister Katangese Rebel or something?

BORG: No, there was no spokesperson. Moise Tshombe had been the leader of the Katangese. His brother was the head of the Lunda tribe. He was the elected chief of the Lunda, which is the ethnic group that lived along the border area. He had come into the consulate on several occasions, and I had gotten to know him quite well. In fact, one of the Peace Corps volunteers had come in to see me about three weeks before the invasion and said that Mr. Tshombe had asked her to become his fifth wife and did I think that was a good idea. I said, "Oh, I don't know." Actually, because of that, she was out of the province at the time of the invasion, because they invaded the village where Tshombe had his headquarters at a very early point, so she wasn't there. He was conveniently away himself. Now, does that mean he knew what was happening, or was it a coincidence? Nobody ever found out.

Q: But there had to have been some sort of organization to say, "Okay, fellows, let's go."

BORG: I can check my records, but I don't recall that we ever found a spokesperson, an identifiable spokesperson, who was behind all this.

Q: Had there been the feeling that there was a group of lawless people, discontented people, sitting on the other side of the border?

BORG: There were lawless people, discontented people, on both sides of the border. We were always so much concerned with what was happening internally that the idea that there were large numbers of equally or even more unhappy people on the outside was not something that was commonly talked about before or after. Where did they go? They disappeared.

Q: What about tribalism in the area where you were?

BORG: Tribalism remained a very important issue throughout the Mobutu years in Zaire. Mobutu was very talented at keeping all of the ethnic groups off guard, playing one group against the other. The Lunda and the Chokwe peoples were probably the dominant rural population, particularly in the western part of the province, but in the cities the miners were generally Luba people who had come from the Kasais many years earlier and were resented by the Lundas and the local people. So you had a disconnect between the city people, who were outsiders, and the people who lived in the surrounding rural areas.

Q: Well now, this is 15 years or so after Zaire became independent, and there had been much talk about the fact that there were three university graduates who were of Congolese origin and the Belgians had not done anything? Were you seeing the effects of that?

BORG: There was a large pool of well educated Congolese about my age. The older people may have not had university educations...

Q: You were how old at the time?

BORG: At the time, 35. They were people who would have come of age right after independence. I remember one local justice, talking with him about his education. He said that he had been forced to learn Greek, Latin, Flemish and French before he graduated from secondary school. You think, my God, here is this country that's so desperate for educated people, and the traditional schools were teaching Latin and Greek because that's what they did in Belgium, but, of course, there are their two languages in Belgium. They couldn't train them in just French or Flemish; they had to teach them both languages. So you really had to be a very smart, talented individual to make it through the school system at that time. But there were a large number of secondary missionary institutions run by the Catholics in particular that were doing an outstanding job. I remember talking one day with a priest who was a Jesuit who had been there for many, many years, and I said to him, "It must be frustrating to deal with education and see all of the corruption and all of the horrible things around you." He said, "The problem is that you Americans have such a short-term perspective. You're always looking at things in terms of the next year or so, and you expect things to be better in the next year or so. I'm hoping that my successor's successor's successor will see the change that we have begun making now. That's the only way." I thought that was a very wise statement.

The first and most important aftermath for me was the effort of Mobutu to have me PNG'd. Mobutu established his temporary capital for Zaire in Kolwezi towards the end of the Shaba I operation so that he could be in daily control of what happened in the country. Ambassador Cutler was going up to visit Mobutu and pay a call on him prior to his departure for some consultations back in the United States, so he'd be able to report back here, "This is what Mobutu is saying and thinking, and here's where things stand." He asked me to come along, so I went with him to the meeting with Mobutu and then afterwards stayed around Kolwezi...

Q: Kolwezi is located where?

BORG: Kolwezi is about three hours west of Lubumbashi, about halfway between Lubumbashi and the border with Angola. This was the city that was most threatened by the rebels, and this was the city where the most sophisticated mines were located. So I stayed after Ambassador Cutler left, and I went around and talked with people that I had known in the past, and among the people I went to see was Mr. Tshombe, the chief of the Lunda, who was residing there. I didn't realize at the time that he was essentially under house arrest there. So when I went to call on Tshombe, I was then followed by Mobutu's police as I went around and talked to other people. My questions had to do with things like, "Have you received any of this assistance that we've been sending out?" "What are things like?" We'd been providing hospital and other sorts of supplies. I talked to maybe a half dozen people, all of whom were subsequently interviewed. Unbeknownst to me - Ambassador Cutler was back in the United States - Mobutu then summoned the station chief down to Lubumbashi and said, "We have evidence that Mr. Borg is doing things that are not friendly to our nation in our struggle against the Katangan rebels." So the station chief brought back a rough report of what the problem was, and I was then summoned to come up to Kinshasa and explain what this was all about. No, actually we did it over cable; I did not go to Kinshasa; we did it by cable. Lannon Walker was the chargé at the time. Lannon is very strong willed in his own way, and Lannon decided that everything I was doing was quite justified and that, if they wanted me to go, they would have to formally PNG me but that the embassy was not going to withdraw me quietly, and if I went back to the United States, they would put me in charge of the Zairian affairs at the Department of State. So Mobutu had his choice, to have me in Shaba or was he going to have me in Washington working on Shaba. So they backed away, they backed off, and I stayed. But the word went out to all government officials that they were not supposed to have anything to do with me. So at the Fourth of July 1977 there was not a single Zairian official that showed up at our Fourth of July celebration. There were people from the economic community and the business community and the academic community but no government officials. So I was essentially cut off from the local political structure, and that lasted for five months or so.

Q: But you were saying before that there really wasn't much of a political structure.

BORG: There wasn't much of a political structure, there wasn't much political to report on, so the fact that the province chief would no longer receive me didn't matter. It didn't make that much difference. I went about whatever I wanted to do. I traveled around the province and went back to reporting what it was like now that the First Shaban War was over.

Q: How did you find American assistance and all? Was it getting out to the people? Was that part of your task, to see whether the money that we were pouring into Zaire was going anywhere but to Swiss bank accounts?

BORG: Yes. Mobutu had thrown out Walt Cutler's predecessor. When Mobutu had asked for Dean Hinton's recall because he was too offensive, the State Department had responded by sending out Sheldon Vance, who was Hinton's predecessor, and Walt Cutler, who was the country director at the time, to see what they could do. Among the activities was a \$60,000,000 assistance package, part of which was in food but \$20,000,000 for an economic assistance program. Mobutu had essentially said that he did like Dean Hinton but that he wouldn't mind this nice young man who was accompanying Sheldon Vance as the next ambassador. That's part of the story of how Walt Cutler got to Zaire. To go from that, the \$20,000,000 program turned out to be in Shaba province, and when I arrived, they were just completing the surveys as to what this project might be like, and Ambassador Cutler had asked me to go up - this was in late '76 - and to look at this project, to see if this was a valid project and whether it was something that we should be putting our money into. I went up and spent 10 days in the project site with the project planners. The project plan was to grow corn in this area that had traditionally grown corn but where they didn't grow much of anything anymore. It was an incredibly remote place that was two and a half hours by missionary plane to the headquarters of the project. The alternative was to fly commercially for an hour and a half over to this town and then take a day's train ride, so this was really, really in the middle of nowhere. It was fascinating to go around and see how services had deteriorated in the years since independence. We went to visit a number of villages where the bridge had broken down, and when the bridge broke down, there was no transport anymore and they stopped coming by to pick up the cotton or the tobacco which they grew, and so there was no commercial life left. And if there's no commercial life, there's nobody in the market anymore and they didn't pay the teachers and the health workers, and so these centers were abandoned also. The place was slipping quickly back into what it had been like probably before the Belgians had even come. So our grandiose scheme was to revive the corn industry in this remote section of the country. I came back and reported that this was really an appalling idea. If we're going to grow corn, you would have thought one could grow it a little closer to some urban areas where it could be shipped a little more easily and would make some kind of a difference and the logistics would not be so complicated. I said, "But if you've got \$20,000,000 that you have to spend and this is the only project which is on the board that they have designed, it's a project that might work. They've done a very careful job of looking at all the different factors, and it certainly is an area that needs fixing." I continued to follow the project while I was there and afterwards, and it turned out that it was moderately successfully. They went on from one phase of it to, I think, another two phases over the years, and perhaps the economy there was temporarily revived. I can't imagine it survived the recent traumas. Anyway, that was the big project. We followed that project. I felt that, as the consul after the Shaba war where we had been providing relief assistance, it was probably my job to go around and talk to people at hospitals, to talk to people at feeding centers and other places that were receiving this assistance. Have they received it? I guess that's what was one of the reasons I got in trouble.

Q: After the Shaba thing was over and you were subliminally PNG'd or something, were there any other developments basically until you left?

BORG: The Second Shaba War occurred while I was there on my watch also. So I was there for both of them.

Q: So what happened?

BORG: It was just a little more than a year later. I wasn't even in the province at the time. I was up climbing in the Mountains of the Moon. I came back and there was this urgent message from the ambassador that they were sending the attaché plane out to pick me up and bring me back to Kinshasa because there had been important developments. So I went back to Kinshasa and learned that a second invasion had begun and I was supposed to hightail it down to Lubumbashi as quickly as I could. I think I got down there within two days or three days of when it started. This time the rebels were much smarter in that they didn't bother with all the little villages. They didn't spread their forces as thinly as they had the first time. They went in and they struck at the city of Kolwezi. They just - bang - took over the most important mining center in the country, and they in the process seized large numbers of Europeans, who were held as hostages. There were a number of people who were killed, massacred, in Kolwezi. It made the cover of *Time* magazine, April 1978. It was a bloody mess. Of course, the Zaire military was as incompetent as ever about what they could do about this. Our great concern was that this could spread to the other mining towns and into Lubumbashi, but the greatest fear still was the Zairewa military and the possibility that they would run amok and start slaughtering people. Again, we called all the Peace Corps volunteers from the whole province. We were told that we could not withdraw any American personnel by the Zairewa government, that everyone had to remain in place. So we rented an airplane and went up to different Peace Corps sites and told them that there was a conference in Lubumbashi and they had to come and attend this conference. So I picked them up individually and brought them back so that we didn't have to issue an order or tell them to go get on a plane. So we got everybody out and brought them back, where they stayed for a couple weeks. The resolution this time was a struggle between the Belgians and the French. There were all sorts of efforts on the part of the Belgians to try and coordinate the rescue and all sorts of efforts on the part of the French to see that they were able to send their Legionnaires in ahead of the Belgians so that they could claim that they were the ones that had rescued Kolwezi and they could establish themselves perhaps in Mobutu's mind as the friend of Zaire, not the stupid Belgians. It was really interesting to see those two nations bickering with each other over how this was to be done, and in the end, I think, the Belgians took the airport and the French took the city with the paratroopers. Again, there was a serious loss of life, and those Katangese rebels that were not killed disappeared. The French evacuated large numbers of people. Did the French do the evacuation or the Belgians? It would be either the French or the Belgians. I have that written down somewhere. They brought people out of the area and back to Europe. The pacification was left to the Moroccans, and so the Moroccans came back for a second time and spread their forces around and attempted to establish a bit of discipline among the various military units and to clean up whatever hadn't been cleaned up outside of the city of Kolwezi. The second Shaba war was much shorter. It was six weeks or something and it was over.

Q: Again, was there any spokesperson, anybody making announcements?

BORG: Not that I can recall. I've got some notes on this, but I do not remember any major communications that could be identified with a particular individual or even a group that one could say this is the name of the group that's doing this.

Q: Was this a looting expedition?

BORG: There was a lot of looting on the part of the Congolese, the Katangese rebels. They cleaned out what they could before they were forced out of Kolwezi. The city was quite a mess.

Q: What about the mines and all this?

BORG: I think the mines began to deteriorate later. The mines were still in pretty good shape. They did not do anything to sabotage mining operations. I think they realized that that was the goose that was laying the golden egg and, if they had it, they would have the resources. The mines began to deteriorate when Mobutu politicized - this was much after I left but as I understand it - even more the leadership of the mining operations and put his finger even deeper in the till so that the goose, rather than laying the golden egg for the whole country, was laying a small golden egg for Mobutu and his cronies. I stayed there until about May or June, when it was over, and I left in July, I guess.

Q: So how did your taste of Africa go? You know, Foreign Service-wise you lucked out. Everybody wants a nice little rural rebellion or something, you know.

BORG: I had gone to Lubumbashi with the hope of having a peaceful experience to sort of restore myself from what I thought was the chaos of Washington and was overwhelmed and challenged by being suddenly at the center of what was considered important to a lot of people, and this was to my great surprise. I had not anticipated anything like this and had not planned for anything like this.

ARMA JANE KARAER
Economic Officer
Kinshasa (1976-1979)

Arma Jane Karaer was born in Minnesota in 1941. She received her bachelor's degree from University of Minnesota and during this time also attended Osmania University in India. During her career she had positions in Australia, Zaire, Turkey, Pakistan, Swaziland, Finland, and ambassadorships to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Ambassador Karaer was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: You went to Zaire in what late '76?

KARAER: No, let me think, middle '76.

Q: Middle '76.

KARAER: Yes, I think August, July, August.

Q: You were there until when?

KARAER: I was there for three years. We left in the summer of '79.

Q: What was the situation when you arrived there?

KARAER: Mobutu was very much in charge. Zaire itself was politically peaceful. There were no rebellions going on. Although you probably know that earlier in the decade there had been an attempt on the part of the people who lived in Shaba Province, where the big copper and cobalt mines are, to break away and form their own country.

Q: There was Shaba One and Shaba Two.

KARAER: Well, that comes later.

Q: Oh. So, Shaba One had happened.

KARAER: No. The independence of Zaire was extraordinarily painful and bloody. The Belgians who had been the colonial power there had really not thought about letting go there until much later than they actually did. But by 1960, they just were not able to hold onto the country anymore. They left very suddenly, after which the place just fell apart into all kinds of warring, ethnic factions. I can remember reading the stories in Life magazine when I was in college and looking at the pictures of the murders of the nuns in towns along the Zaire River. A lot of people were killed, Europeans and many more Africans. There were people participating in this bloodletting that believed in magic, that if you had a special charm hanging around your neck the bullets couldn't hurt you. They did awful stuff to one another.

At independence, the name of the country was Congo. Its economy at that point was based 2/3s on the export of agricultural products and about 1/3 on the export of minerals. It's a very big country and extraordinarily wealthy if it is run properly. When the Belgians left and law and order broke down, the Westerners who were operating the plantations had to flee and the Africans who were the workers on those plantations either were killed or had to run into the bush to save their own lives and so almost all of the plantations went back to jungle. In Shaba Province, which abuts Angola and Zambia, there are incredibly rich copper and cobalt mines. Because of the mineral wealth of that province, the people down there thought that they could break away from the rest of Congo and make their own country, but they failed. Mobutu, who had been an army officer under the Belgians, took over the country. Through a mixture of threats, murder, imprisonment and exile he kept the country peaceful and his own hand in the till. Although he did have people killed, his main technique of control was to arrest people who were a threat to him politically and then have them exiled, sent them off to Europe, let them sit there and stew for a few years, and then offer them a position in his government. Those who accepted the offer could become the minister of whatever and have a chance to participate in the incredible theft that was going on under the Mobutu regime. Now, by the time I got there the export economy of the country had flip flopped from the colonial days and now they were earning about 2/3 of their export from minerals and 1/3 from agricultural products.

There were a small number of very wealthy Zairians, many of them related to Mobutu by blood or coopted, as I described before, and lots of poor people. Kinshasa had this glorious skyscraper that was just a block from the embassy. It soared up into the heavens over what otherwise was a disintegrating African city with miles and miles of shantytowns on its outskirts which were called, collectively, Le Cite. Of course that means The City in French, but in Kinshasa Le Cite was the slums as opposed to the central part of town and one nearby suburb where the few Westerners and Europeans still lived.

The U.S. was providing a significant amount of developmental aid to Zaire, as were the Belgians and the French. There were quite a few embassies in the city. One Turkish lady, whose husband was working there for an international organization, once said, "I have a job too. My job is shopping for food." It was true. Keeping your larder stocked was a full-time job. Our embassy was so big that we had a commissary for which we imported food from South Africa and Europe, but if you depended on the local economy like the Turkish lady did, shopping was a real adventure. Some days you'd go into the big supermarkets and there might be milk, but there wouldn't be any cereal or meat or chicken. Another day the place would be full of chicken, but there wouldn't be any milk. During the holidays though - and this showed you how the elite of Kinshasa both European and African lived - there would be a huge assortment of French cheeses available. There would be champagne and when the Nouveau Beaujolais came out in France, it was in Kinshasa the next day. The gap between the luxury things that only very wealthy people, by Zairean standards, could afford and everybody else was just incredible. In the market there were locally grown vegetables. There was a huge section of caterpillars for sale, because the folks on our end of Zaire like to eat caterpillars. I'll never forget taking a newly arrived African American couple to see the markets and, as we turned the corner into the caterpillar section, the lady stepped back and said in horror, "What's that?" She had been looking forward to getting back to her roots, and she got back with a vengeance I'm afraid. My husband was the one in our family who spent the time picking out what he could find in the market to eke out what we were able to buy at the commissary.

The town was lawless to a certain degree.

Q: You're talking about, this is Kinshasa?

KARAER: Yes. There were police, but we were warned by the security officer, "Some will say that the police are as bad as the criminals. But I don't agree. The police are better organized and better armed." In other words, if you're in trouble, don't call the police. Of course, calling anything was usually not an option because of the nearly inoperable telephone system.

Q: This is well before the advent of the cell phone and all that sort of thing.

KARAER: That's right. In fact, our first experience with radios was in Kinshasa. Everybody in the embassy was assigned a radio to communicate within our own organization. Also, the Marine Guards would patrol our residential areas and check with our house guards so that there was some backup presumably relatively close by if there were attacks on our houses. There were attacks on houses. The American embassy did not have such a big problem, primarily because we had this huge guard program that was coordinated well by our own people, but some of the people who

worked for the international organizations for example, had attacks on their houses where they were beaten up or daughters were raped. It was very scary. I thought it was interesting, because the U.S. had just emerged from the Vietnam, anti-war, anti-government era. During those years young Americans demonstrating in the streets called the police "pigs." After I was in Zaire for a while, I thought those American demonstrators had no idea what it was like to live in a place where there are no police, or not any that count for anything anyway. The time in the U.S. when there was "no law west of the Pecos" was ancient history as far as Americans were concerned, but as far as people who lived in places like Zaire, it was their daily life.

Now, American policy there. Mobutu was a bad guy. In fact he had kicked out our previous ambassador.

Q: Who was that?

KARAER: Deane Hinton. Apparently Ambassador Hinton had told Mobutu once too often that they didn't like what he was doing and Mobutu told him to get lost. He was removed, and Walter Cutler became ambassador. Lannon Walker was the DCM, a really brilliant team actually. I was the assistant commercial officer. That was the first year that the Foreign Commercial Service was in operation, but they still had no personnel of their own, so State Department Officers were still doing commercial work. Commercial work was a joke in Zaire, of course, because nobody had any foreign exchange in Zaire to buy anything. I would go around to all of these companies trying to find out what we might be able to sell in Zaire. There were a lot of textile mills in Kinshasa and plywood manufacturing operations. They would show me equipment that was 20 years old that was American and it was running like a charm. They liked it, it was good stuff, but they couldn't buy it because they couldn't get credit and nobody was about to offer credit in Zaire. Anyway I did my duty and reported all this stuff.

Now Cutler's job was to get Mobutu back on the right track economically so that Zaire could start being the kind of a place that it had the potential to be, but without alienating the Zairean government on which we depended for two things. One, the United States was the biggest end user of cobalt. The only other big producer of cobalt in the world at the time was the Soviet Union, and, of course, we weren't buying it from them. The trade statistics didn't show any cobalt going from Zaire to the United States, because it all went to Belgium where it was processed and then sold on. We need cobalt to make steel which withstands the high temperatures in jet airplane engines. We needed the cobalt, so we wanted the mines to keep operating. Second, the war was going on in Angola and we were providing assistance to certain factions in Angola via Zaire. That was the balancing act that our ambassador had to perform there.

As for my job, I spent the first year just getting up in the morning, looking at myself in the mirror and saying, "Try not to make too big a fool out of yourself today." because we had to speak French to do our jobs. There were a handful of people at the top of the Foreign Ministry who spoke English well. Just about everybody else that we had to deal with spoke only French or one of the local languages. I had gotten basic French, three months at the FSI. I must say I admire whoever teaches French to their colonials because while I still have a hard time understanding English spoken by a lot of Nigerians, for example, the educated folks who spoke French in Francophone Africa spoke it very well and with a very good accent. At least I had a fighting chance because I

could understand their accent, but there were so many new words, and I was so scared every time I opened my mouth. Eventually, after about a year of just suffering horribly and feeling really like a fool, I was able to operate pretty smoothly in French, although I know that I made lots of grammatical errors. I know that because even though I was able to communicate with everybody about just anything, short of atomic science, the FSI teachers they sent out to test us at the end of the second year only gave me a half a point higher score than when I left the FSI, because of my grammatical errors. I understand the FSI has changed its policy a lot since then. Now it's ability to communicate rather than perfect grammar that they prize.

I had a couple of my biggest adventures while I was there. Kinshasa was very claustrophobic, because it was almost impossible to travel outside of the city. You could only go as far by car as you could carry enough gasoline to get you there and back again, because there weren't any dependable gasoline supplies in the country-side. Also, almost all of the roads were totally destroyed. The Belgians had had a policy that was very much hated by the Africans, but had worked very well as far as maintaining the infrastructure goes. They had built roads all over that big country. One of our drivers at the embassy told me that when he was a young man his first job after he got a drivers license was to drive an American in a Buick all over Zaire. At the time he told me that story that trip would have been absolutely impossible. The only road that was open on a regular basis and kept maintained was between Kinshasa and Matadi, which is the port on the Atlantic Ocean.

I reread Joseph Conrad's short story Heart of Darkness while I was there and I thought we really, really haven't progressed very much, or at least they'd progressed, and then they fell back to pretty much the same situation. The way that most people traveled into the interior was by air, which was totally unreliable. Everybody referred to Air Zaire, which served the interior of the country, as Air Peutetre, in other words, Air Perhaps. Maybe it would go, maybe it wouldn't. I found out that not only it might not go when, it might not go where. I had two colleagues who had bought tickets to go to the northeast of Zaire, got on the plane, spent the entire day flying, were taken to Kenya where they were not allowed to get off the plane, saw large pallets of cigarette boxes being loaded on the plane (smuggled), and then the plane came back to Kinshasa and that was the end of the trip.

The other way that most of the Zaireans traveled was on the river. That's the Congo River, which is the biggest river in Africa after the Nile. At that time the river was called the Zaire River. My husband and my little daughter and I took a trip from Kinshasa to Mbandaka. It's only about 500 miles; it took us three days to get there. We, and a few other cabin passengers, traveled on the pousseur, which is a tug boat that pushes, rather than pulls. The pousseur pushed three large barges on which the rest of the passengers traveled, slept and did business. Along the way, villagers would come out in dug out canoes with whatever they had to trade and the market ladies would hang over the side of the barge, bargain with them for their wares -- smoked monkeys, fish, and stuff like that. All of this went on while the boat continued upstream. That was an interesting trip.

A Zairean businessman friend of mine had invited us to visit his home in Mbandaka and to see the sorts of businesses that they were running up there. He had helped arrange our reservation on the boat. Well, you can imagine what a mess that would be to get that done. So, only people who knew who to see and what to do could get those reservations. When we arrived at the dock and were

shown to the cabin, we found two men and their baggage already in possession. Fortunately my friend was there. He had a word with them and with the captain and they were removed.

My little daughter was about 2 or 2½ years old when we took this trip. When we got to Mbandaka, my friend, who had flown up there, met us at the hotel to take us to his house for dinner. Now, if you're anybody in Zaire, you have a Mercedes. His had leather seat covers. In Kinshasa, we, on the other hand, were driving this really rattle trappy second-hand Jeep. My daughter, who always has had a taste for fine things, slides across this leather backseat, looks around and says, "This is a nice car." Yes, the car was nice, but Zaire is Zaire. We missed our plane to come back because the plane took off two hours earlier than it was scheduled to leave, so we were nowhere near the airport when it left. It took us three more days to get back to Kinshasa.

I went back to Mbandaka again the next year and the result was a report that I am particularly proud of. The main reason that Zaire's agricultural productivity had fallen off so drastically was because of gross mismanagement by the Mobutu government. The main thing that the Africans in town ate was "fufu", which is cassava. They eat the leaves and they also eat the root which is soaked and pounded into a kind of flour and made into a pudding-like stuff. Rice is another staple food. Zaire has a huge area that has always been rice growing and Mbandaka, the town that I was visiting, is the capital of Equator Province, which is the center of the rice growing area. Now, in order to try to help feed the people in the city, the United States had provided wheat from the United States, which was ground in a mill owned by an American company in Matadi, and then it was shipped up by rail to Kinshasa. There was always French bread to eat in Kinshasa. In fact, the lunches of the workers in town seemed to consist of a bottle of Coca-Cola and a baguette. In addition, the United States, together with the other major aid donors, was pressing Mobutu to lift the price controls on locally produced foodstuffs. He had put price controls on what the farmers were paid for what they grew. Then he'd give licenses to his nearest and dearest to buy that produce and market it in the city for whatever they could get, which was considerably above what they paid for it. Prices for food were high in town, but they were low in the provinces, way below certainly the world price for rice. What we were trying to do was to get the agricultural sector operating again. About the end of the second year I was there, the donors persuaded the government of Zaire to take the price controls off of rice, and immediately the prices shot up in the city. The ambassador took a trip up to Equator Province using the military attaché's aircraft. First he was going to call on the governor there and then he was going to go to one of the big Lever Brothers plantations that grew oil palm. He took me along on this trip and to his meeting with the governor. After preliminary small talk, the ambassador said something to the governor like, "Well, you know the price of rice is going up." The governor said, "Yes it is." The ambassador said, "Well, is the production in the countryside going up as well?" The governor said, "No. The production is going down." The ambassador's jaw dropped. When the meeting was over, the ambassador said, "Well, Arma Jane you're not going to the plantation. I want you to stay here and find out why rice production is going down." Off he went to the plantation. I started going around calling on the bankers and the merchants trying to see what was happening. It wasn't hard to find out.

I ended up writing the report that I was most proud of in my entire career and it was called "The Case of the Backward Bending Supply Curve." Now, backward bending supply curves in economics are theoretical for the most part. Normally, as the price of a commodity goes up, the

more is produced, so the curve rises at an acute angle. But in some rare cases as the price goes up, the supply goes down and the curve on the graph bends back on itself. Now why did that happen in this case? Because Mobutu had not only ruined the price structure of agricultural products with his bad ideas, but he had also ruined the distribution system. In the mid to late '60s, he made a trip to China and was very impressed by their controlled economy. He said, okay you've got all these poor people and the government decides how things are going to be run. I think I'll try something like that when I get back. He didn't communize businesses. He "Zairianized" them. Almost all of the businesses in Zaire at that point were owned by foreigners. There were Jews from Rhodes, there were Lebanese, there were Indians, Pakistanis from East Africa, there were Greeks, there were Portuguese and they owned everything from the big textile mills in the city to the small trading operations out in the interior. Those trading operations were the key to encouraging the farmers to grow more than they needed for their own consumption. When he Zairianized their businesses, he took the business and he gave them to Zaireans to run. The people who got the businesses were supposed to repay the original owners from the profit that they made on the business. Well, in theory, maybe that should have worked, except the people to whom the companies were given had no idea how to do business. It takes more to run even a small trading operation than just the truck and the goods. You need to know how to trade. They didn't. What happened in almost every case was that once the truck broke down and the goods that were on the shelves at the shops were sold, the new Zairian owners closed the place and left. When that happened, the farmers had no way to get their excess crops into the city where it could be shipped down to Kinshasa and there were very few goods available to buy with any money that they might make. When the price of rice went up, they discovered they only had to produce a third of what they had produced the year before to make enough money to buy what was available to buy. It was clear that they were not going to grow any extra rice until there were more goods in the interior that they could buy with the extra money they would make.

I think one of the first lessons in our economic course addressed the question of where the value of money comes from. This was an outstanding example of how money is absolutely worthless if there is nothing to buy with it. Anyway, it was just a perfect example on the backward bending supply curve. The AID director got very grumpy with me when that report was sent out, because apparently all of these brilliant agricultural economists had been coming in and making plans for special projects to grow more crops and all this. Nobody was working on the distribution question at all. That was a huge lesson for me in economics. I always said it was the perfect thing for my education that I had that course at the FSI and then went to a country where the government was doing all of the textbook things to do to ruin an economy and then I got to go the next time to a place where a government had decided to adopt all of the textbook things that you do to make an economy take off.

Q: How did you find let's say as a commercial officer, what would you be doing?

KARAER: That was a good question actually. I did market research on stuff that my predecessor had identified as those things that were most likely to be salable in Zaire, like textile equipment and wood working equipment. I also gathered basic information that visiting businessmen needed, who to see, who was in charge of the office, what their telephone number was, where the address was, how you got around, and put it in a big loose leaf folder that was easy to use and to update. I also took the opportunity to train the Zairean Foreign Service Nationals who were working for the

commercial section. We had a separate little building in which we maintained our commercial library where the local folks would come in to ask about ordering things from the United States. I had three Zaireans working there, and only one had the slightest notion of the procedures that the Commerce Department expected us to follow. The Commerce Department had training courses by correspondence and I knew that just getting the courses and handing them to the employees was not going to accomplish anything. I had to have classes with them. Every week we would have certain days and hours when the library was closed. We would sit down and do the lessons together, so they would understand this stuff. When I left Kinshasa, the Commerce Department had the basic information that they could use to assist American businessmen who went to Zaire and they had some trained employees.

Q: Was there a feeling of particularly on the economic side of you know, real frustration of being there? We were pouring a lot of money in with aid and all, you almost had the feeling we were pouring it in here and there's a chute and it came out in Zurich into numbered accounts or something. What was kind of the spirit there?

KARAER: Well, there was real unhappiness between the economic section and the AID people. Economists were always pointing out exactly what you just said, and AID didn't like to hear that because, after all, their job was to try to develop the economy. I don't know if what went into the Zurich accounts was our money per se. Of course money is fungible, but we had, I think, decent controls over how the aid funds were used. Let's face it, most of the money in these aid programs is paid to Americans who do surveys and make plans. It wasn't so much our money that was being stolen as it was the monies that the Zairean government made from the sale of their minerals.

A really funny thing happened while I was there. I was trying to improve my French, and, in addition to reading newspapers, was trying to read novels in French that would be interesting enough to keep me going and keep me opening up the dictionary. I had read some stuff that the DCM's wife gave me from her library and then a friend of mine, one of the Indian merchants, gave me a thriller. I found out later that it is part of a whole series of trashy spy novels that are sort of James Bondy. The key word in the series is "SAS" and it stands for "Son Altesse Serene". The fellow who is the hero is a French nobleman and so he has that title, but in fact he is a real James Bond character in every respect, the women, the daring do. I don't think he had as many weird contraptions to work with, but the other hallmark of the series was that the name of the country in which SAS did his thing was in each title. The name of the book I read was "Panique au Zaire". Well, it was really interesting, because the author's technique was to go to the country that he was going to write about and hang around for a couple of weeks, a month maybe, and get all of the gossip about the people who ran the government and the economy and then make up his characters based on that. Well, in this book there were some pretty evil Zaireans all right, but the most evil character was a European. There also was a discussion of the CIA Station Chief and where his house was. After I read the book, I asked my friend, "Okay, now we can see that this Zairean character is really this guy and the other Zairean character is that guy, but what about the evil businessman? He isn't real is he?" He said, "Oh, yes he is." Then he started telling me about it. While I had spent quite a bit of time meeting and researching the backgrounds of the top Zairean businessmen, I really had had nothing to do with the Belgian business community. I didn't really know them. What my friend was able to tell me was that this writer was absolutely spot on. This guy probably was capable of doing all the awful things that he did in the book.

Q: Zaire is you know in our profession we know the certain countries that are CIA countries, that the CIA dominates and certainly Zaire. How did you feel about the CIA there?

KARAER: I didn't want to know. I mean I knew who the Chief of Station was, but I didn't want to know what they were doing. The "need to know" thing is a very smart policy. The person that I did get to know quite well, because by that time he was a representative of a big American business in Zaire, was Larry Devlin. Ever heard that name?

Q: No.

KARAER: Larry Devlin was one of the top CIA officers in Zaire in 1960 at the time of independence. Larry got stood up against a wall twice by the rebels and just got reprieved in the last minute. When I was there he was in the country representing the interests of Maurice Tempelman.

Q: Oh, yes, the diamond man.

KARAER: Larry told us a lot about the background of the powerful Zaireans who had come and how they had risen to power. He told us a lot of war stories about the 1960s, which were truly scary and helped explain something about the Zaireans that I got to know. I really think that I was able to be what I considered friends with three Zaireans while I was there. One was a neighbor who was married to an American woman just down the street from us. One was my French teacher, a wonderful man, and the third was a young government official.

Q: This is tape five, side one with Arma Jane Karaer.

KARAER: We got the third fellow one of those USIS travel grants to see the United States and that's how I got to know him pretty well. After he returned, I continued the friendship. He had a child that was a little bit older than mine and we were able to actually get invited to his house. An invitation to a Zairean's home was a major coup in that place. When people got to know you well enough to trust that you weren't going to run out and blab what they had said, they would ask, "Why won't you Americans get rid of Mobutu for us? He's a terrible person. You should get rid of him." Of course they knew we had helped him get the presidency, and they figured we should help get rid of him. However, when you asked them who they thought would do a better job of running the place, they'd kind of back down. They were really afraid of falling back into the chaos that had existed in Zaire in the early 1960s. Thanks to Mobutu's very clever way of either eliminating or co-opting any real rivals, there was nobody that anybody could think of that was capable of replacing him for the better.

Well, then you mentioned Shaba One and Shaba Two. Those were the names of two invasions of the country from Angola into the Shaba Province. The tribe that exists contiguous to Shaba in Angola are the same people as the tribe that is the majority in Shaba. That was part of the reason for the invasion. They said that they wanted to liberate their people. Those people had always been very restless under Mobutu's government. They had tried to make themselves independent in the early '60s and that had failed. Mobutu was keeping a very strong hand on that area. For example,

Zaire was building an electric supply line that went from a big dam on the Zaire River, at a point just between Kinshasa and Matadi, all the way to Shaba, 1,000 miles over jungle. It was being built by Morrison Knudson. They were great engineers. I mean they could do this crazy thing because they, like the American military during the Second World War, could do everything for themselves. They built their own airstrips. They had their own airplanes fly their stuff in and out. Mobutu wanted his finger in Kinshasa on the switch for the electrical supply to the mines and everything else in Shaba, and that's why this thing was set up that way.

When those invasions took place and a number of Africans and Europeans were killed there, those of us in Kinshasa knew what was going on, but it didn't affect us at all really. For a while people thought that the Shaba invasion might be the event that pushed the rest of Zaire into getting rid of Mobutu. Most diplomats in Kinshasa thought that any other group of people would have revolted long before, but not the Zaireans. Of course one of the reasons was that they were so fractionalized. Each tribe had its own loyalty to itself and was very suspicious of the others, so they couldn't cooperate with each other. The other thing was that having come from the army himself, Mobutu did the classic thing that all army dictators do. He had broken up the army's ability to cooperate with itself. He kept it poorly supplied. He had encouraged rivalries between various commanders so that if there was any loyalty at all, it was to him, not to the army or to each other. When the invaders came across the border into Shaba, it was a real threat to his regime because if he lost the income from the mines then he probably wouldn't be able to feed the country, but at the same time the Zairean army really wasn't able to put up a defense. The French and the Belgians sent in paratroopers eventually and got rid of the invaders. There was a lot of fear among the foreigners in Kinshasa, however. They thought, "Mobutu's going to go and then this place is going to back to what it was in the 1960s, and then how are we going to get out of here"? Everybody who knew anybody at the American Embassy was coming to call on us and asking, "When you leave, you'll take us with you, too won't you"? Well, that wasn't necessary because they got rid of the invaders.

Q: Were our other non-governmental agencies working in that area when you were there trying to make conditions better?

KARAER: Oh, we had the Peace Corps.

Q: How were they doing?

KARAER: You have to ask the Peace Corps about whether they felt that they accomplished much there. The only thing I remember about the Peace Corps while I was there was a deep concern on the part of the people who ran the Embassy and the Peace Corps whether our volunteers out in the countryside would get enough food to stay reasonably healthy. In Kinshasa, food was not exactly scarce, but so unevenly available and so expensive from the point of view of the Zairean people, that the Embassy had started a project using money that was earned by our employees association. We had a restaurant and a tennis court and a swimming pool and all this stuff. People paid money to use these things. The Embassy used some of that money to start a food bank where our Zairean employees in addition to their salaries, would also receive a food package for themselves and their families every payday. Canned fish, rice, that kind of stuff so that our own employees at least would have something to eat. We were very concerned that the Peace Corps Volunteers that we were sending out into the villages in Zaire were not going to get enough to eat to keep them

healthy. The few Peace Corps volunteers that I saw come through the embassy, however, looked ok to me.

Q: On your commercial side, were you ever looking at the Zairean women, the people who ran the market place and all this. Was this strictly local or was there any chance of tapping into that as a source of selling American goods?

KARAER: No, because what they dealt in were consumer goods and consumer goods were not something that the United States was going to sell to a place like Central Africa. The sort of thing that the United States could be competitive in, desirable in, was machinery.

Q: What about with the Department of Commerce, your job, were you working at that point essentially directly for the Department of Commerce?

KARAER: I'm trying to remember. Somehow I think I wasn't working for Commerce until I went to Ankara. While we worked closely with them because these programs were Commerce's programs, I think we were still State Department officers during that time.

Q: Did you feel any, I mean in reports back, obviously we're supposed to list trade opportunities and things like this, trade opportunity being to tell Commerce to let American business know that there's an opportunity to do business. I mean with a place like Zaire, was the feeling really we couldn't in good conscience tell any country to do trading unless there were very particular circumstances.

KARAER: Yes, well, we did do the trade opportunities, but as one of my colleagues in the economic section used to joke, today's trade opportunity is tomorrow's trade complaint. So, of course one of the things that when anybody would come to us and say oh, I want to buy this or that and let the companies in the United States know that I am interested, we would look as deeply as we were able to into how they were going to finance the purchase. In some cases it was peculiar means, but they appeared to have the means to do it. It was just that everything was so criminal the way people saw the people that were getting ahead there. They were doing this through dishonesty. In some cases necessarily because the laws were unreasonable and unfair, but in other cases because if you were going to get the money that you needed to capitalize something that you wanted to start, you were going to have to do something dishonest. What we were concerned about was that at least the part that they had to do with the American company was honest.

Q: Well, did you feel too that you were dealing with a deep rooted Belgian I don't know if you want to call it a Mafia cartel or something, in other words the Belgians had a lock on a lot of the stuff that was going on?

KARAER: Oh, absolutely. I did my best to lay out in the marketing reports that I wrote who owned the companies and who their traditional suppliers were. On the other hand, for whatever reason, American companies had not tried to develop this market either. For example, you can't just sell a big complicated spinning machine or a weaving machine or textile printing machine and say, "okay, fine, you got your machine, I got my money, see you later". There has to be some system for maintaining the thing, getting spare parts, etc. That was the other big complaint that these

companies had, and it was justified. While they knew that the machines that were being sold by the United States were good ones, American companies weren't interested in dealing with the vagaries of Africa. Remember this was still when Commerce's big thing was to encourage American companies to export at all. We were not exporting because most of our companies were very happy with the American market and not worrying about exporting. Also, exporting was still set in colonial patterns. The potential customer was saying, "If I buy a machine from Europe, the representative comes through here once every three months to see how we're doing, but if I buy something from the United States I'm never going to see anybody and I don't want to take that chance". I think that at that time American companies probably had similar networks of service and representation set up in Latin America like the Europeans had in Africa. Nevertheless, as far as I was concerned my work was very interesting and I could happily spend all of my time getting marketing information and feeding it back to Commerce. Now, whether my efforts sold a single pin is another question, but hopefully I helped educate people about what you needed to do to do business in Africa, this is what you're going to have to consider.

Q: How did you find the banking structure, the people to give out credit to people to buy things?

KARAER: There wasn't any.

Q: You were giving me a blank look there.

KARAER: Citibank had an office in Kinshasa and that was the one bank where I knew I could talk with the directors and get their take on the economy, what was possible and what was impossible. Although, I think probably its main business was with the embassy and with AID. Another project I undertook was to do biographical sketches on the ten leading Zairean businessmen. The one at the top of the list was Uncle Lito. He was Mobutu's uncle. He was the one who raised Mobutu. Mobutu's father died when he was a very young boy and so Uncle Lito had brought him up and he felt obviously a very deep obligation to him. He had given Uncle Lito a big chunk of the Zaireanized companies and one of the things that Uncle Lito owned and was the source of tremendous wealth was the main trading company that dealt in foodstuffs, that imported foodstuffs from overseas. Oh boy, the whole time I was in Zaire, the stories I heard about Uncle Lito were just absolutely horrendous and these were all coming from the European or Indian merchants and business people that I had met along the way. Uncle Lito, according to them, was the source of all evil, but he was on the list to interview, and I had to go see him. I made an appointment, and when I left the office I said to my secretary, I said, "Well, if they throw me into the crocodile pit, you know where I went and you can send them looking for me." I think the crocodile pit was one of the things that was featured in that trashy novel that I read.

Anyway, I get there and Uncle Lito couldn't have been sweeter. Now, I'm sure he did all of the dishonest things that they said and more, but he was absolutely thrilled that the American Embassy wanted to know about his life. In fact, John Heimann, who was the head of the economic section, had said he didn't think I would have any trouble getting to see these people. "All you have to do is bat your eyelashes and say, tell me how you got to be the great man that you are today." He was absolutely right. It worked every time. I didn't even have to bat my eyelashes. "You're such a successful man. Tell me, how did you get to be a success?" It was again, a great education that helped me understand people in other developing countries that I went to later.

Until independence there were almost no educated Africans in Zaire who had gone beyond primary school. A handful of people had university degrees, and almost all of those who were educated were priests. When I asked Uncle Lito what he wanted to be when he was young, he said, well, when he was a young man, what he wanted to do was to become a priest. I almost fell out of my chair. Then I thought, of course, in his youth, that was the only way open to an ambitious Zairean man who wanted to get beyond being a clerk in some warehouse.

Q: There was something in 1960 when Zaire or the Belgian Congo was being given independence, something like four college graduates or three college graduates or something.

KARAER: Yes, it was very small, six sticks in my mind. Uncle Lito wanted to be a priest, but that didn't work out, because he had to take care of his family and on and on. I must say he was so sweet. He was so forthcoming that I reminded myself that I had better stop and think about the motives of some of those people who told some of those stories about him. On the other hand, he really was an old crook. We were getting to a crisis at that point in the Zairean economy. The World Bank and the major donors had really put it to the Zairean government that they had to bring the management of their own resources under control. The World Bank sent a retired German central banker out to become the head of the Zairean Central Bank and the IBID sent a Turk who had been in the Ministry of Finance in Turkey out to be the chief advisor to the Minister of Finance. I got the following story from the German, so this is true. Uncle Lito arrived at the Central Bank with these big metal trunks that the traders used to move stuff around in Zaire. He sent them into the bank and said, "Fill them up". He didn't get them filled up that time. As you can imagine, the World Bank reps had to have protection, because the Zairean leadership really wanted to get rid of them in the worst way. I got to talk to all of these people and find out how this program was going, so it was a tremendous education for us.

Q: Did you find, I mean when you're dealing with a country like Zaire which is almost the prime example, but where corruption is so big, we have other fish to fry. We wanted to keep it from disintegrating. We wanted to keep the cobalt. We wanted to keep the Soviets from messing around there. There were border questions and other things going. If you write back reports about how awful the corruption is on sort of a weekly basis which this stuff can leak to congress and newspapers and really screw things up by showing that we're supporting as we do a corrupt regime. I mean did you feel inhibited or something or think well, everybody knows that, so I'm not going to report that anymore?

KARAER: I wasn't writing that stuff every week as you were saying. It wasn't as though our government didn't have the information and wasn't keeping tabs on these guys. Cutler's job there, together with the other major donors, was to find some way to corral Mobutu, not to destroy him, because, as you say, in the absence of a more viable government, they needed him to keep Zaire together and to get the cooperation they needed for these other things. At the same time there needed to be a way to keep the thefts under control. They were succeeding to a certain extent, but the great mass of the people still remained horribly poor.

Another thing I continued to learn in Zaire, adding on to what I'd learned living in India, is that while much of the poverty of developing countries stems from misgovernment or from serious

imbalances in the economy, a lot of it comes from the inability of the old social structure to deal with the modern world and the modern economy. Zaire needed the foreign exchange that it was earning from its minerals businesses that had to be run in a first world manner by people who understood the machinery and the marketing in order to build the infrastructure to provide the education and the medical treatment and other things that their people needed. The people for the most part were still operating on the basis of their old tribal family rules that made it very hard for a person who understood the modern world to move in both of those worlds. I have two examples of that. You talk about corruption. There was one man in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with whom I had very long, frank conversations. He would tell me about how family members would come for help, and when we say family we're talking about a really extended family. We're talking about lots of potential petitioners who come to him and say, "You have a big job in the government now. You control jobs. You control money. I need help. Help me. Give my son a job. Give me some money for whatever. He has to refuse, because neither the money nor the jobs are his to give away. That's the kind of corruption that, for the most part, we're talking about. Of course Mobutu is socking away billions in Switzerland, but who's he helping? Uncle Lito. He's the first one who gets help from Mobutu. So, trickle this down through the entire modern government structure. Every single one of those people who had any kind of influence over jobs or over money had tons of family members coming to ask for his help, and if he didn't give that help he was considered a really bad guy. Now, this is not just your unfortunate brother-in-law, like we might have in our society, this is lots of people. People who are very close to you.

My French teacher made his living tutoring American Embassy employees in the embassy language program. He had a steady income, but it wasn't huge. He lived in a neat little one-room house in the Cite. He lived with his sister, who was unmarried, and with his little daughter, who was the same age as my daughter. Before he invited us to come to his house for dinner, which was a really big honor for us, he told me the terribly sad story about what had happened to his wife. He'd been married, of course, that's where the little girl came from, and he had decided that since he had a low income that he would limit his family to one child, so that he could educate and care for her well. Now, this was a horrible risk, because disease is rampant there. In fact during the time that I knew him, his child had gotten malaria and had almost died and there was very little medicine available in the city. The hospital was a joke. However, he stuck to his decision. Then one day his wife's family came to them and said, "Our uncle has 12 children. He lives upriver somewhere in a small place. He can't afford to send them all to school. You have a good job. You live in a big city. You have your own house. We're going to send two of his children down to you to take care of". This meant that he would not only feed and clothe them, but he would pay their school fees and take care of them until the time came for Uncle to take them back. The French teacher told the relative, "Look, I didn't ask Uncle X to have 12 children. I can only take care of my own family and my sister. I can't take care of anybody else's children". His wife was so mortified that he had taken that position that she left him. Now, it's so easy for Americans to sit back here and look at the amount of money that AID sends out and say, "Why don't these people pull themselves together and do what's right". But in order to do what we think is right, they have to pay a terrible price for rejecting their cultural demands.

Q: Is there anything you want to add?.

KARAER: Yes. Oh, one thing I wanted to add. I had read all the classified reports that came across my desk about Mobutu. Just before I left we participated in the Kinshasa Trade Fair. Now, Commerce did not want to give us any money to do this, because they knew by this time that there was no way that participating in this fair was going to sell any American products, but it was one of Mobutu's pet projects. If an ambassador wanted to show that he was cooperating, he participated in the Fair. We had hardly any money to do it with. I can't even remember where I got the money that I used. I guess a couple of the big companies gave us some funds. We had a General Motors assembly plant there and we had a Firestone Tire factory. I think that they did give some money just to be good guys and our own shop put together some plywood booths and stuff and painted them red, white and blue. We had some catalogs and some pamphlets and things to hand out.

Well, on the first Sunday of the fair, Mobutu came to tour it and we were at our display to shake his hand. That was the first time that I really understood what "charisma" means. I knew all this awful stuff about this man. He was very tall, still very handsome. He came down the line. He looked down at me with his big eyes, shook my hand and said, "Bonjour, Madame." I said weakly, "Bonjour, Monsieur." Wow. His personal magnetism was incredible. That was a real revelation to me, how some people just have this thing. I guess it's what they say Bill Clinton has. People can find fault with him, but everybody who has ever met him says you just can't resist him.

Q: Yes, well, luckily you weren't put to the test.

KARAER: No, I got out of there fast.

JOYCE E. LEADER
Associate Director for Education, Peace Corps
Kinshasa (1976-1979)

Ambassador Leader was born in Pennsylvania and raised in Ohio. He was educated at Dennison University, the University of Chicago, and the Columbia University School of Journalism. After work in the private sector and with the US Department of Education, he joined the Peace Corps, serving in Kinshasa and at headquarters in Washington. Joining the State Department in 1982 he began his career in which he was to deal primarily with African concerns, both in Washington and abroad. His foreign postings include Kinshasa, Ouagadougou, Lagos and Marseilles. In 1999 he was appointed Ambassador to Guinea, where he served until 2000. Ambassador Leader was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

LEADER: This time, I was mostly on the planning side of things. But I wasn't doing a lot. I finally decided that I had to get very serious about getting out. I had applied previously for a job with the McGraw Hill newsletters. I had a friend working there and she told me there was another opening and I should come and look into it, which I did. I got the job. So, I left the DC Public Schools to work on a newsletter having to do with chemical pollution in the workplace. It was a newsletter in search of a subject and eventually evolved into a newsletter on fertilizers, but I left by that time. I

also interviewed with the Peace Corps at that time and I was offered a job as the associate Peace Corps director for education in Zaire. So, in late 1976, I left for Zaire.

Q: And you were there from when to when?

LEADER: I was there for all of 1977, 1978, and almost to the end of 1979.

Q: Today is November 3, 2003. What was Zaire like in '76?

LEADER: Zaire was under Mobutu Sese Sekou. It had been several years in decline and people were getting to the point where they thought that it couldn't go any lower but during the time I was there it just kept lower and lower and lower. People didn't have jobs. If they did have jobs, they had to work two jobs. Oftentimes, some member of the family had some sort of business selling something on the road that would make them some money. It was very difficult for people to make ends meet. Because of this, it spawned a lot of corruption.

I was working with the education volunteers. In the schools, there was a lot of deception and a lot of people used their positions as teachers or head of the food program at the school to enrich themselves. For example, the teacher in charge of food would get a certain amount of money from the students and then he or she was responsible for buying the food for that term for two or three months. What was happening was that the food would run out about a month before the end of the term, so they had to close school early and the students had to all go home. The evidence indicated the teacher had just taken the money and was using it for his own purposes. The same was going on in the examinations. Students would buy answers from the teachers so that they would be able to move on to the next level. The volunteers were seeing this and were very upset by it. It made a lot of them feel that we should not be there at all. My argument was, if they weren't there, who was going to provide any model at all of some sort of integrity for the students? They just weren't seeing it in quite a number of the teachers. This was even in cases where the schools were very closely affiliated with the churches. The school system was very run down and wasn't able to manage very well. It was a very big country, so they really depended a lot on the schools that were run by the various missionary groups, some of which still had their missionaries in the schools. Some were becoming more and more aligned with the government. They were also still very important in education and healthcare. So, it was just a very difficult place for people to survive. Inflation was incredible at that time and was quite out of control. As U.S. government officials we were not allowed to deal on the black market, so all of our money was exchanged at the official rate. I would sometimes pay \$70 for a lunch if I went out to a restaurant, which would probably cost about \$10 if I could use black market money. It was rampant. I do recall sometimes when we had to pay vendors of some sort, we had to take suitcases of money. They didn't have large denomination bills. So it was not unusual at all to see people carrying around briefcases full of cash. The banking system wasn't working very well and you couldn't bank like we do here. You couldn't go into a bank and write a check. Most of the transactions were done by cash. So, it was a tough life for a lot of people and for the volunteers. People had so little money that they were rarely eating meat. Volunteers would report to me that they felt embarrassed if they cooked meat because their counterparts were unable to do so. Volunteers are expected to live at the same level of the people that they're working among, so a lot of them were going without just because their counterparts were unable to afford it. People just weren't getting paid. If they were government

workers, they were not getting paid regularly. Teachers were also suffering from this situation. They never knew when they would get a paycheck. I remember seeing one paycheck. It was duly made out to the teacher's name and then where you're supposed to write the amount, it said, "000000." It was a check for nothing. It was a very hard life and people didn't really think that it could go much lower, but it did.

Q: I'm sure you were getting reports from our volunteers who were out there trying to teach. Were they feeling they were making a difference?

LEADER: They were teaching and they were usually very popular teachers. They oftentimes had activities in addition to their teaching to make a difference in the community like raising rabbits that would be a source of meat for the village. There were volunteers, not under my jurisdiction, who were doing fish farming and they were introducing a source of protein into the diets, which were very heavily dependent on manioc, which is cassava. I have always retained one little fact in my head about it which is that it takes seven pounds of it to make the amount of protein that you need in a meal. Your stomach would burst. It's pretty tasteless stuff. But some of the teachers got very depressed because they didn't feel like they could make a difference, that they were just swimming against the tide and the tide was so overwhelming that they couldn't make a difference. But others felt that they had something to contribute and that they could plug along and try to contribute to the kids and their communities.

Q: Those that were having problems, could you move them to another country?

LEADER: The tour was only two years. If they were so down about it, they could just terminate. Not many did. If they were having some serious problems at their school, there was a possibility of my moving them to another school in Zaire, but normally it had to be pretty serious for me to move them to another school.

Q: Zaire is huge. Were volunteers working in villages close to cities? Or were they out practically up against the easternmost borders?

LEADER: The volunteers in Zaire were spread fairly evenly throughout the country. Zaire is made up of regions and each of the regions had a capital and in each of the capitals we had a Peace Corps volunteer who was the regional representative. That person had a house and a radio and a vehicle in the capital city and we did radio checks daily from Kinshasa with those people. So they were the first line of recourse for the volunteers in that region. Some of the volunteers were quite some distance from those regional capitals. My job entailed visiting the volunteers at their sites and so for every maybe three weeks out of every five or six, I was on the road. That entailed flying with a local airline to a regional capital and then going with the regional representative in a Land Rover to visit the various volunteers. We would usually try to visit all of them in a given region, spend the night with them, meet the people who were in charge of the school, meet the other teachers, observe them in their classrooms, and things like this. It was a fairly strenuous job.

We were able to provide the volunteers with some support so they felt the capital was involved and that the Peace Corps staff was involved and concerned about them. I think that one of my biggest critics was one gal who felt that we weren't doing enough for her. Frankly, I think she was

mistaken. She was getting a lot of support from the teachers and the leadership of the school where she was, which was a religious school. The volunteers would get their support from their environment and most of them were doing pretty well. They had learned French to start off with and then they'd get into their areas and find out they'd have to speak some local language like Swahili or Lingala or some of the other languages. So I organized a language training program for the summer between their first and second year. I did this in four different regions for four different local languages. It worked out great. We got some of the Zairians who were language trainers in the summer programs to help out. We had people from a university. We identified the language speakers. The kids really liked that. They felt in the second year they were much better equipped to speak the local language and to communicate with those who couldn't speak French. So that worked really well.

It was an interesting time in Zaire because it was during Shaba I and Shaba II. Twice while I was there, Shaba was invaded by people coming from Angola. They were generally people who had fled when Mobutu had taken over, somehow felt that they had to flee for their lives. They reconstituted themselves as rebel groups and had recourse to arms and came into Zaire. The first year, it affected my volunteers in Kamina. Kamina was an important location because there was a big airport there and the Americans, probably prompted by Shaba I, turned that into a very big base in Central Africa. I had been there just before the war started and then I went down to Lubumbashi and we called our volunteers into Lubumbashi. I went down there and talked with all of them. They felt that they wanted to stay in Zaire but they wanted to go to a different place. I reassigned most of them. One of them is in the State Department right now doing quite well. The Zairian husband of another one is also doing quite well in the State Department. He has become an American citizen. The turmoil didn't necessarily deter these people from further service overseas.

The second Shaba was the one that Americans are probably more familiar with because it was an invasion that reached Kolwezi, the area where the Gécamines has its copper mines. There were a lot of foreign people working there, mostly Belgians, some French. That was about an hour to two hours north of Lubumbashi. We had no volunteers in Kolwezi, so we were pretty fortunate. The people there were held hostage for some time and many of them were killed and it was a very ugly affair. I found out later that the only reason why there were no volunteers in Kolwezi when the invasion began was because they had all been invited to a big party there but they had no way to get there because the regional representative had gone to the U.S. and had intentionally taken the key to the Land Rover with him so they couldn't use it. Otherwise, I fear we would have had some volunteers who might have been in some real difficult situations. We were fortunate. It worked out. None of the volunteers were in harm's way or at least we got them out of harm's way. We came through it pretty well.

Q: Did you have any medical problems with the volunteers – dietary or diseases or what have you?

LEADER: I'm not really able to speak to that because the doctor that we had followed strict rules of confidentiality. Even though I was in charge of 150 education volunteers I did not know much about their medical problems. I kept insisting that I should know because they were my volunteers and I should be giving them support, but I did not.

Q: This was before AIDS became a problem.

LEADER: Yes. We were first becoming aware of it in the early 1980s.

Q: Were there any clashes between Peace Corps volunteers and local officials over the volunteers finding signs of corruption and challenging the people who were siphoning off the money?

LEADER: Yes, and this caused a lot of friction sometimes in the schools which led to me having to transfer some volunteers to another location. They weren't dealing with local officials as much as they were with their school officials, at least the ones that I oversaw. But they were very good about trying to work with people and trying to model integrity by their behavior, and I think that it was very important.

Q: Did you have much dealing with the Zairian government?

LEADER: My involvement was really with the education ministry and its officials. Obviously when I went to the various communities, I would sometimes see local officials but not that often. I was mostly dealing with school officials.

Q: How did you find them at that level?

LEADER: Some of them seemed to be very interested in their students and very concerned about education. Others were using their positions in ways that would not be called totally honest. I remember a story that a teacher at a teacher training college in Kinshasa told me. He said that if he were to show up at work one day driving a Mercedes, the students would applaud him rather than ask him where he got the money to buy it. They would applaud him for having the ingenuity to tap those kinds of resources. Everything was turned on its head. It seemed to me that it would be very difficult to get things straightened out again so that people would not feel that they had to milk the system for all they could get because they had no other resources. But I'm afraid that it's probably still happening.

Q: Zaire was well known as being a country where in our overall mission, the CIA had a major hand. Did you ever run across problems with the CIA or was this out of sight, out of mind?

LEADER: The Peace Corps tries to keep its distance from the diplomatic American community. We did that pretty well. Our director would go to staff meetings and report back to us but we were not really privy to what was going on in the embassy. I wasn't aware of the size or the activities of the CIA at all. I was aware that it was there, but I wasn't aware of what they were doing.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

LEADER: Lannon Walker was the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) and Ambassador Walter Cutler served most of the time that I was there.

Q: Did he show much interest in the Peace Corps?

LEADER: He was always very friendly to the Peace Corps. They didn't travel out like we did, and the volunteers were not in Kinshasa. There were some in the region called Bandundu which weren't very far from Kinshasa, but I don't think they visited the volunteers very much.

Q: Volunteers are not supposed to work with the embassy or be reporting, but at the same time in a country as huge as Zaire, here were Americans getting a much better feel for the entire country because we didn't have any real apparatus to get out there.

LEADER: While I was there, there was a consulate in Bukavu in the east. They closed the United States information service (USIS) operation in Kano in the north at that time. And there was a very active consulate in Lubumbashi. Parker Borg was the Consul General. So they did have some resources. Parker traveled and was very involved with the volunteers in Lubumbashi. There were volunteers right in Lubumbashi and in some towns not too far from Lubumbashi. During the war, he traveled up to Kamina and was picked up because he didn't have the proper papers. The volunteers had to verify his story, who he was. They laughed about it a lot after. They could have got him in real trouble if they had denied who he was. He moved around a lot. Otherwise, we weren't rigid and rigorous. We didn't have to be because the volunteers didn't have that much access to the embassy nor vice versa. I'm sure that when the director met with people from the embassy he was sharing information as was necessary and appropriate. But there was a line there. When I went down to Lubumbashi to talk with the volunteers, I came back and made my report to my superiors and my other associate Peace Corps directors. Then we, as the staff, made the decision that we would pull the volunteers out of Kamina. So we passed this message on the radio back to them that this decision had been made and we would be working on reassigning them in the country. If there was anybody who felt he or she needed to go home, or if they had only a few months left, then we would go through the termination procedures. Parker Borg happened to be at the volunteers' house when this message was passed. He was very upset by that. So he went back through his channels to the embassy and the next thing I knew, I was summoned to the ambassador's office along with the acting Peace Corps director, our admin officer, and the two of us were sitting there and trying to defend our action. They were saying, "We shouldn't be pulling them out" and we were saying, "We should be pulling them out because they're watching people at checkpoints get forced onto the ground at gunpoint, forced to grovel in mud, and being harassed and so forth." The volunteers themselves in Kamina had had a group of drunken soldiers come into their house with bayonet sticks on their guns and their house was searched. There were other things like this that had happened that was making it very uncomfortable for them to stay there. The embassy proposed, "Well, what if we talk to the people and we get more protection for the volunteers? What if we can get some kind of promises from the authorities that they will keep things calm?" It just seemed unlikely to me, and I said, "Are you saying that you want to use our volunteers as guinea pigs to calm the situation down in Kamina?" The thoughtful answer was, "Yes." I said, "No, our volunteers... We have to answer to their parents. We have to answer to Congress. We just can't afford to keep them in a situation that is as volatile as it is. If things calm down, if things get better, then we can put them back. But we can't leave them there when things are as bad as they are." They accepted it but it was a very difficult encounter on my part with the embassy.

Q: Embassies hate to evacuate anybody because it upsets the local authorities, who always maintain to you it's fine, you can take care of things. So you're going counter to the local authorities. But that's not our business. Our business is to protect Americans.

LEADER: Well, we hadn't discussed it thoroughly with the embassy first. We felt that it was our decision to make, not theirs, so it hadn't really occurred to us that we needed to vet our decision with the embassy before we announced it. But perhaps in retrospect, that would have been a good idea. But neither the other staff members nor myself were aware of the sensitivities around evacuation. We just knew that we had to do what we had to do to protect them. But the local authority angle is of course a serious one. It's there. One of the schools that we did evacuate people from was in a town closer to Lubumbashi. I thought it was a wonderful little town, Likasi. The principal there said, "We can't count on you if you're going to evacuate people like that, so we don't want any more Peace Corps volunteers." It was a wonderful little town and a wonderful little school. I had great respect for the school principal. And it was his decision that he couldn't count on the Americans and he wasn't going to have them. I regretted that, but we had done what we had to do.

Q: By 1979, where did you go?

LEADER: By 1979, I was really burned out. The Peace Corps contract for APCDs (Associate Peace Corps Directors) is usually two and a half years, but they couldn't find anybody to replace me, so I just sort of kept staying and staying and staying. Finally, on my second to last trip, I was going between Kananga and Bujimai and the vehicle we were in lost its steering. We just sort of rolled into the sandbank. Fortunately, we were very close to where we were going to spend the night with the missionaries. They had planes that flew between there and Kananga, so the regional representative went back and got some parts and came back. He himself had to repair the car and we went on. But that was a little bit hairy. On the last trip I took a different car lost its breaks. Fortunately, the driver quickly pulled the emergency break and we didn't have any serious consequences from that one either. But my feeling was that unless we were going to get funding from Washington to repair these cars up to the standard that they needed to be, I wasn't going out anymore. They finally did get somebody to replace me and I left and came back to Peace Corps headquarters, where I spent the next two years as the desk officer for Southern Africa, to 1981.

FRANK D. CORREL
Acting Program Officer, USAID
Kinshasa (1977)

Frank D. Correl was born in Germany in 1929. He received his BS from Rider College in 1950, and his MA from Columbia University in 1955. He served in the US Army from 1953 to 1955. His postings include South Korea, Vietnam, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Lesotho, and Zambia. W. Haven North interviewed him on September 29, 1990.

CORREL: Well, this Southern Africa evaluation trip was another wonderful assignment, one that I really enjoyed doing. I thought that it wasn't in the cards that I travel again away from my DSP responsibilities until a constant dispute with AID personnel burst into flame when they tried to draft me as Program Officer to Zaire at the beginning of 1977. That came about just after I had been contacted by my good friend in the Asia Bureau, Mike Adler, to do what I would have considered an absolutely fabulous challenge, a survey of possibilities for assistance to the independent countries in the South Pacific. At this point, Personnel put their foot down and said that I wasn't going to the South Pacific, I was going as Program Officer to Zaire. I replied that I had important personal reasons for staying in Washington, that my career had been blighted for so long by some of the very people who were trying to recruit me for Zaire, and that it was an unfair action to send me to Zaire. To make a long story short, a compromise was negotiated whereby I went to Zaire for two months to be the Acting Program Officer. Again, it was an experience that in terms of making an impression on me was just incredible. I arrived at probably one of the most unhappy missions I've ever seen in my entire career. People didn't know what they were doing. Many of them were very unhappy.

Q: This was what year?

CORREL: This was the beginning of 1977. I arrived there about the 8th of January, 1977 and I was there until the end of February. I was the acting head of the Program Office. They tried to find someone else for permanent assignment and they did eventually send somebody out there. While they were searching, I was in charge on the spot. The first thing that happened when I arrived in Kinshasa and went to pay my respects to the Mission Director, he said, "Well, Frank, I'm glad to see you and now that you're here I just want you to know that I'm leaving." He went on an extended leave and I suddenly found myself Acting Mission Director for a program that gave one the feeling that one was hanging on by the skin of one's teeth. As I said, the mission certainly was very unsure of its role, and I rarely have encountered such low morale or virtual absence of any kind of commitment to one's work. There was a situation involving relations with the Embassy. The Mission Director and the DCM and the Ambassador did not get along well. The Mission Director told me how much he resented how the previous Ambassador had treated him. This was an African American Mission Director who felt that the previous Ambassador had mocked him, had tried to address him in mock Southern dialect and had obviously been an exceedingly insensitive person. I don't think that the current ambassador and DCM held this man in the world's greatest respect. To be absolutely candid about it, I could see both the Embassy's point of view and the Director's point of view. Anyway, he took off and here I was in the hot seat.

The first thing that happened, as I remember, was, that word started filtering in from the area between Kinshasa and the Atlantic Coast that there was some kind of a virulent fever raging there that was killing people like flies. It was named green monkey fever, and I gather that medical opinion later on decided that it was some kind of precursor to HIV/AIDS. We and the Embassy, of course, were worried very much about this. We had a doctor on the Mission staff and I saw Dr. Kennedy every day with a personal report on what was coming in. I think that the Embassy appreciated very much how we were monitoring the situation and keeping them informed. As I remember, we had a Commodity Import Program in Zaire, which had its share of problems. I remember myself doing some kind of an analysis for the DCM with suggestions how some improvements could be made. I'm very pleased to say that it was accepted in a very positive way.

Next thing that happened was is that we had a very serious volcanic eruption in the East, near Bukavu or Kivu, I'm not sure which.

The Head of State, Mobutu, came in with a request to the Ambassador for five million dollars in disaster assistance, which was referred to me. I talked to the DCM and said, "We need to send somebody out to take a look at the situation and see what we can learn from that. We have a \$25,000 authority, but obviously if this is such a big thing, then we have some other steps that we can take." I sent a person from the Program Office out to the East, a young woman who had been pretty much sidelined in the Program Office. I discussed with her what to do, how to go about it, what to look for, to use her judgment and write me a very candid report. We would see after that how we handled it with the Embassy. Everybody was so nervous as to whether the Embassy was going to run all over us. And, indeed, when I told the DCM that I was sending this young woman out who was the Assistant Disaster Relief Officer, he said, "Well, do you think she's the right one?" I'm sorry to say that I had in the back of my mind an uncomfortable suspicion that she was being questioned as being the right person on account of being an African-American. And I said, "Well, she has the job, and I've talked to her, and I have confidence that she can do the job." She went out and came back with an excellent report and excellent observations. We, together, recommended that the Ambassador give them \$20,000 and, by God, they bought it.

One of my things I'm particularly pleased with having done during my government career is that I helped work Mobutu out of four million, nine hundred and eighty thousand dollars. That \$20,000 was for tents and blankets, and that apparently provided what was needed. As I'm telling you this, I think you'll realize that my two months in Kinshasa went pretty fast. I was ensconced at the top of the apartment house that the Embassy had in those days, called the Alhadeff Arms, where at night I could look and see the lights of Brazzaville twinkling across Stanley Pool. Zaire was in a very messy economic situation at the time with a vastly overvalued currency. Zaire's suppliers of petroleum products refused to ship unless they received payment in advance. One of my memories of Kinshasa in those days was long lines of vehicles trying to buy a few liters of gasoline. I recall another crisis on a more personal level. It involved a rather untoward incident involving distribution of Butagas cans used for cooking to the Mission families. I'm sorry that I had to use my prerogative as Acting Director to take away a whole bunch of Butagas cans being hoarded by the wife of the actual Director and distribute them on a fair basis all around. On the 28th of February, I got on a Lufthansa plane together with an AID inspector who had come through Kinshasa sometime earlier and with whom I became friendly, and I went home. I really felt that after two months I had earned my pay.

Q: You certainly had.

CORREL: It was a fascinating thing. I had been very reluctant to go and, of course, the opportunity cost was that trip to the South Pacific, but in retrospect, it was a very interesting and satisfying assignment. I even got somebody promoted during that time, because the officer whose place I was taking, who had left, hadn't written any efficiency reports on the staff. I'm very pleased to say also that it was the first time for me in an executive-type situation. I had a chance to influence what some of the local employees of the Mission were doing, and I think they felt quite good about that.

ROBERT J. MACALISTER
Director, Peace Corps
Kinshasa (1977-1979)

Robert J. MacAlister was born in New York City and attended Bard College after serving in World War II. He began his career in the Foreign Service in 1950. He served in Vietnam, the Ivory Coast, and Chad. Mr. MacAlister was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1995.

Q: *Well, maybe we ought to jump ahead and go through the whole Peace Corps cycle now.*

MACALISTER: Okay, I was asked to be the temporary Peace Corps Director in Zaire right after there had been problems in the Shaba province of Zaire. The Peace Corps program there was one of the largest-over 200 volunteers. Operating in Zaire was and is difficult. Like in Chad, you need to have your own support system. They were looking for someone who had prior Peace Corps experience to keep the program going and manage a large and far-flung group of volunteers. We had English teachers; people involved in fish farming which I will come back to in a minute. We had volunteers involved in health training. Some agricultural volunteers. It was quite a diversified program. But PC/Washington was looking for someone to hold down the fort while they went about recruiting on a long range basis. I was not interested in a long range overseas assignment at that point.

Q: *How long were you there?*

MACALISTER: I went for three months and stayed for seven. Sound familiar? Additionally, we had a very large in-country training program for volunteers in Zaire which was something I had not experienced before. Also, at that time, the Peace Corps Director for Zaire was also the Director for Rwanda where we had just six volunteers teaching English at the University.

In any event, one of the finest programs I have ever come across was the one showing farmers how they could grow tilapia. The reason I say it was one of the finest programs is that it added an additional source of earning power that the farmer didn't have before the arrival of the volunteers. And with the exception of bringing in some cement, it used entirely indigenous products. Also, the farmers decided for themselves if they really wanted to participate. The whole element of being willing to make a commitment, the fact that the demand of the farmers wishing to participate was so huge, meant that the volunteer was able to screen people and decide who was really serious.

Interested farmers came and visited farmers who were already raising tilapia so they could see exactly what was involved. In a sense the program sold itself. The farmers already involved were the ultimate extension agents. It was very creditable. A farmer could look and see that a farmer just like him with the same background and resources could do this. It wasn't something that depended on a lot of foreign intervention. For feed, they used rice chaff and so forth. With the exception of some cement, everything involved was local.

The farmers who participated had to decide to invest a considerable amount of labor on their part. They had to dig the pond, dam it up, and the farmer and his family had to feed these fish regularly. You needed a commitment from the farmer. I guess that is one of the first times I saw graphically the importance of village people investing their work in a project with the result that they felt it was their project-not the Peace Corps.

The tilapia project operated in an area of Zaire where any kind of protein in addition to rice or cassava was very rare. Consequently, marketing the fish was very easy. As I recall, you could harvest the tilapia once every six months. The farmer would let the water out of the pond and was able to sell the crop right then and there at the pond site. People came from miles around to get it. Cultivating tilapia represented guaranteed additional income for the farmer.

Q: Was there some government involvement?

MACALISTER: Well, I was just about to get to the only drawback which was that we didn't really have counterparts from the government because the Government of Zaire was broke. Theoretically, we had counterparts at some district headquarters, but in reality we didn't.

Q: Did the idea spread on its own?

MACALISTER: I think it did. One of my best fishing volunteers went over to Rwanda at the request of the Rwanda government to advise them on how the project worked, what it involved and so on. I do know there were other Peace Corps fishing projects.

Q: Was there any sense that this was sustained after the farmer had got it going?

MACALISTER: Yes, definitely. Because all you had to do was to ensure that fingerlings would be available. Then once you had your pond, you used the residue from growing rice for feed. All locally available inputs. Also, the farmers knew how to keep up the ponds.

Q: Did the fingerlings have to be imported or were they locally available?

MACALISTER: Well, there were, as I recall, government installations that grew the fingerlings. Depending on how well the government financed the program, the spawning of the fingerlings could very well be the missing link in the future.

Q: Was there any other important project in Zaire?

MACALISTER: No, this is the one that stands out in my mind.

Q: And this was your last Peace Corps assignment?

MACALISTER: No. I came back to Peace Corps Africa for a while and worked in the Africa bureau before I went over to AID.

WILLIS J. SUTTER
Cultural Officer, USIS
Kinshasa (1977-1979)

Willis J. Sutter joined the USIS in June 1966. He served Thailand, Russia, Laos, and Mauritania. He was interviewed by Jack O'Brien in 1988.

Q: I forgot to ask, Will, before you return to Laos, in Africa, at both posts where you served, just give us a general idea of the nature of the programs that we were able to carry out there.

SUTTER: In Kinshasa was a straight, what I call orthodox, USIS program. I have always used that word "Orthodox" ever since my experience in Thailand, which were so unorthodox. But, we had an information section, a cultural section. We had a small center with a library and an auditorium. We brought in speakers, all of them spoke French, on various aspects of the U.S. We showed films. We held exhibits and so forth.

We had a Fulbright program which was not really as big as it ought to have been. We had a very active IV program.

Q: IV?

SUTTER: Yes, that is the International Visitor program. I think we had about 24 international visitors a year from Zaire.

What stands out in my mind from my two years in Kinshasa is my impression of Zaire itself. I think it is a potential powerhouse. I am willing to bet -- come back fifty years from now -- that we are going to see Zaire as one of the principal countries of Africa, and possibly one of the principal countries of the world. It has enormous natural resources. It has a bad political system. That is largely because of the chaos following independence and, an inexperienced government, plus, of course, the rather heavy hand of Mobutu.

One of the things I was about to say was that I was struck by the riches of human resources in Zaire. The number of people who had Ph.D.'s from French or American universities, and the quality of their minds was quite striking. I could not put together then and I still cannot today, the phenomena of this rather rich pool of people, well educated, smart, who are subservient and passive in the face of the rapacious Mobutu dictatorship.

But Mobutu is not all bad. He has done some rather interesting things in that country. But, still, you would think that a country with the pool of human resources that Zaire has would not have submitted itself to such a government, but it has. I do not know quite how to explain that. They are more oriented toward French culture than they are to American culture, which made it very interesting for me as cultural affairs officer.

Their bias was toward culture. That, therefore, gave us an entree with American films, American literature, and so forth. By nature and by training, they were interested in these subjects. We had some rather interesting exchanges with our audiences in Kinshasa. We had a branch post down in Lubumbashi.

ALLEN C. DAVIS
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kinshasa (1977-1980)

Ambassador Allen C. Davis was born in Tennessee in 1927. He served in the US Navy from 1945-1953 before receiving his BSFS from Georgetown University in 1956. His career has included positions in Monrovia, Moscow, Algiers, Ouagadougou, Dakar, Kinshasa, and ambassadorships in Guinea and Uganda. Ambassador Davis was interviewed by Peter Moffat on June 26, 1998.

DAVIS: Yes, I went to Kinshasa in '77 as deputy to Walter Cutler, who was the ambassador in Kinshasa at the time. And there had, if my memory serves me correctly, had been one Shaba war and we were headed toward the second one, which occurred while I was there. In both instances, outsiders had to come in to give a hand. The Moroccans were the main ones who helped Mobutu stay in power. The situation in Kinshasa was difficult at the time. Zaireans suffered really terrible economic conditions - and buying foodstuffs, and getting clothing, and gasoline and cooking oil was very tough for them. There was a great deal of unrest in the population of Kinshasa in particular, and the rest of the country either kind of worked on its own or it didn't work, depending on what was happening in a given location. We had a consulate in Bukavu and a consulate in Lubumbashi, so would visit from time to time. The roads had deteriorated dreadfully, almost all travel had to be by air. Fortunately, we had a military attache plane which could move us around the country to do things that needed to be done to stay in touch with our constituent posts.

Q: The Moroccans provided an element of personal protection, did they not, for Mobutu?

DAVIS: As well as helping to turn back the bands of people who had come into Shaba, primarily from Angola.

Q: Policy in Zaire was a favorite punching bag of critics of our policy of supporting Mobutu. Did this play out in any sort of tensions in the embassy? Or was everyone happy with our policy?

DAVIS: Far from it. The great divergence of opinion even between the political counselor and the ambassador eventually became so intense that the political counselor had no choice but to find something else to do elsewhere. I believe he may have retired.

Q: Who was that?

DAVIS: His name, I believe, was Remole. I believe his first name was Bob, and Bob took a position similar to a number of people in our Congress and elsewhere in our society that was

defensible - that Mobutu was such a dreadful dictator and so corrupt and so greedy that he did not deserve our support. Bob's position, however, went to a degree where I couldn't follow him. It was that whoever we got to replace Mobutu, whether it were by chance or we had a role in installing his replacement, he couldn't be worse than Mobutu. And having seen such things as the elevation of Bokassa to a position of responsibility, having seen what happened in Uganda with Idi Amin, it was by no means certain that it was impossible to get worse than Mobutu. So, it was along these lines that several kinds of schisms, ruptures, rifts, were quite obvious in the mission. Mobutu's performance during that period was very difficult to defend.

For example, there was a minor attempt to overthrow him - one of many, of course. But I think there were 8 or 10 people executed on the grounds of the executive mansion when they caught them and given a kangaroo trial. After the executions they were burned in a fire there. Moreover, Mobutu was grabbing so much of the country's resources that I recall that on one rather dramatic occasion he made a reach too deep into the coffers of the Gecamines, the mining company. I was there as charge and was asked to fly to Lubumbashi, where he had moved his office shortly after the second tribal war there. Literally, I think I was flown down there in a Gecamines plane. My role, my instructions, were to go and tell him to stop it and put the money back, which I did. And while I was down there, there was a Gecamines office in the same town, and I went from one office to the other. After I spoke with Mobutu and he absolutely denied doing any such thing. "How could anyone accuse me of such a thing! This is clearly prevarication!" Then I went over a little later in the afternoon and the Gecamines office and they said "It's been put back." That kind of role just seems so ridiculous and laughable.

Q: That's the other part of the popular criticism of the time of our support of Mobutu - if memory serves me, is that he was a creature of the Central Intelligence Agency, and that the station chief was sort of his master or certainly more influential than the American Embassy. Am I misrecalling or was the Agency beyond such criticism?

DAVIS: Certainly that was alleged. At no time did I ever doubt that we had had a significant role in putting Mobutu where he was and maintaining him there. Because we were afraid of the consequences if he fell: the disorder, the chaos that could occur there in this great big, awkward giant of a country. It was just almost too awful for our policymakers to even contemplate. So very often the instrument of dealing with him was the CIA. And I have no doubt whatsoever, although I was not that much involved in the early years, that the CIA did indeed have a very, very significant role in setting him up and maintaining him in power. But then, the rest of our government, the rest of our institutions here either acquiesced or went along willingly with their doing that. Now when we were there, '77 to '80, when I was there, there was no doubt in anybody's mind that the ties, personal ties, between Mobutu and the station chief were at least as strong and quite probably better than they were with the ambassador. We had the role of criticizing him and asking him to stop doing god-awful things; whereas, the CIA did not. So, we tried to use that relationship as best we could and at the same time hold as tight a rein as possible on the CIA and to require as elaborate reporting as we could possibly get from them on everything that took place in that relationship. But not only was the close relationship between the station chief and Mobutu personally, but there was also in addition, a former station chief who represented a diamond concern. And his relationship was so strong that we needed to use him and we did use him as a channel for getting quickly

through to Mobutu and emphasizing to Mobutu how serious certain things were. So, it was a tricky and complicated and sometimes very distasteful kind of a knot that had to be tied and untied.

Q: Did you find that he was able to view things rationally or did you feel you were you dealing with an essentially irrational...

DAVIS: Mobutu? Powerfully rational, a highly, highly clever person with keen intelligence, almost insatiable greed. He took great delight in playing off French against Belgians against Americans and whoever else might come into the picture. A fabulous politician, brutal as could be, with scruples that were pretty hard to find. Oh, far from irrational. He knew that we needed him. He made us pay dearly for it. And we did pay - dearly, not just in resources, but also in disagreements within our government. Congressman Solarz was bitterly opposed to him. There were people in the Department of State who hated him bitterly and wanted him brought down. There were of course the people in the private sector such as Templesman, who would go to bat for him and do extraordinary things for him. He was easily one of the most difficult of government leaders to defend. And I never had anything to do with it.

Q: This of course was in the Carter administration and one would have thought that perhaps the anti-Mobutu forces would find more sympathy than in some of the other administrations.

DAVIS: I hadn't thought of that. Of course, one of the people who felt very strongly that we had to have stability and order there, and therefore a relationship that was workable with a master of keeping order, Mobutu. That person at the Department of State struck me as being Lannon Walker, who very often would either come in and pay a visit and presumably be convinced that he had gotten Mobutu to agree to do something that we wanted him to do. Walker just felt so strongly that we needed Mobutu.

Q: And what position did Lannon Walker hold at that time?

DAVIS: I think he was a deputy assistant secretary of state. I honestly don't remember for sure. His reasoning was fairly close to my own reasoning at the time. I felt that it had to be, for the lack of a better expression, a carrot and stick approach that kept a very tight rein on Mobutu. I was never content really with the stick part of it. I didn't think we hit him hard enough when he needed it, but then you know this was in the time such people as Kissinger were looking at global issues. We had a kind of mind set in those days that - you know, do what you can to make him do the right thing, but if he doesn't, disorder and chaos just aren't something we want.

Q: Were you able to work with the French and the Belgians? Or was he successful in putting everyone at everyone else's throat?

DAVIS: You know, we felt so often under siege, really, in that sea of misery and unhappiness that the population was always exhibiting. There were, for example, such things as a band of people who invaded the home of one of the World Bank or IMF employees and carted off the belongings in the household after they had raped, I think, the daughters. It was just dreadful disorder. So, the diplomatic community did band together a little like you would have found in Moscow. And I was there back in the '60s. So there was a community of interest. Obviously we didn't always agree

and the French were constantly trying to horn into things that had been Belgian. They were trying to horn into things that had been our preserve at various times. I remember the French built a very impressive and almost worthless telecommunications installation that involved television broadcasting studios and antennas and things that were almost worthless in that circumstance, but we were told that it was mainly a political gesture that had been backed by the very, very top leadership in France. And so arguments over things like that were the most likely disagreement. We did not disagree fundamentally on the fact that Mobutu was corrupt and inhumane.

Q: Of course you now know that the French really did chase out the Belgians.

DAVIS: No doubt about it. The writing was on the wall, there. Oh, yes. The enlargement of the Francophone community was coming on. Belgium was getting some hard licks from France in those days.

Q: There was considerable preoccupation, particularly as DCM, with the problems of security?

DAVIS: No doubt about it. I think if I had to put on a piece of paper a list of the things that were top concerns personal security, security of property, particularly the lives and good health of the staff were very near the top. This consumed an awful lot of time and an awful lot of other services.

Q: Was moral high, low, indifferent?

DAVIS: Morale was surprisingly good in Kinshasa in spite of the fears. We had a large American community, a rather tightly knit American community that was pretty much organized around an elaborate community center where there were tennis courts, a swimming pool, lots of evening functions, and a large marine contingent was very much involved in it. So I'd say the community worked rather well together in Kinshasa. The Department was very good in assuring the necessary resources.

PHYLLIS E. OAKLEY
Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS
Kinshasa (1979-1982)

Ambassador Phyllis Oakley was born in Omaha in 1934 and graduated from Northwestern. In 1958 she married Ambassador Robert Oakley. She accompanied her husband to a number of his postings in Africa and personally held a USIS position in Zaire and a number of high-level State Department positions. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: In 1979, you went to Zaire as the wife of the ambassador and as a member of the Foreign Service.

OAKLEY: Right. We looked forward to the assignment; the continent was familiar and we were ready to go overseas. Bob had the excitement of his first ambassadorial assignment. Our daughter

by this time was in college and our son was a sophomore in boarding school. So they were pretty close to becoming independent and didn't need our constant attention.

Bob left around Thanksgiving, 1979. I was left behind to pack up, redo the kitchen and make other renovations before renters moved in, and finish my assignment. I waited for the children to come home for Christmas vacation and then the three of us left for Zaire.

Before leaving, I looked for possible assignments in the embassy in Kinshasa. Bob and I agreed that the job should not be too close to the front office. There was an opening with USIA as an assistant cultural affairs officer. USIA still had a big program in Zaire; you will remember we had some very large embassies in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s. USIA was not housed in the chancery so there was a physical separation from the embassy. USIS seemed delighted that I was interested in working for them and USIA people in Washington were very willing to go along with this new experiment of dual assignments, particularly since they were having trouble filling their slots in Zaire. Bob and I thought it was just the right assignment for me, both as a professional and as the wife of the ambassador.

Q: There was a pretty good firewall between what Bob was doing and what you were doing. He didn't have any direct supervisory responsibility and you would be working for an agency other than State.

OAKLEY: That's right. It all worked out pretty well. As I said, the children and I arrived in Zaire just before Christmas and in time to meet all the staff at holiday parties. The residence was an old, lovely building - probably built in the late 1940s or early 1950s - right on the banks of the Zaire River. When we looked across the river, we saw Congo-Brazzaville. We had a tennis court and swimming pool. It was a very comfortable residence. We were there from late 1979 until September 1982.

Q: Let's start by describing the situation in Zaire during your years there.

OAKLEY: President Mobutu had been considered one of our close allies for a long time. There was an on going struggle in central Africa against communist expansion, which was particularly acute in Angola. In 1976, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola had organized a Marxist regime with the support of a large contingent of Cuban troops. Zaire had itself gone through some rough moments in the early 1960s after independence, with a Katangan rebellion followed by a government headed by Moise Tshombe who was overthrown by Mobutu in 1965. In 1977, there was another rebellion in Katanga (Shaba) Province that was put down by the Kinshasa government with the assistance of the French and a couple of other countries. Shaba was an important province because it was the home of serious mining - copper and cobalt. Zaire had made a lot of money off these minerals that were vital industrial components. When we arrived, the government, using American companies, was finishing a huge power line from a hydroelectric plant on the Zaire River near Kinshasa, the capital, to the southern Shaba province for processing of ore. A lot of the Katangan and Shaban rebels had fled into Angola, and there was still some instability.

So Mobutu was certainly “our man” and he was supported strongly by the U.S. As I said, Zaire had gone through some very difficult periods. In the mid-1970s, in an economic decline, there had been a number of personal attacks in Kinshasa as Zairians became desperately poor. But this wave was practically over by the time we reached Kinshasa. We in fact were there in a rather tranquil period before another rising wave of Zairian desperation that led to open rebellions in the 1980s and 1990s.

Q: Was Mobutu being criticized at this point for corruption and management failures?

OAKLEY: Mobutu was always corrupt, or had become so very soon become after taking power. He always skimmed off a certain percentage of costs of major transactions or industries. I have heard people say that Mobutu had no concept of economics, and I agreed. He knew nothing - nor cared - about economic predictability or management; he basically ran Zaire as his personal fiefdom. Whatever progress was made was due to his acquiescence or approval; it was not the result of any systematic bureaucratic initiative, or any initiative from the population. Fortunately, Zaire had many assets - ores, oil, electric power, a good transportation system (rail and river), coffee, tea, food products. We knew that if there had been even minimal management and proper stewardship, Zaire was a country that could have grown dramatically in economic terms. Zairians are as artistic, musical, and intelligent a people as I have ever met in Africa. They were absolutely wonderful people, but there was no system to keep universities going or anything else moving in the right direction. There was just a complete absence of overall systematic management, with great corruption.

Q: What was your assignment?

OAKLEY: I had what I considered a wonderful job. As I said, I was an assistant cultural affairs officer, in charge of all the scholarship programs. We had had many Fulbright scholars from Zaire who had studied in the U.S. as well as American scholars who had spent a year in Zaire studying such matters as anthropology, sociology, or politics. There were some every year at the University of Lubumbashi as well as the University just outside Kinshasa. We had had exchanges going on for a couple of decades, from the early 1960s when our influence was at its zenith. By 1979, there were many educated Zairians who were very impressive.

So I worked on those exchanges as well as the international visitors program which sent about 30 Zairians on familiarization trips to the U.S. I worked out programs with them and organized their itineraries. I remember especially one dance tour that was sponsored by the African-American Institute in Washington. That was a wonderful, powerful dance group; it toured in a number of American cities and was well received.

Other staff members worked on press releases and contacts; we had a rather large cultural center. Others worked in the library. I thoroughly enjoyed my job and felt I met the most wonderful Zairians; they were the cultural leaders of the country - university professors, writers, and artists. It was just terrific.

Q: Today, Zaire is viewed as a completely dysfunctional state. In your days, were there functioning institutions to which these scholars could return?

OAKLEY: I believe so. I think most if not all of the people who went to the U.S. were able to use their experiences in a worthwhile way after their return, at least for a certain period, but I must also say that deterioration of Zairian institutions was well under way and was very visible when we were there. Nevertheless universities still functioned; they had visiting scholars and professors. These were obviously hard times, but the essence of the universities still persisted and they were active places of learning.

The city called Lubumbashi, near the copper mines which brought in a lot of foreign workers and influence, had a good university establishment begun by the Belgians. But the state did not support the system financially - or at least on an appropriate basis. So professors went payless; students had dormitories, but no food. It was the unpredictability of the arrival of promised resources that made management very difficult. We used to select university students for study in the U.S. and the government would promise to pay the schools, but the money would never show up. Of course, someone had absconded with those funds to Belgium or some other haven. The national Department of Education was a catastrophe; it never had any resources.

There were a lot of Zairians who had been educated in Europe in French speaking countries. They knew what an educational system should look like. They would return to Zaire and speak eloquently of their experiences and aspirations, but there was very little they could do about the problems in their own country.

Q: Wasn't this a discouraging scene?

OAKLEY: It was indeed, but on the other hand, we found Zairians so intelligent and eager to learn that we tried the best we could to help wherever we could. This was particularly true on the personal level. There were a number of organizations that provided assistance, both bilateral and multilateral, which tried to keep the financial system going; there was still a lot of interest in Zaire. There were strategic reasons, as I mentioned earlier, primarily because of the pro-communist regime in Angola. These reasons led us to continue to support Mobutu, particularly after Reagan became president and Jean Kirkpatrick at the United Nations took an interest in Africa; she promulgated the "benign dictatorship" theory that justified our support of people like Mobutu. Bob and others in the embassy kept saying that some standards of acceptable financial conduct had to be set because allowing all corruption to go on unchecked was not doing anyone any favors. In the end, Mobutu complained to the U.S. government, through the CIA, about Bob's attitude and requested that he be recalled. Vernon Walters used to visit Zaire often as the primary interlocutor and the conduit between the CIA and Mobutu. Walters had been the Deputy Director of CIA, our Ambassador to the UN, and spoke many languages fluently, and often undertook assignments such as these. When he came to Kinshasa, he would stay with us. Walters told Mobutu that ambassadors didn't stay at their posts forever and when Bob's tour was up at the end of three years he would be reassigned, but he would not be pulled out. This was the usual Mobutu game and he had PNGed ambassadors before. I think Bob felt that he had an obligation to call a spade a spade; he had to be true to the principals that the U.S. stands for. There were reasons to support Mobutu, but there also had to be some limits. When Carter became president, some accused him of being soft and allowing Angola to keep its communist government without trying to subvert it. But Congress had passed a prohibition on funding the Angola insurgents, the Bolland amendment I believe. In the

meantime, Ethiopia had fallen to the communists, followed by Afghanistan that eventually led to a Soviet invasion of that country. All of these events raised some questions about the strength and staying power of the U.S., and that made it seem even more important that we continue to work with people like Mobutu, trying to keep their support, and at the same time trying to reform their regimes so that the large resources which countries like Zaire had would work for the benefit of the masses and not just the few at the top.

What surprised me was the acquiescence of Zairians to these deplorable conditions. They did not demand any changes; they accepted the corruption and undemocratic regime without rising up. In a country as large as Zaire, one would have thought that some demands for better conditions would have sprung up, even if it had to be done violently. But it didn't happen, in part because Zairians had such bitter memories of the events of the early 1960s after independence when the country was wrecked by civil war between various factions. People were loath to take any action that might bring instability again. Furthermore, there was no starvation; the standard of living may not have been as high as it should have been, but everyone had the basic necessities. There was some commerce, so people did not reach a point of desperation, although when you consider what might have been, it was a very sad situation.

I wondered why more people didn't leave the country; I didn't understand the attachment of many Zairians to their country, and especially those who had lived in Belgium or another foreign country. I came to the conclusion that large countries with established cultures, family ties, unique patterns of living, including stealing from each other, have a hold on people which keeps them at home and draws those who had left back to the motherland. This attraction seems to be true for Russia, China, Zaire, France, Brazil, and of course the U.S. There is something unique in each of those cultures that holds people and brings them back - "there is no place like home." Zairians loved Zaire and being Zairian; they just wanted a higher standard of living and greater participation - not a complete lack of corruption, some of which they seemed to accept. I used to say that Mobutu would let a number of people approach the trough, drink its riches, and go away able to live comfortably for a number of years. That group would be followed by others; which made for constant movement in society.

This was a period in Zaire's history when no one was being killed. Some would be held under house arrest and denied the ability to travel, but it was not a brutal regime. The brutality lay in the poverty that denied people access to adequate housing, food, education, and medical care; people at the bottom of the ladder had no chance to rise; they had no hope for a better future.

Q: Did you have any problem with the jealousies among the tribes?

OAKLEY: We certainly had to be aware of tensions among the Zairian tribes or ethnic groups. We had to know what we were doing. Of course, the embassy was trying to assure that international visitor grants covered all the various parts of society - men and women, north and south, east and west, teachers and business people, government and religious leaders. So our programs were fairly balanced.

I must add that at the time we were in Zaire, there were some mysterious diseases that were beginning to spread. One was a "monkey" fever, which we now know was the beginning of AIDS.

We didn't know that then. French and Belgian doctors, people whose forefathers had settled in Zaire, were working in tropical medicine and began to examine these new fevers.

The Mission Aviation Fellowship flew mail and people to mission stations, in remote areas of the country and sometimes gave us rides. The religious organizations held the fabric of society together. They provided whatever there was of value - religion, medical care, and education - in that society. They showed real and deep concern for people.

There are a number of trips and visits that stand out in my memory. One had to do with the desire to visit all the American mission stations in Zaire. There were a good number of American missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, who had set up stations and hospitals and schools. Some of their families had come to Zaire at the turn of the century, so that they were second and third generation missionaries and doctors, very dedicated, impressive people. In one area, where it was thought sickle cell anemia had originated and then spread to the U.S., a number of American anthropologists - well known university professors - had come to study. One Yale art historian linked hand gestures made by American cheerleaders to some basic Zairian stances that he had noticed. Learning from them certainly enriched my life.

Q: There had been a long history of tensions between the ambassador and the CIA station. Did you get involved in that at all?

OAKLEY: Not much, because Bob faced the problem within the first month of his arrival. He told the CIA chief that his and his predecessors' direct access to Mobutu might have worked for other ambassadors, but that was not the way the U.S. mission was going to operate under him. Fortunately, we had friends who were in senior positions in CIA and the Agency backed Bob and diminished the role that CIA had played in Zaire previously. There were attempts, naturally, by station employees to keep their lines open to Mobutu, but Bob squelched them whenever he found out about it, thus raising Mobutu's level of unhappiness with him. But Bob was the ambassador and ran the embassy as he saw fit and not the way Mobutu might have liked it.

Bob also had some problems with diamond organizations, like deBeers. They wanted to conduct their own foreign policy and had done so in certain circumstances. But those were just facts of life in Zaire.

Q: Did the CIA try to influence the selection of participants in USIA programs?

OAKLEY: Absolutely not. They would not have dared.

At the time we were there, The U.S. still had a big mission in Zaire. We had a consulate in Kivu, where there was a large Peace Corps training center. We had a large military assistance mission that worked with the Zairian military, largely on training. We had a large AID mission that concentrated, to large measure, on PL 480 food programs and on health care. As I said, we had a Peace Corps group. We also housed certain regional experts - e.g. doctors for U.S. personnel - who used Kinshasa as their base. Zaire was larger and had more services than other nearby countries and therefore it was a more satisfactory base.

In light of the importance of Zaire and its central location, there was a large diplomatic community in Kinshasa. We spent a lot of time with the Canadian ambassador and his wife, who were very active there, and with the French and Belgians, who had the greatest influence in Zaire. The British had representation, but at a lower level than the others. The Germans gave some money to Zaire as did the Japanese, and they were well represented plus there were missions from other African countries. There was also an international business community - Firestone, GM, etc., for the U.S. - but mainly European firms. This was an era when most other African countries still envied Zaire's light industry and infrastructure that had been maintained from its colonial period. So Zaire was an active place. As I said, I met a wonderful group of Zairians and Bob and I were able to travel around the country quite a bit.

Q: Was there some feeling that Mobutu would be in power for sometime?

OAKLEY: Yes, primarily because we and the Europeans were not going to get rid of him, assuming that we could have done so. We could have cut off assistance, particularly cash, but this was a period when the greatest concern was the Soviet Union. The western allies certainly were not interested in having Zaire ally itself with the communist camp. The Chinese were present and were very active and busy trying to increase communist activity and influence. The whole diplomatic thrust was to keep Mobutu on as straight and narrow path as humanly possible - extremely difficult.

ROBERT B. OAKLEY
Ambassador
Zaire (1979-1982)

Ambassador Robert B. Oakley was born in 1931 in Texas. He graduated from Princeton University in 1952 and served in the US Navy until 1955. Oakley joined the Foreign Service in 1957 and served overseas in Sudan, the Ivory Coast, Vietnam, France, Lebanon, and as Ambassador to Zaire, Somalia and Pakistan. In Washington DC, Oakley served in the Office of UN Political Affairs, the Bureau of East Asian Affairs, as the Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism and for the National Security Council. Oakley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kenney and Thomas Stern in 1992.

Q: Then in 1979, you were appointed as our Ambassador to Zaire. How did that come about?

OAKLEY: After consultation with Phyllis, we had agreed that we had been in Washington long enough and that the time had come to return to the field. As a Foreign Service officer, five years in Washington was long enough. Holbrooke, as usual, was very clever. When I told him that I wanted a field assignment, he said he would take it under advisement; he said he understood my rationale, but that he hated to see me leave his staff. Some days later, he called me into his office and said that the only Embassy that was available for someone like me was Zaire. I immediately told him I would accept - perhaps somewhat to his surprise. I hadn't been in Africa for several years, but I

knew enough about Zaire to realize that it would not be a dull assignment. We had plenty of problems there and in the neighboring countries.

Our Embassy in Kinshasa was substantial. We had a medium size AID mission. We had a big Peace Corps operation - which of course was not officially part of the Embassy - we had a Defense Attaché Office, which fortunately had a good airplane that became my main means of transportation around the country since there were very few roads. We had a Defense Representative Office to handle military assistance. We had a large CIA station. So it was a fair size Embassy. I think the staff was good, particularly the three political and two economic officers. The DCMs, first Alan Davis and then Ted McNamara, were excellent. Jennifer Ward, the chief of the Political Section, was great. John Heimann, the head of the Economic Section, was superb. Wendy Chamberlain was an excellent political officer. So I was blessed with some top notch talent.

I think the staff worked very well together. There was some friction - there were a few who didn't think we were being sufficiently aggressive on human rights and were anxious for the Embassy to have closer relationships with opposition leaders. That was partly a generation gap and partly an experience gap. My advice to the staff was not to get too close to opposition leaders, but one of my political officers did engage in very close contact with a member of the opposition only to find out that his conversations had been taped. That was brought to my attention by Mobutu's security chief. I managed to explain it away, but I did have a long chat with that officer. After that I think he had a better appreciation of my warnings about contacts with the opposition. I didn't think we helped the opposition at all by making them targets of Mobutu's secret police. We had to be much more circumspect about our contacts with the opposition. After that incident, I think the staff understood and became much more careful - the younger officers learned to temper their enthusiasm and idealism with reality and experience and thereby became better officers.

The first problem in Zaire, of course, was Mobutu. He had been in power for fourteen years. We had put him there in an effort to get a pro-western leader for Zaire who could stabilize the political situation. Mobutu certainly did that - by assuming all powers unto himself, as did many African leaders. He was very clever in handling the domestic political situation; no one could unseat him and almost no one could budge him on his *modus operandi*, which was hardly benevolent and certainly didn't incorporate Carter's views on human rights.

Mobutu had a tremendous amount of charisma, human magnetism, charm. He was also a brilliant schemer and plotter. There were several Washington "experts" who in 1979, didn't think Mobutu would last very much longer. When I had an opportunity to survey the situation on the ground, I came to the conclusion that there was no chance of Mobutu leaving - certainly not in the short or even medium term. He was able to take the measure of his opposition, he manipulated them, brought people into his government so that they would have an opportunity to "eat from the trough"; then he dismissed them and brought in another set to alleviate their hunger pains. He lived lavishly and flamboyantly. I found him not very convivial and not pleasant to deal with. For example, during my whole three year tour, though we had a substantial assistance program - mostly economic but also some military - Mobutu always complained about the level of resources we were providing. He insisted that what we were giving Zaire did not match what the USSR was providing Ethiopia, Angola or other satraps in Africa. Not once do I remember Mobutu making

any comments or showing any interest in the benefits that our assistance was providing his country. He was neither grateful or interested; he just wanted more. He was much more concerned with the aid levels that he was getting in comparison to other African regimes.

I mentioned that Zairean government ministers came and went, according to Mobutu's whims. But he did have a close coterie around himself - some of whom amazingly enough are still with him. It was a very small group of advisors, mostly from his own tribe and his home town. He managed the country as a chief would rule his tribe; that was hardly appropriate and Zaire was not managed well. For example, the social services - education, public health, etc. - for the interior of the country were provided almost exclusively by missionaries or Peace Corps volunteers, of which there were many. The Catholic Church, run by Belgians, had a large network. There were a number of American Protestant missionaries in Zaire. Hospitals and clinics in the interior always suffered from a lack of medicines; often there was no fuel for generators - if the facility even had a generator. The schools lacked supplies. These deficiencies seemed to be almost miraculously overcome when Mobutu came to visit; for about two weeks before the visit and for a week after, there were no shortages. Then the shortages would start again. That was Mobutu's governing style. He himself amassed large amounts of money and was very lavish in dispensing largesse to his friends and followers. No major decisions ever were taken without his approval.

It was clear in 1979 that Zaire's economy was in decline. The price of copper on the world market had fallen; the price of transportation had risen. Other minerals also suffered from declining prices. So it became uneconomic to ship some of the ore out of Zaire - the purchase price was below the transportation cost. Copper made a little money still, but the transportation costs - barge, truck, ship, railroad - were very high. Except for beat up barges, the transportation system within Zaire was almost non-existent. There was a sea-level railroad that had run across from Angola to Mozambique, designed to provide quick, cheap transport for mineral ores during the colonial days. But that line was cut during the Angolan insurrection in the 1960s. So it was very slow and expensive to move minerals from the mines to the markets. And the ore prices kept dropping.

There were large public buildings in Kinshasa, but they were never maintained. The U.S. had contributed to Zaire's infrastructure. We had financed an electric transmission line from the hydro-electric dam in Inga - right outside of Kinshasa - to the copper mines in Shaba - about 1,000 kilometers through the center of the country. It had to be direct current [d.c.] transmission to get enough power from generator to consumption and became the longest transmission line in the world, requiring some very modern and new technology because it needed lots of alternators - each of which was about the size a football field with ceilings 100 feet high. They were all covered with a smooth metal - zinc, perhaps. And the electricity would arc back and forth across the alternator. The same was true at the receiving end when the d.c had to be converted into a.c. [alternative current] Morris-Knudsen built the line, with the Swedes building the machinery. We worked hard to get the line completed - it had been under construction for a number of years. But with the fall in copper prices and the rise in transportation costs, there was not a great demand for the electric flash smelters that were supposed to be erected so they were not built. The line could not be tapped, even when it ran through a village of 1 million inhabitants. The electricity went right overhead and could not be used by this city which had to continue to use the few small generators that it had. It would have required some very high tech devices to turn the d.c. power into a.c. and would have

cost around \$15 million. No one had that kind of money, so the poor villagers watched all this power go by them, without being able to use it - in fact, it was hardly used at all.

Corruption was endemic; it was huge. In the 1970s, Mobutu had nationalized - expropriated - a large number of Belgian and Portuguese commercial enterprises - firms and factories. They were turned over without any compensation to the former owners to Mobutu's friends and family. He got a cut from those operations. Eventually, most of these enterprises went broke, but not before they had enriched Mobutu's coffers. He also diverted funds generated from the sale of native natural resources - diamonds, copper, cobalt, coffee, cocoa, rubber, etc. The sale of these resources were all controlled by state marketing operations. Mobutu and his entourage got a cut from those revenues. In one particular situation, we thought we had plugged tightly all possibilities for bribery and diversion of moneys. We had a World Bank team in the Gecomines office - that was the state corporation that handled the mining and sale of copper and cobalt, the principal export resource and greatest revenue source for Zaire. The IMF had a team in the Central Bank. We thought with all that expert manpower, we could reduce if not eliminate the diversion of revenues. We soon discovered, through some very good work by CIA and our commercial people and our Embassy in Brussels, that the Zaireans were falsifying shipping documents. These documents showed only half of the actual shipments of cobalt - which was the most expensive resource. All Zairean official documents showed far fewer shipments than were actually taking place - they did not match the loading documents that were prepared at the port by the shippers themselves which we obtained. The actual amounts being shipped were twice the amounts shown on official Zairean documents. Then we discovered that the Belgian bank - Societe Generale - that was handling most of the Zairean foreign exchange had worked out a deal with Mobutu and his cronies which in effect did not credit the Zairean Central Bank with all the revenues generated by the sale of the resources. That prevented the IMF from monitoring the use of funds in the Central Bank; the Belgian bank held the balance in Brussels in the personal accounts of Mobutu and his cronies. He did share some of these illegal profits with his Belgian buddies, so that everyone, except the Zairean people benefitted. The Belgian foreign minister was one of the directors of the Belgian bank. I once asked the Belgian Ambassador in Kinshasa about that situation. He told me that in Belgium there was no such thing as "conflict of interest;" having the Foreign Minister sit as a member of a Board of Directors of a bank involved in foreign transactions was perfectly normal.

I don't know whether Jackie Onassis' friend Maurice Tempelsman was involved in corruption, but he had extensive business interests in Zaire. He was an important American business man. One of his two principal employees in Zaire was the former CIA Station Chief, Larry Devlin, who helped a lot when Mobutu was put in power in 1965. The other, John Cerages, had been the Embassy's Defense Attaché at that time. I will never forget the first evening we were in Kinshasa. We were invited for dinner at the house of a senior Embassy officer. These two men were there and I had to listen to them telling me how delighted they were that I had arrived; everything was set and my life would be very easy because, as had been the case in the past, whenever the American Ambassador had any difficulties, he would come to them and they would work out satisfactory arrangements with Mobutu. After their intercession, as had been true in the past, then I could go to Mobutu confident that I would get the appropriate response because they had paved the way. I listen to this "educational program" for about an hour - which for me was probably a record for restraint and patience. Finally, I told them I would not operate as they suggested my predecessors had done. In fact, I had heard that their description of the process had been true when Sheldon Vance had been

Ambassador from a good friend, Bob Whittinghill, who had been Vance's Station Chief in Kinshasa several years earlier, but I told the two Americans that the system would not work that way on my watch. In Vance's case, when the "advance spade work," done by Whittinghill, indicated a negative answer, the DCM would be sent to the Foreign Minister with whatever request the U.S. had. If the response were likely to be positive, then Vance would go see Mobutu. But in any case, I told Devlin and Gerages that I thought their proposal was a very bad idea because Mobutu was bound to be confused between requests made by two private Americans and requests made by the U.S. government.

Sometime later, I asked the Station Chief to come to my office. I told him that I wanted him to understand one thing: regardless of past practices, he was not to see Mobutu alone or to see him at all without my prior approval. He noted that in the past, there had been no limitations on his relationships with Mobutu; that had been true for his predecessors as well. I insisted that we start a new way of dealing with Mobutu. He said that he would refer the matter to his headquarters. What the Station Chief did not know was that I had worked out this new arrangement with Frank Carlucci, the Deputy Director of CIA, before leaving Washington. So much to the Station Chief's surprise, he got an order from CIA headquarters that he was to follow my instructions. Since then there was an agreement that the Ambassador had that authority at all posts. This is just one illustration of the sometime free-wheeling operations conducted by CIA overseas. Mort Abramowitz had similar experience in Thailand with his Station Chief. I call these places the "flagship stations" where the CIA was accustomed to dealing directly with Presidents or Prime Ministers without Ambassadorial involvement and sometimes even knowledge. The head of state assumes logically that CIA is the authoritative channel of communications with the U.S. government; I was not going to buy that and got it changed in Zaire.

I had some vague hopes that Zaire's economy might improve. That is why we worked very closely with the IMF and the World Bank, both on the macroeconomics and on development projects. We used to collude with these international bodies; we would review the economic situation together and try to agree on a course of action. Then we would agree on which one of us would take the initiative. Sometimes we would volunteer - after all I was already in so much hot water with Mobutu that another fight didn't make that much difference. Sometimes the international institutions would take the lead. So we tried to work together both on the development of an economic strategy and the necessary implementations. We spent a lot of time trying to improve our own bilateral projects as did the Bank on theirs. We both aimed to make our projects much more labor intensive trying to move [away] from large schemes which after completion would have required skilled manpower that Zaire did not have. There were few very educated people left in Zaire; those who had education, had fled and would not return. We started again to emphasize projects which involved the local populations, similar to the projects that were undertaken in the Belgian colonial era. That made more sense than the grandiose schemes that Mobutu and his entourage thought should be undertaken. As I said, we worked very hard on redirecting the aid program, but there was too much inertia in the Zairean government - it was too weak and didn't care enough and the "boss" - Mobutu - couldn't have cared less.

To illustrate the point I am trying to make, let me tell you one story. In 1981, Zaire had a very good Minister of Agriculture, Kamitatu. He had been politically active before independence. He was a charmer and schemer, but cared a lot for Zaire. Together with him, we developed a new

agricultural project which was to benefit each province. Each would receive ten trucks - Japanese and Italian - provided by those countries - 100 from the Japan and fifty from Italy. We provided seed, other governments donated tools. We were very careful to guard these supplies as best we could. We had Peace Corps volunteers and other Americans drive the trucks and materials from the port. It did take us quite a while to get all the trucks in a row since there were so many governments involved, working primarily through their ambassadors in Kinshasa.

The night before this caravan of trucks was supposed to leave the city and fan out to all the provinces, all the vehicles were stolen, apparently in accordance with instructions from cabinet ministers and leading politicians. That made it impossible to launch the project. I was enraged; I personally drove around town and looked for the trucks. I found most of them, sitting in the yards of various high officials. My pleas for the return of the trucks got me nowhere. The Prime Minister was no help; the Minister of Agriculture was helpless because in part his colleagues had taken the trucks to undercut him - he was being too successful. I finally wrote Mobutu a letter, venting my outrage and telling him that the action of his cabinet and other close advisers was totally unacceptable. I told him what I knew had happened and expressed my disbelief that anything like this might happen. A few hours later I received a call from Mobutu's intelligence chief, telling me that the President was very upset. I said that made two of us. He asked me why I had put the story in writing, I told him that was the only way I had found to communicate with the President. The intelligence chief said to me that, "Letters leave traces." I noted that, "The disappearance of trucks into the yards of cabinet members does too" and hung up. I will tell you later the consequences of this episode, but I just wanted to relate it at this point as an illustration of some of the problems we were facing in Zaire.

I must say that my Washington briefings had been quite good. I was not surprised by anything I found in Zaire. I was told that we were trying to pursue a variety of interests in Zaire simultaneously, which required considerable agility. We were trying to promote economic reform; we were trying to promote at least a degree of political reform - we were not pushing for a democratic state, but we did want to reduce the human rights abuses and increase political participation by the Zairean people. There were some in the U.S. - the Human Rights Bureau and some NGOs - who were frustrated that we did not push harder for a democratic state. They wanted a more aggressive stance, but I thought they were going too far, too fast because we had other interests that also had to be protected. I didn't see anyway in which Mobutu would become truly democratic - nor did we have the power to force a change in leadership even in the unlikely event that we might have found a true democrat in Zaire.

For example, we had to worry about corruption even in our own assistance programs. We found that rice provided under PL 480 was being diverted; that meant we had to stop the program when the Zairean officials would not heed our warnings. The cessation of the program upset some of the American rice growers as well as Mobutu and some of the other culprits. But in Zaire, we had to watch everything; if it wasn't nailed down, it would be stolen.

We were also interested in fostering American business. We had some oil companies operating in Zaire as well as some who were conducting explorations. We also had obvious "Cold War" interests; we did not want Zaire to be subverted or infiltrated or attacked from some socialist neighbor like Zambia or Angola. And this was the time when the civil war in Angola was raging

with the U.S. backing Jonas Savimbi, the leader of the National Union for Total Independence (UNITA) - a pro-west faction - against the government supported by the Cubans and the Soviets. That war had started right after Portugal had given Angola its independence in 1974. Then there was Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other African states that were not pro-west. This vision of Zaire as a bastion of a pro-western state amidst a sea of Soviet supported states was not changed much when Reagan succeeded Carter. Both administrations viewed this part of Africa through the prism of the Cold War. There was probably a greater emphasis on human rights during the Carter administration, although we continued to raise the issue with Mobutu even during the Reagan administration - to Mobutu's considerable surprise and discomfort. As we had done in the Carter administration, we tried to balance our policy so that we could try to reach our multi-faceted objectives.

We used Zaire as a support base for our activities in support of Savimbi. I was not directly involved in those operations, although I did meet Savimbi a couple of times to convey messages to him from the President or the State Department. But my involvement was rather limited - not nearly as much as it was to be later in our Afghan operations.

I was generally supportive of our policies in Zaire. I was not idealistic enough to believe that we could transform Zaire into a democracy. I was realistic enough to understand that there were limitations on our power and influence. Moreover, even if those limitations had not existed, we should have imposed limitations on ourselves. It was not our job to go around overthrowing African chiefs of state just because we didn't like their policies. But I thought we could ameliorate some of Mobutu's extreme tendencies and we worked hard on that. We did make some progress; we did get some prisoners released; we obtained permission for the ICRC to inspect the prisons. The progress was moderate, but at least it was progress.

The same was true on economic reform, although later Mobutu welshed on his promises. At one point, he decided that he had enough of the IMF meddling into his affairs, monitoring the Central Bank on how assistance was being used. He also didn't like the World Bank overseeing the activities of the mining companies. Mobutu warned both institutions that their days in Zaire were numbered. Much to his astonishment, we fought back. All of this happen towards the end of the Carter administration. Soon after Reagan's election, Mobutu hinted that he would like to be invited to Washington - he would not go while Carter was in the White House, but after 1981, he felt "his Republican friends" were in power and that he would like to visit them. He was quite shocked when Lannon Walker and I accompanied [Vernon] "Dick" Walters - our Ambassador to the UN at the time - to a meeting he was having with Mobutu in Paris. Walters had always had a very close personal relationship with Mobutu. Walters at this meeting delivered a letter from Reagan which said that the U.S. would be glad to have Mobutu visit Washington, but only after Zaire got back into the good graces of the IMF and the World Bank. There were also some other stipulations, mainly in the area of economic reform. Mobutu, after reading the letter, burst into a rage and said that he would never visit the U.S. again. His advisors faces turned grey in horror. Walters, very adroitly, rose and said that he guessed that was the end of the meeting since there was nothing else to talk about. Mobutu, courteous as always, also rose and escorted Walters to the door, saying that perhaps he and Dick should have a private chat. So the two went into a separate room where I was told Mobutu burst into tears because he was upset. He claimed he was so shocked, that in his mind, Reagan acted just like Carter. He asked Walters what he should do. Dick told him to calm down

and to consider the President's letter at greater length; it was important not to reach any hasty decisions. He told Mobutu that Reagan's letter was really in his and Zaire's best interests. Walters and Mobutu had had a long relationship; they were both very flamboyant, raconteurs, schemers; so they got along well.

About three weeks later, Mobutu decided that he could accept Reagan's conditions. I think that initially he was really upset by Reagan's letter. He had a number of American Republican friends and I am sure he genuinely felt that he would be treated "better" by Reagan than he had by Carter. He also understood that Reagan was much more a Cold War "hawk"; he viewed Carter as being obsessed by human rights and thought that the new Republican administration would be more favorable to him in the Cold War context. For Mobutu, human rights policy just seemed to be supportive of anti-Mobutu revolutionaries. He saw Reagan's election as a return to the Nixon period when Zaire was viewed as part of U.S.' strategic policy against the Soviets.

There is an anecdote that I would like to recount that illustrates Mobutu's and Zairean views of U.S. Presidents. We hosted an election night party in 1980 at a Kinshasa hotel. We took a secret straw poll among the guests - and there were lots, including the Foreign Minister. As you will recall, it was a close election and Reagan won by a slim margin. I went to bed about 3 a.m. only to be awakened about three hours later by a phone call from someone from Mobutu's entourage telling me that the President of Zaire wished to host a celebration breakfast in honor of the new U.S. President. I was to be at the palace in twenty minutes. I immediately got up - in somewhat less than a happy frame of mind. But I got to the palace on time and was a guest at a wonderful breakfast. Mobutu went on at great length on how much better his relationship with the U.S. was going to be now that pesky Carter was gone. He added that all Zaireans favored Reagan. I told him that his view was very interesting because it was quite inconsistent with the straw poll that we had taken the night before at our election party - in fact, 90% of the votes had been cast for Carter. Mobutu scowled and said: "If I had them in the stadium for five minutes, they would change their minds!" I laughed and said that he was probably right. The Foreign Minister, who also attended the breakfast, looked considerably out of sorts. But I think that breakfast was a good clue about Mobutu's expectations - which is undoubtedly one of the reasons he reacted so strongly when he received Reagan's letter as delivered by Walters.

I think that Mobutu framed his view of Republican administrations from his experiences during the Nixon period. He also was in touch with American lobbyists who were on his payroll and were quite conservative as were the American businessmen he came in touch with. There were a few who came to Kinshasa and saw Mobutu privately, but that was a rare occasion.

This trucks episode and the Walters' meeting, both of which I have described earlier, really irritated Mobutu no end. By 1982, Mobutu's irritation at me and the U.S. was such that he issued instructions that he didn't want anyone to talk to me. He actually sent his intelligence chief to Washington to talk to Casey - the CIA Director - to have me recalled. That was an illustration of Mobutu's views on how the U.S. government was run. Fortunately, Carlucci, although by this time he had become the Deputy Secretary of Defense, knew about my clashes with Mobutu; he talked to [Casper] Weinberger, the Secretary of Defense, Casey and [Secretary of State Al] Haig and told them that Oakley was just doing what he was instructed to do. He told them that I was a seasoned diplomat and certainly not the first ambassador that Mobutu had tried to throw out (he had been

successful with Mac Godley and Dean Hinton a few years earlier - both were recalled for carrying out their instructions). Carlucci said that the U.S. could not afford to have Mobutu try to get every ambassador who does his job recalled. The upshot of this Mobutu effort was that Dick Walters came back to Kinshasa to tell Mobutu that I would not be recalled. Once again, I was told that Mobutu burst into tears and asked: "Do I have to keep him forever?" Walters said: "No, but he is not leaving now!"

We did manage to keep our assistance and Peace Corps programs going - but barely. At one point, Mobutu asked that the Peace Corps program be terminated because he was convinced that volunteers had been providing information to Congressmen Solarz and Volpe. This information was being used in Congressional hearings. Both legislators were very critical of Mobutu and Zaire and wanted our assistance programs terminated. We saved the Peace Corps program through the fortuitous visit of Jeane Kirkpatrick, then our Ambassador to the UN, along with Elizabeth Dole and Ursula Meese. They were on an official tour of Africa and stopped in Kinshasa. It was a very useful trip in general and for us especially. Mobutu fell all over Kirkpatrick and vice-versa, because she saw Mobutu as the personification of a pro-western autocrat - as opposed to a Soviet sponsored dictator - and this was the gist of an article she had written which Reagan liked. She and Mobutu got along very well and he convinced Kirkpatrick that I was really part of the Carter human rights cabal and therefore not only wrong, but also not to be trusted. However, I managed to convince Kirkpatrick that it was neither in Mobutu's or in the U.S.' interest to have him close the Peace Corps program. She managed to get Mobutu to change his mind.

Later, when I returned to the NSC, I discovered a letter that Kirkpatrick had written to President Reagan after her trip to Africa recommending that I be recalled. But since that had already been decided, as I have described earlier, through Carlucci's intervention, nothing was done about her recommendation.

I thought that it was in our interest to maintain both a modest economic assistance program and the Peace Corps. The latter had a good program. I have recently been asked how I managed an embassy. I said that I felt it important that all elements of an embassy work together, but that that was sometimes easier said than done. I mentioned that in Zaire I would bring the AID director and the Peace Corps Director together in my office. We would meet each week, at least once. It took me six months before the two would communicate with each other outside this weekly meeting; each was going off in his own direction. Ultimately, we managed to get four Peace Corps volunteers in one town to work on some local fish ponds with technical support from AID. The number of ponds increased in two years from 200 to 5,000. That provided the town with new business and a food supply. It is possible to accomplish something when all pull in the same direction. The Peace Corps worked in Zaire with the local population, which was exactly what needed to be done, but they needed some technical support.

I think Mobutu resented the efforts of the volunteers because in some respect they made him look bad, in the same way the missionaries made the government look bad because they also worked with the local populations. But Mobutu's unhappiness could not be a guiding principle for us. I did try to make sure that the volunteers kept within acceptable political boundaries - no fiery speeches about dictatorship. They had a very good training center in East Zaire for all of French speaking Africa. I think the Peace Corps training was tough; it emphasized the need for the volunteers not to

be too radical, too idealistic, not to worry about the political situation they found, but to focus on their jobs. About thirty percent of the volunteers were weeded out during this training - they were primarily those who might have been psychologically weak - unable to stand the strains and pressure they would have to endure. One of the objectives of the vigorous training program was to identify early and weed out those who might not be able to meet the challenges; that was a very big plus. But the Peace Corps had a lot of synergy. When we got them to work with AID and the missionaries, they were very effective; they provided low level medical assistance, farming assistance, some English training, etc., as well as fish ponds. It was a great program in Zaire, as far as I was concerned.

Zaire was the focus of considerable Congressional interest in the 1979-1982 period - almost all of it negative. While I was there, Nguza Karl-i-Bond, who had been imprisoned earlier and released, and then had become the Foreign Minister before becoming the Prime Minister, left Zaire suddenly with his wife and family and all of his earthly belongings. He flew to Brussels because he was afraid that Mobutu was planning to imprison him again, or worse. He just picked up and left, leaving a furious Mobutu who could not understand how someone like that could leave his country unimpeded with family and furniture. His intelligence services were shaken up. So Nguza became Mobutu's enemy number one. [Representative] Solarz held several hearings during which Nguza attacked the regime, building pressure on Mobutu. I think he was being subsidized by some smaller Belgian businessmen who had been barred from doing business in Zaire. They hoped that through Nguza, they could overthrow Mobutu and reestablish themselves as the premier businessmen in Kinshasa. However, after three years, Nguza found that his subsidies had dried up because he was obviously not meeting his supporters' aspirations. It became clear to his financiers that he would not be able to dislodge Mobutu. After the third year, he came crawling back to Zaire to beg for a job. Mobutu appointed Nguza as his Ambassador to Washington, forcing him to become Zaire's spokesman and defender in Congress, including Solarz and Volpe. He then had to explain that Mobutu was a good President and had to reverse his previous positions. That was the way Mobutu worked.

We had some visitors while I was in Zaire, including a couple of Congressional delegations. There were two special missions that I remember especially. The first delegation came very privately led by Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Defense Minister, in 1981. Mobutu was having trouble with his palace guard, which was primarily staffed by his fellow tribesmen - handpicked. He found that personal items were disappearing in the palace - one of his leopard skin caps, his cane, etc. That upset him greatly because he was afraid that these were signs of a plot being planned - witchcraft or assassination. He asked us whether we could provide him some bodyguards and whether we would train his bodyguards - all to be done by the CIA. I said "No." Our Station Chief may have thought it might provide him an opportunity to infiltrate the palace, but for many reasons, I didn't think that we wanted to be seen as that close to Mobutu. Washington agreed; it was not the U.S. government's business to do things like that.

I learned later that the Israelis, on the other hand, having heard of Mobutu's interests, despatched Sharon to see Mobutu. Sharon told Mobutu that the Israelis were prepared to train his bodyguard - they knew how to do that well. He also added that Mobutu should never have turned to the U.S. in the first place, because even if we had agreed, we had been shown to be ineffective. After all, our closest allies in Africa, Presidents Sadat and Tolbert of Egypt and Liberia, had just been

assassinated. That showed that we did not know how to protect our friends. The Israelis were prepared to provide trainers and in addition, Israel would make an effort to change U.S. views of Zaire by primarily initiating a lobbying effort in Congress. They also promised to see whether it would be possible to increase private investment in Zaire. In return, all the Israelis wanted was for Zaire to be the first black African state to resume diplomatic relations with Israel. And that is exactly what happened. Mobutu thought it was a good deal; he resumed diplomatic relations with Israel, who provided trainers for his palace guard.

The Israeli Prime Minister wrote a memorandum to President Reagan suggesting that the U.S. should do more for Zaire. The White House did have conversations with Solarz and Volpe, who refused to budge. A few months later, an American business delegation, headed by the CEO of K-Mart came. We learned about it by accident; Washington had not been advised. It had all been arranged through the Israelis. I did go to the airport to meet the delegation and brought them back to the Embassy in my car. During the trip into town, I asked the CEO of K-Mart whether he would like to have an Embassy briefing. He readily agreed. So we gave him a quick one; at the end I asked whether the American businessmen planned to invest in Zaire. He looked at me and said: "Are you crazy? We are not fools! But the Israeli Prime Minister asked us to visit Zaire to indicate interest; so we came." So as far as the U.S. was concerned, nothing changed because the Israelis picked up Zaire's cudgels. It is true that Israel and Zaire resumed diplomatic relations and that Mobutu got trainers for his palace guard, but that was all. I think this story tells you something about the way the Israelis and Mobutu operated; I found it very interesting.

The three most influential countries in Zaire were the French, the Belgians and ourselves. I had very good relations with both the French and Belgian ambassadors; we were very polite with each other. We worked with the French to deliver military material to Chad when it was under pressure from Libya, using the Zairean army as sort of a "fig leaf." We flew the material into Zaire in our transports; the French, who had a military presence in Chad, made sure that our deliveries were not stolen. We followed the same practice when these supplies were re-shipped to Chad using our planes and the French soldiers to guard the shipments. It took a while to work out all the details; most of the work was done in Kinshasa, but it was a successful operation. I think there were many skeptics who were surprised that France and the U.S. could cooperate so well in the middle of French Africa.

It was somewhat surprising how well we did get along with the French who after all were our main competitors. They were suspicious of us because they viewed us as potential replacements for them in Africa. They also were competitors with the Belgians for the mineral resources of Zaire. The Belgians already had a good foothold in the mines, but there were several American and French companies who also wanted a piece of the action. The commercial rivalry did not interfere with the good working relationships the three ambassadors had in Kinshasa. The diplomatic community included Tunisian, Egyptians, Canadians, Chinese. The latter were represented by an ambassador who later headed the Chinese population program until he died of a heart attack. The Canadian Ambassador, Raymond Chretien, is now his country's emissary to Washington. The Belgian Ambassador was a wonderful man - educated in the U.S.; he was the one whom I mentioned before who explained the Belgian views on "conflict of interest" to me.

Of course, there were always ups and downs driven by Mobutu's relations with each country. When his relations with us and the Belgians soured, he would make an extra effort to have good relations with the French. If his relations with the France deteriorated, then his relations with Belgium would improve; it was a constant see-saw. He didn't want to have both countries angry at him at the same time. The only area where we found cooperation difficult was in the bilateral assistance area. I mentioned how well we worked with the IMF and the World Bank. Cooperation with the Belgians was a little more difficult because they had so many special interests. Their Ambassador was very frustrated, but we finally agreed that the Belgian situation was somewhat analogous to what we had seen with the U.S. particularly between the two wars in Central America - the "Banana Republics" - and the Caribbean when the American corporations were calling the shots - not the State Department or the ambassadors. He told me that there was very little he could do about certain Belgian policies because they were being set by the business community and not the Foreign Ministry.

I didn't have to do a lot of table pounding when it came to Zaire's vote in the UN because it tended to vote with the West.

We had a lot of American Protestant missionaries in Zaire. There were many Belgian Catholic missionaries. I spent a lot of time traveling around the country and I made it a point to talk to them as often as I could. I encouraged them and worked with them. As I said, the Peace Corps worked closely with them. They did not put much pressure on me on the question of human rights. They were devoted to the welfare of their congregations.

I was always a church goer. Soon after our arrival in Kinshasa, my wife and I decided that we would attend a Zairean Protestant church. The music was wonderful; we liked the pastor, Dr. Kimbawa. We did not realize that we had entered into a very politically sensitive area. It turned out that Mobutu, some years earlier, had decided that in order to counter the Catholics, who were led by a cardinal who disapproved of him, he would create a protestant "archbishop". The Cardinal - who was still there in 1979 and is still there today was regarded as Mobutu's most feared critic, although the Pope limited him in his involvement in active politics - a limitation still imposed today making the Cardinal less of a player than he might otherwise have been. Both the Zairean and Belgian Catholic leadership were very critical of Mobutu - his life style, the corruption, etc. The Church was an independent force in Zaire, as it is in most countries - the chief of state and the government have no sway over the Catholic Church and its leadership. To counter the power of the Catholic Church, Mobutu decided to get behind a Protestant block of churches. He named someone to head all of the Protestant churches in Zaire. That didn't go over very well with the Protestants. So Mobutu decided on a different approach; he focused on getting a new pastor for the church I was attending. One Sunday, he sent one of his functionaries to the church to announce the name of the new pastor he had chosen. The church committee didn't accept that; that was not the way their pastors had ever been chosen and they were not going to be a party to a new system. That put me square in the middle of a confrontation between the church and Mobutu. I decided that I would not withdraw as a congregant, but stick with my fellow parishioners. I became a real *cause celebre*. After a while, Mobutu's people approached the church's landlord; they made a deal and the church was padlocked. So every Sunday, we would pray in the courtyard of the church. After a few more weeks of that, the gates to the land on which the church stood, were closed. So people prayed outside the gates, alongside the road. It just so happened that on the Sunday after, I did not

attend services. But Mobutu sent some of his goons to the gates and they began to beat up people, including another white parishioner whom they undoubtedly mistook for me. Then everybody got together and took up a collection - enough to construct a new church. We all prayed in the skeleton of the new church on Christmas eve; the next morning, before dawn, bulldozers showed up and flattened the church. After that, we joined a Catholic church, which welcomed us as members of its congregation.

I think in some respects, my presence at that Protestant church may have contributed to its demise. I have no doubt that some people whispered into Mobutu's ear that the U.S. was using the church to plot against him. It was a very tough decision for me whether to leave that Protestant congregation, but in the end I decided to stick with it. I think perhaps had I left the church earlier, the second church building might not have been destroyed. But I decided that I was not going to be driven out by some goons in the exercise of my religious traditions and beliefs. After all, all I was doing was worshipping; I certainly was not involved in any political activity or plot against Mobutu.

On another note, I found it very interesting to watch Catholic services, during which priests walked in the aisles wearing leopard skins and ostrich plumes. The services were tailored to use native music. It is a whole different experience which I found riveting. It is the organized church that gives people any hope for the future of Zaire and many other African states. I found the same syndrome in some Islamic countries; when people are in such poverty-stricken situation, they must find something to believe in. As was true in the European Dark Ages, that something is the Church - regardless of denomination. We used to have contacts with the Cardinal. He was a good analyst of the Zairean political situation. As in many other situation, the Church had a good feel for the sentiments of the people, but the Cardinal was very careful in his public pronouncements. In Zaire, it was the Cardinal who organized a political convention some years ago. But as I mentioned earlier, he was under severe guidance from the Vatican. We still see him when he comes to the US, which is about every six months or so. So we are quite aware now as we were then of the political winds in Zaire and the restrictions under which the Cardinal operated. It should be remembered that Mobutu married his mistress the night before the Pope paid a visit to Zaire - he didn't want to meet the Pope without having married his mistress - he didn't want to be in "sin". The Cardinal, who had to officiate at the ceremony was not a happy man, but had no choice with the Pope arriving the next day. It was quite an event attended by one million people. I have never seen such a huge crowd.

In conclusion, I think it would almost have been impossible for any American ambassador to avoid Mobutu's wrath during the 1979-82 period. There were economic issues, human rights issues. In addition to my decisions to cut off his CIA channel, I was not going to be someone that Mobutu could just roll over. So the bad feeling that he had for me was not precipitated by any one event; it came from a series of decision that we made on a variety of subjects. He was particularly upset - and with some justification blamed me - for demanding specific actions on his part before he would receive his invitation to visit President Reagan. He expected a more favorable welcome and decided to blame me for making demands on him. It is true that Lannon Walker and I worked out this strategy, but it is also true that it was approved by the senior officials of our government.

When I left Zaire in 1982, I did not expect Mobutu to fall anytime soon. So I am not surprised that here in late 1996, he is still around. I have an axiom: an African chief of state who comes to power

- regardless how he came to power - if he can come through his first three years in office unscathed, he can then rule indefinitely so long as he pays careful attention to his security forces. If he can last the first three years, that means he has learned all the political hot buttons of the local scene and is able to manipulate the various power centers - military, tribal, etc. After that, his only danger comes from his security/military forces. He must maintain their allegiance; pay very careful attention to them; stroke them, etc. It doesn't have to be all of the armed forces; in Zaire, for example, Mobutu only had to pay attention to his palace guards and the intelligence services. He had to make sure that the rest of the military never gained enough strength to be a potential destabilizing force; it was the palace guards that had to have all the military equipment. He had in one way or another to insure his control over his palace guard and the intelligence services. As I said my axiom is that any African leader that lasts for three years will be able to manipulate the political forces in his country. I first developed that thought when serving in the Ivory Coast; I think the axiom was true then as it is today - witness Eyadema in Togo who has been in power as long as Mobutu. They were both Army sergeants who engineered in the assassination of a chief of state and took power. I must say that assassinations are rare in Africa and I don't think that is the way Mobutu will end his rule.

I personally left Zaire laughing because the night before my departure, Mobutu sent one of his minions to tell me that the President wanted to give me the "Order of the Leopard" the next day. It was the country's highest honor. I opined that this gesture seemed very odd since in the last six months every Zairean had been instructed not to talk to me - and only the head of the Central Bank disobeyed orders and talked to me. I said that I guessed that Mobutu thought that in bestowing me this honor, I would be in a good frame of mind and thereby refrain from expressing any negative comments about him. I did accept the "Order" but I could barely contain my laughter. I promised to give it to Dick Walters who had never received one, but I haven't done that yet. When I left, I didn't have much hope for Zaire's future. Mobutu, in a tactic many other leaders have used, kept repeating: "If you think I am bad, just wait till you see my successors. Just remember how bad it was before I became President." It was true that in 1963, the country was in midst of a ruinous civil war, anarchy, chaos. He did provide stability. I don't think Mobutu is very different from many tyrants; he didn't like to have [potential] successors or strong vice-presidents or prime ministers. Any strong political leader is competition and a possible source for instability. Mobutu has always been very skillful in making sure that no competitor would become viable; he would get rid of anyone who might have any aspirations. I earlier discussed the Minister of Agriculture; not only was he sabotaged by his colleagues, but eventually Mobutu shipped him out of the country as Ambassador to Japan. Most Zairean embassies do not get paid; they usually have to live off the sale of visas or other documents to survive - that is true in the U.S. even today. But the Minister outwitted his government; when he got to Tokyo, he sold the Embassy, rented it back and lived off the proceeds from that sale - putting the revenues into his own personal bank account.

I think Zaire today is still a huge mess, but we really don't care that much. Mobutu has found a way to make some impact by using the Burundi-Rwanda conflict very cleverly. He insists that he is the only person who can bring peace to these two countries; of course, he is not trying to resolve the issues; he is in fact deliberately exacerbating the situation. I think the White House was considering sending Tony Lake to see Mobutu to seek his intervention in the Burundi-Rwanda conflict; I think Mobutu would pluck him naked in no time. Mobutu is very clever; there are some American emissaries who even think he walks on water.

I found my last six months in Zaire very difficult since no senior government official would talk to me. But we kept plugging away using staff members to carry messages. I did not give any indication that I was disturbed by Mobutu's edict. I did not change our operations. During this period I found out that the Station Chief had talked to Mobutu without my permission. I immediately cabled Washington reporting this violation of my instructions. Fortunately, soon thereafter, in a normal change of personnel we got a new Station Chief, who was a great improvement. He was the one who tipped me off that the Zairean intelligence chief was being despatched to Washington to try to get me recalled. The last six months were frustrating and I understood that we could not make much progress in Zaire under those circumstances, but there were larger principles involved, such as not allowing the U.S. to bow to this dictator. I finally left in early summer of 1982, only about four months shy of a three year anniversary.

When I left Zaire, I was not at all sure what my next assignment would be. I returned to Washington without an onward assignment. The White House and the State Department had stood by me, but they were not at all happy with what had transpired in Kinshasa. Jeane Kirkpatrick, as I indicated earlier, had suggested my transfer and she did have some influence. So while not giving in to Mobutu about my recall, I was not Washington's favorite ambassador.

DEREK S. SINGER
Development Officer, USAID
Kinshasa (1980-1984)

Mr. Singer was born in New York City and Graduated from NYU. He has served in a number of posts including Bolivia, Taiwan, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Zaire and Cameroon. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1999.

Q: Was it any different from before?

SINGER: Yes, it was quite different. There were a number of new skyscrapers, a modern hotel or two, and what have you. On the other hand, the road system and many of the utilities were crumbling then, and under Mobutu they got worse and worse all the time we were there. In fact, our relations, politically speaking, were also crumbling away during the time we were there. Things got to the point where AID forbade its Kinshasa mission to deal directly with government officials. So, we had to find and work through nongovernmental organizations of one kind or another . . .

Q: Why?

SINGER: It was the Carter administration, and our relationships with Mobutu were really falling apart then.

Q: Political relations?

SINGER: Political relations.

Q: Not operational?

SINGER: No. It was not operational. As a matter of fact, we got along fine, operationally. But political relations were getting worse and worse.

Q: What kinds of programs were you pursuing?

SINGER: Well, my portfolio included training, Food for Peace, refugee programs, and general support of PVOs doing a variety of things all over that enormous country. There were quite a lot of refugees we were working with at that particular time, mostly from Angola. They were coming in during the height of Angola's never-ending Civil War, even in 1980, even though the opportunities in Zaire were very small. I worked on refugee feeding and other assistance programs to support the UNHCR, and I also worked on a national program of nutritional improvement, in addition to our Food for Peace activities. We supplied support for many PVOs, Private Volunteer Organizations, all over the place, non-governmental groups. We did international training programs, participant training, of course, as well, and with USIS, we also sponsored English (ESL) programs. I was a pretty busy GDO!

Q: Was there any progress?

SINGER: Yes, well, let me just finish the story. In addition to my work in Zaire, I was also assigned to work across the river in Brazzaville, the capital of the other Congo. Today, that little country has been ravaged and is still aflame from a terrible civil war that is probably even worse than what its bigger neighbor is suffering under Kabila. But, in the early '80's, it was still much better off, and enjoyed substantial Communist political and economic support. As a result, our relationships with that Congo, in Brazzaville, were even worse, politically speaking, than they were with Mobutu, on the other side of the river, which is, by the way, called the Zaire River in Zaire and the Congo River in the Congo. However, we did have a fair amount of AID-funded activities there, chiefly carried out through international organizations like WHO and WFP, and through CARE, the American PVO. CARE was our biggest partner in Congo/Brazza. We worked with them on many things.

Q: What was CARE doing?

SINGER: CARE was working on a lot of things. They were doing public health; they were doing population family planning; they were doing some forestry improvement work; they were doing food distribution; actually, they were doing many different things. So, my job was liaison with the CARE folks in the Congo as well as with the international organizations. The latter were doing immunizations, food distribution, and what have you. Consequently, I probably spent a quarter to a third of my time in the "other Congo", monitoring our grantees' activities, with the rest of my time in Zaire. It was a very busy assignment, as a matter of fact, but it was also interesting, and a great post to get back into development after so many years away.

Q: Do you think the Zaire program was having an effect? You say that you were shifting it to NGOs. There were NGO operations to work with?

SINGER: Yes, including many U.S. and European missionaries, for whom Zaire has always been a favorite country. Some of them had long had developmental activities underway such as CARITAS, the Salvation Army, and other groups. We worked with a number of them. So, there was plenty to do. As to the impact - who knows? You look at it politically today, and you say "My God what a mess. It doesn't look like anybody did anybody any kind of good at all." I can't say at this point, frankly, in retrospect, whether or not we did much good with our aid. I don't think we did a lot of harm, although perhaps our politically-motivated Cold War-driven support for Mobutu (particularly from the mid-60's through the 70's), and our unwillingness to provide direct support to the left-wingers in Brazzaville (much less the "Communist" Angolan government nearby) may have skewed or even distorted the nature and amount of assistance we provided to central Africa in those years. If such political considerations had not guided our hand then, I think the impact of our programs very likely would have been more effective, although I can't prove it.

Q: Why were we on the outs with Mobutu? I thought we supported him.

SINGER: We weren't on the outs with him so much politically, although you can characterize the whole situation as being "politically driven". But, we were on the outs with him and his administration, essentially over corruption; their refusal to open the books and allow us to see how our money was being spent; and that sort of thing. Basically, Mobutu's fast-growing kleptocracy was the problem.

Q: You couldn't work through the government because they took all the money?

SINGER: That's right. At a certain point, while I was there, they actually prohibited AID officers to have any direct conversations with Zairean officials in their offices. In other words, no visits with government officials in their offices. We were not allowed to even talk with them for a period of time.

Q: What was the purpose of that? To make a point?

SINGER: I think so, yes. It was pretty silly but, nevertheless, I believe that is what it was all about.

Q: You were there, what?

SINGER: Four years, but for me it went fast. For my family it didn't go so fast, because there wasn't much to do nearby and with the serious shortage of surface and air transportation, it was difficult and expensive to travel outside the country. The saddest thing was that Zaire was (and is) a vast, beautiful country if only one could get into the interior and move around in it.

Q: Did you travel around it a lot?

SINGER: I made a few long-distance trips (very difficult, and very slow and expensive). Also, there were still a few passable roads in Western Zaire, between Kinshasa and the Atlantic (Bas Zaire), so we could travel there. And on the other side of the river, it was somewhat easier (though

many of the roads there were also bad). I certainly didn't get around Zaire as much as I would have like to.

Q: Is this the time we had the Shaba projects; the rural development projects?

SINGER: We were responsible for building the large Inga-Shaba hydroelectric dam, and we did still have a Shaba rural development project in southwestern Zaire. It was very difficult, even then, to get back and forth, but we had agricultural people stationed there in the Lubumbashi region.

Q: How did it work?

SINGER: I was told by our agriculture people that the project largely escaped the political problems surrounding us further to the north, and that from a strictly agricultural viewpoint, it worked well.

Q: How was it working in agriculture? What was it that was being done?

SINGER: Basically, they were cultivating new seed varieties, enhancing crop fertility, trying new techniques of farm management , that kind of thing. Corn was the name of the game. They seemed to be doing pretty well.

Q: We were involved in that?

SINGER: Yes, we were involved in that.

Q: What were we doing?

SINGER: We were financing construction of the dam.

Q: I hadn't realized we were funding that.

SINGER: Not the whole thing. We did some and World Bank did some. Anyway, after my four years there, I was offered the opportunity to go to Burkina Faso as the GDO. But, my wife and I looked at the Post Report we found there was no international school available there for one child we still had with us. He would be going into his second year of high school, and we did not want to ship him off to boarding school, or put him into a French school.

PETER D. CONSTABLE
Ambassador
Zaire (1982-1984)

Ambassador Peter D. Constable received a B.A. from Hamilton College and an M.A. at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. He entered the

Foreign Service in 1957. He served in Honduras, Spain, Pakistan, and Vietnam. Ambassador Constable was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: *Now, you were then appointed as Ambassador to Zaire. You were there from '82 to '84.*

CONSTABLE: Yes. I arrived in Zaire sometime in October in '82, and I was there almost two years.

Q: *Could you explain about the period when you arrived, and particularly how you saw Mobutu, because he was pretty much Mr. Zaire, still is.*

CONSTABLE: And still is, and has been for 25 years. Well, as I say, it's been an up and down relationship with Zaire. It's essentially a close one, but Mobutu gets concerned that we don't pay enough attention to him. He gets angry. We, or parts of the U.S. government, get angry with him, charge him with corruption and violations of human rights, and slash our assistance to him.

So there's a lot of tension in the relationship all of the time, and this spills out into the diplomatic relationship. He may get hostile to a particular Ambassador and send him home, or tell the department he wants him recalled, and that kind of thing.

One goes to Zaire and confronts the man with a certain degree of trepidation.

Things had really been going very badly in Zaire by the time I got there. They were economically on the floor. Their credit was terrible. They had had agreements with the IMF and programs, and so on, but had violated all of them. And so the IMF didn't trust them any more, didn't want to deal with them. The World Bank still made some loans, but they were getting tired of it. All their bilateral partners were tired of Zaire's performance. And the U.S. Congress was tired of it. Our aid levels were down very low, very little, and everybody regarded any money to Zaire as just kind of down the rat hole. And the Zairians were seen as not doing anything for themselves to shape up their economy.

At the same time, for political reasons, reasons of geography, we thought Zaire was important. We valued our relationship with Zaire and wanted to have a good relationship with Zaire, but also wanted Zaire to begin to get hold of itself so it wouldn't spin down into some kind of chaos.

You look at the map and here is this huge country, which is as big as the U.S. east of the Mississippi, plop in the middle of Africa. What happens in Zaire potentially has important repercussions through the area.

So, before I went, we talked around in the African Bureau and in the department, tried to hammer out a policy, which we did. The principal element in that was to try to get Zaire back into a program with the IMF.

Everybody who knew anything about Zaire, who had served there, who knew Mobutu, said, "This is mission impossible, it can't be done."

I said, "Well, if we can't do it, if we can't get them in, we aren't going to be able to do anything else with them. Our relationship is going to be really strained. They are going to continue to disintegrate as a country, and there isn't going to be anything that we can do about it. We aren't going to be able to get any money from the Congress, no support, nobody's going to want to do anything for Zaire unless they will do something for themselves. If they will do something for themselves, then it is possible to get an IMF program, and then you can get some more assistance from others and get Zaire on the right path again."

So that's what I went out to try to do, with everybody saying it can't be done. My arrival coincided with an understanding in Zaire and among Mobutu's advisors that they really had sunk pretty low, and that they needed to do some things. So, I came with the right message at the right time.

Q: You talk about his advisors. He listened to people within his government?

CONSTABLE: Oh, indeed. Oh, indeed.

Q: Some of these charismatic, or whatever it is, are so autocratic that they don't listen to anybody.

CONSTABLE: No, Mobutu listens to a lot of people. Sometimes maybe he listens too much, I don't know, because he has in the past taken some terrible advice.

A number of years ago, a Belgian Socialist bent his ear and got him to nationalize everything in the country, which was just a disaster. No matter what you may feel about free-market economies and Socialism, in the Zairian context it was just a massive disaster, because there was nobody who could run these businesses, and they just completely flopped. He destroyed the economy in a stroke on the advice of this Belgian Socialist. One wishes he had not listened. Anyway, that was part of what they were trying to recover from, this horrible disaster that had occurred in the mid-70s, I think.

Anyway, that was my message. Now, I started delivering it as soon as I got there, and discovered that it indeed did fall on receptive ears.

Now people back in Washington remained skeptical as I would report that people were beginning to say the right kind of things, and that they did want an agreement with the IMF, and they were willing to bite the bullet on this, and do that and the other thing. People would say: Oh, we've heard that before, and then they don't do it, they don't perform. So there was a great deal of skepticism.

Q: Did you find, too, that your not being an African hand was sort of... I mean they said: Well he's a new boy on the block and he really doesn't understand Africa?

CONSTABLE: There probably was some of that back in Washington, yes. Fortuitously, I had only been there about a month and the Vice President came on a visit, on a swing through Africa. Bush was then Vice President, and he came into Zaire. So we were able to load him up with all of these talking points about: How we want to help you, Mr. Mobutu, and you are a good friend, and we've always had a good relationship, but we *can't do anything* unless you do some really hard and difficult things. That went very well, Bush's visit. Mobutu liked that.

Then they sent a team to Washington of a small group, maybe half a dozen of Mobutu's really close advisors. And Washington, at the working level, Assistant Secretaries and Frank Wisner and people at AID and people at Treasury and up on the Hill, all hammered this message home.

And they came back and sat down with Mobutu and said, "You've really got to do something, and our only hope is if you do."

So he was having some kind of a big political party confab shortly thereafter, and announced a whole series of reforms, an anti-corruption drive, which didn't go very far. But it did do one important thing. It, in effect, closed off the national treasury to the major raids, which had been so common before. Ministers were no longer able to just take their budget and put it in the Swiss bank account. So that was helpful.

Started a process of negotiation with the IMF, and that process took about a year, I think, nine months, to work out an agreement. And this involved some really hard things. They had to devalue the currency, going from about six zaires to the dollar up to 30 all in one stroke, and then let the currency float and have a free exchange rate control the budget -- all of those hard things that IMFs make you do.

Through the whole process of discussion and negotiation there were a lot of skeptical people who said that he won't agree to it, and even if he does agree to it, he'll never keep it.

But he did agree, and he more or less kept it. They still have a program. There have been some ups and downs on it, but they still have an IMF program, we are now, five years later.

So that was my mission, and -- mission accomplished. We were able to get Mobutu to do these difficult things and be a little more relaxed on some of the human rights things.

He was trying to curry favor in the United States and create a favorable impression, so he was wooing his opposition. Instead of throwing people in jail, he was bringing them back from exile and giving them government jobs again.

He was willing to deal with anybody. You could never go too far as an opponent of Mobutu. You could always come back, if you would recognize his supremacy. If you'd recognize his supremacy, you could have views on a whole lot of things. But you couldn't challenge him. When you challenged him, then you were out. But if you were willing to accept that he was going to be the supreme leader, then you could come home and make your peace.

Q: Would it be fair to say, I'm talking about your relationship with the African Bureau, that, in a way, although you had your mission, you were left somewhat alone? I've been told by people there that under Crocker the whole emphasis of the African Bureau was on South Africa. The Reagan Administration was South Africa, period, and the rest of it you did your business and did what you were supposed to do.

CONSTABLE: This was pretty true. Crocker didn't want to get involved in Zaire, but he attached some importance to trying to keep things from falling apart. So he gave the Zaire account, as he always put it, to Frank Wisner. And I needed somebody back in Washington to work on some of these things for me, because I couldn't do it alone from Zaire. I very quickly found that nobody in Washington wanted to hear about Zaire. They didn't want to touch it. They didn't want to talk about it. Zaire was poison.

So when we were getting to the point where something was happening in Kinshasa, and Mobutu was indeed doing some of the things that we wanted him to do, it took some intervention in Washington, which Frank supplied, to get the U.S. government and the IMF to deal with this new reality and react to it in a positive way.

So, while your observation was generally correct, Frank Wisner really did involve himself.

Q: How did our policy in Angola impact on you?

CONSTABLE: While I was in Zaire, not nearly as much as it had before and it has subsequently. This was the period when Crocker was still going around trying to get something going on Angola. There were bits of dialogue, and the Zairians, of course, were very interested. So we talked to them about what was happening in Angola, and occasionally would ask them to talk to somebody or convey something or underscore a point.

But this was the period of the Clark amendment. There were no arms being run around across borders and so on. So it was not, as I say, an intense relationship.

Q: So your period, your work was really concentrated on...

CONSTABLE: It was very much focused on the issues of getting them into an IMF program and trying to turn them around on the economy, trying to get them to curb the excessive corruption, and on human rights. And I think on all three scores we made some headway. I don't think we revolutionized the country, but...

Q: Part of this though does represent an interesting thing. Here we are, you're an Ambassador from another country to another country, and yet we're really talking about major pressure -- the role the United States has played and continues to play in other places. To me, it's not only a very positive, but it's also a very active role.

CONSTABLE: Yes, it was active, but I like to think of it as perhaps less intrusive than what your question implies.

We weren't really putting pressure on Zaire, we were trying to explain to Zaire the way the world works. And if you want to get something done, if you want more out of the U.S. in terms of aid and so on, you've got to clean up your act in significant ways, and some very basic things have to happen. And not only is it in terms of your relations with us, but it's just the health of your own country. You're going down the rat hole, and if you want to reverse that, there are certain things that have to be done for your own good.

And we were very careful to say, actually, that there may not be any great pay-out from the United States. We've got budget problems, and our foreign aid is certainly not going up, and you may not get anything out of this. You'll get some goodwill, and your image will be better, and people will look upon you more kindly, instead of as some sort of pariah out there who's messed up a beautiful country.

So it wasn't that we came in and started beating around. The process of doing this was also deliberately non-intrusive.

All those messages about: You've got to devalue, you've got to control your budget and so on, those were all delivered by the IMF.

They weren't delivered by Peter Constable going in and seeing the central bank guy. We would say to the central bank guy, to Mobutu, you have no choice except somehow come to grips with the IMF. But we were not providing the prescription, except in the broadest sense.

Q: So you were acting almost as a friend in court or something like that.

CONSTABLE: Yes. And at the end, when at the negotiating level with the IMF they had agreed to all the hard things, then we did use our political influence to get a somewhat hostile, many-times-burned IMF board to approve the program. And the head of the IMF, who had been burned so many times by Mobutu, was also gun shy, but we used our influence then, when Mobutu had committed his government to do these things.

RICHARD PODOL
Mission Director, USAID
Kinshasa (1982-1986)

Richard Podol was born in Chicago in 1928. He attended the University of Iowa, where he received his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. He became involved in the Foreign Service in 1954. Mr. Podol has worked in India, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Zaire, and Uganda. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in September 1996.

PODOL: In early 1981, I was told there were three Mission Director assignments that were open in Africa and would I be interested? I said, "Yes" and the one I chose was Zaire, believe it or not. So, I spent from August 1981 to May 1982 in French language training and then went to Zaire in June 1982, for four years, as Mission Director to Zaire and secondarily to the Congo, since we didn't have a Mission in the Congo but we had a program run by CARE. So, I had a dual responsibility, you might say, but it was very unbalanced. There I was in 1982 in Zaire, which was a very unique experience from a number of standpoints.

Q: What were we trying to accomplish there as a U.S. foreign assistance operation?

PODOL: That was always a question. Through 1980, at the time I was really selected, Zaire was out of favor with the Carter Administration because of human rights abuses and so on. It wasn't looked upon as much of a favorable or choice assignment, or one in which programs were going to go very far, from what I understand. But that changed before I got there. When the Reagan Administration came in, with its emphasis on fighting Communism, and a civil war was going on in Angola, Zaire became a staging area for operations in Angola. So, the attitudes towards Zaire changed dramatically. In fact, Vice President Bush came out on a visit with his wife and several others: Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Mrs. Dole, which would tell you how our relationship changed. As kind of an aside, at the big dinner that was given, I had the privilege of sitting next to Mrs. Bush, whom I found to be a very delightful, down to earth kind of person - not the slightest pretense, self-importance, none of that. It was really nice to sit with her that evening.

Our program possibilities in Zaire had changed. The first thing you learn about Zaire is, if you want to carry out anything at all successfully, you have to do it outside government. If you involve the government of Zaire in your program, you are in deep trouble. It is, as others have said, a kleptocracy. The president and his entourage will rip-off anything and everything they can get their hands on, and they make no secret of it. The Japanese, who at that time had brought in 25 tractors for village agriculture - every one of them was snapped up by one of the people in power and used on their personal farms. The Japanese didn't want to raise a fuss about this at all, but that's what you had to watch for. Before I had gotten there, a year or so earlier, we had brought in rice under PL 480 and opened it up for purchase by traders - businessmen in the city could buy rice. We found out later on that a number of them didn't exist as businessmen. They took the rice and disappeared. Never paid for it. So, we had this enormous local currency debt we were trying to collect when I was there.

You had to come up with a program that would go around government, but one that was popular so that they would let you do it without interfering. The prime example of this, and our most successful, was rural health. The services in Zaire were run by missionaries. There was kind of a treaty between the Catholic missionaries and the Protestant missionaries that went back years, in which the Catholics, who were European, ran the educational system, and the Protestants, who were largely American, the rural health system. So, dotted throughout the countryside were hospitals run by different missionary groups, staffed by Americans and funded by the various missionary organizations. We had our rural health programs with those hospitals and those missionary groups. It proved to be very effective. Once, Mobutu came out to witness a hospital power plant that we had funded. He came out to the inauguration and found that this was so popular that they let us alone. The Ministry of Health went along with it, let us do it, did not get in the way. In fact, in Southeast Zaire, the Governor of Shaba, which is the Copper Belt, said, "Okay, I'll turn over all of the government hospitals and health centers to the Methodists. Let them run the whole health system for the province." And that worked. So, that was a very successful program.

Q: What was our role in that?

PODOL: We were providing some funding - I'll get to that in a moment - and some training of local staff, not the foreigners, not the Americans, but the local training programs. We had funds to buy medicines. But under AID legislation, we had to buy all of our pharmaceuticals in the U.S. We could have bought them in Europe at half the price. So this was one of the handicaps which one

operates under. We had to work on some tradeoffs with, let's say, the Methodists. They would buy the medicines and we would fund other parts of their program in order to get the best return for the money. We'd fund in other dollar costs that were competitive in the U.S., but we wouldn't buy medicines. So, we ran into that little problem. The program was working very well and was spreading throughout the country. Most of the missionary groups we could work with without problems, but some wanted to keep the U.S. Government at arms length and gave us a hard time, but they were the minority. So, that program was working very well that way. Another one was, we had a very successful corn growing program in the Northeast corner of Shaba, which is fairly isolated. It was isolated enough that it evaded Zaire government control. The contract group could work with the farmers in essentially providing them with improved seed, growing seed corn and providing the seed to the farmers. As long as we were there, it worked very well. When I left, we were still trying to find a local organization to pick it up. There was a local private sector company there and we were trying to get them to pick up this element as part of their overall portfolio.

Q: You had an immunization program with CDC?

PODOL: Yes, operated through the Ministry of Health but with a U.S. trained division chief. This you could do if you watched it carefully because it was popular. Politically, the government could get mileage out of this, so health was something that you could do things in.

Q: So they'd leave their hands off, rather than trying to take over?

PODOL: Yes. AID and the American government had a reputation of not standing for ripoffs. We had a very outspoken Ambassador, Mr. Oakley. He let it be known that he wasn't going to stand for any nonsense. Our program was pretty well protected. We had a commodity import program. There was a U.S. owned and operated tire plant. So, all of our commodities were raw materials to be used in making tires, controlled by the U.S. owned plant. So, we could have some insurance that the commodities wouldn't disappear out the back door. And the same with our PL 480 program. The one wheat mill or flour mill in the country was American owned and our PL 480 wheat went directly to that mill. So, again, there was some assurance that it wasn't disappearing into the countryside.

Q: Were we providing rice when you were there?

PODOL: No. That had stopped because of the ripoffs in the rice program in the previous years. We were only providing wheat. The country can't grow wheat, even though they've tried. And bread has become very popular as a fast food. The basis of the diet was cassava, a starch. But, when incomes went up, they switched from cassava to bread as the fast food. It was easy to eat and keep. So, bread was a very popular food. And for poor people. Not the poorest of the poor, who ate cassava, but one level up, the "working poor," you might say. So, those programs worked fine.

Q: Do you have the sense that they lasted?

PODOL: Everything is gone today because of the collapse of the central government. There is no AID program in Zaire today.

STEVENSON MCILVAINE
Political Officer
Kinshasa (1983-1985)

Born in Pennsylvania of Foreign Service Parents, Mr. McIlvaine was raised in Washington D.C. and abroad. He graduated from Harvard University and served in the US Army before joining the Foreign Service in 1967. His assignments abroad took him to a number of posts in Africa, including Kinshasa, Bissau, Dar es Salaam, and Lusaka, where he served as Chargé d'Affaires. At the State Department in Washington, Mr. McIlvaine dealt primarily with African issues. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: You left there in '83. I take it you really weren't plugged into any jobs.

MCILVAINE: No, nothing. I started to go through the assignment process for the first time. I'd come in out of cycle. I was interested in Africa and the only thing out there was right back to where I'd been: Kinshasa, which was Leopoldville under a new name. I was assigned as number 2 in the political section in Kinshasa, Zaire.

Q: So you were there from '83 to when?

MCILVAINE: '85.

Q: What was Zaire and Kinshasa like at that time?

MCILVAINE: Again, I enjoyed it. It was the court of King Mobutu and political reporting was something I enjoyed very much. It was great fun to try and figure out what was going on and who was doing what to whom. There were no facts or hard evidence. It was all rumor and who would tell you what and sources and all the rest of it. I remember reading at the same time a biography of Mary Queen of Scots when she was in Scotland. It was the same thing. The court of Mary in the 1500s was very like the court of Mobutu in 1983. I did a report once on his family. This is hard to imagine with a head of state, but there was no consensus on how many children he had, who were children, who were full children, who were half, who were recognized, who were not, and who he had actually married. There were various anointed wives. There had been 2 anointed wives. But there were clearly others. A hard fact was impossible to find. To a true political reporter, what could be more fun?

Q: How open did you find the society?

MCILVAINE: The society was in theory very closed. It was very much a one man show. Everything was decided by Mobutu. In practice, Zairians loved to talk and everybody would talk. You had to figure out what to make of all the talk you heard, what was likely and what was not, which was what's fun about being a political reporter. That's the analysis of it. In terms of political reporting, it was great fun and really a challenge. In terms of working and the US relationship, it

was very difficult. The station was huge. This was the time when we were doing a lot of stuff in Angola and doing it out of Zaire. We were endlessly confused with the station and frequently I would get in the way of the station and that would not sit well with the ambassador.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MCILVAINE: The first one was Peter Constable. The second one was Brandon Grove. I had more troubles with Peter Constable, not his fault, but his mission was basically to support the station and I was causing trouble. I didn't realize it, but I was doing what I thought I was supposed to do as a political officer: contacting dissidents and getting to know them. I knew all the so-called "bad guys."

Q: Was the problem that you were contacting the dissidents and reporting on it or was the problem that you were contacting the people who the station was playing with?

MCILVAINE: I was contacting the dissidents and Mobutu was complaining directly to the ambassador and the station, "Get this guy to stop talking to those people." The inclination of the embassy was, the relationship with Mobutu was so important that they didn't want it messed up.

Q: Why was it so important?

MCILVAINE: That was never fully explained to me but I assumed it was because of all the work through Zaire on Angola and maybe other things in support of Savimbi and UNITA. This was early Reagan.

Q: Within the embassy, was there...

MCILVAINE: The same arguments went round and round over the Congo for 30 years. Mobutu could hold it together; nobody else can. He's our ticket. We've got to stay with him. And a counter-argument saying, "Mobutu is the reason why it's a mess." Both arguments were true and are still true.

Q: Today-

MCILVAINE: It's a mess and it's a mess in part because of Mobutu. But he did help hold it together.

Q: Within the embassy officer corps, was there concern about Mobutu and our ties to him?

MCILVAINE: Not much that I detected. I was pretty much the only one that was following that line. I was certainly the only one talking to what was called the "13," the dissidents like Tschisked, who was thrown in jail, and Makanda.

Q: Were they just being dissidents?

MCILVAINE: No, they were providing something resembling an alternative. It was flawed, too, but they were trying to put together an alternative and getting a lot of attention because Mobutu kept throwing them in jail, having them beat up and stuff like that.

Q: Was the political life concentrated in Leopoldville? It's a huge country. What was happening elsewhere?

MCILVAINE: That's always a problem with that huge country, that there is Kinshasa and then there's what is going on in the rest of the country, and usually nobody knows. Mobutu in many ways wanted it that way. Many analysts assumed that he neglected the infrastructure in part because he didn't want you to be able to get quickly from Katanga to Kinshasa because then you could cause trouble. In fact, what had been a fairly good infrastructure brought by the Belgians was reduced to... Zaire was the size of the United States east of the Mississippi. By the time I was there, it had the infrastructure of the United States east of the Mississippi in about 1820: dirt roads, not much else. My wife found this Spanish TV crew that was doing a TV show going across Zaire with this fancy truck. They had a driver and the driver didn't speak French, so they needed an interpreter, so she went with them and actually drove across Zaire, which nobody did. It took 10 days and a number of washed out bridges and things like that. But it was 10 days to drive 1,000 miles.

Q: When did you acquire a wife?

MCILVAINE: I acquired a wife before I came back into the Foreign Service in the late '70s.

Q: What's her background?

MCILVAINE: Her father and my father met in 1935 when they both took and both failed the Foreign Service exam. My father heard her father being called out, William Breese. He said, "Breese? That's my mother's maiden name." So he accosted him and asked who he was. It turned out his Breeses were from New York. So he went home that weekend and asked his mother, "There are Breeses from New York. Are we related somehow?" She said, "Oh, those Breeses. Yes. They're in trade." Our Breeses were all naval officers. They had actually made money, whereas ours didn't.

So, our parents met there. They kept in touch. Many years later, my father retired from the Foreign Service, came back to Washington and met the Breeses again somewhere on the Washington circuit and invited them and their daughter over for dinner. I was invited and I thought the daughter was terrific. She thought I was kind of a bore, but I pursued and persisted. Two years later, we got married.

Q: How did you find the diplomatic social life in Kinshasa?

MCILVAINE: With Zairians, it was either these over the top, too much money spent, too fancy villas, too fancy receptions for government elite figures, or it was the struggling middle class. They were lucky if they had a cement floor and if they had running water. Anyhow, it was maniac

pounded into a concrete-like paste. Then you put some sauce or chicken on it. So, it was too much money on one side and too little money on the other side. The huge gap was really visible.

Q: Did you get out and around to the various provinces?

MCILVAINE: A little. I spent some time in my old Katanga, where I spent 6 months as a kid, but that was in Lubumbashi where we had a consulate. And I got up to Stanleyville/Kisangani. I got up to Bukavu, one of those beautiful places.

Q: Is that on the lake?

MCILVAINE: Yes. That zone from Bujumbura, from the head of Lake Tanganyika up to the Sudan border of the volcanic mountains across the spine of Africa, it's Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Zaire or Congo on the west side. It's just the most magnificent country. There are live volcanoes. Gorillas. Forests. Lakes. Stunningly beautiful.

The last 10 years have been very hard on that country. Millions of refugees. It's been deforested. Lava flows. Civil war. It's had no end to trouble. I don't know if it's still beautiful, but it certainly was.

Q: How did you find African hands? By this time I assume there was a solid corps of what you call African hands?

MCILVAINE: There weren't so much at the post because it was so politically charged at that point. It wasn't so much the traditional Africa hands.

Q: You wouldn't put them in there. you would use them elsewhere.

MCILVAINE: None of the guys I worked with... I don't think any of them did other Africa tours. Peter Constable wasn't a true Africa hand. Brandon Grove wasn't an Africa hand. The political counselor, who I worked for, was an alcoholic and later died just a couple years later. The inside the embassy part of it was not good. I was out of step and it wasn't a step I particularly was looking to be in.

Q: Was there a hold on reporting on corruption?

MCILVAINE: No formal hold. There was no vetoing of reporting. I did have a free hand on reporting. The assumption was, that's okay, nobody's reading it anyhow. But what I did run into friction on regularly from the station, and that got to the ambassador, was that I shouldn't be talking to the people I was talking to. I was also talking to some of the Mobutu folks, too, because it was important to have those contacts.

Q: We had this in Iran and other places where we were being called... After the Shah went down the tubes, one of the things was, we hadn't really been talking to the others. I would have thought that there would have been a certain tenderness on this point.

MCILVAINE: I think it's a chronic problem with embassies. Every ambassador wants to have good relations with the president or the head of state, particularly in countries where it is a one man show, because that's his or her meal ticket. He's got to be able to get the president on short notice to meet a senator or tell him what the government's going to do on X. He's got to be able to get to him. If you're too mean to him, the president won't let you anywhere as near. Ambassadors learn the hard way. If access is cut off, they're ineffective. When it's a dictatorship, access means you've got to be careful how you criticize and when. Plus, there's just a whiff of Homerism: "This is my country for 3 years and we're going to get it right. We're going to need all the help we can get. I don't want anybody rocking that particular boat." Every embassy is prone to it. Some manage to avoid it. Some have situations where it's easy to avoid because you just don't get along with the government anyhow. But most have big problems with it.

LEONARD H. ROBINSON, JR.
Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
Washington, DC (1983-1985)

Mr. Robinson was born and raised in North Carolina. After graduating from Ohio State University he joined the Peace Corp, serving first in India and later at Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C. His varied career took him to Capitol Hill, to AID and to the State Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. Mr. Robinson was also active in a number of private organizations having to do with African Development and with Population Programs. Mr. Robinson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: What about Zaire during this time? Zaire as run by Mobutu was corrupt as all hell and also it seemed to be almost a fiefdom of the CIA. How did you find this in your perspective dealing with Zaire and business and all that?

ROBINSON: I went to Zaire and Congo (Brazzaville) in May of 1984. I flew to Kinshasa first and met with Mobutu. On that trip, I wore two "hats." My brief covered both business issues as well as a political agenda. Mobutu was seen by our government at that time as a staunch ally, a bulwark of that part of central Africa against the Soviet Union. He was viewed as an interlocutor vis a vis Angola and Namibia. Zaire was the staging ground for a lot of activities, particularly the trans shipment of materiel and equipment to a number of southern African states intended to bolster their capacities and capabilities to prevent the take over by local communist fronts through the use of the Cuban troops who were clearly seen as the proxy for the Soviet Union. There were Soviet advisors on the ground in Angola and in northern Namibia, but they were strictly advisors. They were not, to my knowledge, combatants.

BRANDON H. GROVE, JR
Ambassador
Zaire (1984-1987)

Ambassador Brandon Grove was born in Chicago in 1929 and graduated from Bard College and Princeton. He has served in numerous countries including Ivory Coast, India, East and West Germany and Israel. In 1984 he was named ambassador to Zaire. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 1994.

GROVE: Being an ambassador is different from anything done before, whether as a foreign service officer, journalist, or CEO of a major corporation. At an embassy, the deputy chief of mission takes on the day-to-day management and the ambassador provides leadership and policy direction. An ambassador's authorities and responsibilities are better defined in the president's long letter of instructions to each ambassador than those of any other person in foreign affairs appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate; they are much more explicitly stated than the functions of the secretary of state. Ambassadors are supported by staffs who ordinarily are experienced and competent, and whose success in their careers is linked to the ambassador's success. They are provided places to live intended to represent our country and its values or, in a capital like Paris, where our residence is more like a palace, America's prestige and place in history.

Despite the absorbing and stimulating activities of social and public diplomacy, an ambassador, like the captain of a ship, must be at the center of things but also maintain a certain distance, since he or she is ultimately accountable for everything that takes place. So a kind of solitude comes with the privilege of command responsibility. Making the hard decisions on how to further US interests with the host government, how to deal with a crisis, is the ambassador's task, someone who must at the same time take into account and move a huge, sluggish, Byzantine bureaucracy in Washington that sets the agenda for relations.

No American abroad should be able to define the elements of relations more lucidly than the ambassador, understand local and Washington's concerns more thoroughly, assess the future more astutely, or anticipate opportunities and difficulties more shrewdly. It is work requiring constant thought. An ambassador at post has left native shores behind and does not spend too long in either harbor, maneuvering in the waters in between, entering one and then the other port, only to leave again for the open seas that separate them and are his or her dominion.

Ronald Reagan telephoned prospective ambassadors at the time their nominations were forwarded by the White House to the Senate. His ostensible purpose was the formal one of asking whether they would accept their posting, something they had known about for an average of six months, having gone through security, financial disclosure and other bureaucratic processes along the way. I think Reagan did this because he enjoyed personal contact and dispensing good news, as well as exercising an agreeable side of presidential authority. He was making the important point, however, that ambassadors were his personal representatives abroad, deriving their constitutional authority from him. This was particularly important for foreign service appointees, accustomed to layers of bureaucracy, to understand.

A White House operator reached me a day in advance, giving me a time frame during which I could expect a call from the president. I got myself ready at the appointed hour, and asked my 13-year old son, Mark, to pick up the telephone extension when the call came through in order to

hear the president. After several false rings from unwelcome callers that morning, the White House operator was finally on the line. "The president is calling," she said. Mark scrambled into place, his hand cupped over the speaking end of the extension phone. What a special moment in a foreign service career and family life!

A pause, and then the familiar, husky, friendly voice was on the line. "Mr. Grover?" the president asked, adding an "r" to my name. I glanced at an astonished Mark with an expression that said if you laugh I'll throttle you. To his credit, Mark kept his hand on the phone, although he was starting to tremble. This was dad's big moment! In the brief exchange that followed, I told the president that in Zaire I would do my best for him and our country. "I know you will," was his gracious reply.

In 1984, as I picked up the threads of our relations, Zaire was a particularly important country to us in Africa. By 1997, the year of President Mobutu's expulsion by Laurent Kabila, it was far less so. Zaire, then the Belgian Congo, gained its independence in 1961, along with many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Over the next four chaotic years, the Congo went in a Marxist direction under the influence of Patrice Lumumba, who was murdered, apparently by Mobutu's supporters. Its various governments narrowly succeeded in suppressing bloody secessionist movements in the mining region of Katanga and to the north in Stanleyville, and its economy collapsed.

When a former army sergeant, Joseph Désiré Mobutu, seized power with the help of the US government through its urbane, amiable and canny CIA station chief in Leopoldville, Lawrence Devlin, Zaire's future was sealed. I once asked Larry, a good friend, whether it is true that the CIA in Washington had sent him a tube of poisoned toothpaste with instructions to get it to Lumumba. "It is," he replied with a smile, "but I didn't carry out the order. I questioned it. How in the world would I get toothpaste to Lumumba, anyway?"

By 1984, Zaire had been brought to ruin by Mobutu. One-third the size of the United States, Zaire is as large as our country east of the Mississippi River. It has strategically important natural resources, among them copper, cobalt, diamonds, oil, timber, and copper related minerals, of which there are many. When world commodity prices and especially copper prices fell precipitously in 1973, Zaire suffered an economic decline of major proportions from which it has not recovered.

The US was also interested in Zaire for strategic reasons. Mobutu had steadfastly supported us in the Cold War; he had become one of our strongest allies in Africa. He sided with us in the UN on important issues. He twice sent his troops to restore order in Chad. He was viewed by us as the powerful and enduring leader of a large country surrounded by nine smaller countries which he helped keep in the Western orbit. In addition, Mobutu was an important voice in the Angolan and Namibian struggles and in US-sponsored negotiations.

I left Washington with three major objectives in our relations. First, we were committed to keeping Zaire on the path of economic reform. At the time, there was an impressive and increasing degree of compliance by Mobutu with IMF-mandated economic restructuring, including meeting scheduled debt repayments in the Paris Club, an oddly named organization that regulates government-to-government debt. There was overall progress on the economic front, albeit uneven,

which gave slender hope that the basic downward spiral could be slowed. The country had been plundered for decades by Mobutu and his cohorts. To keep Zaire on the path of economic reform the US worked in tandem with Belgium and France in particular, often urging the same actions on Mobutu and his government to demonstrate our common views.

The second US objective was to keep the dialogue with Mobutu going in our direction. For anything significant to be accomplished in Zaire during my tenure, we would require Mobutu's support. To succeed with Mobutu, I would need to understand his personality and develop strategies to foster as cooperative a relationship with him as possible. Despite US government tolerance of his despotic ways and our generous aid programs, Mobutu was renowned for having American ambassadors for breakfast. Three of my nine predecessors had formally or informally been asked by Mobutu to leave.

Our third policy objective was the most elusive. We sought real progress, in specific ways and cases, in curbing wide-spread and well documented human rights abuses. At the same time, we intended to nudge Mobutu toward democratic practices, particularly with regard to tolerating opposition leaders and their parties, and acknowledging a role for them in the political process.

Before departing for Kinshasa, I talked with my predecessors: "How did you handle Mobutu? What should I expect?" These conversations gave me, from different angles, a picture of Mobutu that was all too accurate. He was a man of constancy. Not surprisingly, my predecessors were foreign service officers rather than political appointees, each with his own style and ways of dealing with Mobutu. In the course of time I developed mine, which I will later describe.

I recognized that the situation in Zaire--the overwhelming poverty, near absence of human rights, disintegrating infrastructure, one-man rule--would not change significantly during my tenure, short of a miracle. The demise of Mobutu was not expected. I saw that I could have only a minimal effect on Zaire's future. Little glamor was attached to this ambassadorship.

There was great fear of Mobutu in Zaire, and of his army in particular, by people in villages and the countryside who suffered constantly from pillaging, brutality and rape by his underpaid or unpaid soldiers, who exacted their "pay" from villagers by stealing food and generally having their way. There was no one in Zaire at that time able to challenge Mobutu directly. Opposition leaders like Etienne Tshisekedi and members of his UDPS Party lived in exile in Belgium, as did N'guz Karl-i-Bond. Our embassy in Brussels maintained low-level contacts with these figures, arousing Mobutu's suspicions and anger. He had a relationship with us over the years that can only be described as love-hate on his part.

Before leaving Washington, I decided to call on the Israeli ambassador to tell him of my intention to work closely with his counterpart in Kinshasa. Israel had for many years made serious and sustained efforts to win friends and influence people in various African countries. Moshe Arens was away, but his deputy, Benjamin Netanyahu, received me for forty-five minutes of probing conversation. I sensed I was in the presence of a highly intelligent, smooth yet intense, politically attuned and forceful man who had done his homework on Zaire. I could not miss a steely and domineering quality in his personality.

Ambassadors newly arrived at their posts follow similar procedures leading to accreditation to a head of government or chief of state. Copies of letters of credence, and recall of the previous ambassador, signed by the president of the United States, are delivered to the foreign minister. The ministry's chief of protocol explains local diplomatic practices, such as when to fly flags on one's official car, and briefs the ambassador-designate about the accreditation ceremony. The new ambassador, meanwhile, has time to take charge of the embassy and settle into a residence often in need of painting and serious repair, sparsely furnished, and therefore dispiriting at first sight.

My courtesy call on the foreign minister was uneventful. The chief of protocol arranged to brief me on the evening before I was to present my credentials to President Mobutu. During my call on him, Kinshasa experienced a total power failure caused by a thunder storm. We were in complete darkness in an empty building. There were no candles or flashlights at hand. The briefing continued. At the end, moving in single file, we slid our fingers along the walls of pitch-black inner corridors, calling to each other to stay in touch, and made our way cautiously down several flights of stairs to my car outside. An apt briefing in every way, I thought.

On the following day, four other newly arrived ambassadors and I were scheduled for individual appearances before Mobutu. We were to be ready at our residences at nine o'clock, but did not know in what sequence we would be whisked to the presidency by motor cycle escorts. The heavy rains of the previous night had caused a major leak through the ceiling of my son Mark's bedroom, adding urgency to the list of repairs to the second floor of the residence. Senior advisers on the embassy's country team were invited to join me at the ceremony. We spent three warm hours on my terrace becoming better acquainted, and drinking coffee in our most formal attire while work crews attended to the flooding and roof. Motor cycle escorts for other ambassadors living nearby wailed and roared as they sped their charges to Mobutu, sounds disappointingly fading away as, once again, they passed us by. Finally, the churning reached our gates which had long stood open, and eight policemen vroomed into the circular drive at breakneck speed, flinging up dust and gravel to the horror of our bulldog, Johnny. At long last, I was on my way.

I first saw President Mobutu at Camp Tshatshi, when I presented my credentials to him during a ceremony on a plateau overlooking the Zaire River at Stanley Pool, where millions of tons of water roiling and pounding on rock make a drumbeat of their own. A newly arrived ambassador faces this rushing river while national anthems are played, and it's quite a thrill.

I looked to my right where Mobutu was waiting in the entrance to a large *paillote*, or straw covered hut. He was a tall, heavy-set figure, standing against the dark background of the interior and my first impression was the gleaming whites of his eyes bordered by black horn-rimmed glasses. He was wearing his *abacost*, the required Zairean dress for men modeled on the Mao jacket, perhaps China's most distinctive contribution to the Zairean scene. His head was large and round with tightly curled hair covered, outdoors, by his trademark leopard skin hat. He carried the carved wooden stick of a chieftain and stood ramrod straight. It was disconcerting to feel him standing there, watching me intently as the band played.

I walked toward him trailed by senior members of my staff, whom I introduced. Another of Mobutu's affectations was to insist on being addressed as "Citizen President." I carried a letter from President Reagan, which I had helped write and managed to get signed before my departure

from Washington. It described our objectives in the relationship and said some pleasant things about me. I presented it to Mobutu and he was pleased.

Mobutu, I had been told, had the habit of testing American ambassadors as soon as he could, and lost no time with me. "Mr. Ambassador," he said, "I want to offer you a traditional Zairean drink--coconut milk. I hope this does not violate your human rights," a clumsy dig at best. Mobutu felt sensitive about our human rights policies and pressures, and I was pleased to see they were having even this kind of effect. I am not fond of coconut milk, but assuring Mobutu that my human rights were unoffended, I did my duty for my country.

I met with Mobutu many times, usually alone or with one or two others over breakfast or lunch. He spoke no English and we communicated in French. He was often moody and depressed or angry, and increasingly bored with his life. Mobutu had everything money could buy: his yacht *Kamaniola*, residences in Zaire, Switzerland, France and elsewhere, women of a certain kind. There were no comforts he could not enjoy, if he wanted them. Yet he found these dull and insufficient and, as it turned out, he was ignoring his health. He was building a marble palace at Badolite, in the northwest corner of Zaire. My diplomatic colleagues and I, who were summoned there from time to time, watched its construction, and that of an airport and Potemkin village nearby, with awe and dismay. Everything seemed to be made of green malachite and Italian marble. Mobutu began to spend more and more time in the Oz world of Badolite. While he thus indulged himself, the rest of Zaire rotted.

Mobutu nevertheless felt a profound attachment to Zaire and its soil, the way Russians feel about Mother Russia. I thought at the time the worst punishment one could impose on him would be exile. He would despair in the knowledge that he would never see his homeland again. Its loamy earth, smells, trees, crops, rain, the game preserve at Virunga, its giant muddy river, all had a strong grip on him. Mobutu had been in power eighteen years when I arrived. He pined for Zaire every time he left, even when he was enjoying the comforts of Europe, and could hardly wait to get home again.

In private, Mobutu was a shy and unassertive man. I have seen this trait in other leaders whose public display of charisma, self-confidence and authority is forceful. He was a generous and caring host. If you were his guest at a small and social meal, he would insist on serving you himself from the buffet of African dishes, telling each guest what was on his plate, not helping himself until all his guests, or at least the guest of honor, had been served. I was in constant dread of encountering monkey meat. Although I have eaten many exotic animals, I draw the line when it comes to monkey. It's a little too close to home.

Mobutu could be relaxed at intimate social occasions and participate in banter and small talk. He would wear a Hawaiian type of sport shirt with an open collar, often in wild colors. These were times he called me "tu," and we joshed without regard to roles. He liked to tease and put down his target of the moment; his humor was usually at someone else's expense. I was the butt occasionally, and never found myself on his wavelength at such times. More than once, for example, Mobutu played me off against his wife and her identical twin sister. One of them would enter the room while we were talking, and Mobutu would courteously ask me, "Have you met my

wife?" I answered that I had, at which point he would say with childish delight, "Well, that's not my wife!"

Politically astute, Mobutu was a discerning and informed observer of world politics. Long in office, he had a deep appreciation of the regions of Africa and their leaders, among whom he favored Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, Bongo of Gabon, and his old ally, King Hassan II of Morocco who would ultimately provide him refuge when he was overthrown. Beyond Africa, he arrived at sophisticated assessments of the Soviets, Chinese and ourselves, asking me pointed and well informed questions. He admired the Chinese, and had little use for the Soviets in any form. He liked to talk politics and was a Reagan fan. He understood competing interests in the Cold War as they played themselves out in Africa. For him this was vital. Mobutu managed his relationship with the United States through the Cold War decades, during which our involvement in Zaire was deep, in calculated ways that aligned him solidly with the West. While he read our leaders since Kennedy well, he never understood (or did not want to understand) our system of government, believing a president need only instruct Congress on levels of foreign and military aid. For his support, regionally and in forums like the UN, we backed and rewarded Mobutu.

Mobutu characteristically viewed politics in terms of people, assessing their strengths, weaknesses, ambitions, appeal, and foibles. "That fellow!" he would exclaim when I asked about someone, following this rejoinder with a canny and usually unflattering thumbnail sketch. Until his last few years in power, Mobutu met with many leaders on a regular basis to keep his knowledge and influence current. He nourished his African connections in ways one can only guess at, and constantly tried to play off the Belgians, French and ourselves against each other in his own game of triangulation. During my time, at least, it didn't work.

Proud, vain and thin-skinned, Mobutu was obsessively concerned about imagined slights to his presidency. If one understood this sensitivity, and made clear one was talking about issues and not demeaning the dignity of his office, Mobutu would usually listen carefully, and the dialogue could deal with some of the most contentious aspects of US-Zairean relations. We would quite often, for example, be able to discuss such topics as transparency in financial transactions, human rights, and political reforms.

In the end, I was instrumental in causing several political prisoners to be freed. Mobutu created a government office for human rights during my tour, making a big point of it with me when it was opened. Occasionally, I would call on the head of that office, Citizen Nimi, who was one of Mobutu's henchmen. I did not get the impression that this citizen felt passionately about the rights of his fellow citizens. I attempted to make progress on issues of economic and political reforms by appealing to Mobutu's sense of history. I asked him how he thought history would judge him if he did not take steps toward reform, suggesting that such measures, were he to apply them, would be applauded. "Think of your place in history!" I implored him, with scant expectation that I could persuade him to act in accord with our policy objectives and his own best interests.

In fact, Mobutu cared little for the people of Zaire. He was never interested in discussing our economic aid programs with me. Military assistance was a different matter. Despite his skill at raising money, Mobutu did almost nothing to provide schools and functioning hospitals, roads, water, sanitation, electricity, housing, or anything else for the ordinary Zaireans, who created an

extended-family economic system to stay alive. He enjoyed his power over them, and their organized support at staged mass rallies. Democratic institutions and respect for human rights had no place in his schemes. Mobutu felt himself accountable to no one.

Special Ambassador Vernon (Dick) Walters visited Kinshasa as a presidential envoy on two or three occasions while I was there. He had not yet been appointed our representative to the United Nations. He came to underscore our views on the urgency of Paris Club public sector debt repayments and structural economic reforms, and, in the usual mix we fed Mobutu, to talk about support for UNITA and the rebel leader Savimbi in Angola. Walters was tapped to make these overtures because he had great influence over Mobutu. Dick stayed with me at the residence, and this great raconteur was always a prized guest, especially in my children's eyes. I well remember the first time I went with Walters to see Mobutu. He was on board the presidential yacht, on which we landed in a helicopter while it was underway, to Walters' evident discomfort. Throughout the conversation, Walters flattered Mobutu in ways so exaggerated I thought they would cause us problems. Nobody could be that gullible, I reasoned. On the way back in the car, I commented to Dick that I thought he may have overdone it. Walters looked at me disparagingly and said: "Brandon, anyone who thinks flattery doesn't work has never had any!" He read Mobutu correctly from the day he met him years earlier.

Dick is the only person I know who can accurately recite Mobutu's full name: Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga. Translated, it means "All-conquering warrior who goes from conquest to conquest," in the polite version, or, more accurately, "The cock who jumps on anything that moves." Nothing "moved" in Zaire that was not pleasing or profitable to its president.

During a visit to Washington in 1986, on which I accompanied him, Mobutu was invited to a White House breakfast with Vice President Bush. There were perhaps eight of us around a table in the vice president's office. Mobutu sat at Bush's right, and I at Mobutu's right. When a steward entered with a platter of scrambled eggs, sausages and bacon, he went directly to Bush who served himself generously, and then proceeded to Mobutu. As Mobutu helped himself, Bush began to eat. The Zaireans noticed. I felt Mobutu stiffen. Bush, normally a man of instinctive courtesy, had unintentionally offended his visitors and run afoul of etiquette dictating the relationship between host and guest. The host, solicitous of others, is the last to be served and eat. Although Mobutu made no subsequent comment to me, he felt slighted and surely found his host wanting on this occasion.

Returning, during the visit, in an Air Zaire jet with Mobutu and his entourage from a brief sojourn in New York, I found myself sitting across the aisle and slightly behind Mme. Mobutu. I looked up from my book when she summoned an aide, who brought her a suitcase which she asked him to unlock. Inside, arranged side by side, I could see rows of fresh US currency, bound together with paper bands across the middle. It was a scene from a gangster movie. I could not read the denomination of the bills, but a safe guess is that they were 100s. And this is *after* the shopping spree on Fifth Avenue!

Before departing, Mobutu joined President Reagan for a "working lunch." This was preceded by a meeting in the Oval Office, during which a few points of substance were addressed by the

president, and reinforced by George Shultz and Caspar Weinberger. Our thrust was to encourage Mobutu to adhere to IMF and World Bank reforms, which were stringent, in order to get Zaire's economy on track. Everyone then adjourned to a small luncheon in the Roosevelt Room. Here, a relaxed American president abandoned all thought of serious conversation. He began telling jokes, many of which had communism or the Soviet Union as their target. These were dutifully translated into French by one of the State Department's star interpreters (those unsung heroes!) Alec Toumayan. I have never heard a joke travel well in translation, and these were no exception.

Mobutu became increasingly baffled. The Americans chuckled loyally, although it was clear that for White House staffers like James Baker, and regulars at the table like Shultz and Weinberger, this was not the first time around. Mobutu tried to discuss Angola and the Benguela Railway. Finally, he gave in and told a rather long story himself, in French. It fell flat, although everyone tried their best. In the State Department later on, I asked Alec whether Reagan always told so many jokes. "No," Alec replied, "sometimes he tells more."

Reagan may be among our underestimated presidents. True, he struck me as shrewd and opinionated, locked in on only a few large objectives that were important to him and impatient with details, but he was also immensely friendly and brimming with good humor. From his conversation, I sensed his head was filled by a world of horses, ranches and California sun that was dear to him. One occasionally felt that for him the duties of the presidency were an unwelcome distraction, *noblesse oblige*, accepted with a small sigh of resignation. But then all I brought to him were the miseries of Palestinians on the West Bank and Mobutu Sese Seko.

Reagan was earthy, and sometimes told racial jokes after carefully checking out the room. He assessed everyone in a room. He made eye contact, smiled and nodded, and during briefings asked quiet people whether they wanted to add to the discussion. I found it impossible not to like and respect him despite his flaws and superficialities, and to be warmed and jollied by his presence. Somehow, he was emblematic of our sunny and optimistic side.

Our embassy in Kinshasa was the second largest in Africa, after Cairo. We had a major AID presence, some 250 volunteers in the Peace Corps, and a military assistance mission. Economic aid to Zaire under Reagan rose to \$80 million annually, four times the amount during the Carter administration. There was an effective USIS unit which had its greatest impact, I thought, in its library and English teaching programs. We did not have commercial or agricultural attachés.

Of particular importance in understanding the economic and political complexion of Zaire was our consulate general in Lubumbashi, the former Elisabethville in the southeast Katanga region of the Belgian Congo. Shaba, as the province is now called, has a history of secessionist tendencies. It contains much of the country's wealth, including its vast copper resources, and is the economic engine of Zaire. Its leaders are sophisticated, business oriented people who have a way of looking down their noses at the rest of the country, particularly at the governing center of Kinshasa. The Clinton administration, citing budget constraints, closed our Lubumbashi post. Penny wise, possibly, but surely pound foolish. I enjoyed visiting Lubumbashi and its surroundings, which were cooler, higher, more graceful and less grating than Kinshasa. Homes built in the western style had fireplaces to keep them warm.

The deputy chief of mission for most of my stay was Daniel L. Simpson, who had earlier in his career been consul general in Lubumbashi. He was an expert on the African continent, a first-rate manager, courageous foreign service officer, and greatly valued adviser, a friend who would later succeed me in Kinshasa, and preside over US interests during the invasion of Zaire and overthrow of a terminally ill Mobutu by Kabila. Then and thereafter, he sorely missed the presence of a US consulate in Lubumbashi.

Peace Corps volunteers were engaged in such projects as fish and chicken farms, water wells, public health, and road maintenance. These efforts, although at low technical levels, were on target. The Peace Corps served Zaire particularly well, and we were all pleased by its performance. The mesh of Peace Corps and AID projects, a result of daily coordination of efforts, was in Washington's view a model to emulate. AID was involved in larger endeavors, some of which I thought were ill-conceived. Rural electrification, being pushed by AID, was an example of economic development too advanced for the existing state of Zaire's economy and its absorptive capacity. Some of these assistance projects stemmed from what AID's Washington bureaucracy thought should be done, rather than what the Zaireans thought should be done, and I often agreed with the Zaireans.

There were, of course, many AID projects that were well conceived and successful. I was able to reshape the economic assistance program during my three years, but it wasn't easy. Soon after my arrival I initiated three seminars on development in which the full country team of senior advisers participated. The AID mission, Dan Simpson, and I selected key development issues, and our discussions produced priorities and options for program development. These seminars were tied to AID's annual budget and planning process. My initiative was not popular in the AID mission. The senior leadership felt I was being intrusive; some thought I was overstepping the bounds of propriety. As ambassador, however, I wanted a firm voice in the nature and direction of all major programs in Zaire, and was particularly interested in how increasingly scarce US resources were being used. We met on three Saturdays for about three hours during each seminar. Papers were presented and discussed. As a consequence of these seminars, we changed some existing programs and the longer term direction of our development assistance. Priorities were reordered. The AID mission afterwards could cite its ambassador as a staunch supporter, and that should have been useful to it.

On the military assistance side, the French, Israelis, Egyptians, Chinese, Canadians, Germans and Belgians had programs as well. The Israelis trained Mobutu's personal security detachment and made it a crack outfit. Mobutu himself had received training in Tel Aviv as a paratrooper. Our objectives were to assist Zairean forces in logistical matters, communications, transportation, and training. We provided Jeeps, trucks, other vehicles, communications gear, and a modest list of non-lethal equipment. We were careful not to supply weapons, ammunition, or training for potential police functions. Occasionally, we sent Zairean officers to the United States under the International Military Exchange and Training (IMET) program, one of the most effective concepts in US military assistance. An officer who visits the United States returns with a better appreciation of democracy, American style, as well as life in an open and transparent market economy.

The embassy's political officers thought of Zaire's governing process as a bewildering merry-go-round. People would be in power as cabinet officers or advisers to the president, and six

to twelve months later they would be ousted, to be replaced by people who had been thrown out earlier. The process would be repeated, with former outs becoming new ins. Changes were made according to Mobutu's whims, and were intended to prevent ministers from creating their own platforms of power. They also served as a reminder of who was in charge.

The exception to this merry-go-round was a small coterie of trusted personal advisers, one or two of whom, I suspect, managed the president's finances and knew the account numbers in Switzerland. His team was a kakistocracy, a descriptive Greek word meaning government of a state by its worst citizens. Mobutu was a hands-on president at every turn, and a paid network of spies kept him informed. His power stemmed from absolute control of the military, generous payoffs to all and sundry, and micromanaging Zaire.

Mobutu was also paranoid about the American embassy, suspecting us of plotting against him. He thought members of our political section were reaching out to opposition figures at a time when there was no political opposition worthy of the name. He was wildly suspicious of the Peace Corps. Toward the end of my stay, he ordered all volunteers expelled for allegedly stirring up dissent in the countryside. One volunteer in the Kivu region had made disparaging remarks about Mobutu over beers in a bar. My explanation to Mobutu of this trivial incident fell on deaf ears.

Zaire was special to my children, who had not seen Africa. My youngest son Mark attended TASOK, the American school of Kinshasa, for three years. During one of his holidays, we took a memorable trip to the vast Virunga Game Park, where there is no tourism, and to the pygmy country in the rain forest beyond. Jack, Cathy and Paul came from their colleges for the summers. Jack worked in the embassy's general services section, honing his skills as a carpenter and enjoying the swimming pool. Cathy filled in for the Community Liaison Officer while the latter was on leave, and led her own embassy trip to Virunga. She stood beside me, a single parent, in the receiving line at our 4th of July reception, wearing a lovely white suit with blue trim and a big white hat, a very stylish 22-year old and in every way a gracious representative of our country.

Paul, characteristically, persuaded our big-hearted Defense Attaché, Colonel Paul Wenzel, to arrange for him to join the French-sponsored paratrooper training program for Zairean soldiers, made three perfect jumps which I watched on three harrowing days, and won his wings. These youngsters were intrigued by African life and culture, and admired the Africans they came to know in open, easy ways. Foreign Service life can be a gift to one's children.

Along with France, we participated in a small but important AIDS research effort centered in Kinshasa. The US side was headed by Dr. Paul Mann, of the National Institutes of Health, later to become UN director in Geneva of the global effort to understand and combat AIDS. By 1983, it had become evident that the disease was of epidemic proportions, especially on the African continent. Some speculated AIDS may have started in Zaire among green rhesus monkeys; others attributed its origins to Haiti. It was in Kinshasa that scientists learned the AIDS virus could be transmitted in both directions between the sexes, and from mother to child.

A large, uninformed American community in Zaire, comprising Peace Corps volunteers in the countryside, teenagers and our Marines among others, was exposed to this disease. I decided we needed a "town meeting" to air the matter, and presided over a large gathering of Americans,

including those from our school and others outside of government, during which Dr. Mann and our two embassy physicians described AIDS as a disease, with special emphasis on how to avoid exposure. There were questions from a shocked audience, but in that one session we defused what might have become a reaction of panic had we allowed rumor and misinformation about this new and deadly virus to build up. We became the first American embassy to recognize AIDS as a public health issue. Our approach was described in *State Magazine*, the Department's house organ, as an example of successful crisis management within an American overseas community. This publicity had no discernable effect on the willingness of people from all agencies to serve in Zaire.

The Ebola hemorrhagic fever virus first erupted in Ebola, Zaire in 1976, causing nearly 300 deaths. I had never heard it mentioned, although it was identified well before AIDS which was first diagnosed in 1981. The Ebola virus emerged again in 1989, threatening laboratory workers and custodians at a monkey house in Reston, Virginia, which imported monkeys for research. No one was infected. A vaccine is now said to be in the last stages of development.

One of the most active aid donors in Zaire was the People's Republic of China. We discussed development assistance with the Chinese quite frequently, and noticed that they usually chose worthwhile, low-profile projects and made them succeed. Chinese technicians kept to themselves in the countryside, living together in cramped, hot quarters and socializing only with each other. There seemed to be little, if any, outreach on their part to the local population, except to provide technical training. There was a noticeable coolness between the Chinese and Soviets in Zaire in the mid-1980s, particularly in an environment in which Mobutu favored the former and shunned the latter.

Our relationship with the Chinese was cordial. Their ambassador lived two houses down the avenue from me alongside the river, and we called on each other from time to time. I thought it worthwhile to explain to him what we were doing in Zaire, and he reciprocated. Mobutu genuinely liked the Chinese. Some years before I arrived, on returning from a visit to China, he had Zairean men dress in Mao jackets, a compulsory and confining uniform that kept them hot and irritated. The Chinese built him an enormous People's Palace in Kinshasa, where he was able to hold lavish and wasteful social affairs.

At several occasions I found myself seated next to the Chinese ambassador's vivacious wife, who spoke neither German, French nor English. We discovered in a process of elimination that she knew a little Spanish, as did I. We spent our evenings together exploring wide-ranging topics in broken Spanish, our hands filling in the words we did not know. She once told me with great animation that a nine-foot boa had slithered into her garden and swallowed the cat. These were long evenings.

I rarely saw the Soviet ambassador, who spoke quite good English. He once came to our residence for lunch with other ambassadors. The Cold War, of course, grimly marched on. The USSR provided little development assistance to Zaire, and no military assistance. Mobutu barely tolerated their embassy and its ambassador. The Soviet presence was passive, although it may have had links to Cuban military forces in neighboring Angola. This Soviet ambassador was visibly unhappy with his assignment: he drank more than he should, and became known for a loose tongue

and disparaging remarks about Africans. He took a liking to me. I did not object to becoming better acquainted, ever curious to learn more about what my Soviet counterpart was doing.

Early one evening, the ambassador called me at my office and asked whether he could see me. I invited him to the residence for a drink. There we were, the two of us, drinking vodka while his driver waited outside. My Soviet colleague didn't seem to have an agenda. I listened carefully for the message I was certain he had come to deliver. None came through, although he talked for quite a while in a rambling way. I had finished reading a book by Arkady Shevchenko, the ranking Soviet diplomat at the UN who defected, and had it upstairs. I asked the ambassador, in a moment of mischief, whether he would be interested in reading it. He said, oh yes. I began to wonder whether he was leading up to a request for asylum and mentally reviewed what I would do under those circumstances. After another drink, he left with the book, and without my being able to determine why he had asked to see me. Thinking about it afterwards, I could only guess that some combination of loneliness, despair, alcoholism, and curiosity about Americans drove him to take such a dangerous step as seeing me alone. If he harbored thoughts of changing sides, he never mentioned them.

I did not give the episode further thought, beyond reporting it in intelligence channels. Several months later, however, after this Soviet ambassador had left Kinshasa, I read an arresting item in one of our periodic world-wide intelligence summaries. It cited a Soviet foreign ministry report about one of its ambassadors in an unnamed African country who had become recklessly friendly with his American counterpart, and had accepted from him a book by the defector Shevchenko. The report condemned loose and unprofessional behavior. The American ambassador was subversive. Soviet diplomats everywhere must keep their guard up. I found it amusing and a little sad. I suspect his "driver," probably KGB, turned him in, and assume my Russian colleague was punished for that bizarre and pointless evening with me in Kinshasa.

During Mobutu's visit to Washington in December 1986 I met my future wife, Mariana Moran Fleming, one of the few good things for which I credit him. I had been a single parent, with custody of my minor sons Paul and Mark, ever since Mary and I separated in 1980. They lived with me from the beginning of my assignment to Jerusalem that year until college. Cathy and Jack, ending their high school studies in Washington, spent summers with me while Mark and Paul visited their mother in Spring Valley. It was a lonely time for all of us, though friends helped us endure it. I felt the responsibilities of helping four children through their most difficult growing years; the end of our marriage surely was hardest on them. I managed the residences and official entertainment in Jerusalem and Kinshasa, and accepted the life of a diplomat without a spouse. Far from my thoughts at the end of a grinding, week-long visit to Washington by Mobutu was the prospect of meeting someone so compatible, interested in the world, lovely, and captivating as Mariana.

On a cold December evening, out of a sense of duty, I accompanied Mobutu to the Georgetown home at 28th and Q Streets of his friends Harry and Norma Smith. I had met Harry, a businessman long involved in Africa, on his visits to Kinshasa. Standing by the stair rail was Mariana, looking quite lost in a sea of Zaireans in black Mao-jackets. She lived across the street, and had been invited by a scheming Norma to meet the unattached American ambassador to Zaire. I asked her right off whether she liked to travel, and she said she had done a lot of that. The next evening we had dinner by the fire at La Chaumière. We would in any case have met two nights later at a black

tie dinner dance in the home of Smith and Elizabeth Bagley, to which we had separately been invited. In encouraging her to accept, Elizabeth told Mariana she could offer two Jesuit priests and our ambassador to Zaire as single men. Mariana came anyway.

Born of a Panamanian mother in the Alfaro family and an American father of Irish descent, Mariana graduated from Smith College after majoring in art history and Spanish. She was a founding partner of a Washington antiques business specializing in 17th and 18th century English furniture. It thrived during the free-spending 1980s and then closed its doors. Mariana became a Washington real estate agent at a large firm. She was getting a divorce. Her daughter Michele, also a Smith graduate, was starting off in New York's fashion industry when I met her, working in retailing for stores like Ann Taylor and J. Crew, specializing in women's wear. Petite, bright, quick to laugh and successful, Michele became an instant New Yorker, living in Chelsea and eventually marrying David Shotts, an environmental engineer and marathon runner of some distinction. Mariana's son, Carlos, died in a drowning accident in the Philippines at the age of 24.

I invited Mariana to visit me in Zaire, after we had seen each other during several of my subsequent trips to Washington. Over lunch before returning to Kinshasa, I offered her malaria suppressant pills to take in advance of a possible visit, which she accepted and I took as a good omen. She came in time for the June 1987 festivities of "Fish Day." In the Virunga Game Preserve, on a rise overlooking an enormous, wild, and primordial plain with no trace of civilization, believed to be a site of the earliest origins of man and woman, I asked Mariana to marry me. Two bewildered, armed Zairean guards watched us at a distance. We were married in Washington on December 3, 1988 with my son Mark as an eloquent best man.

An annual festival in Kinkole, a tiny fishing village near Kinshasa, was called "Fish Day" and provided Mobutu an opportunity to make a "State of the Nation" address in front of an enormous crowd and hundreds of drummers and dancers. Mobutu used the catching and marketing of fish as allegories for life in Zaire, and dwelt on the symbolism of the great river as provider and life force. His speech, entirely in Lingala, went on for more than two hours, with some sixty ambassadors and their wives sitting in obligatory attendance under the sun in a great variety of head cover. The Japanese had knotted a handkerchief in four corners; a colleague unabashedly sported a hat from Disneyland with a Donald Duck logo. Ambassadors who had been to Kinkole before brought books to read. People slept. Not a single diplomat, including other Africans, understood Lingala. My fiancée Mariana was there, under a large straw hat.

At the end of "Fish Day," it was announced on the public address system by the chief of protocol that luncheon would be offered to diplomats and their wives. We were told where to gather, and went to the air cooled comfort of our automobiles, forming a caravan to proceed to our destination. On disembarking at a large and completely empty hall, we were in due course told by a flustered protocol official that lunch would be provided at a different place. We all climbed back into our official cars--each with its national flag--that had been carelessly parked in conflicting directions on the narrow road. After painstakingly forming a line again, we proceeded through billowing dust to another place several miles away. When we arrived at this second destination, a grand Chinese-style pavilion with gushing fountains at one of Mobutu's military camps outside Kinshasa, we were relieved to find a splendid lunch beautifully set out. It included vintage French

wines and melting cheeses, and a barbecue of local fish and beef from Belgium prepared by an Argentinian chef. Voluptuous dancers wearing not very much swayed to live Hawaiian music.

Mobutu somehow knew Mariana would be attending "Fish Day," and we were astonished to find ourselves at his small table. Mariana was on his right and I next to her. Her place card read "Madame Brandon." Fresh from Washington, she felt herself in an altogether different world. During the meal, I inadvertently caught the eye of the French ambassador at a distant table. He outranked me on the protocol ladder, and found this breach of etiquette disconcerting as did several of my other colleagues and their wives. Yet this was our life on Mobutu's merry-go-round, this time during "Fish Day" at a Chinese pavilion on a military base offering Argentine barbecue, French wine and cheeses, and Hawaiian music under a blazing African sun.

President Mobutu died of prostate cancer, in exile in Morocco on September 7, 1997

MICHAEL W. COTTER
Political Officer
Kinshasa (1984-1988)

Ambassador Michael W. Cotter was born in Wisconsin in 1943. He graduated from Georgetown University in 1965 and received a JD from the University of Michigan in 1968. Postings throughout his career have included Saigon, La Paz, Can Tho, Quito, Ankara, Kinshasa, Santiago, and an ambassadorship to Turkmenistan. Ambassador Cotter was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: So, we are in Kinshasa, which was then still Zaire. This was 1984 to 1988. Wow, that is a long time. What were you up to?

COTTER: I was one of two mid-level officers in the political section. There was a four-person political section at that point that had a counselor, two O2 officers and a junior officer. Interestingly enough, when I arrived at the beginning of September 1984, the promotion list came out, and I was promoted to O1. This caused a certain problem for my boss, who had two mid-level officers there. He had worked with the other guy for over a year, who was very concerned about losing his perks to someone new who came in. We ended up cutting a deal where I wouldn't be deputy chief of the section on paper, but that I would supervise the junior officer, which turned out to be a fair deal in the end. Anyhow, I arrived on the same airplane as the new ambassador, Brandon Grove, who is best known as the "father" of the new FSI complex. Grove turned out to be a very good ambassador. For those who know him, he looks to be right out of central casting. If you could get a line-up of people and choose the one who looked the part of ambassador, it would be Brandon Grove.

Q: Always impeccably dressed, very tall.

COTTER: Yes, tall and very well dressed. He was not an easy person to get to know, but a very effective ambassador.

Q: Let me ask a question here. Here you have a corrupt dictatorship and you have a four-man political section. I would think that the political life would be almost nil. Can you talk about that?

COTTER: Yes, there was limited political life, although what one should have been doing in Zaire was trying to find out what was going on in the interior. Unfortunately, it was practically impossible to travel in the interior, since there were no roads anymore. You could fly, but your ability to really travel around was quite limited.

Q: You say there are no roads anymore; had there been roads, and they deteriorated?

COTTER: Yes, there had been roads under the Belgians. There had been all sorts of things under the Belgians that no longer existed 20 years after independence. Much is blamed on the Mobutu government, though the fact is, as we see today, the Congo or Zaire should never have existed. It, like so many other African countries, was a creation of European geopolitical interests. Even by the mid-1980s, it was recognized that the country was an anomaly. There was a question that nobody asked because it wasn't politically correct to ask it. That was whether Africa's borders, at least in the case of Zaire, had any long-term viability? Mobutu, to his credit, which very few people give him today, managed to turn that place into a country, more or less. By the time I was there, at least, I think most people identified themselves as citizens of Zaire and recognized what that meant. He did this through a number of means, but the primary one was cooptation of every kind of political opposition he could find. You didn't murder political opponents; you bought them off. Mobutu bought people off repeatedly. There was a revolving door, where people would come into government jobs, presumably make some money, and then at some point, he would find them guilty of corruption, which, of course, was true of everybody in the government. Then he would fire them. They would head off, perhaps into exile, or into internal exile or simply lose their job. Five years later, you would find them back again. Interestingly enough, the only person he wasn't able to buy off a second time was Etiermie Tshisekedi, who was the main opposition figure during the time I was there, and is still a main opposition figure. He was recently sent into internal exile again by the current government in the Congo, as had been done to him when I was there. But every other figure in Zaire had been bought off several times. One of the things about Mobutu that gets misunderstood, I think, is that our estimates of his wealth are very exaggerated. I think in the four years I was there, media estimates of his wealth went from \$3 billion to \$5 billion to \$11 billion. If you ever tried to look into these estimates, it would be a newspaper quoting some other newspaper or quoting some Zairian opposition group. The fact is nobody really knew. But, again, like other places I have been, the problem was that the distinction between the president and the treasury was a very fine line. When you read that Mobutu has \$3 billion, I think it is accurate that Mobutu, in one way or another, had appropriated or used some of those monies. But whether it was his personally, or whether it belonged to the government, I think is a moot point. People would talk about his palace in Paris. I remember Brandon Grove went there on his farewell call. It was a very nice house on Avenue Foch. It could have been very nice, but it was not kept up very well inside, and it had ratty old furniture. It was exactly what you would expect Mobutu to have in Europe. We are not talking about a palace. I have never heard, and I'm sure this wouldn't be the case, that when Mobutu died, his family claimed that house, or the house in Switzerland, or any of the others, because I don't think Mobutu ever saw these as being personal possessions of his. He was Zaire, and these things were perks that went with the office of the president. When he came to the States,

he would charter a Concord aircraft. We would talk to the government people about this and tell them that it really looked bad. Here was Zaire, a poor country, and the president flies on a chartered Concord with, of course, an Air Zaire DC-10 following with the rest of the entourage. Then, they came back overloaded with all the stuff they bought. Zairian officials' answer to this was interesting and it showed the gulf of thinking between us. Our view was that this looked bad. Their view was that he was the president of the country, and they were not going to have him going to the U.S. looking like a poor relative. He was going to go looking like a head of state. They didn't see anything wrong with this. Again, these are things that cost money. People would say that this was paid for out of Mobutu's money. But, of course, it was not out of Mobutu's money but the government's money. The other thing is that a lot of the wealth that went through his hands ended up as part of the cooptation process. In Zaire, you have an incredible network of family and clan relationships, and people in a position of power and people in the capital had very clear responsibilities to take care of and provide for a whole series of clients both related to them and not related to them. This costs money, and it costs money for the president. It costs money for everyone on the way down. I would not go so far as to say that corruption in Zaire is a trickle-down economic process, but in fact all of the people in government had responsibilities that went far beyond whatever nominal salary they received. You would find colleagues who would have eight or ten kids in their home, of whom two or three were theirs. All the rest were nephews and nieces from the interior, wherever the family came from, who had come to Kinshasa for their education. This head of family was responsible for care, feeding, paying books, and all the other education expenses because nobody out in the village at home could afford that. There was no minister who made enough money to do this kind of thing. A lot of the corruption that went on worked its way out in this sort of way. Mobutu has always been pilloried for this system. Yet we never heard the same criticism of Houphouet-Boigny (former president of the Ivory Coast), in spite of the fact that he built the largest cathedral outside of Rome, and turned his whole village into a new capital and a great city. But, we heard a lot of criticism about Mobutu, who did almost the same thing. I think this was probably because Mobutu was more our client, and Houphouet was a French client. I ran into the same dichotomy when I was in Central Asia, and another example is that we never heard criticism of the King of Morocco. My guess is the distinction between the state monies in Morocco and the king's private purse doesn't exist. If you went to a Moroccan and said, "The king has billions of dollars." They would say, "Whatever the king wants, the king has." There would be certain controls on it. To call Zaire, under Mobutu, a kleptocracy is accurate, but it isn't any more accurate there than it was in most African countries with a natural resource that could be used in this way. But, as I said, Mobutu did manage to turn Zaire into a country, coalescing disparate ethnic groups, co-opting them in one way or another, and turning it into Zaire. We wondered in the 1980s what was going to happen when Mobutu left. One of the problems with a very personalized system like his or any other authoritarian government is that it makes the identification, training, and preparation of a successor virtually impossible. Once the "big man" nominates a successor, in many ways he becomes a lame duck. There are no "big men" in Africa, or anywhere else in the world, who are willing to let that happen. It is probably exacerbated by the way Mobutu left. But I think we are seeing today what a lot of us would have predicted in the 1980s, or even earlier, and that is that without some kind of a strong government, the viability of Zaire or Congo as a country is really in question. I would venture to guess that 10 years from now it won't be a country. The other thing about this that was clear to us in the 1980s was that Zaire, because of its size and because of its geographic location, was critical to this kind of geopolitical stability in all of Africa. It really is a key. It has borders with, I think, 11 or 12 countries.

Q: I come up with 10 countries, but I may have missed some.

COTTER: It is composed of various tribes and ethnic groups, who tend to be more related with people across the border than with Kinshasa itself, or with the center part of the country. Once that system breaks down, it leads to or causes or exacerbates the geopolitical, ethnic tensions that exist in the other countries. This is exactly what we are seeing. The civil war in Angola is part of this. Certainly what is happening in the Great Lake states in Rwanda, Burundi, and the issue between Tutsis and Hutus, if not caused by the breakdown of Zaire, is certainly something where the breakdown of order in Zaire allows it to develop as it is. The situation in Sudan is affected by Congo because the southern Sudanese who are Christians have long gotten assistance from there. The issue in the Congo, across the Zaire river, where there is still chaos, in Brazzaville...

Q: Chaotic as hell right now.

COTTER: That's right. So, the breakdown in Zaire is coincident with or causing a breakdown all through Africa. This was fairly obvious to us. Observers now tend to put things in a Cold War context, particularly during the 1980s. They tend to say "Our policy toward country X was driven by the Cold War." My experience during the Cold War was that it was sometimes true, although almost always our policies in countries were more sophisticated than that. They took into account, and were based on, regional interest. What did often happen is that those interests were couched in Cold War terms in the bureaucratic fight for resources because resources were often dependent on being able to justify them in terms of Cold War.

Q: So, we are really talking about dealing with Congress, in a way.

COTTER: That's right, and even within the Administration.

Q: And also dealing with an Administration too.

COTTER: That's right, but you were always competing for limited funds. People who study our policies during the Cold War era have to do so very carefully because if you look at the media or policy papers and see things couched in Cold War terms, keep in mind that there may very well be and probably are other political interests at work, but in the competition for resources, the Cold War tended to be very important. Now, for instance, we see a number of other buzz words, democracy, etc. We are pressing democracy around the world, whether it exists or not. Clearly, when embassies or the State Department develops its request for assistance monies for countries, they are always going to couch it in terms of aiding that country toward democracy or toward economic stability. Well, in those days, we did it in terms of the Cold War. But, a lot of our policy was based upon the fact that a strong, unified Zaire was critical to the geopolitical stability of Africa.

Q: Was there any question at the time, in the political section, with others at the embassy, looking at this and saying, "Look, this thing isn't going to hold together, do we really have to do this, and what will top this?"

COTTER: People worried about it, but there weren't any signs of Mobutu going anywhere. Again, it really wasn't very clear what would come. Certainly, Washington, and even more so businessmen, would ask us, "Well, what happens after Mobutu?" My answer was an answer that was similar to one that I've used in other countries where I've served. I think in hindsight it was probably wrong in the case of Zaire, but my analysis was that the senior people in the Zairian Government had more to lose from falling out amongst themselves than they did from staying unified and figuring out how they could keep the same system that Mobutu had going. The problem with that analysis is that since anybody with any talent was forced to keep his or her light under a bushel, it is very hard to identify who would emerge in such a situation as a leader. There were some other fairly senior Zaire leaders who had quite a bit of credibility and who could have emerged. Unfortunately, Mobutu didn't die suddenly. These scenarios always work better when the head of state dies suddenly and the other people in power are faced with the situation of what do they do now, as opposed to a lingering illness, such as Mobutu had, with declining support from outside patrons. In that case, the whole situation deteriorates slowly, and the next thing you know is there is a rebellion in the far eastern part of the country headed by somebody that nobody in the West knows at all. Anyway, the embassy worried about this, but, again, our ability to do anything about it was greatly overestimated by people. People thought, that somehow we could tell Mobutu to leave and he would leave. We and the French told him to leave, and he told us to get lost. We could look at and try and groom people who might be potential successors, but that was sort of a risky business in Zaire. If somebody got too identified with the United States, he was likely to be out of a job.

Q: You were setting somebody up.

COTTER: Happily in that system, they would come back again, so you would fall back on government people whom we had been working with 15 years before, who had ended up off somewhere and who were now back.

Q: I think it was Sekou Toure who had people literally rotting in jail.

COTTER: Mobutu didn't do that. I'm sure there were some people who rotted in jail but not the senior people. If they fell out with him, the worst thing that they used to do, generally, was send people to internal exile -- "rusticated," it was called. That is sending them back to a village. This is pretty tough if you are a French educated person who is used to living the good life. There were some people in jail. Tshisekedi ended up in jail I remember back in 1987, I think, or early spring of 1988. The chargé d'affaires and I went and visited Tshisekedi. Etienne is what his first name is now. Etienne, then he was Tshisekedi wa Mulumba because, of course, everyone had taken a Zairian name. That is another interesting point. Mobutu, in one of his Zairian organization things in the early 1970s, had done a couple of terrible things, one of which was to kick out a lot of the small traders, lots of Greeks, Indians, and some Lebanese, who kept the country together. They would go through the country selling bicycle inner tubes, pins and needles, and stuff like this. Mobutu expropriated them and handed their business over to Zairians, who, in general, had no sense of how this was done and really didn't have any interest in slogging through the hinterland. Their idea was that they would make a lot of money and live in Kinshasa. What often happened in these businesses is that the new owners would milk them dry. They would build a house and buy a Mercedes, move to Kinshasa, and the business would deteriorate. Even by the mid -1980s, when I

was there, a lot of the villages way upcountry simply didn't get commodities that they used to get. Going back, the Belgians had developed the Congo quite well. They had developed it, by all reports, with fairly brutal techniques, but there was a road system; there was a river system; there were towns. By the 1980s, when you were there, Kinshasa had deteriorated. There were parks and monuments that were simply falling into ruin. When you went into the interior towns, you would see brick buildings, brick homes, shops, which were simply abandoned. Roads didn't function because they were never repaired. The Belgians had a very firm system of requiring each village to maintain its section of road. They would enforce that, I suppose, by taking out and whipping village leaders who didn't do it. But, the upshot is that the roads got fixed, not that any of the village leaders necessarily saw a connection between their fixing that part of the road and the broader economic life of the country. The boats on the Congo, the Zaire River, the major traffic artery, had deteriorated. The Zairian government hadn't bought a new boat since 1970. There was simply no money put into these things. One of the big impacts of corruption is that money went into cooptation and various things that could have gone into infrastructure development, and didn't at all. When I arrived in 1984, one of the things of great interest to us, just emerging interest, was AIDS.

Q: What is this?

COTTER: Auto immune deficiency syndrome, HIV. I'm not sure, before I went in 1984, that I had ever heard of AIDS. It is possible I had. But Zaire, of course, is one of the cradles of the disease. There are a lot of reports about how it got spread. It turns out that during the Second World War, apparently there were Haitians who served in their armed forces or our armed forces, but in any event were working after the Second World War in Africa, in Zaire, and other places. Some people say that Haitians contracted HIV there and brought it back to Haiti. Then it worked its way north. In any event, research was being done on it by the time I arrived in 1984. The CDC, the Center for Disease Control, in Atlanta had a center in Zaire doing very good research on AIDS. That office was headed by Jonathan Mann, who a couple years later left CDC and was the first head of the World Health Organization's AIDS program. He was very active in AIDS up until earlier this year when he died in a plane crash. Anyhow, Brandon Grove, to his great credit, in the fall of 1984 organized the first of several town meetings in the embassy to talk about this. Of course, people had lots of questions about how AIDS would impact them. People who had children had the question of what they should do about their nannies. They were wondering whether they could leave their children with a nanny, or was their child going to catch AIDS. The CDC people, from their research, already were able to say quite confidently, "As long as the child didn't have an open sore, and the nanny didn't have an open sore, they were probably fairly safe, that the disease was transmitted by an exchange of bodily fluids. One of the other questions at that point that was very high in people's minds was whether it was transmittable by mosquitoes, because nobody knew in those days whether that was possible. But the CDC people were already concluding that it wasn't possible because they were tracking family groups in Zaire who lived in areas that were very mosquito-ridden. This was a major concern as well with the Peace Corps because, of course, we had lots of Peace Corps volunteers in Zaire, and interacting with locals was high on their priority list. During the time I was there, we had no Peace Corps volunteers (and I have not heard of any since) who contracted AIDS in Zaire.

Q: AIDS was significant because sex was one of the major ways that it was transmitted. With the Peace Corps, these are young people out in the hinterlands, not just anywhere, and lifestyle being what it is, I would have thought the embassy would have to have, at least if nothing else, a rather prolific condom distribution. Was this done?

COTTER: I don't remember whether we did. Condoms were available in the embassy health unit for embassy people. I assume they were available for Peace Corps volunteers. I don't think in those days, as I recall, that people were terribly confident whether or not condoms protected you. I think what they were recommending to Peace Corps volunteers, which I assume most of them did, was abstinence. Your comment about it being sexually transmitted is very true, and of course, in Africa then, and I think still today, AIDS is largely a heterosexual disease. People in the States worry about it very much being a disease of homosexuals and drug users, but that is not the case in Africa, where it was a heterosexual disease. In a number of countries, the social mores contributed greatly to the problem. Men who had reached a certain economic status would have mistresses, perhaps serial mistresses. The [nickname] for AIDS in French is "slim." They would call it "slims." One of the groups that CDC was studying that, of course, was heavily infected were prostitutes. Whereas in the States people who have AIDS die of sarcoma or pneumonia, in a place like Zaire most people died with AIDS from diarrhea or dysentery. Their immune system would not work, and they would have diarrhea and die. Well, one of the other impacts this kind of thing had was that people lost weight. At the time I was there, Zairian men preferred to have slim European style mistresses, as opposed to heavier, traditional African women. As a result, what you had was men being attracted to and taking as mistresses women who met their standards of beauty, probably because they were infected with AIDS. By the time I left Zaire in 1988, the disease was already devastating the country. You would have on almost a daily basis reports appearing in the newspaper of somebody having died of a "long and difficult" disease. You knew what that was. In the recent statistics that I have, it hasn't gotten any worse. I don't know why this is. Even when I was there, there was much talk about the Zambian Army being 30 to 40% infected. There was lots of concern about Uganda, where a civil war was raging involving lots of very young soldiers. This kind of thing would move the disease through a population very quickly. One of the characteristics in Zaire was that it was almost exclusively an urban disease, largely in Kinshasa, and to some extent down in Lubumbashi. But, again, because mores were different out in rural areas, you didn't have the freer sexual conduct that contributed to the problem.

Q: Also, too, you were saying that roads had collapsed, because I understand in other parts of Africa a major sector was truckers. Well, if you don't have roads, the truckers aren't going through.

COTTER: Actually, that is not only in Africa, that is also the case in the former Soviet Union as well. Yes, that is true. Again, it differs a lot from country to country. In a place as big and as difficult as Zaire, it stayed largely an urban phenomenon.

Going back to the political section, I would like to mention one person in that section. We had one of the extraordinary local employees, Foreign Service National (FSN) employees, Papa Botumbe. I don't even know Papa's first name. I'm sure I have seen it written, but he was known as Papa Botumbe. When he finally retired from the U.S. Government a few years after I was there, he had worked for the government for 50 years. He had started out working with USIA in the 1940s. He

had then been elected a senator at one point. Then, later he lost his senate position and had gone back to work for us. He had been the political section's FSN for years when I arrived. He was critical to us because unless we were able to staff the embassy completely with Africans, not African-Americans, but Africans, it was difficult to really understand the country. I mean, a foreigner can learn a lot about the culture, but to meet contacts or contacts who would want to meet with you, particularly in a controlled environment like Zaire was, is very difficult. So, we depended a lot on Papa Botumbe, who was widely well known as the way to get your story to the American Embassy. I'm sure he was watched by the Zairian Government, but he managed to do this quite successfully. His office was in a trailer that had been converted into an office out in the back lot of the embassy, not in the building itself. Visitors could come and visit. He was critical to us in keeping us in touch with various dissidents. I think he did a very honest job of transmitting their views to us. It is the only place I have been where in a political section we had a daily staff meeting in the morning with Papa Botumbe. He would go over what he had picked up during the evening, go over the newspapers. He was really a great asset to us. He is still alive and still there. He did finally retire. Toward the end of my term, it was clear he was reaching the mandatory retirement age, and we were trying to convince him to take on an assistant who could be groomed to replace him. With somebody like Papa, that is very difficult because there is nobody who is going to replace him. That had not been resolved by the time I left.

We did have Cold War interests in Zaire. One of them was an air base, Kamina, located in the south of Katanga. It seemed to be fairly common knowledge that we were supporting Jonas Savimbi in those days, and a lot of the support was being run by our intelligence community through Kamina Air Base. It was actually an interesting air base because it had been built to NATO standards. It was the only air base south of either Dakar or... What's the name of the air field by Monrovia, by Liberia? Roberts Field, something like that.

Q: I think it is Roberts Field.

COTTER: Roberts Field may have also been a NATO standard air base, but Kamina Air Base certainly was. Kamina had been built by the Belgians in the 1950s to NATO standards and could actually take any of our large aircraft. Going back to my comments about how we justified things in Cold War terms, we used to talk about support for Kamina because it was the only air base that could support an evacuation from or an intervention in South Africa, if and when South Africa disintegrated. Therefore, the argument went, we needed to provide assistance to the Zairian military and to the Zairian Government in order to retain our access to Kamina. Well, Kamina was also used to support the war in Angola.

Q: I would have thought that given the state of the Zairian Government and all, that to maintain an air base you would almost have to do it yourself.

COTTER: Yes, well actually, all we really worried about were the runways. We talked at various times about getting enough assistance to rebuild them. For instance, there was no lighting on the runway because long since the wires and lights had all been stolen. There was nothing in any of the buildings. In Zaire, things disappeared. You would go to the university, and there wasn't a working toilet in the place. Most toilets that were there didn't function. A lot of them had simply been stolen. Kamina was like that. We did get some money to improve the base. The way we did that is

something we have used with success in other places. The U.S. Air Force has a rapid reaction engineering force. The one from the European Command was called the Red Horse Squadron. I think each of the regional commands has a similar unit. But, what we did was to bring the Red Horse Squadron down to Kamina on a deployment exercise. It was good for them. It allowed them to deploy to a place they hadn't been. They came down for a couple weeks, lived in tents. They are a construction engineering battalion. They redo the runways and the taxi-ways, and off they fly. It really is very much a win-win situation. An added benefit is that it doesn't come out of foreign assistance funds, it comes out of their exercise fund. Kamina was the one Cold War thing that was fairly critical.

One other comment about these issues is how the Cold War often got translated in the way we would do policy documents. An example is a word that is, still today, much misused. That is the word "strategic." We would justify our programs in terms of the country's strategic importance. We would talk about Kamina Air Base and Zaire being "strategic." Even in those days, it really bothered me. It isn't anything but a platform pointing to the heart of the bottom end of Africa. Frankly, South Africa may have some strategic interest to us, but I find it difficult to perceive what it is. Much less Zaire, for that matter, if you looked at "strategic" purely in Cold War terms, which is what in theory you were talking about. Yet, we used the word because if you could get the Washington community to accept a strategic argument, our likelihood of getting resources was much greater. This still goes on today in Central Asia. Our people talk about the strategic importance of Central Asia, and, unfortunately, some of the Central Asians would listen to us and take it seriously. In the same way, we would talk about the strategic importance of Kamina Air Base and of Zaire. The political counselor when I arrived was Jack McDonald, who left in the spring of 1986, thus opening the political counselor position. At that point, Joanne and I would have been nearing the end of our two year tour. I bid on the political consular job. In the absence of a plethora of senior bidders, as an O-1 I got the job. It entailed, on my part, a commitment to a further two year extension. So we were there for four years. What began as a training tour for my wife, going for her first overseas post, and me going to a position that, by the time I arrived, was below my grade and not very stimulating, turned out actually to be much better for me than for her because I ended up with a stint as political counselor in one of the large embassies in Africa, while she worked as assistant cultural affairs officer for four years. That is the reason we were there that long. From 1986 until the summer of 1988, I was political counselor.

Q: What would you as a political officer do? You had your local Papa Botumbe giving you ideas of what was happening and all. Then, you say, you kind of all fan out and do something, but how did you work in this environment?

COTTER: Well, there are the traditional functions of a political section, which are to cover internal political activities, which includes a whole multitude of sins: human rights, social affairs, refugees. There are external affairs, which tend to be either our bilateral relationship or Zaire's relations with other countries. There are the political-military issues: military assistance, military relations issues. There are labor issues. Zaire did have labor unions. They weren't truly independent, but nonetheless, AFL-CIO and Belgian trade unions had a lot of interest in them. Of course, in the Cold War at that point, labor was still perceived as being a major battle ground between the international Communist-controlled unions and the Western international federations. In Zaire, we worked on a lot of those subjects. Human rights was a major interest. The status of dissidents was

a major interest. We spent a lot of time maintaining a data base of dissidents. When I said Mobutu didn't jail people, I didn't mean he didn't jail anybody. I'm talking about the senior people. We maintained a card file of dissidents who were either in jail or in exile or thought to be dead. We had a very good relationship with the Belgian embassy on this because the Belgians still had much more information and access to information as one might expect in Zaire, than we did. But, we had a very useful interchange on that and on other internal matters with the Belgians. So, we spent a lot of time tracking dissidents, tracking real and imagined human rights problems. Refugees were not a major problem in Zaire, although there were refugees from fighting in Angola and refugees from Sudan, both groups of which we tracked.

On the external side, it was really difficult to do much very useful. We could track, in general, what we knew of Zaire's relations with other countries, but in a place like Zaire, all decisions were made by Mobutu. So, even at the level of the foreign minister, if you could get to see him, you weren't going to get a decision. If you really needed to get a decision made or something done, the ambassador had to go see Mobutu. Since things didn't function very well in the capital, telephones didn't work, for instance. These were the days before cell phones, so you didn't have a cell phone. Most Zairian officials had several jobs. Again, corruption works a lot better if you happen to be someone in a position where you can benefit from it. For example, the policeman on the street, the customs agent, anybody in an office where someone has to come in and ask for a government service. But, in the foreign ministry, except perhaps for people who issue passports, and that probably wasn't the foreign ministry (it was probably the interior ministry), they weren't in those kinds of positions. So, people who weren't in a position where they could make extra money on the job tended to have several jobs. They would never be in their offices. There is simply no control over this in a place like Zaire. People nominally are on the payroll, but aren't there. So, you would find if you were going to make a demarche in the foreign ministry, you couldn't telephone ahead. Generally, what we would do would be to collect a number of issues that we had to do with three or four or five different people and go over to the ministry and walk the halls and see who was around. Literally, you would have to walk from office to office and find that most people weren't there, but if you were lucky, you would catch one or two. You would do your demarche, or get your answer, and go back to the embassy. Kinshasa is not that big a city. But an officer could spend a whole morning doing this, possibly getting one demarche out of it. We also spent a lot of time completing the plethora of U.S. Government required reports. I think our own internal reporting requirements take up an enormous amount of our time. By the time I became political counselor, we lost the fourth position in the section, and had it replaced by a rotational junior officer. A junior officer would be assigned in Zaire for a two year tour. One year was spent in the economic section and one year spent in the political section. This is an excellent job for a junior officer, and we had some really great officers come through. But from a manager's perspective, what it meant was training every year because every year you got a new officer into that position. That officer only experienced what functions he or she had one time, and then you had a new officer. So, if they were assigned to prepare the annual human rights report, you had to teach them how to do it, but after one report, they moved on and you had to train another. So I spent quite a bit of time training and working with junior officers, which is good, but it takes a significant amount of time. We had quite a bit of work tracking some of the military issues, particularly the military assistance program. Zaire also got lots of visitors, congressional visitors who were often critical of the government and other people who came through to hold Mobutu's hand occasionally. Ambassador Vernon Walters, who at that point was ambassador to the United Nations, got sent out on a regular

basis by Ronald Reagan to hold the hands of people like the King of Morocco and Mobutu. Supporting those kinds of visits took up quite a bit of time as well.

Q: There is always the problem of reporting back to Washington, you know, the phones don't work, corruption is everywhere. The more you do that, the more people in Washington tend to disregard your country, or else stuff leaks. So, you are not getting anything done because of these reports. Did you find that you had to sort of sit on your reporting skills to overstress the corruption problems, and all that?

COTTER: I think the problem was actually the opposite because what press there was about Zaire tended to emphasize either corruption or how horrible the human rights situation was. A lot of the reporting, to the extent we did it (and we had to be very careful doing it), was trying to put things into perspective, which nobody really wanted to hear. We had to be very careful in doing that, not to be seen as an apologist for the regime. So there is a very thin line, where you try in a place like Zaire to keep some balance in what is known in official Washington at least, if not the world, about the country, without them saying "Here is Embassy Kinshasa once again defending Mobutu." It can be done, but is very difficult. It requires gaining a reputation for honesty in your reporting, for being willing to criticize the government on occasions when it is deserved, and it is only after, really, you have built up that credibility that you can report objectively on some of the other things. The fact of the matter is the press reporting on Zaire and most other countries is not very objective. I don't think we worried a lot about reporting enough on human rights issues or on corruption, as we did trying to put them into perspective.

Q: Did we have a consulate in Lubumbashi?

COTTER: Yes we did.

Q: Was that it or was there one in Kisangani?

COTTER: No, that was the only one. There had been one up in Kisangani, but that had been closed quite a few years earlier. Lubumbashi was the only other post we had.

Q: At one time, that was Shaba. It was a whole different world. It had Belgian interest, copper interest was very strong. We have gone through a great deal of turmoil trying to keep that area within the Zaire framework. How was it when you were there?

COTTER: One of the things the Zairian government had done, which actually caused them lots of difficulties later on, was to build a dam on the lower Zaire River, between Kinshasa and Matadi, called the Inga Dam, which was an enormous hydroelectric project. It had been done well before I got there. They ran power lines from there all the way down to Shaba to power the copper industry. The geopolitical interest on Mobutu's part in doing this was to tie Shaba to the center for its electricity. But it was an enormously costly project. I think, at that time, it was the longest direct current electrical transmission line in the world. It used direct current not alternating current, which required boosting stations at various points along them. I think Westinghouse built it. That project had cost several billion dollars. These were U.S. Export-Import Bank and other loans that when I was there in the '80s were still hanging over Zaire and causing lots of problems in

repayments. But the Inga project did tie Shaba more closely to the center. This has always been a major concern of the government in Kinshasa going way back to the Katanga (the earlier name for the Shaba region) rebellion early on.

But geographically, Shaba is different. Shaba and Lubumbashi are on the southern African steppes, as opposed to the central African savannah and forest area that Kinshasa was on the western edge of. Shaba is much closer to Zambia. People who were assigned in Lubumbashi usually had their household effects shipped in through Lusaka. I know a number of the people in Lubumbashi who bought their cars in South Africa and drove them up, something we couldn't do in Kinshasa. So, it was a different world and it was always a problem for the government in keeping Shaba functioning and loyal. Again, the copper industry, even by the time I was there, was having a very difficult time. Happily for the Zairians, their copper mines were low-cost surface mines. This was strip mining, largely. The costs were quite low, but already the infrastructure was deteriorating in a significant way. The mines had all been mostly expropriated, but they still had investments from and strained relationships with Belgian entities. The Zairians, while they had taken things over, continued all the time I was there to have this strange love/hate relationship with Belgium, where they professed to dislike the former colonial master but still had all sorts of relationships with it, including the fact that many Zairians carried Belgian passports. Most of them sent their kids to Belgium to study. They had all sorts of business relationships with Belgian firms, which you thought were long since out of the country but, in fact, weren't. They were still busy running from behind the scenes a number of major operations, including a lot of the copper mines.

One of the other very interesting things to me about Zaire, which is my only experience in Africa really, in that kind of a former colonial atmosphere, was how interesting the lifestyle was. I mention this because we were talking about Belgians. One could in the 1980s maintain quite a decent lifestyle in Zaire with local help. A lot of the Belgians who remained still had a very colonial mentality. Most of the senior Belgians, the professionals, left and what remained was a very interesting ex-colonial group. You had lots of Belgians who were lower-level technical people or professionals, a lot of whom wouldn't have had anywhere near the same job in Belgium that they had in Zaire and who lived very well, with a slew of servants. A lot of them were very much Belgian rednecks who had incredible attitudes. We very much disliked them, and socialized very little with them. You would go to a dinner at one of these Belgian homes, and the whole dinner conversation was how lazy the Zairians were, and how they didn't work, and how dumb they were. All the time, you are being served dinner by Zairians. I kept thinking, "Why is it that I'm not getting ground glass or splintered bamboo in my food?" To me, this idea of talking about servants like they aren't there, was very strange. The whole conversation would be about how bad things were in Zaire. Another interesting holdover you found from colonial days was this mentality was not only in the Belgians, the Zairians still shared it. In the colonial days Africans were not allowed in those neighborhoods unless they had a special pass that indicated that they worked for a European or they had business there. By 1984, 1988, this was very much still the same. If you gave your household help anything -- clothing, an appliance, or a gift -- they would insist that you give them a piece of paper with the embassy stamp, saying that you had given it to them. Otherwise, they were probably going to get stopped by a policeman and have it taken from them. Indeed, when we first got there, the servant we had in the house came to us and said he wanted a letter so that he could come and go to our house and neighborhood freely. We said, "This is silly, why do you need this?" He said, "The police will stop me." We responded, "This isn't colonial days, you

are a Zairian, this is Zaire, you can go anywhere you want." Of course, he gave us this look that you usually do to fools and children that says, "Okay, I understand all of that, but I still need the piece of paper with the stamp." In fact, the police and others would hassle Africans who had no business in European neighborhoods. This was in the mid-1980s, 25 years after independence.

Q: Was there a security problem?

COTTER: Not a bad one. I have been very lucky in assignments because I have been to places that have been difficult places to live, but I have been fortunate enough to serve in them during fairly good periods. If you talk to people who served in Zaire, they have a range of experiences because there were times when the situation was very difficult there, and there are times when it was not bad. All of the time I was there Zaire had IMF (International Monetary Fund) programs. That meant that hard currency was available, which meant that goods were available to buy in stores. It also meant that there was work and people were being paid. There was a security problem but it wasn't a critical one. Almost all of the thefts from homes, once you looked into them, were inside jobs. It was someone related to a maid. There were no cases when I was there of people breaking in with weapons. In Nairobi, at that time, people had safe havens in their homes. The bedrooms would have steel doors which you would bolt when you went to bed. People would break into the home armed and kill anyone that they could find. That was not the case in Zaire. While you certainly had the potential for a break-in if you lived in a house, it wasn't that great. Most people had guards. I think the embassy hired all those guards, although I don't recall. The first two years we were there we lived in an apartment building that was all occupied by AID and embassy people at which we had an embassy guard 24 hours. At our political counselor's residence, we had embassy guards 24 hours. They were not terribly effective and were unarmed. But, on the other hand, the worst I think we ever had was a couple pieces of lawn furniture stolen. Security in town was not a real problem, although when we first arrived, there were roadblocks at night in the city, unarmed troops checking documents. It was never really clear why. In many cases, people thought they were holding up drivers for money. Your diplomatic plates would get you through. What you would do when you approached one was turn your lights down, turn the interior lights of the car on, so they could see that there were Europeans in the car, and slow down. I am not aware of any embassy cars being stopped during the time.

That ended about a year after we arrived. There were other dangers. Automobile accidents were one. We were warned when we arrived that if we hit a pedestrian, we should leave the scene of the accident and drive immediately to the embassy. Hitting pedestrians was very easy. There were lots of them, many of whom had come in from the countryside and were not at all familiar with cars. They would be walking along the side of the street and, all of a sudden, decide to cross the street. The danger was that if you would hit a pedestrian and stopped, you would be mobbed by people who might drag you out of your car and beat you to death. Again, I wasn't aware of any cases where that happened, but on the other hand, we were warned not to let it happen. It also goes against all of our training as drivers. We learn to stop after an accident, not drive off. This was a matter of some concern. There were lots of accidents like this while we were there.

The embassy employed a local guard force. We had regular guards who we hired, who were managed, in those days, by the commissary association. But we also had on full time duty a platoon of Zairian police who were fed, uniformed, and equipped by us. This was very cushy duty

for a Zairian policeman because he got a good meal at the embassy, got a food supplement, and got a decent uniform. We always had a group of this force on call. If you had a problem up at your house or anywhere else, rather than calling simply the local police number and hoping you get a police response, you would call an embassy security officer. They would send out a vehicle with a squad of our own policemen. This was a necessity because you couldn't get that kind of security from the local forces. We used primarily, for our communication, a radio net. Again, since the phones didn't work, they didn't work very well for Americans either. So almost all of our communication was done over the radio net, which meant that if you were going over to somebody's house for dinner, or you wanted to talk to someone over the weekend, you had long conversations on the radio. The big problem with that, of course, is that you also had people who spent their time listening to the radio. None of your business is your own if you choose to use the radio in that way. We all used radios for communication because there simply wasn't any other reliable way of house-to-house communication. People lived in a couple of areas in Kinshasa. One was Gombe, along the river where the ambassador's residence is, which is where our first apartment building, was located also, along with a number of other apartments and single-family homes. There was the Binza area, which was up on a hill, out on the edge of town, which had a number of homes and also a compound that had belonged to Gulf Oil. At one point, years earlier, Gulf had left and the embassy had inherited that compound, which had single-family, U.S. style homes in a walled compound. Most of the families with children preferred to live there because the kids could come home from school and play in that rather large compound, quite securely. You were going to ask me about...

Q: Our mission in Zaire had a reputation of being a CIA post. I was in Athens during the time of the colonels, 1970 to 1974, which had that reputation, and somewhat deserved, because of the undue influence the CIA had, both within the Greek Government and really on the ambassador. Could you talk about the CIA as a political officer in our embassy during this 1984 to 1988 period?

COTTER: Now that I am retired, I don't have to worry so much about keeping good relations with them. This history in Zaire goes back a long time, of course, because the CIA was popularly believed to have been present at the creation, and in fact was. New Zaire hands soon meet Larry Devlin, who is sort of mythical in the system. He was the station chief in 1964 or 1965, when Mobutu came to power. He has some great war stories to tell about those days. Indeed, he and the Agency certainly were present at that time. Larry has since retired, and last I heard he was working for Maurice Tempelman who, in addition to dating Jackie Kennedy at one point in her life, was very active in business in Africa.

Q: Diamonds.

COTTER: Larry, later on, worked for Tempelman, and was still around Zaire when I was there, and had been back numerous times. Anyhow, the Agency's relationship goes back a long time. Of course, it was largely the Agency that conducted the war in Angola. As I said before, I headed a four-person political section, although on paper I had a 14-person political section. I couldn't have picked some of my staff members out of a lineup. I would go to parties with other diplomats, and they would say, "You are the political counselor and John Doe works for you." I would have to say, "Oh, yes, he is a valued employee," not having any idea who John Doe was. This could be

quite difficult, but you had to deal with the realities because the fact was that the Agency had access on things that we didn't have. As far as I know, Brandon Grove and Bill Harrop, his successor, managed it quite well because it had the potential for being a problem for the ambassador as well.

Q: I might mention for the record that both Brandon Grove and Bill Harrop have been interviewed by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Program..

COTTER: It was undoubtedly somewhat difficult for them managing that relationship since the station chief had his own access to the security people, if not to Mobutu, and I think, actually, probably, to Mobutu as well, because he was courted very much by the Agency. One of the difficulties that this poses, not only in a country like Zaire, but in lots of countries, particularly where the Agency has a policy role, is that they always say that they are not a policy organization. Of course they are a policy organization. It has annoyed me over the years to have them say that they do not make policy or that they simply carry out what others decide, which is simply not true. In countries like Zaire, where things like human rights are an important US policy, generally they are not very high on the Agency's agenda. So, while the Embassy is pressing the U.S. Government view that human rights are important, the station chief over here is saying, "Don't worry about these things."

That problem is actually broader than that. It is unfair to blame the Agency. My experience over the years in countries where human rights are perceived as a problem has been that they are largely perceived as an issue in the State Department, not in the U.S. Government generally. Human rights are not perceived as a problem by senior U.S. Government officials, other than some State Department officials. The result is that we send very mixed signals. When Vernon Walters came to Zaire, or Bill Casey (Director of the Central Intelligence Agency) came to Zaire, you can bet that pressing Mobutu on human rights was nowhere on their list of talking points. The Secretary of Commerce went to Zaire. You can be sure that it wasn't on his talking points either. Frankly, what was even worse was that even if you had a very senior State Department official visiting, human rights weren't on his agenda either, because he would be out there to talk about a specific thing. The embassy would always include human rights as one of the issues in briefing papers, but they always ended up amongst those issues that somehow never quite get covered in the discussions.

It is the same when senior officials from those countries go to Washington. Human rights would always be included on the President's talking points. I think Mobutu went to Washington only once, maybe twice, while I was there. When, months later, we would get the NODIS (no distribution) report of the meeting with the President, nothing about human rights was mentioned. When we asked, the answer was, "Well, it never came up." As a result, two things happen: (1) these countries begin to perceive human rights as a State Department policy, not a U.S. Government policy. Even worse, they perceive it as an embassy agenda because the embassies are always making demarches about it, but when other visitors would come, nothing. When they would go to the United States, nothing. Not surprisingly, they would conclude after a while that the problem really wasn't with the U.S. Government, it was with a couple zealots in the embassy who were pressing human rights. In my entire career, I have never seen us manage to take that issue as seriously as those who are engaged in human rights would like to see it taken. Over my last 10 years, I simply gave up pushing it. I simply wouldn't do it unless there was some indication that we

were serious about it and balanced about it. I wasn't going to put myself in a position of pressing a policy that no one else in the U.S. Government is willing or able to give high priority. This is a real problem in Zaire because you would have the station there at the same time that we were going in to demarche the government on human rights saying, "Don't worry about this, this is just some crazies. You know how the guys in the State Department are."

Q: Another thing, just at the working level, did you find information coming from the station officers to help you with your reporting?

COTTER: No. Again, this is another problem with stations. In most countries where we have a cooperative intelligence relationship, the last thing they want to do is spoil that relationship. So, while they will be busy working on Soviet targets and third country targets, they aren't willing to, for instance, penetrate the local security service to find out the situation of dissidents, they are not willing to do that. Indeed, you got very little out of the station that would help you reporting on those things that were of interest to us. The answer simply was that that wasn't their mandate and they weren't very interested in doing that. It was tough. One anecdote I will tell. My wife never likes it to be told, although I don't know why. We have had a lot of discussions about it. But it is an indication of how Zairian security people work. At one point, when we had been there for about a year, Mobutu had released a number of dissidents. They had been either under house arrest or actually in prison, and were "rehabilitated." We made contact with them. I was the one designated in the embassy to do this. We would have them over for drinks in the evening at the house. I would religiously write up a memorandum of the meeting. Well, one day Joanne got called into the ambassador's office. Then, I got called in. What she had gotten called in for was that the ambassador had been to see Mobutu and Mobutu had said, "You have an officer who is doing stuff she shouldn't do. I want her out of the country in 48 hours, Joanne Cotter." The Ambassador couldn't believe that Joanne Cotter had been doing something she shouldn't do, but he said he would go back and look into it. He came back and asked us what was going on. What we concluded had happened was that, as I mentioned, Joanne had arrived at post three or so months before I did. As a tandem couple, when she arrived first, we were in USIS housing and the apartment was in her name. It is very clear that these dissidents were followed by security services, who learned which apartment in that building they were going to, probably from the guards. Then, obviously, they had someone in the American Embassy who was willing to tell them who was the person in that apartment. They reported all that to Mobutu, who said, "She has 48 hours to leave." When Brandon called Joanne in, he said, "Do you want Michael involved in this?" She said, "Yes, I would like him in it right now." I said, "It's not Joanne; it's me. I have been having these meetings. These guys have all been released, and I have submitted MEMCONS on all of my meetings." He said, "Send me the MEMCONS." So, I went back and got the MEMCONS (Memorandum of Conversation) and sent them up. To Brandon's credit, he went back to Mobutu and said, "This is incorrect, the person you are talking about is not engaged in this. Nobody in my embassy is engaged in contact with these people surreptitiously. It's all above board as they are free men." He actually stood up to Mobutu on it and went away. It was interesting because, clearly, they were tracking those people. They found out where they were. Where they made the mistake was, they looked at whoever in the embassy records was the resident of that apartment and mistook who it was. Let's see, what other things occurred?

Q: Missionaries?

COTTER: Missionaries, yes. Some Americans. There were lots of different missionaries, Swedes, Belgians, and all sorts of people. Actually, missionaries were very important when you traveled in the interior because that is where you would end up staying, since if you got very far in the interior, there weren't places to stay. People always preferred to stay with Catholic missionaries because you could get a drink. A lot of the Protestant missionaries were dry. The last thing you wanted when you got to the end of the road was not being able to have one of those great Zairian beers. People much preferred staying with Catholic missionaries. Some of the missionaries are very interesting because many of them were in Zaire for the second generation. Parents had been missionaries. The children grew up there, went back to school, and came back as missionaries. By the same token, this is often a problem for us when we are trying to evacuate American citizens from a country, because, generally, these people don't want to go. Their view is that they are well integrated at local communities, and the people there like them, and they are not in danger. History has shown that when situations reach a point where we have to evacuate, a lot of those relationships don't go on for very long. But, you had quite a few missionaries.

Q: You obviously weren't using them as agents, but in talking about local conditions, did they seem to understand the local dynamics or were they concentrating mainly on religion?

COTTER: Generally, they concentrated on religion. I think the Belgians probably had better luck. My guess is that a lot of the Belgian embassy sources in the interior were missionaries. A lot of the American missionaries, when you would try and press them on it, would say, "Well, we don't deal with these issues." It was very hard to get useful information. You could get sometimes things on local dynamics about how local government officials interacted with people. But, you know, one of the things about Zaire is that when you got very far into the interior, frankly, the central government's writ didn't run very far. Down in the diamond mining areas it did and in the copper areas it did, but in the vast bulk of the country, there simply wasn't any government presence, or if there was, it was people doing other things because the government wasn't paying their salaries. The writ of Kinshasa did not run very far into the interior.

One of the interesting things in Zaire is that there is a very interesting religion there, a Christian sect called Kimbanguism. It is a locally developed religion. I think the founder of it was named Kimbangu. He may actually have still been alive when we were there. It was a Christian sect that preached a very strict morality. Their headquarters was in a town 75 kilometers or so east of Kinshasa. It was quite an influential sect, as attested to by the fact that that is how far the asphalt road ran. Kimbanguists were very much sought after either for staffing the embassy or staffing homes because they had a very strict code of honesty and monogamy. They were very good people to work with. But, it was one of the very important African Christian, locally developed Christian sects.

Zaire was a fascinating place. One of the things that being there four years allowed me to do was get to know things and people much better. Two year tours, of course, as we all know, just don't work. I know lots of reasons why we have them. There are places where it is very difficult to work and live, and if we require people to be there three or four years, we won't have anybody go. But, there is an old truism in the Service: you spend your first six months settling into a post; you spend the last six months anticipating your next post. So, in essence, on a two year tour you have one year

to work. In a place with as many cultures as Zaire has and as complicated clan and family and tribal relationships as Zaire has, you really just can't get a handle on it in two years. By the end of four years, I was able to distinguish where somebody was from by his name. I knew a lot of the tribal and clan relationships, primarily from Papa Botumbe, who was a great fountain of knowledge on this. This was done by simply picking his brain over time. You could become quite an expert on this. It is much more interesting, I suppose, to a political scientist, historian or anthropologist, than to practitioners, because nobody in Washington cared about that level of detail. But it was very useful, and it certainly allowed you to do some good reporting. We did some very good reporting on tribal names of clan affiliations and relationships. I was there for two ambassadors and three DCMs. John Farragut was the DCM when I arrived and was there for one year. Then, for my middle two years, Dan Simpson was the DCM. Dan was later ambassador in the Central African Republic and then to Zaire until last summer.

Q: Is he still in the Service?

COTTER: Yes, Dan is now the vice president of the National Defense University, I think. He was replaced as DCM by Mark Baas, who later became ambassador to Ethiopia.

So, Brandon Grove was ambassador my first three years there. He was to be replaced by Bill Harrop in 1987. Well, Bill ran into confirmation problems. I can't remember specifically the reason. I think it may have had to do with Bill having been one of the first presidents of AFSA (American Foreign Service Association), and Senator Jesse Helms or somebody was down on AFSA and labor unions at that point. So, Bill's arrival was delayed. Mark Baas arrived that summer. For the fall of 1987, it was Mark Baas as chargé and me as acting DCM, and I was essentially the historical memory in the post because, again, we had had significant turnover that summer of 1987. Bill Harrop arrived finally in about January 1988 when I only had six or so months left in my tour. One of the nice things when I left Zaire was that I was actually chargé for the first time in my career. There was a time, for a couple days at the very end of the tour, when Harrop was on leave, and Baas had gone on official travel out of the country. Baas was supposed to be back before Harrop left but got caught up in travel difficulties, which is always the case in Africa, and he didn't get back in time. Harrop had to leave, so I was chargé for about three days. I sent out the first telegram over my name. All in all it was a very good tour. We were there, as I say, at a good time in that country's somewhat sad history.

Q: Being there four years, and maybe it didn't pertain when you were there, but I have often wondered about the fact that we have made a great effort to go after minorities for recruitment into the Foreign Service. Were there African-Americans who were assigned to Zaire in responsible positions? Was this a plus or a minus? How did this work, if there were, in dealing with the Zairians?

COTTER: I think it was a neutral. Of course, you really need to talk to African-American officers about their experience. But my perception of this, and some of this is from observation and some of this from talking to African-American officers, is that the Zairians weren't confused. They knew they were Americans. There was no mistaking on their part that somehow these were brothers who had come home. It is also true that most African-Americans are of mixed blood. You find some African-Americans who are very dark, but most Zairians, except for those who have European

blood, and indeed in the Zairian upper classes quite a few of them do because very many of them are married to Belgian women or married to Belgian men, as the case may be. You had a lot of mixing of races in the upper classes, but in lower classes, in the rural areas, Africans are very dark and very distinctive. None of the Zairians were confused by this. As for the African-Americans, I suppose it depends a lot on the individual, whether they felt they were going back to their roots or not. I didn't get a sense that the four or five black officers who were there when I was there had that kind of a reaction. The one interesting thing, and I don't know whether I should use a name or not, but one junior officer who came through was a very attractive black woman. She was very clearly not pure African. She is an officer who is still active in the Service. She is a very good officer, and did a lot of the human rights portfolios. A lot of her interface was with the ministry of justice. We finally had a minister of justice who was pretty good, and we were able to do some programs with him. She would be sitting, waiting to see the minister. Other people would come in and assume that she was his mistress, not being able to understand why an attractive young woman would be there, and they were always very surprised to discover that that wasn't the case. On the other hand, she also commented that her looks gave her access to government officials that she wouldn't have gotten otherwise. I suspect it meant some quick brush offs on her part to keep them from pursuing a relationship beyond that. So, I think, in her case, both her sex and her race, probably after an initial barrier, because people assumed she was something she wasn't, probably assisted her. But, otherwise, I don't think it would help much. The first time I went to Europe in the 1960s, you could pick out Americans. We dressed differently, we walked differently. That hasn't changed, frankly. There is no way, without spending years there, that an African-American could "pass" very successfully. You could possibly pass for a European-educated African of mixed race, but would unlikely pass for much more than that.

Q: You mentioned that with the new minister of justice, you were able to work out some programs. What sort of things would these be?

COTTER: Some training programs, both sending him and other people off on USIA programs in the U.S., grants, and also doing some training with the police and with the courts. To a large extent, real human rights problems in a place like Zaire are not high-profile political dissidents, but the problems an average, everyday citizen has in getting justice out of the system. Again, when the US focuses on human rights, we end up being taken in by high-profile political dissidents who are probably no better than the people they are trying to replace. But we like them because they are dissidents, when the real human rights problem is simply non-functioning government institutions and non-functioning legal systems. This was very true in Zaire. I remember we had programs of trying to build up court data bases. You would ask what prisoners there were, and the fact of the matter is, the Zairians weren't very sure what prisoners they had, because they relied on whatever paper records they had, to the extent they bothered to keep them. It was very possible in Zaire for someone to disappear in the prison system and be forgotten, simply because nobody cared, nobody had records. If a family member went to a court or went to a policeman, unless they could pay the significant amount of money it took, they couldn't get the person out. Apart from the corruption, which was a problem, a lot of this was not ill-intentioned. It was simply that people were not prepared, weren't educated, and didn't have the equipment with which to work. So we were at that point trying to help them build up a data base of their prison population. Another problem was people who would disappear in the system, after being charged for a crime, and never come to trial.

Again, it is a function of paperwork not moving. I don't think we were very successful at changing that. But, we certainly found their system responsive to our help and willing to accept it.

One of the problems is that we never follow through on these things. You would get an opening with an official saying, "Well, yes, we would like help doing this." An expert would come in and look at it and say, "You have to be kidding me, to build a data base and provide this for the Zairian court system is going to cost \$20 million." "Well, we have \$400,000." So, you buy a couple of computers and send someone out for some training and do a couple of things, but you are putting a band-aid on a gaping wound because these things always cost more than we think they are going to cost. We never have the resources to put against it to make a real difference. You could say, on the other side, there is some reason to think that we probably wouldn't make a real difference if we followed through. You would put in the \$20 million and half the computers would disappear a year later and half the people would disappear, and there would be a new group of people in, and they wouldn't know how to use them. We shouldn't fool ourselves into thinking we are going to make much of a change in any of these countries. The problem is we fool ourselves into thinking we are going to have an impact, and then we don't have the resources or the will.

Q: Probably, there is not the will on the other side, or the ability of the other side to do these things. You are really trying to change culture and all.

COTTER: I think that is right and what you find, at best, is people saying, "If the Americans can pull this off, more power to them. Am I going to invest my time in it? Not really, because I have been around Americans a long time and I know they are probably going to forget about this, or when this guy leaves and the new guy comes in it will be a different thing, or I'm not going to be here a year from now, so I won't worry about it." I think a lot of this on other people's part is a matter of managing us and we are pretty good at allowing ourselves to be managed in that way.

Q: Before leaving Zaire, could you talk about your relations and impressions of the direction that was coming, both in the Reagan Administration, and the NSC at the top, and also from the AF Bureau regarding Zaire?

COTTER: Well, it was a very important relationship. The war in Angola was a very serious war. At that point, there were two wars going on in that part of Africa. There was Mozambique and Angola. They were both, but particularly Angola because Cuban soldiers were fighting there, perceived as very important to the Cold War. This was a focal point of our battle against Communism for the minds and hearts of the African people. So Zaire took on a very high profile and got significant attention. As I say, Mobutu had at least one, and maybe two, official visits to the States, both of which caused great angst amongst human rights communities, but the Regan Administration, I think, was focused much more on the "strategic importance" of it. By the same token, the Administration was not particularly willing to press Mobutu for change. But, on the other hand, I didn't think then, and don't think now, that we get very far by doing that. We had regular visits from senior officials. Bill Casey came through while I was there, as I said.

Q: He was the head of CIA.

COTTER: Yes, at that time. Vernon Walters made a number of visits. I think, probably, the highest State Department visitor we had was Chet (Chester) Crocker, who was the assistant secretary, at that point, for African affairs. But we had a number of military visitors, the commander in chief of the European Command and a number of other senior military visitors. So, Zaire took on quite a high profile.

Let me mention one other interesting thing in Zaire that worked very well for us. That was summer interns. The intern program that State has and embassies have is a very good program. We were able to take a lot of advantage of it in Zaire because there are a lot of graduate students who speak French. When I got to Turkmenistan, it was much harder to do because there aren't that many people who speak Russian, but it worked very well in Zaire. We had some absolutely outstanding interns. The nice thing about interns was that it was easy to find projects for them because you could send them out to the interior - places that no sensible career officer was going to go to on a bet. We sent one intern off with an AID person up to far northeastern Zaire, near the Sudanese border. These trips would take a couple weeks to set up. You would fly to the nearest airport, usually on a small airplane. You would have to have arranged vehicles in advance, usually borrowing them from missionaries, and then drive. The trip I mentioned went up through part of the northeastern part of the immense Congolese rain forest. I remember that intern coming back all excited because he had gotten to ask about cannibalism amongst the pygmies. He drafted up a report on it, and I had to say, "We are not going to send this report in because, basically, you are talking to other people and asking them about cannibalism, and they are giving you the answer they think you want to hear. I'm not going to have a cable going back from this embassy about cannibalism in Zaire based on that kind of information. If we are going to do this kind of report, it would need a lot more investigation, otherwise, we are simply catering to people's worst beliefs about it." I know that intern wasn't very happy about that.

We sent one other intern off with Papa Botumbe to his home village, which was in a province north of Kinshasa, called Bandundu. I suspect, as the crow flies, 200 miles. Again, this was a trip that took two weeks because there were several rivers they had to cross. They were crossed only by ferries, but you could never be sure when the ferries were coming, so you went in your Land Cruiser with your food and water, and then maybe spent two days sitting at the ferry crossing, waiting for the ferry to come. On all of these trips to the interior, when they would come back, the Land Cruiser would be full. I remember the intern who came back on that trip: they had a live crocodile tied up, live chickens, and a Land Cruiser jam-packed full of food. The driver and the FSN who went along took advantage of this trip into the interior to load up on things that weren't readily available or only at inflated prices in Kinshasa. They would bring these things back in the vehicle.

The other trip that I didn't get to take, that is great if you can manage it decently, is the river trip up the Zaire River. About five, six years ago, the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) did a great series on this in one of their travel things, because these river boats were a microcosm floating world of their own, and it was mostly trading then. There was the central boat and several barges tied to it, some of which were for cargo and others of which had dormitory style housing on them. The boats would leave Kinshasa and go up as far as Kisangani, which is as far as the river is navigable. Rapids beyond that make it unnavigable. The problem with taking the trip up from Kinshasa is you never knew how long it was going to take. It depended on what the current was

like and how much trading there was to do and whether you got stuck in a sandbar or not. Hardly anybody ever did that because you could never say that you would be back in two or three weeks. The only sensible way to do it was to fly up to Kisangani and take the boat down river. Well, the only problem with that is, you would fly up to Kisangani and you could never be sure when it was going to leave. But it would leave eventually and you would get back. The other problem was you did have to take your water. I think most people who did the trip didn't take their food. There were a couple cabins on these ships that were the "first class" cabins, which meant you had air conditioning, which might or might not work. You had a little bit different food than the other people. From the people who have done it, it is just an absolutely amazing trip. It's one of those things so often you find in the Foreign Service, and I have learned this lesson over and over, and that is when you arrive at a post, the things that are interesting to do, you have to do them right away. Otherwise, all of a sudden you discover you are in your last three months of your tour, and you haven't done this and you haven't done that. By that time, it is too late. In the last six months of our tour, when I wanted to take this trip, there was cholera up country, and there was at least one case of the river boat having gotten down to the major town north of Kinshasa and not being allowed to come ashore because there was concern there was cholera on board. So, they left that boat sitting out in the middle of the river and didn't let it go anywhere until they were certain it was clean. I wasn't going to subject myself to that kind of thing, so we never did take the river trip, which is unfortunate, but I highly recommend the BBC's show.

ALICE A. DRESS
Finance and Development Officer
Kinshasa (1985-1988)

An Economic and Financial specialist, Ms. Dress was born in Indiana and educated at a number of colleges and universities, including George Washington, Tufts and Boston Universities. Initially working with the Department of the Treasury in Washington, DC and in Rome Italy as Treasury attaché, Ms. Dress joined the State Department Foreign Service in 1985, and served, primarily as Economic Counselor, in Kinshasa, Zaire, Dakar, Senegal, New Delhi, India and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. At the State Department in Washington, DC she held senior positions in the European and African Bureaus. Ms. Dress was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: Today is the 17th of September 2009 with Alice A. Dress. This is an oral history done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. It's 1985 and you are off to Zaire.

DRESS: Yes, I'm off to Zaire for my first Foreign Service assignment.

Q: Zaire was called Zaire in those days, is it back to the Congo now?

DRESS: It's the Democratic Republic of Congo today. When I was there Mobutu Sese Seko was president, an autocrat who instituted what he saw as an authentic African society, stripped of

European artifice. He went off to China in the early 1970s, was impressed with what he saw, and came back and changed the name of the river and the country from Congo to Zaire. He forbade the use of Christian first names and the use of French courtesy titles like Monsieur and Madame. Men were addressed as "citoyen" or citizen. Western clothing was banned and men wore the "abacost," which looked rather like the Mao jackets the Chinese wore.

Q: What was your job?

DRESS: Actually it was a very good match with what I had been doing at Treasury. I was the finance and development officer in the Embassy in Kinshasa and the deputy director in the economic section.

This was my first Foreign Service assignment but I was very well prepared substantively thanks to thorough consultations before going out to Africa. I met with Zaire experts at Treasury, State, Commerce, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and Export Import Bank who gave me the background on U.S. economic interests in Zaire. I went up to New York City to consult with Citibank, Bankers Trust, Morgan Guaranty, Conti Grain (a Belgian grain conglomerate headquartered in NYC), and Maurice Tempelman, the Belgian-American diamond trader who dated Jackie Kennedy at one time. The picture they gave me of Zaire in the mid 1980s was of a poor but resource-wealthy, badly managed country that had accumulated massive external debts in the boom years of the 1960s and early 1970s - debts that Zaire couldn't service when copper prices plunged in 1974. Banks and investors stopped doing business with Zaire and it wasn't until Mobutu agreed to resume paying Zaire's foreign debt and undertake economic austerity programs supervised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank that economic activity picked up again.

Q: Okay well let's put it in a little perspective. What was the situation in Zaire in 1985 when you got there?

DRESS: Since independence in 1960, many Americans have served in Zaire. In the 1980s Embassy Kinshasa was a big mission - in addition to the usual embassy sections, there was a large military assistance group, a large CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) presence, a large USAID (Agency for International Development) mission and the Peace Corps. As a result, there are many officers from a number of U.S. agencies who share the experience of having served in Zaire. Although we all served in Zaire, our individual experiences were very different because so much was going on and so much changed from year to year. Before I arrived, in the early 1980s conditions were very difficult. Westerners were victims of crime and the police were stopping everyone at roadblocks and extorting money, even from diplomats.

During the brief time I was there from 1985-1988, things were going well. Zaire was borrowing from the World Bank and the IMF, foreign investment was flowing in, and Zaire's external debt was being rescheduled. Most foreigners were only interested in getting a slice of Zaire's mineral wealth - copper, cobalt, and diamonds. Private businessmen -- French, Belgians, Greeks and English -- invested in the local economy and produced things to sell, such as beer, soap, bread and cement. Lebanese were traders. It was a reasonably prosperous, stable time. The Soviets and the

Chinese were also present and active; the Chinese build sports stadiums, something they did all over Africa in those days.

The economic section focused on commercial and economic relations between Zaire and the United States. As the finance and development officer, I tracked Zaire's compliance with the World Bank program and the IMF's structural adjustment program. I worked closely with the World Bank resident representative William Grau and the IMF resident representative Regis Blin. The fact that these institutions had officials stationed in Kinshasa full-time shows how intense the international community's interest was in Zaire in those days.

Q: Why was there this attention?

DRESS: If you look at a map of Africa, Zaire is right in the middle of the continent and shares borders with Angola, the Congo Brazzaville, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zambia. The United States was interested in Zaire for political and economic reasons. The Cold War was being waged in Africa and one of the reasons we had such a large CIA presence in Zaire was because Mobutu was helping us oppose the Cuban presence in Angola. It was a wealthy country, with substantial foreign debts, some of which were owed to the U.S. Government and U.S. banks. Zaire had borrowed a lot of money to build the Inga-Shaba Electrical Transmission line that ran 1,700 kilometers all the way across the country from the Inga hydroelectric dam near Kinshasa to the Kolwezi copper mining center in Shaba (Katanga) Province. A number of other countries were interested in Zaire and had diplomatic and business presences there -- the Belgians, of course, the French, the Chinese, even the Israelis. The international community and the international financial institutions were engaged in trying to help Zaire develop and help Mobutu do the right thing for the country.

Everyone was focused on Zaire's incredible mineral resources -- the diamonds, the copper, the cobalt and rare minerals. The donor community tried to channel revenue from mineral sales into government coffers while Mobutu and his cronies were busy lining their pockets. At one point the Swiss were actually managing the customs service to try to keep what we call euphemistically called "leakages" to a minimum. The IMF had people sitting in the central bank rifling through officials' desks looking for invoices to try to figure out what was going on. It was a very active, very interesting period. I met often with the international organizational representatives and other diplomats to share information about what Mobutu was up to and any statistics we could get our hands on about export earnings, debt payments, etc. I always enjoyed going to meetings at the central bank or finance ministry with my boss, Joe Saloom. I learned so much from him. He was a terrific Foreign Service officer - very bright, energetic, a good linguist and a good economist. Joe was the best possible first boss I could have had in the Foreign Service. He was the one who showed me how to be a good economic officer. He took us on factory visits so we got first-hand experience of how private companies did business. At every dinner or reception he attended he invariably picked up useful information. He was indefatigable!

I've got lots of stories about Joe but let me share just one. When you arrived in Zaire back then it was always in the middle of the night and you had to run an obstacle course just to get into the terminal. I recall my arrival vividly. I got off the plane after a long flight from Paris, carrying a very unhappy Burmese cat named Oscar, walked across the tarmac and pushed my way past

airport guards into the terminal. Everything was dilapidated and there was no signage. I couldn't figure out what to do or where to go. I was asking myself why I had given up my comfortable life in Washington and my familiar work at Treasury. I know Oscar was wondering the same thing. That's when I spotted my embassy sponsor and my new boss Joe Saloom, who had come out to greet me. I was so impressed that he came out in the middle of the night to welcome me, something he didn't have to do. That made a very great first impression of him and of the Foreign Service at its best.

Anyway, one of the advantages of being posted to a developing country is that you get to talk to ministers and deputy ministers. Joe and I would go to the Banque du Zaire (the central bank) and talk to the governor or to the finance ministry and talk to the minister about the issues of the day. It was a lot of fun. Adjusting to living and working in Zaire was difficult but the job was always just really, really fascinating.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

DRESS: I worked for two ambassadors. The first was Brandon Grove, who is right out of central casting in terms of looking ambassadorial. He was tall, imposing and patrician. His Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) was Dan Simpson, who volunteered to serve in Beirut and was replaced by Mark Bass. Ambassador William Harrop replaced Brandon Grove in 1988.

Q: I've interviewed Bill too. This was a challenging assignment. How did you find it?

DRESS: I know you've heard a lot of stories about Zaire under Mobutu. People describe it as a kleptocracy, which of course it was. Mobutu maintained power by giving everybody a turn at the trough. People would move into power, steal their share of the national wealth and then move out again. He would rotate people through and he co-opted a lot of his opposition that way. We knew he was a crook but he was useful in Angola. It was the old "he's a SOB but he's our SOB." And we tried to keep him from ruining his country. The conventional wisdom was that he was holding the country together. I didn't believe that at the time (it sounded too much like the Vietnam domino theory) but subsequent events seem to have proved me wrong. Living and working in Kinshasa was difficult primarily because of the isolation. The Belgians had created some infrastructure but after independence everything, including the road system, just started falling apart. You could drive in Kinshasa and if you were foolish enough to risk death-by-truck you could drive to Matadi, the port city, but beyond that there were no paved roads. The only way to get across country was the Zaire River or flying.

Q: Copper was the big thing at the time, wasn't it?

DRESS: Zaire had a wealth of resources in the ground, but public sector revenues depended upon what the world price was for specific commodities at the time - cobalt, copper, and diamonds.

Q: I've heard that the infrastructure for mining particularly was breaking down or wasn't being maintained very well. Was this your impression?

DRESS: The mining sector was in better shape than any other infrastructure in the country because it was the money earner. So they kept it operating. I'm not saying that it was state of the art. I'm not saying they were putting a lot of new money into it, but when I went out to Kolwezi to visit the mining and smelting operations I saw ore being mined and processed. While some of the equipment looked pretty old, other equipment -- like enormous trucks with tires as tall as this room -- looked state of the art.

Q: We are talking about 12 feet.

DRESS: Yes. Obviously trucks like that cost a lot of money.

Q: How stood the oil exploration when you were there?

DRESS: One of the U.S. oil majors, Chevron I think, flew me and Melanie Smeallie, our commercial officer, down to the port city Matadi and then out to an enormous barge, anchored offshore in an area where the company was doing exploratory drilling. It was interesting to see the operation and talk to people, but it wasn't terribly exciting because they weren't finding much oil.

Q: Looking at the map I see and counted Zaire's got ten bordering neighbors which is not always a good thing in any place and, of course, the African boundaries are all very problematic because of the tribal situation and all that. Was there sort of a back and beyond from your point of view of things happening up in the Sudanese-Central African border or something? Or didn't you really know what was going on?

DRESS: Your question is prescient, given what happened to Zaire after Mobutu's death. It wasn't Cold War communism that tore the country apart but a homegrown African affliction - tribalism/ethnic strife. In the late 1980s a major focus for the U.S. foreign policy establishment, in particular the CIA, was what Zaire's southern neighbor Angola. The U.S. relationship with Mobutu was shaped in large part by efforts to secure his cooperation in countering Cuban influence in Angola. Because of those Cold War interests, there was a large Agency presence in Embassy Kinshasa and a number of young Agency officers learned their tradecraft in Zaire.

Q: Yeah. Normally I don't talk about agency activities because of sensitivity but Zaire is a unique case where it was known as an Agency-dominated country.

DRESS: Speaking of the Agency, one of the first people I met in Kinshasa was the famous Larry Devlin.

Q: Oh yes.

DRESS: - - who had been the CIA station chief in the 1960s.

Q: And he's written a book about it.

DRESS: He's written a book about it. He was the one who was ordered to assassinate Mobutu. When I met him, he was long retired from public service and was representing Maurice Tempelman's interests in Zaire.

Q: The diamond person and a friend of Jackie Kennedy's.

DRESS: Yes. During consultations before I went out to Zaire, I went up to New York and met with Maurice Tempelman. At the time, I didn't realize how famous he was. Anyway Larry Devlin and his wife Mary invited the economic section to lunch -- Joe Saloom, me, Bob Whitehead, Hampton Smith and Melanie Smeallie. The Devlins had a house a little ways out of Kinshasa up on a hill. Larry was full of stories of Zaire from 25 years earlier; he had seen the country change and knew Mobutu well. In the old days, he had met with Mobutu fairly frequently so he gave us a fascinating glimpse of history. I never did meet Mobutu, which is probably just as well. I remember hearing that President Mobutu would summon Ambassador Grove up to Gbadolite, Mobutu's ancestral home way up north on the border with the Central African Republic, and harangue him because things weren't going the way he wanted. At the time, Mobutu wanted his creditors, both foreign governments and international bankers, to give him generous repayment terms on his foreign debt. Mobutu would tell Ambassador Grove: "Well, after all the things I've done for you Americans, I expect you to speak on my behalf in these international meetings and get me the best deal that you possibly can in terms of generous debt relief." We took a financial rather than a political approach to debt relief and offered repayment terms on the basis of what we thought Zaire could repay. Unlike the French, who for commercial or political advantage would forgive debt or give very generous terms of relief. Of course, we also had Congress to satisfy so we had to be pretty hard nosed about the thing.

Q: Were we watching an economy that because of the corruption and the lack of investment was slowly sinking them? What were we looking at at the time you were there?

DRESS: Well as I said, this was a moment in time when things were going pretty well. Now if you look at the long-term trend it's downward all the way from 1960 to the present day. It's a clear trend downward, but over that period of time there were plateaus, pauses, and precipitous drops. I just happened to be there at a time when things were not going that badly.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Zairian officials?

DRESS: The nice thing about economic work is you generally deal with a better class of people -- and you get invited to lunch. This has been true throughout my whole career. My counterparts were invariably well-educated, cosmopolitan, sophisticated people. It doesn't mean they weren't crooks, but if they were, they were very nice, very pleasant crooks. The Zairois (French for Zairians) liked Americans and were generally very warm and friendly. We did not have the colonial/imperial baggage that the Belgians had. There was very much a love-hate relationship between the Zairois and the Belgians. We had good access and official encounters were generally pleasant and informative. Having good access and having people wanting to talk to you and share information certainly makes your job an awful lot easier.

Q: When you went to the Ministry of Finance were there books and figures and that sort of things?

DRESS: I don't recall ever seeing any data published by the government of Zaire. What we knew about government finances or the macro economic situation was gleaned from various sources -- from government ministers, the IMF, the World Bank, foreign investors, etc.

Conditions were very basic. To the extent that a visit to the central bank, for example, involved making one's way through the chickens and goats grazing in front of the building. The phone system worked only occasionally and never during the rainy season. Even if you could get a call through to a government office, no one answered the phone. The economic section's local employee Mudibu would go out with a car and driver to make appointments for us. It usually took several days if not longer for him to set things up. Another interesting feature of doing business with the government involved the gatekeepers, who acted like concierges. So when Joe Saloom and I would show up at the central bank we would say hello to the guys at the reception desk and they would escort us to the elevator, ride with us upstairs and usher us into the governor's office. They were always very nice to us because at Christmas time we would take them bottles of Johnny Walker whiskey. They were always thrilled to see us and whisked us right through the front door into the elevator and up to the head guy's office.

Q: This is one of these not completely untold stories of diplomatic life and that is Christmas gifts. It's expected, it works and it oils the machinery very nicely and at no great expense.

DRESS: If you wanted to do some soul searching, you could say we were participating in the corruption of a corrupt society. But I don't think that's accurate; it was really more a matter of observing local custom. You served in Italy and you know that the Italians are very big about gift giving at Christmas. That's where I learned to give gifts to the people that provide services, like the mail carrier or the office cleaner.

Q: I know around Christmas time I often find myself in Washington interviewing people in law offices messengers are coming in with big gift baskets of cookies or fruit or jams.

DRESS: Businesses do it too.

Q: It's to the same people, it's not really to the top, and fair enough it's the people...

DRESS: The facilitators, the lower level people who aren't paid very well and who don't have a lot of status, but who can help you or hurt you. I thought it was a very smart thing to do.

Q: Yeah.

DRESS: I saw the benefit of it in action. I had ordered a Peugeot 505 from Paris, an Africanized Peugeot, before I left Washington. The car was shipped down to the port city of Matadi where it sat waiting for custom's clearance for months. I knew the car was in country, but I couldn't get my hands on it. Hamilton Smith, one of my colleagues in the economic section, had the same problem so we joined forces and went to the customs office in the Finance Ministry to see the official in charge of the paperwork. Hamilton had been a Peace Corps Volunteer in Zaire, so he talked about what a wonderful country Zaire was and about how hospitable the people were. I gave the man a

bottle of whiskey and then having softened him up I casually said, "By the way we've been waiting for the paper work to get our cars released." And he said, "Oh, I'll take care of that." He thumbed through the huge stack of documents on his desk, pulled out our papers and signed them. And that was that. And yes, I felt a twinge of guilt about what I was doing, but hey, I got my car.

Q: We have an interview with a man who is an administrative officer in Africa and talking about how things are difficult there. I asked how did you get things done? Oh we bribed them. I mean you'd call a bribe a gift but it's the way things are done. Also when I was in Vietnam I realized civil servants were hardly paid at all so what you were doing, I mean the people who were dealing with this were paying for service. If you had to have them do something and the people, the government said okay you are here and the people who need something and the people will pay for it. In a way it is a form of paying. In other words, if I didn't need the service I didn't have to pay it and if I needed the service I paid it. One can say economically there's a certain amount of sense there.

DRESS: Yes.

Q: How did you find social life? Did you feel welcome? Here you were a mid-grade officer and all and coming in on this program. Did you feel a little bit that you were ignored?

DRESS: Not at all. I felt absolutely no different from anybody else at the embassy. Before leaving Treasury, I talked to some of my Foreign Service colleagues about life in the Foreign Service. I remember saying to Lorelei Peters: "Look, I'm really concerned about going off to some small post in Africa as a single woman and ending up really lonely." She said, "Don't worry about it. The small posts are often the best. The embassy community is very cohesive and there is a lot of community activity. People bend over backwards to make sure no one is left out." Even though Embassy Kinshasa was a large post for Sub-Saharan Africa, life was very much as Ambassador Peters had described. There were all sorts of community events going on and people were warm and friendly. Everyone in the economic section was terrific. So in those terms, it was good. That doesn't mean that there weren't many weekends when there was absolutely nothing to do, and no place to go, especially if you were single.

Q: No, it can be very difficult. Of course, you couldn't travel which if you were in Paris can be a very difficult post for people but at least you can get the hell out of there. I mean you can wander around Paris.

DRESS: Another aspect of life in Kinshasa was the profound isolation. Communications were primitive. When Mobutu didn't pay the bills for the satellite hook up, you couldn't make an international phone call. We would have to call through our embassy in Brazzaville across the river to get a phone line out. So we weren't calling home or doing business with the State Department by phone. We used a weekly O-I (official-informal) cable to take care of routine communications with the Zaire desk in the African Bureau. Now, of course, people rely on email or cell phones. We didn't have email, fax machines, or dependable phones. Everybody in the embassy had a Motorola radio, like a walkie-talkie, to keep in touch. The radio operator, a local employee at the embassy, was code named "Beehive."

Q: It was an emergency net.

DRESS: Yes, and we were supposed to use it only for emergencies. But because it was the only reliable communication option we had, people would call up "Beehive" and ask him to get the word out that the bridge game (for example) had been cancelled. Television wasn't available for at-home viewing; you had to go to the Kinshasa Hilton to watch CNN.

Q: Did you ever get to or have any connection with I would think South Africa would be financially a counterpart of where you wanted to find out what was happening at least within Africa.

DRESS: The only thing I ever knew about South Africa was that was where the commissary got its vegetables. Some Americans went to South Africa for rest and recreation, especially the consulate folks in Goma. During the two and a half years I was in Zaire, I went on home leave to the States once and to Paris twice on business to attend Paris Club debt rescheduling meetings on Zaire. Travel inside Zaire was difficult, as I've said. We tried to avoid using the national carrier Air Zaire, for safety as well as health reasons. There were awful jokes about Air Zaire, which ex pats (the expatriate community) described as a flying toilet. Pardon my language. But you couldn't always avoid it. I joined Michael and Joanne Cotter for a trip to eastern Zaire to see the mountain gorillas.

Q: I interviewed Mike.

DRESS: He was the head of the political section and she worked for the U.S. Information Service (USIS). We flew out to Goma to see the mountain gorillas, which was very exciting. That whole area is volcanic. The soil is black and basaltic; the hills conical in shape, steep and bright green. We had to trek up into the hills to get to the gorilla habitat and once there had to be careful not to agitate them. Coming back we didn't think we were going to make it because of the mob scene at the airport. Westerners stand in line and wait their turn; African's don't. While we were in the terminal waiting for the plane to taxi up to the gate, people started pressing against the doors. When the doors opened, there was a stampede to the plane and a free for all to board and grab a seat. There was no reserved seating and the flight was oversold. It was like a rugby scrum -- downright dangerous. I never wanted to have a similar experience.

Q: Well in 1988 was it about when you left?

DRESS: The assignment was for two years but since I had come in November I was off cycle. I looked at the bid list for winter of 1987 but there really wasn't anything available, so I extended for six months to get on summer cycle. Kinshasa was not a place you wanted to stay in any longer than necessary, but in this case I had no real choice.

DRESS: Excuse me while I return for a moment to Zaire. One of the things I forgot to mention was the horror of HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus infection/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), a deadly disease hitting the local population very hard. The acronym in French was SIDA.

Q: Which particularly in those days was absolutely deadly.

DRESS: Yes. It probably originated in that part of Africa as a result of human contact with infected primates. The CDC had a research...

Q: The CDC is the Center for...

DRESS: The Centers for Disease Control had a research center in Kinshasa. This was 1985-6 when we were just waking up to what a serious disease HIV/AIDS was. One of my next-door neighbors Dr. Francis "Skip" Jones was one of the CDC researchers. (I became good friends with him and his wife Brenda.) HIV/AIDS was causing problems in the local population. There were a lot of funerals, especially among the educated elites. The Zairois called it the "slim disease."

Although francophone like Zaire, Senegal was very different. It was predominantly Muslim, democratic and had a heavy French influence. The Senegalese were more physically attractive and stylish than the Zairois. The Senegalese were taller, handsomer with a wonderful sense of style. For formal wear the men wore long, magnificent robes called "grand boubou" and the women would tie up their hair in fancy scarves. Zaire was kind of a wild west, but Senegal, having been so closely associated with France for so long, was much quieter.

GEORGE KENNEY
Finance and Development Officer
Kinshasa (1991)

George Kenney graduated from the University of Chicago with a degree in economics. He entered the Foreign Service in 1990. He served in Marseille and Kinshasa. He was interviewed by Michael Springmann in 1993.

KENNEY: I was looking around the world and I wanted a good job that would give me opportunities to broaden out. I found an a vacant position two grades higher than my own grade in Kinshasa, Zaire as a finance and development officer. Kinshasa is designated as a "hardship" post. No one at the right level had bid for that vacancy; there were some who were one grade below who had put their names in. But we were able to argue that I was more qualified than any of the other candidates and therefore I won that assignment, even though it was a two level "stretch". I was very happy to go to that assignment. I was there for a couple of months when the Zaire military mutinied and the Western countries closed or severely reduced their diplomatic presence. So I didn't even have time to unpack my household shipment. I stayed in a variety of hotel rooms; I just had gotten acclimated to my office space. I had just started making contacts and drafting reports. I predicted the mutiny because my tracking of the economy suggested that the Zaire middle class was experiencing a worst situation than it had met before, or at least since the last military coup.

MELISSA FOELSCH WELLS
Ambassador

Zaire (1991-1992)

Ambassador Wells was born in Estonia and raised abroad and in the U.S. She was educated at Mount St. Mary's College and Georgetown University. In 1958, she joined the Foreign Service and served in Washington and abroad. Her foreign assignments include posts in Brazil, France, United Kingdom, Trinidad-Tobago, and Switzerland. She also served in senior positions at the United Nations in New York. Her ambassadorial assignments include: Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau (1976-1977); Mozambique (1987-1991); the Democratic Republic of Congo (1991-1992); and Estonia (1998-2001). Ambassador Wells was interviewed by Ann Miller Moran in 1995.

Q: Because I have never been there and I don't know very much about it, but it seemed to me that when you arrived there, in Zaire, you found yourself with quite a mess on your hands. The president was Mobutu and there are 35 million people. It's a very rich country, but the per capita income is \$170 a year, or it was then. Now, in September 1991, apparently things blew up. Would you tell me when you arrived what were your impressions?

WELLS: Well when I arrived which was in early June '91, the main challenge was to take advantage of the opening in the political scene in terms of... President Mobutu had decided that political pluralism be introduced. In other words there could be a number of parties. At first he had decided there should be only three parties. Everybody objected and then we started getting parties by the dozens. Everybody and their dog and three cats decided to form a party. But in terms of major parties, and when I arrived and started making my contacts and finding out what they were hoping to do and how this political pluralism towards democracy is supposed to evolve, I was confronted time and again with the same issue. That was, "You, the United States, put him, Mobutu, there. You get him out of here." I just confronted it head on and this is now June '91. I said, "Look, let me make one thing very clear to you. The 82nd airborne will never, ever be seen in Zaire. General Schwarzkopf has retired. Now what are we going to do next?" "You liberated Europe from Hitler, etc." "Excuse me," I said, "that was 1940s. This is 1991." "We need a peacekeeping force." I'm sort of generalizing the many, and there were a number of these encounters. "We need a peacekeeping force."

I said, "You mean like the Congo in the sixties?" This was before peacekeeping operations became a land office business just a few years ago. I said, "Look, the world has changed. You don't have a war on here to begin with. Peacekeeping operations cost money." "We'll all be killed while we're discussing all of this." I said, "That won't work." "What are we going to do?" I said, "You Zaireans have to develop a transition plan which includes President Mobutu. Nobody is going to take him out. I'm not going to carry him out. He's a bit overweight. [laughter] A transition plan which includes President Mobutu and we will support you." And after much toing and froing and trying to play the empty chair, the opposition said, "Well you know I'm not attending because they [Mobutu people] didn't do this." I finally had to shake a few of these people and said, "Do you realize what you're doing? You're so dependent on the outside world. When are you going to grow up and wear long pants?" In many ways I think it's only a woman who can talk that way. [laughter]

Q: Good point.

WELLS: But it was roughing them up and then by gum they did it. I developed very good contacts with Monsignor Monsengwo who's still one of my dearest friends, who was the archbishop of what is now called Kisangani. It used to be Stanleyville back in the Congo days of the sixties. He was elected president of what was called the National Conference, which went on for months on end. And everyone was criticizing this National Conference. That they never get anything done. But it was the first time that the Zairean people had a chance to express themselves in an open forum that was televised most of the time. Sometimes there were literally technical difficulties when it broke down, and other times President Mobutu decided that the criticism was unacceptable and so forth and closed it down, but eventually it reopened. It was a wonderful exercise in political expression which the country had never, ever experienced.

Q: This was throughout the summer of '91?

WELLS: No, this went beyond then. I'll get to the evacuation. That's right, that's what you asked me. This went into '92. Actually started after '91, the Conference. But to finish with the National Conference, and as they were putting their plan together it was clear that the President didn't like it and he started to obstruct it. And I'm telescoping here two years of living there to the point where when I said farewell, I said my good-byes to the President, I informed him, under instructions from the US government, that I was leaving and that there would not be a US ambassador until such time that there was a transitional government according to the National Conference, and as we speak as of May 4 (1995) this has still held. Other countries, the French, the Belgians and so forth have maintained their ambassadors, but we have not.

Now, going back to the troubles of '91, September '91, what happened was that with all the economic problems in Zaire, the army was very irregularly paid. They were late in being paid or only some of them were paid, but early in the morning on a day in September '91, we heard that a unit had mutinied out by the airport and that they had ransacked the international airport at Kinshasa, and that they were moving down the main road towards Kinshasa and of course the population was just joining them and looting everything in sight and burning cars and so forth. The long and short of this is that over a period of five to seven days we evacuated almost 3,000 Americans, including missionaries from the interior and so forth. Over 20,000 expatriates left Zaire, many of whom, most of whom have never come back.

Q: They were the ones who ran the businesses?

WELLS: They ran the businesses, the shops the whole lot. And Kinshasa certainly was just looted, gutted out. It was incredible. The main streets... I think it was just stolen out. Fortunately there was relatively little loss of life because when this began, while I didn't know what the outcome was going to be, certainly I felt that Washington felt, 'Oh my God, here comes another Congo crisis of the sixties.' But it was not. It was not. Yes, there was loss of life, but the people were not targeting human beings they were targeting goods. It was as if they had taken the economic mismanagement of decades into their own hands, and this was only in Kinshasa actually, into their own hands and just looted everything in sight. Within a month, almost a month later it was the same thing, the Army was not paid in the south in the province of Shaba, the capital there, Lubumbashi, the army went on a rampage and did the same thing, looted the whole place. We evacuated and closed the

consulate general there. Then you had sporadic incidents all over the country. But with the fear that we might be heading towards another Congo crisis-type situation of the sixties, thousands of people left. I must say that within a few months, certainly within six months, many of the missionaries came back.

Some of them never left because they don't leave. They just feel that their mission is to be there and I must say that in terms of the American missionaries, I want put this on the record, I was so impressed. When I was there the American Presbyterian church was celebrating its centenary in Zaire and that means that they literally followed in the footsteps of Henry Stanley.

Q: Yes, exactly.

WELLS: It was incredible. In Kananga, out in the boondocks of the Kasai, a wonderful hospital still working under the most incredibly difficult conditions. I have stayed in touch with the Presbyterians here. I went down and spoke with them, prayed with them in South Carolina a couple of months ago. The people who are supporting this mission. But what happened as a result of that evacuation was that you had all these foreigners leave. There was no interest in investment, even the type of high risk investment which was offered at the time before the looting. Our own embassy staff, we had been the largest post in Africa when I arrived, and I had instructions from the undersecretary for management to reduce the size of the post, well, with the help of the mutinous Zairean army within 48 hours we were down to 35 people.

Q: How many did you evacuate?

WELLS: As I said 3000 Americans, but that included missionaries, businessmen but also our own staff and our own dependents.

Q: How big had our mission been?

WELLS: We had over, as I recall including AID, State and all the various elements, we had over 300 people. And then full of dependents. And contractors and so forth. Then we were left with a tremendous problem because we still owned houses. We started all this back in 1960 or whatever. The beautiful buildings with furniture and everything in them and my whole staff disappeared out from under me and I kept asking for more staff in order to consolidate the government properties. First the belongings of those who had been evacuated, then the belongings of the US government, and then try to figure out what to do with all the properties we owned. They kept that ceiling in place rigidly for security reasons and I finally, I didn't send it, I alerted them. I threatened them, I said I am in the process of sending this message in. Let me read it to you. "I am the US ambassador in Zaire. Under section blah-blah-blah I am responsible for US government properties. Now, I cannot, I refuse to accept any responsibility for US government property to the extent that we had it when you haven't given me the staff." My ceiling immediately went up by two or at least three people, general services officers, came.

Q: There was a piece about it in either the State magazine or the Foreign Service Journal about the evacuation and the evacuation of pets.

WELLS: Oh, the petevac. It was wonderful. I must tell you about this. First we got the people out.

Q: How did it feel when your husband had to get on the plane and leave you behind? He couldn't have been very happy about that.

WELLS: No, he wasn't. He went to South Africa because our son was living in South Africa. We have one son in South Africa and one in Brazil. Other than that he would have to go and live with his brothers. He has a family. So we got a special dispensation for him to go to South Africa. No, he was there. He was a great help the first few days because we had so many of the missionaries who moved into the residence. I was sleeping at the chancery. These wonderful people who came armed with their own food and everything and got themselves organized as to who was going to use which bathroom. We had close to a hundred people sleeping in the residence, on the terrace and all over the place, sleeping bags. Waiting to be picked up on which flight to get out. No, he was wonderful. He was a great help for that. I didn't see much of him, but then he took off for South Africa. I like that point in your book that you made.

Q: Reverse roles?

WELLS: The reverse roles.

Q: With a vengeance. That's the most dramatic thing that could possibly be.

WELLS: That's true.

Q: The wife had to evacuate the husband.

WELLS: But then again, this actually was the second time it happened. The first time was in Uganda with the United Nations. He had never arrived at post but after we had had two murders of UN staff, we had an evacuation and then I came back, but without the family. So Zaire was actually our second unaccompanied post. I've had it. Life is too short. I've done my stint on that.

Q: I would think. You couldn't have let him stay anyway?

WELLS: Un-un [No].

Q: Of course you had to set the example.

WELLS: I have to set the example. He couldn't stay.

Q: But that must have been awful. You did write that you were rattling around in the huge residence.

WELLS: And then later - this beautiful residence that we have there, really magnificent - and I was all alone in it, with the household staff who were wonderful, the Zairean household staff.

Q: What sort of security people did you have for yourself?

WELLS: Early on, early on we had special people come from DS [Diplomatic Security Service] in the department and they were protecting 24 hours around the clock, and then that was reduced as the situation... But actually that's what made the headlines in September '91, but we went through a much worse security problem in January of '93 where at least we figure over 300 people were killed in Kinshasa and that's when the French ambassador was killed.

Q: Oh, yes, of course.

WELLS: He had just arrived. I had just gotten to know him. He couldn't have been there more than six weeks. He was shot. His number two called one night at the height of the troubles and said, "My ambassador has been killed. Do you have a body bag?" I couldn't go over that night but as soon as it was dawn I went over with all the help that we could, because I felt very close to the French embassy there. We'd always worked very closely and I knew the previous ambassador, Henri Rethore, very, very well. He was my closest colleague in Kinshasa. But the situation has not improved that much there. There's been some movement towards improving the transition, but I'm very worried about Zaire.

Q: Is it true that Mobutu lives on his yacht on the river?

WELLS: He has a yacht and it goes... it's not a yacht; it's a river boat. It's a very attractive vessel. He loves it, and once you've been on it a couple of times you can understand why. He loves the sense of the river and he goes up, he doesn't go all the way up to Gbadolite. He doesn't go up that far. He spends a lot of time in Gbadolite. I don't think he spends much time in Kinshasa these days. He wasn't spending much time in Kinshasa. When the boat comes in, it docks there, out where you present your credentials. The name escapes me right now. I would meet with him there or else actually on the boat. Many times he asked us, me and some other ambassadors, to come and have breakfast with him or dinner, lunch, whatever it was. I flew to Gbadolite to talk to him a couple of times. I flew up river and met with him once. I had some very urgent message to deliver and he sent his helicopter for me and I took my deputy, John Yates, with me, because it was tricky. The timing. We took off in a helicopter and flew upriver and landed on the boat in a storm in the middle of the river. There was a regular place for the helicopter to land. And then I delivered my message and then we took off.

Q: In bad weather?

WELLS: In bad weather. Yes. Actually the pilot of the helicopter was knocking on the door of the salon, where [the president] meets people. He said, "We've got to take off now otherwise we'll have to spend the night here." That's why I took the Deputy Chief of Mission with me, just in case that happened. [laughter]

Q: You have to think of those things, don't you?

WELLS: Yes.

Q: Is it true that there is really very little infrastructure left in the country?

WELLS: What is so tragic is, you see Ann, when I first arrived, and I've done this in so many of my African posts, I've collected books written in another era. It seems I'm always traveling around countries with guide books from the 1950s or something. They talked about the marvelous hotels and roads and "stop here for lunch." "Look at the animals here." And here they've all been shot. In the case of Zaire I had a very interesting book. I suppose it came out in the late forties. Very detailed, giving you travel routes and places to stay. Obviously the Belgians are still in charge. And while you don't expect all of that to still be around, you expect some of it to be around. When I started traveling in the interior, it was very clear that the country as such was really going back to the bush. What you would call major cities in the interior have no light, have no running water, no medications, no schools.

Q: No transportation?

WELLS: No transportation. There's nothing.

Q: I gather they don't even have the boats that used to go up and down the Congo.

WELLS: No, they have those but they run less and less frequently and in terrible condition.

Q: There was an article about that in the National Geographic. I'm sure you must have seen that and it was just appalling.

WELLS: It's appalling. It's probably worse than that now. In effect to me Zaire at this point is Kinshasa and Matadi, the port. I'd say the roads and the towns between Matadi, the port at the mouth of the Zaire river and Kinshasa and then Lubumbashi, where I had gone to visit a couple of times while I was there. Particularly when the whole sort of Shaba consciousness started up again... They refused to call themselves Shabas; they called themselves Katangans... At one point, there was a very hostile reception - people, placards.

I knew the governor was behind it because you can't come right up to an airplane at an airport. It's fine to have all your demonstrators outside or inside the terminal or something, but to be right up there as the plane lands... So, obviously the governor was in cahoots with all this. And at the time that I... very, very hostile signs about the fact that the US government had not noticed an earthquake, but that we were sending relief, assistance for all the Kasaians who were fleeing from Shaba, back to their homes. I saw this reception and I made a point of walking by slowly and reading every single sign, shaking the hand of each of them, because they were really just trying to look ferocious. They'd been put up to it and I wanted them to know that I knew they weren't really ferocious. [laughter]

Q: You terrified them.

WELLS: I had security with me at the time and [sound of growling]. And I said, "Yes, yes, and what exactly does that mean?" and "How did you get that information?" I didn't overdo it, but I didn't just walk past them. But there again, Lubumbashi, the former Elizabethville, which is the center, the heart of the copper belt and the cobalt belt, and what is so sad now, particularly after the

looting. I'd gone down after the looting, after we'd closed the consulate, although I stayed in the residence there. The office of the consulate had been totally burned down. The mines weren't functioning, the smelters, and the copper processing plants weren't functioning and, if anything, they were literally being taken apart by the employees and sold as scrap across the border in Zambia.

Q: Is this because the managerial class had all fled and there was nobody there to run it? I understood there were 100,000 people put out of work.

WELLS: Because it closed down, yes.

Q: They closed down everything?

WELLS: They closed down.

Q: And is the United States to blame for this because we are no longer giving them all the aid we were giving them at the time of the Angolan war?

WELLS: Oh, yes. Because then I had some genuinely very hostile delegations who came to see me. I first met with the governor there. Then I said, "Look, I will meet with these delegations but I want to meet with those representing the Kasaians." These are the people who are being tormented and whose houses were being taken over and who were living in effect in a concentration camp around the railroad station in the Kasai.

There they made the point: [Speaking in a gruff voice] "Well, we will have to withhold our cobalt" and so forth. I just let them have it. I said, "You may not have heard, but the cold war is over. We are no longer producing bombs and we have a huge cobalt surplus pile and we're going to start selling it. You're going to have to eat your cobalt." I literally said, "Vous allez manger votre cobalte." So don't give me this nonsense. But the point of all of this, Ann, is that they were playing games rooted in the sixties, and over and over again I said, "The world has changed. You are falling off the map." I couldn't say, "Nobody cares about you any more."

Q: But the Belgians don't, the French don't. I mean, the French had no problems with pulling out.

WELLS: They care for different reasons. We all do. In terms of the strategic role that the Congo played, and what is so sad about Zaire is that no new generation of leader has come up. If you read Madeleine Cobb's Congo Cable and so forth, they're all still there, thirty years later. A couple of them have died now, recently, since I left Papa Ileo died recently. It's stagnant. It's still rooted in expected power plays to come from the outside, as opposed to, "Okay, let's do it ourselves. Let's clean up this thing."

Q: Now, the army was pretty loyal to Mobutu, was it? How does he stay in power?

WELLS: Well, Mobutu is a brilliant politician. He has more political smarts in one little finger of his hand than the entire opposition put together. This is the tragedy. He figured this out long ago,

so there isn't just one military force. I mean he has a presidential guard, there's the army, there are the gendarmes.

Q: Oh, the way Saddam Hussein does it? Various little cadres.

WELLS: Various cadres. Trusted people appointed to them, but still never relying totally. One of these could go wrong and he still has others.

Q: I see, so he doesn't have to worry about coups d'état?

WELLS: That's right. Let me tell you about one thing that I treasured very much about my experience in Zaire and that is... I must give credit to President Mobutu and the government at that time. They gave me full access on television. I mean, I was interviewed always after I met with him. I was interviewed when I met with ministers and so forth. And rarely - on some occasions they did - but rarely did they cut it, censor it, edit it. Once I realized that this was going on, I played to it; I took advantage of it, because I didn't know how long it would last. As a result, and I spoke out very frankly, I acquired a wonderful nickname, a sobriquet which I shall treasure for the rest of my life. Tantine. Auntie. Now at first I said, "Tantine? Is this because of Uncle Sam and I'm a woman, is this Auntie Sam or what does this mean?" I mean I speak French, Tante is an aunt. I said, "But why a tante?" "Oh, no, but don't you know the expression tantine. Tantine may or may not be related to you by blood as an aunt should be. A tantine is a senior woman in the family to whom you come and tell your troubles to and get good advice." And one of the most wonderful moments of my entire career was when this National Conference had reopened. It had been closed by Mobutu for some time and the US had applied an enormous amount of pressure and I made damn sure that everybody knew that we were doing this. And then the National Conference was reopening and the diplomatic corps was asked to attend and they had a special section down there at the front and as usual, Ann, I'm late. I pull up in the official car with all the flags flying. I could see all the other ambassadors and their flags and their drivers are sitting over there and I go running up the stairs and I'm trying to figure out which door to go in. "Where is the diplomatic section?" "That way, that way, madam." I start walking, I start running almost, walking fast down this aisle to get to the front. And then I hear applause and I said, "Oh dear God, Monsengwo is coming and I'm in front of him. I start looking around and there's no Monsengwo and I see people looking at me and clapping (claps) "Tantine, Tantine, Tantine." Well, it didn't take me long, Ann, to stop running down the aisle and to absorb fully for the US government and for Melissa Wells in person. I acquired a very regal step coming down the aisle.[laughter]

Q: You see your mother's training was not for nothing.

WELLS: I sat down in my proper place. Of course, my diplomatic colleagues are saying, "My God, what an entrance you made." Never mind. Never mind. I collected that day. (laughter)

Q: That's lovely. I think that's delicious. Incidentally, you are well remembered after you leave posts. I was at an event for Rosa M. Parks and it was put on by the Episcopal church over in Alexandria. And my sister had come from California for this and I met her there. She said, "I'd like you to meet so and so who has been in Africa." I can't remember where she was but when she

heard what work I was doing she said, "Do you know Melissa Wells?" And I said, "Indeed I do." And she said, "You know she's still loved." I think she was referring...

WELLS: She was from where?

Q: She was referring to Uganda, I believe.

WELLS: Uganda.

Q: I believe it went back to Uganda. And she said, "You know it's terrific, really, what she's done." So you see.

WELLS: Those are real jewels.

Q: Those are wonderful things.

WELLS: I'll tell you one more story on Zaire.

Q: Please.

WELLS: That was in February of '92 and the Conference had been suspended. That's right. Okay. Now backtrack. My royal entry here, we were going a little backwards in time. The Conference had been suspended because my grand entry was when it reopened again. The Conference had been suspended and we were aware that the société laïc, like the non-governmental associations, but all Zaireans...

Q: The lay people, you mean.

WELLS: The lay groups, yes, were planning a major demonstration. They had come to us but we did not want to be caught in any position of fomenting demonstrations or anything. They come into the library and they read about Martin Luther King and so on. It was entirely peaceful. It was church-based. In other words the demonstrators would all collect in churches, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, whatever. On a Sunday. And they had several Sundays of rehearsals beforehand, in terms of training the people. They were going to go out and demonstrate that they wanted the National Conference to start again. They would sing hymns, they would walk arm and arm, and then if violence started they would simply drop to their knees and pray. It was all so reminiscent of our civil rights movement.

Q: Exactly, yes.

WELLS: The appointed Sunday came. We gave strict instructions to the few Americans left in Kinshasa, "Do not go to church." Because we expected that the churches would already be surrounded by guards, by the army. It was a very tense Sunday and since I was at home and I started getting calls at the residence and then I called the driver and said, "Take me to chancery." People started coming in, priests all bloodied up with torn cassocks. Phone calls. You knew something awful was going on but you didn't know exactly what. Then the political counselor was

there, and about four in the afternoon, I said, "All right, put all the flags on the car, on the Cadillac, we are going to the hospital. I don't know if we're going to get in or not. But we're going. I want to see what's happening." We drove up to the hospital. I thought they might try to stop us. No, they let us in. We went into the hospital. I was overwhelmed with people. I was taken to the morgue to see the dead from the demonstrations. I talked to the wounded, those who wished to speak at all about anything. And I had my own report to make. I happened to have a meeting with - we had what we called a troika, the Belgian, French and US [ambassadors] meeting with President Mobutu the following day. But I had a first hand report of what happened, not just sitting and listening to phone calls. Then I reported to Washington. They asked me, "Did they march and so forth?" This was never carried on television, but a lot of people knew.

Q: I was going to say that word of that sort of thing gets out.

WELLS: Gets out. In April of that year, in April of 1992, in the United States, there were riots in Los Angeles and I'm sitting watching my Zairean news which is not the most exciting newscast, but anyway, you keep up with it.

Q: You watch what you're got.

WELLS: And he's delivering news about the riots in Los Angeles and the newscaster announces that the prime minister, who was Nguz Karl-i-bond at the time, that the prime minister wishes the Zairean people to know that he has not given instructions to our ambassador in Washington to go visit hospitals in Los Angeles. I mean, this was so far off the wall. Top Mobutu supporters started calling me immediately and said, "Madame Ambassadeur, je suis très gêné." "This is terrible." I am so embarrassed and ashamed," and this sort of thing. Very clear what it was referring to. I was interviewed but it never appeared on TV, what I felt about it. But I said, "Look, if the Zairean ambassador had wanted to visit any hospital in Los Angeles he was perfectly free to do so." But it never appeared on TV. But how about that?

Q: Isn't that something? They didn't advise the Zairean ambassador! Do we have any representation at all in Zaire now?

WELLS: Chargé.

Q: A chargé. But you closed the consulate general, you said, in Lubumbashi?

WELLS: We've kept the property. We had about three or four loyal FSNs [Foreign Service Nationals] who were still running it for us. I don't know what's happening now, with the closure of posts and so forth. In effect, Lubumbashi has been closed. There's nobody there except some FSNs to guard the property.

Q: You have seen so many things in Africa, Melissa, all of the things you told us about the children and so forth, but I understand that the AIDS crisis is getting pretty bad.

WELLS: It is, yes. And that was one of the really tragic casualties of the whole evacuation, was the AIDS program that we had in Kinshasa. It was magnificent. It took me three days to visit the entire program. Because it was not just a question of training Zaireans in terms of dealing with the

disease and analyzing and so on. There was... Well, it's a rather sensitive subject but let me talk about it. One of the fascinating aspects of the program was dealing with prostitutes. Increasing their awareness of the problem but recognizing that this is their livelihood. They're going to continue this profession. Now if they're going to continue this profession, they have to learn how to insist that their clients use condoms.

Q: To protect themselves, yes.

WELLS: In the first place, if one does it, insists on it, then the other one, if she doesn't insist on it, she'll get the business. So you have to get them together on this. Then actually training techniques, I'm not going to go into the details, but which were very sensitive.

Q: I can imagine.

WELLS: In terms of just saying, "You better put a condom on or..." No, but actually teaching the women how to get their customers to wear condoms, and for what reasons.

Q: I suppose they didn't even understand the physiology.

WELLS: No. But it was a beautiful program.

Q: And that had to be suspended?

WELLS: It had to be suspended because we evacuated all the expatriate personnel. We were doing wonderful research in terms of transmission of AIDS, through the milk of lactating AIDS-infected mothers to the children and babies. It was a great loss, a great loss.

Q: It sounds a terrible thing. You have been now in Uganda and you were in Mozambique.

WELLS: Zaire.

Q: You know the whole continent. What's the prognosis? Is there any hope?

WELLS: On AIDS? One of the brightest pictures is in Uganda because they have confronted it openly. It's one of the worst countries in terms of infection. But then again we don't know because... We know Uganda has a very high incidence of infection but we also are very sure that they're reporting everything that they know. You see, many countries don't.

Q: They have better statistics because they don't report it.

WELLS: Yes. They look better statistically but we all know from what we know goes on that the statistics don't reflect the true situation. Until you get over that hurdle, I suppose it's like alcoholics anonymous. You have to get up and say okay. We've got AIDS or I'm an alcoholic and this is what we're going to do. And get the entire leadership of the country behind it. In Zaire certainly we had good programs going but I never had the feeling that the political leadership was behind it the way it is in Uganda. And it was President Museveni. And in Mozambique where President Chissano... I

remember when I was there, he had a wonderful speech and then he kept rephrasing it and giving it over and over again about bees going from flower to flower and eventually you know. We had some tee shirts made with Chissano and the bees. There was only one flower. [laughter]

Q: That's pretty good. It's amazing to me that you're still as cheerful and full of energy as you've always been, because I would think after the years you've spent in Africa you would be very discouraged about human beings.

WELLS: Actually it was. I was getting burnt out. And in many ways Zaire was the most difficult one. It was the most depressing one. It was stagnating and not getting anywhere. In spite of there not being any war going on, as in Mozambique or just chaos in Uganda. And I was being sort of burned out, which is the only phrase to describe it, towards the end of my second year there in Zaire.

I had always wanted to climb the mountains of the Moon, the Ruwenzori, I had hoped to do this from Uganda when I was there in the late seventies, but at that time the security was impossible in that area and they had nothing. There were no huts, there were no guides. There was nothing. This always remained a dream of mine. So I organized it from the Zaire side, and this would have been December 1992. I had made inquiries and there was a man, a Swiss national, but who'd lived in Zaire for many years. Actually he had a number of Zairean wives and lived out there. He had a base camp and took people up to the top and brought them back, for a handsome fee, but it was all right. Okay. So I made arrangements to do it in early December which was a good time to go up. There was less rain. It rains all the time up there. Then he was in radio contact with his daughter in Kinshasa and his daughter came in to see me and said, "My father just sent me a message that the army are again looting and they haven't been paid. He was a little worried." Then she came in two days later and said, "My father's packing up and leaving. He suggests we postpone the climb until next year." At that point I wasn't sure that I was going to be there in the following year because I'd asked to be curtailed to two years as I was not with my husband.

So at a moment's notice I shifted the whole trip to Uganda. I got in touch with our ambassador in Kampala, Johnny Carson, and told him I've got these few days because I've got to get down to South Africa for Christmas and would you please organize it? They helped me and they got it done.

But it was the first time that I was back in Uganda since leaving in 1981. And it was very brief. I stayed in a hotel, the Sheraton, in which I had lived for about three weeks and gave up because at that point it was still trying - this was 1979 - it was still trying to be a hotel. Squatters were moving in, chopping up the furniture, burning it to cook their food. There was no running water. I had to use the fire hose to fill my pail up once a day so that I could flush the toilet once a day. This is very healthy. Very healthy. Once you've been an ambassador you should trek up five floors with a bucket of water to flush your toilet once a day. It puts everything into scale. But, Ann, to go back! And I recognized the hotel - same place and the lobby is all nicely done and I go up to the desk and "Oh yes, Ambassador Wells," and they give me a drink with umbrellas and cherries sticking out of it, a welcome drink. I go to my room and the first thing I want to do is find that fire hose that I used to use to fill up my bucket. I go back and they seemed to have moved it and it's no longer accessible. It's sort of locked up.

And then to go out and walk up and down the streets which was inconceivable in my day. I mean, there was shooting and looting. And just to absorb Kampala one evening with little restaurants coming back and people walking around at night. I remember sitting on that balcony and thinking, "I looked out at this scene." It wasn't the same room obviously in which I stayed in 1979, and it was so different.

Then the next day I had hired a car to go to the base camp for the climb and I know the country well and I said could you take the Mubende road and then come back through Mbarara. "Oh, yes." So we took the Mubende road and passed little villages - and I literally started to cry because I could see a post office, a PTT, and people were going in and out doing their post office business. This was inconceivable. I mean had I gone on the Mubende road in 1980, I would have had my water, my gas, my money, my food - a post office, forget it. There was nothing. It was like Captain Nemo every time you left Kampala; you had to have everything with you. Then of course topping that off was a climb of the Ruwenzori mountains. It was gorgeous. It was in Uganda that I was first exposed to the violence, the suffering, the tragedy of Africa, and it was in Uganda that I was healed. And I had the privilege of telling President Museveni that story during a visit to Kampala in 1994. I got to know Museveni quite well during that earlier period before he became president.

Q: That's very reassuring.

WELLS: I tell you too many stories.

Q: No, you don't at all. That's what this is all about your stories. They're terrific because you feel these things. It's how you feel about these things that happened. The things that happened we can read about in the paper. We don't know how they affect the people who are living through them. Do you suppose Zaire will turn a corner one of these days, one of these years?

WELLS: I don't know.

Q: They've certainly got the metals and minerals and so forth.

WELLS: They have so much wealth. And yet what worries me is that they're... I'm worried about Africa in general; it's sort of falling off the map in terms of people's interest.

Q: Well, what with Rwanda... It's terrible.

WELLS: But then subsequently becoming involved in Sudan's peace process and what worries me is if that one doesn't come through and the war continues, that there's going to be one big path of chaos which is Sudan, Zaire, the two biggest countries in Africa. Which will then suck in all these bordering countries. Zaire is very worrisome. It's very worrisome.

Q: I would think. And much of the wealth has been siphoned out, I suppose, to Swiss banks?

WELLS: Absolutely, absolutely. It's always sort of left to the foreigner to take care of the local people.

Q: How's Kenya doing these days?

WELLS: Kenya? It's quite tense there. It's quite tense there. I mean, this tribal tension that they have.

Q: You didn't have that in Zaire?

WELLS: Oh, gosh, yes. Especially in Katanga. And it was deliberately stoked up. I have kept all the speeches.

Q: Is that so?

WELLS: Oh, yes. Talk about ethnic cleansing. It was happening in Zaire just when we were getting into using that term in terms of the former Yugoslavia.

Q: Now the Hutus moved over the border into Zaire, right?

WELLS: That's now, most recently yes.

Q: That's from another country.

WELLS: That's from another country, yes.

Q: But within Zaire...

WELLS: But within Zaire between what you call the Kasaians who came from another part of Zaire to work in the mines in the Katanga province, and the local people.

Q: The Katangans you call them?

WELLS: That's what they call themselves now. Now they're supposed to be called Shabans, but then they wanted to go back to their original name, Katanga. But they were not interested in working in the mines. And the Belgians, when they came to develop this mineral wealth, they needed people to work in the mines, they brought these Kasaians in from another part of the country. The first generation was working underground in the mines and by the second generation they had some blue collar people. The Belgians established schools, the kids learned to read, so then the third generation of Kasaians were getting white collar jobs, and there it goes. And then the local people say all these foreigners come in here getting all the best jobs and the basic problem is "Look, you didn't want to work here. They brought us in here." It's a rather complex issue.

Q: Now, you asked to be curtailed after two years. Did you feel you had accomplished what you set out to do there?

WELLS: Yes, certainly in terms of support of a national process which was not focused simply on "Get Mobutu out and put me in and everything will come right." But not in terms of working out a compromise transition arrangement, which was then unacceptable to Mobutu.

Q: It's still sort of hanging the same way, isn't it?

WELLS: It's still hanging the same way, and now there's a new prime minister, a very good man, Kengo. But they're not moving towards elections. I would like to see an independent electoral commission set up, something on the order of the South African electoral with participation for the outside. And the key thing being, not to set up a chronological time table in terms of, "You have to have these elections then and you do this and this," but a conditional calendar which would look at things like "Are the governors still Mobutu people?" With a totally broken down infrastructure it's just going to be impossible to monitor elections. Next thing is the military forces, the security forces. Are they still strictly controlled by the president or is there a sharing of authority over them? Until you have those two things sorted out, you can't have really fair elections.

I can see that it would be in President Mobutu's interest to have elections as quickly as possible and then, "Come visit," anything you like - but it's impossible to get around.

Q: Obviously there's not going to be any tourism there. Or any investment.

WELLS: No.

Q: Therefore no jobs. It's terrible. Do we still give them aid?

WELLS: No, no, no. By the time I got there there was no aid, there was no foreign military assistance. The only assistance...

Q: Oh, by the time you got there there was none?

WELLS: Yes, congress had turned everything off. The only assistance was humanitarian assistance.

Q: Humanitarian, yes. Now when you came back, you were then given a special assignment...

WELLS: I was still ambassador in Zaire and it coincided with the change of administration, but I'd already indicated earlier that two years was the maximum length of time that I wanted to stay there, separated from my husband.

DAVID R. ADAMS
USAID Deputy: Interagency Task Force on Zaire
Washington, DC (1997-1998)

Mr. Adams was born in Washington, DC and raised in Virginia and abroad. He was educated at John Carroll, William and Mary and George Washington Universities. Mr. Adams joined USAID in 1973 in Washington, DC. He served in Washington and abroad, dealing primarily with matters concerning Latin American countries and Kosovo. His foreign assignments include Bangladesh, Guatemala and Haiti, where he served as USAID Mission Director. Mr. Adams was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: You were doing this from when to when?

ADAMS: this was, I came back from the secretary's office to his job in late summer 1995. I did it for a couple of years. So actually in the latter part of that assignment I was seconded to an interagency task force that was basically getting ready to help deal with the UN and others deal with the aftermath of the Mobutu regime in Zaire, because at this time he was quite ill. I think he was in exile.

Q: Yeah he was in exile with what's-his-name from the east came out of?

ADAMS: His son is now president. Kabila. Anyhow we, the inter agency led by Susan Rice, the Africa director at the NSC. So she chaired with the assistant secretary for Africa. Who is the assistant secretary for Africa now? It was an African American gentleman. Was it Moose?

Q: George Moose.

ADAMS: I think George Moose was, and then she replaced him later. But anyway so it was interesting for me because one of the things I did was serve as task force deputy. Well the AID deputy. They brought in a political guy Tony Gambino, who later went out to be the AID mission director in former Zaire. So I was a deputy to him, the career person. We basically did a lot of strategizing and participating in the inter agencies, getting ready to deploy resources. But I went in for a time to help reopen the AID mission because it had been closed. In fact I had been partially responsible for closing it down early in the Clinton administration when I was at State because I was the state person at the time who was interacting with folks at AID on the closure of a bunch of AID missions. The new administration led by Brian Atwood who was the new head of AID, wanted to make a statement about both if you are undemocratic regimes we shouldn't be giving aid to them, and on the other hand it was a way to save money, operating expense money. Of course you don't realize those savings for two or three years down the road after closure. I was involved in that. Here was three years later and guess what we are going back in, so it was quite interesting.

Q: Well how would you think of it going back in. From what I gather this wasn't a, the change of regime never really quite, it wasn't a full countrywide change of regime. There were guerilla problems, different forces. So you are dealing with a bowl of jello or something.

ADAMS: Sure. Well there was a recognition early on this was not going to be a countrywide strategy. That the country is so diverse and the security situation was so variable. In the course of the east it was a mess, and is still a mess from what I can tell, or largely anyway. So part of the development of the strategy was to determine where an AID program of some type could be

useful. We had, I don't know if you have ever heard of the office of transition initiatives? That was the Clinton administration initiative. It was the office designed within AID to react very quickly. In other words we had our disaster assistance folks, OFDA for short that did pure humanitarian aid. Basically through the main NGO's like CARE, Catholic Relief. But then this was seen as being an entity that was offering assistance for recovery from disaster including everything from financing community development activities meaning trash pickup or reconstruction of houses that had been damaged. Because a lot of this was in Bosnia later, or rehabilitation of water systems that had been destroyed or damaged. Damage repair, everything from large infrastructure to just helping communities re-elect mayors or city councils. It was a hodge-podge of different things to help people recover from war or crisis, usually man made crisis, not just a regular disaster unless it was a huge one. So we deployed a team and they were there working as I was involved in the logistics with some admin folks to physically reopen the AID mission in the capital, the AID headquarters. We had folks who were traveling to some of the regional towns around Zaire to determine some of the things like tribe identity, you know helping them with the reform of civil government or repair of infrastructure. If conditions were such in the different towns, Kisangani for example, to make that kind of aid effective. So a determination was made that there were a few places where that kind of aid could be helpful. That went out to Kit, what was the name?

Q: Kitwe?

ADAMS: It had the distinction, this town to fly into it, it wasn't that far from Kinshasa. I think it was Kitwe where they had a major Ebola outbreak just a year or two before that. A relatively peaceful area that recovered from the disease. It was kind of interesting.

Q: You had been away for awhile and in coming back had you found that the relationship between AID and the non governmental organizations had matured considerably or not, or maybe there were new strains?

ADAMS: It depends. Ironically the segment of the NGO community whose relationship was the most strained with AID were the democracy and governance movements. The National Democratic Institute and the republican equivalent. The National Endowment for Democracy, the elections group, there is an election NGO that is IFES, International Foundation for Electoral Reform. And there were others who felt similarly, and I think it is ironic because the head of AID at the time was the former president of the Democratic Institute, Brian Atwood. They were upset because of among other things the slow process within AID of entering into grants or awarding grants and contracts, and then all the bureaucracy involved in actually releasing the money and in the oversight for the grants. So there were other NGOs which had a similar view, but the situation seemed to be exacerbated for some reason with the democracy group. People's careers were damaged within AID because they were perceived to having contributed to the problem. I won't mention any names. I am sort of fast forwarding here to the next, after two years in Africa I then got involved with the reconstruction of the Balkans, and in the whole Kosovo thing which was coming to a head at that time. Bosnia and Croatia reconstruction. That is when the relationship went downhill the most between the number of NGOs and AID. In part it was because AID didn't have a cadre of officers that had a strong background in the democracy and government arena. So a number of the NGO's field personnel were giving feedback to their headquarters that they

weren't getting the kind of support and help that they thought an AID mission should be. It was a strained relationship, and now it continues actually.

Q: I can see a problem with democracy and governance and all. This is pretty soft stuff. This is not delivering grain or help and it allowed for a bunch of people with maybe good ideas, maybe not good ideas, but it is pretty hard to say if you are delivering wheat you know people are eating. But if you are delivering advice, particularly coming out of the academic world or some other world, it is a little difficult to see are they really making much of a difference. I don't know. Sometimes I have a feeling that maybe that type of thing is a great boon to the Ph.D. candidates or what have you among the universities. I am not sure about the impact on overseas. But this is maybe a job that is new.

ADAMS: No, you are right. But fundamentally the problem was you had a very risk averse bureaucratic mindset in AID, somewhat similar in State but it is worse in AID because there is a lot more money, and because Congressional oversight and the strings attached to the funding have become much tighter to put it in more benevolent terms it has caused folks, especially those like contracting officers and agreement and assistance officers who legally can be penalized if something goes wrong. That is a key reason why I think the number of the NGOs have been upset, and a number of the for profit companies who deal with USAID is because of this butt covering that goes on. In a sense you really can't blame some of these folks whose careers and their pocketbooks are on the line. They get in trouble if they do something intentionally or unintentionally wrong or illegal.

Q: One of the complaints by foreign countries if they are getting aid what they get are an awful lot of accountants.

ADAMS: Right, or it pays for high priced U.S. expertise. They would prefer to have it in hand.

Q: Well while you were dealing with the Congo thing how did you feel it came out during the time you were there?

ADAMS: Well on the one hand I thought that our task force and then the mission that was later set up and run by my colleague Tony Gambino did a pretty good job under the circumstances. They never really got that much money. And of course it is a huge country, and huge problems, and very diverse, and infrastructure needs and the road system especially being as bad as it is just getting things done is quite hard. Now I think they have had some relatively decent elections. Kabila senior was a problem, and I think a lot of the governance and corruption issues and what have you, while not on the same scale as under Mobutu, they continued. But downstream his son was elected in I think a fairly clean election, and some of the humanitarian assistance was effectively used to feed starving populations. You don't hear about the famine or what have you. You don't hear as much about Zaire these days at all frankly, although I understand significant human rights abuses continue in the east especially. But considering the level of effort, people, and resources, I thought it was relatively well done.

Q: Well then you moved back to Bosnia.

AUBREY HOOKS
Ambassador
Democratic Republic of the Congo (2001-2004)

Ambassador Hooks was born and raised in South Carolina and educated at Brevard College and the University of South Carolina. He entered the Foreign Service in 1971 and served abroad in Tel Aviv, Warsaw, Ankara, Port au Prince, Tel Aviv, Rome, Helsinki and Harare. He also had several assignments at the State Department in Washington, DC. In 1995 he was named United States Ambassador to the Republic of Congo at Brazzaville and served there until 1999. He subsequently served as Ambassador to Democratic Republic of the Congo (2001-2004); and as Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire from 2004 to 2007. Ambassador Hooks was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: So after about three months of living in this ideal atmosphere, where did you go? Did you finally get Congo? What was it called?

HOOKS: It was called the Democratic Republic of Congo when I went there.

Well, it was interesting. I only spent three months in Harare. In July I was confirmed by the Senate for Congo, and so I left Harare in August to begin the briefing process in Washington. I planned to spend six weeks in Washington, but the DCM informed me that President Joseph Kabila would be traveling to Washington in September to meet President Bush. I had to travel quickly to Kinshasa to present my credentials so that I could be part of that event. I only had two weeks to pack and get to Kinshasa to present my credentials and prepare for President Kabila's travel to New York. He was supposed to travel on the fifteenth of September, and I met with him on the morning of 11 September 2001 to talk about his itinerary, his program and his meeting with President Bush. That program changed drastically during the course of the day.

Q: OK, let's talk about in 2001. What was the situation in the Congo, sort of politically in relations to the United States?

HOOKS: When it came time to look at places to go for a next assignment, I did not put down Kinshasa as a priority bid. This was in the year 2000. I put down Cote d'Ivoire and some other places. Nancy Powell, who was P/DAS at the time, told me: "We'd like you to go to Kinshasa. Would you consider going to Kinshasa?" I said, "You know, I didn't put Kinshasa down on my list because the old man Kabila was there at the time. It can be very frustrating to deal with him over a long period of time."

Q: Who was there at that time?

HOOKS: Laurent Desiree Kabila, the father of the current president. He was a very difficult individual to deal with; very capricious and paranoid.

Q: He had been a guerilla leader for 40 years or something.

HOOKS: Che Guevara didn't think very much of him as a guerilla fighter.

Q: Che did try. One forgets that Che went to Africa.

HOOKS: And gave up on Kabila because Che felt that Kabila was not serious, not politically very smart, and basically a womanizer hustling for money; in short not a serious revolutionary. And all of that of course was true.

I told Nancy that I would consider Kinshasa. I met with Susan Rice, the Assistant Secretary, and she said she would like to have me in Kinshasa, so I agreed to do so. During the course of that confirmation process, Kabila was assassinated on January 16, 2001, and his son Joseph succeeded him.

Q: Who assassinated him?

HOOKS: One of his own. The person who actually killed him was one of his young guards around the palace. It was never clarified what exactly transpired, but there was a lot of speculation that this young guy was put up to the job by some of the barons of Kabila's own party who felt that Kabila was getting a little out of control, and they feared for their own positions.

When I arrived in Kinshasa, Joseph Kabila was the new president. I had been in Brazzaville when Kabila came to power in Kinshasa. Mandela had tried to arrange a meeting between Mobutu and Kabila to affect a smooth transition of power. The first time Mandela tried to set up this meeting, Kabila didn't come because he said that the French were trying to kill him. The meeting was rescheduled, and Kabila finally did come to Pointe Noire, but he knew at that point that power was his and therefore he was not prepared to enter into a power-sharing arrangement. Kabila agreed not to kill Mobutu, and would allow Mobutu to remain in Congo, not as president, but as former president. And of course, Mobutu turned that offer down.

When I arrived in Kinshasa, we were trying to establish a new relationship with Joseph Kabila, and to move the country back from some of the more capricious behavior of Kabila, Senior. Kabila, Senior had been handpicked by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and brought to Kinshasa by Rwandan forces. Once Kabila got into power, he decided he wanted to be independent of Kagame, and he turned against Kagame. Initially, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces was James Kabarebe, who was Rwandan, and later became Chief of Staff of Rwandan troops. Kabila saw himself as the president of a big country, and he wasn't prepared to play second fiddle to Kagame, the president of a little country. Kagame did not take kindly to Kabila's insolence, and this led to another invasion by the Rwandans. It also led to the witch hunt against Tutsis and anyone resembling Tutsi or anyone whom Kabila didn't like. There was serious ethnic cleansing in Kinshasa. A lot of people were killed.

Q: When was this?

HOOKS: This was in 1998. When I arrived in 2001, the country was divided into five parts, controlled by three large rebel groups and two client rebel groups. We were trying to establish a relationship with Joseph Kabila who was young, 29 years old at the time. He was trying to find his way as the new head of state and we were trying to guide him through that process.

I first met Joseph Kabila on June 18, 1997 when I was evacuated from Brazzaville. At the time, he was in charge of security at the airport. We were held up on the tarmac for 45 minutes to an hour. I think I reported in the previous session that we had six Marines who were wearing flak jackets. The Congolese in Kinshasa were so paranoid under Kabila, Senior that seeing foreigners in flak jackets on the tarmac in Kinshasa led to panic, and they actually pulled up a truckload of military armed to the teeth, and parked them off to the side, even though the Embassy in Kinshasa had explained who we were, why we were coming there and what we were doing. Somehow the message hadn't gotten through the system. Communications obviously were poor, After 45 minutes or so I was invited to see Commandant Joseph. Commandant Joseph was a young man in military uniform, I took the RSO from Kinshasa with me and we met Commandant Joseph in the VIP Lounge. Some soldiers spoke to him in Swahili and then left, and there was just the three of us in the Lounge. He said to me very quietly in English, "Who are you?" I explained who I was and why we were there and he said, "Who are the military?" I explained to him who these Marines were and why they were there and why they were in uniform. Well, there's no problem. These military, could they take off their uniforms? I said, "The problem is they don't have other clothes. We have just been evacuated. They have nothing but what is on their backs and when we get to the embassy in Kinshasa, they will probably borrow some civilian clothes from the Marines there, but they have no other clothes at this point." "Could they take off their flak jackets?" he asked. I replied: "They could take off their flak jackets if that's the issue and have T-shirts on." He agreed to that. By the way, when I offered to speak French, Joseph told me that he did not speak French.

The RSO was going to have the Embassy trucks cars come around the back of the airport to pick us up at the side of the airplane. That was a problem for Commandant Joseph, so we agreed that we would walk through the VIP lounge and meet the trucks and cars out front.

When I arrived in Kinshasa in 2001, four years after this incident, President Kabila and I talked about our previous meeting when I presented my credentials to him. I think that got us off on a good footing and we had a very good relationship the three years I was there.

Q: How much of a rule did Joseph Kabila have? This country is sort of split or what?

HOOKS: The country was divided into three different camps; there was the Kabila camp who had also been rebels. There was the Jean-Pierre Bemba camp. Bemba is a guest of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, and then there was the Rwandan Tutsi contingent with Ruberwa out in the east. Each of those two rebel groups also had clients that controlled certain territory. That meant that the country was divided into five different parts. There was a UN peacekeeping operation there, and a very fragile regime in Kinshasa still reeling from the assassination of Kabila Senior. Kabila's rule was very capricious, and I think had he not been assassinated he would have been overthrown. That's just my own speculation. When I arrived, Joseph Kabila was trying to establish his own authority. After all, he was only 29 years old. He was dealing with his father's old buddies who saw themselves as the rightful heirs. Since they couldn't agree among

themselves, they put Joseph in power in the hopes that they could manipulate him. You know, young, inexperienced; he'll do what you tell him to do.

Joseph is a very interesting guy. He was smart enough not to get rid of all the old guys right away, although he got rid of some of them fairly quickly. He kept a few. He was trying to establish his own authority but doing so slowly and politically. He didn't know what the limitations of his own power were at that time. He knew he had a military; he had been chief of staff. He knew the military itself was practically nonexistent as a viable organization. It was an empty shell, by and large. He was very unsure of his own power, and he was trying to establish himself. Kabila also faced the issue of his own identify, whether he was really Congolese. Was he really Kabila Senior's son, a question often asked in the streets. Was he really Congolese? He was a kid who was like a fish out of water in some respects. He was very quiet, very reserved. As I discussed with his closest advisor, Katumba, whatever his passport may be, whatever his biological parentage may be, he was not Congolese in culture. That was not surprising. He grew up in Dar es Salam. He was Tanzanian in culture and Tanzanian in language, that is, in Swahili. His Swahili was the pure Swahili of Tanzania, not the Swahili of southern Congo. He didn't speak French very well. As I noted earlier, when I met him at the airport, he didn't speak French at all.

When he became president of the country, his French was very weak. He probably had maybe a 3/3 in French. In any public situation he never spoke French. He would always say a word of welcome, he would say one or two sentences, and then he would turn to one of his advisers to explain whatever policies he wanted to explain or answer any visitors' questions. He would talk in English in one-on-one situations, but where French was the language, he would always ask one of his advisers to explain the issue. His French improved quite a lot while I was there, and I could tell by the time I left he was becoming more comfortable in French, although clearly there were still nuances of the language he had not mastered.

Here was a young man who felt almost like a foreigner in his own country. He didn't speak French, which was the official language, and he couldn't speak Swahili in public because of his accent. It is a difference like between British English and the English let's say of Arkansas or Texas. As soon as he spoke Swahili, people knew he was not from Congo because he spoke the pure Swahili of Tanzania.

He spoke English very well. That was the language of his education, but that was not an official language in Congo. He had all these handicaps to deal with. He was also trying to manage his father's old buddies, many of whom were really thuggish. In fact, some months after I arrived, he had a crisis between his father's buddy who was Minister of Justice. The Minister had come to Philadelphia, gotten a master's degree, married an American woman, worked as a social worker in Philadelphia, then went to Congo to hook up with Kabila Senior. He was really a thuggish guy.

At one point President Kabila said to me, "The minister is threatening me." He told me this, the American ambassador. The day before the Minister had made public comments that to me looked unacceptable for a minister to be talking about his own president. The President acknowledged that the Minister had threatened him. I said, "Mr. President, this is very serious. It is very serious, first of all, when a minister threatens the president, but it is also very serious in terms of the way it is

perceived in this country. He was really stepping on your toes and your authority. This is very dangerous. If you don't nip this in the bud, it will get worse."

When I arrived in Congo, the key issue was how to move Congo through a process that would lead to elections? We wanted to dialog with the various parties. We wanted to bring them together to reach some agreement so we could have elections. The peacekeeping operation there was a very expensive operation. Congo is a huge country. My mission when I first arrived was to establish contact with all the parties, foster some sort of dialogue, and get them to move to some sort of agreement where there could be elections that would help to reestablish legitimacy. After all, Kabila Senior had come to power on the back of a foreign government.

Q: Rwanda

HOOKS: The Rwandan military brought Kabila Senior to power. He had not been elected. He had been a rebel, and I occasionally had to remind President Joseph Kabila of that fact. He would characterize the opposition as rebels. I said, "Mr. President, bear in mind how your own father came into power." He also came to power through a rebellion. Former President Mobutu initially treated Kabila Senior as an insignificant rebel. I said, "That's part of the equation we are dealing with here, and it is one of the reasons why we are where we are today in terms of legitimacy and other questions." He would recognize the fact in an intellectual sense, although he really didn't want to hear it. However, to put things in perspective, I had to explain to him that part of the problem in Congo was the issue of legitimacy of the regime.

I had a very interesting situation in Kinshasa. There was a group called Le Groupe des singes (monkeys), a play on the French word Sages (wise men), composed of the UNSRSG, the Belgian ambassador, the American ambassador, the French Ambassador and the British Ambassador. We would meet once a week to discuss current issues. We occasionally would organize travel to rebel-held areas and bring in the Russians and Chinese for these trips. They were not part of the Groupe des Singes. They were part of the UN Security Council P-5, plus the Belgians. The purpose of these trips was to carry on a dialog with the various rebel groups in order to influence their behavior.

When I went off on my own to the east at one point the French ambassador was quite taken aback. He wanted to know why the American ambassador was going off on his own to visit with the rebels? The Belgian Ambassador and I explained that we all had contacts with the rebels. It wasn't just the P-5. We needed to work together and coordinate within the Groupe des Singes, but that did not preclude everyone from having contact with the rebels by telephone and otherwise.

It was a fascinating period of time trying to work with the rebel groups. I traveled frequently to the territories held by the rebels. I was able to bring in a C-12 aircraft which used to be stationed in the Ivory Coast before being moved to Ghana. The C-12 was ideal for a country like Congo where there were no roads. The distances are enormous and I could visit each rebel group in the area they controlled..

Q: What kind of plane was it?

HOOKS: C-12.

Q: Could you describe it?

HOOKS: It's a twin engine, small aircraft that can carry about 18 people. The USG maintained 2 or 3 in Africa. The one we used in Congo was parked in Cote d'Ivoire and then Ghana. We could bring it in every few months and use it to fly around the country for about a week at the time to meet with contacts. It belonged to the U.S. Air Force. It can land on very short runways, unpaved of course. It was an invaluable asset to have. It allowed me to know all the various parties quite well because I met with them on a regular basis.

Q: I have seen newspaper accounts saying there is a war that is killing and displacing millions of people going on under sort of the canopy of the jungle practically and it is virtually unreported on. Was that fair to say or not?

HOOKS: Yes, it is fair to say. No one was really interested in it. One of the problems when you work in Africa is that you really don't have a constituency in the United States that is interested in what you are doing. The African American community has traditionally been focused on trying to improve its own situation in American society and, secondly, it is typical for the African American community to identify with all of Africa rather than just one or two countries. Because of the language barrier, the African-American community tends to have more contacts with the English-speaking countries of Africa. The community is generally not well informed on the specifics of any given country. Congo, of course is one that people didn't know very much about. There was very little coverage of events, especially in the eastern part of the country. It was very dangerous. There were no permanent correspondents out there. Occasionally people would come and go, but there was very little international reporting. You saw few news stories on CNN.

I recall that CNN covered the volcano eruption in Goma; the eruption made for spectacular photos. The cameramen would fly over it at night and photograph it. It looks great on CNN for 10 seconds, but there was very little coverage of what was happening even a few miles away. There was a UN force present, actually one of the most expensive UN operations in history. There was no one back in Washington who was focused on it. No one in the Senate or House was really focused on it.

There was an African-American Congresswoman (McKinney) from Georgia who was interested in Congo, but I think she was not well regarded here in Washington as she was seen as too radical. Even though she was a democrat, she was extremely critical of the Clinton Administration. Unless there was some major event like a volcano or major offensive, there was no news coverage. Yes, there were still attacks on villages. People were being killed, but it wasn't a major war that got people's attention.

Q: You talk about major offenses. You know, it seems sort of like the tide going back and forth. From the point of view of an American diplomat, were you looking at who controls the government and if there is a major offensive it takes two thirds of the country and then recedes back, then an awful lot of people are killed and displaced . Does it have any lasting effect?

HOOKS: Well, it does have a lasting effect. Congo was one of the saddest cases in Africa. At independence in 1960 it had one of the best infrastructures on the continent. Yes, the Belgians, especially King Leopold, had exploited the country. However, in order to exploit he had to build infrastructure. When the Belgian Government took over from Leopold, it built infrastructure. In 1960 Congo was endowed with some of the best infrastructure in Africa.

While I was in Congo, driving outside Kinshasa was unthinkable; there were no viable roads. The climate is very unforgiving. Without proper maintenance, roads are reclaimed by the luxuriant vegetation. I recall a couple that had lived in Congo for many years; he was from Belgium, and she was from South Africa. They talked about when they got married in 1959 they drove from Cape Town to Kinshasa in a sports car. In 2001 and 2002 when I was there, it was simply unthinkable to drive from one city to another in Congo. There was a road that during the dry season led from Kinshasa to Matadi, but during the rainy season it was impassible. Driving anywhere else outside Kinshasa was impossible. The country was a wealthy country with vast resources, one of the wealthiest countries in the world in terms of resources. It has everything in abundance. It's got gold, diamonds, copper, oil offshore; it's got everything and yet Mobutu and company had ruined the country. The money had just been skimmed off; debt had piled up, domestic debt, foreign debt. Congolese somehow had accepted that. Unlike in Egypt where people take to the streets and riot if bread is raised a few pennies, somehow the Congolese had passively accepted not getting paid and watching as their standard of living declined.

Then Congo became in a sense the victim of the machinations of its neighbors because it was weak. Paul Kagame of Rwanda suddenly became the master of the situation in Congo. Many of those responsible for the genocide fled to Congo; some returned home while others remained in Congo. This created a problem for Kagame, who wanted to crush any opposition to his regime.

Kagame suddenly found that Mobutu was an old tiger who was losing his teeth, but was unwilling to step aside. He picked up Kabila, who was sort of a gadabout in eastern Africa, and put him nominally in charge of a rebellion that was little more than a front for Rwandan troops, who faced very little resistance as they moved across the country.

Zimbabwean troops complained bitterly about the fact that they would have a scrimmage with the Rwandans and the Congolese troops were drunk. Why should the Congolese fight? They were not getting paid, and if they got killed or wounded, no one took care of their families. As a result Kabila and the Rwandans were able to march across the country. Kabila was a very capricious guy, really paranoid. His management style was just as chaotic as that of Mobutu. He of course was very hungry and he wanted to skim off as much money as he possibly could.

Congo had at one time been one of the jewels of Africa that had really lost it all. I recall when I was there talking to students, many of them would comment that many of the facilities at the University of Kinshasa no longer functioned. The Olympic-sized pool with diving board was no longer functioning; it was just a breeding ground for mosquitoes. In the University library, you saw no books on the shelves, none, zero. Why? Because termites had gotten into the wooden shelves, so the librarians stored the books in an underground damp basement area of the library where there was one fluorescent light in the ceiling. To find a book you needed a flashlight to search the shelves. The musty smell of rotting books was overwhelming. Of course, the students couldn't get

jobs when they graduated because diplomas were practically worthless as the standards had fallen to the wayside. Students could buy their grades and their diplomas.

The country had really gone down the drain, and people talked about the fact that the previous generation had had all sorts of benefits which the younger generation no longer had. It was sad to see the waste of human and natural resources in a country with so much potential. It takes talent to destroy that much in such a short period of time.

Culturally Congo was a very vibrant country. The music of Congo was heard throughout Africa. When I traveled around Africa with ACRI, I heard Congolese music in market places all over the continent.

Congo is a huge country; 60 million people being humiliated by smaller neighbors who then proceeded to exploit the country. Rwandans looted everything they could find: equipment, tools, furniture, etc. They dismantled equipment and took it back to Rwanda. The Rwandan army got involved in metal exploitation. Angolans creamed off what they could as well. It was a sad situation. Congo had been traumatized by the rapacious nature of Leopold's regime that had been somewhat moderated by the Belgian Government. Independence just sort of came overnight, instigated by a few politicians like Lumumba. Lumumba was not a manager, he was a politician. He was a great orator but not a manager. Within weeks of independence the government was beginning to come apart at the seams, and serious problems arose in the southern part of the country.

The country had really been traumatized for a hundred years. However, I never saw the abject poverty in Congo or elsewhere in Africa that I saw in Haiti. There were many poor people, and some cases of extreme poverty, but I never saw the generalized poverty in Africa that I saw in Haiti.

Q: What tools did you have? What sort of consulates did you have or did you have consulates?

HOOKS: We had no consulates. There had been a consulate in Lubumbashi in the south, but it had been closed well before my arrival in Kinshasa in 2001. We only had the embassy. We had very limited resources. Washington was unprepared to give very many resources, so basically we had to leverage the prestige we have as a superpower. When it came to money, the Belgians would step in and provide that. We never would. We were not going to provide troops. We were not going to provide any serious help, although we had previously had some serious aid programs back in the '60s, '70s and '80s. However, starting in 1991, all that was finished. There had been some riots in 1991 when Mobutu was first facing serious problems of security in Kinshasa itself. Mobutu basically let the troops loot as compensation for not getting paid. We were not going to put any funds in there, even for the election of the president.

Basically what I had to do was rely upon the political prestige of the United States to maintain a high profile in dealing with all the parties. It was important to all the parties to have a relationship with the United States, and that was the asset that I had.

Q: Basically, this was a write-off, isn't it? You had a government that didn't really rule most of its country.

HOOKS: That can be said for many countries in Africa where the government controls only a small part of its territory. When I was in Kinshasa, that was definitely the case. Rebel groups controlled various parts of the territory and Kabila and his government controlled less than half of the country. That was the reality of the situation.

One thing I think is important for the record; oftentimes Congo has been portrayed as the major pawn in the cold war in terms of Africa. I think that case is often overstated. That was something I thought about a lot when I was there. We had basically helped to bring Mobutu into power, and I think there is something to that, probably because Kasavubu, the first president, was so over his head. Patrice Lumumba was an eloquent loudmouth but not a serious politician in terms of being able to move the country forward. As a result, I think Washington and Brussels were looking to reestablish some degree of order. I think there was an effort to encourage Mobutu to launch a coup d'état.

In the first few years he was in power, Mobutu was not too bad, but power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. As his regime became more and more corrupt, he creamed off all the resources, not just a percentage but all the resources, and the country started going downhill. We didn't step in and say, 'OK, it's time to go.' We regretted the situation, but we didn't take an active role in getting him out. After all, there are many other cases of corrupt rulers, but his is the most egregious one. He had more resources to play with, and he completely ruined the country.

He ruined it in every sense; he ruined it a financial sense, in terms of infrastructure that just crumbled, and he ruined it morally. Corruption was just a way of life. When I arrived in 2001, for instance, not one single landline was in the country, not one. Not a question of a few hundred or a few thousand, but zero. They were starting to get cell phones, but only in Kinshasa. But he completely ruined the infrastructure. The health system, of course, had collapsed. One saw only the shells of huge hospitals that the Belgians had built. The education system had collapsed.

Q: This in a way is one of the most harrowing accounts I have ever heard. Here is really a major country that is absolutely devastated and there doesn't seem to be any particular prospect of it recovering.

HOOKS: Well, I am optimistic about Congo and Congo's future, but it is one of the most dramatic cases of a country that has been slowly destroyed. One of the things I used to cite as an example of that was the number of polio victims. I have never seen so many victims of polio as I have seen in Kinshasa, where you see lots of men, you don't see the women so much, mostly men crawling around on their hands and knees in the streets. They didn't have crutches or wheelchairs so grown men crawl around on the streets on their hands and knees. For less than a dollar they could have had an immunization that would have saved them from being victims of this disease. In other words, the money spent on buying one of Mobutu's palaces could have vaccinated the entire country from this disease.

There was something very demeaning, very humiliating about seeing a grown man crawling around the streets on his hands and knees like an animal. That was something I was very touched by. You would see everyday lots of people in this condition. If they had wheelchairs, the wheelchairs were provided by various humanitarian organizations, not by the government. To me that was symbolic of a country that was paralyzed by the way it was run and had been deeply humiliated.

You take a case like Congo, and then look at Japan. What resources does Japan have? They have few resources other than the people. Congo had everything, and yet somehow the people were denied the benefits of the wealth. The wealth was squandered for the personal benefit of a small coterie of people, and of course when money is free like that, it has no value. Mobutu just squandered billions, and at the end when he finally left, a sick and broken man, his country was also sick and broken.

All of a sudden Kabila came to power on the promise of getting rid of corruption and restoring democracy; he did neither. It was really one of the saddest cases of broken promises.

I remain optimistic about Congo for the fact that it does have resources. With the right management of the country, the people of Congo could live a very decent standard of living, with decent health care, job opportunities and so forth. It's got water, sunshine, rich soil. It was a major agricultural producer under the Belgians. It could be a major producer today. It has an internal market of now about 65 million people. It could easily have industry. Whereas the South Africans are an engine of growth of the southern part of the continent, Congo should play that role in the middle part of the continent. Instead of being an agent of growth for the smaller, poorer countries in the region, it sort of drags down the rest of the continent because it is so big.

I think a few things are important to say in terms of policy. While in recent years the Bush administration has put more money into Congo, traditionally the African continent is always at the bottom of the scale in terms of strategic importance, and there are reasons for that. It also means we are not terribly engaged even politically, and this is something difficult for Africans to understand. They say, "You're the superpower. You should be doing all kinds of things." I heard that many times, "If you would just say the word," -- whatever that word is -- "then the security problem here would be solved and the country would be reunited." Whatever the problem was, many Congolese thought that the United States could resolve the issue. I tried to explain many times how we were in Afghanistan and how we had traded threatening words with the Taliban. It didn't work and we had been forced to invade and spent billions of dollars and still had not resolved that problem. It is easy to get engaged. It is hard however to work out an exit strategy.

In Congo, one of the problems was no one really wanted to engage. It was so big, so vast and with such serious problems, that most governments wanted very little engagement. Even the French, who led a peacekeeping operation because the UN forces couldn't do it up in the Ituri Region where there were really egregious human rights violations, had a very effective but limited engagement before turning the responsibility back over to the UN. A UN peacekeeping force was there, but a UN peacekeeping force is always handicapped by a mandate that is established in New York and does not always fit the circumstances on the ground. Many participating contingents either have limited capacity to perform or handicapped by their own command structure.

I will cite the example of the Uruguayans. At one point rebels were coming into the city of Bukavu. The UN was trying to block their entry. The South Africans were able to respond within 30 minutes. However, the Uruguayans took over three hours before they agreed to move. At that point it was pointless because the rebels had already taken over much of the city. The Uruguayans had first gotten in touch with their command in Montevideo, and given the time difference, where do you find someone at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning in Uruguay who can make a decision, and what decision can they make if they are not on the ground? The Uruguayan contingent was basically ineffective.

Washington wanted Congo to move in the right direction, but was unprepared to invest very much to make that happen. I used the prestige of the United States as a superpower to have a very high profile in order to have political leverage with the various groups. They all wanted to have good relations with the United States. We were fortunate we didn't have a history of colonialism in Africa, and therefore we were not tainted as the French or Belgians or Brits. That helped us a great deal.

All the rebel groups wanted to have contact with me. I was in contact with them by telephone frequently. I traveled out to see them regularly, and that helped to build a relationship with them.

As you recall, Jean Pierre Bemba went into the Central African Republic several times in support of President Patassé, and when Bemba's troops went into a frenzy of looting and raping, Washington asked me to contact Bemba and demand that he put an end to the raping and looting. The fact that I knew Bemba and we were on a very first name basis meant that I could raise any subject with him. Naturally, he denied any misbehavior. I had to insist that it was serious misbehavior. He needed to bring a halt to it or it could have serious consequences for the future, which of course, it has: he is now before the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

Washington's policy for Congo was to bring about stability. I was urged to work toward finding a long-term solution, but Washington was not prepared to give resources to make that happen. As long as it remained relatively quiet, Washington was focusing on other issues and not on Congo. When there was some flare up, decision-makers would glance our way.

The South Africans took the lead and tried to put together a peace conference in Sun City. The goal was to bring all the parties together in an effort to reach some sort of agreement that would allow elections. Assistant Secretary of State Walter Kansteiner was very interested and worked closely with the South Africans. He asked me to go to Sun City to be supportive of the South Africans.

One of the things I found in dealing with South Africans, both in Congo and Ivory Coast, is that the South Africans don't fully understand the Francophone countries. They tend to overlook the fact that these are not South Africans; they are Congolese (or Ivorian). They have a different culture, they have a different political culture, and that led to a lot of confusion. South Africans did a lot of good, whether it was Mandela in dealing with Kabila and Mobutu or Sun City, but sometimes their arrogance and impatience with the Congolese made it difficult for them to play the role of mediator.

Q: From what I gather, I have never been to Africa, but Congo is forest jungle and South Africa doesn't have that. It is a whole different climate, culture, topography.

HOOKS: Exactly. It's a different climate, a different culture, and even the political culture is very different. When I went to South Africa to Sun City to maintain contact with the Congolese and to encourage them in the right direction, it was like trying to herd kittens in a small, shallow box.

The South Africans are very sensitive about their leadership role in Africa. When I went to Sun City, I met with the South African ambassador shortly after I got there. I knew him very well from Kinshasa. I explained the role that Walter Kansteiner envisioned for me, and offered to meet with President Mbeki's advisor handling the negotiations if she wanted to see me. The South African ambassador called me a day or so later and said, "She would like to meet you. If you go to this hotel and to this room, she will be happy to meet with you." He was not going to join us, however.

I went there and was ushered into a small sitting room. The receptionist said to me: "Please have a seat. She will be with you shortly." The receptionist walked out and five minutes later another lady came in and sat down without introducing herself. We started talking and at first she was rather reserved. Then she got to the point where she was on edge and she said, "You know, you come here to Sun City and you are carrying on parallel negotiations with the Congolese without even letting us know." I told her that I didn't understand what she was referring to. First of all, the day I arrived I met with the South African ambassador (he had just joined us at that point) and I told him why I was there. I went on to say that Walter Kansteiner was in touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs." She angrily replied: "He hasn't talked to me. I am the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He hasn't mentioned this to me." I said, "Well, maybe there is a communication problem, but I know Walter has been in touch with the Deputy Foreign Minister. I have known all the Congolese parties for some time, and I am here to encourage them to work with you on finding a solution."

She accepted those explanations. When she looked at her Ambassador to Kinshasa, he just put his head down and said nothing. Thereafter, she wanted to see me quite frequently, and I knew that I had won her confidence when she called one Sunday afternoon and said, "Could you come over and brief me?" She had gone back to Pretoria and she said, "I haven't even had time to take off my hat." I said to myself: "Ah, she comes back from Pretoria and she calls me to find out what is going on, not her own Ambassador. That must mean I am useful to her."

President Kabila sent two of his closest advisers to Sun City. I was frequently in touch with them, but I called President Kabila almost every day to brief him on my take of events and to give him a perspective that I doubted he was receiving from his advisers. I could also raise issues and encourage him to show more flexibility in his position. I missed a day calling him, and when I called the following day, he said, "You didn't call me yesterday." I said, "Well, I didn't have anything to report to you." He replied, "Well, I was waiting for your phone call." I figured he found our conversations to be useful.

The Foreign Minister of South Africa called me at one point and asked me to call President Kabila and persuade him to accept a proposal the South Africans had put on the table. I said, "Madame Foreign Minister, I can do that and I will do that, but isn't it better for you to call him? You are the hostess and you are running this conference. I suggest that you talk to him directly. I will be happy

to call and tell him that the United States Government strongly endorses this view, but I think it is good for you to communicate with him directly. She said, "Well, I haven't been able to get hold of him directly. If you could call him I think it would be very helpful." I said, "I am happy to do so."

It was interesting how we were able to play an important role in communications in Sun City in helping to bring about an agreement. I told various parties trying to hold out that if they didn't come together, we would support a partial agreement and leave them aside. I tried to play the role of intermediary in close collaboration with South Africa. It was really a fascinating experience. Ultimately, there was a partial agreement that came out of that conference that led ultimately to the elections.

We were engaged; we had the prestige of being the superpower. The Congolese expected far more from us. Expectations were greatly inflated and unrealistic in what we could do. One of the challenges you face when you are ambassador in a country like Congo and you have so few resources available is managing expectations.

Q: Zaire and Mobutu had the reputation of being a CIA country where you had Mobutu who was supposed to be supportive of Savimbi. This was all open but I was wondering...

HOOKS: That occurred in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Q: Oh, I understand that. My question is you had this huge country; you have only got a medium sized embassy, no consulates. How well were you served by the intelligence community? You've got missionaries, you've got other people: Military intelligence, central intelligence. Newspaper people, the media doesn't get in there very much. How well did you know what was going on in the country?

HOOKS: You have touched on a critical problem, which is communications. How do you get information? As you know, there are no serious newspapers. There were several newspapers, but they are basically rags. It is mostly editorial comment and highly politicized as the newspapers belonged to the parties or to the government. They engage in very little factual reporting. The press would sometimes bring your attention to the fact that there was a problem, but you won't necessarily understand what the nature of the problem was just by reading the press. What you have to do is rely upon personal contacts. It is a country where informal networks get things done. The economic sector is largely informal. Even in the government itself, things operate on a very informal basis. Institutions don't work very well. Personalities and political ties are what count. To get information you basically had to be in touch with people to find out what was going on.

There were no newspapers to keep me informed, there were no correspondents around the country reporting on events. Kabila's staff only knew what he was willing to share with them. He ran the government as a one man show. The situation was much the same out in the east. It was important to have personal contacts, to be on the phone, to visit them as often as you could in order to get information.

In addition to my political network, business people were very helpful. I found the missionary community to be very helpful, not as an intelligence network but as an information network. Many

of them had been there two, three or four generations. They grew up in the country, and they had their own perspective, but they could at least tell you certain things that were happening in their areas and that was very helpful.

I worked closely with other embassies, although I had to be very careful with them. I was closest with the Belgian Ambassador of all the ambassadors. He was slightly flamboyant and wanted to play a big role. After all, where does Belgium get to play with the big boys? Not too many places in the world, but Congo was a case where they could. Indeed, they had more resources on the ground than anyone else. They had a large Belgian community, a lot of investments, and they were very jealous of the diamond flow into Antwerp to keep that industry alive and healthy. They had a lot of vested interests in Congo. They had lots of contacts. A lot of people had studied in Belgium, although their information wasn't always good. It was important to have several sources of information in order to get some sense of what was going on. Since all the rebel leaders wanted to have a relationship with the United States, they were very open to meeting with me and maintaining contacts.

Q: Did you ever feel under threat going around visiting and all?

HOOKS: Not at all. The rebels were too happy to see me and wanted to maintain a good relationship with the United States. I didn't see anyone as a threat. No one had a bone to pick with us, so to speak. They all wanted to be in our good graces, and therefore they all received me extremely cordially. When I talked to them on the phone, they were always very friendly. They welcomed that contact. They called me when they wanted to send a message. I served as a mediator between the various parties. For instance, if Kabila wanted to respond to Jean-Pierre Bemba, he would often ask me to pass the message to Bemba.

Q: So there wasn't this sitting there, OK, I am head of the state. You don't talk to rebels, kind of thing?

HOOKS: Joseph Kabila was a little more open and realistic. I am convinced that Kabila Senior would have been thrown out of power within a year or so had he not been assassinated because he was so capricious, so unpredictable and so provocative in his language.

Joseph succeeded his father and the provocative language stopped immediately. He was more willing to have contacts with the rebels. Of all the leaders Congo has had, I think he has been the best thing that has happened to Congo since independence.

You have to handle Joseph very carefully. In a one-on-one situation he and I had a very good relationship, and I could talk to him about any subject. In public he is very reserved and you couldn't communicate with him very well. I will give you an example. Kabila is very quiet, very reserved, and somewhat short. Bemba is a big tall guy, must be six feet three at least, a big burly guy, very loud, aggressive, very smooth in a certain way. He came from one of the wealthy families, educated in Belgium, very smooth, very charming guy, but very aggressive. He and Joseph were total opposites of each other.

Joseph didn't like talking with Bemba because Bemba would launch full force into a list of his grievances. He raised every resentment, and poor Joe would just sit there and listen to all this and then hang up the phone.

I was trying to facilitate communications between them. The president felt that Bemba should call him. Bemba felt that Kabila should initiate the call. I recall at one point trying to talk to these two guys to re-establish contact. I said to Kabila: "Mr. President, you are the president. You want to be accepted as the president. You should call him." Kabila replied: "When I call him he goes into a long litany of all his problems." I told the President that I understood. I told him that I would coach Bemba to make sure that Bemba toned down his approach.

I called Bemba and told him that Kabila was going to call him. I said: Jean-Pierre, Kabila is going to call you, and when he does you say, how are you? Things are going fine. Thank the President for calling, and that's about it. Don't raise any complaint whatsoever, because if you do, you overwhelm the guy, so no complaints." I had to coach him on what he was supposed to say. I told Bemba that Kabila feels intimidated when Bemba talks to him. Bemba said: "OK, OK, fine." I told Bemba that a successful first contact would encourage Kabila to call him more often, and they could get into the substance of issues, but that he could not unload both barrels during the first conversation.

Bemba agreed to do so. Finally Bemba called the president and they started talking back and forth. That helped to build a relationship between the two of them that started moving towards a dialogue and ultimately towards the elections, although after elections the process fell apart.

Initially, President Kabila had been adamant that he wanted no vice president. He ultimately decided to have three vice-presidents, and that was a very clever move on his part. One vice president was a threat, but three vice presidents were a committee, and committees don't work very well.

When I was there the country was undergoing an evolution, and I give credit largely to President Kabila. He toned the rhetoric down, he was open to contact, he was open to mediation, and he was willing to make a decision to share a degree of power in order to bring the rebel groups in as vice presidents along with one of his own guys. It did not water down the institution of the Presidency, but it brought the rebels into the fold and made it possible for the country to move toward elections. The time I was there was in the preparatory phase, trying to move the country toward elections, trying to improve communications and trying to repair the fences to a degree they could actually move to elections.

I remain optimistic about Congo due to the fact they did go through elections and the elections were relatively fair and free elections. That was very good. The government has not been terribly responsive afterwards, but it will take time.

This is a county that has vast resources and potential. Some countries have very little potential. Congo has huge resources, and if the resources are properly managed, the population could have a decent standard of living. The institutions of course have to be strengthened but elections were a step in the right direction.

I still remain optimistic. I think there are some very talented younger politicians there. They have to be given a chance to gain experience in governance. The aftermath of corruption is extremely difficult to deal with. When there is a climate of corruption, it is very hard to overcome it, simply because that's the way it is done. It would require, of course, more transparency and more oversight, but over time I think that will be the case.

Q: You left there when?

HOOKS: I left there in 2004.

MELISSA SANDERSON
Political Counselor
Kinshasa (2003-2006)

Ms. Sanderson was born and raised in Ohio and educated at Xavier University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1985, she had several tours of duty at the State Department in Washington, DC and served abroad in Guadalajara, Ottawa, Madrid, Warsaw, San Salvador, Moscow and Kinshasa. She was a Polish speaking officer and a specialist in Technology and Arms Control matters. Ms. Sanderson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

SANDERSON: I went to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kinshasa.

Q: You left in, this would be 2002 or so?

SANDERSON: 2003. I left Russia in 2003, direct transfer to Kinshasa.

Q: OK. With your winter underwear, I guess.

SANDERSON: Yeah (laughs). Yeah, well you may have noticed this pattern where I go from hot to cold all the time.

Q: When did you go?

SANDERSON: Let's see. I left Moscow in -- let's see, it must have been either April or May of 2003.

Q: All right. Well then, you're off to the Congo. What was it called by this time? It kept changing names.

SANDERSON: Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Q: OK. And who was the ambassador there?

SANDERSON: When I first arrived it was Aubrey Hooks, but he left about three months after I got there. He had come out and reopened the embassy, because of course we had closed it down during the war. And so Aubrey was sent out along with Jim Swan, who was his DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), and of course who's now ambassador also in Africa. So at the time I arrived it was still a skeleton staff and a no dependents post, because we were still just trying to ramp everything back up.

Q: What was the situation in the Congo in 2003?

SANDERSON: The Congo had been at war since 1998 when a Congolese named Laurent Kabila invaded from Tanzania. Laurent Kabila had been in exile for, oh gosh, almost 20 years for fighting Mobutu. He was Katangan by birth and had been staging his rebel movement for a few years in the mountains in Katanga and actually there was a very famous visit by Che Guevara sent officially by Cuba to help try to train Laurent Kabila's revolutionary force. But apparently, Che found them too (chuckles), too undisciplined to be able to help and left about six or eight months after his arrival. And around that time Mobutu mobilized the military and chased Laurent Kabila and his followers into Tanzania. So in 1998, with the support of Rwanda, Laurent Kabila invaded Congo through Katanga Province. And successfully with an army mostly composed of child soldiers crossed the Congo on foot and captured Kinshasa driving Mobutu out. Then Laurent Kabila was installed as president in 1999, but he was assassinated in 2001. And the country then went back to war -- at first it resembled a Civil War because there were Congolese fighting Congolese. There was a force called the MLC (Movement for the Liberation of the Congo) led by a guy named Jean-Pierre Bemba, which was a proxy army for Ugandan interests. And there was an army called RCD (Rally for Congolese Democracy) loosely led by a guy named Azarias Ruberwa which was a proxy army for the Rwandans. And then Joseph Kabila, who was installed as president following his father's assassination, had the so-called official regular army at his disposal, and roughly speaking the country broke into three parts with the MLC controlling the northern section, and Orientale provinces and the RCD controlling the east (the two Kivu provinces and Maniema). The president controlled the rest of the country (Katanga Province, West and East Kasai, Bandundu, Bas-Congo, and Kinshasa). And this is the war that is frequently called Africa's World War because there were about five million casualties and a total of nine African nations involved before the end.

It was very terrible. And eventually the international community stepped in in 2002 and forced the warring parties to come to peace talks in Sun City in South Africa. Several African nations, including Angola, South Africa, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe were involved. And of course the United States, France, Belgium, Great Britain, and the United Nations. These were the principle players who brought the Congolese elements together, and essentially the international community imposed a transitional government on the Congolese in which power sharing was designed to keep everybody happy over the short term until we could get the country to elections. And so that government was finally negotiated and officially installed in May of 2003. So the situation in Congo when I was arrived was Kinshasa essentially was occupied by three armed camps. One part of the city was Jean-Pierre Bemba's stronghold with about 10,000 troops, even though the United Nations had told everybody they couldn't have more than 5,000. Jean-Pierre had ten. One part of the city was occupied by Azarias Ruberwa and the RCD with 5,000 troops. And the president controlled the high ground with about another 10,000 troops

sitting around. And even though a government structure had been laid out and accepted by the Congolese, when I first got there, there was no such thing as a Council of Ministers meeting or a Defense Council meeting or anything else, because all of the guys were convinced that if they actually gathered in one place they'd be killed by their enemy. So we had a kind of détente and embassies reopening and everyone trying to convince the Congolese to keep the peace.

Q: What was your job?

SANDERSON: I was the Political Counselor. So my job in a nutshell was to try to make as many friends as possible among all the various factions and help keep the peace until they could get to the elections. The elections were originally scheduled for 2004. The power sharing government was only supposed to be in place for a year. And of course, as you know, eventually we did manage to have the elections in 2006.

Q: Well, did the various military forces there -- I mean was there a real desire for compromise and reaching an agreement?

SANDERSON: Absolutely not, no (laughs). Absolutely not. Everyone was only interested in number one, staying alive, and number two, gaining as much personal power as possible and as much personal wealth, and number three, undercutting and making look bad as frequently as possible their multitude of enemies. So there constantly were things happening in the opaque way that is just so Congolese. There would be massacres in Orientale Province and mutual finger-pointing between the governing parties as to who was responsible. Massacres out in the East, same scenario. There were accusations of oh, corruption and everything else running around. So we spent a lot of time fighting fires. And particularly when it came to things like the massacres keeping people from leaving the government entirely and breaking the structure. And that almost happened twice. We almost lost the MLC on the first one and we almost lost the RCD on the second one. And there were a lot of late night negotiations and a lot of conciliation. Bill Swing was in charge of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission from 2003 to 2006 and he did a Herculean job in keeping his Congolese friendships that he had developed when he was U.S. ambassador to the Congo. He was really a key figure. And of course Aubrey Hooks, as I mentioned, left three months into my tour and he was replaced by Roger Meece as Ambassador. And Roger also had good friendships because when he came as ambassador it was actually his third time in the Congo. He had come initially as Political Counselor, he was back later as chargé when we closed the embassy. And he and Bill Swing worked so hard, along with everybody else of course, to keep the peace and get the elections organized and get the country back on a more democratic footing.

Q: Well the Congo for years had been almost a domain of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). At this point was the CIA a factor in trying to put things together?

SANDERSON: No, not at all. It was a State Department initiative. You know, anyone will tell you the Congo's always full of conspiracies. But in the transitional government period the Agency wasn't playing a big role. It was definitely State Department. It was Roger and Bill and me essentially. Because I had the great good fortunate to arrive at that time when everyone was so deeply suspicious of each other. And in an African context I'm a nice, harmless woman, but I'm a nice, harmless woman who represents a great power. So as I went around town introducing myself

to everyone, it began to dawn on people that hey, she's not just talking to me and my guys, she's talking to those guys over there. And so I can ask her to tell them what I want them to know. So pretty soon I was being an intermediary between the different factions and, you know, my house sort of became known as neutral ground because I would have dinner parties inviting leaders of the different factions promising everybody that you can come to my house, you won't be poisoned and you won't be killed (laughs). So they would come talk to each other (giggles).

Q: Well, did you -- I mean obviously this worked. But was this outside of the -- I won't say the traditional tribal -- first place, was this conflict basically tribal?

SANDERSON: No, not at all. It wasn't tribal at all in a classical sense. What prompted the second war was the assassination of Laurent Kabila. And of course to this day it's far from clear who arranged to have the trigger pulled. The actual shooter is well known, President Laurent Kabila was killed by a member of his personal bodyguard. But the question was who put him up to it. And there was all kinds of speculation at the time in 2001. The United States was accused, among others, because Madeline Albright, who was Secretary of State at the time, made no bones about not liking Laurent Kabila. She called him a thug. So there were accusations that the U.S. had had him killed, Rwanda, because Laurent Kabila had just recently thrown out his Rwandan allies to run Congo by himself. And so Rwanda was suspected, Uganda was suspected. President Laurent Kabila, who is now president, Joseph Kabila, was suspected. The Angolans were suspected. But that was the proximate trigger for the fighting. And of course within the president's family, they suspected certain individuals in Eastern Congo who were known to be allies with the Rwandans. So it started with the assassination of the president and then it became a power grab by these other strong men figures who all wanted to wind up President of the Republic.

Q: Well, did you feel you had anything you could hold out to these people, except to play the honest broker or what did you -- what could you work with?

SANDERSON: Well, me personally, I certainly was able to do the honest broker, because I was brutally honest. If I thought that any of the elements were on a good course I told them so, and if I thought they were on a bad course I told them so. But you know, it also was a question of none of these guys knew how to govern. So one of the big things that we had to offer was instructing them on how you govern in a democratic system, how you legitimately can enhance your position vis a vis those of others. How you can work to gain the trust of the population so that when we do have an election you get elected. Those were all very important factors. And obviously each faction wanted to court the favor of different elements of the international community. So I mean over time the Congolese themselves would start to say oh, you know, the United States and France, they like President Kabila. Oh, the Belgians, they like Jean-Pierre Bemba. Oh, the British, they like Azarias Ruberwa. And you know, it's kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy because the international group had set up an organization called the International Committee to Accompany the Transition, which went by its French acronym, CIAT. And CIAT was chaired by Bill Swing because we wanted an independent voice. And so the United Nations was chair of the CIAT. But all the key players were involved and some that weren't quite so key at the time, because membership was the United States, Britain, France, Belgium, Norway, China, Japan, Angola, South Africa, and -- let me see, there's one African country that I'm forgetting -- oh, Zimbabwe. And the CIAT would meet regularly in the United Nations headquarters to discuss how to help the Congolese

government move forward. So for instance, if the Defense Committee was running into a blockage over the issue of pay to the soldiers, what the pay rate should be set at and so forth, CIAT would meet and discuss comparable situations in Africa and present a proposal to the Defense Council on what CIAT thought would be reasonable. And same thing for, you know, if there was an issue between the president and the vice presidents. CIAT would meet to develop our policy position and explain to all sides why it was not in their interest to be behaving so aggressively and why they needed to go to elections. That was a frequent mantra, why you need to go to the elections.

Q: Well, was there any mechanism within this international organization to come to a single point of view?

SANDERSON: Oh yeah, the majority always prevailed. There sometimes were quite length debates, but in the end the majority always prevailed. And that was the case when it came to organizing elections as well because the CIAT played an extremely key role in organizing the elections in 2006. You know, the various leading embassies provided advisors to help establish the first independent Congolese electoral body and provided advisors on how to write a constitution, because that was an important step that had to be finished before we could go to elections. The country had no democratically voted constitution. They were still using one that Mobutu had developed back in the late '70s. So the first thing we had to do was help them write a constitution and then have a plebiscite so that the population could vote yay or nay on the proposed constitution. And that of course by itself was a very lengthy process because there was no common point of view among the Congolese on any key element in the constitution. How long the term should be for the president, how long the term should be for the legislature, how many times could you be reelected, how old did you have to be to be a member of the parliament or to be president, how young, et cetera. No common points of view on any of this whatsoever. What should be the structure of government? Should there be a strong president and a vice president, which is what we had in the transition? Or should we have a parliamentary style with a prime minister and a relatively weak president? My goodness, that debate dragged on for two years. We had the a constitutional vote, the plebiscite on December 18th, 2005. And that finally set the stage for getting to the elections.

Q: Well, how important was the fact that the Congo is sitting on some very valuable mineral wells?

SANDERSON: At the time that was a fairly insignificant factor because we really were very tightly focused on keeping them from going back to war, because tempers were so short and militaries were still very well supplied and provocations were so abundant that there was no sense whatsoever of a capacity at that time for attracting or promoting foreign investment in the country. There were lots of elements, like the Carter Center for instance, that didn't even consider the transitional government to be a legitimate governing body and therefore not capable of entering into contractual agreements. And that was a whole debate that took place in the economic arena about whether or not the transitional government could have that authority or not. So no, from that period there wasn't a lot of reflection about that. Now, on an unofficial level of course that was a very different matter. Everyone was interested, by which I mean the military, the MLC, the RCD, and President Kabila. All those elements needed the money from illegal mineral exploitation in the Eastern Congo, principally the two Kivu provinces and Orientale Province, where there's a lot of gold and various sorts of minerals like the infamous coltan. And these militaries were interested in

grabbing hold of lucrative locations and using the local populations as slave labor in the mines. And then the product would be sold in the neighboring countries of Rwanda and Uganda. At one point there was a statistic showing that Uganda was gaining more export revenue from the sale of gold than would have been possible if it had sold every ounce of its own gold reserves. So in other words, demonstratively smuggled gold. And also in Eastern Congo, we had, and still have, the remnants of the Rwandan genocidaires who go by the initials FDLR (Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (Democratic Forces of the Liberation of Rwanda)). Those guys had already established themselves around several lucrative mining areas. And they set the pattern for the Congolese to follow in how you illegally profit from Congo's rich natural resources. So on an official level, in terms of oh, government conduct or CIAT or anything else, the answer's no, the natural resources didn't matter that much. But unofficially, they were actually a absolutely vital source of funding for these warlords to support their armies.

Q: Well, when you're dealing with warlords, each is so threatened by peace, I mean that I would just think that they would have no particular call to come to an agreement.

SANDERSON: I neglected to mention something very important. The United Nations Peacekeeping Mission at that time had 27,000 troops on the ground. Largest United Nations Peacekeeping mission ever mounted. And in addition, the French had just finished a military intervention, a pacification mission in Oriental Province where they sent some crack French troops in to make the peace and essentially separate the combatants and kill anybody who continued to fight back. So in that period, in that transitional period, the Congolese had concrete evidence that the international community was willing and able to intervene militarily, to make the peace and then keep it. So they had a big incentive to go along with this transitional government thing.

Q: Was there any residue of the Cubans in that area at this time?

SANDERSON: No. They had shifted their interest down to Angola long ago. So I guess maybe you could say indirectly from the sense that the Angolans were a Cuban proxy state for a long time and a lot of their political advice to the Congolese would have reflected that Cuban influence. But no, there was no direct influence any longer from them.

Q: I assume we had American military, either attachés or the equivalent involved with your team. What were they saying about the situation?

SANDERSON: Actually, during the transition, the military office and embassy in Kinshasa was very small. We had a lieutenant-colonel and he had a grand total of three people on his staff.

Q: Good God.

SANDERSON: Yeah. So there wasn't a big military presence on the U.S. side or large military engagement. And fact is, to this day there's very little military engagement. We're doing some small training efforts, and that's about it.

Q: Outside of playing the neutral hostess, did you have any other piece of the action?

SANDERSON: You know Stu, there's some people who would tell you that I'm the new Larry Devlin of Congo (laughs).

Q: Ah yes. Of course Larry Devlin was the CIA's tsar in the Congo back in the early days.

SANDERSON: Right, and there's a lot of people, both Congolese and foreign who would tell you that I'm the Larry Devlin of my generation (laughs). Yeah, I mean, you know as I say, I had the advantage of being a woman. So I was not threatening to anyone. I was clearly intelligent, I clearly represented what in Congolese terms is still a major power, the U.S., and that uniquely positioned me to be able to suggest courses of action that were consistent with U.S. policy objectives. And frequently those suggestions were taken on board by the Congolese of all the different sides, because people underestimate the Congolese all the time; they think they're stupid. They're not stupid. They're sometimes hard to understand, but they're not stupid. And they could recognize these suggestions for the important messages that they were. So lots of the work was done on this informal basis and Ambassador Meese would entertain, I would entertain, we would take people out to lunches and dinners and plant these policy suggestions in these informal ways. Because particularly at this time in Congo, marching into somebody's office and making an official demarche wasn't going to get anything done. But if you could make friends, that was the most important thing. Number one, make friends, and through those friendships you would gain trust and respect. And once you had the trust and the respect, then you could begin to make suggestions and people would actually listen. They wouldn't always do what we hoped they would do, of course, but they would listen and frequently take those suggestions into account.

Q: Well, did you find that I'd say being a woman, but that's only one factor, of being an American, that's another factor, and on, that within sort of this working group of essentially Europeans and all, were they supportive or were there some people or parts of it that, you know, felt you were out of line or worried about your status and all?

SANDERSON: You know, that's a really interesting question and the answer varies issue by issue. Because it fairly quickly became known that I had made friends with some very complicated and hard to reach people that were simply not open to contact with a lot of foreigners, and that includes President Joseph Kabila. He had very pronounced preferences and he would only talk to ambassadors and/or others whom he liked. And it doesn't matter, you could be the Belgian ambassador, if he didn't like you he wouldn't see you. And all the Congolese were like that. So again, it varied country by country. I found that the French ambassador had a lot of respect for what I was able to do, and he and Roger would coordinate on approaches, and a lot of them were approaches through me because I was the person who had those contacts, and nobody else did. The British ambassador at the time I remember, I don't know if he was jealous or not, he was not personally very popular and therefore didn't have great access. And I remember him one time at a British embassy function making the comment to me that well, some of your friends are just evil, vicious, villains and I would never condescend to speak to them. I answered him back. I said, "Well, then it's a darn good thing that I condescend, isn't it? So we can get our messages through." The Belgian ambassador was -- the first ambassador that they had there was not particularly good, and he was replaced in 2004 with a very sharp guy, very well connected. And he and I understood each other very well. We didn't always see eye-to-eye, but we understood each other very well. His overall impression, I think, was that I was maybe too close to the Congolese and therefore not

trustworthy. Because I used to -- I served as chargé several times. I was actually chargé between the departure of Ambassador Hooks and the arrival of Ambassador Meece, and I was the one who took Ambassador Meece around and introduced him to everyone, including President Kabila. And the Belgian ambassador I think thought somehow or other I'd gotten too close to the Congolese. So when I would sit in on the CIAT meetings he usually objected to my point of view. But other than that, I didn't find a lot of problems, and none of the problems were based on me being a woman. They were based on oh, we don't like it that she's made friends with these terrible villains or oh, we don't like her because we think she's gotten too cozy with the Congolese. But gender was never the issue.

Q: How about Washington? I assume obviously you were reporting in, but were you getting -- all of you, I'm talking about our embassy and all -- but giving you your head or were they trying to micromanage this?

SANDERSON: Oh no, not at all. We had a really good team back in, in Washington. Don Yamamoto, who's the current PDAS (Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary) was DAS at that time, before he went out to Ethiopia as Ambassador. And Don was really important and thought that Roger and I were doing God's work. And when Don launched the tripartite initiative, which was a U.S. brokered mechanism to bring together Rwanda, Uganda, and the Congo to try to work on cross border issues and deeper peace building initiatives, Don was very appreciative of our ability to get the Congolese to the table, and not just any Congolese, but the right ones. Because in the transitional government you had a formal power structure and then you had where the power really lay. And if you didn't understand that and if you didn't know the power brokers you couldn't get anything done. And Don really appreciated that we had made those connections to the people who had the power and were able to bring issues straight to President Kabila or straight to Jean-Pierre Bemba or straight to Azarias Ruberwa and that we ourselves could go and talk to these guys, because we needed that, that cohesiveness to bring that initiative and many others together and make it function. So no, Washington was very aware of and supportive of what was going on. I was told one time by INR that everybody waited breathlessly for my next installment in my cable history of the Congo (laughs).

Q: Well, what then -- there's a book called The Congo Cables. This goes back to the 1960's, but did the missionaries play any role at all? Because they had been all over the place at one time.

SANDERSON: No, not really. It was actually one of the grievances of civil society about the power sharing agreements, because civil society was officially included sort of as a fifth element and actually one of the vice presidents was supposed to be a civil society representative. But coming back to official and unofficial structures, they had official positions but they didn't have any power. And the missionaries were concentrating just on work on the ground trying to help all the war wounded and the child soldiers and there was a lot of good cooperation between faith based organizations and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), for instance, as well as USAID on setting up locations where child soldiers could be demobilized and receive some psychological evaluation and treatment and then, you know, attempt a reunification between the child soldier and his or her village and ultimately, if possible, his or her family. Didn't always work out of course because the military leaders usually forced the children to do some sort of atrocious act, you know, rape their sister or shoot their father or, you know, burn the village down

or something so that the child would have the sense that there's no going back and I might as well continue on this path. So sometimes reconciliation wasn't possible, but the faith-based groups, and particularly in Congo, we have very large activities by the Mormons and also by the Methodists. For the Catholic church the Jesuits had the deepest penetration. But it would be Methodists next, particularly in Eastern Congo, and then Mormons, particularly in Western Congo. And no pun intended, these guys were really doing the Lord's work, helping out with some of the most difficult issues like child soldiers. But politically, no, they had no role to play.

Q: You know, all the accounts I've had over the years of interviewing people who served in the Congo, slash, Zaire talk about the deterioration of the infrastructure. Was there anything left of the Congo to tie it together anymore or?

SANDERSON: Absolutely not. There had been a natural process of deterioration because Congolese don't seem as a society to understand well the concept of routine maintenance. And that may go back to the colonial period. I'm sure the Belgians didn't encourage them to understand how things operated and therefore no maintenance required, but apart from that of course the war destroyed everything because as in any war each side targeted the infrastructure. So bridges were blown up, or in the case of wooden bridges chopped apart. There never had been a national television or radio network. So the local ones were destroyed. There never had been a real national electrical service, but the transmission lines that had connected the Inga Dam in western Congo, in Bas-Congo Province with the mining zone in the east in Katanga Province had been severed. So infrastructure was and still is a huge issue for the Congo, because when you talk about investments and making better use of Congo's natural resource wealth, the single biggest impediment is the absence of infrastructure.

Q: How was an agreement put together and what did it consist of?

SANDERSON: You mean for the transitional government?

Q: Yeah.

SANDERSON: Well, it was put together by everybody sitting in Sun City for literally nine months bickering among themselves and having a chance to air grievances while international people listened attentively in order to determine what could be possible. And what was eventually decided was we would have a very American model for the transitional government. We keep President Kabila as president. And believe me, that right there was a huge issue. But he had been president going into the war and therefore it was decided that coming out of the war he would retain the presidency. But there would be four vice presidents, one representing the MLC -- that was Jean-Pierre Bemba. And Jean-Pierre Bemba would take over the economic functions of government, so that meant that MLC members and allies took positions like Minister of Economy, Minister of Finance, Minister of Mines. Azarias Ruberwa, RCD, he was Vice President for Security Issues. So the RCD took positions like the Minister of Defense. But the president was awarded the position of Minister of Interior to have some balance there so not all security functions would be held by former enemies. And likewise in the economic arena some of the economic positions were awarded to the president so that again there would be a balance and we could overcome the fear that the president's people would be financially strangled. Then we had a Vice

President for Civil Society Functions. And there was a lot of controversy about that particular individual. The civil society elements themselves said he wasn't one of them and he certainly was a long time friend of the Kabila family and had been a strong supporter of theirs during the war. So there was a lot of talk that the power structure, which had been designed to promote checks and balances tipped in the president's favor because he essentially controlled both the Vice President for Civil Society and the Vice President for Social Affairs. So essentially out of the five power positions President Kabila directly occupied one and controlled two others. And then, as I was saying, within the government, ministries were identified for each of the four groups that I mentioned that each had a vice president. Then within that we had the Council of Ministers, which the president chaired. And so that was supposed to be the executive policy-making body. And a legislative body was set up that essentially didn't have any real power at that time. But a 500-member parliament was established with an upper house, the senate. And the senate had 130 members. And again, seats were allocated based on a power sharing principle. So the president got slightly more than the MLC who got slightly more than the RCD and then civil society and so forth picked up the rear.

Q: Well, was this a concept that came from the Congolese or was it an international group that put it together?

SANDERSON: Oh, it was strictly an international effort. Susan Rice had been deeply involved in that process, the French were instrumental, and many other people as well. It was definitely an international structuring because the Congolese were never going to come to an agreement on their own and in fact, several times walked away from the table and had to be cajoled and bullied back to the talks. So no, it was purely and simply an international vision, a way to get everybody to put the guns down and go back to Kinshasa.

Q: When did this new structure take power?

SANDERSON: The transitional government was seated in April of 2003.

Q: And you were there.

SANDERSON: Not when it first started. I arrived in June of 2003.

Q: Now, you were there how long?

SANDERSON: Three years. Until September of 2006.

Q: So besides this trying to bring parties together and all, did you have other responsibilities?

SANDERSON: Oh yeah, Lord (laughs). Everybody did everything in those days. I mean we were building the embassy back up. So of course I was recruiting junior officers and staff for the Political Section, which went from myself and one person to me and one midlevel officer and four junior officers and a secretary. The Econ Counselor had to leave early from her assignment, so I wound up doubling as the Economic Counselor. I think I mentioned I served as chargé several times. And we all did a little bit of everything, I mean for example, since the defense attaché's

office wasn't that large and that strong at the time I was more involved in military issues that I normally would have been, in taking a look at the relative balance of power between the three combative forces, taking a look at how we could do military reform, which was then and is now a hugely neuralgic issue of trying to achieve true integration among the warring factions. And in addition, find out how to either subdue or incorporate rogue militias, of which there were and still are many in the Congo. Speaking of militia --I always call them petty warlords, militia leaders -- I remember one time when I first got there back in the early part of my tour in 2003, the main problem area of Congo at that time was up in Orientale Province, because that's where people had been seriously massacring each other, in a tribal war between the Hema and the Lendu exacerbated by outside meddling by both Uganda and Rwanda. And as a consequence of that instability and chaos we have several mass murdering petty warlords running around, a guy called Bosco, a guy called Jerome. Of course all these guys call themselves General, General Bosco, General Jerome, General Kakalele, et cetera. And at one point early on I had a call from General Jerome basically saying, "You know what? I'm tired of war. How do I go about integrating my forces and what do I get? How can I avoid being sent to prison for life or being killed or whatever?" And of course what I knew and what he didn't know that I knew was that he had terminal AIDS and probably didn't have more than six to eight months to live anyway. So you know, I took the question to Roger and we took it to Washington and we discussed it with the CIAT, and it was decided that I should tell Jerome that there was a willingness in principle to integrate his men and that he could come to Kinshasa and would be put under house arrest, but you know, no one would hurt him, et cetera, et cetera. And that's eventually what happened. He did come to Kinshasa, we put him under house arrest and essentially UN protection. And his guys became part of the army. And that was important because General Jerome's guys controlled border crossings between Congo and Uganda. And being able to move them out of the way did a lot to improve relations with Uganda. So things like that, I mean sort of like everybody did everything. And mostly what we tried to do was prevent fires and when fires arose put them out as quickly as possible. One good example of that is we had a massacre of Tutsi refugees in a place called Gatumba, which is actually inside of the neighboring country of Burundi. And of course Burundi was a Rwandan controlled state. Initially many people wanted to blame President Kabila for arranging the massacre. In Eastern Congo there is a certain kind of militia that is called Mai-Mai and many people alleged that one of the Mai-Mai controlled by President Kabila had snuck into Burundi and massacred these Tutsis, some of whom were cousins of the RCD head, Azarias Ruberwa. And Azarias left Kinshasa, went to Goma (capital of North Kivu province), which had been the RCD capital during the war, and said, "I'm not coming back. The transition's over. You know, you international folks are letting these guys get away with murdering my people, and I'm not coming back." And Roger and I flew out to Goma to talk to him and reason with him and reassure him and the United Nations sent a big investigation team into Burundi. Bill Swing led it personally. And we managed to convince Azarias to come back to the government. I also remember early on in my tour in Congo when I was doing my country familiarization. Because of course I didn't see my job as being just to sit in Kinshasa. I visited every one of the 11 provinces and over the course of my three-year tour I didn't just visit the capitals, I got to little villages by riding on the back of bicycles and in little canoes that are called pirogues and went and met tribal chiefs and ordinary people. And I remember one time I went to a village, this was in 2004, late 2004. I went to a very remote village in Maniema Province out in Eastern Congo, where the people are so isolated they spoke neither French nor Swahili, so they had to find somebody who could interpret into their language so that we could communicate. And the very first question I was asked was, "How is the Great Leopard?"

Q: Oh, Mobutu.

SANDERSON: In other words, Mobutu, yes. These guys were so isolated, they didn't even know that Mobutu was gone, that Mobutu had died outside of the country, that Laurent Kabila had come and been president and been killed and that they now had this guy named Joseph Kabila. They knew nothing about this. Which was really what I call one of those Congo moments, when you really have an encounter with exactly how vast that country is and why it is as hard to deal with as it is. One of the other things I remember that was really interesting, again back in 2003 when I was doing familiarization trips I went to Bukavu, which is the capital of South Kivu Province and had been a stronghold for the RCD during the war. And throughout 2003, you know, there was no way to travel to these eastern capitals except on United Nations flights, because they were the only ones who were allowed to fly into these areas. We were still negotiating what amounted to economic reunification with the east and the west. So I flew into Bukavu with the United Nations and met with the governor, a guy named Xavier Chiribanya. And of course Chiribanya, and I knew this about him, was one of the guys that President Kabila suspected of assassinating his father, Laurent; and he had been put in place as Governor by the rebel RCD movement. So I went to see the governor and we had a very good initial meeting and he invited me back for dinner at the official residence that night. I went back for the dinner, and again, this is one of those Congo moments. At that dinner were many infamous guys that during the war were regarded as the enemy, and most importantly, every single man at that table was on what we called "the death list". All these guys had been sentenced to death in absentia by a military court in Kinshasa, a tribunal headed by President Kabila. They'd been sentenced to death for their alleged role in the assassination of Laurent Kabila. And they spent that entire dinner saying we didn't do it, here's why we didn't do it, you know, this guy is my cousin, President Kabila started it, he killed my cousin, etc. My goodness. It was four hours and the Bishop of Bukavu was there. I think he had been asked just in case for some reason the wild American woman pulled out a gun and tried to arrest everybody. I don't know why the bishop was there, but he was.

Q: (laughs)

SANDERSON: And it was really one of those Congo moments where these guys see an opportunity to tell their side of the story and why they didn't deserve to be on this death list. And of course we were very opposed to the whole death list. I mean the whole thing was so patently illegal, a military tribunal assigning people a death sentence in absentia. But yeah. So I don't know, I give you those as examples as things that I did. Aside from running around and talking to power brokers, I ran around and talked to ordinary people, and tribal leaders too. And I explained to some people that Mobutu was no longer there (laughs).

Q: All right. I'll make my announcement here. Today is the 6th of January 2012 with Mel Sanderson and you are in Wyoming and I am in Virginia, being done by telephone. Now, we left off the last time when you were in the Congo and we said we'd pick it up the next time when things began to settle down and everyone was getting used to the new Congo. How did that work out?

SANDERSON: Well, I think the breakthrough basically came in 2004 when we successfully organized our first Defense Council meeting, because the transitional government established a

structure where in addition to the Council of Minister's meetings, which involved every member of the government, we set up three specific councils, one for defense and security, one for economics, and one for social issues. And we really pushed hard to get the Defense Council meeting to happen because it involved the principle actors. And early in 2004 we finally got our first Defense Council meeting together and began to have a real discussion about what to do with the various militia elements that at that time were very numerous. I mean Congo still suffers from militia activities in the east, but in 2004 we still had several militia groups active in Orientale Province in the northern part of the country, as well as in the Kivu provinces. And in fact, at that time the violence was worse in Orientale Province than it was in the Kivu Province.

Q: Could you describe sort of the composition of these militia groups and who they would answer to, if anybody?

SANDERSON: Well yeah, in Orientale Province most of them had initially been organized by both Uganda and Rwanda. But by the time we arrived at this Defense Council meeting in 2004 the groups that were still active in Orientale Province responded to Uganda principally and there were three that were essentially Congolese tribal in nature that had arisen in the war as an effort to defend specific villages or specific tribes from attack. So those were the two sorts of groups that we still had active in Orientale Province. In the Kivus we had, and for that matter still have, former Rwandan Hutu genocidaires who are living in those provinces and prey upon the population. They go by the initials FDLR and there are also several of these indigenous tribal militias, which go generically by the name Mai-Mai. And there were also a couple of militia elements that were offshoots from the former RCD Army and responded to individuals within the Rwandan government. And all of these elements, north to east, were clearly very destabilizing elements. But as I say in 2004 the violence was worse in Orientale Province. So we succeeded in getting the Defense Council meeting together to advance the notion that the best way for Congo to deal with these militia elements, because clearly the Congolese military was incapable of defeating them militarily, would be to integrate them little by little into the army and provide discipline training and try to regularize their activities. The international community was providing economic and technical assistance for military restructuring of the Congolese military with the objective of downsizing it, as well as providing training. So that was sort of our breakthrough moment, because once we were able to launch that dialogue we were then able to carry it over to the Economic Council Meeting, because as I say there was an economic assistance element. And we were able to carry it over to the Social Council Meeting, because obviously there was a social element as we tried to reduce the size of the Congolese military and therefore integrate people into civilian life. So that key issue was the wedge that broke through everybody's ongoing hostilities and started a system of regular government meetings.

Q: Well, were there you might say outstanding warrants of arrest or something for some of these people which means they'd have nowhere to go except to keep fighting or?

SANDERSON: Not at that time. The ICC (International Criminal Court) had not yet begun to look systematically at the Congo in 2004. The Congolese government had issued some arrest warrants for some of the militia leaders, but it was well understood that the Congolese government lacked capacity, either technical or political, to enforce those warrants. They were largely symbolic. The problem wasn't that so much. The problem for these militia leaders -- well, let me separate out my

answer. The problem for the militia leaders who responded to outside direction, like the groups in and around Bunia, who were being directed by Uganda and the groups in the two Kivu provinces, which were being directed by Rwanda, their problem was they had an economic objective of seizing control of places that were rich in resources. In Orientale Province that meant gold as well as control of Lake Albert for the fish that came from the lake. And in the Kivus it meant controlling the areas where coltan was being mined, a very valuable mineral that's used in the production of cell phones and computers. And even in 2004 the international community was very aware of systematic organized smuggling by these militia elements. So that was a big impediment to actually demobilizing them because as part of the demobilization agreements eventually everyone had to agree to be restationed. What we quickly found was that while these militias would become, at least in name, elements of the regular Congolese army, they refused to be re-stationed. They insisted on staying exactly where they were because they weren't going to give up access to the mineral flow. And if we tried to force that issue, of course the whole dialogue would have broken down.

Q: Well, how did you resolve the economic side?

SANDERSON: It largely is still not resolved. The question of illegal exploitation of minerals from the Congo and associated violence against civilians is still one of the most high profile issues plaguing the Congo today and one on which the international community remains very focused. Part of the Dodd-Frank legislation on financial reform, for instance, included provisions regarding trafficking in conflict minerals. And the Securities and Exchange Commission is grappling right now with what sorts of regulations should be introduced to enforce that piece of legislation. And private sector electronic companies are looking very actively at what that's going to be mean for them in terms of verification and chain of supply measures. So that issue has not been addressed essentially to this day.

Q: Back to the disbanding the militias. Were there a significant number of what we would call boy soldiers or?

SANDERSON: Yeah, everybody including the official Congolese army, every military element engaged in recruitment, so to speak, of child soldiers. Raids on villages by militia and Congolese military were very common during the transitional period of 2003 to 2006. Regular soldiers needed slaves more than they needed more soldiers. Most of these children, boys and girls, were used as porters, for instance, to carry illegal minerals across borders, they were used as sex slaves, they were used to cook and clean. But of course the real tragedy of that is as part of their indoctrination many of these children were forced to commit crimes in their villages. You know, UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) was doing a lot of work with child soldiers and documented just absolutely horrifying stories of young boys who were force to rape their mothers or sisters or, you know, girls who were gang raped in front of their family, et cetera. To make sure that there would be no going back for these children. And that's still an ongoing issue in Congo as well, because the whole idea of reconciliation and reintegration is of course extremely difficult and especially after children were forced to do these things.

Q: I mean this is beyond. But what was being done for the women who were raped? I mean did they become outcasts or was there effort made to reintegrate them into society or what?

SANDERSON: Unfortunately, in Congo rape is still a crime which is held against the woman. So in most circumstances if the husband found out that she had been raped she and her children would be thrown out on the street and left with nothing. And in most cases even her parents would reject her. There's a strong prevailing cultural belief that, you know, somehow or the other she must have asked for it or she wanted it or whatever. There was at that time, and still is today, a tremendous medical institution in the Kivus called Panzi Hospital. It's right outside of the capital of North Kivu. And they do terrific work with fistula surgery, they do some psychological counseling. And particularly in some very recent years there's been a very strong mobilization effort among various NGO's to provide both psychological and family counseling, including to husbands, to try to change the mindset and help the husband accept his wife again. But also to teach women how to be more economically independent so that at least if reconciliation is not possible the women can work together in cooperatives, agricultural cooperatives, fabric and sewing cooperatives, et cetera, to make a living, and to not be either forced into prostitution or simply die of hunger and shame. So over the ensuing years that's become a very high profile issue, particularly in the two Kivu provinces and there is a broad international effort to try and help with that. But what's sad is that the violence itself continues and is mostly perpetrated by the Congolese army, quote unquote, keeping in mind that these militia elements are part of the army.

Q: Boy. I mean were there times you would think how the hell are we ever going to put this thing back together or?

SANDERSON: Oh, absolutely. Sadly, that's what many people think of Congo: too hard, takes too long, too complicated. Congo's a place that can easily reduce you to despair. But you know, there's so many really outstanding people in Congo. The Congolese people are incredible, particularly the women who just sort of keep picking up their various burdens and marching on despite starvation and rape and violence and war and terror. They are very, very admirable people. And that's the main motivator that, you know, fights that sense of despair, because it's so self-evident that the Congolese people deserve so much better than they've been getting. And if they're not going to lay down and give up then why should anybody else?

Q: Prior to the settlement I take it the militias and the armies were being paid by the loot they were getting from their -

SANDERSON: Illegal trafficking, yeah, absolutely. They were profited directly from that.

Q: Well, did you find there were economic interests from the West that were sort of not overly helpful?

SANDERSON: Yeah, absolutely. I mean the United Nations had established in 2004 the so-called group of experts. And they made an annual visit to Congo-Rwanda-Uganda to try to really quantify and identify the participants in the illegal trafficking. Because of course minerals went out one way and then arms came into the Congo in exchange to keep the militias in good fighting form. And several of their reports and classified annexes identified some western companies that certainly appeared to be implicated in this two-way trade and in at least one report the governments of Rwanda and Uganda were also identified as actively participating. I remember one report where

President Museveni's sister was named. So yeah, some western companies in various countries and neighboring governments were at least according to those United Nations reports implicated in the trade. And that illustrates one of the reasons why it's so difficult to break it.

Q: Well, was the United Nations as a unit actively engaged in trying to do something or was it sort of being dragged in?

SANDERSON: I think that it depends on what aspect of life in the Congo that you're talking about. You know, despite having the largest numerical peacekeeping mission in the world, the United Nations mission in Congo doesn't have a great track record. When I first got there in 2003 and right up through the middle of 2004 it was a Chapter Six mission, which essentially meant that it didn't have any active peacekeeping authority. And that was why you had a whole series of scandalous incidents that emerged in the international press of United Nations soldiers standing sort of idly leaning on their guns while militia guys raped women and burned down villages right in front of their faces. It was one of the big ongoing behind the scenes battles in New York to upgrade that mission's authorities to a full Chapter Seven mission.

Q: What's a chapter six and seven?

SANDERSON: Chapter Six is more of an observer mission. UN troops are not authorized to engage "enemy forces." You're not there to protect the civilians. With Chapter Seven the United Nations takes more active responsibility for protecting unarmed civilians from armed aggression. And we did finally get a Chapter Seven authorization from the middle end of 2004 at which point new U.N. member states entered the Congo mission. Those Indian and Pakistanis became important contributory members particularly in Eastern Congo bringing in attack helicopters, on the ground highly trained troops and really began concentrated efforts, particularly against the FDLR, the Rwanda Hutu elements, and tried to push them out of their established zones. And simultaneously, the United Nations began a large repatriation effort to encourage these Rwandan elements to return to Rwanda and of course that was a touchy thing that had to be negotiated by international parties, including the United States directly with the government of Rwanda, because clearly Rwanda wasn't wild about accepting back a bunch of genocidaires. And as part of the repatriation the FDLR elements had to accept to go through the village reconciliation process (gacaca) that Rwanda had put in place. So it was quite complicated. It was sporadically successful, but not sustainable. The UN forces working together with Congolese military would push FDLR forces out of an area and they would drift away up into the forest or the mountains. And they'd be gone for a while. And then as soon as the UN forces moved on to another zone the FDLR guys would filter back in and take over their areas again. So as I say, the UN mission has a very spotty record. I think that you could say that at least during the transitional years the United Nations was more successful as a political element than as a military element. And perhaps that's not surprising. Bill Swing was the Head of the UN Mission during the transitional government. And of course he had been United States ambassador to the Congo and spoke several Congolese tribal languages and is an extremely charismatic man who did a really outstanding job I think in being that bridge between the international community and the Congolese government because both sides trusted him. Both elements felt that they knew him. But he faced a lot of constraints in terms of military success, in large part because the mission was being almost constantly reconstituted. The structuring of the military side changed three times in three years. And of course you always

face constraints by member nations themselves because you may have the United Nations mandate in the Congo that says OK, the troops should shoot the enemies to protect the civilians, but what we actually found on the ground was that sometimes they wouldn't act anyway. In one actual instance that occurred at Bukavu, we had a mix of rogue Rwandan military and Congolese Tutsi military move into Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu, and basically start selectively killing those whom they claimed were trying to wipe out the Tutsi people. And the United Nations soldiers leaned on their guns and doing nothing about it because when push came to shove the member state governments didn't authorize their troops to actively engage, which of course would have meant risking their lives. So even though you had the on the ground military commanders saying intervene and you had the head of mission saying intervene, the member state countries were saying oh no, our guys aren't getting killed for these Congolese people, oh no, no, no. So that's why I say overall the record is spotty, but certainly more successful politically than militarily.

Q: While this was going on what was the U.S. government doing?

SANDERSON: We were actually doing quite a bit. We were very active at the embassy in the day-to-day context, exploring the motivations that were behind activities and encouraging all sides to stay the course. At one point, for instance, the RCD, which was the eastern element, largely identified by Congolese as Tutsi, threatened to leave the government because there was a massacre of Tutsis in a refugee camp in neighboring Burundi at a place called Katumba. And the RCD, everybody from the RCD essentially left Kinshasa and went back to Goma, which had been their wartime capital. And we were extremely close to having the transition break down at that point. That was in 2005. And both the embassy and Washington were extremely active in healing that breach. The Secretary of State called President Kabila to get President Kabila to reassure the RCD people. We at the embassy were in contact with the head of the RCD. We flew out to Goma to talk to them. The U.S. government was also very active in a regional reconciliation initiative, which was started by at the time Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Yamamoto, and it was called the Tripartite Initiative. It was U.S. funded and we served as the facilitator to bring together government officials from Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Congo to try to work out some of these cross border issues with the smuggling, with the soldiers, with raids from Rwanda and Uganda into Congo with refugees being killed in Burundi, et cetera. And that was a 100% U.S. initiative that Washington developed and the embassy supported. We worked hard to get the right Congolese to take part because there was considerable resistance. Particularly in President Kabila's group there was no desire whatsoever to have any discussions with either Rwandans or Ugandans and it took considerable persuading to get them to the table. So we were very active in that way. The USAID budget more than doubled and USAID cooperated very actively in trying to work through NGO's (Non-Government Organizations). The National Democratic Institute guys were there, NDI, and we had several other U.S. NGO's there trying to teach, for instance, members of parliament what is their responsibility, what is their role in a democracy. And also to work with the independent electoral commission to teach them how you prepare for a democratic election, how do you enroll your citizens, how do you set up a database, how do you prepare ballots, et cetera. Significant funding went into that. And of course the U.S. was also the single largest contributing country to the United Nations mission to the Congo. So the U.S. government was very active during the transitional period in engaging with Congo on all fronts.

Q: Well, during all this time you were part of the State Department or you were working for the UN?

SANDERSON: No, I worked for the State Department. I was the Political Counselor at the embassy during the transition, from 2003 to 2006. It might almost sound like we worked for the UN because we had so much daily contact with the UN (laughs).

Q: Ah yes. Well, did you find your UN colleagues were pretty well committed to the cause?

SANDERSON: No, not at all. I was actually -- you probably already have detected this. I was already very disillusioned with the United Nations operation as I saw it on the ground. There were too many conflicting national interests. French citizens, for instance, were almost more busy reporting to Paris than they were to New York. British citizens likewise, South African cities likewise. It was another element that made it very hard for Bill Swing to get anything done with the UN, because everybody seemed to be much more interested in advancing their national interest than concentrating on the official UN agenda in Congo.

Q: Well, what would be national interests in this war torn country? Nobody was going to grab a piece of territory? I mean I think the national interest would be all for getting peace.

SANDERSON: Not really. Most countries already were looking ahead to the elections and making decisions about who among the powerful figures would be most likely to favor their interests post-transition. There was a great deal of maneuvering related to those questions. And as you know, many countries don't have the legal or moral restrictions on directly interfering in internal or political issues that the United States does. So most of the maneuvering is really related to looking toward the elections in 2006 and making sure that whoever was going to win that would be a candidate favorable to their national interests. Because post transition most countries were looking toward the possibility of private sector investments in Congo and the general thought was, you know, if you get in an administration that favors your nation then your companies are more likely to get favored status for all these wonderful investments.

Q: Well, did we have a particular interest there?

SANDERSON: No, not really. I was always a little -- no, I was always a lot disappointed in how poorly the United States seems to understand the strategic value of the Congo. It's not just a question of this very central geographic location, it's a question of the mineral and natural resources that are within the Congo's boundaries. Not just gold and silver and copper, but also uranium, also the so-called rare earth minerals, also forests, also one of Africa's largest rivers. The Congo used to be the breadbasket of Africa because there is rainfall throughout the country somewhere every single day throughout the year, and the growing season is therefore continuous. Congo's an incredible strategic resource and the United States has pretty much failed to see that because we're too focused on oh, it's too big, it's too complicated, it takes too long, it's too hard, who cares. Other countries were much more alert. Even during the transition it was quite clear that the Chinese were already moving actively toward acquiring control of a lot of Congo's heat resources. Japan was intensely interested, France was intensely interested, even Germany was interested. But sometimes I had the sense that our, our folks in Washington just weren't getting it.

Q: Well, did you find yourself conflicted and trying to carry out American policy and -- whatever that was -- and what should be done?

SANDERSON: Not conflicted so much because, I mean, our policy was always in that sense benign. It was much more benign than many of our European colleagues. I mean the Belgians in particular of course who still regarded the Congo as their personal, you know, fiefdom were very highly directive and did very little to mask the connection between their national interest and what they were promoting in Congo. So no, conflicted wouldn't be the wrong word because our policies in that sense were extremely benign. Frustrated, yes. Because the embassy spent a great deal of time sending rather lengthy cables trying to explain to Washington why things were the way they were, what were those motivations, what were individuals after, how could those motivations be turned to a more benign path or to U.S. interests, what is the value of Congo to the U.S. We spent a lot of time sending a lot of cables along those lines. And that was more or less the frustrating part, that it sometimes felt that we might as well be sending them to the great beyond.

Q: Oh boy.

SANDERSON: (laughs)

Q: Well I mean, but all of this work, you did see -- I hate to use the term, I'm an old Vietnam hand -- light at the end of the tunnel? I mean was it aimed toward something?

SANDERSON: Oh, absolutely. The whole objective of the transitional government was to get Congo to its first democratic election in almost 50 years. Because in its entire history Congo had only had one election in 1960. And that elected government did not stand for very long, less than two years. It was overthrown by at the time Sergeant Mobutu. So from the 1960's until mid-1990's we had a dictatorship under Mobutu. And when he was overthrown by Laurent Kabila we had what amounted to a dictatorship by Laurent Kabila until he was assassinated and civil war began in 1998. And so when we set up the transitional government in 2003 the understood objective by all parties was to make those democratic elections happen. And a rather over ambitious time table had been set calling for the elections to be held by 2004. I think that that happened because the folks negotiating the peace agreement in Sun City simply hadn't focused on all the mechanical steps to get to those elections. And one of the most important of those was getting a Congolese constitution that would be voted upon by a popular plebiscite. So in 2004, with the assistance of international experts, the Congolese started working on the terms of reference for their constitution. And the wrangling over that, including really hot button issues like nationality, the right to vote, the rights of provinces versus Kinshasa, et cetera, dragged on until 2005. And finally, on December 18th, 2005 we were able to have that national vote and the population voted in the favor of the proposed constitution, which had been printed in its entirety and circulated to every voting station in the Congo, so more than 60,000 voting stations. It was not a small effort and it was funded entirely by the international community. There were ads on the radio, in the newspapers, on the few television stations to try to explain to the population the nature and elements of the constitution and why it mattered. So once we had that popular approval of the constitution in December of 2005, the parliament voted to approve it in January 2006. And that was the key moment that set the stage to allow elections to happen. And so from January 2006 until September 2006 there was a virtually

single-minded effort by both the Congolese and the international community to put in place the mechanical elements necessary for those elections to happen. So in other words, making sure that citizens were properly registered, making sure that citizens understood where the voting centers were, deciding who was going to print the ballots, who was going to distribute the ballots, how were we going to organize the international observers, how would we organize the national observers, how would the embassy organize their observers. Every single day there were multiple meetings from morning to night trying to hash out problems and overcome obstacles and get those elections done. We had first thought that the elections would take place in July of 2006. And we, we missed that mark just by a little bit. We did hold the elections by August of 2006 and the first round wrapped up on September 6th. The constitution provided for a second round presidential runoff if no one candidate had the decisive majority, and indeed that was the case. So in October of 2006 we had the presidential runoff and it was in that runoff that Joseph Kabila emerged as the elected president of Congo. So that was the big triumph of the transitional government. Many difficult issues were tackled, many difficult dialogues were begun. But the big success was that the election happened and international observers, such as the Carter Center, determined that while there had been some irregularities, the elections were judged to be sufficiently free and fair and the results were officially recognized by the international community. So that was our huge triumph.

Q: All right, you had this election, which was run fairly well considering the difficulties. What was the result?

SANDERSON: After the second round of the presidential elections, President Kabila was recognized as the elected president. We did have some -- how do I want to put it -- some push back from Jean-Pierre Bemba and his MLC forces. He was the guy during the war who was the Ugandan proxy and during the transitional government was the vice president in charge of economics. And he of course was President Kabila's strongest rival in the elections. He wasn't willing to accept defeat. We had some very significant fighting over a limited period of time in Kinshasa, mostly between MLC forces and government army forces before President Kabila's army forces managed to subdue the MLC and allow the president to be installed in December of 2006. We also saw the successful election of 500 members of the National Assembly. And once that body was elected they were able, per the terms of the constitution, to name the senators. So the results of the elections were that we had for the first time in almost 50 years a largely directly elected representative government in congress. The head of the executive branch, the President, was directly elected by the people, both the national parliament and the provincial parliaments were directly elected by the people, while both the senate and the provincial senates were indirectly elected in the sense that the elected members of parliaments named senators. And in the case of the parliaments the provincial assemblies also proposed governors to the president and the president certified those governors. So again, indirect election. But the ultimate result of the elections was that for the first time in almost 50 years Congo's people had a chance to choose who they wanted to represent them. And that was a pretty satisfying moment. It really was.

Q: Was there any sort of surprise in how the vote went?

SANDERSON: No, not really. It was clear well in advance that it was essentially going to be a two-horse race between Kabila and Bemba. Biggest surprise was the third-place went to a guy named Antoine Gizenga. Mr. Gizenga, who was a little over 80-years-old at the time, had been one

of the elected officials way back in the very first government in 1960 and had been a very strong supporter of at that time Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. And when Lumumba was killed and the country fell apart Antoine Gizenga fled to Kisangani, the capital of the Orientale Province, raised an army, and took over part of Eastern Congo essentially in the name of Patrice Lumumba and saw his political party, which went by the acronym PALU (Parti Lumumbiste Unifie (Unified Lumumbist Party)) as the government in about one-third of Eastern Congo. He governed there until Mobutu's forces overthrew him. And so it was quite surprising that Mr. Gizenga who had not even actively campaigned for office, came in third out of the slate of 33 presidential candidates. And it put him rather naturally in the kingmaker's spot for the second round runoff between Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba. Both men very actively courted Gizenga's support. And eventually Gizenga agreed to support Joseph Kabila in exchange for a political agreement in which his political party, PALU, would be given the prime ministership for essentially the entire five-year presidential term. So Gizenga was the first prime minister under President Kabila's elected government, and then he stepped aside in favor of another PALU party member, Adolphe Muzito, who is still prime minister today.

End of reader