

## **ETHIOPIA**

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**CURTIS F. JONES**  
**Economic/Consular Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (1947-1948)**

*Curtis F. Jones was born in Bangor, Maine in 1921. He graduated from Bangor College in 1942 and then served in the Army for three years. In addition to Egypt, his overseas career has included towards the end of the war that he became interested in Foreign Affairs. He has also served in Lebanon, Ethiopia, Libya, Syria and Yemen. He was interviewed by Tomas F. Conlon on March 29, 1994.*

JONES: As a matter of fact, they rotated me out of Beirut entirely. I went to Addis Ababa.

Q: *So you were in Beirut in 1946-47.*

JONES: Yes.

Q: *How did you happen to get your assignment to Addis Ababa? Did that just come up "out of the blue"?*

JONES: Yes, out of the blue.

Q: *What was your assignment there?*

JONES: I did primarily economic work until John Randolph ran into trouble. I think that he had some altercation with the local staff. The consular position became vacant, and I went into consular work for a while. In the interim I applied for full-time Arabic language training and finally got it. Then, in the fall of 1948 Jimmy Moose came through as a [Foreign Service] Inspector. He asked me what I wanted to do. I said that I wanted to be an [Arabic] language specialist. He himself had studied Arabic at the Ecole des Langues Etrangeres [Foreign Languages School] in Paris. He was totally out of sympathy with the language program and with my decision. He later wrote, in his [inspection] report, "I think that this man is asking for language training so that he can get out of the real work of the Service--namely, administration, consular work, and the rest."

In any event, in the winter of 1948-1949 I went to Washington where, by then, Arabic language courses were being given at the Foreign Service Institute.

**EDWARD W. MULCAHY**  
**Vice Consul**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1950)**

**Consular Officer**  
**Asmara (1950-1952)**

*Edward Mulcahy was born in Massachusetts in 1921. He graduated from Tufts University in 1943, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1947, and served as a first Lieutenant overseas from 1943 to 1946 in the U.S. Marine Corps. His postings abroad included Mombasa, Munich, Addis Ababa, Athens, Southern, Tunisia, Lagos, and Chad. Mr. Mulcahy was interviewed in 1989 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

MULCAHY: This program in coming to an end within the next few months and I'd just as soon go back to Africa." I got a private telegram from two friends of mine in African Affairs who

asked if I'd like to open a consulate at Asmara. I wrote back, "Ready, willing and able; sooner the better."

While I was in Kenya I learned a great deal about Asmara, about Eritrea and the ex-Italian colonies from some of my British friends who had been in the military service up there in the campaign against the Italians in East Africa. I knew what a delightful city Asmara was. On the map it looks dreadful, only this far away on the map from Massawa which is one of the hell-holes of the world climatically at least. But, Asmara is up at 7,600 feet and that's perpetual springtime there, about the same altitude as Mexico City. So I jumped at the chance of going there. This was in December of 1949. By the middle of January, I had my orders transferring me to Addis Ababa. We'd closed up our post at Amberg on January 10 and I was back in Munich.

*Q: Why were we opening a post there? Why did we want one in Asmara?*

MULCAHY: We had had an Army group there, Signal Corps, and Army Security Agency, since just after Pearl Harbor. The first Army group going out to establish a small communications station there were on board ship in Cape Town at the time of Pearl Harbor. The British, who had taken Eritrea from the Italians, were occupying it by then with a civil administration--a corporal's guard of colonial service and Indian civil service types who'd left India and were out of jobs--two British regiments of battalion strength, very small numbers of British. They kept Italian law and Italian customs but, with minor changes in force and something like 80 civilians and two regiments and few policemen, they ran this country of about a million and a half people.

*Q: Was that part of Ethiopia at that time?*

MULCAHY: No, it was not, and what it was to become was the subject of great dispute at the Big-Five Foreign Ministers' level, the whole question of the ex-Italian colonies. The reason for the rush in getting me out there, canceling the home leave that I was well over-due for, was the fact that the United Nations Commission of Inquiry, on which we were not represented, was going out to recommend to the General Assembly what the future of Eritrea should be. They wanted me to get out there and keep Washington informed on a daily basis if possible what the tilt of the report or recommendations of this U. N. Commission of Inquiry would be. It consisted of South Africa, Burma, Guatemala, Norway, and a number of people from the secretariat, including two Americans. I lived in the hotel, the principal hotel, where they lived and saw them at practically all meal times and entertained them over at the small military base, then called Radio Marina. There were about 75 Americans, counting dependents, at the base then. In the three years I was there it grew to 400 people. It ultimately grew to 5,000.

*Q: That was Kagnev Station.*

MULCAHY: At that time it was called Radio Marina because it was located in a compound occupied before the liberation by the Italian navy. It was an Italian naval radio station that they took over. But the married people lived out in the town wherever they could rent houses. Life was very nice there. We had an APO, a commissary, officers' club, sergeants' club, enlisted men's club. It was a very nice post. If anyone fouled up, they got sent home as punishment!

Politically, the thing was difficult, because everybody, including the major powers, had their own view of what should happen. We and the British favored the partition of Eritrea when the Moslem northern part of the country where the people were largely nomadic in any case going to the Sudan. Most of the tribes spent part of their year in the Sudan and then moved back into Eritrea during the wet season. The Italians favored receiving it back as a trust territory. In the case of Somalia they received their old colony back in the form of a trust territory. They favored that for Eritrea. The Soviets favored a trust territory directly administered by the United Nations, by the Secretary General. Such a thing never happened. We gave up the idea. Ethiopia wanted to annex the whole thing as a province, as its new province.

The population was divided about evenly, maybe slightly more, maybe 52% or 53% were Coptic Christians, who spoke Tigrinya, the language of the people in the nearby providence of Tigre in Ethiopia. The northern Moslems spoke a language called Tigre, but they also spoke five other languages, mutually unintelligible one to the other, for the most part. They were Semitic languages in the northern half of the territory. Along the coast there were islands of barely related Hamitic languages. But they spoke Arabic among themselves, fairly good quality of Arabic, as a lingua franca.

While I was there I learned Italian, which I needed every day. Everybody needed Italian. That was the real lingua franca of the country. After I had a good grip on that, I went on to Arabic. It was the colloquial Arabic of the Red Sea area and a very useful form of Arabic, close to the classical. Those two languages would get you just about all over the country and nearby parts of Ethiopia. There was a great deal of Italian still spoken in Ethiopia in those days.

My record shows an assignment at Addis Ababa. Quite true. I had to be assigned someplace until I had a consulate open in Asmara, so I was attached to the embassy at Addis Ababa, where I spent a couple of weeks in early February of 1950 and where I called on the Emperor in top hat and morning clothes, borrowed; I didn't own those myself. Ambassador George Merrill (and later Rives Childs) at Addis Ababa and their staff were very generous in their support most of the time that I was in Asmara running it as a two-man post with one Foreign Service female clerk in carrying the administrative load for me.

*Q: How did it work? Were you under our embassy in Addis Ababa?*

MULCAHY: Until Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia on the 15th of September, 1952, Asmara was an entirely independent consulate and I reported directly to the Department of State.

*Q: How did the embassy in Addis Ababa feel about Eritrea?*

MULCAHY: They were quite loyal. They used to have people over there from time to time and they had been doing what reporting there was on Eritrea available in the Department's files. But I think they were probably sympathetic to the Emperor's view that there ought to be a connection with Ethiopia. I think also they thought it would be a leavening and possibly a good example for Ethiopia to deal with a democratically elected, autonomous, internally autonomous, Eritrea. I, frankly, thought that, too. I firmly believed that that would have been exactly the best thing for

Ethiopia and that the empire, which it indeed is, could thrive if run as a series of autonomous regions under a federal constitution, for example.

*Q: Did you feel that you had any role in developing any policy towards this? The federation came. Did it come without our pushing or pulling or objections?*

MULCAHY: I had regular consultations with the United Nations High Commissioner who eventually was sent out there, Don Eduardo Anze Matienzo, a distinguished former foreign minister of Bolivia, a very fine, erudite, cultured gentleman. Anze Matienzo was a good friend. We had a good personal relationship. I also had a close relationship with his Principal Secretary who was an Austrian, an old employee of the League of Nations, Ranshoven-Wertheimer, and with all the key members of his staff whom I saw frequently. Asmara was a city of only all told 50,000 or 60,000 people, about 15,000 Italians and 1,200 British, I suppose, counting dependents, and not counting a 2,000- man British battalions and a very, very small American community. We had a few American missionaries there besides that, three missionary establishments. We had a very close knit community and good relations among the different communities both internationally and ethnically. I was always being approached by the leaders of 16 different political factions when I went there. Some of them amalgamated with others after December 1950 when the General Assembly decreed in favor of federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia. They went down to about eight. To round up a good cross-section of Eritrean opinion on any subject, I would take my time over a three-day period to seek out the eight leaders of these factions. Sometimes I wouldn't need to go to all eight of them, but maybe five or six of them and have a chat with them. You could do that by sitting at a certain coffee shop near the cathedral on the main street in Asmara. If you were there, many people would see you and they'd want to get their word in with you or they'd come around to the Consulate to deliver their points of view.

*Q: You did find yourself sort of captured by the American military community or by the British military community or by the Italian community.*

MULCAHY: No, definitely not.

*Q: How were relations with what we would call--I don't want to use the pejorative sense--the natives, the actual Eritreans?*

MULCAHY: Very, very good. The Coptic Eritreans who were in the majority in the highlands around Asmara had favored outright annexation by Ethiopia. They were supporting what was called a shifta army, several guerrilla bands, always much less numerous than you'd ever believe. They were indistinguishable from the Tegrinya-speaking Ethiopian citizens who came in from across the border. But most of the Eritrean nobility--and they continued even under the Italians to have their stratification of society into azmatches, dejazmatches, caghazmatches, ect. similar to counts, earls, barons, dukes and what have you, old Ethiopian titles. A lot of them fielded little guerrilla bands of their own in order to show their loyalty to the Emperor. In the northern Moslem areas there were also guerrilla bands, who tended to favor a partition of Eritrea. They wanted to go with the Sudan with which they identified ethnically and religiously. That was their outlook. Now, the Moslems were divided in the country as a whole. Most of them in the cities

and coastal areas favored the status of republic. But after the General Assembly voted in favor of federation and we and the British supported it when we saw that partition was a non-starter. After India, after Cyprus, after Palestine you couldn't talk partitions.

*Q: After seeing the fighting that took place and the animosity, we just were not inclined to support partitions.*

MULCAHY: That's right. Everybody came around, to believe that, if this federation concept could be well and fairly hammered out, it would be a good thing. In my office staff, I had an Italian who had been an active member of a party that favored an Eritrean republic. He had been a former member of the Italian Colonial Service but had resigned in 1938, resigned from the Fascist party, resigned his reserve commission in the army. I wouldn't call him a great democrat, but philosophically he was rooted there. He'd been there for almost 30 years and spoke flawless Arabic, was often consulted by the Mufti and the Qadi of Asmara on fine points in Koranic law, and used to lecture to the Moslem law students. I got him a job teaching Arabic at the little University of Maryland extension program we had at Asmara, which is where I also learned Arabic. I learned my Italian from him, largely on the job. I had him, a Christian Eritrean, a Moslem Eritrean, and an Armenian female. The Armenian Community were quite influential in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Social relations among the communities were really quite good in Eritrea. I divided my time pretty equally between the British, the United Nations and the Italian communities. The Moslem and Christian communities were not very much engaged in social affairs by our standards--cocktail parties and dinner parties--but they were continually inviting you to their weddings, to the mosque for feast days, to the Coptic cathedral for all their feast days. You were very often in touch with them. I also visited the political leaders when I went traveling, which I did a great deal of. A lot of visiting I tied in with hunting trips. Hunting was fabulous there because the British had taken guns away from all the Italians and didn't even let them have shotguns. There had been something like nine years of uninhibited growth of the wildlife population there. For birds and for four-legged animals it was a paradise for hunters.

*Q: Was the continuation of our communications base in Asmara a major imperative as far as how we wanted to see Eritrea go?*

MULCAHY: Whatever way Eritrea went, we wanted to be able to maintain the communications base there. At that time that little base was handling all of our military and diplomatic correspondence from the Middle East and nearby parts of Africa and boosting it to Washington--to a base near Washington, shall we say. I don't know whether that's still classified, so we'll just say near Washington--by high-speed telex so that it sounded like just a screech and was almost un-monitorable. I gather it was monitorable at the receiving end but it would be considered fairly primitive by today's methods. All diplomatic and military communications went there from a large part of the world. The beauty of Asmara at the edge of the Ethiopian plateau with sheer cliffs all around was that it had almost trouble-free radio communications except in times of sun spots. No black-outs or two days of black-outs, say, in the normal year where Frankfurt and Manila, the other comparable bases in the world, and Panama, were blacked out for as long as a



month during the whole year. Often Asmara would get all of the traffic of Europe to relay to Washington.

*Q: Did this have any effect on how we voted for federation?*

MULCAHY: Yes, but I think we had no agreement. I wasn't aware of any even secret understanding that the Ethiopians would allow the base to stay there. The agreement on our remaining there and on the whole subject of military relations with Eritrea--the final agreement and the initialing of the papers--took place in my living room in Asmara in September 1952 between Akilu Habte Wold, the Foreign Minister, and our then-ambassador to Ethiopia, J. Rives Childs. To make a long story short, 25 years later, when it expired I was Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in Washington and drafted the notification to the Ethiopians that we didn't intend to renew it.

**RICHARD ST. F. POST**  
**Assistant Public Affairs Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (1952-1953)**

*Richard St. F. Post was born in Washington in 1929. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1951 and his master's from George Washington University in 1969. His career includes positions in Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Somalia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Angola, Portugal, Ottawa, and Karachi. Mr. Post was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in February 1990.*

POST: I had the basic officer course which wasn't much in the way of training in those days. Then in the course of it we were asked where we wanted to go. I didn't really know where I wanted go. But I thought that I would go to a place that had a nice exotic-sounding name. So I put in for Addis Ababa.

Certainly in those days, if anybody put in Addis Ababa, you would certainly get it. So we got it.

*Q: You went then to Ethiopia in 1952 until 1955. What was the situation like as you saw it.*

POST: The situation as far as the United States was concerned?

*Q: How you thought Ethiopia was running?*

POST: Well the emperor was very much in charge. Haile Selassie. He had everybody cowed, including the diplomatic corps.

As an illustration of that, whenever we saw the imperial Rolls Royce, with its flag flapping, we were required, and we did, stop our cars, get out and bow as the emperor went by. Then of course, the business of having the ambassador present his credentials was another rather demeaning experience. Because he and all his staff would shake the imperial hand, but only after

starting at the end of the hall, bowing, walking up half way, bowing, walking up to the base of the dais, or throne, bowing, shaking the hand and then bowing and walking backward to the halfway point, bowing again, walking to the far end and bowing, and then scuttling off to the side. The guy was really in charge and in charge of us too.

*Q: It was the only place where you had to wear striped pants and a tail coat for the ceremony. That and Japan were the only places left.*

POST: Would you believe. There I am an impoverished, brand new Foreign Service Officer and to go there I had to invest not only in striped pants and cutaway coat, and the tuxedo, naturally, but white tie and tails. I had to have all these things. Thank God for S.S. Schwartz in Baltimore.

*Q: For the record S.S. Schwartz was the one store that had cut rate clothes wholesale and in a warehouse in Baltimore that would run exclusively for the Foreign Service. You could get summer weight clothes, for example, in the middle of a blizzard, because they stock year round.*

*What were you doing in Addis?*

POST: I went into the Foreign Service and just at that point they decided that information work would be a permanent part of the Foreign Service function. As you remember, we were all supposed to be interchangeable parts. We were expected to have our tours of duty in consular work, political work, economic work, admin work and all the rest. So information work was added to that just at the time I came into the Foreign Service. About ten percent of my class were asked if they would go into the information work. I thought that sounded like a fine idea and I did that.

I was in Addis for about a year when they created a separate agency, U.S. Information Agency. I was then put on detail to USIA. So my job in Addis was as Assistant Public Affairs Officer. In that role, I did a lot of traveling around. We had an extensive film program, and that was a lot of fun, too, traveling around the country. But it was a country that was, aside from the emperor and the top, who had a reasonably good life, lovely homes and the rest of it, the rest of the country was really very abjectly poor.

The city of Addis was a mess. It was dirty, except of course when there was going to be some state visitor. At those times we would have teams of coolies running around the main streets where the visitors were going to be escorted, putting up walls to cover the most obviously putrid parts, and painting all over the place. So that the visitor would look upon Addis as a clean, well-lighted place. We got a little more into that than others, because although I was a U.S. Officer I was assigned there in a position that was a little outside the normal workings of the Embassy. I did not, as did all the other FSOs, I did not have quarters on the Embassy compound. I had to go out and find my own. And we found a house that was brand new, in fact we had to wait three months in the hotel while it was being finished. But it was in an area well removed from the Embassy. The road leading to it was like crossing the Andes Mountains. So we got a little more than our fair share of the nitty gritty side of Addis Ababa living there.

*Q: What was our American interest in Ethiopia at the time?*

POST: We had, as our major interest at the time, the radio base in Asmara, a new station. It was primarily a Navy communications base. It had been an Italian radio station before the war. The British took it over during the war and we took it over from the British. It was basically the quid pro quo for what we gave Ethiopia in the way of assistance. In fact from the point when we had expanded that into a major installation, we justified just about everything we did, in favor of Haile Selassie, by that base. In other words, we had to come forward with the aid he was requesting from us, because if we didn't do it, he would close the base down. A little later on, when we had established a position in Mogadishu, Somalia, anything we wanted to do with respect to the Somalis was circumscribed by the alleged effect this would have on the emperor's attitude on the maintenance of Kagnew station.

*Q: So you found, as is often the case, once you put a base in, you become hostage to it.*

POST: That's right.

*Q: With all sorts of consequences which are not envisaged at the time.*

*What about as a Public Affairs Officer. Did you make much contact with the Ethiopians?*

POST: I'd like to think I did. What we were usually doing was showing what great things the United States was doing in and for Ethiopia. We had, as you recall, just about the time I arrived, we had just started the Point 4 program. Point number four given in a speech by Harry Truman. Ethiopia was one of the first countries to have a Point Four program, now called AID. So we were busily trying to persuade Ethiopians that we were doing great things for them. That American policy generally in the world was a good thing. I think perhaps at the time, we were a little unsophisticated in our efforts. We were using a shotgun approach. We weren't targeting all that much on key people. We did but we also dissipated our efforts I think a great deal, on somewhat marginal audiences. There were times when I did things and I wasn't really conscious of the adverse effects of what I was doing.

For instance, on one occasion, we had had a visit by the emperor to the United States in 1953 or 54, and we did a film on it. We didn't have vast technology available to us but I managed to work with one of our Ethiopian employees and with a variety of what would seem very odd--tape recording--machines and so on, we put together a sound track to go with it. We had it running simultaneously. It was difficult to keep it synchronized, but we managed. We thought this was a great thing. It showed the emperor and the United States in harmony and therefore, his people should be delighted with the United States. Well we took that thing down into the desert and showed it to a bunch of Somalis. I didn't know much about the Somalis at that time, but I know now they must have thought I was crazy in the head.

*Q: Like shots of Hitler in Israel.*

POST: I think I did sense a little bit of the hostility. The next morning I took off and I thought I was missing something but it didn't register. Finally it dawned on me that I didn't have my

Harvard letter sweater that I had gotten playing lacrosse. To this day I have assumed that some Somali stole my sweater in retaliation for my showing that movie of Haile Selassie.

*Q: One further question on Ethiopia. How did you find dealing with Ethiopian officials?*

POST: I didn't have an awful lot to do with Ethiopian officials. I did get to know a number of the younger members of the nobility, if you will, who did indeed occupy some positions in the government. These were people I would get to know socially, in some cases, I could do things through USIS that would be of benefit to them in their jobs. For instance, there was a Dejazmatch Ameha Abera Kasa, who was a vice minister in the Ministry of the Interior. He had nothing in the way of a law library. Well, I managed to get USIS to provide him with a law library, which had been donated from some law school. So there was some value to what I was doing and what I could command in the way of resources that enabled me to make some progress with some of these officials. But then there was the social side as well.

This is perhaps an illustration of how pampered this noble set of Ethiopians was. We were once invited, having invited a lot of Ethiopians a number of times to our house, we were finally invited by some young Ethiopian nobles to a picnic. When was the picnic? They said, "We'll drop by at 9 in the morning and we'll pick you up." Well, by noon nobody had arrived. But finally about one o'clock they did come and pick us up. We drove off and went to some land near the airport of Addis that was owned by one of the families of these youngsters.

They stopped and opened up the trunk of their car and they had there a beautiful picnic set. Knives and forks and dishes and so on. But no food. They said, "Well didn't you bring some food?" "No." "Didn't you bring some food?" "No." "Well we need something to eat, don't we." So they spotted a young boy, a young herdsman, with some sheep. And they went over and bought a sheep. "Now we can have a sheep for lunch." Well, then the question was, "What do you do with the sheep." You don't eat him raw, you don't eat him live. You've got to kill him and skin him and cook him over the fire. So who ends up having to kill and skin the sheep? Me. They couldn't touch it. They couldn't find any boy who was available to do this. So I had to wind up doing this.

Let me get back briefly to Kagne Station because my service in and on that part of the world went through various repeats. I was in Ethiopia as my first post. Then a few years later, I was in Mogadishu, Somalia, from 1958 to 1960. Then I went back to Washington. I was briefly on the Libya desk, but then I took over the Ethiopia/Somalia desk. And after the moon went over the tops of the mountains a few more times, I found myself back in Washington, in the seventies, 1975, 76, 77, as Office Director for East Africa, which included Ethiopia and Somalia.

Well, when I first arrived in that particular position, I was asked by our then assistant secretary to undertake a review of our policy towards Ethiopia, and we convened an interdepartmental group. By then the emperor had been overthrown, we had a Marxist government in place, and our ambassador at that particular time, Art Hummel, had virtually no contact at all with this government. Either he couldn't get appointments to see the leadership or he didn't try.

But in any case there we still had this enormous AID program, economic aid program, a huge military program. We had a mapping team in there. We had a consulate in Asmara as well as Kagnew Station. We had a vast USIS operation in the country. We had a medical team. Just about everything that we were doing anywhere in Africa we doing in Ethiopia. And it didn't seem to me and to others in this group that our interests in Ethiopia were at all commensurate with the vast amount of things we were doing there. Also by that time, satellite communications were being used and the technology totally outdated Kagnew Station. There was really no reason for us to hang in there.

So I authored a NSM (National Security Memorandum) and got clearance throughout the Washington establishment, including the Defense Department, for a revised policy towards that part of the world, where we would scale down our operations in Ethiopia and we would try to build our positions in the countries surrounding, including Somalia, where we were not in very good standing at the time. The Soviets were very big in Somalia. We were also not well found in Sudan. But we had prospects of advancing our position in both Sudan and Somalia, particularly if we scaled down our operations in Ethiopia.

That was accepted as policy. The first step was to go to the Ethiopians and say that, in line with the worldwide reduction in our MAAGs (Military Assistance Advisory Groups) we were going to have to cut down our MAAG in Ethiopia. We had a couple of hundred who were supposed to be advising the Ethiopian army and they couldn't get any of the officers to listen to them. So they were basically cooling their heels. So we went to the Ethiopians and said, "Look, we are going to have to cut this by next fiscal year roughly in half." About three days later the Ethiopians came to us and said, you are not quitting, you are fired. We want to have the whole military advisory group out by 48 hours, and we want Kagnew Station closed, and we want the consulate in Asmara closed; plus all of the USIS libraries around the country. We want you down to just the embassy. So we had a rather exciting time in the tank, up in the seventh floor of the State Department. We had to put together a task force to manage this. And we complied, although it took a lot of doing. They actually extended the deadline.

*Q: That must have been a relief to you.*

POST: It was. It accelerated the process and it meant that what we had to do, had to be done in a rather hot house condition.

*Q: Any options missed dealing with them? The officer group came in when?*

POST: They took over from Haile Selassie in 1973. I was in Portugal at the time. And initially, it looked like it might be an interesting group that replaced him. He had a lot of shortcomings of course. And initially, the man who seemed at the top of this group of army officers was a major when I first knew him but was now a lieutenant general Ammanuel Andom. He was a very good friend of the United States. He was a very strong individual. He had the respect throughout the army. He was an Eritrean, too. And I had just rejoiced that this had happened, because of the possible effect on the Eritrean problem which, of course, had been simmering for years, with the Eritrean Liberation Group fighting a guerrilla war. Here was an Eritrean in charge in Addis Ababa who had the capability of resolving that conflict. And then he was murdered. There was

another man briefly on top but he was murdered by Mengistu too. I don't think there was anything we could have done about that. I think that I have the feeling that we tended to not be too upset that we couldn't get too much of a hearing from Mengistu and the Derg people. We looked upon them as ideologically our opponents. Of course then they had to look upon us as opponents. We had always been the strongest supporters that Haile Selassie had. And so they had to assume that we, as his supporter, had to be hostile to them, as being responsible not only for dethroning him but for eventually killing him. I don't think we made a hell of a lot of effort trying to overcome that situation. Whether or not we could have is questionable. But we had the leverage, up until the time when I came on the scene, of being their sole military supplier. And I think we could have used that a little more than we did in terms of inducing them to be more open to us.

*Q: Back to Kagnaw Station, there is the story that if it were left to the military, we would still have fully manned forts in Apache country. How about for Kagnaw Station? This is 1977 period. Did you get much resistance in the Pentagon or were they ready to get out too?*

POST: They were basically ready to get out. They were less eager than we were but I couldn't say that they dragged their feet. When I, in drafting this national security directive, put in a phrase, which everyone else cleared on, to say that technology, communication technology had now rendered Ethiopia of very little strategic interest to us, they put in a footnote saying that they didn't agree with that. I think what they didn't agree with was that there was no strategic interest whatsoever. Well, there is the Red Sea, so there is some strategic interest, but as far as the specific strategic interest that we had, that was what we were addressing. They certainly would not have wanted to move as quickly as they did. They wanted it to be a gentle landing.

**EDWARD W. CLARK**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Asmara (1953-1956)**

*Edward W. Clark was born in New York and graduated from Princeton University and Cornell Law School. His postings abroad have included Panama, Asmara, Lima, and Buenos Aires. Mr. Clark was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.*

*Q: Then you got yourself out of Central America for a while and went to Asmara from 1953-56. What were you doing there?*

CLARK: I was consul there.

*Q: What was the situation at that time in Eritrea?*

CLARK: Eritrea had just been federated with the Empire of Ethiopia by the United Nations. The British had just left. It was then turned over to a local Eritrean government but federated with the Ethiopian Empire. The Ethiopians had customs, immigration, defense and foreign affairs. The

other things like garbage collection and local police and fire departments were part of the Eritrean government responsibility.

*Q: How did the Eritreans feel about this situation at that time?*

CLARK: One of my jobs was to keep track of how this federation was proceeding, whether it was being respected by the Ethiopians. The Eritreans and the Ethiopians had always been at odds. The Ethiopians over the centuries would every once in a while come down and beat up on the Eritreans and take back a bunch of their wives and make them pay them tribute and then they would go back. This went on for centuries. They didn't like each other. And the Eritreans had obviously good reasons for not liking the Ethiopians.

The Italians, of course, had been in Eritrea for some 40-50 years. They had a great influence on the Eritreans. They built a lot of roads, good schools. The Eritreans in many ways were better off and better educated than the Ethiopians.

It was obvious to everybody, I think, including the United Nations that this was not going to last. This was just the papering over of a problem in order to let the United Nations get out of there.

So the three years I was there you could see the gradual diminishing of this structure. The Ethiopians were gradual about it but obviously they were going to... Well we reported that but there wasn't much we could do. Our big interest there was the American military.

*Q: Kagnew Station. Had Kagnew been established by that time?*

CLARK: Kagnew Station was originally an Italian naval communications center. When the British took over from the Italians in 1942, they gave us that naval station, and we used it as a naval station at first. Then it expanded pretty quickly and was used as a station that could monitor nuclear explosions in the Soviet Union plus, because of its location, it was a good relay station for the military system across the world.

So by the time I got there, about 11 years later, it was a substantial station run by the Army with a smaller naval communications unit.

It was our major interest and our major problem because there were some 2,000 people there and they were getting into trouble. We had the usual PXs there and people would buy there and sell outside and the merchants would complain, etc.

They had the need for expansion and during the time I was there, there was negotiated a new agreement which provided for a new facility to house all the stations plus some receiving and sending antenna fields. Interestingly that was all negotiated in Asmara instead of Ethiopia, so that we, the American consul and the Commander of the post there were very, very much involved in the negotiations. It was very interesting. I know of no other time when an agreement like that was negotiated.

*Q: With whom were you negotiating with?*

CLARK: We were negotiating with the local Ethiopian Federal Government. The Emperor's representative there in Asmara. The details were all worked out over a period of a year. When that was finally agreed to then we all went up to Addis and with the Ethiopian Government and the Embassy finally signed the agreement.

*Q: The Ambassador in Addis Ababa was Joseph Simonson who was not a career officer. How did he operate?*

CLARK: He was a minister of the church in Minneapolis and a Republican supporter. I think he had said the prayers at several Republican conventions. He really didn't know what he was doing.

*Q: That was probably one reason why the negotiations were held at Asmara.*

CLARK: No, I think it was because the details couldn't have been negotiated without being in Asmara and actually going out to the sites, etc.

He was not involved in it. He was unfortunate. Remember Nixon made a trip around Africa as Vice President?

*Q: Yes, I interviewed somebody not long ago who accompanied him on that trip, Jules Walker.*

CLARK: When Nixon came back from that he said that there was one meatball ambassador that has to go, and that was Simonson as it turned out. A terrible thing to say but...

*Q: But from what I gather he wasn't doing anything.*

CLARK: No, he was unfortunate. He was a nice guy but shouldn't have been in that position. There are lots of other ambassadors I know, political and otherwise, who shouldn't have been there either.

*Q: Did this affect your work at all or was he over the hill and far away?*

CLARK: We were able to report directly to Washington. I would send copies to the Embassy but they didn't have to go to the Embassy. So we were fairly independent. We handled all their mail for them because it came in through the APO. The military would turn it over to us and we would put the Embassy mail on the local Ethiopian airline planes. They were always calling us asking for their mail. At one point they accused us of holding it up, if you can imagine that, for Christmas.

*Q: What was the impression you were getting from those in Eritrea of Haile Selassie in those days?*

CLARK: The Eritrean people didn't like the Ethiopians so they didn't like the Emperor. He came there several times while I was there. They had a big reception up at the Emperor's



representative's palace. But he didn't spend much time down there. But no, Eritrean people didn't like the Ethiopians, period. And they still don't.

*Q: Now they are at least quasi independent, but I am not sure... Were there any other nationalities there that had any influence in that area?*

CLARK: The Italians did. The Ethiopian policy towards the Italians was very well thought out. They advised their people to treat them properly. They wanted them to stay because they were the ones who could build the roads, fix the electricity, do all the things that the Ethiopians didn't know how to do to keep things going. So there was a substantial populous of Italians of that level there. Plus some fairly well-to-do Italians. They had the beer plant there, a textile plant, they had a large dairy producing farm and a number of other things. So the Italians were very much in the ballpark there, very influential. I would say that the Italian Consul General was much more influential than any of us were at the time. Apart from that, no...

*Q: No Soviet representation?*

CLARK: No, no Soviets.

*Q: Israeli?*

CLARK: Well, the Israelis had a kosher meat packing plant there. Eritrea became a central place for produce for ARAMCO. They had an agent there who bought and they would send a plane over once or twice a week to take fresh produce back.

*Q: I was in Dhahran from 1958-60 and I ate that food.*

CLARK: They used to come over and take their R&R there too. Did you ever do that?

*Q: No, I never got over.*

**JOSEPH SIMONSON**  
**Ambassador**  
**Ethiopia (1953-1957)**

*Ambassador Joseph Simonson was born in Minnesota in 1904. After receiving his degrees from St. Olaf College in 1925, Luther Theological Seminary in 1931, he studied law at George Washington University from 1926-1928. He served as secretary to Congressman August Andresen, and then as chaplain in the Minnesota State Senate from 1941-1951. He then was appointed as Ambassador to Ethiopia. Ambassador Simonson was interviewed by Malcolm M. Mosing and H.A. Musty in November 1970.*

*Q: I suppose that the real central point in top experience in your political life was being United States Ambassador to Ethiopia. Could you tell me something of how this appointment came your way?*

SIMONSON: It certainly is true that that is the high point, Mal. Many people wonder how a Lutheran pastor became the United States Ambassador, because this is not usual, this is true. On the other hand, one of my friends said that he thought that this was not at all uncalled for because he said why should we be unqualified for the service of the diplomatic corps once in a while because we are clergy. We are part of the citizenship, too and I think it is perfectly right that once in a while a pastor does serve as a United States Ambassador and with my political interests at any rate, no one was too surprised at it, I suppose, though it is a choice appointment, naturally and one that is sought tremendously. There are not too many ambassadors, even though there have been a great many new nations carved out of the continent of Africa these last years. Yet, there are not too many ambassadors and therefore for a pastor to be appointed United States Ambassador was not entirely an expected event. There were two people, I suppose, we should single out, particularly, who were responsible and helpful. You see being the top republican office-holder in Minnesota in a Republican national administration, Senator Thye was in a key position, as far as patronage positions were concerned and appointments politically in Minnesota. Senator Thye and Congressman Andresen were still in Congress and active politically. Those two were really my chief supports and the chief instigators, Senator Thye and Congressman Andresen. As a matter of fact, we were planning on this appointment four years earlier than it came because you may remember four years before this particular election, everybody expected Mr. Dewey to be elected President. And the election year that year, Senator Thye, Congressman Andresen and I were together on that election day and we were all talking about who was going to do what the next day, because of course, Tom was going to be elected President! So Congressman Andresen was going to get a hold of this one and he said if I don't get a hold of this one then I will do something else. Well, the next morning none of us had anything to do but we waited for four years and the opportunity came and we were really ready for it. We had four years of practice!

I was then with the National Lutheran Council and, thinking back upon it now, I suppose it would have been more difficult if not even impossible to receive the appointment had I been yet still a parish pastor. It would have been difficult for them to justify it, for the President and the Secretary of State of justify it. But I occupied one unique position, then, among the pastors of the country. I was public relations director of the National Council, I was the only one. So they could logically do this without any jealousies, without any conflicts in other people thinking that they should have had the appointment rather than myself. Although, I lived in New York, at the time, and lived and worked there, the appointment was a Minnesota appointment because I had really not relinquished that in a sense. Although I had voted, of course, in New York for General Eisenhower for Presidential candidate that year. When the announcement first came in the newspaper of the rumors, the rumors printed in the paper a long time before it happened, Senator Thye said he got a very irate call from a Senator from New York one time saying, How in the world somebody from New York got appointment of the United States Ambassador to Ethiopia, he didn't even know the man. So Senator Thye said, "Settle down, don't get worried. You are not going to be charged with the appointment in New York. It is going to be a Minnesota appointment so don't get worried about it at all. You are not going to lose an appointment." They

were afraid, you see, that they were losing a New York appointment to an outsider, as it were. Which was not true at all. Even though we actually did live in New York, it was a Minnesota appointment. My commission reads, Joseph Simonson of Minnesota, for example. Others than Senator Thye and Congressman Andresen who were important, too, in the appointment and seeing to it being brought about was Gabriel Hauge, who at the time had become the economic advisor to President Eisenhower, even a speech writer for him before. He was a friend of mine for some years before, a graduate of Concordia Lutheran College at Moorhead, Minnesota. Then Senator Wiley of Wisconsin who was then chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and I had gotten to know him somewhat before, recommended me. The President of our church, President Aasgaard, was very instrumental and even more interested than I thought he would ever become, he was urgent about this appointment coming my way. Walter Judd was interested and in on it, also. Of course, John Foster Dulles, as Secretary of State, made the official recommendation to the President. That is sort of the chronology of the events, shall we say.

*Q: I am curious that the appointment came specifically to Ethiopia rather than some other country?*

SIMONSON: There are two things that I think I can say about that. In the first place, years before that I had read in Reader's Digest a sort of travel story about Ethiopia. it was really my introduction to Ethiopia. I really didn't know much about it before and a lot of people don't even know much about Ethiopia yet today. Certainly in those days, very few people knew even more than the fact that it had been invaded by the Italians and occupied for a while. But I read this article on Ethiopia and it was sort of a tourist type of thing saying among the things I remember that you can get a marvelous meal, marvelous steak dinners in Ethiopia in those days for 65 cents. Then it talked about it being so exotic and that if you really wanted to go to a place that was different you should go to Ethiopia, the one place left that was primitive and which had a lot of interesting antiquities in history which people didn't know about. So, this sort of stuff stuck in the back of my mind. Ethiopia had always been in the back of my head. If I ever had to travel anywhere I have to go to Ethiopia! Then, when John Foster Dulles called me in Chicago and I happened to be in a meeting in Chicago at the time and he called me there and he said, "We have decided to appoint you an ambassador. Where would you be willing to go?" I said, "I had thought about it too, and I will give you four places, Mr. Dulles; I will accept appointment to Norway, Denmark, Union of South Africa or Ethiopia." He said, "Well, that is fine. I am glad to know that those are the four and we will be in touch with you later on but we have made up our minds that you will be appointed ambassador. I don't see any reason why it couldn't be one of those our places you mentioned." So later on, Senator Thye called, but it was Dulles who called to ask me about my selections. But later on, in another meeting in Chicago, Senator Thye called and he said, "Well you are being appointed Ambassador to Ethiopia. Will you accept?" I said, "Well, of course." So I called Sylvia in New York and told her we were going to Ethiopia. I immediately hurried from my meeting over to the Chicago Library and got some books on Ethiopia and started reading up on the country and people but not as much as I had wanted to do, of course, and so we went to Ethiopia for those two reasons, shall we say, in a way.

*Q: On the next phase, did you enjoy your service in Ethiopia?*

SIMONSON: Well, we certainly did enjoy our service in Ethiopia. It was an experience that we will never forget those four years of the first term of President Eisenhower. They were four delightful years. There were so many things that were delightful about it that it is hard to say and single them out. For one thing, however, and that is something that most people so not realize is the climate in Ethiopia, especially up on the plateau where we lived. It is delightful and most people who know how much we hate warm weather, both Mrs. Simonson and myself, and someone said how in the world are you going to take it. I said you don't know how much fun it is going to be and so delightful. You see, if you look at the map of Ethiopia and you see it is right near the equator and so you immediately think it is warm and most people anyway popularly think of Ethiopia and all Africa as being steaming jungle or the Sahara Desert. Well, as a matter of fact, Ethiopia in the upper plateau region, 8,000 feet up of better where I was located, it is high enough you see, to moderate the heat, which in near the equator, but it is near enough to the equator so that it never gets too cold. So we had between 50-70 degrees roughly the whole year through. We never expect to live in a better climate than Ethiopia, for example. And then the country is exotic, as I called attention to before. It is so totally different in so many, many ways. Its people are wonderful people, they are courteous, poised in spite of, we might say, illiteracy as far as the technical. Illiteracy is concerned with reading and writing, but they are people of very considerable dignity. We enjoyed, of course, the relationship with them and we did get to know a great many of them. We enjoyed the relationships with the church, for example, and having been a pastor, this was of especial interest to me. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which is in the ancient Coptic stream historically, does not want to be called Coptic, in a sense, because Coptic means Egyptian and the were not Egyptian in that sense, you see, but they did have relationships with the Egyptian Coptic Church and the Armenian Church and the Syrian Church of India. Those four were closer to each other than any others although from the very beginning, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has been a member of the World Council of Churches from its constituting convention in Amsterdam and has continued that membership. When we first came, however, they were a little bit suspicious of us and as a matter of fact, the foreign minister, when he was here in the United States negotiating the military aid agreement which we had with the country of Ethiopia, John Foster Dulles told me this the last briefing I had with him before we left for Ethiopia for the first time that at one time Akilu, the foreign minister then, had asked Mr. Dulles, what was the United States sending to Ethiopia. Are they sending an ambassador or are they sending a missionary? Because the Ethiopia Orthodox Church is a state church; it is a little bit jealous of its position and of its status there and they were a little afraid maybe we were undermining that and that I was coming as ambassador, all right enough, but under the guise of also trying to subvert, shall we say, almost, the Ethiopian Church. So when we first came, they were suspicious, actually, and when we attended their services they wondered if we came just to sort of spy. But it didn't take very long before we established a sincere relationship and some of the finest associations we had were with the top ranking Ethiopian clergy. It's an old church, of course, from the third century and it is an interesting church, it's an historic church, it does many things differently than we do, that's true enough, and yet we always did enjoy going to their services as we enjoyed having intimate visits with some of their bishops and other clergy, the archbishop, for example. This was rather an interesting thing, nobody expected this, I suppose, it must not have been expected because one of the protocol people whom I was supposed to call on immediately, was the archbishop of the church, Archbishop Basileos. The weekly paper recorded my visit and it said the Ambassador to Ethiopia from the United States of America and His Eminence, the Archbishop Basileos, engaged a congenial conversation for 46 minutes!

Apparently, we were not expected to have a congenial conversation because we were supposed to be suspect but we were very friendly toward the end and they enjoyed our relationship and the help that we were able to give to them and the mediation which, in a sense, we were able to relate between our own missionaries who were there. They do have missionary societies in Ethiopia particularly among the Muslims because many people were Muslims, not all belonged to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church even though it is the state church. It has its great history, though, and many festivities and holidays that were interesting to us. We could go on and on about the Ethiopian Church. One rather humorous incident: one of the Congressional Committees that was there on a Sunday and one of the members asked if he could be taken to one of the Ethiopian Churches. He said he would like to go to a typical Ethiopian Church while he was here. Would you be willing to take me? I said, "Certainly, I will take you to the Emperor's personal church," in that sense, although he had a chapel on his own grounds but this is the church in which he will be buried, for example. His crypt is really there now and his wife, who had died, is buried there now and his other children who have died, who preceded him in death, are buried there in the crypt of his church. In his church, which is a very large church, a beautiful church. It has a mural, for example, of the Emperor giving his speech to the League of Nations, the great famed speech when he said, "God and history will judge what you do here today." And then riding in on his white horse after the occupation was over and the English had driven out the Italians and there was some other governmental picture, too and one of the congressmen mentioned this to me and he said that it was clear there was no separation of church and state here!

*Q: We would like to know something about the life and the economy of the people of Ethiopia?*

SIMONSON: Well, the people of Ethiopia for one thing, and that is another thing that we have to disabuse many Americans of. They are not Negro, for example, except for one tribe. They are Semitic in background as far as their racial stock is concerned. Their life, therefore, is governed in a great many ways by that fact.

They are an agricultural economy, most of the people having their living from farming. It is not large scale farming, shall we say, in most cases share cropping. Many nobles own a great deal of land and they have farmers on it who grow many things that we grow here, except corn, for example, in some of the regions can not be grown. Then they have some things different that we don't grow here like teff which is the ingredient for the bread they use. They grow other things like we do, grains and cereals and feed themselves, clothe themselves. The climate being what it is the shelter does not have to be very adequate, you see, it is nice enough for that. Coffee and hides are the chief exports. It is estimated that there are 25,000,000 people in Ethiopia, although there has never been a census conducted so it can not be certain, of course. Its government is monarchical, His Imperial Majesty is supreme ruler, no doubt about it, but a very benevolent monarch, one of the finest men that we have ever had to deal with, intelligent, knowledgeable about all the things in the world. There are many tribes, and these tribes have different languages and therefore it is an empire and that is why he is called an Emperor. Now that isn't just a fanciful title for him but it really is an empire because it consists of a confederation of tribes which were brought together by Menelik II who immediately preceded Haile Selassie I as the last great Emperor before the present Emperor, who has incidentally reigned for a great many years. It is an ancient land, it is rugged, mountainous terrain in the horn of East Africa. Amharic

is the official language. It is the source of the Blue Nile, incidentally, a lot of people do not realize. The Nile, the White Nile and the Blue Nile meet at Khartoum and the Blue Nile carries most of the water of the Nile, and that originates in Ethiopia. Eighty percent of the water of the Nile at Cairo comes from Ethiopia, the White Nile supplying the rest of it. The Axum Obelisks and the Lalibela Churches are the two great antiquities of Ethiopia, for example, which people ought to visit when they come there. The Axum Obelisks precede the time of Christ, too, and the Lalibela Churches are from about the 13th century.

The people live almost zestfully in this sense that they are happy. We may look upon their living standards as very low compared to ours, but on the other hand, there is no malnutrition. They are not undernourished and while their status is low, compared to ours, for them it is rather satisfying.

*Q: Here are two points: 1. There seems to be a misunderstanding and 2. Even more than that, I suppose a lack of understanding about the work of an ambassador. Could you tell me what an ambassador does in a foreign country?*

SIMONSON: Yes, you are right in saying that there is a lot of misunderstanding, from some people thinking that this is an unnecessary ornament, and just a decoration, to those who have a feeling that it really is important. Now diplomacy has become more and more important, it seems to me and like Senator Thye once said, probably diplomacy is the last and most effective line of defense we will have, after all. I usually define the work of an ambassador into four categories of essential work. This would be true in practically every country, though in a developing country like Ethiopia it is a little bit more true in one case, one part of it than in another, for example. It is one reason why it proved to us to be helpful in Ethiopia and I am glad it was Ethiopia than some of the others. Had I been in Norway or Denmark, for example, it would have been very interesting and fascinating, speaking Norwegian as I do, and knowing the history and background, but it would not have been nearly as interesting and certainly not as exotic nor as helpful and we would have found ourselves, I think with more time on our hands than we would have liked to have. But in Ethiopia there is a developing country and a chance to aid. Well, anyway, the four categories are this, first what we might call intelligence, knowing, in other words, what this country is doing, thinking, and passing this information on to our state department, to our president, to Congress; that, of course, is the original purpose, naturally of diplomacy. Then a second is what we might call propaganda. We are interested in putting our best foot forward and we do this through our embassies. There is no sense in putting your worst foot forward, if you have two feet you might as well put your best foot forward. So we do that, that in our second category. Then we have a tremendous amount of business, shall we say, to do. These are between the government of that particular country and our government; I am not talking about the investments coming in and having industry there, I am talking about the business we have with the government itself, in aid agreements, for example, in Ethiopia. But also a great deal of work is done in the United Nations and therefore you have an opportunity there as our two people who represent Ethiopia and us in the United Nations confer back and forth and secure agreements on how you are going to stand on issues in the United Nations. And, incidentally, I want to pay Ethiopia this compliment; that Ethiopia has supported the United States in the United Nations on more issues than any other nation in the history of the United Nations.

*Q: What was the nature and size of the staff with which you worked in the embassy in Ethiopia?*

SIMONSON: In the chancery, which is the official name of the office of an embassy, there were 24 Americans and 42 locals; now that is right in the chancery itself. In addition to that, of course, we had a military attaché, who was resident there in Ethiopia with another staff. Then we had our point four program as it was called at that time; it had been known by other names, AID now, in which we serve in agricultural development, water conservation, public health and education. Now when I say 24 Americans there, of course, I am talking particularly about the Deputy Chief of Mission, for example, who is a political officer, you might say the economic officer, the consul, and the third secretary. Then we have our CIA, Central Intelligence Agency, the Administration office and the General Services office. In the residence we had our driver, house servants and the gardeners. Now in addition to the Army Attaché resident there, we also accredited to Ethiopia, you see and Air Attaché and a Navy Attaché who were resident in Cairo, but who nevertheless had responsibility for Ethiopia and came there twice a year in their planes. Then we had part of the Signal Corps operation of the U.S. Army at Asmara, about a 2 hour airplane trip away from us. There were roughly between 1,500 and 2,000 members present in Asmara. At the time we were in Ethiopia, there were about 3,000 Americans of all kinds there; now there are more than that by quite a ways.

*Q: What aid were we giving Ethiopia when you were the ambassador there?*

SIMONSON: Some military aid, very minor really when we compare it with other nations, but we were supplying some military aid, both hardware and assistance in the actual instruction. Then our other aid was mainly agricultural because our conviction is, of course, that Ethiopia is an agricultural country, it is never going to be a heavy industrial country, but it can become a great breadbasket of the Middle East, really. So we were interested in the improvement of their crops, other methods, other livestock and other schools of agriculture and we developed two schools of agriculture during the period that I served as ambassador.

We were interested in improving their education facilities. They are fantastically interested in education and even yet they do not have the opportunity for all of the people who would like to go to school to go to school because they do not have the facilities and the teachers. Then we are interested in their public health, both preventative and otherwise. So there was a great deal of translating of public health printed material and much other aid in public health methods and facilities and personnel. Water conservation is a very important element in Ethiopia. There is a rainy season and a dry season and during the dry season there is a great need for water. If the water in the rainy season can be conserved then it would be great help but that is one of the problems, to conserve, sufficiently the water in the rainy season when it rained very, very heavily, but it would always run off unless reservoirs and dams and other methods were made to keep it. In other words, you might say in general that we were there to help them help themselves.

*Q: You must have had some experiences that stand out above others. Would you tell us about some of the memorable events and incidents that occurred in those 4 years in Ethiopia?*

SIMONSON: Well, His Imperial Majesty's trip to the United States in 1954 was probably the most memorable experience that I had during the 4 years. When one is provided the opportunity to very quickly and very intimately become acquainted with the Emperor, more probably than some other ambassadors, so much so that at a reception one time I as relating to one of the other ambassadors, having been down to see the Foreign Minister about the trip that day and the other day I had been down to see His Imperial Majesty himself about the trip and everything, he said what are you doing, sleeping down at the palace these days? It almost amounted to that because to arrange for his trip, no one realizes the fantastic detail that has to be gone into for a head of state's official visit to another country, such as this one was. It was so interesting to have him here, of course, and we could relate so many incidents about that, too, but we will forgo it. It was such an interesting trip which he enjoyed. It was his first time here in 1954. He wanted to come here before but he had not received an official invitation and a head of state has to have an official invitation from the head of state of that country in order to come to that country. Then the second thing was the 25th anniversary of his coronation in 1955; that again was a memorable experience, he had served as a regent before, but it was 25 years as an Emperor. He is 77 years old now and for all practical purposes has ruled Ethiopia for 50 years, which is a pretty durable sort of a reign, I don't think there are many others who can claim it and therefore you will notice now, for example, in the De Gaulle funeral and in other cases like that where heads of states from around the world are gathered, it is always number 1, Emperor Haile Selassie. He is number 1 always, because he is the longest reigning head of state in the world. Then of course, we had foreign visitors there, our own VIP's, Marshal Tito, General De Gaulle, he was not president of France at that time, he was out of power, but nevertheless he was an interesting person to have, Bernard of the Netherlands, and Earl and Lady Mountbatten, and then our own Vice President at that time, President Nixon now. There was an international trade fair during the coronation anniversary, which was interesting, too. You want to remember, also, that it was a memorable thing that you yourself, Mal, visited with our daughter and her husband, your brother, so we don't want to forget that those 10 days which you spent there were memorable for us and I hope for you, too.

*Q: It was certainly the most memorable 10 days I spent ever. I was just thinking here that we have not mentioned one thing that came up early in the interview. We have talked a good deal about preaching and politics but we have sort of forgotten about the poultry. Now where, when and in what ways has this been a part of your life?*

SIMONSON: Yes, poultry hasn't been as large a part, I suppose, as preaching and politics but as a boy I suppose it was. I was born and raised on a farm as we have indicated before and there the poultry was my particular assignment; that is no one else bothered about that, that was my area. I fed, I kept accounts, I sold, I did everything with reference to poultry on the farm, that was my domain. I did do some unusual things with it, I remember I went into the fancy end of it, I wouldn't say I was raising some ordinary chickens, you see. I remember buying a hen one time from Vineyard's Hole, Mass. that came almost famished when she came, but we revived her. I paid \$25 for the hen, but this was really warranted when the next year I was able to sell hatching eggs from this hen for \$1 a piece and then later on as I went into show business with some of these chickens. I sold a rooster one time, and that was in a little town of Lanesboro where that Fillmore County Poultry Show was being held, for \$50. So my farming at that time was not without some profit and then, of course in Ethiopia we did have some chickens there for a period



of time because of the eggs being small there and bitter and unreliable and so we got our own day old chicks from Nairobi and raised them. Since that we haven't done too much with poultry, we may get back into it again, you can't tell some time because I still like chickens very, very much.

**W. HAVEN NORTH**  
**Project Development Officer**  
**Ethiopia (1953-1957)**

*W. Haven North was born on August 17, 1926 in Summit, New Jersey. He served in the US Army in two before returning to Wesleyan University, where he received his BA in 1949. His career has included positions in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Nepal. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on February 8, 1993.*

NORTH: The first OSU mission to Ethiopia was around 1950, the project agreement was signed in 1951, and the first people began to arrive in 1952. (I arrived in March 1953.) The purpose was to establish an agricultural college and research center and extension services. When the OSU people got there they found there were no students who were qualified to enter a college program. So they started a technical school called the Jimma Agricultural Technical School. The first group of the OSU contract staff went to Jimma, which is in the southwest, some distance from Addis Ababa. They started the school from scratch. Over the years since then, the school has trained hundreds of Ethiopian agricultural experts and carried out research, continuing as a secondary level vocational agriculture program. In due course there were enough graduates to move on into a university program.

At the same time, the OSU staff and government were planning an agricultural college which was eventually located in Alamaya, near Harar. The Oklahoma State people and the Point Four administration wanted very much to have the university near Addis Ababa because that was the seat of government, that was where the Ministry of Agriculture was located, but the Emperor said no. He wanted it near Harar in the eastern part of the country where he came from but also to spread the benefits of development activity throughout the country.

TCA provided all of the facilities for the agricultural college from the ground up and initial teaching and research staff. OSU brought in the students from the Jimma school and started research and extension programs in the local areas. After 15 years, when OSU's work was formally terminated, Ethiopia had a flourishing agricultural college, staffed by Ethiopian agriculturists. So over a period of 20 years and starting from almost zero in terms of available institutions and trained Ethiopians, the Point Four program built up the core of the country's agricultural development program. Some of the graduates went abroad for further training in agriculture, came back with advanced degrees and became the faculty. A number of the graduates of the university are now active in international development work. I hear about them or see them once in a while carrying out technical assistance programs. One of my Ethiopian friends works with the World Bank; others for Michigan State University, and similar institutions. Here is an example of an evolution from a period when there was almost nothing on

the ground to the creation of a competent national institution and professional expertise. But it took almost 20 years to bring this about. The Ethiopian ties with OSU are still strong to this day. I was not aware of it at the time but the Point 4 agricultural college project in Ethiopia was a decade or so ahead of comparable institutional development in agriculture in other African countries and preceded those established in other parts of the world such as India.

In addition to the agricultural college project, we used the contract with OSU as sort of a body shop. Rather than have separate contracts for each project activity, we asked OSU to hire project staff, not necessarily from Oklahoma. I think this probably was a mistake-the OSU contract staff was larger than the Mission-but it was convenient; I learned from that experience not to put all of ones eggs in the same basket.

*Q: Also, you had a ruler, who probably more than anybody else in Africa, felt that education was the key, didn't he?*

NORTH: He put a high priority on education, for example, he retained the position of Minister of Education for himself leaving the day-to-day operations to a Vice-Minister. While there is much about his venality and autocratic leadership that one finds troubling, one of the monuments of his time will be his determination to introduce modern education to the country. (A priority that experienced severe set backs during the Italian occupation and subsequently during the period of brutal leadership following the coup in 1974.)

*Q: What were you mainly doing?*

NORTH: My position was (I was a relatively junior person at that time) in the Program Office helping to design the program and projects, prepare the budget justifications, and negotiate project agreements. But I also had an interesting sideline because the Point Four official, Dr. William Wrinkle, who was heading the education program, asked me to work with him as a research assistant. So I spent a good deal of time working with the Ministry of Education on various projects related to improvements in Ethiopian education.

One of my assignments was helping the Ethiopian personnel officer in the Ethiopian Ministry of Education develop a salary schedule for the teachers throughout the country. There was no structured salary system; teachers were not getting paid or paid on time; and they were leaving teaching faster than new teachers could be trained. So I was helping to introduce some of the concepts of modern, at that time, salary structures and patterns and help the Ministry reform its educational system. I did one study for the Ministry on why there was such a high turnover in Ethiopian teachers trying to understand some of the issues affecting educational development. I helped develop the schedule which was subsequently adopted by the Ministry for Addis Ababa but not without considerable difficulty. As a result, I had a good exposure to the Ministry of Education, to the Ethiopians working in the Ministry and our own experts in education, and to the challenge of moving a reform from policy to practice.

We had quite a large staff working in educational development. In those days we had a concept which was particularly important in the education program- probably borrowed from Latin American servicio programs-called a Joint Fund. It was sort of a shadow government and

administration that operated in parallel with the Ministry with a special office funded jointly by the U.S. and Ethiopian governments for developmental services. The office had its own facilities, budget and staffing and operated with considerable freedom from Ethiopian Government and Point Four procedures and regulations. The Point Four education program contained all kinds of projects. Curriculum development, textbook development based on Ethiopian history and culture, salary systems and tests development, teacher training school development, community education, technical education, a handicraft school to promote the use of Ethiopian designs not Persian (such as for carpets that the Emperor gave to head of states when he traveled), and large numbers of Ethiopians sent to the U.S. for training. Recently, in my work with UNDP, I met two UNDP Resident Representatives from Ethiopia who had during their college days worked with the Point Four education program writing Ethiopian stories for textbooks.

In addition to the agriculture college and education programs, the Point Four was involved in rinderpest disease control, an extension service program with Point Four staff working on district agricultural schemes and well drilling in the more arid areas. Another major program and one of the more interesting pioneering efforts was the Gondar College of Public Health and Training Center. It was one of the first, perhaps the first, attempts in developing countries to develop paramedical personnel to work in rural community health services-teams of community health officers, public health nurses, and sanitarians. The Gondar Public Health College has since become a medical school. I am not sure what happened to the paramedical program. The people who worked on that project have been influential over the years in shaping what has now become more commonly accepted as decentralized/generalized public health services with paramedical personnel. This was one of the first. Dr. Clayton Curtis from Arkansas' tuberculosis program was the first director of the college. (See interview with Dr. J. S. Prince on the Gondar project and U.S. assistance to public health development in Africa)

Another interesting project provided technical assistance in mapping the country. At the time there were few maps that were accurate. The old Italian maps had towns and villages in wrong locations and incorrectly named, if identified at all. The mapping project-the Ethiopian Geography Institute-purchased a helicopter (possibly from the \$5.0 million mentioned above; one of the first in the country) to assist the geographers identify villages, farming areas, and roads (trails) and prepare official maps for development planning. (The Institute continues today.)

The Emperor's concern (though probably minimal) about Eritrea's acceptance of a federated relationship led to his wish to extend development projects to Eritrea. As a consequence, the Point Four program, established a branch office in Asmara with projects for technical education, public health, and economic development planning.

Other technical assistance projects were concerned with promoting private investment with assistance to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and an elaborate survey of the Blue Nile River basin with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. This latter project grew out a U.S. response to the Ethiopian concerns over the Egyptian's plans to build the Aswan Dam and Egypt's use of the waters of the Blue Nile. One of my interesting assignments before going to Ethiopia was to study the issue of riparian rights in international law as it applied to Ethiopia-all Ethiopian Rivers are international.

In all of these activities, my function was to assist in developing country program strategies, project designs, budget preparations, the annual presentations to Washington, monthly reports, and the preparation and negotiation of project agreements. (The latter was particularly tedious as each project agreement had to be typed (no word processors in those days) with fourteen carbons in duplicate with each page signed-one set with the United States Government named first and one set with the Imperial Ethiopian Government named first; a carry over from treaty formats, I presume.)

*Q: This was a massive organization. How did you feel that the Americans and Ethiopians worked together? Were there big cultural problems?*

NORTH: Yes and no; in general, I think we worked together quite well. At the time we were in Ethiopia, there were very few Ethiopians studying abroad and those who had were just beginning to return. Their lives were largely dictated by the Emperor as to what to study and what jobs they were assigned to on their return. So for anybody with advanced education and training or status, life was very much determined by the Emperor, personally. We found, in the early period, that those who had returned from overseas training were ambivalent in their feelings about the Americans resident in Ethiopia; many of them were hard to communicate with, developing friendships was difficult. Even though they had had a Western education, they were torn between their traditional culture, the Emperor's personal wishes, and the country's Byzantine political world in which they had to live and their desire to preserve their Western ties. So it took quite awhile to establish close relationships, although over time we were successful in having a number of good Ethiopian friends. Similarly, relations with senior government officials and the Emperor were generally very good. It is my impression that Ethiopians continue to have positive memories of the Point Four program and their relationships with Americans despite the difficult political circumstances after the military coup in 1974 and the Government's turn to the Soviets.

This illustrates what I think you will find over and over again (and in other countries with US assistance programs) that the Ethiopians, who were sent abroad during that time and the Ethiopians we worked with in the country, developed a very warm relationship with Americans. The Point Four program helped over time build up a base of positive feelings, despite all the things that have happened since the mid-seventies in change of leadership and the communist push. The basic relationship is still very strong, I believe.

This was a time when Ethiopia was relatively peaceful and one could travel widely in the country. It was rugged travel that required one to carry all of one's supplies of food, water, and gasoline and repair items; often cross-country driving in areas without roads; and mostly camping. But during these trips, we became acquainted with Ethiopian life in the rural areas and the severely impoverished living conditions of the people. Our reception by the Ethiopian people in the villages was almost uniformly friendly, hospitable, and often curious about their visitors. It is a fascinating country with beautiful scenery, although the severe environmental problems of massive erosions were evident then and are worse today. At same time, Ethiopia was a very Byzantine world full of personal intrigue; one rarely knew what was going on in the government and who was in and who was out. The Emperor was held in great awe, almost as a deity. When he took his evening ride about town, people would throw themselves in front of his car to stop

him in order to deliver a petition. If we were on the road at the same time, we were obliged to stop and get out and bow! (Once we made a mistake and stopped and bowed only to discover that it was the Dutch Ambassador; he had a broad grin on his face as he passed!)

There is one interesting example where the Point Four program ran up against the local culture. At the request of the Ministry of Education, a group from the Point Four office went into the Danakil desert region to discuss with the local leaders the formation of local schools. The Danakils are a rather fearsome nomadic tribe. It became clear from the outset that they strongly opposed the idea of a local school program even if it was mobile and traveled with them. They saw it as a threat by the Government to make them settle down; they would have nothing to do with and made it clear that the visiting Point Four staff should leave immediately or else. The Point Four public health staff had a similar experience. I came to appreciate their view when I drove a truck from Djibouti across the Danakil desert to Addis Ababa; there was no road from Djibouti to the Assab highway; we just followed the compass northward. During this trip we met some Danakils wearing their large curved knives; and saw their small clusters of skin and branch houses.

*Q: In the Mission you were obviously the junior officer, pretty far down the line, but did you get any feeling about relations between the Embassy and the Mission?*

NORTH: Over the five years in Ethiopia I moved up the ladder and became the Program Officer and probably the person with, at that time, the longest memory of what went on in the Point Four program and our work with the Ethiopians. That sometimes was an asset and sometimes not. Over the five years I became more and more involved with greater responsibilities. We had directors and deputy directors that changed, but my role, because of the continuity of experience and my advancement to be the Program Officer, gave me a lot of involvement across the board.

Relations with the Embassy from my perspective were generally satisfactory. We had, of course, a sequence of ambassadors, some professional and some not so. One ambassador who stood out in my mind was Dr. Simonson, who was a Republican from Minnesota and had been a chaplain in the State legislature. He was an interesting personality, very different from the traditional career diplomat. He frequently repeated that his interests were in preaching, politics, and poultry- he had some chickens near the residence to the delight of our 4-year-old daughter. He was very congenial, kindly to Jeanne and I and well-intentioned but not very competent in Embassy work.

During this time, Vice President and Pat Nixon visited Ethiopia. We were told that all Americans should be at the airport to greet him- a large crowd with American flags. We also met them at a reception- a somewhat stiff affair. Subsequently, Nixon reportedly exclaimed that there were too many Americans overseas and as President he later moved to reduce the number of official Americans abroad. Also during this visit the Ambassador was severely criticized by Nixon and the Ethiopian officialdom for the seating arrangements at the formal dinner for Nixon- a failure in protocol that upset the ranking Ethiopian ministers.

However, Jeanne and I, as the youngest members of the official community, had a special opportunity to associate with the Embassy personnel as we lived, for a while, on the Embassy compound. Point Four had constructed a duplex house in preparation for an expanded Point Four

Mission but few Point Four staff wished to live on the Embassy compound. The chancery and the Ambassador's residence and many of the houses of the principal officers were on the compound so it was a pretty close situation. Being junior and nearby, we were invited from time to time at the last minute to formal dinner parties when an invited guest failed to show up-not an usual situation in Ethiopia. As a consequence, we had the opportunity to meet Ethiopia's ministers and high level visitors.

*Q: You left Ethiopia with a very positive feeling towards the work of Point Four. Did you decide to continue in it?*

NORTH: Well, I probably stayed there too long. Five years in such a remote place left me isolated from the main stream of assistance activity. I had a very limited understanding of the overall US assistance program worldwide, although I did have two interesting trips during that period-one to Beirut on international training, and the other to Thailand and India to learn about community development. This was the time when "community development" as a new approach to poverty alleviation was the rising priority in development philosophies. By visiting community development projects in Thailand and India, where the program was most advanced, I developed a first hand understanding of the problems and prospects for this approach to development. The approach has been too easily discredited by hind sight commentators on development and many of the concepts such as participation are returning as essential in development processes.

**THOMAS P. MELADY**  
**FAO, USAID**  
**Ethiopia (1954-1956)**

*Ambassador Thomas P. Melady was born in Norwich, Connecticut in 1927. He served in the US Army and received his BA from Duquesne University in 1950. He received his MA and PhD from the Catholic University of America in 1952 and 1954. His career included positions in Ethiopia, Burundi, Uganda, and the Vatican. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 13 and 19, 1995.*

MELADY: And I ended up in Ethiopia.

*Q: This was from when to when?*

MELADY: I was in Ethiopia--I started with FOA approximately in the fall of 1954, having gotten my degree in the summer and spending the rest of the summer in polishing off the dissertation. And I was with FOA for about two years, mostly in Ethiopia, or getting ready for it or coming back. And I became fascinated by Africa. Ethiopia is a very special "cup of tea" in regard to Africa. It was then especially in the time of Emperor Haile Selassie. And it was really there that I said to myself, I really ought to have an area specialty. I became fascinated with the Emperor because one of my students--I also taught part-time there at the university--and one of

my students was a nephew of His Majesty, and I arranged to interview him. And to make a long story short, I returned after two years, and joined the staff of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh where I, among other things, set up the Institute of African Studies.

*Q: I'd like to make the long story longer. I'd like to return to Ethiopia. Here you were a young man in Ethiopia, how did you see Ethiopia in those days?*

MELADY: Well, it's mountainous kingdom, a very special face of Africa, in the continent of Africa, impacted by the Middle East, one of the ancient Christian lands, at least the northeastern part was, a monarchy with an emperor who was a world figure going back to the League of Nations who fought the fascists, etc. A fascinating country. His predecessor, Emperor Menelik and Queen Zauditu both gave a welcome to refugees. For example, there was a large Armenian community, people who had fled there and were given refuge after the Turkish problems of 1917. You had a Greek community. The emperor himself welcomed specialists and teachers, engineers, etc. from Eastern Europe. And you had a Polish community, rather small communities. I was fascinated by this mosaic of culture in Addis, and also Ethiopia itself. I remember I went down to Dire Dawa, and I had heard there were black Jews in Ethiopia, and I went down and explored them near the Falashas, and one of my first published articles, entitled *The Black Jews*, and I interviewed them. It was a scholarly article. While there I became fascinated by the role of the emperor who I felt then, and still do, and I said this later in a book, but in my first article he had this plan for evolutionary change. He was an authoritarian. He was the classical believer in Plato's republic ruled by the elite. He was quite authoritarian but not a tyrant, there's a difference. And I thought it was appropriate at the time, and just before leaving Ethiopia I remember I wrote an article, I had a contact--a friend of mine was on--for a magazine in the United States of the Pittsburgh Post Gazette. And soon after I was back in the United States, Macmillan publisher called me, and it was an editor, and he said, "I've just read your article on the emperor." The article took the man and described the man against the country, so it was about Ethiopia and how he was the natural product of Ethiopia. And he said, "Given the interest in Africa, I think we'd like to come up with a book which would be on ten to twelve of the African leaders, with the same writing style, the man, the country, the culture." So to make a long story short, I said I'd like to do it. So between '57 and '60 between setting up the Institute of African Affairs, and doing other things at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, I made some trips to Africa and met the then African leaders in countries that were just emerging into independence: Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Leopold Senghor in Senegal, Houphouet-Boigny who is now deceased in Ivory Coast. I got over to the east African coast, Tom Mboya, and Julius Nyerere. They were leaders then struggling for independence, with the exception then of Ghana who had already achieved it. But I did the research in the period of really '57, '58, '59. By '59 many nations in Africa were on the road to independence. I remember I enjoyed doing it, and got down to the then Congo, Kinshasa. Stopped at Togo and met Sylvanus Olympio who later was assassinated. All these people were in my book, and the book was sort of a hobby because I had a full-time job. But it enriched my fundamental knowledge of Africa and the whole movement towards independence. The book came out and I was very fortunate...I've written twelve books, but probably that did the best of them all, mostly because of timing. It came out in 1960 and I remember it was prominently reviewed by the New York Times. And that sort of confirmed my interest in Africa, and you might say it gave me an extra credential.

*Q: I want to go back to Ethiopia and then come back to the book. In Ethiopia what was your job with AID or FAO?*

MELADY: FAO, the administration of President Eisenhower, and we had a great emphasis on trade and investment, not aid. So it was an office known as the Office of Trade and Investment to identify trade opportunities, and investment opportunities. Our goal was to pick a favorable investment climate, avoiding some double taxation and other measures to attract foreign capital. And other measures to attract good trade relations. And one of the things that we suggested was a trade fair. I remember it was a lot of fun working on.

*Q: Looking at these leaders, I recall at the time there was sort of a glow in the United States. This was just before the Kennedy administration came in, but people were looking with great enthusiasm on Africa.*

MELADY: That's right, in the whole of the '60s, but particularly the early '60s.

*Q: Were you seeing something different with these leaders than actually developed? So much has sort of turned to ashes in some of those areas.*

MELADY: Again the leaders reflected a background in culture, dealing with Leopold Senghor a man of great culture, now a member of the French Academy. In fact that was the title of a chapter, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Poet, Philosopher, President. Houphouet-Boigny, who was a MD, a medical doctor, the son of who would have been a king, or a chieftain. They were involved in the sweep of history. And the sweep of history was calling for independence. Now that was then. I certainly supported the whole concept. Remember it was also a period of the cold war. It wasn't a neutral period. Would the enthusiasm have been there if it had been a neutral period with no major confrontation? I'm not sure, but nonetheless, there was general support in American establishment circles that it was in the interest of the African people, and in the interest of the west to have a rapid evolution to independence. Rather than what had happened in Kenya of the major power fighting it, and having what was called Mau Mau, or not so well recorded in history, what the French did in Madagascar to put down the revolution of 1945-1946.

*Q: It's a little hard to go back but I think its interesting since you were surveying the area at the time, what was the view of the role of the Soviets? Was this of concern on the academic side too or not?*

MELADY: I'd say not so much in Ethiopia when I was there, but later in traveling when I would deal with just the leaders, have interviews with them, etc. It included Tubman in Liberia, by the way. I would stay a month or so in a given country at the policy level. There was no doubt that the Soviets were quite active. First of all, they made it public in terms of their proclamations. They felt at that time that it was ripe for revolution, the destruction of the old order, and the establishment of a new order. Therefore they were active in terms of spreading their doctrine, and in practical things like technical assistance reflecting their economic philosophy. And a very active student exchange program dramatized by the establishment of Lumumba University in Moscow. So scholars in the next century will evaluate it. There was no question that the cold war confrontation played a major role in some of the good things like rapid movement to



independence. And some of the more recent tragedies, of course, were in Angola and Mozambique. Hopefully the one in Mozambique is thoroughly over, Angola might be over. I mean the cold war was fought out in Angola and Mozambique.

*Q: So how long were you running this Institute?*

MELADY: The book got published. I like writing books. I must say from the standpoint of sales of all my books that did the best of them all, and it encouraged me that I might be able to become a full-time writer. So I went to New York with that in mind, and I put together a package of where I had taught in a special arrangement, either having adjuncted two courses between Fordham University and St. John's University. St. John's University later establishing an Institute of African Affairs. I wanted to teach and have the spare time that professors get. I also was part time head of a Catholic sponsored organization known as Africa Service Institute tied into the Catholic Inter-Racial Council, and I began writing books, and going off to Africa in the summer free from my academic duties. I decided the second book ought to be on Southern Africa, and wrote White Man's Future in Black Africa. The reviews were fairly good, but it didn't sell quite as well. I never sold enough books to make it a full time activity, but I kept on writing. I did for Macmillan Faces of Africa (my third book) which turned out to be a supplementary textbook. Then I went on to write a book on the rise of the relationship between nationalism and racism, a book I'm rather proud of, and I was pleased to see it has been reprinted a couple of times. I remember Hawthorne did it, and I gave it the title, The Rise to Power of Non-White Peoples in Africa and Asia and the Caribbean. But they redid the title and called it The Revolution of Color. It did fairly well. I also did Western Policy and the Third World. I would write them in the course of the year. From June through August I'd be traveling. And I was in various civic committees. I was an active Republican. In those days I was a Young Republican, one of the largest and most effective Young Republican clubs in the country was in New York City where I lived. And I was chair of the African Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and did think pieces and that kind of thing.

It became apparent to me after my third book, Focus of Africa, was published by Macmillan that writing would have to be an extra-curricular activity as the earnings were not sufficient to support a family.

**STUART P. LILLICO**  
**USIS**  
**Addis Ababa (1955-1960)**

*Stuart P. Lillico was born in Seattle, Washington in 1909. After graduating from the University of Washington, he joined the United States Information Agency in 1953. His career included positions in India, Ethiopia, Zanzibar, Rhodesia, and Japan. Mr. Lillico was interviewed by John Hogan in 1988.*

*Q: Now, from New Delhi, you next went to Ethiopia. What do you remember about your tour in Ethiopia?*

LILLICO: I remember Ethiopia as being the most nerve-wracking place I have ever served. I do not know just why that was. I found working with the Ethiopian government and people to be a source of a great deal of tension. I was not unhappy when I was transferred. In the meantime, we were doing on a smaller scale what we had done in India. We put out a daily news bulletin, the material for which was taken off the wireless file. We also picked up headlines from the morning VOA news. We put out, as I recall, up to ten mimeograph pages, both sides, of news and commentary in English, plus a single sheet of translation into Amharic, the language of the ruling group at that time in Ethiopia.

We had a rule of thumb that the people we were trying to reach were able to speak and read English. Those who did not speak English probably had very little influence on Ethiopian policy for lack of education. [English was generally taught in primary schools.] Of course, the vast majority of Ethiopians could not read any language.

We followed that [policy] fairly steadily, despite occasional efforts to get us off into something else. That seemed to be our best bet, all the way through. We had a circulation, as I recall, around twelve hundred, mostly right in Addis Ababa itself, but we did send copies to other parts of the country by mail.

We worked with the three principal newspapers in Addis Ababa. One was in French, run by an expatriate American. The second [in English] was run by a Canadian and the third in Amharic. All were government organizations, but we had excellent relations with them, I am happy to say.

In addition, USIS had a good library and we did have a scholarship program. It was a good operation, I think, in Addis Ababa.

**HOWARD IMBREY**  
**Attaché**  
**Addis Ababa (1956-1958)**

*Howard Imbrey was born in 1921 in New Jersey. He received his BA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1942 and served in the US Army during World War II. His career has included positions in India, Sri Lanka, the Congo, France, Belgium, and Italy. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 21, 2001.*

*Q: And you were in Addis Ababa from when to when?*

IMBREY: '56 through '58.

*Q: What was the situation in Ethiopia at the time?*

IMBREY: Life was never easy. The emperor was fully in charge. We liked him and in our terms in our country he was pretty good. The revenue that he got from the people was under his care when almost 90 percent were educated and so we had no quarrel with the emperor except the fact that he was always asking for more money and airplanes. Joe Simonson was the ambassador and was made ambassador because Eisenhower was under the impression that Ethiopia was a theocracy and that he should send a reverend. Simonson was a minister and he opened every meeting in the embassy "In the name of Jesus Christ, the elder brother of the human race, let not the emperor ask me again for a constitution airplane." But, it was a constellation airplane. He wanted desperately a constellation airplane.

*Q: Oh, yes, beautiful planes.*

IMBREY: Oh, I loved them. But, at any rate, it was a relatively calm and peaceful country. There were always sideline attempts by the military to get an advantage. Only one important one and that occurred after I left.

*Q: What about Eritrea at that time?*

IMBREY: That was a thorny issue and the reason for that was in 1954 the United Nations in their wisdom or the wisdom of four delegates that they sent to map out the situation decided that the Eritrea issue should be under the Ethiopians for military and foreign affairs but otherwise have a certain amount of freedom. This never worked as far as the Ethiopians were concerned.

*Q: Well, while you were there was Eritrea technically in a different status?*

IMBREY: Yes, it was a province, but it was under its own leadership. It was a self-rule.

*Q: Did we have Kagnev Station at the time?*

IMBREY: Yes, indeed we had Kagnev Station and we also had a camp there that contained enough beds, bedding and equipment to house all the people who might eventually be driven out of the Middle East in the event of a serious conflict. I forget the name of that camp, but I visited it a number of times.

*Q: It was all part of the evacuation system. During this time you were there I was in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia and that was kind of where our safe haven was.*

IMBREY: Oh, you were. But then if you were air lifted out of Tehran then you were gone to Eritrea to this particular camp.

*Q: Yes. How about relations with Somalia at the time?*

IMBREY: At the time there were no relations. They got along and I don't think there was any difficulty between the two countries to speak of.

*Q: They weren't having a war over the Ogaden?*

IMBREY: No, no, they weren't having a war. What was happening there all the time was tribal movements and disturbances at just about every time.

*Q: Well, there are nomads going back and forth across that Ogaden Desert. Were you involved in the long-term question of who was going to succeed Haile Selassie?*

IMBREY: No, that was pretty well taken care of. He had two sons who were eligible. One of them was killed in an automobile crash while we were there. Then the crown prince was the obvious selection to be the ruler. We got along with the crown prince just fine.

*Q: So, were we messing around there?*

IMBREY: Oh, yes, we had operations, but there again they were against the Russians, against their acolytes. We had the first really important telephone operation. This was before that great thing in the tunnel in Berlin. We had a very big operation, as a matter of fact, we had bugs on the Soviets, Czechs, Egyptians and I think a Bulgarian came in. I can't feel that it was a high priority. In the Embassy there was a wing which was known by the locals as the CIA wing. In the basement we had many tape recorders and a number of people spent the entire day translating from the various take on these things. We had a house rather far out in which the tape recorders were running night and day causing a great deal of problems for us because we have to explain the high bill for electricity, which we did by getting somebody in the telephone company to ignore it. But then the problem was the heat that was generated by these things and we had to go out and buy more fans all the time. The fans didn't work, the electricity didn't work and everything didn't work as you can imagine.

Then another thing, we had a central place where the telephone lines were connected to our apparatus. This was about four feet underground and we built in the house of a former agent, we built a garage around it to make it appear as if it were a garage and then we buried this stuff. Well, about every four or five months they would decide to extend the telephone lines which would mean we'd have to go there, unbury the lines, put them near the surface so that they would find them, but they wouldn't find our bugs and to do that you have to get through Ethiopian mud which sticks like a [word indistinct]. It was a six-hour job getting this stuff to the surface and then getting it back in until we all hated it, but it was a successful operation, except that the people never said anything much over the phone.

*Q: Looking at this, were the Soviets very successful in Ethiopia?*

IMBREY: No, no, they didn't have much success. They made friends and I don't think they convinced anybody. There was no communist party.

*Q: Later in the '70s you had Haile Selassie overthrown and the Mengistu government came in they were talking Marxist, but I think they were sort of home grown, weren't they? They weren't Soviet agents particularly.*

IMBREY: The Soviets were playing their own game and the Soviet game at that time was to get to the Red Sea. Now they had been to Somalia, which is on the Indian Ocean. All of a sudden they drop Somalia totally and made friends with the Ethiopians. People, most journalists, will tell you that's when the Americans moved in on the Somalis to take up the slack with the departure of the Russians. That was totally untrue. We never got into Somalia because the president, despite the fact the Russians deserted, was still communist.

*Q: Was it Siad Barre?*

IMBREY: Yes, Siad Barre. Siad Barre said go to Valista [as heard], communists didn't want anything to do with the Americans and it was only years later that we had somewhat of an arrangement with his intelligence organization. But it didn't make any difference; Somalia was such a backwater that we were not about to spend lots of money doing anything with it.

*Q: Well, my understanding was our foreign policy was almost revolved around Kagnev Station and keeping Kagnev Station?*

IMBREY: Yes, and then when that became a liability they moved it to Liberia, God bless them.

*Q: In '58 what was your rank, title?*

IMBREY: Let's see I was a GS-15 at the time.

*Q: What were you calling yourself?*

IMBREY: Attaché at the Embassy. Attaché of what? You know we had this big problem between the two brothers, between the two Dulleses. That lasted after both had departed. They did not want us confused with the Foreign Service and so we were always registered as FSR, where everybody looked down the list and spotted us right away.

**HERMAN KLEINE**  
**Mission Director, USAID**  
**Addis Ababa (1957-1959)**

*Herman Kleine was born on March 6, 1920 in New York, New York. He attended the State University of New York at Albany and then entered the military. Mr. Kleine began his career in Foreign Service in 1949 when he joined the Marshall Plan Mission to the Netherlands. He also served in Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, and Brazil. Mr. Kleine was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1996.*

KLEINE: When the Mission Director in Ethiopia resigned, I was asked if I would be interested.

*Q: This would be probably 1957 under the International Cooperation Administration (ICA)?*

KLEINE: 1957. I arrived in Ethiopia in August of '57.

*Q: Why would you have accepted a switch from European programs out to Ethiopia of all places, comparatively?*

KLEINE: Well, the European programs were on the way out, but there was still a good deal going on. I wasn't looking to go anywhere. I forget how it was brought to my attention, but Stuart Van Dyke, I'm sure, was involved. I was asked would I be interested and I said, "Sure." We ran into some trouble when my name was proposed to the Ambassador, Don Bliss. His objection was that I was too young, that the Ethiopians respected age. He therefore made his view known that he'd prefer to have an older, more mature type. And I was fortunate in that Joe Palmer was then the Assistant Secretary of State - in effect Ambassador Bliss's boss -

*Q: for Africa.*

KLEINE: ...for Africa. I had worked with him on a negotiating team having to do with Libya, when we went to London for the negotiation with the British ... and he spoke up

*Q: What were you doing about Libya?*

KLEINE: It had to do with some sort of assistance program to help buoy up our ability to maintain the then considered very important U.S.-Wheeler Air Base in Libya. That was the only time I had any real direct contact with him, which lasted about a week. He spoke up and sort of told Don Bliss to back off, so I went out to Ethiopia. That was a memorable trip. In those days, as you recall, they didn't have any four engine planes flying to Ethiopia. To get to Ethiopia, you had to get up around midnight, go out to the airport in Athens, and you got into a two engine plane, I think it was called a Con...

*Q: Convair.*

KLEINE: Convair. And you'd fly initially to Egypt, Cairo, and then...

*Q: Wadi Halfa.*

KLEINE: And then Khartoum, and then to Asmara, and finally to Addis Ababa. I remember my arrival at the airport. It was a beautiful day, as most days were in Addis, and in most of Ethiopia. And at the airport was Charlie Stokes, was the Deputy Director and his wife, and the Agricultural Officer, Molohan, and Dr. Curtis, who was the Public Health Advisor, and others.

At the mission, we were having a lot of personnel turnover. Charlie Stokes, who had been detailed from State, was scheduled to leave, and so was our Program Officer, Haven North. Also the program there had some special problems, the consequence of the Richards mission, which had made its swath through the Middle East and Ethiopia not long before I arrived. And what was the Richards Mission? Richards was a recently retired congressman who had been chairman of the foreign affairs committee of Congress for many, many years. And he was asked to have a mission to visit the Middle Eastern countries as...

*Q: by Eisenhower.*

KLEINE: ...by Eisenhower. His activity was part of the Eisenhower Doctrine, designed to build up relations with these countries. Giving gifts was considered to be a way to do that.

*Q: This was presumably to contain Soviet influence?*

KLEINE: Everything during that period and for many years thereafter was motivated to contain the Soviet influence. And we learned, at least I hope we learned, a lot of lessons about whether or not one can buy friendship. But at the time, it was good pickings for these governments visited. There were wild stories that came out at the time. In Yemen, for example, the Imam in charge was suffering advanced stages of senility and illness. He thought that Americans were coming with bags of money. And that's all he wanted - money. He didn't get it. In Ethiopia a program was put together that amounted to about \$5 million. One element of it was to partially pay for a four engine plane, the first such to become part of the Ethiopian airlines. I remember when that arrived. There was a big ceremony. It was all handled under contract with TWA, which provided a team of experts who helped train the Ethiopians to run and maintain an airline. That was a successful project. There were other projects financed by the Richards program, such as the Blue Nile Valley Project, and they had not moved very far by the time I arrived.

*Q: Separate from technical assistance?*

KLEINE: Yes, separate from the technical assistance program which had been going on for a number of years. The program was designed to build up the important institutions in Ethiopia, such as in education, public health, agriculture. Traditional, but slow, long term programs, which I thought throughout the period were doing quite well, considering the problems of selecting participants, and selecting of personnel, etc. Ambassador Don Bliss was there for most of the time that I was there; we got along very well. Not too long after I arrived, we had a visit from Skinny Holmgren, who was the Chief Agricultural Officer in Washington. And I enjoyed his visit and subsequent visits from Washington. It was an opportunity to get news from what's going on in Washington, as we were rather remote in Ethiopia. Not long after that, Ralph Fisher came as Haven North's replacement. And then we got Carl Mathiesson, with whom I had worked on Yugoslavia, who came as Assistant Program Officer, and Jim Roush also came as Assistant Program Officer. Not too much later we had, got a new Director back in Washington, a fellow named Jimmy Smith, James Smith.

*Q: Administrator of ICA.*

KLEINE: ICA. I had been appointed by Mr. Hollister; he had succeeded Stassen. Jimmy Smith replaced Hollister. Jimmy Smith was a business man. He had been the head of the Flying Tigers Airline. He was a very closed mouth fellow, didn't speak much. People were afraid of him. When we were told he was coming out, we prepared an extensive program for him, trips to see our projects in Jimma and Alemaya and Gondar, meetings with the Emperor and other officials, as well as receptions. And we tried to keep him busy. He didn't say much, all through his visit. Finally we got him to his plane, he'd arrived on his own plane. When he boarded, all he said to

me was, "Good luck, Kleine" and off he went. I had no ideas what his views would be, etc. Then I was tremendously surprised when not long after that I learned that he nominated me for the Fleming award, the agency's nominee for ten most outstanding men in government.

*Q: Interesting.*

KLEINE: That was the only way I learned what his impressions were. I enjoyed living and working in Ethiopia a great deal. The country was beautiful and varied. There was a mix of old cultures. The small European establishment, made up primarily of businessmen, lived a more or less separate life, as did the diplomatic community. The peoples of Ethiopia were made up of dozens of tribes, 40 different languages. It was the Emperor's political and military skill that kept the country together as long as it did. Except for some limited rebel activity in the north, it was very tranquil during the period when I was there.

*Q: Did you meet the Emperor?*

KLEINE: Yes, I met him a number of times. It was an experience each time. He maintained a very formal court, at least as viewed by Westerners. Whenever Westerners would call on him, they had to wear morning coat. Before I went out to Ethiopia, I was told to get, that I should bring a morning coat ensemble, white tie outfit, a white tuxedo jacket and a regular black tuxedo. I brought it all and I used it all! During each visit at the palace, the Emperor was always seated on a slightly elevated platform on a gilt throne-like chair. A small man, petite almost, he held himself - seated or standing - very erect, very regal. Having been an emperor for so long, I guess he thought he was an emperor by the grace of God. You'd never see him take a hurried step, he always moved in a slow-moving, regal manner. We were taught that when you go in to meet him, you face him and bow half-way into the room. You would take your seat when he motioned you to do so. When you left, you would never turn your back on him. You would back out and bow as you left the reception hall. He never spoke directly to you in English, but always Amharic through his official interpreter. But he knew exactly what you were saying because he was fluent in English. I spoke in English which was translated into Amharic. He used it as a technique to permit himself more time to decide what he wanted to say.

*Q: What did you talk about?*

KLEINE: From time to time, there were problems in operations that seemed to remain unresolved through the normal channels. I would consult with the Ambassador, keep him up to date on where we stood on programs and problems. When we decided that it was the time to resolve the obstacles in this or that program at the Emperor's level, we would decide to seek an interview with him. All such meetings or interviews were arranged by the Ambassador. He would be present at the sessions, too.

*Q: Do you remember what kind of problems you would take to him?*

KLEINE: I'm trying to think whether it related to actions such as personnel or financial contributions that we expected from the Ethiopians for certain programs. As a matter of policy, we expected some contribution by the Ethiopians in connection with each project we undertook.



For normal operations we had a central contact point in the government. It was run by an Ethiopian businessman who had been designated by the Emperor.

*Q: Tekla, something like that.*

KLEINE: I can picture him, a fine looking man. He'd come in from business. Another key contact was the Minister of Finance, Makonnen Habtewold. And he was a tall, very thin man and was quite old. I found him to be extremely useful and supportive. He was good in dealing with problems. We developed a good rapport. I enjoyed visiting our projects in the field. There was the agricultural high school at Jimma which was run by a team we had under contract from central Oklahoma A & M, which became Oklahoma State University. They developed and ran that program, the agricultural research program and the agricultural college at Al Amaya. They were, I believe, very well run. The objective for these programs, as it was for all projects, was, ultimately, to turn them over to the Ethiopians in totality. There was always a battle with the Oklahoma people as how long that phase out would take. And we were pushing for earlier periods and they were less optimistic. They had developed a whole coterie of people that were working on that project. One of the continuing problems with institutional contractors such as universities was what part of their regular staff would they use and what part would they hire from the staff outside. Our interest was to maximize the use of regular staff. We didn't want to create a foreign service of the University. We wanted their regular staff, for several reasons. We knew that they were people that were likely to be well-regarded by the institution itself, and would be less anxious to stretch the work out as long as they possibly could, for they had jobs to return to. It was a continuing bone of contention which endured, but it wasn't too serious a problem when I was there as the projects were still in the relatively early stages. When I was back in Washington years later, working on African problems, I kept pushing for phasing down and out, and we had battles with the Oklahoma people. Oklahoma had particular political clout because it was one of the oldest of the universities associated with the assistance program, starting with the Point Four program. Also Dr. Bennett, who was an early president of the University, had himself participated in the start of the program. His was a powerful name in Washington - in the Administration and on the Hill in Congress.

*Q: He was first head of TCA.*

KLEINE: TCA - the Point Four program. So dealings with Oklahoma people took a lot of patience. They took advantage, I think, of their situation. But, in general, I thought - and still think - they did a good job.

*Q: What stood out as sort of one of the, the project that you found most interesting?*

KLEINE: The Gondar project in public health which was located up north. For the project, we trained paramedical teams to work in the rural areas of the country. The training was conducted at the Gondar location by U.S. Public Health Service doctors and nurses. We trained the Ethiopians to work as teams.

*Q: Well, it was a team of three. One was the health officer, one a nurse, and one a sanitarian. And I think that the training for the health officer was 3 years and for the nurse 2 years and the sanitarian 1 year, I think, something like that.*

KLEINE: I was very impressed with the enthusiasm of these young people. It was a tremendous opportunity for these young Ethiopians and the project had great promise. I don't know what happened later because of the bloody political upheaval that came after the Emperor was deposed. While we're on that, I get a lot of pleasure from news that I receive from Oklahoma State University. They have formed an association of alumni which has ties with Ethiopia, Alemaya in particular. They publish a newsletter and have been holding annual meetings. I enjoy reading in the newsletters about the Ethiopians that have come back, and the fact that Alemaya still exists as a college-level agricultural institution. They send books and occasionally people go out to visit and help.

*Q: One interesting little sideline in connection is that, your two connections. One, you worked on Hungarian refugees and some of those refugees were medical staff at Gondar.*

KLEINE: Is that so?

*Q: They were brought to Ethiopia by the Ethiopian government and refugee organizations and worked as part of that staff under Dr. Curtis.*

KLEINE: That's interesting.

*Q: You had a little story about that?*

KLEINE: I forget just how we, as a mission, related to the Minister of the Interior. Oh yes, we had a public safety program to help professionalize the civil police forces.

*Q: Part of the \$5 million grant.*

KLEINE: That was part of the \$5 million Richards grant. And we had an expert, I forget the name of the gentleman, to help administer the program.

*Q: Colonel somebody. I don't remember it now.*

KLEINE: It was Colonel Selby. In connection with the program, we had contacts with the Minister of Interior, who was an important man in the group around the president running the country. At one point a young man, a young Ethiopian, shows up, escorted by an aide of the Minister to my office at the Mission. He made known to me that the young man was a gift to me from the Minister in gratitude for what our program was accomplishing.

*Q: Minister of Interior.*

KLEINE: Yes, the Minister of Interior. The question for me was, what was I supposed to do with him? He was given to me to do whatever I wanted. I would guess he was 15 or 16, tall and slim,

bright, and without any knowledge of English. I conferred with the Ambassador. Also, we were supposed to notify Washington when presented with gifts from foreign governments. The solution I chose was to give him a job. We employed him as the lowest entry level laborer in the Mission motor pool and trained him to work around cars, etc. The Minister was thanked for his generosity and Washington informed of the gift and the disposition. The minister stressed the importance of handling the matter with delicacy. That was clear, but how?

Another interesting development occurred in late 1958 or early 1959, when a cable arrives from Washington from Dr. Fitzgerald.

*Q: He was the Deputy head of ICA at that time.*

KLEINE: He was the Deputy of ICA and was the actual head of the agency. He directed me to go to Yemen to assess the impact of a famine that had then gripped Yemen and, I think, some surrounding countries. I was to make recommendations for U.S. aid based on my findings. Yemen had no relations whatsoever with the U.S. I referred earlier to that crazy visit of the Richards Mission to Yemen. Nothing came of it because the Imam was out of his mind. Hence, we had no embassy or other representation in the country. Apparently, a feeler had come out, asking if the U.S. could provide assistance in dealing with the famine. The U.S. government decided to consider the request and Dr. Fitzgerald decided that I should be the one to conduct the assessment. I requested Bill Carter, who was the Mission Controller, to accompany me.

I had a special problem as my passport showed my religion as Jewish and Yemen might not allow entry of anyone of the Jewish faith. I was concerned that Dr. Fitzgerald hadn't thought of that as being a possible problem in my getting into the country. There was a regular weekly flight from Ethiopia to Yemen. That would have been the usual route to get in there. But, concerned about this problem and believing it likely the tightest restrictions would be at the airport, we decided to go in through neighboring Aden, which was then still under British control. We had the U.S. Consul in Aden. Consequently, we flew to Aden. The Consul who had visited Yemen periodically arranged to advise Yemeni authorities that we were arriving from Aden at roughly a certain time. So we went in overland by jeep to Yemen.

*Q: The U.S. Consul with you?*

KLEINE: The U.S. Consul was with me, and Bill Carter. That was an experience. It was high plateau. We passed through villages that were just right out of ancient history, the people were just living in little huts. This open land was actually less flat than I thought it might be. Finally, we got to Taiz. It was the main city, though not the official capital, which was Sanaa. It was architecturally striking; it had buildings of multiple floors, but all built out of mud. We were put up in a guest house, the Imam's official guest house. There was no restaurant, no place to eat. Staff would come to the corridor outside your room and prepare your food on little hot grills, fires, and they'd give you the food. But we were there for several days taking trips to see what was going on.

*Q: Was somebody in the government with you?*

KLEINE: A government official was with us. We talked about what the food needs of the country and its availability, and he set up the necessary meetings with local representatives. We checked the port facilities and explored the kind of controls which would be placed on food that might be imported. We worked on the preliminary arrangements. Ultimately, a program was initiated based on our recommendations. That was the beginning of the U.S. presence in Yemen. I don't know what the situation is now, I believe the U.S. still has a presence there.

*Q: Yes. Interesting. That was really the beginning of our program in Yemen and there was no embassy so it was the first contact of any consequence. Did somebody go there to stay and distribute the food?*

KLEINE: Yes. There was a small, very small mission. While living in Ethiopia, we used to occasionally for R & R, go down to Nairobi in Kenya. It was a delightful place to visit. It was developed by the British who knew how to take care of themselves. It was quite different from Ethiopia.

*Q: Did you have any contact with the British in Addis Ababa?*

KLEINE: Yes. There was a British Embassy. I don't think they had an aid program. There were British and French cultural programs and the Israelis were beginning a small technical assistance program, but we were the only significant bilateral program. There was a UN program. Interestingly, the Ethiopians at that time did not consider themselves as being African. They would say that they were red. The Emperor's political, economic and cultural outlook was oriented toward Europe. And it was only later when he began to aspire to a position of leadership in the newly developing and independent Africa that he made state visits to African countries and sought to attain a leadership role in Africa. He succeeded in getting the Organization of African States (OAS) to establish its headquarters in Addis Ababa. And it was an interesting change. Another thing we started to observe was the growing pressure from the Soviet Union to get a foothold in Ethiopia. The U.S. maintained for a long time an important military communications center, Kagnaw Station, in Eritrea, Asmara. Toward the end of my stay there, at a meeting we had with the Emperor, he informed us that he had been offered military assistance in the form of supplies and equipment and training from the Soviet Union, and he was exploring whether we would do the same. We were rather courageous in deciding not to seek to outbid the Soviets in military assistance and, after consulting Washington, the Emperor was so informed. Later there was a Soviet presence.

*Q: While you were there, you were aware of their presence?*

KLEINE: They started coming later.

*Q: This was military presence.*

KLEINE: Military assistance, yes, as well as economic and technical assistance, particularly after the Emperor was deposed. The Soviet Bloc made little inroad while the Emperor was in power.

*Q: So the Richards mission didn't work.*

KLEINE: No. Because there is no end to how much you have to give, if you seek long term influence by buying it. You have to keep buying and lend yourself to blackmail. The competition becomes pretty steep. Let me cite an example - the railway link between Tanzania and Zambia.

*Q: Tanzam Railroad*

KLEINE: Yes, Tanzam Railroad. And I had a run-in with Averell Harriman on that. We'll talk about that...

*Q: ...talk about that later.*

KLEINE: Okay.

*Q: Well, what's your overall impression of what we were accomplishing in Ethiopia?*

KLEINE: My impression was that the program establishing and building institutions was good. To help these new institutions develop from the ground up, we provided the experts to begin operations while we were training Ethiopians to come back and replace our people. The whole thing was designed to permit a turnover from U.S. to Ethiopian management and control. What we didn't understand and couldn't foresee is that, even if we were successful, we were establishing claims on Ethiopian resources for the maintenance of these things *ad infinitum*. We assumed they would figure in to the priorities of successor regimes because they were rather humble initiatives. We're talking about a country of 40 million people, as I recall. So they needed basic processes and initiatives. What more could they need than public health, agriculture? They had a rich promise of agriculture. Certainly they needed education to bring their people into the 20th Century. We couldn't foresee the takeover by radical military leftists who just destroyed practically everything that had been done. It was tragic that the Emperor's regime was terminated as it was. It was always a question whether the Emperor was loosening his controls fast enough to avoid severe political strain after he left the scene. The first attempt to overthrow the Emperor failed. It must have been in 1963. I was assigned then in New York at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. and the Emperor came to New York to address the UN General Assembly. I saw him there and we greeted each other. From there he flew down to Brazil and, while there, learned that there had been a palace coup with his son among the coup leaders. He cut short his state visit to Brazil, got on his plane and went back. On his arrival, the coup collapsed and he re-assumed leadership. Whether his son was a willing part of the plot, we don't know. Not too long after that, he was overthrown, imprisoned in his own palace and never survived.

*Q: What did you think about the people that we had trained, the Ethiopians? What did you experience with those who had completed their training?*

KLEINE: Many hundreds were trained in the various facilities we had established in the fields of agriculture, education and public health. Many received advanced education and training in the U.S. through our participant program. Many of them ultimately found their way into the States after the military takeover and did very well here. The U.N. and the IBRD hired quite a few

relative to the others from developing countries. Occasionally I bumped into some that we had trained and who had left. Incidentally, as you probably know, there are a large number of Ethiopian restaurants in Washington. Washington became a center for Ethiopians who had exiled themselves or who had been exiled. The interruption by the Communist military regime set back economic development for many years. Also unhelpful were the problems up in Eritrea. Eritrea was part of...

*Q: You had a program in Eritrea at that time?*

KLEINE: Yes, we had a small mission headquartered in Asmara. Not long after I got to Ethiopia, I took a trip to Asmara. Our representative there, Charlie Campbell, just the week before I arrived, had been fired on by rebels who were already active; this goes back to 1957. They were already out in the hinterland and creating problems for the central government. It wasn't totally secure, even back then.

*Q: Why did we have a program there?*

KLEINE: The decision was made before I arrived and was related to the presence of Kagnew Station. The country was large. Communications were difficult, transport was difficult. Our program consisted of a nursery school, or vocational trade school, and participant training.

Eritrea was an important agricultural center and had an important port in Massawa. It was a wild ride from Asmara to Massawa. It was on that route that Campbell was shot at. Separatist activity was brewing. There was the growing presence of the Moslems coming in from the North which fueled the struggle that developed with the Coptic and other groups to the South. It's now a separate country.

*Q: Right.*

KLEINE: Do we have a mission up there now?

*Q: Yes.*

KLEINE: It was a bitter and destructive war for many, many years.

*Q: Any question about relationships to the Embassy at that time? You were Mission Director.*

KLEINE: Don Bliss was the Ambassador the whole time I was there. We got along very well. It was a special satisfaction to me because, as I mentioned earlier, he had originally opposed my appointment. Ollie Troxel was the Economic Officer. He was a strong, independent minded fellow; we got along well. There was a CIA presence there. In fact, one of the people lives in retirement right around the corner from where we are now.

*Q: Were there any issues about relationships or coordination? Of course, the office was some distance away so you had your own independence, I guess.*

KLEINE: Maybe the distance of time has blurred my recall of these things, but I don't remember any significant problems. The whole country team relationship was harmonious. I made sure to keep lines of communication open to avoid surprises. One activity which was not work related. The Emperor had four or so children. His favorite son, the one he was grooming to succeed him, had been killed in an automobile accident. This occurred the year before I arrived.

*Q: The Duke of Harar.*

KLEINE: That's correct, the Duke of Harar. We in the mission thought of the idea of having a program dedicated to the late Duke of Harar. The proceeds of the ticket sales were donated to an Ethiopian charitable organization. The production we staged in the auditorium. It included music, dances, skits, etc. It was a gala event. The Emperor and his coterie came, as did most of the diplomatic and business communities. The emperor was obviously very pleased. It was also a morale booster for the whole Mission and Embassy.

*Q: This was at the Opera House.*

KLEINE: Yes, it was at the Opera House. The fellow who had come, also, to carry out one of the Richard Mission projects in Communications had a lot of experience in theatrical productions and he put it all together. It was really a great show.

*Q: Were there any particular program areas that you were trying to initiate or focus on?*

KLEINE: My main emphasis was in implementing that which we had already committed and undertaken. I, even at that stage, felt that there was too much attention in the Agency to new initiatives while old initiatives were lying around. I initiated a fairly rigorous system of follow-up, meeting regularly with the heads of the various units on each project, setting targets for specific time periods and trying to hold them accountable for progress. I also did a lot of site visits. When I arrived, the Richard Mission project commitments had been lagging. We wanted to get those well underway before seeking appropriations for new activities.

**JOHN PROPST BLANE**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Asmara (1957-1960)**

*Ambassador John Blane was born in Alabama. He attended the University of Tennessee and served in the US Army towards the end of the Korean War. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956. His career included positions in Somalia, Ethiopia, Austria, Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, and Rwanda. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 8, 1990.*

*Q: You moved relatively soon then to Asmara, is that right? You were there how long?*

BLANE: I was in Mogadishu just short of a year. Well, I was assigned to Mogadishu just short of a year. For several months of that period I was in a hospital in Nairobi, which is why I was transferred. I got a really dandy hepatitis, and I was evacuated to Nairobi and spent a couple of months in the hospital. Came back to Mogadishu for two or three weeks, had a relapse, went back to Nairobi to the hospital.

After the second time, the medical branch decided it would be just as well if I was moved from what was then a relatively hard to place to live. We had no air conditioning, we had no fresh water system. Medical services were rudimentary, I think you could say honestly.

And so without asking me (in those days they didn't ask you very much), I just, lying in my hospital bed one day, was brought a telegram by somebody from our consulate in Nairobi announcing my transfer to Asmara.

*Q: The idea being it was higher, it was...*

BLANE: Cool, high. We had an Army base in Asmara, medical facilities.

*Q: I might add that, particularly in this period, hepatitis was sort of a Foreign Service disease, you might say. I mean, it was the main bane of Foreign Service personnel, because of health conditions.*

BLANE: Yes, it almost killed me. I lost 60 pounds; I was in miserable shape.

*Q: What were you doing in Asmara, and what was its relation in the Ethiopian context?*

BLANE: Eritrea was at that point, to quote the formula: "an autonomous republic federated with the Empire of Ethiopia." It was not an integral part of the empire, but it was very closely associated with it. Now during the time I was there, the emperor, Haile Selassie, took a series of steps which clearly were aimed at incorporating Eritrea totally into the empire. And one year following my departure from Eritrea, that did in fact happen.

Now it was just as apparent as anything in the world that the Eritreans would not take kindly to being swallowed up by the empire, and it was pretty clear that they were going to fight. They've been fighting ever since, and they're doing it today.

All, we did so report. Nobody argued our conclusions. Everybody, I think, pretty well agreed that that was the likely scenario. And that is in fact what happened.

Now the Eritreans at that point had their own chief executive. They had their own parliament. They passed their own laws for governing most aspects of life: education, a legal system, what have you. And these autonomous powers were eroded bit by bit by bit.

First thing that happened, and this was in 1958, fairly early on, if my memory serves me, the emperor forbade Eritrea to have its own flag. Up until that point it had a flag. Well, he said no more Eritrean flag, just the Ethiopian flag.



And that just kept on and on and on. People were arrested. Opposition politicians did not fare well. There was some sporadic violence a couple of times, mostly the work of the labor unions. This was put down with great force, and the future of the territory was, as I said, perfectly apparent. And they haven't disappointed us, they have done exactly what we thought they would do.

*Q: Now you're sitting in Asmara. We had a consulate general in Asmara, is that right?*

BLANE: We did in fact.

*Q: And there was an embassy in Addis.*

BLANE: That's correct.

*Q: Did you find yourself, as sometimes happens, you're sitting in one place and you're seeing what the situation is, and, I mean, were you getting this reflected in the relations, that you were saying, "Say, the Ethiopians shouldn't be doing this," and the embassy was more or less taking the empire line, or something like this?*

BLANE: Yes, I think so. That normally happens. On the other hand, I think the people in the embassy were convinced, as we were, that the Eritreans were really quite serious in not wanting to be incorporated into the empire. Obviously embassy reporting tended to justify the emperor's moves. Whereas we, on the other end, were just about as outraged as our Eritrean colleagues.

I will say that Eritrea is the only place in my whole career where I became emotionally involved with the local politics. I was, in my heart of hearts, as fervent an Eritrean nationalist as existed. My little friends were being done wrong and I didn't like it.

*Q: Why was this?*

BLANE: I don't know, they were nice people, you could see them being mashed, they were unhappy--it was inevitable. I hoped that it didn't color our reporting too badly. I recognized the syndrome and tried to compensate for it, but nevertheless the feeling was there.

*Q: How much did you feel that our military establishment, Kagnew Station, was dictating everything we did in Ethiopia?*

BLANE: Not very much. Because during those years technology was advancing all over, and Kagnew was becoming less and less vital.

*Q: Everyone understood this where you were. It was, what, basically a communications relay station, was that it, or was it a listening post?*

BLANE: It was a listening post. Well, both, but its primary importance at that point was as a listening point. But some years later, strangely enough, the Army wanted to close the station, and

it was only through the valiant efforts of the State Department that the station was kept open. Normally the roles would have been reversed.

*Q: Absolutely, yes.*

BLANE: But the Army ultimately said, "We don't need it any more, therefore we should shut it down." And the State Department, which was trying desperately to support the then-faltering emperor, felt that the economic dislocation would be so great--and it would, because the town lived off Kagnev: it employed a great many people, it pumped a lot of money into the economy--and the department's point of view was that if you shut that down now, this will be a real body blow to the emperor, and he's got all the troubles he can handle.

*Q: This must have been in the late Seventies.*

BLANE: Early Seventies. The emperor had all the trouble he could handle at that point without our adding to it.

**JULIUS S. PRINCE**  
**Deputy Division Chief, Public Health Programs, ICA**  
**Ethiopia (1957-1965)**

*Julius S. Prince was born in New York in 1911. He graduated from Yale University in 1932 and also received an M.D. from the New York College for Physicians and Surgeons, an MPH from Columbia University and a Dr. PH from Harvard University. Mr. Prince served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Canadian Medical Corps as a major overseas. He worked with USAID in Ethiopia, Tunisia, Cameroon, Ghana and Zimbabwe. Mr. Prince was interviewed in 1994 by W. Haven North.*

PRINCE: One day in the Fall of 1957, a letter came across my desk—a mimeographed copy of a notice sent out by the late Dr. Cliff Pease, the then Director of the Far East Office of Public Health of the International Cooperation Administration (ICA). He was looking for someone to serve as Deputy Division Chief in India in the Public Health Division of the ICA Mission in New Delhi. I answered the letter saying I would indeed be interested. I came to this conclusion, because I decided that I had finished the main part of my work in Chautauqua County. I had set about the work of convincing the people there that a County Health Department would be a beneficial change for the county. Consequently, I had had good experience in community participation, community development, community social structure, power groups and communications and the like.

So, I became interested now in doing something that I had had in mind for a long time, as a result of my experience in Algeria and Italy during the war, namely, to try and implement these sorts of things overseas. I got a very positive response from Cliff and I began reading up on India. But, by golly, by the time the spring of 1958 came around, he said "have you ever heard of Ethiopia?"

I said: "Just about. I know it's in Africa and was partly overrun by Mussolini's military in 1935-1941. But I don't really know anything about the country." He said: "I would like you to go there instead of India and be the Chief of the Public Health Division." I said: "hold on Cliff I haven't had any experience; that's a risky thing don't you think." He said: "No, your background and what you have been doing is ok; don't worry about it." I said: "Okay, I am your man but I want to take time out this summer to go around to talk to people who have been to Ethiopia and as a result perhaps, get some indication as to whether my ideas might work there." Cliff told me about the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Ethiopia agricultural contract with ICA, headquartered in Stillwater, Oklahoma. I got in touch with the people in OSU and went out there and had a long talk with Dr. (Ph.D.) Bill Abbott who was the administrator for the mentioned OSU contract. We had a fine chat in his office and I met several of his staff. It sounded most interesting to me right from then. I was also advised to visit with an individual in Buffalo, New York, Dr. Edward Jandy, ex-Director of the U.S. Information Service (USIS) program in Ethiopia, who had traveled widely in that country and knew it quite well. I talked with him and, and as a result, when I returned to Jamestown, I asked Cliff whether any one from the Mission would be in the U.S. during the next few weeks. He said that Dr. Brooks Ryder, the physician who was the ICA Director of the Public Health College in Gondar, Ethiopia would be in the country shortly.

Gondar was, of course, just a name to me as I hadn't heard anything at all about it. But Brooks gave me a marvelous filling-in on the work that was going on there and how significant it was; I agreed with him and told Cliff that Brooks was a good ambassador and that, "I really want to take this job now!"

*Q: Bud, would you continue with your discussion about why you went to Ethiopia and your views about AID at that time.*

PRINCE: I agree that it is important to get an idea why people decide to seize the opportunity to work overseas, especially in these higher level technical positions. In my case it was Cliff's mimeographed notice, a kind of *deus ex machina*, because of the following reasons: number one, as I have mentioned in a previous part of this interview, I had decided to get my doctoral degree at Harvard under Dr. Hugh Leavell whom I met for the first time at the APHA meeting in San Francisco in 1951. I finished my thesis, based on the research in Jamestown and was awarded the Doctor of Public Health degree in May 1957. So I had come to a point in my career, which was a logical one at which to begin thinking "what next? The answer is a bit convoluted but was to me at least about as follows:

One of the reasons for the research, which I had just completed, was to see if I could measure such things as attitudes, opinions and knowledge about public health on the part of a representative sample of a community population and then compare that with some other component of the same community population. In this case, I chose, in consultation with Dr. Walter E. Boek, and my mentors at Harvard, to compare the attitudes, opinions and knowledge of public health of a representative sample of the community and of the power structure of the same community. The decision, it is most important to add, was arrived at as a result of consultation with Dr. Boek, social scientist on the staff of NYSDH who to reiterate it, was also appointed as an ex-officio member of my Harvard University degree committee. His advice was

of outstanding value in the permission for leave of absence from the NYSDH, the design of my research protocol, and in the implementation of the protocol.

So, the study concentrated on this particular differential factor (the representative sample vs the power structure) and I discovered that the most forward looking group in the community, from the point of view of attitudes, opinions, and knowledge of public health and public health administration in the Jamestown area, was composed of the women in the power structure! They were, far ahead of the representative sample, in understanding the importance of establishing a full time county health department which would subsume the jurisdiction of the eleven or so Town Health Officers and the two Public Health Officers for the cities of Dunkirk and Jamestown respectively and their small staffs. There was a lot more to the analysis of the survey, of course, and, for those who may be interested, the results are summarized in an article I published in the Journal of the American Public Health Association in July 1958 entitled "A Public Philosophy in Public Health."

In any event, the research stirred up my interest in being able to evaluate such things as knowledge, attitudes and opinions about public health in groups of people living in areas where projects are being instituted or about to be instituted and then, on a prospective basis to evaluate whether there has been some sort of change in the dependent variables of interest, over time - in other words the prospective evaluation of project impact. (AKA "outcomes") And this type of question was being asked in public health administration circles more and more frequently as health officers had to justify the expenses involved in carrying out major public health improvements in communities within their jurisdiction.

*Q: This is also before the idea of KAP (knowledge, attitudes and practices) came into being?*

PRINCE: Oh, yes; some years ahead, as far as I know. But I hasten to add that I was encouraged to do this by Professor Leavell and the other members of my degree committee, especially, Professor Eleanor Maccobie, Drs. Walter Boek, and Ben Paul. With their encouragement, it is easy to see how I would have come to the conclusion that it was important - in fact, absolutely essential - to be able to measure the impact of health programs in NY state and, then, a few years later to realize the potential of this type of assessment as an indicator of success (or lack of it), in overseas development projects. So, when I finished the research and while I was still employed in Jamestown, I began thinking to myself that I should try doing something like that as well, perhaps in several additional counties in the State, since evaluation in only one of the many counties could hardly lead to a conclusion which would be generalizable for the rest of the State. (See also Mustard's comments ref. the subject of establishment of Full-time County Health Departments in the US and his reference to this New York work in many U.S. counties) (Winslow, C.E.A., "Health on the Farm and in the Village" The MacMillan Company 1931 (Refers to the famous Milbank Memorial Fund, 1923, Demonstration County Health Department Project in Cattaraugus County)

I went around and saw a lot of people, including Dr. John Grant at the Kellogg Foundation. You will recall that he was a most distinguished international public health figure; one of the earliest. He had done a lot of work in India and other places and written some excellent papers. I have a book summarizing his life and technical work which contains a number of ideas ( See especially

the telling comments to the effect that, "Any contact between a doctor or public health nurse and a patient that does not, on the one hand, increase the health worker's knowledge of cultural attitudes relevant to health and, on the other hand, increase the patient's understanding of health and its relation to different ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, is - to that extent - a waste of time on both sides. Thus, technical solutions to health problems should be humanized by an understanding of the existing cultures and subcultures and the ways these are changing," page 178) which are very congenial to my way of thinking. ("Health Care for the Community-Selected Papers of Dr. John B. Grant," ed. Conrad, The American Journal of Hygiene, Monograph series 21, The Johns Hopkins Press, 2nd printing, 1963) I, therefore, thought Dr. Grant might be interested in expanding the Chautauqua County research to several other counties in New York State. But no, he wasn't. Dr. Grant said Kellogg was not funding health programs at that time even though the 1929 Milbank Fund demonstration in Cattaraugus County had been a seminal prime mover in drawing attention to the usefulness of full time county health departments in the U.S. But Kellogg would not be interested in an impact evaluation, because the "baseline" in New York State was no longer a baseline. The State Health Department, District Health Officers, physicians in private practice and clinics, at the local level, including those operated by these physicians, had done such a good job, for example in immunizing infants and young children against the common communicable diseases, thereby diminishing the infant and childhood mortality rate, that the "baseline" was no longer a true baseline. Well, I said to myself, "I should go to some place where they have not had any public health services, see what I can do to establish a public health program, and then study the conditions of the health of the people in those areas before the program is instituted and after it has been in effect for some period of time interval to be set during the design of the research). Later on, this type of study was dubbed a prospective study versus the retrospective approach where one examines changes in dependent variables over time where the "baseline" situation is reconstructed from retrospective data put together from answers to retrospective questions.

So when Cliff said he was interested in my working in Ethiopia, and after I had found out something about the country in the ways I have explained, I decided, wow!, this is the greatest opportunity, if I can just get the Mission to buy the idea of doing something like this. I can then see if my approach to solving the problem is correct and if I can get some meaningful results from the work. So this was the principal reason why I was so interested in accepting the assignment in Ethiopia! Of course, as previously noted, I should add that I had been interested in international health problems, especially since my work overseas in World War II; and the research at Harvard and Chautauqua County simply reinforced that interest. In addition, I was completely "converted" to the belief that we (the people) are not, as Santayana said, "an island" and similarly, I believed, that we have to be concerned about the health of people in other countries because everything is related to everything else. So that is the philosophical reason why I wanted to do this kind of work. But as well, there was the technical one in trying to see, if my ideas on evaluating impact of development programs were sound. So It wasn't long before I was on my way to Ethiopia. Fortunately I have my original assignment report (Annex 4) which was written shortly after I got to Ethiopia. It should provide at least a bird's-eye-view of health and related conditions, and already perceivable possible problems noted in the "Sanitary Survey".

*Q: Before describing that, did you discuss these ideas about evaluating impact with AID before you went out as something to be pursued?*

PRINCE: Not with AID; but with Professor Boek and, of course, Professor Leavell.

*Q: Cliff Pease did not know about it, about what you were trying to do?*

PRINCE: I don't think I discussed it with him at all or, perhaps, only "en passant [French: in passing]."

*Q: Did you have any sense of the receptivity of this idea in the Agency before you went out?*

PRINCE: Following the several weeks orientation provided for personnel joining the ICA on overseas assignments, during those August days 1958, I think I discussed this research concept briefly with Griff Davis of AFR [Africa Bureaus Office of] Health Education and with the late Dr. Clayton Curtis, Chief of the Africa Bureau Public Health Division at the time. Both of them were interested, but especially Dr. Curtis who seemed quite excited about it. But I don't think I stirred up much interest in the proposal with anybody else in the group who took part in the course sessions in the Miatico Building; I didn't seem to "strike any sparks," except with Dr. Curtis who had been involved in the Gondar program in Ethiopia from day one! He was very interested and supported the idea of the research from beginning to end!

Consequently, in spite of Dr. Curtis' enthusiasm, I realized that I was going to have to convince most decision-makers in AID/AFR that it was important to do this work even though it was going to cost a lot of money. Incidentally, one thing I did do that was very important was to find some people who would be interested in staffing something like this. You're going to have to have some technically qualified people, particularly a good social scientist. So I started browsing around in the Columbia University Widener Library and discovered a sociologist by the name of Simon Messing who had written his doctoral thesis on the "High Plateau Amharas" (a major Ethiopian tribe) in 1956. I got in touch with him at his home near New Haven, Connecticut and he jumped at the possibility of working with the team. He said, "That's just what you ought to be doing and I think I can help you with the design of that project." I said well, "If everything works according to plan, you can be sure that I will be getting in touch with you, because to find someone like you with real experience in Ethiopia, and with your knowledge of the language and sensitivity to the culture would be a huge asset to the project; so don't go away and do something that ties you up completely before I can get in touch with you!" That's how I recruited the sociologist member of the team.

I also looked at APHA [American Public Health Association] for people interested in doing the environmental health component of such an evaluation; I met a public health engineer, Frank Elder, who was working with APHA in New York but was also extremely interested in the research idea in Ethiopia when I described it to him. And what a lucky break that was for me, for the research, and eventually for Ethiopia's health services!

In addition, if I recall it correctly, I had been informed of an excellent and very experienced public health nurse, the late Elizabeth Hilborn, who had worked in Jordan for one of the

predecessors of ICA, the Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA) but was presently in Ethiopia (Asmara) serving as Dean of the Itegue Menen Hospital Nursing School in that city. So I was able to contact her and she subsequently joined my ICA/Ethiopia Public Health Division staff as Chief Nursing Advisor. This was, perhaps, our luckiest break of all, since she subsequently played a major part in helping with the design and implementation of the research project as well as with all the other technical aspects of the work of my Division at the USAID Mission in Addis Ababa.

*Q: You must have had some idea then that you were going to be able..?*

PRINCE: Yes, indeed! But I knew I needed a Research Project field Director and, as events transpired, the only thing I did not do, and that I couldn't do at first, was to find a public health physician who could fill that position. (I had made up my mind that I would need a Public Health physician for the job.) I discussed this idea with Dr. Curtis before leaving for Ethiopia, but he was, of course, very busy with other matters but continued his keen interest and support for the project, as it turned out later, as soon as the research plan began to develop in my mind and I was able to write something down at the Mission, and send it back to him in Washington. He then used that information and, through collaboration at Harvard University, found a recent HSPH [Howard School of Public Health] graduate, Dr. Dirk Spruyt, to accept the assignment. It's clear in retrospect that a great deal of credit should be given to the late Dr. Curtis for his farsightedness and his recognition of the significance of this kind of work and for his enthusiastic support and assistance from start to finish. It grieves me greatly that, although he did live to see the work to completion and publication, he died just as I was about to leave Washington for Ghana (in August 1973) where I participated in the equally exciting Danfa Project, the planning for which, as far as my part of it was concerned, originated with my experience in New York State, Harvard, and Ethiopia!

*Q: He (Clayton Curtis) was Chief of the Public Health Division in the Africa Bureau?*

PRINCE: Yes, before I went there. When he returned to Washington (in the spring of 1958, I think it was), he headed up the Africa Bureau Public Health Division, as you say, (we had technical offices with strong field connections and responsibilities located in AID/Washington in those days.) And, of course, Dr. Curtis was biased in a positive way in favor of health work in Ethiopia because he had been there for so long (5-6 years) and had been responsible for so very much of the ground work that led to the founding of the Gondar Public Health College and Training Center, and he was also most positive about its long term potential as a development initiative in that country. (In those days neither the IBRD [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development] nor any other official Government agencies or their staffs, had accepted the notion that reasonably decent health conditions were at least necessary (albeit as everyone agreed) not sufficient, for concurrent economic development, in any developing country. My discussions of this pressing subject even, on a few occasions, at Ambassadorial level, only elicited the prevailing view, at the time, that development would more or less follow improved economic parameter of development and that health was not even a "necessary" parameter in this respect. The IBRD's more or less complete acceptance, in the 1993 World Bank Annual Development Report of the view that health is a necessary component of any Country

Development Program is self-explanatory! See following page for more on this subject (especially second and third paragraphs).

I have always looked upon this latter opinion as a kind of "heritage bequeathed" to me by Dr. Curtis. During that last conversation together he gave further strength to the opinion I had already developed. It may, therefore, be of some interest to explain how it was that I came to this conclusion, relating health and development initiatives in the whole process of international technical cooperation.

But one other set of circumstances also exerted a major influence on my thinking about this general topic of health and development in third world countries. As I may have mentioned, my sister Ruth Mack, a very experienced economist serving as a senior consultant with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in New York City and I had engaged in quite a few chats about this subject because she had questions in her mind about whether what we were trying to do to improve health in developing countries would constitute a contribution or a detriment to economic development. Detriment only because of the fact that increased population would certainly follow projected lower death rates, resulting from whatever preventive medicine and public health programs we could establish in these third world countries. On the other hand, if successful, such programs would differentially reduce mortality and morbidity from the traditional communicable diseases that effect tropical countries in such a disastrous fashion. Consequently, the quality of life experienced by people living in those countries, particularly in the rural areas thereof, could be much improved by this intervention. In fact, if this also resulted in a lower total fertility rate, then the consequent increase in population might be considerably less than anticipated, or even reversed, by increased contraceptive prevalence.

Ruth had a friend by the name of Dr. Nancy Baster, Ph.D., who was working with the University of Sussex in England and also with a U.N. organization known as the United Nations Institute for Research in Social Development (UNRISD). She also told me about Selma Mushkin, also a Ph.D. in economics, whom Ruth thought had written some articles strongly supporting the notion that health programs had a definitely beneficial effect on development in the third world countries. So she arranged for me to meet both of these kind ladies as they happened to be in New York at the time. In the case of the visit with Dr. Baster, it was fairly short, and we merely exchanged views and looked forward to meeting one another when she visited the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in the next year or so, in the hopes that we could get together then and that she could help me in my work with the population program which the ECA was undertaking and for which they had established both a demographic statistics and a specific population office in their Addis Ababa headquarters.

Dr. Mushkin told me of the work she had published in "Public Health Reports" dealing with the very subject that I'd been discussing with Ruth. I was extremely interested in pursuing this matter because of all the problems I'd had in getting anybody at the AID orientation session to discuss it in any detail. Unfortunately, I have misplaced the reference to the work done by Dr. Mushkin and I believe also co-authored by Dr. Frank Collings, Ph.D. Suffice to say, I was very encouraged by the findings which both Doctors Mushkin and Collings apparently uncovered giving considerable strength to the notion that health and economic development are in fact closely related, with both being critical components of the improved quality of life that's also



necessary for economic development, even though, of course, neither can be considered sufficient for economic growth. Obviously, there is a lot more to this question than just health inputs, but now the latter are at least considered an important component of what is required.

Well, this information was excellent ammunition for the later battles I had with people all over the place, including even ambassadors from time to time, and has since been given great support by none other than the IBRD in their famous 1993 World Development Report. (The World Bank: World Development Report, 1993 - Investing in Health - Oxford University Press, New York, June 1993. See Chapter 1 in its entirety, but especially pps 18-20, and the 2 "Boxes" (1.1 on pg. 19 and 1.2 on pg. 20). Giving credit where credit is due, one has to admit that the Bank has had at least two Health Sector Policy Papers, one in 1975 and the other in 1980, the latter being a much more proactive with respect to the possible relationship between health and development but still not fully committed on the subject. But, of course, the 1993 report does it all! Also, one should never neglect the work which Jack Bryant has described in his world-renowned book, "Health and the Developing World." In fact, Dr. Bryant has devoted an entire chapter to this subject entitled, "Health, National Development, and Managerial Methods" and a subtitle section entitled, "The Interaction of Health and National Development;" pages 96-97. So, I think, by and large, it's a "done deal" in so far as recognition of the fact that health is essential but not sufficient to development - the concept that I'm perfectly willing to accept.

However, working out the detailed sector policy that donor nations or agencies need to establish with their host countries is another matter. I am sure there is a great deal to be said on this subject - way beyond what has already been said. It's an enormously complex subject affecting basically every country in the world, in my opinion, and will take a long time to sort out, especially in the presence of the extraordinary degrees of instability and political "churning" that seem to be characteristic of today's international events. The best we can do is to keep thinking about the importance of the issue in all of the development activities in which we participate whether it be central government or most peripheral, village level aspects of development-the latter too often neglected!

*Q: Do you have an impression of what the AID health policy or strategy was at that time?*

PRINCE: I'm not even sure there was any mention of health policy and strategy in the AID/Washington [AID/W] orientation session which all of us new FSROs participated in. In fact, one of the perceived problems with the orientation, on my part at least, was that it was too "cut and dried;" there wasn't much give and take in the group. So, I wasn't fully satisfied with the orientation, and I think this view was shared by a number of other participants.

*Q: You didn't have much sense of the importance of public health in the ICA at that time?*

PRINCE: Clayton and his boss, Dr. Gene Campbell, Director of the ICA Office of Health in Washington, certainly gave me the impression that health should be a very important component in development initiatives. But you have to realize that at that time there were only two important health programs in Africa south of the Sahara: one in Ethiopia and one in Liberia. It was "slim pickings," and this apparent lack of emphasis on HPN [health, population, and nutrition] programs was a constant problem back then. Thus, concerning "health and

development" and Dr. Bryant's seminal book on the subject, I have always agreed with him that, indeed, health was a necessary component of the development process, even though, with the exceptions noted, I have had to fight my way pretty much from one end to the other in getting people really dedicated, not just interested, but dedicated to the idea that this was the case! And it is only now that the World Bank officially recognized this fact in their Development Report for 1993. They have come out and said, "Yes we've got to put money into this... up to 40 percent of our money will be going into health, population, nutrition-related projects, because we realize that this is an essential aspect of development." (Emphasis added) Boy, oh boy! Meanwhile I felt I was "shouting in the wilderness" all those previous years!

*Q: You are referring to the World Development Report for 1993.*

PRINCE: Yes. I think very few people outside of our circles realize the battles that some of us in public health have been waging to get that point across. Strangely, some might say, since nothing should have been more convincing to any perceptive health officer practicing in jurisdictions with large rural, relatively low income components, than that the levels of health and illness in these communities were closely and inextricably related to their retention of young, vibrant families, increases in productivity, and overall development. My experience in Chautauqua County constituted no exception to this rule, for the County was underdeveloped from many points of view, and parts of the rural portions were, believe it or not, almost as remote and difficult to reach as parts of Ethiopia. (See Annex 5, and publication, "Public Health Practice in New York State and Ethiopia-A Comparative Analysis", New York State Health News, March 1963.) Poverty existed in those areas just as it did anywhere else in the world! In fact, nobody could have told me, after my ten years in Chautauqua County, that health wasn't an important component of development. I couldn't understand why this idea wasn't well accepted - not accepted at all, particularly among many economists at the time.

*Q: Your impression was that among most economists, health was considered not to be a contributor to economic growth and therefore should not be given a priority?*

PRINCE: I was certain that was the general view (excepting the views putatively expressed by Mushkin and Collings as noted above). Yes, and by the way this view is supported by the lengthy conversations on economics and development I continue to have with my sister, Ruth Mack Ph.D. (Even today, although well along in years, she is still very active.) A book she wrote in 1971, Planning on Uncertainty: Decision Making in Business and Government Administration, (Mack R.P.) is currently considered a landmark in the general substantive area of long range economic planning. So, when she, and now the World Bank, basically support my views on the matter, at least in principle, I feel vindicated for having consistently objected to the contrary view held so widely by so many other workers in the general field of third-world-country development economics.

*Q: What year was that?*

PRINCE: That was 1971. She was active and got her Ph.D. from Columbia University ca.1931; and during the early days of our discussions on this question of health and economic development she was also hard to convince about the significance of the relationship. In fact, we

used to argue about the matter from time to time. No longer! For, in the intervening years I must allow her accolades, not only for the mentioned publication, but for her own "advancive behavior" (a term she uses in her book) in addressing the development problems, now set forth in the mentioned World Bank publication and the many others on the same general subject. This began I guess with her interest in the work of the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), in the early sixties, which also dealt with the question of the relationship of the quality of life and "development," and the work of the University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies. (See also especially Nancy Baster's seminal collection of work carried out by the Institute and published in the April 1972 Journal of Development Studies and ("Measuring Development," The Role and Adequacy of Development Indicators, Baster, Nancy, ed. See especially Chapter entitled, " Social Indicators and Welfare Measurement: Remarks on Methodology" by Jan Drewnowski pps 77-90, Frank Cass, London, 1972) in April 1972), particularly, the work by Drewnowski explaining how it came to be that "economic variables such as GNP - were increasingly used to "measure social progress")

*Q: What was her line, her view?*

PRINCE: My sister's view at the time was the same as that of other economists: The big engine of development was the economy, the economic aspects of development. "You will find it difficult to make a case, Bud, that health by itself has much to do with development. Because if you don't have the economic component of development, for example, improved GNP and per capita GDP, you're not going to get much improvement in the development of the country just from having a health program."

And later on, in a meeting in Cairo of the Public Health Division Chiefs from the Middle East, Africa and Europe missions in 1969, I met the US Ambassador to Egypt; and he sounded like a "broken record" - the same thing; just as I said. It was a big, big, problem in those days; you remember that? It was very difficult to convince people that we public health advocates knew what we were talking about. The idea of spending so much money on health programs, and especially on the "esoteric" operational research that I was proposing, was really a big divergence from the norm. If there had been a basic policy and strategy, it would, I am sure, not have included these types of activities. Consequently, it required a lot of conviction on my part and that of people like Dr. Curtis, Dr. Leona Baumgartner, and no doubt many other public health oriented people in AID/W, that it was important for this research to be approved and funded. We had to fight right down to the finish, (and I'll explain more about that later.).

As a result of all these considerations, and Brooks Ryder's description to me of the value of the Gondar approach as bringing practical reality to the health problems of the underdeveloped countries in Africa, I was convinced that that was the thing to do!

*Q: Do you want to describe now what that approach was? Or pick it up later? So people will understand what you mean by the Gondar approach?*

PRINCE: It would be good for me to say a bit, at first, about how I picked up some ideas from the literature. I mentioned Benjamin Paul; he was probably not so well known as a sociologist in those days as he is now. But, when I was working on my doctoral degree at Harvard, he was, as I

have already indicated, a distinguished member of the faculty there. He was the first sociologist, as far as I can recall, to have that position in the School of Public Health. Professor Leavell was a major reason for his being there. For Hugh (Leavell) was absolutely convinced of the validity of the decentralized, generalized, and interdisciplinary approach to community health services, see his article "Contribution of the Social Sciences to the Solution of Health Problems," New England Journal of Medicine, December 4, 1952. But he had the same trouble getting other people to believe him, especially from the point of view of the interdisciplinary part of it. One of the most interesting and beneficial aspects of this situation, at least as it seemed to me, was that Professor Paul had begun writing when he went to Harvard and then finished his seminal book, Health, Culture and Community, 1955) while we were there (and I say "we" because there were three or four members of the class of '53 who were also extremely interested and involved in international health work). This group included, besides myself, Carl Taylor, who is now Emeritus Professor at Johns Hopkins (he went to Hopkins after Harvard and prior to the famous study at Narrangwal, Child and Maternal Health Services in Rural India: The Narrangwal Experiment-A World Bank Research Publication, December, 1983 ), Professor-Emeriti John Wyon and Brian MacMahon, who subsequently became professors at the Harvard University School of Public Health; (we were all together in the class except Carl, who already had his doctoral.) I believe that Ben asked us to edit this manuscript which, in those days, had not been given a name. We talked with him about it and all agreed that it might appropriately be called Health, Culture and Community.

The book received wide circulation and, from its frequent citation in the literature, must have attracted great popularity among cultural anthropologists and in virtually all health development circles and teaching institutions. That was one of the things that helped convince me that the approach, of very strong involvement, intimate involvement, of communities, community leaders, the power structure, in any kind of development activity was absolutely essential! See also my own publication on this subject, The Health Officer and Community Power Groups, Health Education Monograph #2, University of California/ San Francisco, Berkeley 1956, which I'll be referring to in more detail. This was true overseas at least as much as it was in the United States, and with respect to my experience in Chautauqua County, New York!

While finishing up my research, I had a call from Professor Bill Griffiths at the University of California, Berkeley, asking me if I would be interested in writing a paper summarizing my findings, especially with respect to the importance of the power structure, in a community approach to selling health programs, and in implementing them as well, of course. In what was a weak moment (because I was absolutely up to my ears with work, between my regular job and finishing up preparation for the defense of my thesis and getting ready to go to Boston a few more times to tidy up final details at Harvard, etc. - all prior to leaving for Ethiopia in the late summer-early fall!) I took up the challenge, and much to my pleasure, the paper was published, prior to my leaving for Ethiopia. As far as I can recall, however, this paper was not greeted with very much excitement - positive or negative; at least I never got much reaction to it of any kind. However, it served to solidify my own thinking; and the important part about this whole discussion is that it was one of those major capstones of my experience, in terms of the development of the project for evaluating health program impact on community health, that I finally came up with in Ethiopia! One of the many reasons why this experience was so important was that it convinced me of the need to have a social scientist on such a research team. In fact,

how could it have possibly been done successfully without the help of Simon Messing's "savoir-faire [French: knowing how to act]" and entrée to Ethiopian groups and their leaders?!

I also summarized my thesis findings for use when I was discussing the possibilities of doing some kind of follow-on study in New York State. I have a copy of my thesis summary here, but I'll just mention the main conclusions, as follows:

"The main body of my Thesis research was concerned with the relationships which could be discerned between the ecologic and social characteristics of Commville (that's the name I gave to the city of Jamestown for the purposes of anonymity as is customary in all such studies) and the knowledge and attitudes of its citizens, with respect to public health activities both in the city and the surrounding county. The parameters to be studied included, attitudes towards and knowledge of, the existing official administration of public health in the city and in the county, and several alternative methods by which this administration could be made more effective. "With these terms of reference," I added, the thesis study design placed particular emphasis on a comparison between the knowledge and attitudes of the main "power groups" of Commville and of the general population.

The main conclusions from the analysis of the data obtained at the time were that, taking all the findings into consideration, it would seem, first of all, that the people of Commville could, indeed, be persuaded to increase their public health services and facilities and to bring them more into line with the newer concepts of public health, (meaning establishment of county health departments - decentralized, generalized health services and the like) than they were at the time of the study. It would appear that the people of Commville would also support the establishment of a County Health Department in "Lake County" (an "alias" for Chautauqua County) provided that this was presented to them in the proper way. However, in order more adequately to assess the possibilities in this connection, I suggested that it would be most desirable to carry out a study like the present one among the people of Lake County, outside of the city of Commville." Secondly, it seems to the writer (and this is the paragraph I want to emphasize) "that if our health educational activities and health services are to be properly evaluated, some way must be found by which to determine the effects of the activities and services on the attitudes, opinions, and value systems in general of the people in the community. Hopefully, the present effort by showing how a suitable baseline of knowledge and attitudes towards public health can be established, may serve as a stimulus for the carrying out of additional investigations. The creation of "experimental areas" including adequate "control communities" representative of NY State as a whole might be a first step in this direction."

That was written in 1956 and the last two sentences summarize what I had in mind for a wider study involving communities in NY State other than Chautauqua County, and covering a much wider geographic area. I think my teachers taught me well!

And all this is part of the background for my particular interest in going to Ethiopia. In addition, it is important to note that there was further impetus for my interest, in development of local

health services overseas, which I derived from an article written by the same public health practitioner, Dr. Haven Emerson, who taught us Public Health 101 in the medical curriculum at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University in the 1930s, entitled "Local Health Units for the Nation." The paper was requested by the American Medical Association and was published with the assistance of the Commonwealth Fund of New York with the fullest substantive concurrence of the American Public Health Association, of which Dr. Emerson was a past president and most respected "docent."

In this study, Dr. Emerson holds that the key to the successful delivery of health services, for the entire population of any state in the U.S., is decentralization of authority and responsibility for the delivery of these health services to the appropriate local governmental units. He describes such local government structures in New York and in many other states and then deals specifically with those in New York State. He says that, "superimposed on this local structure and having its authority in a 1913 law, and a 1923 amendment empowering the State Health Commissioner to divide the State into 20 or more Sanitary Districts, is the state system of health administration, operated, staffed, and financed directly by the State Health Department itself." He describes how the Districts were staffed and the approximate number of counties included in a Sanitary District, etc. "The state and local staff," he said, "would function together as a single team and, thus, provide adequate local health service coverage in each of the Districts." Thus, the prophecy of the American Medical Association (AMA) Special Health Commission of 1930, responsible for the Emerson paper, is rapidly being fulfilled and in such a manner as "to be sure that the State District system does not destroy, and in fact does much to encourage, local responsibility." And after the first few years in Ethiopia, I thought to myself, "Amazing! Dr. Emerson, some 30 years ago, had an idea that may be applicable in any country and any state, not just New York State and not just the U.S.!"

And guess what we did in Ethiopia? I'll come to that later but you won't believe me about what happened. I don't know whether this story has been written down anywhere before. But generally speaking, I doubt that many health workers have any idea how significant the work that was done in this country was, in the development of an approach to recommended health policies and strategies in much of Africa. But the truth of the matter is that none of these ideas were particularly prevalent in Africa and, in fact, were mostly nonexistent in those days, in the very beginning of 1952, when the Gondar project got underway. But there was concern about the situation and consequently it became a "fertile field" in which to suggest innovative concepts of public health practice. Little did I know, even then, how relevant that was and how important it would be to try to sow these seeds of progress! But that is what I set out to do in 1958; I don't know whether I succeeded or not, but I'm sure I had some impact on the whole situation. In other words, the situation fitted perfectly my mentor, Dr. Clelland Sargent's postulation about the arrival of the "teachable moment." We had to help create this moment among the rising cadres of public health professionals and through them, among government officials at all levels, in the various countries with which we worked.

Of course, nothing could have been done without the fullest cooperation of all of my colleagues in the USAID, like Gene Campbell and Clayton Curtis; the responsible Ethiopian Government officials and the entire highly proactive staff of the Ministry of Health such as, in addition to the Minister himself, His Excellency Ato Yohannes Tseghe, Vice Minister in the Ministry of Health;

and the many other professionals in the Ministry, such as Hailu Sebsebba, Director General for Health Education, Wo. Sambatu, the chief nursing officer, and so many other really sharp and yet equally pleasant working partners! And all of my staff in Ethiopia and elsewhere, relevant ICA/AID, U.S. Embassy and other bilateral governmental agency staffs working in Ethiopia, as well as the cooperating international and private voluntary organizations and our host country colleagues throughout the country must be included. They were all involved in a major way, believe me! I cannot emphasize that fact sufficiently! And that also made the effort for me even more rewarding and exciting than it would otherwise have been.

*Q: Do you want to say a little bit about the Gondar approach?*

PRINCE: Yes, I'd like to discuss the whole business. Let me say something else: I had made up my mind, after talking to Brooks Ryder and finding out how much WHO [World Health Organization], UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund], and even other U.S. bilateral programs were involved in the Gondar concept, that it was essential for me to establish proper contacts and good relationships with as many of these organizations as possible before I went to Ethiopia. The obvious way to do that was to meet some of their officials in the appropriate places on the way there!

But something else happened that I need to mention now which relates to the whole thing as well. What happened was that pretty close to the time that I spoke to Cliff Pease about my interest in accepting the assignment in Ethiopia, he got a cable, which he immediately passed on to me by telephone, saying that the Ministry of Health had qualms about accepting anybody for the position proposed without more detail about the nominee's background. And the Mission was reluctant to violate the general principle of nominating people and having them accepted with a very brief statement about the vitae of the supposed professional, because the Mission felt that the U.S. Government didn't want its nominations questioned on technical grounds. I called Cliff and said, "Look, you know I'm a doctor; I know how doctors feel about such matters... How would you feel if you were a member of the County Medical Society and somebody was put in, with a very minimal description of his background, as the head of the Board of Censors? (The top governing committee of practically all city and county medical societies throughout the country) Holy mackerel, that would be totally unacceptable." So I did not blame the Minister of Health for taking exception to the idea of someone outside the Ministry passing on the credentials of a candidate for such a demanding position. He realized how important this could be for the development of Ethiopia's health program, knowing the relationship of the U.S. contribution to Gondar and all of the "Joint Fund" arrangements in effect at the time, you know, where the TCA health officer signed the checks for the Cooperative Health Service Program with the Minister! One could easily imagine if one were in the Minister's position how one might react to someone you didn't know taking on that function. So Cliff said, in effect: "Well, maybe you're right; why don't you handle it as best you can."

So I wrote a letter to the Ethiopia Mission Director, through channels, with a copy to Bob Shannon, Administrative Assistant in the TCA health office, and I said in substance, "Dear Mr. Klein, please be assured that I have heard about the problem and I agree with the Minister completely. Please send him a copy of my curriculum vitae (enclosed) and add that I would, of course, be absolutely committed to abiding completely by his decision on whether I am qualified

for the job." It couldn't have been more than ten days from the time I sent that response when I received an urgent Mission cable via Washington saying, in effect, "the Ministry of Health wants you as soon as possible. We don't want you to spend too long getting here."

*Q: You bypassed the AID HQ in the process?*

PRINCE: Not really. They had copies of everything, and Cliff, of course, had some correspondence with the Mission in Ethiopia as well as some cable communications. Thus, in this case at least, it was an accepted approach. The result was that I was on my way with the proper introduction to the Ministry, in writing.

I decided that I would stop in Geneva first to see the relevant WHO officials and then go to Alexandria, Egypt to meet the staff in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO), which was responsible for the Ethiopia component of the WHO program in those days. And then I decided it would be important for me to stop in Sudan (Khartoum) to meet the Dean of the then Kitchener Medical College because Brooks Ryder had suggested trying to lay the ground work for the training of Ethiopian physicians in countries and medical schools closer to Ethiopia geographically speaking than the U.S., and more in keeping with the environment the physicians would be working in when they returned to Ethiopia. So I set my plans accordingly, once approved by the necessary ICA officers, and we took off "en famille [French: with the family]" on a PanAm flight in late October 1958; I can't remember the exact date. But it sure was the beginning of the longest and most exciting adventure of my entire life, even allowing for the not exactly boring four years experience with the Canadians in World War II, or the 10 years stint in upstate New York!

Before leaving, and while my family and I were still at our house in New Rochelle, New York, waiting to take off for Ethiopia, I felt it appropriate "protocol" to phone the office of the Imperial Ethiopian Government (IEG) representative to the United Nations Organization Headquarters in New York City. Her name was Woizero (Wo.) Jodit Imru, a high official in the IEG Department of Foreign Affairs and a member of the Royal Family. I explained that I would soon be on my way to take up my assignment as ICA Mission public health division chief and asked her if she would be willing to see me for a few moments before I left for Ethiopia. (Of course I explained in very brief and general terms the reason for my departing for Ethiopia.) This inquiry elicited a speedy and affirmative answer, so, "best bib and tucker," complete with Homburg (but no striped trousers), I was granted immediate entry to the Delegate's Lounge for my appointment with Woizero Jodit - one of the most charming and gracious ladies I have had the pleasure of knowing - and the "short introductory chat" went on for almost an hour! I took the liberty of explaining, among other things, that I had every intention of working very closely with the relevant U.N. and its specialized agencies/officials posted to Ethiopia, in the spirit of continuing the very close technical collaboration between WHO, UNICEF, the Ministry of Health and the U.S. International Cooperation Administration which I believe had been established since the early 1950s. I added that this cooperation had been established during the extremely significant and close cooperation of all concerned in the conception, planning and implementation of the unique Gondar Public Health College and Training Center program at a joint meeting in Geneva about 1952. I also stated that I had been informed by the present ICA Director of the Gondar Public Health College, Dr. Brooks Ryder, that the Technical Advisory Committee's work was already



well underway and that I looked forward with enthusiasm to working with this outstanding group of public health professionals to make this project a great success.

I explained that my travel plans en route to Ethiopia included stops in Geneva at the WHO Headquarters, the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office in Alexandria, Egypt, and the stop in Khartoum to meet the Dean of the Kitchener Medical College to discuss possible training of Ethiopian physicians, in case IEG Ministry of Health officials would consider this possibly advantageous in the effort to build up Ethiopia's medical professional staff as well as the paramedical personnel being training at the Gondar Public Health College.

I concluded my comments by asking Wo. Jodit if my plans met with her approval and if she had any further suggestions. She had none and seemed very pleased with the interview and, I presumed she passed the word appropriately.

Thus, Nona, Tom and I soon found ourselves on the TWA flight to London with a same day transfer to Geneva to meet appropriate officials there and, after a very short visit, on to Khartoum to meet with Dean Smith of the Kitchener Medical College. All of this was per prior arrangements; and then on to Addis via Asmara. A suitably brief account of the meetings in Geneva and Khartoum may be found on page 10 of my quarterly progress report for the period from October to December 1958 (see Annex 4, also for use in perusing the overall work plan I had discussed with Dr. Curtis prior to my departure from Washington.)

Arriving in Ethiopia, I wasn't allowed to have any time to think about Gondar because the minute I got off the airplane in Addis Ababa my staff was there and said, "Dr. Prince, come on, we've got to get to work with the Ministry. Ethiopia is in the grip of a terrible malaria epidemic." And never having had any experience with malaria epidemics (always having thought of it and been taught about it as an endemic disease), I was astonished. The reasons why such things apparently exist are set forth in a paper which Russell Fontaine and Abdallah Najjar and I wrote in 1961, "The 1958 Malaria Epidemic in Ethiopia," American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. 10, 6, pp. 759-803, November 1961) in which we pointed out the epidemic's likely relationship to the peculiar ecology of the country and lack of malaria immunity among the relatively high altitude inhabitants who were usually not exposed to the disease, confirming also the ideas on the same subject suggested by Sir Gordon Covell of the London School of Tropical Medicine in 1957. (Covell, G., "Malaria in Ethiopia," Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene., pps 7-16, 1957)

Basically, it had to do with the altitude and meteorologic conditions necessary for mosquitoes to breed under certain conditions (the belt above 5000 feet which normally does not have malaria because the mosquitoes don't breed that high under average circumstances; it's too cold.) But in 1958 things were just right, we suspected, in terms of temperature, humidity, rainfall and the like, for mosquitoes to breed in locations even well above 5000 foot altitude. And unfortunately, the ones that breed in many parts of Africa, including much of Ethiopia, are Anopheles Gambiae, the most "efficient" malaria vectors and the ones that transmit falciparum (cerebral) malaria, which is also the most fatal. (It has a case fatality of maybe 15-20 % untreated and in children under the age of one the fatality is much higher. Nobody really knows, but it is probably close to 50%.) Every effort was made to try to control this epidemic but we couldn't because it was too

late. The outbreak was well started before anything could have been done, since, owing to the lack of communications in the country, nobody knew what was happening. It started in the most rural parts of the Ethiopian high plateau above 5000 to about 7500 feet. And it took so long for messages to get to Addis Ababa, because of the remoteness of the affected communities, very poor telephone and electronic communication, and the sickness of the people, that it was three or four weeks before anybody knew that an epidemic was in progress. The result was that, altogether, there were some 3 million cases of malaria and 100-200 thousand deaths from the disease (or maybe more) in the course of the three months from September to November 1958!

Well, we went directly to the Ministry of Health that morning and joined the planning already underway. And the only thing to do was rapidly to get as much chloroquine tablet medication as possible into the country and distribute it, for emergency treatment of all individuals found to be febrile, as widely as one could over the affected areas and also do that as rapidly as possible; for time was of the essence. It was mainly a logistics problem; and that is what the Ministry of Health undertook. From the Mission we sent cables to the U.S., U.K. and Kenya to try and obtain chloroquine tablets in sufficient amounts and in the shortest possible time to deal with this enormous pandemic ("Regional epidemic" is, perhaps, a more accurate term.) I even fell prey to it myself!

What happened was that, towards the end of the epidemic, Brooks (Ryder) came down (from Gondar), picked up his new DKW [German manufactured] "Jeep" and we went on my first field trip in Ethiopia, by road, in his jeep, with the windshield down. Brooks wanted to sit up where he could see everything. So we went all the way from Addis Ababa to Gondar by road (some 1000 kilometers) via Tigre Province - and other mostly rural areas - to get my first look at Gondar, the "set piece" of the whole program that I was supposed to be working on during the time I was in Ethiopia. Needless to say, by the time we got there we were encrusted in road dirt and assorted bugs; it was nice to find Brook's house so hospitable and, of course, a bath! But as it turned out, some 12-14 days later (the usual incubation period for malaria), I found out I had been "fair game" for the mosquitoes, too; the antimalarial (supposedly prophylactic) drug Daraprim, which in any case, didn't work well against falciparum malaria, was, nevertheless, (for lack of better information) in use at the time. The cerebral "element" was quite an experience, with what felt like a railroad train going round in my head and a fever of about 106 degrees F., until the chloroquine which my colleagues made available to me (even on a Sunday evening as it turned out), went to work. The chills and fever and the railroad train disappeared, and I "woke the morrow morn a better and a wiser man!" But that's another story, so back to Gondar.

The day of our arrival (on the mentioned "expedition" in Brooks' DKW "jeep") we had a chance to visit the Gondar Public Health College and Training Center (Gondar) and some of the training health centers in Begemidir Province, as indicated previously, located close enough to the college to provide easy access for faculty to exercise their supervisory functions and yet sufficiently rural in aspect so that they gave the Gondar "interns" experience very much like what they would encounter when they began running health centers on their own. I think that at this point I should introduce the excellent sketches of the Gondar program that were written by Drs. Lee Min Han (Han, Lee-Min, M.D., DPH, DTM&H, Public Health Advisor, Ministry of Public Health, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia "A Historical Sketch of the Public Health Training Center, Gondar", 6/10/65 Unpublished ) and Wen Pin Chang (Chang, Wen-Pin, "Development of Basic

Health Services in Ethiopia," J. Formosan Medical Association, Volume 68, No. 6, pps 306-321, June 28, 1969). Dr. Han was the first Dean of the college and a WHO employee for many years up to 1958 when he retired but, as he points out in his paper, was asked to continue on as Dean until 1963 when the College became a unit in the Haile Selassie I University and began granting graduate degrees, Bachelor of Public Health (B.P.H.), to health officers after they had completed their training. Dr. Chang was also a WHO employee and a member of the Gondar faculty and chief of the WHO-staffed Health Center Supervisory Team, working with the Ministry of Health to provide direct supervision of health centers around the country and, as well, training the Ethiopian supervisors so that they could take over the job themselves in due course. Dr. Han's paper is, perhaps, the first formal description of how the college got its start that I know of. It was never published so I guess I may be one of the relatively few people in the U.S. who has a copy of this document— yet it is of the utmost importance if you really want to understand the philosophic and technical background of that institution. (Some aspects of which are included in the official WHO/IEG Plan of Operations and the USG/IEG Project Agreement, but not in so much detail.) Dr. Chang's paper is, from many points of view, including its technical content, the more detailed of the two, and, as the reference indicates, has been published in the Formosan Medical Journal.

What Drs. Han and Chang point out, briefly, is that there was no public health program to speak of, before 1947, in Ethiopia. There were no Ethiopian physicians even as late as 1950. So, in that year, the Ethiopian Government requested a WHO consultant to visit Ethiopia to look at the problem of the lack of Ethiopian physicians in the country. The physician-consultant provided by WHO, Dr. Daubenton, in response to this request concluded that, "there is no doubt that training is the most important prerequisite for the creation of an effective public health administration in Ethiopia and, on this basis, medical and ancillary training will have to be built." (emphasis added.) Two years later, in 1952, a WHO advisor Dr. Rudolf Tesch was, for the first time, assigned to the Ministry of Public Health by WHO. He made an extensive study of the problem of medical education, and the need for training of other personnel as well, and consulted with the Inspector General in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Friede B. Hylander, the Swedish physician already noted here for his extremely sound advice in areas of public health and preventive medicine, during a period of almost 20 years residence in the country.

Dr. Hylander had first come to Ethiopia in 1932 as the representative of the Swedish Red Cross to help the Ethiopian Government deal with the problem of casualties resulting from the war between Ethiopia and Italy during the time of the Italian military attack on Ethiopia and attempt to occupy it (1935-1941). Dr. Hylander had had an exciting experience in this capacity since, when he organized a malaria prophylaxis program for the Ethiopian military, fighting in the Ogaden Desert area of the country, and when it was found to be quite successful in preventing the disease from decimating the Ethiopian military personnel in the area, the Italians apparently found out about it and bombed his Red Cross ambulance! Dr. Hylander was wounded in the attack and had to be evacuated to Sweden where, however, after some considerable time, he recovered fully and then, as indicated above, returned to the country and was given a very high position in the Ministry of Health as a result of his evidence of great dedication to the country's needs and expertise in the field, not only of preventive medicine and public health, but overall tropical medical acumen.

These factors are important to note because of the close connection which subsequently developed during my "watch", between the USAID public health development effort in the country and those of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). In fact, Dr. Hylander was a fine and wonderful person, besides having a thorough grasp of the important principles of public health practice, preventive medicine, and clinical medicine in circumstances under which we all labored in Ethiopia. In addition, Dr. Hylander's extraordinary capabilities were obviously recognized by the Ethiopian Government and he was appointed as chairman of the General Medical Advisory Board of the Ministry of Health, so that his understanding, of the support for the types of collaborative public health activities and related efforts which were worked out with the Ethiopian Government, before I arrived on the scene and during the time I was there, was of the greatest importance in the success of this collaborative effort.

The account of these various efforts to assist the Ethiopian Government in dealing with the terrific health problems and lack of adequately trained personnel to contend with them, would, however, not be complete without mention of the visit in 1952 of still another "wise man", Dr. Henry R. O'Brien. He was at that time the Commissioner of Health for the Pennsylvania State Health Department. He came to Ethiopia as a consultant for the USTCA, at the request of the Ethiopian Government, and traveled quite widely around the country, meeting the relevant officials and field medical personnel available. As a result, he was able to make an overall recommendation for the development of health services in the country, which included the establishment of "a demonstration health department and field training school for medical assistants to be set up in one of the provinces, with cooperative support in supplying both staff and equipment from the Ministry of Public Health, U.S. Technical Cooperation Administration, and WHO." Fortunately, some of the details of Dr. O'Brien's 1953 report were published in Public Health Reports and should be readily available to interested scholars. As far as I can tell, this was the first enunciation of the basic concept involved in the establishment of a training program epitomized by that which was organized in and around the Gondar Public Health College and Training Center.

*Q: First, in what context...?*

PRINCE: In the context of the establishment of a school for the training of paramedical personnel to fill a gap that was created by the lack of "fully qualified health personnel," i.e., of physicians.

*Q: Just in Ethiopia or worldwide or in Africa ?*

PRINCE: In Ethiopia, particularly, though it was a common problem all over the developing world. (However, see below for more details re the major unique aspects of the Gondar idea.) At the point in time about 1952 which we are discussing, there were only two Ethiopian physicians in the country. As Dr. Han goes on to explain; this idea of Dr. O'Brien's was discussed at great length in Ethiopia and finally in a meeting between the WHO group and representatives from the U.S. Technical Cooperation Administration and the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) during a meeting in Geneva on February 12-19, 1953. The deliberations of the conference concluded that "the closest coordination and cooperation between U.S. TCA and WHO should be observed in all these matters". Training programs were considered essential to meet the long range

objectives of health programs, namely, the development of health services in a given country (it wasn't just Ethiopia that they had in mind). And the training of several categories of health workers, both as to level and function, was felt to be necessary for this purpose. In addition, while the training of paramedical and auxiliary health workers is going on, it was concluded that the training of teachers in these disciplines should be carried out concurrently and that, these projects should be designed in such a way that the host country can take them over as rapidly as possible.

The presentation of this concept to the Ethiopian Government began to develop subsequent to the WHO meeting; and an agreement for cooperation between the USTCA and the Imperial Ethiopian Government (IEG) was concluded in April 1953 in a multi-project agreement entitled "Public Health Advisory Services." Among the proposed projects there was one entitled a "Field Training and Demonstration Unit" in one of the provinces. It was to be a cooperative project, however, between IEG, WHO, UNICEF and USTCA; and it provided for a "Joint Fund" which would be contributed to equally by the IEG and the USTCA to operate the entire project. The funds were to be administered concurrently by the Minister of Public Health and Chief of the Public Health Division of USTCA Mission. That is how this idea was, at length, formalized and finalized in a Project Agreement document in April 1953.

*Q: Was it your understanding that this field training and demonstration unit was unique or were they starting this in many parts of the world?*

PRINCE: No indeed. It was absolutely unique; nothing of this kind had ever been done before in the entire world.

*Q: But WHO, you said, was thinking about doing this in other countries ? This was the first?*

PRINCE: This was absolutely the first.

*Q: The idea of paramedical was not common at that time?*

PRINCE: It was not "common" but apparently it did exist, in part at least, as in the health training project in New Guinea, described to me by Dr. Frank Schofield (personal communication), who had worked on the project some years previously and was, during the early years of my presence in Ethiopia, a member of the faculty at Gondar, which gave us a chance to talk about the New Guinea project in detail. Dr Schofield gave me the impression that, although, as I have indicated, this general type of training had been used there to train paramedical personnel, there were three major aspects of the training program that were unique to Gondar, namely: (1) the fact that all the training was to take place in the same institution; in other words, whatever kinds of people were to be trained, they would be trained together so that they all got the idea of working together as a team from the beginning. (2) The second aspect of a unique character was that the teams were to be used to staff rural health centers providing generalized health services (combined preventive, promotive, and curative, with special emphasis on the first two) for the people living in the area served by the system. (3) The third unique aspect of the program (although much less important than the other two), was the fact that it was partly directed through a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) with almost complete authority over

the administration of the technical aspects of the training program and its planning, development, and implementation; and the TAC consisted of representatives of the various agencies concerned in assisting in the project. These agencies were the Ministry of Health of the IEG, WHO/EMRO, USTCA, and UNICEF, the latter of which was brought in to enable it to rationalize its contributions by way of equipment, supplies and logistics, in support of the college and the training and service health centers.

A fourth aspect (perhaps not so unusual) was the concurrent construction of four training health centers (as distinguished from service health centers where service, not training, was the major objective) close enough to Gondar to be relatively easy of access, but still rural enough to give the students a relevant experience during their training.

Finally, a fifth, and again unique, aspect of the program was the establishment of the "internship year" where the graduates of the college were to receive one year's experience working in these training health centers, under supervision of their training faculty - a type of internship. So the people who taught the academic technical aspects of the program would also have a chance to teach the practical aspects of how you apply this technical knowledge in the context of a decentralized-generalized health program, being run by a team of paramedical personnel with no fully qualified physicians readily available.

*Q: How was the college staffed?*

PRINCE: The lion's share of the staffing was provided at first by WHO; but the Dean of the College, as per the relevant formal agreement, was to be a WHO employee; and the Administrative Director of the College was always to be a U.S. TAC employee. The chairman of the TAC, of course, was the Ministry of Health representative. But the deputy chair was the U.S. TAC Public Health Division Chief (in addition to filling the position, as mentioned, as Administrative Services Director of the TAC.)

*Q: Wasn't Dr. Curtis the first director of the college?*

PRINCE: He was the first Director even before the TAC was established. (See Dr. Han's accounting, Annex 6, p.8 para 12.) The TAC, by agreement of the Government, TCA and WHO, was composed of members from both the USTCA and WHO. Their original function was to approve the curriculum for the training courses. In practice, however, the committee governed the operations of the project technically as well as administratively. The committee chairman became H.E. Ato Yohannes Tseghe, the then vice-Minister of Health. He was not the Director of the TAC when it was first established although later on, when Haile Selassie University was formed, there was a change which complicated matters considerably. But in those days - the first five years - it was entirely run by the TAC with the Chief of the Public Health Division of USTCA as the TAC Deputy Director.

*Q: First it was Dr. Curtis and then Dr. Brooks Ryder; he was the second director, I believe.*

PRINCE: Yes. But, I only knew that Brooks was the Director of the College and not the Deputy of the TAC in 1958, when he first came to see me in Jamestown, NY as recounted earlier in this

record. That position, of course, fell on my shoulders automatically, as soon as I became Chief of the U.S. Mission Public Health Division.

*Q: They ran the college. I remember that the college was staffed with some Ethiopians; but also people from TCA and an international group...?*

PRINCE: And many others from Germany, Sweden, and Holland.

*Q: There was an international group; I believe WHO provided most of them, although there were a number contracted by the Ethiopian Government, who were refugees from Eastern Europe. I recall Dr. Curtis saying, at one time, after having tried to keep this relatively motley group of people moving in the same direction: "This old world isn't ready for this "One World" business!" (This was the time when Wendell Wilkie had just published a book called "One World.") Dr. Curtis was discussing his frustration with trying to get them to agree; as, for example, he couldn't get the British and American nurses to agree on how to make a hospital bed - illustrating some of the problems of technical cooperation among those providing assistance, let alone with those receiving it!*

PRINCE: That's absolutely right especially in terms of the complexity of the project. I was, of course, plunged into this completely and I had many difficult meetings with the TAC; and many visits to Gondar to try and sort out some of the interpersonal differences which, almost unavoidably, arose among the staff. By the way I was told.. I don't know whether this was true or not..that before we were finished there were doctors and nurses from 22 different countries who, at one time or another, worked on the staff of that institution! You can imagine that this was a "melting pot" in a small context - a very close knit context. However, where the differences between them became major stumbling blocks at times, it took a lot of effort on everybody's part "to keep the top from blowing off." And there were technical problems as well, because, for example, some of the surgeons didn't adhere to all the best concepts of careful "scrubbing in the operating room (OR) etc. as some of the others did; and there were arguments about surgical procedures, etc., which went on. It must have been the blessing of the Almighty, the general overcoming force of the desperate conditions that prevailed in Ethiopia, and a great dosage of goodwill, that kept that bunch together despite all these different problems. But it resulted, in my opinion at least, in an outstanding job in the long run, even though the "Derg" (the Ethiopian revolutionary Government) "abolished" Gondar sometime in 1976-77 and converted it into a government medical school (which I was later told was a really second class institution.)

In his review paper, Dr. Han (Annex 6), discusses the results of the meetings of the TAC in terms of the fundamental requirements of the curriculum, which consisted of 45 percent classroom teaching and 55 percent practical work. The duration of the health officer's course was four years; the community nurse and sanitarians courses, in the beginning, were two years, later on to be three years and still did not have the high school certification requirement. Health officers were graduates of secondary schools with School Leaving Certificates; none of the others were secondary school graduates in the beginning. (They all were before the project was completed.) The practical work dealt with maternal and child health and school health, environmental sanitation, outpatient clinics, hospital wards, laboratory work, health education and concluded with comprehensive experience at the Training Health Centers (THCs), Provincial

Health Department experiences, and unscheduled epidemiologic studies, which encouraged the inquisitiveness and scientific research methodology we also wanted to instill in the minds of these excellent young people. And the result was that there was an interesting consequence... a feeling of upward mobility, especially in technical matters of medical and public health relevance among all the students but especially among the student health officers; they began to appreciate the importance of getting an even better education than they were already getting at the college and so they wanted to achieve a baccalaureate degree so they could work toward an advanced degree later on. And why not?! (See below for the arguments that ensued!)

We had quite a battle about this in the Ministry of Health, I may say, in the Ethiopian Medical Society and it even extended to the halls of the United Nations. Thus, when in 1963, WHO and the United Nations called a worldwide meeting to be held in Geneva on the subject of the "Application of Science and Technology for the Benefit of the Less Developed World"(UNCAST), and the Ethiopian Government didn't have any body to send to that meeting, they asked me to write a paper and deliver it as the "Ethiopian Government representative." I did that, with the essential help of the Vice Minister, Ato Yohannes Tseghe and my staff. I presented the paper, "The Application of Modern Methods of Public Health Practice to the Solution of Health Problems in Ethiopia." It was published in the Transactions of the meeting (Prince, J.S., Tseghe, Johannes, Spruyt, Dirk, "The Application of Modern Methods of Public Health Practice to the Solution of Health Problems in Ethiopia" UN Conference on Application of Science and Technology in the Less Privileged Nations, 1963) and, I presume, is still available. (However, to make access to this paper as easy as possible, I have attached it as Annex 7) The thrust of the paper dealt with all of what I have said about the way in which the technically qualified people... a cadre of properly qualified health workers had to be established and a proper philosophy, strategy, and mechanism developed for them to work together in dealing with the kinds of health problems afflicting countries like Ethiopia. And the concept of training together—the three kinds of health workers together in the same facility, as teams—was strongly emphasized.

But in addition, in discussions of the paper in Geneva (and Yohannes agreed I would do this), I proposed the idea of giving the Gondar health students, beginning with the health officers, the necessary incentive to progress by allowing them the possibility of moving up a career ladder. And that created the biggest uproar, you wouldn't believe it. There was such a commotion that the head of the conference, Sir John Charles, said, "well, ladies and gentlemen, we can't discuss this here in open meeting that is being recorded. It is much too complex and difficult a concept so I am going to schedule a private unrecorded meeting... not really a private but a non-recorded informal meeting in one of the committee rooms tomorrow afternoon." The meeting took place and some of the doctors, from West Africa particularly, raised big objections with me for even proposing the idea of providing the health officers a chance to become doctors by earning a baccalaureate degree and the possibility of attending medical school later. They felt that, if this was done, the health officers would all leave their "postings" and want to go to medical school and not stay as health officers working for the most part, in the rural health centers. In effect, they felt, "once they've trained as health officers they should remain in that posting; otherwise you won't have any in a few years."

We realized in Ethiopia that this could be a problem; but one of the requirements in our plan, we pointed out, was that the health officers would have to serve for about four years as health



officers, mostly in rural health centers, before they could apply for their advanced degree training. In addition, we had what we felt were perhaps some more constructive views: indeed, the health officers might later become physicians and not stay in the health centers; but health centers were not the be-all-and-end-all of the organization of health service programs in developing countries... or in any country with large, mostly rural, areas, underserved by health personnel well-qualified for the job. In any case, I had put into the document the questions that we had to look to, in Ethiopia and all developing countries, including the concepts of organizational development of the necessary administrative and functioning framework for delivering decentralized, generalized health services. That translates into the need for trained public health physicians at the supervisory and coordinative organizational and functional level of a country's health services and not just at the most rural or other health service delivery levels!

Finally, to cap the whole discussion, Mr. Shubik, Minister of Health for the Ukraine, said, "Dr. Prince is right. Feldshers (rural health workers) in the USSR can go on to become university professors if they have the determination and capability; and several have done so; and this has caused no harm to the staffing of the health care system. In fact, quite the opposite. And most feldshers do not leave their posts for more advanced work even though they have the opportunity to do so." (Needless to say, I felt very much in Mr. Shubik's debt for his kind and conclusive support on the matter and thanked him for it most sincerely when the meeting disbanded very late in the afternoon.)

*Q: What happened to health services in Ethiopia?*

The above-described issues also had to be addressed in the context of the difficult communications and other obstacles to carrying out the necessary tasks. So to do that, you had to decentralize the authority and responsibility for running health services to a peripheral level. And in the discussion I said "We have had a model in New York State for some years based on the "development of district health services" and I don't think we can succeed in Ethiopia or any other developing country without doing something similar, in other words, decentralizing the services, as Emerson put it so wisely in his famous analysis of "Local Health Units for the Nation." And, much to my amazement, several years after the UNCAST conference discussed above, when one of the Emperor's administrative and legal staff returned from graduate training in the U.S., I heard that he had been instrumental in writing a new section for the Ethiopian Government Awraja (District) law which was published in the Negaret Gazetta 14th of March, 1966, under the heading of "Local Self-Administration." It contained a number of sections extremely pertinent to public health law in Ethiopia and I found out, when I noticed several sections of the new law which, unbelievably, seemed to resemble closely some provisions of the New York State Public Health Law, that the mentioned Ethiopian Government lawyer, apparently working immediately under the Emperor's direction, had received his graduate training at the Maxwell Institute of Public Administration, Syracuse, New York! Since the law seemed to decentralize authority and responsibility for public health administration to the Awrajas (districts), I asked him, "where in the world did you get this..." And he indicated "well, you know, you have very good decentralized health services going on in the U.S., and especially in New York State, and I found out all about it at the Maxwell Institute; they had a record of the whole thing and I believe we ought to have something like that in Ethiopia; and the Emperor

agreed! My, what a coincidence! And here I was, privileged to see everything "come full circle," provided, of course, that it worked!

*Q: So you came full circle?*

PRINCE: Yes, I suppose one could say so. This form of decentralization of health service organization (the district level decentralization) was proposed for adaptation (not adopted) on a worldwide basis by WHO at a conference in Harare, Zimbabwe in August, 1987, entitled "Interregional Meeting on Strengthening District Health Services." This conference was attended by ministerial representatives from many countries around the world, along with some of the WHO country representatives (W.R.'s), their headquarter staff officers, and attendees from WHO HQ in Geneva, the WHO Regional Offices, representatives from several of the other UN Specialized Agencies, and from a number of other private voluntary organizations.

(See Annex 8 for a selection of some of the most important documents from this meeting which, by the way, should also be considered in the context of the "International Conference on Primary Health Care" held in Riga, in what was then the Latvian Republic of the USSR, under the auspices of WHO and UNICEF, in March of 1988. The conference was held as a celebration "of the tenth anniversary of the declaration of Alma Ata" of September 1978 and was commemorated in a publication entitled "From Alma Ata to the Year 2000, Reflections at the Mid-point." ("From Alma Ata to the Year 2000, Reflections at the Mid-point." World Health Organization, Geneva, 1988 (Preface by Dr. John H. Bryant, especially see pg.155)

This publication describes the problems in implementing the Alma Ata Declaration as seen from the WHO and, no doubt, many other worldwide viewpoints, and to consider possible initiatives that might be taken by all concerned to strengthen the original initiative and ensure at least reasonable progress toward achieving the objectives set forth in 1978.

The reason for this comment is that the mentioned document implies that this ten year retrospect did not come up with an entirely optimistic view of the chances of its achieving "Health for All-by the Year 2000" - a goal which was the ultimate of the Alma Ata Declaration. This distinctly modest approach is typified by the heading of the substantive material which deals with details as it goes along for the rest of the publication, e.g., "Health for All - Wishful Dream or Living Reality?"

The strange thing about the document, at least as it strikes me, is that although the next 115 pages are filled with many different kinds of recommendations, including several major references to strengthening district health services within the Ph.D. system, none of them seem to relate in any definite way to the conclusions reached at the conference just the year before in Harare, which dealt with what seems to me to be a fundamental requirement for the achievement of the Alma Ata objective, namely, attention of a most detailed and determined type to the overweening problems of health service organizational development throughout the world!

This is, indeed, strange since, as far as I know, the Harare conference did exactly that, even including a quite detailed curriculum for the attendees, parts of which I have included in the Annex 8 but not the entire document because it is quite long and very detailed. It is also strange

because Dr. John Bryant, who wrote the preface for the entire document and I think must have had considerable editing responsibility for it, in summarizing the interpreted actions recommended at Riga as focal points for future concern, wisely included the following rhetorical statement which, if it were given substance could really make quite a difference if it were to be focused, among other worthy objectives, on the problems of organizational development: "It is necessary to look over the horizon, beyond the turn of the century to the problems of that time, some continuing to the present, others emerging as entirely new. The capacity for dealing with those problems needs to be strengthened further between now and the year 2000. It is likely that a very important long-term contribution of the "health-for-all-movement" will be to establish in every country, and in every community, an evolving capacity to deal with the health problems of that place and time." (Emphasis added.) (Ibid., page 74, paragraph 5)

But as I have already said it doesn't seem as though the Riga Conference or any other WHO conferences or assemblies have grappled, fundamentally, with the hard nugget problem of the necessary organizational development of health services, specifically the decentralization of authority and responsibility to the logical governmental subunits within each of the member countries of the United Nations, all of whom were signatories to the Alma Ata Declaration in 1978!

*Q: It hadn't been adopted before 1987?*

PRINCE: No, not really. WHO had thought about it but they hadn't made it official. This was probably the true "launching" of the concept of the Strengthening of District Health Services, by WHO. (I've underlined the word "District" because for years WHO had developed programs in keeping with the Alma Ata Declaration for "strengthening health services." But the concept of placing the primary government focus at the District level was a new idea in many countries, and even with WHO, the concept having been approved by the General Assembly only in 1986, the year before the Harare conference.)

*Q: Even though it was already going on in quite a few places?*

PRINCE: That is correct. So my contention is that if you are looking for the seeds of the modern concept of practicing public health services that you now find in developing nations you have to come back to Ethiopia. I believe they were the first developing country in the world really to concentrate on the whole thing from the bottom up with an integral training program and everything else. All of which was aimed, fundamentally, at this concept of organizing a system of decentralized-generalized health services with the required organizational and governmental locus, namely, the Awraja (District) espoused in the WHO Conference referred to above some 22 years later!

In fact, if one takes a close look at the history of the development of the concept of decentralizing health services, as part of a required overall organizational development emphasis, then one must also figure out how to re-jigger the technical parts of the program, and the training of necessary technically qualified personnel, to fit the whole plan! For an idea about how to deal with this problem, one needs to go back to the work of Dr. Herman Biggs in New York State beginning in late 1913 and lasting up to about 1930 during which time he was Commissioner of

Health for the state, and during which time he also succeeded in introducing the concept of the establishment of decentralization of health services in the state to governmental units called Districts--a concept which was embodied in the New York State Public Health Law in 1923, effective May 21 of that year ("The Consolidated Laws of New York Annotated" Book 44 Public Health Law, Edward Thompson Company, January 1943. § 4A Public Health Law of New York State, article 2.).

The first paragraph of this highly significant statement reads as follows, "The commissioner of health shall from time to time divide the state, except cities of the first class, (the law states that these cities have to have their own full-time health departments separate from the state districts that are established by the section) into 20 or more sanitary districts. He shall appoint for each such district a district state health officer who shall be a physician. Each district state health officer, under the direction of the commissioner of health and subject to the provisions of the sanitary code, shall, in addition, assume such other duties as may be imposed upon him, and perform the following duties." Then it lists 12 such duties which I won't go into - suffice to say that they cover everything that a local health officer could possibly consider himself responsible for. But the last one of the 12 gives some idea of the power that is granted to district state health officers under this law and the degree of complete decentralization, therefore, of the responsibility for carrying out the tasks and responsibilities of a local health officer. This item number 12 in the list of duties required by the law reads as follows:

*Act as the representative of the state commissioner of health, and under his direction, in securing the enforcement within his district of the provisions of the public health law and the sanitary code.*

And finally in notes of decisions under this legislation reference is made on page 4B of the addition to the same provision of the law, of the following legal caveat:

*District Officer--under subdivision 12, each District State Health Officer is authorized to perform the duties of the Commissioner of Health within his district and specific authorization by the Commissioner to perform such duty is not necessary. April 2, 1941, opinion of Attorney General.*

Furthermore, as I have mentioned previously in this account, and following the recommendation of Haven Emerson in his famous article of 1945, (op cit Emerson 24). The New York state legislature went ahead further with Emerson's doctrines and authorized establishment of county health departments as a further effort to decentralize such services in the state. The reader may recall that my assignment to the Jamestown District of the New York State Department of Health, in 1948, had to do not only with carrying out my normal duties as District State Health Officer resident in Jamestown and Chautauqua County, but also to concentrate on the task of convincing county government officials, including the board of supervisors, and the appropriate groups of decision-makers in the private sector, especially the members and officers of the county medical society that a county health department would be "a good thing" for them and the county.

As indicated, I began the above-described effort in June 1948; but the suggested County Health Department was only established 16 years later! If one looks at this as a "development project" one should not therefore be surprised that such projects require at least a decade of effort on the part of cooperating agencies/donors/PVOs in today's world! Without being accused of putting words in people's mouths, I would like to suggest that, perhaps, some of these occurrences and ideas had at least something to do with the much later conceptualization and planning that lay behind the convocation of the WHO Interregional Meeting on Strengthening District Health Systems in Zimbabwe (to which I have already referred and for which I have attached copies of some selected documents in Annex 8, dated August 3, 1987).

*Q: Maybe we are getting ahead of ourselves but it would be interesting to know what has happened to that program in Ethiopia?*

PRINCE: I will come to that, but the answer needs to be seen in the context of some of the ideas that were developing in the United States concerning improved methods of evaluating the impact of public health programs on the health of target populations. One has to realize, that possible ways of doing this, even in the U.S., were quite rudimentary in the 1950s. But there was a lot of thinking going on about the importance of the problem and finding better ways to solve it, as evidenced by the interest in the part which might be played by social science research methodology, which, as I have already mentioned, I learned about at the Department of Social Relations at Harvard. So conceptually, the D&E [demonstration and evaluation] project was to a considerable degree a follow-on to the ferment in thinking and methodology that I suppose one might say I and many others "inherited" from our mentors and which proved quite "infectious" among people in the Ministry of Health and in the medical profession, generally, not only in Ethiopia, but also in many other developing countries where U.S.-trained higher level professionals had postings from official USG agencies in the health field.

And I think that this is a lesson that needs to be taken to heart in terms of what we are trying to do in helping people around the world, especially in developing countries, to improve their own welfare. Clearly, it seems to me that the D&E project in Ethiopia, as well as the whole program for improving health services delivery in that country, and what AID has done elsewhere, showed us that what we really need to do to get in motion in these countries, is to train top level professionals with a global interdisciplinary view of things so that they in turn may teach in top level professional schools and, as appropriate, in paraprofessional schools, because they can have such a profound influence on their students' thinking. And their students could then "carry the ball" worldwide as appropriate, and may well become leading officials and innovative thinkers and policy makers in their own countries.

In addition, it seems to me that the projects in Ethiopia in health and agriculture showed us that we had to put a lot more emphasis on providing opportunities for institutions of higher education in the U.S. to work with the developing country institutions of higher education in the third world to help them achieve the kind of objectives in training and policy innovations that I have just mentioned as well as to avail themselves (the U.S. institutions I mean specifically) of lessons to be learned from experiential and training programs in the third world countries where they (the U.S. institutions) have established relationships with the mentioned institutions of higher education.

And lo and behold, here in Arlington we have the UDLP, (the AID University Center for the Development Linkages Project); just the thing I was talking about. Nothing could be more gratifying to a university professor, I'm sure, than to see something like this happen and evolve, through an innovative process like the understanding of what is really required in order to achieve the objectives or perhaps, more generally, the goals which everybody has agreed on for years! It was just a question of how we got there that was not agreed upon. Now I think the policy and strategy has been accepted all over even, perhaps, in terms of the new (1993) World Bank policy and strategy.

And therefore I think the answer to your question about what happened to the D&E project and the Gondar program in Ethiopia is to say that it probably had a major influence at the very least, in accelerating the implementation of policy changes necessary to achieve these goals. So I think that this is a fundamental component of the whole concept of technical cooperation in the development process around the world. And that is why I say technical cooperation rather than technical assistance; it is really technical collaboration at all levels that has to be achieved and this, ideally should result in clearly multidirectional benefit flows when the whole process has achieved maximum progression of sustainable development.

In Ethiopia, I believe, the donor and appropriate governmental agencies, at least, approached this concept at a much earlier historical stage in the technical cooperation field than most other (certainly not all) developing countries in the world. And this, in answer to your question, could be considered one of the long term results of widely ranging health and agricultural programs which we helped the country institutionalize, I believe, to an extraordinary degree. In fact, even though, for example, the health program was nearly emasculated under the Derg, it seems to have "sprung back" to a considerable degree in the last few years, judging from personal communications I have had with Dr. Joyce Pickering and others of the McGill University team which has worked in the country for the past 10-15 years, in continuing to collaborate in the institution building process.

*Q: Are you talking in general or just in the public health field?*

PRINCE: I think I am talking in general too since, as I have already indicated, these innovative approaches both in terms of development of services, training of personnel, institution building were going on in Ethiopia in agriculture with the extraordinary Oklahoma State University project at Jimma and Alemaya (where there is a multi-disciplinary training institution known as the Alemaya College of Agricultural, Mechanical and Industrial Arts, located in the town of Alemaya in Harar Province).

Having arrived in Ethiopia with social science research ideas under my belt and dealing with the malaria epidemic and a number of other categorical disease programs in addition, encouraged me immeasurably in my efforts to move the Ethiopia health program in the direction, perhaps, of being one of the most comprehensive of any TCA (and later AID) had undertaken up to that time, because it dealt not only with communicable disease control projects, but with administration, management, organizational development, and technical aspects covering the entire disease spectrum... maternal and child health, adult health, environmental health, etc.

Further on, this did, I hope, become a good example of what I choose to call international health technology exchange. (Neumann, A.K., Carlson, Dennis, M., Lourie, Irvin M., and Prince J.S. "International Health Technology Exchange-A Multidirectional and Multidisciplinary Road," Royal Society of Health Journal, June, 1979) & Annex 9

And that same "D&E Project" in Ethiopia you just asked me about was part of the "technology" I had in mind when I accepted the assignment for AID work in the health and medical field in that country. This particular field of technology had a name-"Operational Research"!-and that's what it became; and the next chapter is about how we applied it to the wide-ranging scope of work I seemed to be given for my assignment in Ethiopia. (See my Quarterly Progress Report for the last quarter of 1968 and the first quarter of my work in Ethiopia)

So, we included the Demonstration and Evaluation Project as part of the Mission's overall program in the country. However, in the beginning I had difficulty securing the Mission's agreement on two major points: one was that I would not go ahead with further design of this project without involving the Ministry in the process (and the Mission demurred). (You may recall the E-1 Project Paper, which was part of the Annual Budget Submission, was not supposed to be discussed in detail with everybody in the host government.) And I said, "Well, you know, let's face it, I have had a lot of experience with this kind of situation in my work in Chautauqua County; and I can say that if I had gone into the communities... to the leadership of the communities, without first involving them in the design of the research survey questionnaires I would not have gotten to first base. Furthermore, I had to interview about 1200 people in the community and they all knew something in general about this project because we were properly authenticated as doing work for Harvard University, which was considered very prestigious for the respondents... so they were glad to cooperate with us. Thus it wasn't a cold turkey operation... in no way! So in Ethiopia, I said to myself I don't think we'll make that kind of mistake ("cold turkey approach"); I don't think the research effort would have had a chance of succeeding without community collaboration, because we knew we were going to be interviewing people in communities some of which in Ethiopia were way out in the boondocks. And if one were to go to them, without the Ministry of Public Health "papers" giving us authority to administer this project we would have had big problems getting statistically valid results, to put it mildly!

Having discussed these issues with the Mission, they agreed to this approach and then I sat down with the late Excellency Ato Yohannes Tseghe, Vice-Minister in the Ministry of Health, and one of the first people I felt I should ask to help us design the project and to my great relief, he said he would do so with pleasure!

By that time, I had become a member of the General Medical Advisory Board of Health, which was like the Public Health Council of New York State, the highest authority next to the Minister himself, in the establishment of technical policy and strategy of the Ministry. So I presented this whole idea to His Excellency Yohannes and the Board in great detail and we had several extremely interesting sessions in discussing the content of the questionnaires and the way in which we were going to handle the data, etc. Thus, the Ministry was fully aware of all the technical details as well and HE the Vice-Minister, who was also Chair of the mentioned Medical Advisory Board of Health, was asked to write the Foreword for the journal article and to serve as a coauthor. He accepted both requests and made a number of very valuable other

contributions to the paper. About seven years later, thanks to the Herculean labors of my staff, especially my secretary, June Bruce, and the UNESCO officer assigned to assist the Artistic Printing Press, who volunteered to expedite the publication of the article, complete with photographs, had it ready for publication on schedule. Because I suppose it was felt that the journal article had possible international significance, it was felt that it needed to be approved by the Ministry of Interior, which it was, without difficulty, before publication in the Ethiopian Medical Journal in 1967. (Spruyt, Dirk J., Elder, Francis B., Messing, Simon D., Wade, Mary K., Ryder, Brooks, Prince, Julius S. Tsegue, Yohannes, "Ethiopia's Health Center Program-Its Impact on Community Health" Ethiopian Medical J.-Conference Supplement-3rd Annual Meeting, Ethiopian Medical Society of May 1967, Vol. 5 No. 3 July 19, 1967) &Annex 10

The project began with the decision, first of all, concerning the question of how many communities it was possible to study in the context of trying to select the appropriate number of "control" and "experimental" communities ... to get the baseline done, and then to have sufficient time between the completion of the baseline study and the study to be carried out after the application of the change agent. In this case, the change agent was the health center staff and services; and the sample size and degree of change had to be sufficient to obtain statistically meaningful results, assuming a difference in the tested parameters, e.g. infant mortality, of at least 10%. I might amplify this by pointing out that the effort was to follow a kind of "case/control scenario" using the true experimental method, which, in this instance, would consist of the study of x number of communities, half of which, the "experimental" communities, would have the change agent introduced (in this case the health center and staff) and half of which would not have the change agent and were, therefore, termed "control" communities. All were arranged in matched pairs for purposes of statistical analysis of the relevant data. Thus, this x number of matched pairs of communities was further chosen so that we could have one pair in the highlands, one pair in the tropical rain forests, one pair in the savannah area, and one pair down on the Red Sea Danakil desert; because obviously the ecologic factors would influence things greatly in terms of the health/illness spectra in the various communities. And if we were to try to compare, e.g., four health center communities with four control communities in different parts of the country the confounding errors would be much too great. So we had to compare them by matched pairs. When that was agreed to, then it was only a question of how many such pairs of communities could be handled from a logistic point of view. We finally decided to do four pairs; but, with respect to the fourth pair, one of which was to be located in the desert ecology in the Danakil depression near the border with Somalia, unfortunately, we were never able to secure the approval of the local power structure in the region. The Danakils were very suspicious of the plateau Amharas - and some things also happened in terms of "Shifta" - thievery action - down there which caused big problems for the government and made it, more or less, impossible for us to work there on a community basis. So we had to abort the fourth pair representing the desert ecology. Too bad! But the sort of thing that can happen in many parts of the world where the communities' social base may not always prove stable even if all efforts are made to create a relaxed relationship.

The three pairs of the chosen communities were then matched by demographic, sociocultural and ecologic background as nearly as possible. So the question then became... how much time must you allow between the baseline and the follow-up study of results of change-agent action to expect meaningful results? The problem was, of course, time because this was an expensive



study and we had a big staff and a lot of logistics which were also expensive, and the usual, pretty much fixed, project budget. So, we finally concluded that the maximum time interval required between baseline and follow-up surveys for a possible project impact would need to be kept at or below 24 months.

We set about the details, including follow-up, based on the philosophy that I have already mentioned which is "we don't do this kind of thing anywhere without the proper introduction." Hence, before we began the actual survey in any community we first sent a "reconnaissance team," which met with easily identified members of the power structure, e.g. the town elders (equivalent to a town board). The team went to the chiefs, the governor, and other top people in the community, and explained what this was all about. "It was important for the future of that community and the future of the country." I had already established this concept with many of the elders and chiefs and other people in several parts of the country because, in furtherance of the Ministry of Health's interest and our presence there, the Emperor wanted health centers developed eventually throughout the entire country. In order to do that we had to follow the same philosophy when going to the towns where the health centers were to be established and to explain what the purpose was and then ask permission to put a health center in a certain place. Oftentimes there was no land readily available and the elders had to get together and agree where we were going to have the land, and who was going to contribute it, etc. When such contributions were agreed to, arrangements were then made through the same process of mutual negotiations to assign the donor other more or less equivalent land to use as his own. This was often a complex process, but, because, I suppose, all parties achieved high or increased status for an action perceived as so beneficial to the community, the negotiations were usually completed promptly. And I found myself, often enough, in the position of representing the Ministry of Health in these visits, as I often didn't have anybody with me except my driver, Ato Mersha Mandefro, serving as a guide, as well, and one or more local officials who could also serve as interpreters when needed. The people in the villages and towns were very, very cooperative when we explained to them what the purpose of our visit was.

The same approach was adopted by the research team once the recce team had completed its work. And in this latter instance the power group leaders in the communities agreed that taking stool and blood samples to test for amoebiasis, dysentery, malaria, schistosomiasis, etc. was something that was foreign to them. As a reward for making this possible, we also provided treatment, on request, for the people in all the villages that we studied while we were there. And if we found something serious in our patients that required evacuation to the hospital or whatever, we tried to arrange for this as well. So, by and large, we received the cooperation of most of the people in the communities, and that's why we had a good turnout for the interviews, physical examinations, blood tests, and stool samples, etc., all of which was necessary to obtain statistically valid results.

But the logistic details were, otherwise, horrendous. We had to have everything transportable by C-47 in order to get to some of the research community locations, which, as I have indicated, were chosen to be characteristic of the Ethiopian "countryside." Consequently, they were in several cases remote enough so you really couldn't get to them by road! And you can imagine what that meant! But anyway we managed. We had a very hearty, tough and determined but compassionate team of researchers before we were finished, believe me! Furthermore, it is

important to note that a goodly percentage of the staff that went on these D&E field trips, and did much of the work were Ethiopians. Some of them were health officers, some laboratory technicians, some sanitarians and some community nurses. All of them, with their background in public health already received from the Gondar Public Health College and Training Center program or prior laboratory experience, made excellent workers on the project. It is also important to note again that our official interpreter, Ejetta Feyessa, was extremely accomplished in handling most major Ethiopian languages, and some dialects as well. Quite a feat!

So in due course, the research protocol was carried to completion and we put the finalizing touches on an article to be published in the Ethiopian Medical Journal the day I went on my last trip from Ethiopia to a meeting in Kampala, Uganda, on population problems in Africa... the beginnings of the USAID assisted population program on that continent! (As noted previously, such programs had already begun with assistance from private voluntary organizations - PVOs - such as POP [Population] Council, IPPF, Pathfinder and others, and had been underway in some places for several years.)

*Q: When was this?*

PRINCE: In mid-1967, a short time before I left Ethiopia to take up my new Post as the first population adviser to AFR/AID [Africa Bureau at AID/Washington].

*Q: Didn't you have some problem with the Washington office about funding that D&E project?*

PRINCE: Yes, I mentioned the problem earlier and I forgot to go ahead with the discussion of that issue. In 1965 the USAID Research Advisory Committee (RAC) was asked to review our project.

*Q: The research advisory committee of AID?*

PRINCE: Yes. It was a committee established by AID in the Fowler Hamilton (former AID Administrator) years. This was the time when the school of thought was to emphasize the prime importance of the economic aspects of development vis à vis other aspects. So the technical assistance the (technical cooperation parts) of our program were being examined most thoroughly and/or "getting the axe" financially and literally as well.

The "change of emphasis" is something else and many of those who went through it may still remember it. But, just in case some of my readers may not recall what happened, I can remind them of the fact that it was when Congress wanted AID to start cutting the budgets of all development projects funded by the Agency which were deemed not to contribute, as directly as others, to the economic aspects of development. This included health programs generally, and the Demonstration & Evaluation Project especially, perhaps because the RAC had concluded that the project, from a technical point of view, was not worth the money being put into it. It was generally concluded that Congress wanted the Agency to limit the number of African countries receiving bilateral, i.e. direct assistance from the U.S. But, of course, by that time we had spent some \$600,000 on the project (the total cost of which was \$900,000 by the time it was finished in 1967.) In those days that was a whale of a lot of money. The fact that two-thirds to three-quarters

of it had already been spent on the research didn't seem to bother the RAC; they thought it should be cut off! So, when Dr. Leona Baumgartner became the head of the Office of War on Hunger about the same time...

*Q: In ICA?*

PRINCE: Yes in ICA, (rather, AID by that time), she came to Ethiopia in late 1964, I believe, to look at our program and we went on a field trip to study several health centers in a remote area. During our conversation, I said, "Leona, we've got to do something about this situation in Washington. I think it would be a disaster to terminate the D&E project now. It's the first time anybody has really tried to evaluate the impact of any of our AID programs in scientific terms. And, perhaps they want to kill it because it doesn't fit the norm... the classical "bench" type research work that some of the RAC members may prefer, or the economic paradigm that some in AID seem enamored of. Then I asked her, "What do you think we can do about it?" She said, "You'll have to come to Washington and defend it." I said, "I doubt that I can do that on Government business, so I'll just take home leave (due shortly) in any case and, the small additional costs won't matter as I can pay them myself. It's worth it." She said, "Well if you do, I will give you every assistance I can." So I went in the early fall of 1965, I think it was, and Leona managed to get Hutchinson (Ed Hutchinson, Assistant Administrator for Europe and Africa, AID) to agree to hold a meeting on the subject of the need for proper funding and completion of the D&E project in Ethiopia. I believe Steve Christmas was also there in a strategic position, as he represented AFR/Development Planning. There were, perhaps, 8-10 people at that meeting and we certainly had a very serious discussion, as I recall it, although not quite a knock down and drag out fight! Finally Leona turned to Ed and said, "What's the matter Ed; you know perfectly well that this project is necessary. Haven't you got any money?" And he looked at her and kind of threw up his hands and said "That's not the problem, but, ok, I don't think you are right but I'll just take a chance on it. There is only another \$200,000 to \$300,000 involved and \$600,000 has already been spent. So Prince, you go out there and get this job finished; don't dawdle, get cracking." So that was that, it seemed to me then and still does, that Leona and several other friends of the project, especially Steve Christmas and Clayton Curtis, saved the day. (See Annex 11 for correspondence and documentation of what I believe was this meeting, although it is possible that the meeting that I just described may have been followed by another, of a more formal type, in order officially to authorize the preparation of the necessary IAD for funding of the project to its conclusion (Further study of my records shows that this is, indeed, what happened. The meeting approving the IAD was held on December 26, 1965.). Anyhow, looking back on it now, can you imagine what a hindrance to sound project planning it would have been if we had not been able to show, at a sufficiently early stage in our project development and implementation experience, that at least it was possible to evaluate some significant aspects of actual project impact. For clearly it was the only way in which the Agency could have been reasonably sure, that what it tried to do in the future, would prove to be successful, or not, in achieving outcome objectives!

*Q: Are you aware whether the methodology was being used elsewhere, or were we learning from this process?*

PRINCE: That's rather a long story. Bits and pieces of the methodology had been tried in the U.S. and elsewhere. In addition, reference should be made to the work by Dodd in Syria in 1934, Weir in Egypt, in 1952 ( Annex 13), Getting and colleagues, at the University of Michigan in 1960s, and Taylor and Faruquee in Narrangwhal, India in 1970s, (the latter published in 1983) But, as already mentioned, we certainly were in a learning mode throughout, and nobody had any illusions about that--even our two most highly qualified consultants in epidemiology (Al Buck) and demography and statistics (Matt Tayback).

In addition, the work done by the Commission on Health Research for Development, under auspices of some 16 donors from Europe and North America, and Latin America with special acknowledgment to the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (United States), International Development Research Center (Canada), and the Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit - (Association for Technical Cooperation - not a Government of the Federal Republic of Germany agency) having supplied more than 12% of the Commission budget. However, the list of special reports and actual publications contained in the bibliography and reference notes of the mentioned extraordinarily detailed and significant study, contains only a very few references to research projects in the 1970s and none at all prior to that time. So here we have the Agency trying to develop an historical archive of its actions and accomplishments, yet its computers appear to have insufficient capacity to store the data from the earlier projects.

There was obviously an explosion of interest in the kind of research we are talking about in the 1980s, but this long postdated the work that we did in Ethiopia, which, as I have already indicated, was published in July 1967, some 30 years ago. So it seems to me, the answer to your question has to be that, although these bits and pieces of the methodology, had been tried, either previously or concurrently with the work we started in Ethiopia in 1959-60, it is probably fair to say that the full methodology for the application of qualitative survey research techniques, and a modicum of the quantitative approach, as an interdisciplinary application of both social science and epidemiologic health service research methodology (importantly including the testing of the logistic and related difficulties involved in doing this kind of work in developing countries), was pretty much pioneered by the D&E project in Ethiopia. So we certainly had to be in a learning mode throughout that entire project period of operation. Some further detail concerning the projects in Guatemala and Narrangwhal is provided in pages immediately following these comments.

However, we weren't very far along in the 1970s before it became "de rigueur" to include an evaluation section in every Mission initiated project paper, not to mention a section on social soundness, and the overall careful analysis required to prepare a logical framework which, of course, requires one to detail the objectives and methods of achievement of the evaluation component of the project along with all the other details that are involved in preparing the proposal. (See Annex 12 for the "short version" of the Logical Framework scheme developed by Practical Concepts, Inc., a contracting firm working under an AID contract to develop the Framework, ca November 1980.)

*Q: Was the methodology you used in the D&E Project something that was picked up by other projects?*

PRINCE: I believe it was; and the proof of the pudding, I guess, would be the fact that this general methodologic approach to impact evaluation was used not only in the Ethiopian Demonstration and Evaluation Project (1960-67), but as well in the USAID/AFR/ACCRA-assisted Danfa project in Ghana (1969-79), and the Narrangwhal Project (1967-74) carried out by the John Hopkins University School of Hygiene, the Government of India, and the Indian Council on Medical Research. In fact, as you know, at the present time, no Project Paper prepared in an AID Mission, and funded at the Mission level, can be accepted for further processing in AID/Washington unless a Logframe, including a Project Evaluation Component, is integral to the completed Project Paper. In addition, the similarity of the research methodology employed, including the comparison between the experimental and control community or sample population being studied, the use of carefully identified baseline and follow-up surveys, and the interdisciplinary (often including a social science component) is common.

In addition, I have here a number of documents that might flesh things out a bit. For example, in the D&E project paper and the publication in the Ethiopian Medical Journal, we referred to the fact that the idea of evaluating impact was not entirely original with us and in fact had been undertaken by the Rockefeller Foundation and Dr. John M. Weir and his Egyptian colleagues from 1945-1952, in Egypt in a study which was published in the 1958 Journal of the Egyptian Public Health Association entitled: "The Evaluation of Health and Sanitation in Egyptian Villages." However, we also pointed out that the work was limited almost to sanitation - not much about general health programs - and the sanitation part was mainly fly control and it wasn't very instructive, as the methods used did not apparently work very well. But there is the document; and it should still be of considerable value to readers interested in the history of impact evaluation in international health. Since it may be difficult to find elsewhere, I have attached it as Annex 13. (For the interest of my medical colleagues who may read these pages, one must always be aware while working in tropical areas that, particularly in these days, one has to bear in mind not only the usual communicable diseases but also, primarily because of the ongoing demographic transition, always to consider the possibility of non-communicable metabolic and similar diseases. This simple fact was driven home to me by the chief pathologist in the Regional Hospital at El Obeid, capital of the Kordofan Region in Sudan, told me during a seminar I was chairing at that institution about 1981, "Dr. Prince, you know it's not all diarrhea and vomiting here, but hypertension, nephritis, cirrhosis, etc. as well." And how right he was!)

Another research project, involving prospective differential evaluation of the impact of improved nutrition, versus improved water supplies, versus improved generalized health services, was carried out in three Guatemalan villages, during the period from 1959-74, in other words practically during the same time period as the Ethiopia D&E project. The work, by N.S. Scrimshaw, et. al., as often happens in instances of "simultaneous" research projects by different investigators, was not known to any of us in Ethiopia; nor was our work known to the group in Guatemala as far as I know, until I visited INCAP [Institute for Nutrition of Central America and Panama] during a U.S. Embassy/Addis, Leader Grant trip with H.E. Ato Abebe Retta, the IEG Minister of Health, in 1962. Consequently, we and INCAP were unwittingly traveling down the same research pathways for about three years and, in effect, I believe, the findings and methodology of each of the projects increased the significance of the other. In some ways this was also true of the later Danfa and Narrangwhal projects, although the research objectives of the two projects were not as similar nor their timing quite as coterminous.

Haven, just to finish up the discussion of the D&E Project, I think I need to say a word in summary about its results:

First of all, let me assure the readers that I have a complete copy of the published manuscript (see Annex 10). (Available in the collection of annexes.) And, as a consequence, I need say relatively little about such details in the text of this document. However, some rather general but rather important comments to set the context for the more detailed information in the manuscript are offered as follows:

With respect to methods: It is necessary to point out that, as the study progressed from its early days in 1961-63, it became apparent that we had omitted a highly significant aspect of the possible impact of the Gondar program and its assigned graduates, namely the qualitative and quantitative impact on the functioning of the five health centers to which they had been assigned. In order to get the necessary data for such a determination, we realized we would need at least one additional researcher, and that he would have to be very experienced in such matters and at the same time fully acquainted with the conception and operation of the Gondar curriculum.

Through great good fortune, we attracted a person most ideally suited to handle this task, to wit, the second Director of the College (who followed immediately on Dr. Curtis' tour of duty ending in 1958), Dr. Brooks Ryder, the very same "Brooks" who had recruited me for the post I came to occupy at the time! So, very soon, we found ourselves working together on this fabulous project along with all our colleagues on the D&E, Gondar, and WHO staff at the College.

It was obvious that what we now needed was a functional analysis, a wholly new component of the study design which would help us to get some idea of why the health centers being studied had certain health impacts on the population being served. So Brooks became Field Director of the project, and concentrated on this meticulous analysis of the various aspects of the work of the Health Officer, Community Nurse, and Sanitarian members of the health center staff. This work is all detailed now in Section iv of the attached copy of the published manuscript. (See Annex 10). In the period of time available for observing statistically significant changes in desired parameters of the health center impact, the results were equivocal in all but a few instances. However, the reader should examine the final conclusions and recommendations, and note the team's belief that if these recommendations were to be implemented, many of the problems causing the equivocal results could well be remedied. In this connection, it is important to note that the population served by the system appears to perceive the services rendered as having great value and importance. The advent of the health centers and their well qualified and energetic staff could well form the nucleus for a big improvement in the health conditions in the community served, given the continuing favorable response from the Ministry of Health in terms of strengthening the already much improved organizational development integral with the service system which is clearly in place and following the best principals of public health practice and clinical primary health care.

I really believe that Haven's question about whether we felt there was a great deal to be learned from the work in Ethiopia was a very pertinent one indeed. The answer is a clear and ringing "Yes," and I think it's safe to say that it was a teaching experience that we couldn't have gotten

any other way. It was so important because it was based on the kind of teaching and learning that can only come from practical experience, and cannot be conveyed in a classroom.

Thus, we feel that the recommendations made in the D&E Report more than 30 years ago are still just valid as today as they were then--maybe even more so. And now, they have the added force of having been strengthened by similar findings in many other health delivery systems around the world, including many in "First World" countries. Good examples include the many-faceted struggle in this country to improve the quality of our health delivery system by broadening its accessibility, vastly improving its administration, and emphasizing the most important fundamentals of public health practice--namely preventive and promotive health measures. Also, I think it's vital that the medical profession and all its colleagues in the paramedical and allied health care professions be imbued fundamentally with their responsibility for benefitting the human condition, in all aspects of their technical expertise!

Now, the rest of the program in Ethiopia, I think, confirmed... helped to solidify the belief in my mind and WHO's mind of the importance of two basic ideas: one was the concept of emphasizing, in the developing countries, the absolute requirement for taking the road of decentralized/generalized health services with the emphasis on generalization of the public health program, which means it must include not only public health but curative medicine as well, because you can never offer preventive health programs alone and expect people to use them or accept the idea, because when they are sick they want to be made well, particularly when their children are sick; then, it is absolutely essential to be able to treat them, or at least to be able to offer treatment with a reasonable chance of success. And one of the things we found in the D & E Project was that the most successful component of the mentioned health center services, and the one which set the tone for the subsequent development of that kind of health program, was the reduction in infant mortality which was brought about by the simple means of providing adequate treatment, neonatal, postnatal, pediatrics for children, and follow-up for pregnant mothers. In other words obstetrics, prenatal, natal, and postnatal care, for both the mother and the child, are absolutely essential components of decentralized/generalized health services! Without that you really have no program! So we were able to show quite a noticeable decrease in infant mortality ... almost 19% reduction .. over the three years during which the health center programs were in operation in the three experimental communities. And, due to the prospective nature of our data, the conclusions could be based on life tables - the first, as far as we know, that it was possible to construct in the African diaspora (Tayback, Matthew, Prince, Julius S. "Infant Mortality and Fertility in Five Towns of Ethiopia," Ethiopian Med. J. Vol. iv, No. 1, 1965) Annex 14).

*Q: Was there resistance to these ideas?*

PRINCE: On resistance... it was a strange thing; I never ran across any appreciable opposition to any of the ideas in health service delivery that I proposed in any of the developing countries that I worked in. But where I had the biggest problem was back here in getting money to support them... in the U.S. in terms of the apparent administrative philosophy, strategy of the Agency; it wasn't keyed to the notion, that these expensive and time-consuming and expertise-consuming efforts, were "worth the candle" in terms of "development"! And, from what I have read about the general tendencies of congressional consideration of AID technical assistance programs, it

appears to me that the attitude mentioned is only becoming more prevalent, rather than less so. It may be that this simply reflects attitudes in Congress and this, in turn, may reflect a point of view that has been expressed by more than one Congressman in recent times... "You don't have any constituency in the public realm." Thus, it seems, quite frankly, as far as the "powers that be" are concerned, we do not appear to have reached that "golden door" of "the teachable moment!"

*Q: But weren't there medical professionals in these countries who were somewhat resistant to the decentralized/generalized health care?*

PRINCE: That brings up another point. You are quite right; there were. And of course some of the British trained west African doctors who objected to the concept of the Gondar health officers getting medical degrees were typical of that group, perhaps; not that British training had anything to do with it; it was just their background, perhaps, the feeling that medicine was the be-all-and-cure-all. But one way at least that I got around that problem, and I did so knowingly (based on experience in Chautauqua County), was to eschew taking for granted the idea that the fact, that I wanted to work with the professional communities in these countries to develop these newer concepts, was just talk; it was not just talk - it was straight from my heart and from my beliefs in the way things should be done. And the only way you can achieve that collegial relationship, is to convince your colleagues that your judgment is reasonably sound, you know... based on a solid background in academic and experiential preparation, which would give you the authority to make such judgments, was to join the organizations that seemed to be in decision-making positions, and yet were in some opposition to the idea of really emphasizing the preventive medicine and public health component of the decentralized health services. So, in a word, I had to become part of the professional milieu in which I was operating!

Consequently, when I was in Ethiopia I became a member of the Ethiopian Medical Association and I, in fact, was also appointed as the Chair of the Credentials Committee of the Ministry of Health, after I had been in Ethiopia four or five years. In that position, I did everything I could to promote the development of a cadre of highly qualified physicians, not just public health physicians, but physicians in different specialties... but making sure that those sent to do a job in the rural communities were, in fact, well aware of the facts of decentralized/generalized health services and would know and be reasonably comfortable with it. There were difficult times in deciding who to send to rural hospitals, but because everybody was aware of what was going on and had more or less agreed to it, our committee was able to make sound judgements, and these judgements seemed to be in accordance with the Ministry's; and the leadership followed through on them. Thus, the General Medical Advisory Board of Health never once made a change in any of the Credentials Committee decisions. So I think that speaks for itself; and in Ghana, as you know, I and my UCLA medical associates on the UCLA Danfa Project team were members of the Ghana Medical Society. We also published in the Ghana Medical Journal with our Ghanaian colleagues. (See the bibliography in Annex 15--"Summary Report of the Danfa Project.")

*Q: How about some summary remarks about the Ethiopian experience.*

PRINCE: My conclusions from this extraordinary nine years of experience in Ethiopia were not only very difficult to exaggerate from the professional, medical and scientific point of view, but also from a personal and even emotional prospect. This may have resulted from my association



with the Ethiopians in a social way... in as many ways as possible in terms even of where we chose to live - in the middle of an Ethiopian village in the middle of Addis Ababa and not off in any kind of isolated area with people of other nationalities. I wanted to live where the Ethiopians were at home and in this way they came to my house frequently for meetings and for fun... Picnics, lots of hard-hitting tennis, or whatever. What you learn from this kind of experience is a kind of approach... you have to have a feeling for the humanistic sociocultural aspects of what you are doing as well as the technical aspects of it. In fact, it may relate a lot to what concerns me about the present situation, and the way it's been going on for many years now, the reliance to such a degree on contract personnel who may or may not have this kind of experiential background, of being responsible for actually working with the host country nationals on a cooperative basis; and perhaps such personnel may not be as sensitive as they need to be, to the human relations nuances of working, one might say, on a quasi-guest basis in a developing "host" country (where we are the guests and they are our hosts). And I don't think we have, by any means, heard the last of this potential problem!

*Q: Do you have any sense of the political scene at that time?*

PRINCE: The other thing, of course... yes, I was fully and actually aware of the fact that, for example, there were conflicting elements in the socio-cultural composition of Ethiopia and that the communist influence, at least in Addis Ababa, was very strong in the late '60s and early to middle '70s. And the reason that I was so keenly aware of this was at least partly, because I was under fire during a period of time (in 1966)... actual bullets... not, of course, aimed at me personally but in the whizzing around, my VW [Volkswagon] and me while caught in the area in a cross fire situation between the German Neway group (who were members of the rebelling bodyguard) and the Minister of Defense HQ, just down the street from our little "village." This "battle" arose because the rebel bodyguard troops were trying to overthrow the Emperor while he was visiting Brazil. They attempted a revolution and all this resulted in a firefight right around my home. The bullets were flying so thick that the leaves were falling off the trees as in the autumn here! Fortunately combatants were using fully automatic weapons and, perhaps, didn't know how to use them too well and they were shooting high or, more charitably, they may have purposely avoided targeting our house. Who knows?! But what they were shooting at was the Ministry of Defense which was just down the street from our house. So we took refuge in the half basement (that's all the house was equipped with); it was kind of an old place and because of that it only had about 3-4 feet of dirt around the perimeter (no masonry whatever.). I took the kids down there and we were relatively safe from the firing that was going on. But Nona (my wife) was not at home when the firing started and I was worried stiff about her. Eventually, "Grace à Dieu [French: Thank God]," everything turned out ok, the firefight simmered down, the revolt was overthrown, and the Emperor came back and made sure the Air Force was on his side. The Bodyguard mutineers had to throw down their arms; they couldn't resist any longer and in due course, that was that, at least while I and my family were in the country!

*Q: Did these events and the Emperor's role have any effect on the work you were doing in public health?*

PRINCE: I think that the important thing to remember (and it needs constant re-emphasis) is that in this particular case, the head of state, who might have been considered a dictator, was very

strongly positively oriented towards what we were doing. And we had his strongest support all along the line. Consequently, his being in power was an advantage from a public health point of view rather than a disadvantage. The people who led the local governments were also pretty much in his camp so that, although the dissident elements were noticeable, particularly the Gallas and Gurages (now, I believe, lumped together as "Oromos"), in the southern part of the country, and, of course, the Danakils, (the group who didn't want us to work there). It was not, however, a material obstacle to the accomplishment of our task. Having in fact the support of the central government, in the work we were doing, in the Awrajas (districts) and the Meketel Weredas (subdistricts), was on balance an advantage rather than the other way 'round. Of course, if I had been there another two years when the forces which were opposing the Emperor were able to overthrow him completely, I would have had a different story to tell. I had a taste of that in that I was asked to come back to Ethiopia in 1976... but I'll tell you about that later... In short, this experience showed me that it would have been impossible to do any rural health work in the country at that time. And I believe fully that it is axiomatic that this would also be true anywhere else. Thus, we should not, in my opinion, even attempt such work anywhere in the world unless it can be done in a overtly peaceful and secure environment!

*Q: Did you have any sense of, or impact on you of U.S. policy towards Ethiopia - not just AID, but the Embassy? Did you have anything of that kind of experience?*

PRINCE: That's an excellent question. I was, incidentally, an ex officio (of course) member of the Country Team for quite a period so I was "in" on many of the policy decisions and at least was able to contribute my knowledge of the public health situation in the country to the team's deliberations, insofar as it might relate to U.S. policy development.

*Q: Who was the Ambassador at that time?*

PRINCE: Ed Korry. He was there towards the end of my tour of duty in Ethiopia.

*Q: You were a member of his country team?*

PRINCE: Right (as an "observer" only). He was not a career Ambassador but a correspondent with Look magazine or similar publication when he took the job. He had a broad view of the possibilities for AID and Embassy collaboration. I must say that some of the other Ambassadors were not so clearly inclined in that direction. I didn't have any problems with him at all. In fact, we became good friends, but, I must say, I didn't have much of a connection with the work of the Embassy in previous years. Thus, at the time in question, the relationship was very good and, of course, in any event, we always cooperated with the Embassy whenever we possibly could. Some of the things they asked of the wives of the AID staff, who happened to be in top-level positions of the AID Mission were a bit excessive I thought. But purely from a "logistics", personal point of view, that had nothing to do with the general experience.

*Q: How would you characterize the American/Ethiopian relationships?*

PRINCE: I think that the Embassy had a tendency not to recognize the importance of being part of the country, of being familiar with - and going to work with and listening to - people who were not higher up in the country's government administration. In other words, for example, I

had a difficult time in getting approval for my house which was not in a place where Americans normally lived in Addis Ababa. Instead it was a in normal Ethiopian village situation... in a house built mostly of mud and wattle. I had to get special permission and the Embassy didn't pay the whole cost up front in the usual manner. Instead, I paid the rental, for which I was fully reimbursed, as well as certain other costs, e.g. propane gas for the stove. And so I had the impression that, for various possibly justifiable reasons, Embassy-community relationships were not quite in touch with the real thinking and feelings of the Ethiopian people.

*Q: How would you characterize that thinking and feeling vis-a-vis the United States and the American people?*

PRINCE: I think that the Americans with the obvious exception of the, by now, many ex-Peace Corps volunteers, have not had the opportunity to be in touch with people in the developing countries very much and so the average American voter might have difficulty in understanding the things that drove me to do what I and many other of my colleagues and yourself included, tried our best to do! That's why we have to cultivate the "teachable moment" - so developing country leaders can readily understand what motivated us to come and work with them.

*Q: How did the Ethiopians express themselves about Americans?*

PRINCE: I think they were like the Thais and the American ambassador - the truly "ugly American" - in the book called The Ugly American (Lederer, William J., Burdick, Eugene, 1958). When Americans read that book they seem to get a totally wrong impression - they think the ugly looking Texan farmer was "the ugly American," and the Ambassador was great. But it's just the other way around. The real "ugly American" in the book was the Ambassador! The guy that was truly well thought of was, in fact, the guy that looked ugly; but in his heart and in his feeling towards the people, and in his understanding of their financial and logistic and cultural problems, he was the guy that made the program work. He was the guy that thought of the idea of the bicycle pump... why not? So a lot of the agricultural people who went over there were true ugly Americans in the good sense of the term. You find them all over the place working with the people in the field trying to help them plant row crops; how to till the field so that it won't erode, etc. You find them all over farming communities in the U.S. as well. It was one of the great attractions to any resident in Jamestown, New York. It was in a farming area and all my neighbors were farmers - and what wonderful people!

*Q: You found that the Ethiopians you worked with had a positive view of working with Americans or were they resistant or reserved?*

PRINCE: Let me tell you a little allegory, not an allegory actually; but it could be: Two of the communities we were studying in the D and E Project were Maichew and Quorem in Tigre and Wollo provinces respectively. They were located in relatively mountainous country, about 10,000 feet altitude. Both of them, cold as the dickens in the winter time. We were finishing our study in those two communities during the second round, after the health centers had been studied for about two and a half years. And while we were in Maichew we had these terribly cold nights... water froze in the buckets outside our tents. (We were living in tents then, as we did mostly in the country during the experimental work). The only way you could communicate with

Addis Ababa, (with my office) to keep in touch, to find out if anything required my attention was going on or etc., was by phone at night, because there was only a single copper wire, carrying what telephone communication there was between Maichew and Addis Ababa. So I used to go down to the telephone office which happened to be right on the compound where our tents were pitched - so it was easy for us to bring coffee and cocoa down to the telephone operator who was a very kind lady - and we used to sit and talk with her... I and my D & E staff. She was very nice and friendly and had got my calls through, and, as a result, I got my telephone work done with my administrative chief in Addis, Rod Lehman, one of those indispensable people who keeps things running smoothly.

So we finished there in due course and went on down to Quorem two weeks later to do the control community study; and there again the telephone office was in a separate part of the village... nearby the camp but not in it. It was up on a hill and the cold winds from the north came right down and hit that telephone shack going through the cracks in the timber as though through a sieve; and it was bitter cold inside. So I was shivering and the telephone operator got me Addis Ababa and I wanted to get out of there as soon as possible. He said, "Hang on a second; the operator in Maichew wants to talk with you." Now, a word of explanation - while I was in Maichew I had taken a locum tenens [temporary substitute] for the health officer there, who had to go to Asmara to have his Land Rover repaired. So for a week, I ran the health center for the people of Maichew. I got to meet many of them and I had some pretty sick kids. So I wondered how they got along with my treatment that I had left orders for; it looked as though they were getting along pretty well during the week or two that I was there. Some of them came in for revisits after I left and the children seemed much better, and everybody seemed pleased and happy. So I had a wonderful feeling when I left that health center in Maichew; and that cold night in Quorem when the telephone operator from Maichew came on the line, she said, "Dr. Prince, how are you?" I said, "I'm cold; how are you? She said, "Well, I haven't got your coffee and I miss you all. But what I really wanted to say is that your patients are doing okay. Their parents also came and told me that if I ever had a chance to talk with you that I should say they are all doing very well now with their little ones and they are so appreciative; "and the whole of them send their love!" Dear God, I thought, I'm not cold anymore!

*Q: A very good story and good way to end this part of the interview.*

PRINCE: I'd like to back track a little bit to Ethiopia again. I forgot to mention a couple of major items that I left out or at least that I didn't get to last time. One of them was the project of the International Committee on Nutrition and National Defense, which was started in 1956, two years before I got there. It must have been when you were there, Haven.

*Q: I think that is right as I have a vague recollection of the study.*

PRINCE: What you may not recall is that the original purpose of the study was to determine the nutritional status of military personnel in countries in which a substantial Security Support Project was being implemented as part of the U.S. host country Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) AID assisted Security Support. However, when General deGavre, Commanding Officer (CO) of the MAAG in Ethiopia, introduced the topic to the General of the Ethiopian army (General Mered Mengesha), he apparently got a rather negative response. But when

General deGavre suggested that perhaps a nutritional study of a country-wide population sample might be appropriate, General Mered agreed and offered much of the needed logistic support.

Anyway those things are important but they are not the real reason I mentioned this study which is of considerable importance not only for what happened in Ethiopia but for development of nutrition programs in many countries, possibly even outside of Africa. What happened was they did this nutritional study and because the government had been involved in it right from the beginning, they were very interested in it and when Dr. Schaffer suggested that one of the recommendations should be the establishment of a National Nutrition Advisory Board, the government supported this recommendation fully. The result was that we had, I believe, the first interdisciplinary and interdepartmental National Nutrition Advisory Board in an African country, connected with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, and other ministries as appropriate. Moreover, the Board played an important part in the subsequent development of nutrition activities in Ethiopia and provided the coordinating nexus for a carefully designed research and implementation program to deal with nutrition problems in the country.

Another significant "spinoff" which may have originated with the Board's establishment, was the part it may have played in focusing the interest of the Swedish International Development Agency on establishment of the Children's Nutrition Unit (CNU) in the Princess Tsehai Hospital in Addis Ababa. Thus, it happened at the time (December 1959) that I was appointed a member of the National Nutrition Advisory Board along with Dr. Edgar Mannheimer, the Swedish professor of pediatrics at the mentioned hospital, and a physician, Professor N.K. Gorbadei, Doctor of Medical Sciences, and Director of the "Soviet Red Cross Hospital" which was established in Addis-Ababa in 1947, following upon a medical mission to Ethiopia on the part of the Russian Red Cross Society, in 1897 and the opening of a small hospital in Addis at the same time and with the same sponsors. (This information comes from a document entitled, "Collection of Research Work of the Soviet Red Cross Hospital in Addis Ababa," edited by Professor Gorbadei and published by the hospital in 1962 on the 15th anniversary of its entrance into operation.) Consequently, I was able to arrange for the three members of the Board at that time, namely Dr. Gorbadei, Dr. Mannheimer and myself, to sit down together one day (probably around early December 1959) to discuss what we were going to recommend to the Ministry of Health about making something out of the conclusions of the excellent ICNND study.

We agreed that the Board would absolutely need a secretariat if anything was to come of it and the recommendations of the ICNND study. But, in addition, I said to Dr. Mannheimer, "We (AID and MOH) are going to be carrying out an evaluation of the effectiveness of the health centers in the country and the work of the Gondar graduates. But there isn't going to be much emphasis on the nutrition end of the health center work because we haven't the money to do that; it would require additional laboratory work etc. I wonder whether you might be able to obtain some funding from the Swedish Government to handle that end of it." He said, "Well, I'm going back at Christmas time and I'll see." So, lo and behold, he returned in a few weeks with authorization by the Swedish Government, for the purpose indicated. Since this happened at about the same time as the beginning of the Children's Nutrition Unit, and a major demonstration and evaluation project on nutritional health improvement in Lekemti [Nek'emte] and several other towns, especially the town which became a major center of the associated research in Wollega Province (Ijaje), it is possible that the Swedish International Development Agency

(SIDA) had already decided to carry out a nutritional type of "D&E" Project. In any case, it turned out to be a truly major project with very important results. (Some of the relevant references and a few truncated annexes are included to give some feeling at least for the meticulous work of the Swedish investigators on this project. I can't recall all of the findings. But anyhow I have a lot of the documentation of that study... I think I have it here and I can give it to you, Haven... Here's the one on Teff... "High Content of Iron in Teff and Some Other Crops from Ethiopia as a Result of Soil Contamination," written by one of the Swedish research team and, "The Antibody Pattern In Representative Groups of Ethiopian Village Children".. again from the Children's Nutrition Unit Study. "Anthropometric and Biochemical Study in Children from Five Different Regions of Ethiopia". That was one of the main documents of the study published in the "Journal of Tropical Pediatrics in Environmental Child Health," September 1972.

Anyhow, that is the first thing that I wanted to mention that I hadn't discussed during the earlier session. The second thing is a generic comment. You know I have been talking as if I was the one who has been doing all this stuff. Well, of course, that's nonsense. None of this could have happened without my staff without people like Bob Shannon at first and then Rodney Lehman the two administrative assistants who served on my staff seriatim, Elizabeth Hilborn, the top notch Public Health Nurse, who, had come to us following a long (4 year) ICA posting in Amman, Jordan. I was tipped off in Washington about her availability--a lucky break for me and Ethiopia! Guy Trimble the hospital architect, Joe Hackett the distinguished Pharmacist and Senior PHS Officer Don Johnson the health educator "par excellence" - and the equally experienced Walker Williams. It's hard to mention them all. But I had 25 professional people on my staff by the time I had been there a couple of years and these were all "in situ" in Addis Ababa, Gondar, and elsewhere in Wollo Tigre and Begemidir Provinces and on the D&E Project research team, the Malaria Eradication Project team, etc. - a truly fantastic group of American professionals!

*Q: Were they all government employees?*

PRINCE: No, although the great majority were, assuming you include the nearly 30% of my staff who were employees on PASA (Participating Agency Service Agreement) employees from the U.S. Public Health Service.

They, of course, pitched in and worked like Trojans the whole time they were there. None of this could have happened without them. And I have mentioned publicly at an NCIH [National Council on International Health] conference a couple of years ago when I received an award there for "Service in International Health"... that I owed this honor to the people of the countries that I had been working in... which was, of course, absolutely true, as well as true of all the people on my staff and in the Missions and back here in Washington. You know, I must also never forget that Clayton Curtis was the "spark plug" who played a major part in getting things started for me, once Cliff Pease had gotten me on board, and he helped everywhere along the way. So this is not an account of one person's experience but an account of what happened as a result of what I consider to have been a very constructive and positive effort on the part of AID and associated organizations and agencies, in trying to improve the level of health and the quality of life of people in African countries.

*Q: What about the Ethiopian professionals you worked with? Were there any?*

PRINCE: Of course. Remember I told you that the Minister didn't wish to accept my nomination by the Mission without getting the approval of my vitae. And this was necessary because the Ethiopian Medical Association and, particularly, the Medical Advisory Board of Health insisted that they have that information. So when they received it ...and apparently found everything therein compatible with the responsibilities of the technical professional nature required, my approval from the Ministry of Health was immediately forthcoming - end of problem!

*Q: This Medical Advisory Board was all Ethiopian staff?*

PRINCE: No, it wasn't. Dr. Friede B. Hylander a Swedish Medical specialist in the control of tropical diseases, was the chairman of the Board and most of the members were physicians from other countries, (mostly European) working in hospitals in Addis, or other parts of the Ministry of Health, such as the Anti-Epidemic Service.

*Q: Where did the Ethiopians get their medical training?*

PRINCE: At that time.. none of them in the country, of course, quite a few of them from Beirut; the American University of Beirut (a USAID-assisted university) medical school (This Medical School, although located mostly in Beirut, has a major administrative office in New York City and received its charter from the Board of Regents of the NY State Board of Education some 30 or more years ago. Its graduates, on successfully passing NY State Medical Licensure exams, are then able to practice in NY State and virtually, I presume, anywhere else in the world, once they pay the required licensing fees.). Quite a few from England and, at that time, I don't think any of them had been trained in the United States. I think, the first physician (I am almost sure) in Ethiopia was trained in India. However, altogether I was told, medical and related staff in Ethiopia came from 22 different countries and had in many cases been trained in the first instance in their own countries before coming to Ethiopia .

*Q: How did you find their receptivity to public health concepts?*

PRINCE: It is a very good question. I had a lot of support from the American and other missionary doctors who were also in many instances strongly public health oriented, and I, myself, became a member of the Ethiopian Medical Association (EMA) right away. I thought it was essential for me to be a part of this group and I went to all their meetings. We had lots of talks about this business of decentralized/generalized health services because this was long, long before the idea of primary health care which was almost twenty years down the pike (1978). We had some differences of opinion, I guess, but mostly the other EMA members were quite in agreement with the view that prevention had to be combined with curative services if we were going to solve any of the health problems of the country.

*Q: What was their attitude about paramedics as opposed to fully qualified doctors?*

PRINCE: That is always a problem. Remember I ran into it at the UNCAST meeting in Geneva in 1963 as well. But I also encountered it in Ethiopia; for it is true that, in those days, the medical

profession had a more limited view, than many doctors do now, about the capabilities of paramedical physicians' assistants, technicians, public health workers, etc...

*Q: Among the Ethiopian doctors?*

PRINCE: Yes, even among the Ethiopian doctors. That attitude had to be overcome but, you know, they "came rather quietly," after the first Gondar health officers became doctors because "the Gondar group" proved so well qualified and knew so much about the logistics, administration, planning and clinical and public health generalized health services, aspects of and, particularly, how to handle emergencies in remote locations, a problem common in the Ethiopian diaspora! Not known as "The Land of Cush" for nothing!

*Q: They became doctors or full medical officers?*

PRINCE: Doctors, yes. That was the big argument, "you mustn't give health officers a chance to become doctors because then they will leave their health officer posts." However, we had anticipated that possibility and therefore included the proviso that health officers applying for full medical qualifications had to work four years in the field before they could even apply for medical school matriculation - so this could have served as an automatic restraint to minimize the likelihood of any wholesale "flight" of health officers from their rural assignments.

As it turned out, however, many of them wanted to go back and work in rural areas when they completed their medical training anyway and liked the idea of being Provincial Medical Officers of Health. It was done in a way that gave them considerable status; and they had a chance to work with the local government organizations at a very high level. It was a good way to handle the need, at the time. But, I know very little about what happened afterwards. Thus, I can't tell how sustainable this dedication to the ideal was, in the face of adversity... the Lord only knows...although we know that it did stay in place in Ghana through the upsets there; but the upsets that occurred in Ghana were nothing, I gather, compared to what happened in Ethiopia!

*Q: Well is there anything else on Ethiopia?*

PRINCE: No we are finished with Ethiopia., i.e. "finished" in quotes. I'll never be "finished" with Ethiopia any more than I could be "finished" with New York State! It's in my heart, my mind, and my thoughts forever, I guess. But I need for Ethiopians and you to know how my experience in Ethiopia, I believe, proved so useful in the many assignments I carried out on a TDY basis in other countries while still posted in Ethiopia.

These assignments had to do with attendance at conferences, meetings, etc. (many under international agency auspices, such as UNDP [United Nations Development Program], UNFPA [United Nations Fund for Population Affairs], UNRISD, WHO, ECA, UNICEF, OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development], DAC, and private voluntary agencies - Volags, such as IPPF, Pathfinder, etc, and other bilateral government organizations, e.g.: the ODA (UK), SIDA (Sweden), FAC (France), GTZ (German), US agencies other than USAID, such as the USPHS, and many others.) I also had the privilege of being visiting lecturer



at several universities in the developing countries, such as AUB [American University of Beirut], University of Ghana, and Ibadan University in Nigeria.

I will discuss these matters separately as appropriate and begin right now with mention and a description of some of the TDYs that I was requested to handle while I was still posted in Ethiopia. You may recall that President Johnson signed an amendment to the foreign aid authorization and appropriation bills in 1965 which altered completely the attitude of the United States government toward technical assistance to population programs in developing countries. This was one of the most important events of this type that have occurred, I would say, in the whole history of the foreign aid appropriation legislation. What the President did at that time was to agree that U.S. foreign aid funds could be used to assist countries with the planning and implementation of family planning and related programs (including, to an extent to be determined on a case by case basis, assistance with establishment of maternal and child health projects necessary for the successful implementation of family planning efforts). This was an extraordinarily "advancive" step on the part of the U.S. government (at least in my opinion) and resulted in most extraordinary and extensive involvement of the U.S. foreign aid program in all types of population related activities in developing countries in the years that followed.

As a result of the above turn of events, quite a few of the "extra curricular" activities that I undertook on AID/W orders, were in connection with the beginning efforts, of the Agency in general and the Africa Bureau in particular, to attempt to comply with the requests of a number of African countries which saw a chance to implement a program of the type which had never before been possible, at least from a AID collaborative program point of view.

Compliance with these requests, on my part, was nearly always in the form of TDYs. I will try and deal with these assignments chronologically. Consequently, the earlier episodes of duty performed while I was outside Ethiopia were almost certain not to involve Public Health College graduates, whereas a number of the latter were assigned to work as members of the ICNND team. More detailed listing and appropriate acknowledgments of the service rendered by the very large number of Ethiopians involved in this important study are included in the ICNND report. (Annex 16).

Although this may sound rather routine today, it should be remembered that, almost 40 years ago, this was a most remarkably pioneering effort considering the relatively primitive methodologies available for biochemical investigation of nutritional status in a population, and in the age of McBee cards, manual processing of data and their analysis - in other words, during the "era before the computer!" Consequently, when one reads in the ICNND report of this research, that the observed indicators of Vitamin A in children throughout the country was only of a moderate degree and when one reads of the very much more recent findings of Sommers, et. al., in Indonesia and other developing countries, one is impressed with the understatement of the problem implied in the use of the word "moderate." For now it becomes apparent that such deficiencies in many micronutrients are not, in reality, "moderate" at all but of far reaching significance to the welfare and longevity of the individuals concerned (Sommer, A., Tarwotjo, I., et al, "Increased Mortality in Children with Mild Vitamin A Deficiency" Lancet, 1983; 2:585-8)., (Hussey, Gregory D., M.B., M.Sc., "A randomized Controlled Trial of Vitamin A in Children with Severe Measles," NEMJ July 19, 1990), (Bjornestjo, K.V., Mekonnen, Belew, Zaar, B.,

"Biochemical Study of Advanced Protein Malnutrition in Ethiopia", The Scandinavian Journal of Clinical and Laboratory Investigation. 1966. Vol.18, No.6-Report from the Ethio-Swedish Children's Nutrition Unit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), (Mellbin, Tore and Vahlquist, bo, "The Antibody Pattern in Representative Groups of Ethiopian Village Children" Acta. Paediat. Scand. 57:385-394, 1968). Finally, concerning this Vitamin A nutritional status problem, one needs to be aware, in interpreting the data from this study, that, when it was carried out, probably very few people had even heard of or even conceived of the idea of the question of the availability for metabolic requirements in the human body of the various micronutrients that are required everyday when the intake of these micronutrients may be episodic. In other words the body has some kind of a leveling off mechanism for handling this kind of problem. In the case of Vitamin A in which such "ever normal granary" processes are of the utmost importance, it is now possible to measure this capability in the given individual through a test entitled "relative dose response (RDR)." This depends on the fact that Vitamin A is stored in the liver and in the case of a relatively decent intake of this micronutrient the level of storage of the Vitamin A in the liver is of such an extent that when there is an inadequate intake of fresh Vitamin A on a regular basis, the liver pumps out whatever is necessary to keep the ever normal level going on in the blood whereas the intake may be extremely irregular. Actually, if this is carried too far, the level of storage in the liver goes down to the point where it can no longer fulfill the need to keep things "normal" for the rest of the body. Similarly, the end result of the lack of Vitamin A in the metabolism of tissue that is particularly effected in the human case, namely the conjunctiva of the eye, is called the "conjunctival impression cytology test" whereby a scraping of the conjunctivae, very gently of course, with a sterile swab and depositing this on a glass slide which is then examined after treatment and staining under a microscope, shows the state of the epithelium of the conjunctiva. If there was a deficiency of Vitamin A in that particular patient, the tissue has a characteristically abnormal appearance which can be detected by a microscopic examination of the specimen. As I say, none of these methods were available at the time the study was carried out, so there is quite a bit of discussion in the excellent report of the analysis of the data concerning this problem, not realizing that the problem was fundamentally due to the lack of sufficiently sensitive biochemical methods to determine the degree of the deficiency.

The lack of iron deficiency in the children within the sample studied in this particular case is discussed at some length, and the correct conclusion was reached, using methods actually available at the time because they were mostly observational and certainly did not require any advanced biochemical determinations. This conclusion was that the high iron content of teff, the grain normally consumed by almost the entire Ethiopian population, was caused primarily by the iron deposited on the surface of the grain which is not removed by threshing and which comes from "iron contamination" from the soil in which the grain is grown. This happens to be due to of the particular nature of the soil in Ethiopia which has an unusually high iron content - a fact which I think was thought to be related, perhaps, to the volcanic nature of the terrain. This fact was later substantiated by several of the Swedish researchers, working with the Ethio-Swedish Childrens' Nutrition Unit in Ethiopia, but in which the actual chemistry and analytic work was done at this unit's "home base" at the University of Uppsala in Sweden.

*Q: Nine years in Ethiopia was it?*

PRINCE: Yes indeed, and the time really flew, I suppose to a major extent because I was so busy during the entire period, starting with the conclusion of my public health assignment in New York State and running right through to the completion of my posting in Ethiopia and, as events subsequently proved, pretty much right up to the present!

PRINCE: Yes, right. I was far from finished because I went back to Washington as a result of an urgent cable from Bob Smith who was AFR (Africa Bureau) Assistant Administrator asking the mission to get me there ASAP [as soon as possible]. I was quartered with Clayton Curtis in his office on 19th street and Pennsylvania Avenue for a few months. We had some talks together when I got back. And I told Clayton, you know, I attended this population conference in Kampala just before I left Ethiopia. That convinced me that I had to undertake an immediate sanitary survey in Africa - if anybody needed convincing (because a health officer, when he takes on a new job, always does a "sanitary survey"). Of course, this wasn't a "sanitary survey" but a "population program survey" that I thought was essential for me in order to have a grasp of what the problems were and how the African nations were looking into the situation. Because I thought it would be wrong and even perhaps counterproductive for AID to undertake to try to carry out a program of this kind in African countries (And I knew about the sensitivities, on the issues in Ethiopia first hand) without first having a close look at attitudes, opinions, and possible approaches to the population problem. So I was back in Ethiopia within a few months of the time I had left there, as part of this study. The trip didn't begin in Ethiopia; it began in Senegal and then we went to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, finishing in Tunisia and Morocco.

*Q: This was on population programs?*

PRINCE: Absolutely.

*Q: What year was this?*

PRINCE: The same year I got back .. 1967. I didn't wait for 1968; I went right away within a month to six weeks of my return. I went back to Africa with this particular objective and I was able to get to go with me, Waller Wynne, an excellent demographer from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and Jean Pinder, a public health nurse who was very active in AID at that time. (Her husband was Mission Director in Ghana.) and Harriet Parsons, now Harriet Destler, who was just being "broken in" to the population field in those days. She was an excellent administrator and programmer and travel companion as were Jean and Waller. The four of us went off, as I said, within a month or so of my return and we visited those countries and wrote a report in which we pointed out that there is no way we felt that we could recommend to the Agency that it undertake "pure" population programs in any country in Africa unless we also provided assistance in other substantive areas in that country, and particularly, in maternal and child health and thus a chance to integrate family planning activities in the maternal and child health programs. Of course, there were some second thoughts about that back here, particularly in the Office of Population. (It wasn't called the Office of Population in those days, but I can't remember what it was.) But later on it was the Office of Population and, frankly, that office had qualms about integrated MCH/FP [maternal child health/family planning] programs, at least during the early days of the new program.

*Q: Were there any population programs in Africa at that time?*

PRINCE: The Population Council had engaged in several. They had a program going in Kenya. (The Kenya family planning document was written with their help.) And likewise the family planning progress and development document in Ghana was also written with the help of the Population Council and with the Ford Foundation which was very active in this area. And of course IPPF was already involved in helping to establish family planning clinics in many countries. And the Pathfinder Fund was involved in Ethiopia before anybody else was in the population field. Edna McKinnon represented that organization on a couple of occasions when I was still there. And I remember thinking that this was a very charming lady but she is going to have second thoughts about this before she is here very long. And she did indeed! However, she stuck to it and helped in the organization of a Family Guidance Council which was then the only "spark plug" for family planning activities in the country. Of course, the Press was quite strongly opposed to it--and that all had to be changed--and change gradually came about. And you know in due course, I think there have been major changes in attitudes and opinions about family planning in Ethiopia, although it may have been one of the hardest countries to work in from that point of view, in the early days of the "movement."

*Q: You are now in Washington and your major role is ?*

PRINCE: Yes, the story now is about my experience in Washington right after my return from Ethiopia. My major portfolio was population and family planning. Then the next thing, I said to myself was that I had to have representation on the spot in Africa. "It makes no sense to try to run this show from here." I'm sure you've heard of the Africa Regional Population Office; that was my idea. It got through the Agency and we did set one up in 1970 with Ernie Neal as Director . He had been in the Philippines as the Mission Director and he had been brought back to Washington on complement at the end of his tour of duty there. So we managed to "snare" him for the job of Director of the Regional Population Office. It was located in Lagos. That was the second thing that had to be done.

**RICHARD M. CASHIN**  
**Program Officer, USAID**  
**Addis Ababa (1959-1962)**

*Richard M. Cashin was born in 1924. In addition to serving in Ghana, Mr. Cashin served in Ethiopia and Libya. He was interviewed by Paul D. McCusker on March 4, 1993.*

CASHIN: I was assigned to Ethiopia and went there in 1959. I went out as the program officer in what was then called the Point Four Mission in Addis Ababa.

*Q: By this time were you enthusiastic about the potential of the US AID program? Was it called that at this time?*

CASHIN: It had a variety of names over the years and I have forgotten what the name was in 1959. At one stage it was called the Foreign Operations Administration, the International Cooperation Administration, and, I think the present name has been probably the longest lasting it has ever had. I suspect it is about to be changed.

*Q: There is a recurring effort to change the name but so far it hasn't been so far as I know.*

CASHIN: Well, you know in Ethiopia again the aid program was really quite modest when I went there, something on the order of four or five million dollars a year.

*Q: So the staff was smaller than the Embassy staff?*

CASHIN: Well, you can hire quite a few people for that amount of money. It wasn't a huge program but it was sizeable in its way. But again it was a kind of rental payment for Kagnev Station in Eritrea. So I should by then have begun to realize how strongly driven the aid program was by political/military considerations. Certainly in retrospect it seems to me that I have devoted almost all of my career to one or another aspect of cold war activities...placing humanitarian aid and economic development at the service of these larger national interests.

*Q: That is no doubt true, but on the other hand national interests did happily prevail, but at an enormous cost. Let me ask you from Ethiopia, which again you were in an area that was heavily influenced by Italy...*

CASHIN: It was indeed. However, the Ethiopians had more of a sense of their own identity and of their own history. The Emperor, whatever else you might have said about him, had taken a variety of steps to educate his people in ways that hadn't been available to the Libyans. So there was somebody on the other end of the line in Ethiopia in a way that was not true in Libya when I was there.

**CHARLES E. RUSHING**  
**Deputy Principal Officer**  
**Asmara (1960)**

*Charles E. Rushing was born in Illinois in 1929. He received his bachelor's degree from Augustana College in 1951 and his law degree from Duke University in 1954. He served in the US Army from 1954-1955. His career included positions in Italy, Eritrea, Southern Rhodesia, Congo, Laos, Liberia, Denmark, and Ireland. From 1985-1991 he served as an ambassador to the UN in Geneva. Mr. Rushing was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in July 1996.*

*Q: In 1960, after two years in Naples, you were transferred to East Africa, to Asmara. Why did this happen? Had you asked for a transfer? Was your time up?*

RUSHING: My time was up. Naples was a two-year tour. I thought that Africa was interesting and perhaps would enhance promotion.

Q: *In 1960 it looked that way.*

RUSHING: I was first assigned to Benghazi, I think. Did we have a consulate in Benghazi?

Q: *We had an embassy in Tripoli and, for a while, we had a consular office in Benghazi.*

RUSHING: I think I was assigned to Benghazi first.

Q: *Of course, either one of these assignments, with your Italian, would have made sense.*

RUSHING: Yes. But Benghazi washed out for some reason that I don't remember. Then, I was reassigned to Asmara.

Q: *Why did we have a post in Asmara?*

RUSHING: For a couple of reasons. Asmara was the capital of Eritrea, which was at that time, ruled by Ethiopia. The Italians bought Eritrea from the Ethiopians at the end of the last century. Then, Mussolini used Eritrea as a jumping-off place in his invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. It was also one of the first pieces of Axis territory to be liberated. The Brits entered Asmara from Sudan in '41 or '42. Then, it was under UN trusteeship. Eventually, the Ethiopians, through the United Nations, assumed sovereignty and it was treated as a province. The U.S. military had a large communications base there called Kagnev Station. One interesting thing was that practically all of the message traffic during the Korean War, went from Washington to Asmara and then from Asmara to Korea. Eritrea was a very good place to have for this purpose. The installation and the city were high, at 8,000 feet, and not too far from the equator, where propagation was particularly favorable.

Q: *Tell me a little bit about Asmara as a city. Had it been destroyed or not?*

RUSHING: No. A beautiful city. It looked like something out of the movies. It had sidewalk cafes and a beautiful cathedral, excellent restaurants, there was a golf course, there were outdoor swimming pools. But it got so cold at night that the pool at the consulate would only get up to about 65 during the day and that was cold.

The consulate itself was in a compound. The office building, the principal officer's house, my house as the deputy principal officer, and the consular officer's house were all together. The compound included stables, swimming pool, and a tennis court. I've undoubtedly romanticized this, forgetting the high altitude fatigue (8,000 feet), the relative isolation, difficulty of having meaningful exchanges with local officials, etc.

Q: *Yes, I presume that that made living more pleasant. What did you do? What was your job?*

RUSHING: I was the deputy principal officer, although I'm not sure that that description existed in those days. I was number two, and there was also a consular/administrative officer, a CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] guy and his secretary, a USIA, and an AID [Agency for International Development] officer. There was also a State secretary.

*Q: You covered most fronts that way.*

RUSHING: My activities and reporting that I did tended to be on economic and commercial matters.

*Q: And then the principal officer did most of the political reporting?*

RUSHING: That's right.

*Q: What was your relationship with the embassy in Addis Ababa? Did they supervise you or did you report directly to Washington?*

RUSHING: As I recall, we reported directly to Washington with info to Addis. Because of the sensitivities of our position, we had to deal with Kagnew and the Ethiopians on a daily basis. At the time, Ed Streater was sort of my counterpart in Addis. I happened to be there when he got news of his next assignment. The communicator came in and said, "Mr. Streater, your next assignment is Rome!" Ed replied, "Gee, that's interesting. I had asked for another African assignment." The communicator said, "Well, it's a garble. They spelled it L-O-M-E." Of course, Ed was being assigned to Lome!

*Q: During this period, there was an uprising against the Emperor although it was beaten back. Did that have any effect in Eritrea?*

RUSHING: I'm not sure. I think, in the time I was there (only from January through September of 1960), there were two attempted coups. One of them held up my/our departure from Frankfurt via Ethiopian Airlines to Asmara. I remember a second one, but I don't remember whether that occurred after I had left, or while I was there.

*Q: After these months in Asmara, you were suddenly transferred to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. Tell me about that. How did that come about?*

RUSHING: I met and married an Italian young woman who had been born in Asmara, as had her parents. Her grandparents were among those who came to Eritrea in the early 1900s from Sicily and Puglia. She was working for Aden Airways, which folded a long time ago. It was a part of the overseas operation of BOAC [British Overseas Airways Corporation].

She and I met at the airport when I was meeting the courier. I was duty officer which meant I had to be available 24 hours a day each week-end, every third week. One of the great things about Asmara was that you could hear the airplanes coming in to land from anywhere in town and you could beat them to the airport. So, it was never a question of having to call up and say, "Is it on time?" I was playing tennis and I heard the airplane, so I got into the car in grimy, smelly tennis

clothes and drove out to the airport to meet the courier. Asmara was a big courier station. From Asmara, couriers would go to Aden and Khartoum before stopping at Addis and farther south and ending up in South Africa. Besides the courier, there was this lovely woman there.

*Q: Who is now Mrs. Rushing and she is indeed lovely.*

RUSHING: In those days, as you remember, if you married someone from the country to which you were assigned, you were transferred almost immediately. Of course, also in those days, you had to submit a request to marry a foreign national to the Secretary of State together with your letter of resignation. One or the other would be accepted.

*Q: Happily, it all turned out well.*

RUSHING: Yes, it did. So, therefore, after marrying, we were transferred to Southern Rhodesia, which was quite a change, although still Africa. Another beautiful city. Five thousand feet high, jacaranda trees, sophisticated infrastructure.

**EDWARD WARREN HOLMES**  
**Chief, Political Section**  
**Addis Ababa (1960-1963)**

*Edward Warren Holmes was born in Beverly, Massachusetts in 1923. He received a bachelor's degree from Brown University in 1945 and a master's degree in international law from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1946. Mr. Holmes joined the Foreign Service in 1946. He served in Nicaragua, Venezuela, Israel, South Africa, Ethiopia, Malawi, Ghana, and Washington, DC. Mr. Holmes was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.*

*Q: I'm sure it was. Well, then you left in 1960 and went to Ethiopia.*

HOLMES: Yes, to Addis.

*Q: Where you served until '63.*

HOLMES: Yes, that's right, a three-year tour.

*Q: What were you doing in Addis Ababa?*

HOLMES: I was chief of the Political Section in Addis. That was, of course, under Haile Selassie.

*Q: Could you talk about what the political situation (if you want to call it that) was in Ethiopia in '60 to '63.*



HOLMES: Yes, well, once again, it was a time of much ferment. We didn't get there on our tour, so it was all brand new to me. And, of course, it was one of the two African countries that had been independent for a long time, in which we had embassies for a long time, the other being Liberia. We had an embassy in Liberia, we had an embassy in Addis Ababa, and that's about it except for South Africa. In all these other places, if anything, we had a consulate. We didn't have embassies because there were no independent countries (I'm leaving out the northern littoral, the Mediterranean littoral). So I came into a well-established situation. The emperor was *the* emperor; he ran the country totally.

My particular job there, as a younger political officer, was to establish contacts with opposition elements, of which there were many, *sub rosa*, but particularly the students.

The emperor, in a way, was a very interesting person, a very astute man, or he wouldn't have stayed on the throne over fifty years.

*Q: He started in 1930, and one way or the other...*

HOLMES: There was an interlude, of course, when he was thrown out by the Italians, Mussolini. He took exile in England, and then he was reinstated after the war, and then kept on.

He was a mixture, as are so many people, perhaps. He was an authoritarian, in the old-fashioned sense; but he felt that the people were his children, in a sense. He personally held court; he personally handed out pieces of gold to people who needed help, in his audiences. We went to dinner at his palace, with flaming torches and solid-gold plate, with liveried people, one butler behind each chair, with the best French wines and so forth. That's one side of him, sort of the old-fashioned imperial ruler. He was an emperor, not a king, but an emperor. He felt this and he acted it.

On the other hand, he established the Haile Selassie I University. He financed that totally. Of course, there was no distinction, really, between private purse and government purse there; everything was his and everything was government, it was all intermixed. But he established this over the opposition of many of the nobility; the nobility didn't want this. Like any emperor, even he had political currents within the courtiers around the court. He established this and brought in a lot of young American professors. Inevitably, what came from this was that the young students became radicalized. That is, they wanted change. They were embarrassed by this rigid, 10th-century, 12th-century type of government, as they traveled for their higher degrees and so forth. And I will say, there were some very brilliant young scholars developed in this university, many of whom went to the States or England or France for further degrees. They were embarrassed to realize that they were out of step with the rest of Africa. They became very much pan-Africanists, in a sense, in that they wanted Ethiopia to advance; they wanted a democratic government.

So it was a very interesting period. And the embassy tried hard, frankly, to get Haile Selassie to abdicate, to step down in favor of his son, the crown prince, who had been educated in England, who was a centrist moderate, let's say, who admired the British monarchy, who took as his model the British monarchy, so that he would have been not exactly a figurehead, but he would have

been a constitutional monarch, with a prime minister and elections, real elections, to choose a government under his general suzerainty.

I think we could have prevented the revolution which came, but we were unsuccessful. The emperor, at times, would seem to almost agree with us: Yes, I've been on the throne fifty years. I can spend my declining years in England or Geneva or wherever, it doesn't matter where, or even in Ethiopia, and gracefully step aside. And his son, I think, could have held the situation, with the change.

The emperor didn't change. Just what we predicted. I can remember writing these dispatches, in those days, long dispatches, with analogies, that this was going to lead to... fairly soon. We couldn't tell when or exactly how. It happened just exactly... the young students, the young military officers, the majors downward. Above major, you got into the royalty, into the courtier system, the colonels and so forth. But below that, you had these young officers, many of whom were trained in the United States, or at least had post-graduate training in military at our various institutions, West Point or wherever, and came back. They were in league with the students, you might say.

*Q: ...*

HOLMES: What happened exactly, well, we couldn't figure it. Communism, exactly, but it was worse than we expected.

*Q: ... How did we view Eritrea in those days?*

HOLMES: Well, it had been taken over by the emperor, and I was there when it happened, actually. He simply, by decree... Well, first of all, he undermined it through powers of the purse, let's say. He was a very astute, able, ... politician, I would say, ... and, although you might not agree with his methods, which were sometimes very rough on those who opposed him (that is, the gallows or bullets to get rid of them, which was the old-fashioned way, after all, he was still a man of...), he simply took over Eritrea. And we all thought that would lead to trouble. During the period that I was there, there was a lot of ferment in Eritrea, a lot of ferment, but one assumed that, at least as long as he lasted, he could hold it, hold it by brute force. The army, the army.

*Q: Well, we were sort held... to Kagnaw Station, weren't we, in everything we did?*

HOLMES: Well, of course, Kagnaw was a terribly important thing. On the other hand, we could see that the explosion was coming, that's all, and that's why we urged him to step down. So as to save Kagnaw, in a way, but by changing the type of government. That is, a constitutional monarchy is what we foresaw, which would be stable and still adapt to the demands of the youth.

It was more or less a split on age, the youth in army and in civilians and in professions or wherever versus the older people who were tied up with the government; they were the landholders. You had the three pillars of the society: you had the crown and the nobility; you had the landholders, huge estates; and you had the clergy. The emperor was the head of the church,

the Ethiopian Coptic Church. So these were the three pillars. But outside of that, he had this ferment, the young people, the younger elements. So it was a fascinating period.

*Q: Did you have any dealings with the nobility and the church...*

HOLMES: Yes, yes. Mostly that would be done by the ambassador or the number-two man, the DCM. I was at the political level, sort of more reporting on, in a sense, the opposition.

*Q: The ambassador was...*

HOLMES: Arthur Richards.

*Q: How did you find him? How...*

HOLMES: Well, he was a professional Foreign Service officer, and he did the proper job, he maintained contact with the government. He was not keen on pushing the emperor toward reform, at all. His successor was Ed Korry, who was a very different sort of person. He was a journalist, a non-career man. First of all, he spoke excellent French. Richards did not speak French, so that was awkward. The emperor spoke Amharic or French, with very little English. Korry could speak French, and so could speak more easily with the emperor, and was much more willing to push the emperor for reform, for his own good and for the good of the country. There was this sort of thing, and I think Korry certainly recognized the need for reform, perhaps more than Ambassador Richards did. Ambassador Richards carried on, I guess, a certain tradition of maintaining contact with the government, which was the emperor.

The emperor was everything. The ministers came and went at the emperor's pleasure. They would be exiled overnight, and then they might come back in six months, or disappear, or...

*Q: If you wanted information or something, were you able to go to the Foreign Ministry?*

HOLMES: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. You'd get the official line, of course, from the Foreign Ministry. But there were young officials that one could cultivate. Many of them were wholeheartedly with the opposition, although they had positions. They were younger. And it's almost entirely age, almost; there were exceptions to that, but...

*Q: Were you able to have free discussions, at your home or something like that, with these students...*

HOLMES: Yes. They were quite... But during my three years there, it became noticeably freer, that they were seeking out more and more. It was quite a change. The emperor had a very highly efficient secret service, and knew, I'm sure, that a lot of this was going on. And people from time to time, if they overstepped the boundary, might disappear or be arrested, which was fairly common. Sometimes they'd be held for two weeks, or six weeks, and then back into their jobs again. First of all, they would have to go before the emperor personally, to be chastised by him. If he felt their attitude was proper, then he would let them go back into their position as director

general of the XYZ Agriculture Department or whatever. It was a personalized type of old-fashioned system. That's all I can say, it was old fashioned.

He was an outstandingly able guy, but he..., I think, couldn't quite appreciate the modern world and the demand for... constitutional government. They wanted real elections; they wanted to be able to vote; they wanted a parliament. There was a fake parliament, there were fake elections, but they wanted the real thing. And I don't think he quite understood the... well, obviously, he didn't, as we see what happened to him. He was brutally killed.

*Q: What about our military there, our attachés and all this? How did you feel? Were they a strong force for don't rock the boat type of thing?*

HOLMES: Well, for Africa, we had a very large military-assistance program. This, in a sense, was quid pro quo for Kagnev Station; it was ransom. It was never called that, of course, but it was clear that... And there was a lot of training. So our military people were very much involved. We had an MAP, a Military Assistance Program, large, over a hundred people, which is large for that... And we did a lot of training, a lot of equipment, trained the air force, brought in F-16s or whatever. F-14s or something.

*Q: I think they were F-86s.*

HOLMES: Well, I'm not a military person. There were always arguments, and the emperor always wanted more. And our main approach was trying to keep it within some reasonable bounds. The annual battle was the military-assistance budget, which was very, very important. And we always had to balance what we could get by with and keep Kagnev. The emperor, of course, would keep coming over and meeting with presidents. Presidents loved to receive the emperor; it was sort of fun, I think, and the emperor loved to get into the White House. Both sides felt it was sort of fun, I think, so he almost had an annual visit.

*Q: Yes...*

HOLMES: I guess, although we're a republic, I think we like kings.

*Q: Yes, we do.*

HOLMES: So he had entrée to the White House. And then, of course, once he came, there was always how to whittle down the demands for another twenty million dollars for God knows what, more tanks and more of this and that.

*Q: Were we at all concerned at that time, the Political Section looking at this, about what the effect might be of...*

HOLMES: Oh, sure, that was very much in our cognizance, that situation, and we devoted an awful lot of energy to trying to keep the border quiet, both our embassy in Mogadishu and... We worked together, in a way, on these things. We tried to have a restraining influence. And I think we... Incidents were constant, and some fighting every now and then was a little more than

incidents, but on the whole, that situation didn't blow up, at least, which took a lot of work on both sides to damp it down.

**WILLIAM WHITE**  
**Peace Corps**  
**Ethiopia (1962-1963)**

*William White was born in Ohio in 1931. He graduated from Ohio State University in 1952 and promptly served in the US Army. After working in the private sector, White joined the Peace Corps in 1962. White worked for USAID in the Philippine before leaving to work for the Model Cities Administration, on the US Commission on Civil Rights, and eventually return to the Peace Corps. White began work for USAID again in 1980 as Director of the Office of International Training. He continued on to work in West Africa Affairs and overseas in Pakistan. White was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1996.*

WHITE: This was in 1962. We were going to set up a secondary education program and a community development program for Ethiopia. It was necessary to complete the agreements to go into the various provinces in the country, to meet the provincial governors and the education officers, and to actually work out the details about the numbers of volunteers that were going to be assigned there. So it fell to one other person and myself to go out and complete these arrangements. The idea was that we were going to come back to Washington and go through the training at Georgetown with the volunteers, who at that time were being recruited. So we did return and entered into the training program, and I believe it was the second day that we were advised that things were becoming unglued in Ethiopia. So we had to go back out there. As a consequence, we missed out on the training, which would have been a unique experience, staff and volunteers training together. I think it would have been the first time the Peace Corps had done that.

*Q: Was Harris Wofford involved in this or had he become the director yet?*

WHITE: Yes he was involved, but he stayed behind in Washington. He hadn't yet wound up all of his affairs at the White House. So my colleague, Ed Corboy, and I went back out to Ethiopia to tie things back up again and await the arrival of the volunteers.

*Q: Were the problems with the Ethiopian government?*

WHITE: We had a few problems, but they weren't insurmountable. In many cases they were related to internal political quarrels, and there were some situations involving bruised egos that had to be resolved.

*Q: Was the idea of the Peace Corps well accepted or was there resistance to having outsiders come in?*

WHITE: It appeared that it was fairly well accepted and there was minimal resistance. I think that probably the Provincial Education Officers were the most fearful because of perceived threats to their status, and whether or not there would be a diminution of their responsibilities in their respective provinces. The Provincial Governors appeared to be very cooperative for the most part. They seemed to be the key to getting the program operational in those provinces. Eventually, the Provincial Education Officers, even those who had been reluctant at first, became very cooperative once they saw this was going to benefit not only the educational programs in their provinces, but was going to benefit them as well. So we ended up with 288 secondary and middle school teachers in Ethiopia. They arrived in August of 1962. We also brought in two physicians who were the forerunner of a community health program which started at a later time. Overall it was very successful.

*Q: Who were the physicians?*

WHITE: I can't remember their names now. Two young fellows who were very enthusiastic and did an excellent job. We also had a Peace Corps physician on our staff, Dr. Ed Cross, who later, incidentally, became the U.S. Surgeon General.

*Q: He worked for AID too didn't he?*

WHITE: Yes, he certainly did. Our first deputy was Bascom Story who was an AID employee, who moved to the Peace Corps right there in Ethiopia and worked with us. He subsequently went on to Nigeria. The second person who came in as deputy was Chet Carter, who later became Deputy Chief of Protocol for Lyndon Johnson. So we had some very outstanding people who worked with us there in Ethiopia. It was quite a significant program.

*Q: What were your responsibilities? You said you had functional and area responsibilities.*

WHITE: My responsibilities initially covered the eastern part of the country. Ultimately, I became the liaison officer to the Ministry of Education, and had the responsibility of working very closely with the Director General for Secondary Education, making certain that the programs were functioning, insuring that problems that developed were resolved. I still was responsible for meeting with individual volunteers to help them through their trials and tribulations.

*Q: What was the name of the Director General at that time?*

WHITE: Mary Tadesse was the Director General, a very effective, formidable woman.

*Q: Who was the vice minister at that time?*

WHITE: The Emperor carried the portfolio for the Ministry of Education.

*Q: And then was there a vice minister in charge or not?*

WHITE: Not in education. The Director General was the person in charge as I recall. Now there was a Dr. Mengesha. I'm just trying to remember whether he functioned as a quasi vice minister, but my memory now is a little hazy.

*Q: Very well. This was a very significant program. How did it work? How were the volunteers able to proceed? Were they tightly bound by curriculum or did they have latitude? Were there issues that you were concerned with?*

WHITE: They had a good deal of latitude in their work. They were also encouraged to engage in other activities outside of the classroom. In fact another rather outstanding person who was there was Paul Tsongas, who was a volunteer at that time. As I recall, Paul was very active along with several other volunteers in his community in initiating the construction of a hostel for Ethiopian students who came from very remote rural areas in order to permit them to stay in the area adjacent to the school so they didn't have to make that long trek to school every day. We had two retired secondary school teachers, Beulah Bartlett and Blythe Monroe. At that time they were in their sixties and, as I say, had retired from the public schools in the United States. They were probably two of the most active and effective volunteers we had in Ethiopia. They started a library in their province, tutored students after classes, and engaged in a number of community activities. They were just very enthusiastic and served as role models for the Ethiopian teachers in the school where they were teaching.

*Q: Were there volunteers all over the country?*

WHITE: Yes, they were all over the country. North, south, east, and west.

*Q: What did they teach? Mostly English?*

WHITE: They taught the core subjects. English, math, science, geography, as well as business and vocational... virtually all the courses.

*Q: This was at the secondary level?*

WHITE: At the secondary level and at the middle school level. We had some volunteers assigned to middle schools.

*Q: Middle school was what year?*

WHITE: Seventh and eighth grades. Nine through twelve were at the high school level, and we had some volunteers assigned to the technical schools as well.

*Q: Did you travel around the country at all?*

WHITE: Yes. I spent a considerable amount of time on the road, so I saw a good deal of Ethiopia. Even today when I meet Ethiopians here in the United States, and we talk about the country, and I mention some of the places I have been, they look at me and say, "I've never been to those places."

*Q: How effective do you think the teaching was? How do you judge this?*

WHITE: You know, Haven, that's always a difficult question to answer. I remember during that period of time Robert McNamara was Secretary of Defense and he instituted the PPS-- what was that evaluation system-- I think it was program planning budgeting system. The essence of it was to quantify what you have been doing in terms of determining whether or not it was effective. The problem we had in applying that kind of a process to what was going on in Ethiopia, and other countries where you had educational programs, was that you can quantify the number of hours that have been taught by the volunteers, the number of textbooks that were introduced into the system and the number of students that were in the classrooms. However, what the students themselves were deriving from this experience would be nearly impossible to quantify. I think that the only way you can determine what kind of an effect you have been having is years later when some of the students you have been teaching, or have been taught by some of your volunteers, emerge in positions of responsibility in their governments or in the private sector. Then you can begin to see whether or not some of the values that have been imparted to them during their formative years are being manifested in the decisions they are making in their respective positions. In that respect, I would say the jury is still out. Certainly there were people who found their way in to positions of responsibility, but because of the turmoil in that country, many of those people had to leave or unfortunately lost their lives. One might say that the fact that they lost their lives or had to leave, is an indication that their ideas, their methodologies were effective and were anathema to the incoming revolutionary regime. So in that sense they were effective, maybe too effective.

*Q: How would you judge the impact of the volunteers? It is often said that the Peace Corps does more for the volunteers than it does for the country. Do you share that statement?*

WHITE: I would think so. All of us, volunteers and staff included, derived more than we gave. I think that's true in a very general sense in terms of when you are contributing to something, when you are giving, you receive more than what you give. That was my perception there in Ethiopia. Some of the volunteers, many of them moved on to positions of greater responsibility in their respective lives here in the United States and abroad. Many of them ended up in the Foreign Service; many in the private sector. I think the experience they had as Peace Corps volunteers in Ethiopia was a very significant part of their development. I think that we all without exception derived more than we gave.

*Q: Were there any issues of particular significance that the office had to deal with, that you had to deal with in relations with the government or the volunteers that stood out in your memory?*

WHITE: I guess the underlying issue was a feeling certainly on the part of the Ministry of Education that we were probably pushing things along too fast. There was some tension between the Ministry of Education and the Peace Corps with respect to what was happening in the secondary schools. This did not mean they didn't like what was going on or didn't want us there; they very much wanted the Peace Corps in the country. Because you had A: the clash of cultures, and B: the tendency as part of that clash, the tendency of westerners, especially Americans, to want to move fast and to want not to waste time.



*Q: Change things, improve things?*

WHITE: Exactly! There was a very frequent expression, "We're agents of change" and it was used in those days. Occasionally that concept rubbed people the wrong way so that there were, occasionally, problems that had to be resolved, but I don't recall that there were any major problems.

*Q: Were the volunteers involved in some development areas like curriculum development or program development or were you just teaching the established curriculum?*

WHITE: That's right. There was curriculum development, and that of course was a point of friction within the schools.

*Q: But not in all countries were the Peace Corps allowed to do anything but teach the syllabus. You had more latitude there.*

WHITE: That's right there was more latitude. The Emperor at that time was very much aware that they had to move ahead. The country had stagnated developmentally, and there was a very definite feeling emanating from the palace at that time to move ahead. As a consequence, there was encouragement for the Peace Corps to come and have this latitude. At the same time there was this reluctance, as I have indicated, particularly among the Provincial Education Officers to see this evolve. But again, for the most part, the Provincial Education Officers saw the benefits that could be obtained by this and also saw that their status would be enhanced with the success of the program in their provinces.

*Q: You mentioned the Emperor. Did you meet the Emperor?*

WHITE: Yes I did. My children were very young. I had two sons and a daughter. My daughter was 2 ½ years of age. Shortly after the volunteers arrived in Ethiopia, the Emperor, Haile Selassie, had a reception at his palace for the entire Peace Corps, and prior to going there we coached our children as to how to behave towards an Emperor. They had already begun in that short period of time to learn Amharic. My daughter who, of course, was in her own little world, was coached to curtsy when she met the Emperor and to speak to him in Amharic. We practiced this several times and it all seemed to go quite well until we got to the palace. We were standing in line waiting for our turn to greet the Emperor. Since there were people in front of us and my daughter was very small, she could not see what was happening until suddenly she was in front of the Emperor, who was seated on his throne. And, at that moment, she saw that he had two tiny dogs sitting at his feet on pillows, which immediately attracted her attention. The Emperor extended his hand to my daughter and she completely ignored him and started petting one of the dogs. He said to her, "I see you like my dogs." She said, "Yes" and kept right on petting. That just sort of broke up the entire reception. He just chuckled which indicated a very human side of the Emperor.

*Q: Do you have any views of the Emperor; did you meet with him on any subjects?*

WHITE: No, they were strictly ceremonial. We met several times with him, but each time it was strictly a ceremonial meeting. There were no official, substantive discussions with him at least at our level.

*Q: But obviously he was very supportive of the Peace Corps and a prime mover in having it happen.*

WHITE: Absolutely. It was at his request that we were there. The major problem that he was creating by having the Peace Corps there was that the program caused a greater thirst for higher education on the part of the students. Many of them did go abroad to obtain higher education. When they returned, the economy wasn't expanding rapidly enough to absorb them and that was the problem he was creating by what he was doing. But, he was aware of that.

*Q: What about relations with AID? They had a big program there.*

WHITE: They had a very big program, and we had excellent relations with AID which were enhanced by Bascom Story's presence for the first part as the deputy.

*Q: What was his position?*

WHITE: He had been the education officer for AID and was very well plugged in to the system so that it facilitated the entrance of the Peace Corps into that country in the educational program. Bascom knew virtually all the people in the Ethiopian education hierarchy, who were important and who had influence, and he was very helpful in getting that program started

*Q: What kinds of things did you collaborate on?*

WHITE: With AID? Well they provided primarily logistics support to us in the beginning stages. They provided some educational materials. The Peace Corps brought in footlockers of texts and reading materials that the volunteers had that they could distribute to their students. Of course AID was helpful to us in the distribution of those materials around the country.

*Q: And in the curriculum development work was there any collaboration on that?*

WHITE: I don't recall that there was.

*Q: Was there a public health section to the Peace Corps program?*

WHITE: That came later and the two doctors who were there were beginning to lay the ground work for it, making contacts through the Ministry of Health.

*Q: Were there any other dimensions of the Peace Corps program?*

WHITE: At that time there were not.

*Q: And the community development work?*

WHITE: That had not started yet.

*Q: You were there for what period?*

WHITE: I was there from the inception of the program in '62 to '63 and returned to Washington as the program officer for East Africa.

*Q: How did you find your relationship in Ethiopia? What kinds of people did you find in social and working situations?*

WHITE: I found Ethiopians to be very bright and sensitive people, very sensitive, and for the most part willing to incorporate new ideas into what they were trying to do there in the country. I found the culture fascinating. I've been back to Ethiopia on several occasions, and have Ethiopian friends here in the United States. I found it to be a very positive experience relating with them.

**SHELDON VANCE**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Addis Ababa (1962-1966)**

*Ambassador Sheldon Vance entered the Foreign Service in 1942 after graduating from Harvard Law School. His assignments included positions in Washington, DC, the Congo, Ethiopia, and an ambassadorship to Zaire. Ambassador Vance was interviewed by Ambassador Arthur Tienken in 1989.*

*Q: Mr. Ambassador, I now would like to get to your time in Ethiopia, which was from 1962 to 1966, where you were deputy chief of mission. That was a period of time when Ethiopia was a very different Ethiopia in many ways from what it is today. Haile Selassie was still emperor. The old feudal system of Ethiopia was still in pretty much full flower, much of which has disappeared now since the revolution of 1974. I wonder if you could tell us your impressions of Ethiopia at the time and your relations, if any, or at least your impressions of Haile Selassie.*

VANCE: I think that the period of time that we were in Ethiopia is one of the most difficult for me to analyze as to what did we do wrong or what went wrong. Shortly after we left, it fell apart and was taken over by the disaster known as the derg.

I was in Ethiopia the four years. As I said earlier, I was chargé d'affaires between ambassadors at the beginning, so at the beginning I got to know the emperor on a personal basis. Because I speak French and he spoke French and Amharic, period, full stop with him--he spoke almost no English--I was able to communicate and talk to him directly without an interpreter, which most Americans are not able to do if they didn't know French.

He had decided, after he was returned to his country by the British after the war, that he would have to make strenuous efforts to modernize his country, and he ruled, among other things, that education for the future would be in English, not in Amharic, so that his educated people could communicate with the rest of the world more easily.

He said also that public education would be pressed. Before the Italian occupation, education had been entirely in the hands of the Coptic Church, and it was said that there were many Coptic Church teachers who believed still that the earth was flat and other wonderful bits of intellectualism of that nature. As I look back on my four years in Ethiopia, that man dragged his country kicking and screaming out of the cave age.

What happened? He regarded the United States as his greatest friend, and we supplied his prime minister with a legal advisor. The second one was there when we were there, Donald Parradis. We helped them draft a modern constitution which envisaged a Parliament with two houses, which would have a general election, have public participation in the elections. The emperor would appoint a prime minister, there would be a Cabinet, and it all looked like Thomas Jefferson had been at work.

However, looking back on it, the emperor, I should add, although very friendly to me personally and to close foreign friends, people he regarded as close friends, he really was God in the eyes of his people. I've been standing with him and have seen reasonably senior Ethiopians come up and prostrate themselves flat on the floor in front of him.

Although he was 70 years old when we arrived, I certainly can attest to his good health and strenuous physical capacities, because he would frequently go on inspection tours of this, that, and the other thing, and the diplomatic corps would be invited. I was very considerably younger than he, but I would get out of breath trying to keep up with him at that altitude. He just practically ran, almost a dog trot, as he conducted these inspections. There was certainly nothing senile about him during my period. He was so interested in education and expanding the public schools, that he leapt at the possibility of having a large Peace Corps contingency. We sent 600 Peace Corps volunteers to Ethiopia, which was at the very beginning of the Peace Corps, and it practically doubled the faculty of the secondary schools in Ethiopia. So we should not be astonished that we instilled a lot of ideas and ideals that were very strange to then feudal Ethiopia in the youth that was growing up at the time. We helped him open Haile Selassie University, funded it, supplied teachers, and started turning out these highly educated young people.

We did not realize how really, totally, 1000% feudal the old man was. He simply was not about to delegate anything to anybody. We used to joke that he decided whether to put a 25-cent stamp on any letter that left the government, or a 50-cent stamp. His unfortunate son kept on being absolutely nothing but Crown Prince on and on and on, until he finally had a nervous breakdown and became a vegetable. He went to Switzerland.

I'm told that finally what happened was the emperor became senile and lost control of what was happening. I can't understand it. What happened was, he lived too long. If he had tried to use the educated, trained youth and the structure in the government. We talked him into land control and

land reform, brought in airplanes to map the country so that people would know who owned what, rather than just the dukes and their equivalents owning everything in sight from the mountaintop. It all fell apart. I think it all fell apart because he lived too long, and people got fed up with the crap. It was just very sad to look back at that period.

We were able to drive everywhere in Ethiopia. They had an agricultural advisory structure that was supported by an agricultural college and high school that we'd founded, that had county agents helping the farmers throughout Ethiopia. This was the country that was the breadbasket of the Middle East, and now everybody's starving to death. It's just an extremely sad view.

*Q: Later it became fashionable to echo what you've just been saying, that the emperor was no longer able to keep up with developments toward modernization, if that's the right word, in Ethiopia. That failure was one of the direct causes of the revolution that took place in 1974. Another was supposedly his failure to recognize the seriousness of the famine that had occurred just before that.*

*Were you able to recognize in the period of time that you were there, 1962 to 1966, the trend that would develop later on, or did that come later?*

VANCE: I think it came later, because we kept being asked by Washington to report on how we would appraise the possibility of a revolution, and there didn't appear to be any signs of one coming up. I think we probably weren't wise enough to see the slippage of the training or the creation of all these hopeful young people. We saw the form of government that they had, but it was never used. We should have seen that this was headed for a dust-up, but we didn't. I think it started after that.

There had been a coup, but it was an in-house, in-palace coup. The bodyguard and police chiefs were, regrettably, the emperor's brothers, and the two of them pulled off a coup while he was traveling aboard. But that was an in-house coup within the feudal system, so that there were no signs that we detected.

*Q: There was a considerable American presence in Ethiopia while you were there, specifically in Asmara, where we maintained a fair-sized base. Is that fair enough?*

VANCE: Yes, absolutely, and we had a very large MAAG, military advisory group, a large AID mission, a large aid program. As I indicated earlier, we had an enormous Peace Corps contingent and advisors in the government of Ethiopia. An American advisor was in the office of the prime minister, with an open door to the emperor.

I remember something that should have tipped me off, I guess, during one of my early calls on him when I was chargé after I arrived. We used to get telegrams from Washington that would start out, "You will make clear to HIM (His Imperial Majesty): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5." I went over to deliver one of those. Of course, I tried to put it forward more diplomatically.

His Majesty interrupted me after I got started, and he said, "I want to assure you that we will always value highly the advice of our great friends, the Americans. But Mr. Chargé (this was all in French), would you mind telling me when you were born?"

I said, "I was born, Your Majesty, January 18, 1917."

"Oh," said His Majesty, "that's just about a year after I became regent. What were you saying, Mr. Chargé?" (Laughs) In other words, "Drop dead. You guys don't know what you're talking about."

*Q: Ethiopia, of course, was the one African nation that had not ever really been colonized. The Italians tried to do it at the end of the 19th century. They really only occupied it in the late thirties. There were some evidences of Italian presence there, particularly the roads the Italians had created. Was there any other foreign presence there of consequence while you were there?*

VANCE: No, I don't think so, not of significance. The Italian roads were certainly evident, the great road building of the descendants of Rome. We helped the Ethiopians maintain them by bringing advisors from our highway departments, and we enlarged road systems and helped maintain the ones in existence. As I indicated earlier, I drove over most of the corner of Ethiopia during that four years. The main road system was made open at every corner.

We had even American Protestant missionaries, strangely enough, in a country headed by the emperor, who was the defender of the faith of the Coptic Church. There were probably other national missionaries. There was a major one in southwestern Ethiopia whose followers extended over the border into southern Sudan, and this caused a certain amount of problems.

*Q: Just before your arrival in 1962, a year or so, the beginnings of the Eritrean separatist movement had taken place, a movement that's still going on. Was that an issue between us and the emperor at the time?*

VANCE: No. We were involved from the very beginning, from the early stirrings of that Eritrean movement, because one of our mapping planes made a forced landing out in the boondocks of Eritrea, and the crew was seized. We had quite a long negotiation getting them released. It was a little awkward because we were negotiating with the ELF and the emperor.

*Q: There was another province that also became concerned with separatism, namely Tigre. Perhaps you'd like to comment on that.*

VANCE: Yes. I indicated earlier that we would periodically be questioned by Washington about the prospect of a rebellion. I had become personally friendly with the then chief of staff of the Ethiopian Government, General Yassou. One night after a small party at our house, at which General Yassou had been present, he stayed on for a nightcap. I asked him about it. I said, "From where you sit, General, do you see any threats of rebellion?" He referred to some rather minor flare-ups at the time with the Eritreans, but he said, "That's about all."

Laughingly, I said, "General, if you see a threat coming along that you think is likely to succeed, my personal advice to you would be join it and lead it, because if there's going to be one that succeeds, we might have someone like you heading it." He patted his big tummy and laughed back at me and said, "Look, Mr. Vance, I have no intention of undertaking anything as physically strenuous as that." Well, let me remind you that General Yassou is the deputy leader of the Eritrean rebellion going on right now. He certainly doesn't have a big tummy at this point.

The Tigrenian rebellion was headed by President Ras Tafari, who is the head of the Tigre House in the Imperial Dynasty. The Imperial, in Ethiopian history, had been in competition with the House that Haile Selassie belonged to. However, in the time we had come along, peace had been restored. They named the governor general of Tigre, he was given one of the emperor's granddaughters, Princess Aida, as his wife. We visited them in the capital of Tigre with Sam and Mary Gammon, when Sam was consul general in Asmara. Tigre was part of the Asmara consulate district.

I have seen him twice here in Washington in the last year or so, because he and his son were invited by Mary and Sam Gammon, and just six of us went to the Gammon apartment. Sam suggested that if I had any slides of that visit, I should bring them. I brought them and our projector, then showed him and his son slides of their home in the great old days. Aida had been arrested and incarcerated with her mother and other female members of the royal house for years at that point, so these pictures brought tears.

Since then, I've been told and have seen in the newspaper that the royal ladies have been released from prison. But the second time I saw him was just about two or three weeks ago. I asked him where Aida was, and he said, "I don't know. They were released, and I haven't heard any more about it."

I asked him the first time whether he and the ELF were coordinating their efforts of rebellion, and he said, "Yes, we were. I told the ELF I would be prepared to work out appropriate arrangements, if we won."

*Q: Ethiopia has been known as one of the poorest countries in the world in such things as gross national product or average per capita gross national product, this despite the relative affluence of the royal family and the upper class. Since you were able to travel virtually anywhere you wished to go in Ethiopia, was this apparent?*

VANCE: All of the villages, of course, were rather primitive, but nowhere did we sense a lack of adequate food. It was an agricultural country. They seemed to be sustaining a subsistence level, better than a subsistence level, of life. In big cities, there were beggars all over the place, but abject poverty is too strong a word to describe most of what we saw. Certainly no villages were prosperous, but they seemed to be getting along.

*Q: Famine was reportedly one of the things that led to the revolution in 1974, more specifically the fact that Haile Selassie and his government were either unwilling or unable to recognize the seriousness of the famine that had taken place just before. Yet our own aid mission had, for some years, urged him to concentrate on agricultural matters. In terms of what you were saying*

*earlier about Haile Selassie, I wonder whether that made sense, in the sense that he was not able to recognize that this was going to be a problem, even though famine had been endemic in Ethiopia for centuries.*

VANCE: Famine had been endemic due to climatic up and downs, particularly in the north and west. But I've heard the story that there was this famine in central Ethiopia, and he should certainly have noted that and done something about it, and could have, because he had coped with it earlier in such outbreaks. I think he was beginning to lose touch because he was too old, I guess.

*Q: You served in Ethiopia as DCM for essentially non-career ambassadors. How did you find your relationship with them?*

VANCE: My first ambassador lasted only two weeks, and he was a career man. Then the only other one was Korry, who was not career. Korry was of a journalistic background. Korry tended to leave the running of the embassy and the mission as a whole to me, except for the most important political issues, dealing with the emperor and the prime minister. That he very jealously kept to himself. We got along reasonably well. Korry's ego is pretty enormous, and he did not think that anybody else could be very bright or very capable, but he was willing to leave the sort of nuts-and-bolts management of the mission to me. Rather to my surprise, when I left, I learned that he had raved about me in his efficiency reports, which led to my being considered as having an ambassador assignment.

He then was assigned to Chile, where he sort of went off his rocker, because he was just obsessed with demonstrating that he had no part of overthrowing Allende Gossens. He just spent the rest of his life trying to prove that and became almost unbalanced.

*Q: He was the same Korry, was he not, who was later identified, or maybe during your period, with a rather elaborate thesis on aid?*

VANCE: Oh, yes. That was during my time. He was called back to head up the committee that studied how we should reorganize our aid programs in Africa, and he came up with the idea that there were 50-odd independent countries, and there was a great waste of administrative talent and money running a separate aid mission in each one of these, and a separate aid mission should be continued only for bigger countries, and the smaller ones should have regional programs.

When I was selected to go to Chad as ambassador, which was one of the smaller ones and no longer had an aid mission, a friend of mine asked me how I expected to be successful dealing with the Chadian Government when I didn't have an aid program. I said, "Well, if an American ambassador could not get the attention of his chief of state with or without an aid program, he ought to be sent back to kindergarten." Anyway, it was an interesting approach. I think there was some merit, perhaps, to it.

*Q: I take it from your remarks that living was reasonably comfortable in Ethiopia during the time you were there.*



VANCE: Very. We had a very pleasant house, which I think you're familiar with. We had a good staff of servants, and we had a very interesting and able group of colleagues. The Ethiopians were friendly, and we enjoyed that period.

*Q: I'm sure now, however, there must be an element of sadness with regard to your time in Ethiopia, because surely some of the people with whom you had contact or associated with among the Ethiopians . . .*

VANCE: Are dead.

*Q: Are either dead as a result of the revolution or in exile.*

VANCE: In exile. Exactly. It is very sad. We run into from time to time our friends the Rosenfelds. Chris Rosenfeld was the PAO when we were there. He was instrumental in organizing an association known as Friends of Ethiopia, and everybody reminisces about the great old days and the horrors that have befallen the country now. It is sad.

**OWEN CYLKE**  
**Peace Corps Volunteer**  
**Addis Ababa (1963-1965)**

*Mr. Cylke was born and raised in New Jersey and educated at Yale University. After a tour with the Peace Corps in Ethiopia, he joined USAID in 1966 and served several years in Washington, where he dealt with African matters. In 1968 he was posted to Nairobi, the first of his overseas posts, which include Kabul, Cairo and New Delhi. In all, he dealt with environmental and development matters with USAID. Following retirement Mr. Cylke continued work in his field, including holding the Presidency of the Association of Big Eight Universities, which also dealt with developmental and environmental matters in the developing world. Mr. Cylke was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1996.*

CYLKE: Yes, so I was at Yale College in '60 and law school in 1963. I don't recall a course in international development at that time, even though there may have been one. That was the beginning of the discipline, so I'm not at all certain. And international development wasn't much on my brain. I think two things were on my brain. One was how to get out of New Haven. Secondly, John Kennedy was elected President and so I was attracted to that. I can remember strictly the day that Sergeant Shriver came to Yale Law School and made a speech. I can't say I was seized with fervor, but I was taken with the whole notion and I joined the Peace Corps. That was 1963. We were the second group to go to Ethiopia. I was assigned to the law school. I really struck my interest in development there.

*Q: In Addis Ababa?*

CYLKE: Yes, in Addis Ababa, rather than anything that ever happened to me in New Haven.

*Q: Why was Peace Corps a sudden interest?*

CYLKE: The only thing I can say is that my interests were consistent. I majored in economics but was interested in government. My role model as a child was an uncle who had served in federal government and was a lawyer. I was fascinated by politics from the earliest time. I remember, I have a letter from Adlai Stevenson from 1952. So, even in the eighth grade, I was interested in politics. I always thought that that was either something I wanted to do or be engaged with, but, again, the international setting wasn't there. The Kennedy years, I guess, just blew embers on almost anyone who had any inclination about government during that time. I have to be honest - I think the Peace Corps; I joined the program which was sponsored by the American Bar Association and the Peace Corps jointly. They were recruiting lawyers for a program called "The African Lawyers Program." Of all the options, I couldn't see myself just going into a law firm right away. The military held no interest. So, it was an option and that's as simple as it was. So, I ended up, after 25 years, on the streets of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, as far away as I'd ever been in my life, in a law school.

*Q: This was at the university?*

CYLKE: At that time, I was at Haile Selassie University. It was the first year of the law school. The dean, who had a big impact on it then, was named Jim Paul, a professor from Rutgers. He was subsequently the vice chancellor of the university and quite a distinguished person who decided, in organizing the law school, that the premise for the law school, the only real premise for the law school, was to introduce the law in support of development. I would have to say, that's the first time I ever heard the word "development." I was assigned, of course, to property law, which we turned into a course in-... Having said that the law school was going to be dedicated to development, I'd have to be honest, I don't think anyone in the faculty knew what that meant. They were all lawyers. They taught the typical courses. But Jim was very much interested in institutionalizing the law school. He had to have a premise and he decided that was the premise for education and for the law. I was given the assignment to teach property law from New Haven, Connecticut. Rather than teaching property law, I turned the course into a course in agricultural economics, land law, land reform and agricultural development. I just did that simply by reading, by having (inaudible) prepare the course. I did traveling, I did a land tenure service. In the summer with some students, we went to a village and spent the summer and tried to describe how land actually got transmitted and whatever, blah, blah, blah. I taught that course for two years. When I came home, I can recall sending resumes to everybody-

*Q: Let's talk a little more about the Ethiopia experience. That's a very interesting period. What did you find out about the land law? That's a very touchy subject in Ethiopia.*

CYLKE: Let's see if I can remember back. The interesting thing about Ethiopia was how generous Ethiopia was to itself. It had a feudal land tenure system, as opposed to the communal system, of the rest of Africa. If you looked carefully at it, in fact, it had lots of the attributes of medieval Europe: an indigenous Christian church, a feudal system, a monarchy, lots of the nuances of the law, servitudes. All of these kinds of things were really rooted in a tradition, which was much closer to the European tradition than to African traditions, at least in the

highlands. It was probably not as sophisticated a course in retrospect, as I could teach today because I knew so little about what I was teaching and the materials that I had. At any rate, I understood rather quickly that the law was going to be rooted in development if the law was to serve a development purpose, if I was teaching, and land reform was quite a subject at that time.

*Q: This is what year again?*

CYLKE: This was '63 to '65. In fact, I'll tell a curious story about that. I recall, I was in parliament one day, watching parliament. They had a lower house and an upper house. In lower house, some fellow stood up and proposed that they simply abolish the word "tenancy" from the vocabulary. That would solve the problem. It was a vocabulary problem and they'd just eliminate the word from the vocabulary. It was interesting how naive that kind of movement was. On the other hand, you had fellows in capes who were nobles, who were just appalled that anyone could be in a room talking about their land. You could see, it was visceral on their face, that this incipient democratic kind of institution even existed. They were just appalled that this kind of thing could be talked about. But this was before there was any outspoken tension with the Emperor. There perhaps was some somewhere, but not to be noticed. There had been several coups attempted at the highest levels, but the Emperor was still greeted with enormous respect. The tradition was so powerful that there was almost. I recall, in order to make the law school non-foreign, because all of the faculty were foreign, the dean incorporated into the faculty a night law school. It was run by lawyers in the town, including the fellow Bulcha Demeksa, who you probably knew later. I think he was the Minister of Finance. These fellows were all radicals and all told us that they wanted to eliminate the Emperor, blah, blah, blah, blah. Yet, when the Emperor came to the law school for the graduation this one time and we were all standing there, while we all showed respect, they all went to the ground reflexively. That just suggests to you how deeply rooted that feudal kind of system was.

*Q: Did you have any idea of what the Emperor thought about the kind of things you were teaching?*

CYLKE: Land reform was publicly debated in the parliament, but it wasn't debated in the sensible kind of way. It was debated from a sense, in any kind of a communist dialectic, as to what was right. It was a very technical kind of debate as to how we should adjust the law of servitudes or how we should adjust the law. It wasn't how they should redistribute the land or what the redistribution of land would mean for income or development. To me at any rate, as I recall, it was a very legalistic kind of conversation.

*Q: Were there land laws?*

CYLKE: At that time, in 1963, the Emperor was, in his own way, a modernist. It's hard to imagine. He constructed the legal system. He had decided they needed a legal system. He decided that the only way to get an instant legal system was to adopt a civil law system. So he hired a Frenchman to draft a civil code, which was possible in the French system. There was a dispute over payment. The fellow was never paid. Therefore, he never released his notes, so no one ever knew why he made the adjustments to the law that he did. But they have nothing to do with Ethiopia. Drafting civil codes was always an exercise of privilege, that you got the right to

write the perfect code from a legalistic kind of framework where you were coming from. The Emperor, however, understood the kind of formalism of the civil code. When he set up the law school, he purposely came to the United States to hire a common law lawyer to teach it. He felt that there would be more flexibility. In its own way, that's a rather smart or dumb thing to have done, to decide, "I need a legal system." You can't just bring precedent from the United States. So, you get a civil code, which can be written. So, you take a French code, which gives you a document. You say, "That is our law." Recognizing that that's not possible, you go out and hire a bunch of common law lawyers to teach it, with the sense that they'll bring flexibility to it. So, in that sense, it seems to me that the notion of a modern military, which was his downfall, the notion of education, the notion of law reform. It's what I guess we would all call "incrementalism" as we look back on it. But certainly, there were incipient seeds of a man who saw that his country had to come into a modern age. To the extent he understood it, it seemed to me he tried to do it. But he was as hobbled by the feudal system as much as the people who bowed at him, by expecting people to bow to him, it seems to me. I came to revisit Ethiopia later in my AID career, but that's about all I can recall.

*Q: Did you see any follow up to the teaching that you had done then, when you went back?*

CYLKE: Well, when I went back later, the follow up was actually to recruit students into the law school. It was quite a dilemma because there was no legal profession. So, where to find students in that first year- The dean went down to the Harare military academy, which had peeled off most of the best students from high school into the Harare Military Academy. He recruited students from there. So, our first year class were all military students. And also a shrewd dean. During my time there, several were arrested, several in class. Most of them were part of the revolutionary activities. Afterwards, I think, half are dead. Another 25 percent are in Washington, DC, and another 25 percent are probably teaching in the law school. I don't know of anyone who's prominent in politics. But then you had a revolution over the years. I think that the notion of a civil code vanished in irrelevancy.

*Q: But what you were teaching was-*

CYLKE: Revolution.

*Q: Revolution in terms of-*

CYLKE: That's what AID's teaching.

*Q: I see. How did you enjoy living in Addis Ababa?*

CYLKE: For myself, not having come to it with an international background, with an international interest, I have the hunch that I probably got a tremendous amount out of it, but I can't say that. I was probably still a fairly provincial person when I left Ethiopia, certainly more worldly than the one who arrived in Ethiopia. But I taught in an American institution. I taught with Americans. I had another experience two or three years later, by going to the African Development Bank, where I was in an African institution, the only American staff member in an African institution. I think it was a fundamentally different experience. Although I lived in

Ethiopia, I traveled widely, I knew lots of people, my institutional setting, almost like AID, I'd have to say, was walking into an American culture every working day.

*Q: Did you experience that as cultural shock?*

CYLKE: Oh, I'm sure I did. I mean, as I say, as a provincial kid coming from New Haven, Connecticut, I think it changed my world views on that we were all part of the world, on race, on culture, that kind of thing. But I have to be honest, I think I came back less jolted, as evidenced by what I did immediately after coming home, than lots of my friends who served in the countryside, probably.

*Q: How did you find the Peace Corps as an organization to work for?*

CYLKE: Bureaucratic. The only comment I have on the Peace Corps, which I think you'd have to have on AID later, was that I thought that there was a tremendous effort for the headquarters to project an image of what they thought the Peace Corps should be, rather than allowing the Peace Corps to be the sum of its volunteer parts. You had a desperate need to have people who wanted to join the Peace Corps for altruistic reasons. I think, like AID, you have people who join a thing like that for all kinds of different reasons. Some people for so-called "altruism," some to travel, see the world, have a cultural experience, some to have a professional experience which you can only have in that kind of a setting. There must be a hundred different reasons that people engaged in this exercise. I thought the Peace Corps (inaudible) was almost desperate to project an image of a whole image. If you didn't really talk the talk of what that image was, you were considered an outsider in the Peace Corps. Rather than allowing the Peace Corps to essentially be an impressionistic painting of the sum of its parts. Having said that, I didn't have much interaction with the staff of the Peace Corps. I can't say they interfered with my daily life. I barely knew anybody on the staff. I think, in fact, as a volunteer, you certainly had less contact with the Peace Corps staff than as a AID contractor, you probably had with an AID mission.

*Q: Did you have any interaction with AID or with the Embassy?*

CYLKE: No, I have to say that I knew some people in the Embassy, but I had no understanding that there was such a thing as a country team or what it did. I think Will Meneke was the AID director in those days. I remember going down and asking if I couldn't rent a vehicle from them once, but I think that was my entire interaction. They looked at me like I was crazy. I think that was my entire interaction with AID. I think I had the general perception and prejudices that lots of Peace Corps people had, that the Embassy was promoting political interests, USIS was there. AID had a better image. There was no negative image that AID was removed, detached, lived off the economy. I never heard anything but good things about AID, but I have to say that it didn't register very much on my consciousness. I lived in another world. The AID community had nothing to do with my life. I don't think, as a volunteer, we considered ourselves part of an official community. In fact, I think we consciously strived to be apart.

*Q: Any other dimension of that?*

CYLKE: In addition to teaching at the law school, I did teach English at night in a high school. I traveled widely. I suppose, yes, the conservative side of the Peace Corps, of certain countries which had the biggest impact on volunteers - I think Ethiopia, Philippines are two of those countries. I think there are a few others. But I think, surprisingly, the Ethiopians, because they're a distinctive people, because of the mountains, and yet racially distant, but unique unto themselves, I think you couldn't help but go to Ethiopia and come away without- Any sense that you had, if it was relevant to racial makeup and things, got reinforced in Ethiopia. They were distinctive unto themselves. There were no stereotypes. The stereotypes were opposite because, in fact, the Ethiopians had certain prejudices themselves about other kinds of people, which made the whole thing look so silly. It was also probably a uniquely cordial- They're such a unique society, it just comes up and hits you right in the face. I think, because of that feudal background, which had certain similarities to our Western, although it was set in Africa, countryside people drinking Meade, using poultry, a feudal church, a feudal system that's so similar to our own historical background, that Ethiopia's culture was apparently more accessible than lots of other countries around the world. Whether it was really accessible or not, I don't know, but it had apparent accessibility, it seems to me.

*Q: When you traveled around the country, did you get a sense of the state of development of the country? Did you get a feeling about that?*

CYLKE: I don't know that I thought enough about it.

*Q: You saw the people living in the conditions?*

CYLKE: I can't say that I had a rush of concern that I had to help those people, but I think I had a rush of understanding as to what some of the issues were coming from the legal side. As it turns out, I came to AID, so it had a tremendous impact on me. What I'm trying to say is that I don't think I came home with any conscious, verbalized sense of what the impact of what this experience was going to be, but it had a tremendous impact over the next year.

**ERNEST WILSON**  
**Auditor, USAID**  
**Addis Ababa (1963-1965)**

*Ernest Wilson was born on February 24, 1925 in Louisiana. He received his BS from the University of Illinois in 1949. His career has included positions in Addis Ababa, Rio de Janeiro, Guatemala, and Accra. He was interviewed by W. Haven North on December 1, 1998.*

*Q: What did that course at Boston University convey to you?*

WILSON: It was primarily independent study on East Africa, the Horn of Africa, Sub Sahara Africa, and the history of the area, the economic status of the countries, how interest was spurred

in the Horn of Africa after World War II when the U.S. took over primarily in Ethiopia from the British, what we were doing there and why we were doing it.

Our main interest in East Africa and in Ethiopia in particular at that time was its strategic location and a desire to hold on to a military installation in Eritrea. I think that base was part of the worldwide military communications system. It was at that time important to the U.S. because that was before satellites were widely used.

*Q: Did you get any training or orientation about the financial management systems of AID at that time?*

WILSON: Not really. Just a smattering. It was mostly FSI [Foreign Service Institute] courses, what to do and what not to do, very little or no concentration on the AID financial system. Maybe an interview a couple of days with the head of the Audit Division, but nothing substantial or detailed or related to what I would be doing at USAID/Ethiopia.

*Q: So, you went out to Ethiopia in what year?*

WILSON: August, 1963. I arrived at post on August 21st.

*Q: Your position was as auditor?*

WILSON: As an auditor. There was a small audit staff.

*Q: Small being what?*

WILSON: Consisting of two American and one TCN [third country national] auditor on the staff reporting to the USAID Controller. The USAID mission at that time was quite large. I would say probably 60-70 U.S. direct hires.

*Q: This was in the days when audit function was part of the financial management system?*

WILSON: It was, yes. The chief auditor reported to the Controller. The audit reports were directed to the Mission Director and resolved in the mission.

*Q: What was your understanding of the situation in Ethiopia in terms of economic development and what we were trying to do?*

WILSON: My understanding of the economic situation was that Ethiopia was one of the poorest countries in Africa, but that they had potential to be self-sufficient in food production and exporting food and agricultural products to other East African countries. The program there was concentrated in agriculture, public health, and public safety.

*Q: What was your function as an auditor? What do you do when you're an auditor in a mission set up like that?*

WILSON: In response to requests from the front office, the Director's Office, and other staff officers, or in response to concerns of the Controller, certain programs were scheduled for audit. After querying the mission, the staff prepared an audit plan for the year. It was presented to the Controller and the Controller in turn presented it to the front office. It was adjusted and finalized and we took off and started conducting the audits. We had a big program also in infrastructure, road building, farm to market roads, that sort of thing. We also had a large education program building and equipping schools.

*Q: What was the focus of the audits?*

WILSON: We financed a lot of the local costs of projects. We also provided a lot of commodities. The focus of the audits was to determine that adequate supporting documentation existed for the local costs that had been reported as having been expended on the project, and that commodities financed by the project had been received in a timely manner and promptly utilized for project purposes.

*Q: What were the main issues that seemed to be a pattern across the various projects that you audited?*

WILSON: Inability to document the receipt and utilization of commodities that had been financed by the project. The failure of the host government to maintain records that could adequately document the receipt and utilization of funds advanced for local cost financing. In short, by our standards, weak financial systems.

*Q: What happened to your recommendations? What kind of recommendations did you make?*

WILSON: If commodities could not be located or there was no documentation to support the utilization/disposition of commodities financed, recommendations for refunds were made. If costs that were not eligible to be financed were financed, we recommended refunds. The audit findings or recommendations were to be implemented by the technical office in charge of the project. We worked with them to try to resolve recommendations in a timely manner.

*Q: Did you find people responsive to your recommendations?*

WILSON: Yes, generally, they were responsive. We also found, naturally, some problems on the USAID side. Technical people ordering commodities apparently without sufficient knowledge of what was required. For instance, ordering 110 volt sewing machines for secondary training schools, where the electric current was 220 volts or no electricity was available. I would attribute those things to people who were technically qualified in their field as educators, but not necessarily as procurement people.

*Q: Or sensitive to the local requirements?*

WILSON: Yes.

*Q: Were there any major audit issues at that time or were they all of the kind you described?*



WILSON: They were all of the nature that I described. I was not aware of other type findings.

*Q: At that time, did you look at implementation and project objectives, whether it was meeting the purpose set forth in the project paper?*

WILSON: Not at that time at that mission. This was 1963-1964. We primarily reviewed the project agreements, saw what was financed, and attempted to trace the commodities or assistance provided.

*Q: We'll come to it later, but AID shifted the audit functions out of the missions. But did you find your independence as an auditor somewhat compromised in terms of what you could audit and what you couldn't audit, the Mission Director trying to steer you in certain directions away from some things and toward others?*

WILSON: At that point in my career, no. I wasn't aware of it. I wasn't in charge of the audit function. I was given assignments and I tried to complete them as efficiently and effectively as possible. My reports went to the Controller through the chief auditor. So, I was somewhat removed from what was going on, although I knew that getting audit reports published was a problem if they contained sensitive findings.

*Q: Were your reports submitted to Washington? Was there any Washington reaction to them?*

WILSON: At that time, they were published and resolved right in the mission.

*Q: So, they didn't go outside of the mission?*

WILSON: No.

*Q: Was there any external audit of the program during your time?*

WILSON: Not during those two years I was there. We didn't have GAO auditors or anybody else come in at that time. Ethiopia was a long way off the beaten track.

*Q: How did you find living in Ethiopia?*

WILSON: It was hard to get adjusted at first. There were no spectator sports or theaters or that sort of thing, so one had to make one's own way. Our life sort of revolved around the elementary school, which was fairly large, and camping trips and exploring the countryside.

*Q: How did you find that?*

WILSON: It was a beautiful country and we adjusted to it and loved it. We looked forward to the camping trips down at the lakes. My wife worked at the American school. Our lives revolved around that and entertaining at home. There was the ECA, the United Nations Economic

Commission for Africa, which was headquartered there. There were a lot of other expatriates around, so we met a lot of people, and many Ethiopians as well.

*Q: How about relations with Ethiopian officials or Ethiopian people? Were you able to have much of a rapport with them?*

WILSON: I met a number of them. In fact, I met people on every audit. One might be in one ministry on one audit and in another on the next audit. All the audit functions were performed in the various Ministry Offices because we were looking at their records and looking at what they had. So, I had the opportunity to meet a lot of people at my level.

*Q: Did they have an audit system?*

WILSON: They had an auditor general, but it wasn't sophisticated and it wasn't up to date. There were funding problems and training problems.

*Q: But were there individual auditors that you worked with as counterparts?*

WILSON: No. They didn't work with us. We worked primarily in the controller side of their organization where the records were. We had very little contact with their auditors.

*Q: Did you find them responsive to the concept of auditing?*

WILSON: Yes, but that was before AID went into the business of recipient audits and that sort of thing. There were limited opportunities for audits by public accounting firms because there were no public accounting firms located in those areas at that time, or very few. So, an audit was a difficult thing to do there. That's why we had audit staff there to try to do some elementary type audits.

*Q: Were you involved in trying to develop any capacity for auditing in the government?*

WILSON: Not at that time. I was a very junior officer on my first overseas tour.

*Q: But did you have a counterpart that you worked with or were you on your own?*

WILSON: I was on my own. In fact, the three of us worked alone on each audit. If there were problems or observations, we had to resolve those with the chief auditor or with the deputy controller. There was a great audit backlog. We were the first group of auditors assigned to the Mission. They were just staffing the audit function. So, the audit workload was great and the emphasis was on production and getting out and seeing what was happening.

*Q: What was your perception in your role there as to the overall management of the program?*

WILSON: The overall management of the program on our side was good.

*Q: And on the Ethiopian side?*

WILSON: The capacity wasn't there. They had very little to work with in terms of office space, or people with the required training. There was a lot of learning on the job from people who had prior experience.

*Q: Anything else about your experience in Ethiopia? That was your first tour. It must have been a great learning experience.*

WILSON: It was primarily a learning experience and an opportunity to “get my feet wet” and to learn more about what the Agency was about and what it was doing, etc. As I said, it was a relatively large mission. There was a large military training group there, too. So, there were lots of Americans around.

*Q: You finished up in Ethiopia in what year?*

WILSON: In 1965.

**JOHN A. BUCHE**  
**Political Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (1963-1966)**

*John Allen Buche was born in Indiana in 1935. He served in the U.S. Army overseas from 1957 to 1959 and received degrees from Purdue University and Tuebington University in Germany. After entering the Foreign Service in 1959, his postings abroad have included Toronto, Addis Ababa, Malawi, Niger, Bonn, Geneva, Zambia, and Vienna. Mr. Buche was interviewed in 1999 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: So you took Amharic for a year?*

BUCHE: Yes.

*Q: This would be what, '62-63?*

BUCHE: No, it was just 1962. The class started January 20 and ended December 20. I was to report to the Embassy at Addis Ababa in late January 1963.

*Q: How did you find learning Amharic?*

BUCHE: I found it difficult. Amharic is a member of the Semitic language family. It was the first non-Western I had studied. I had to suspend almost all the rules or paradigms I had learned in studying Greek, Latin, German, and French. Also there were sounds in Amharic that were particularly difficult for me to replicate. We had three Ethiopian graduate students, who were picking up some extra money by working as the native speakers. Our linguist, Professor

Obolensky, was a Semitic language scholar, but admitted on the first day of class that he did not know much Amharic. He said, "I'm a Semitic language linguist. Amharic is a Semitic language, and I understand its structure. I will use the native speakers in such a way that you will learn the correct accent and use of the language." He was able to help us correct our mispronunciations and help us in so many ways. I was not accustomed to the Foreign Service Institute's language teaching method, namely a heavily oral approach, stressing repetition of memorized sentences or dialogues. I was accustomed to the reading approach, where I learned vocabulary, declensions, conjugations, and rules of grammar. We started the first day with simple phrases, constantly repeating after the native Amharic speakers. I wanted a text before me so I could "see" what I was trying to say. I also wanted to have explanations of how the words fit together grammatically. We had a phonetic text, but it was not in the Amharic script. It was just a peculiar mixture of Roman-alphabet symbols. We memorized sentences; then we memorized simple conversations. I, of course, went along with what the class was asked to do, but I was convinced I could learn faster with a combination of the FSI method and my traditional manner. Dr. Obolensky counseled patience and trust and assured me that the missing elements would be addressed in a few months. Now my task was to do my best to imitate the Ethiopians without thinking of grammar rules or gender and case agreements. "Be like a child and mimic the teachers."

I was the only person of the four in the class who seemed to have mental block against the method, although I was probably the most determined to learn the language. There were two officers from the Department of Defense who were going to Addis Ababa as attachés. They were to study Amharic in Washington for about two months, just to get started and then continue at post. The other person in the class was a first-tour FSO, Bill Womack. He was a natural linguist. I was uncomfortable at first that he was so quick to pick up the language. Bill understood the language so much better and faster than I did. At St. Meinrad and at Purdue, I had always been the best student in the language classes. I, of course, realized it was better for me that someone was ahead of me rather than holding me back. I was determined to keep up with Bill, so spent more and more time at night and on the weekends studying the language. I was a bachelor with no Foreign Service responsibilities other than learning Amharic. I was concerned also that I not hold him back. Bill was scheduled to remain only six months in class, the maximum time allowed for language courses for Junior Officers. When Bill left, he had reached the FSI's goal for a full-time hard language student: speaking and reading at the 3 level (with 5 being native speaker). I then had the three Ethiopian instructors to myself for the last five months. Thanks to Bill's torrid pace, I was also ahead of the normal schedule. I began to ease back a little on the weekends, especially since in September, I had met a management intern at the Department and was very interested in her. During the week, however, I pretty much maintained my schedule of eating dinner in my apartment in Arlington Towers and then taking the elevator to the language labs for an hour or so a review.

*Q: The classes were in the basement.*

BUCHE: In the basement of Arlington Towers.

*Q: About this time I was taking Serbo-Croatian down there, too, in the garage.*

BUCHE: Although the classrooms and labs were not fancy, they were certainly convenient for me. I could use the elevator, which meant no commuting. It also meant that at lunch time I could go up to my apartment and have a sandwich and just get a change of scenery for a half hour. Concentrating on just one subject for an extended period was something I had wanted to do in my life - not necessarily study Amharic, but to study one thing, whether it was mathematics, history or a language. This was my opportunity to concentrate 100 percent on one discipline. I really enjoyed it and was grateful the Department had chosen me to study a hard language. As it turned out, learning Amharic not only was a career boost for me, but the assignment to Addis Ababa led to lasting personal friendships and professional developments that have greatly enriched my life. Incidentally, I also scored S/3 and R/3 on the FSI Amharic test at the end of the course. (That means I was able to speak and read at a minimum professional level.) I think that was what PER had expected when I was selected for hard-language training, partly as a result of my score on the MLAT taken during the A-100 training and the fact that I had tested well in German..

*Q: Modern Language Aptitude Test.*

BUCHE: After I took the MLAT, I did not think I had done very well. As I later learned, I was in the top quartile.

*Q: Often in taking a language, you learn quite a bit about the society by your interaction with your instructors. Were you getting anything from instructors about Ethiopia?*

BUCHE: We did, and largely through observation and informal chats after class and during breaks. There were no structured talks on Ethiopian culture, history, or politics. They were there to help us learn how Ethiopians spoke Amharic. I absorbed cultural practices and traits through close proximity with my instructors over an eleven-month period. I did not realize how much I had unconsciously taken in, until I was already in the country. In speaking or interacting with Ethiopians, I caught myself reacting with body language similar to Mulugeta, Debebe, or Alemayehu in analogous situations. What I learned about Ethiopian history was from reading on the side. I was told many times, not only by Professor Obolensky, but also by other FSI staff to learn about the history and the politics of the country when I got there. I was in a *language* class, not an *area studies* class.

*Q: You were in Ethiopia from 1963 to when?*

BUCHE: From January of 1963 until July of 1966. I finished Amharic class in mid-December, spent some time with my family in Indiana, was married on December 29, 1962, spent our honeymoon *en route*, and arrived in Addis Ababa in mid-January.

*Q: You mentioned that you got married. Where did you meet your wife, and what was her background?*

BUCHE: My wife, Anike, was a management intern at the State Department. I met her through my roommate, Richard Kochan. He was a close friend of mine from the Army, and he needed a room in Washington for two or three months. He shared my apartment in Arlington Towers.

Rich was working in the Personnel Section of the Department, processing incoming Foreign Service officers, interns, political ambassadors, et al. He was the key person for the initial paperwork. He helped process Anike and enthusiastically described her to me. Anike Verhoeff was born in Indonesia of Dutch parents. She spent the war years in a Japanese internment camp with her mother and brother. Her father was in a POW camp. After the war, they returned to the Netherlands, where her father worked as a physician with KLM. The Verhoeff family then moved to Curacao and later immigrated to Vancouver, Canada, before moving to North Carolina. She graduated from Duke, spent a year in Europe, and came to Washington to work. Richard asked whether I would like to meet Anike. I really was not sure, but replied affirmatively. I warned him, however, I could meet with her only within a limited time because of my classes. I did not want her to take up my weekends or interfere with my evening tape labs.

Q: *Oh, heavens, no!*

BUCHE: So he arranged for me to telephone her around Labor Day. I met Anike and was instantly impressed. We saw each other more and more frequently. Since I was going to Ethiopia, we had to decide rather quickly about our future relationship. Our Charge in Addis Ababa was in Washington on consultations in November. He asked to see me. I asked whether I might bring Anike along. He agreed. He and I spoke about my progress in Amharic and a little about the situation in Ethiopia. Toward the end of the discussion, he asked whether I planned to marry Anike. I told him I was not sure at that point. He jokingly said that if I married her before going to Ethiopia, the Department would pay her fare; otherwise she would have to buy her own ticket. Anike and I, however, realized that a long-distance relationship would be nearly impossible to maintain. We, therefore, decided to marry. It has been an extremely happy marriage.

Q: *You got to Ethiopia in '63. What was the situation there? What was your impression of Ethiopia when you arrived?*

BUCHE: Well, I had some ideas about what to expect, but was quite naive and completely unprepared for other things. I had some short briefings by the Desk Officer in December, but no African Area courses at the FSI. As I mentioned earlier, I did some reading on my own, but I did not often go over to the Desk to read cables and airgrams. Professor Obolensky and other staff members were firmly opposed to taking time out from class, although other language trainees would insist on taking off early on Friday afternoons to read in on their next country of assignment. I think it was my monastic and military training. When someone tells me this is what I am supposed to do, I do it. Also I was the only student in class for about five months.

When I got to Ethiopia, I really was not aware in any detail about the political problems. I knew in general about the overarching role of the Emperor, the wealth, influence, and conservatism of the Orthodox Church and the noble families, the failed *coup d'état* and the aftermath, the unrest among the students, the abject poverty, the urgent need for land reform, the stirrings of Eritrean independence, and the potential effects in Ethiopia of the African independence wave from reading and from stories after class by the instructors.

Of the three, the most astute observer and also the most critical of the regime was Alemayehu Wondimagegnehu. He was an NCO in the Imperial Body Guard, and served for years as the driver and an aide de camp in Korea and Ethiopia to the Commanding General of the Bodyguard. He left the military in his mid-thirties to study in the U.S. shortly before the December 1960 coup attempt. He was personally very close to the general who had led the coup. Alemayehu wanted fundamental changes in the way feudal Ethiopia was governed, so I had an early taste of what turned out to be similar sentiments among the university students and young military officers. The other two instructors were critical of the regime, but were more inclined toward incremental reforms.

I knew from reading about Ethiopia's gross national product, literacy rates, infant mortality, miles of paved roads, kilowattage generated, and other assorted statistics that Ethiopia was one of the poorest countries in the world. When I arrived, however, I was stunned by the sight of the diseased and maimed beggars, the open sewers, the dirty, overcrowded health clinics and hospitals, the rags people wore as clothing, and the hovels where they lived. My reading and discussions with my instructors had not fully prepared me for my first experience in a third-world country. My first job at the Embassy was a temporary assignment in the General Services Section for about a month, until I could get my feet on the ground. Although we had met for an hour in Washington, the *chargé* wanted to find out what he was dealing with, what I was like, and what I had to offer. He was not going to put me into a sensitive position immediately. I was happy to help out the GSO for a while and to learn a bit about how an embassy works. I knew I was eventually going into the Political Section, but not sure when. I made arrangements for Amharic lessons an hour a day, but I had many opportunities to converse with Ethiopians in my work as the Assistant GSO. I was so pleased at the way I could speak with them. The first time I spoke with an Ethiopian in Amharic outside the FSI was on the Ethiopian Airlines plane. It was just polite chatter. When Anike and I arrived in Addis Ababa, there was no one to meet us at the airport from the Embassy because of a mix-up. I had to go through Customs/Immigration with loaded suitcases and a new bride, who still had her tourist passport in her maiden name and no visa. The conversation with the Ethiopian officials followed fairly closely what I had learned in one of the classroom exercises, Lesson X "What to do at the Customs and Immigration." One official asked me a question in Amharic. (In the early 1960s, very few Ethiopians at such a level could speak English.) I answered back in Amharic. He and the others were quite surprised, so they asked more questions in Amharic, and I responded in that language. They were impressed and warmly welcomed us to Ethiopia. Anike was *very* impressed.

Q: *Who was the chargé?*

BUCHE: Sheldon Vance.

Q: *Sheldon Vance, oh, yes.*

BUCHE: He had replaced Ambassador Richards. Sheldon had come under Ambassador Arthur Richards and took over when Ambassador Richards retired. The new ambassador was to be Edward Korry, but he did not arrive until April of 1963. Sheldon Vance went from Ethiopia to become Ambassador to Chad and then to the Congo. He then became the Department's Coordinator for International Narcotics Control. I am not sure what the exact title was then.

*Q: What was the political situation in Ethiopia when you arrived? Really, we're talking about early 1963.*

BUCHE: The Emperor had survived the 1960 coup, and there was a slightly faster pace of reform. The coup was still on peoples' minds, although it took place in December 1960, and the last executions were completed by mid-1961. It was a bloody coup, and there were deaths on both sides, not only from the fighting, but also the killing of hostages by the Revolutionaries and then the executions by the Government. The coup punctured the mystique surrounding the Emperor, damaged the relations between Haile Selassie and his son, the Crown Prince, revealed the bitter rivalries in the military and security forces, demonstrated the extent of hatred toward the reactionary nobles around the Emperor, and inspired other opponents of the regime to continue their fight. A pesky insurgency was festering in Eritrea. The common wisdom in Addis Ababa was that the insurgency was not going to amount to very much, because how were the Eritrean guerillas going to stand up to the Imperial Army? The rebellion did not have to happen. Haile Selassie made a strategic miscalculation. After WWII, there were years of discussion at the UN on what to do about the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Italy was our ally, so we and the Brits were willing to listen to what that country advocated. On the other hand, Ethiopia had been abandoned and betrayed in her time of desperate need by the West (with the exception of the U.S.) The UN had to grapple with the hard question of what to do with Eritrea: independence, complete amalgamation with Ethiopia, or a federation with Ethiopia. Haile Selassie wanted complete amalgamation, but he saw that proposal was not going to fly. He was absolutely opposed to independence, so he accepted federation. In 1951, the Federation came into being. From the beginning, the Emperor and the Ethiopians, with the support of some influential Eritreans, set about to destroy the Federation. The means were classic: threats, intimidation, bribery, flattery, loans, gifts, assassinations, marriages, awards, etc. By 1961, Haile Selassie had the Eritrean Parliament under his control. He gave the signal and the Eritrean Parliament voted to abolish the Federation and join "Motherland Ethiopia". The rebellion began a few months later.

While there was intense interest within the Palace and in several Government ministries about the momentous changes in Africa, the man in the street looked down on the dark-skinned Africans and did not want anything to do with them. The Emperor had the foresight to use the burgeoning African independence movements for the benefit of Ethiopia. He had decided that if there was going to be a large number of newly-independent African states, he was the only logical choice for the role of the Continent's "father figure". So he laid the groundwork for an organization (to be sited in Addis Ababa) to serve the new Africa. His vision created the Organization of African Unity. How did he bring it off? For years he had supported independence movements, not with large sums of money or arms shipments, but by personal contacts with the various leaders. Many, while still engaged in the struggle for independence, had been invited by the Emperor to visit him in Addis Ababa. The Emperor feted them lavishly and bestowed generous gifts on them. They would leave Ethiopia, pleased with the Emperor's recognition and generosity. The Emperor sent the draft OAU charter to the leaders of independent African states and invited them to meet in Addis Ababa in May 1963 to sign the document. They came, and after several days of oratory and festivities, signed the Charter.



I had been alerted by conversations with my instructors to an antagonism between the younger, educated officials in the Government and the traditionalists in the senior Government positions and at the Court. Most of the college-educated people in Ethiopia at that time had been selected or approved by the Emperor. Many had studied abroad, since the national university (Haile Selassie I University) was just developing. All the grads with higher degrees had to study abroad, since there were no post-graduate degrees awarded at HSIU until around 1964. He chose prospective students largely on the basis of grades and performance in high school. A high percentage was from the low and middle class. The Emperor did not favor the sons and daughters of the nobility. He probably envisaged the hundreds of future university grads as a long-term counterweight to the nobility. The Emperor made it clear to the students that he was choosing them to play an important role in Ethiopian Government and society. The Emperor spent considerable time on education and took a personal interest in it.

The 1960 coup had wide support among the college students, not only the undergrads in Addis Ababa, but many of the graduates who had benefited from going abroad and studying under Haile Selassie's patronage. Many of the latter came back with ideas and hopes that clashed with what they were experiencing: poverty, injustice, favoritism, in brief, a traditional, semi-feudal aristocracy. They had been introduced to democracy, either experiencing it abroad or reading about it in classrooms in Ethiopia. There was a Parliament of two chambers that was created by the Constitution, which was given to the people by Haile Selassie. So Parliament was created, and the first parliamentary elections for the Lower House were held. The Senate was appointed by the Emperor. Political parties were not allowed, and candidates had to stand as individuals. It was pretty much a Parliament of landed interests, as one would expect. There were a few exceptions, namely schoolteachers, small businessmen, and minor officials who somehow got elected. They were not opponents of the regime, but on the other hand, they were not subservient to the landowning class or the Orthodox Church. While the Parliament was under the control of the Emperor regarding what legislation it could enact, there were opportunities for the members to criticize (obliquely and gently) actions of the Government, as long as there was no direct mention of the Emperor, the Ministers, or influential persons. Amharic is quite subtle and flexible, with double and triple meanings to words, so a clever, but careful person could criticize without too much concern about going to prison.

To go back to your question how did I find things. The university was a sort of "warm-bed" of rebellion. Americans were looked upon as the supporters of the *status quo*, which we were and were not. Internally, we were in favor of progress and development; externally, we wanted the Ethiopians to be strong enough to defend against Somali irredentism. We were beginning to bring in more weapons for the military to oppose Somali attacks in the Ogaden. The USG wanted to expand the base in Asmara, Kagnaw Station, which was a key monitoring and communications station. We did not pay much rent. I think we paid only \$100,000 a year, which was the actual going rental price for the land. The real "price" for Kagnaw was in economic and military aid. The fact that the U.S. military was at Kagnaw infuriated many students. They were attuned to the anti-colonialist rhetoric of the African independence movements and looked upon Kagnaw as symbolic of our manipulation and interference in Africa. They also saw Kagnaw as the guarantee of our support for the Emperor. So all these things were festering in Ethiopia when I arrived.

I forgot to mention there were also non-Somali ethnic groups in Ethiopia who were very unhappy with the way they were treated by the Government. It did not start with Haile Selassie, but by his immediate predecessors who conquered the people beyond the Amhara heartland, took their land, and imposed the imperial system on them. The conquered people were from various ethnic groups, but the Amharas often lumped them together under the pejorative term of “Galla.”

*Q: For the darker people?*

BUCHE: They were sometimes darker than the Amharas or Tigreans who comprised the ruling elite of Ethiopia. The “Galla” were Hamitic people. They spoke languages which were from a different linguistic family than the Semitic languages of Amharic or Tigrinya. They had not been converted to Christianity until after they were conquered. They were either Muslim or animist. These were conquered peoples, although the Emperors tried to sweeten the situation somewhat by inviting the traditional chiefs to become Christian and marry Amharas. Haile Selassie played the game as well as his predecessors. He would throw a rebellious chief into prison, and then arrange for an Amhara woman, often from the nobility, to marry the chief's son. The son would be expected to become Christian, learn Amharic, and transfer his loyalty to the Imperial Crown.

*Q: When you went into the Political Section, what were we looking at? How did you operate?*

BUCHE: Since I could speak Amharic, I was assigned by Sheldon Vance to reporting on Ethiopia's internal developments. My beat was the Parliament, what was happening in the provinces, the university, and the "young elite." Bob Wenzel arrived as the new Political Counselor, and Don Junior came in to take charge of reporting on the OAU and African issues. After his arrival, Ambassador Edward Korry reviewed what the Embassy officers were doing and made changes in priorities. He realized from his briefings in Washington that we knew little of what was going on Ethiopia outside of Addis Ababa and Asmara. With me he emphasized more travel to the provinces. "That is your bailiwick. You are to travel anywhere in Ethiopia, and I want you out of the Embassy for a minimum of one week every month. We will make money available to you for transportation. Take Embassy jeeps, an Ethiopian Airlines plane, or go along a team from our Military Advisory Assistance Group, the MAAG. When military training teams come from the U.S., go along with them." I was delighted with the order to do more travel to the provinces. I found provincial travel was personally fascinating and politically productive. The rest of the political section did the traditional work of bilateral relations and reporting on Ethiopia's relations with the rest of the world. There was a CIA station with three officers. We had many political issues: OAU, UN, Kagnew and military assistance, insurgencies, domestic opposition, etc. With the founding of the OAU and the upgrading and expansion of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Embassy Addis Ababa took on additional responsibilities. Ethiopia was becoming more important in Washington's eyes. We were making a political commitment to Ethiopia with military training and weapons and increased economic assistance. The Somali insurgency was active and was getting a lot of attention. Its aims, source of support, and the stakes involved were fairly obvious. On the other hand, the nascent insurgency in Eritrea by the Eritrean Liberation Force (ELF) was not so clear to us regarding the depth of its support among the populace, the effectiveness of the Government's counter-insurgency measures, the staying power of the ELF, and what it meant to Kagnew. In January 1963, when I arrived, we were focusing primarily on the Ogaden, not Eritrea. We did not recognize at the time the deep

intensity in Eritrea of the anti-Amhara, anti-central-government feeling. Our post in Asmara was not staffed to do in-depth political reporting throughout the province on Eritrean attitudes, developments, and leadership. The Consulate General had heavy obligations toward Kagnew, serving the base's public affairs needs, plus providing political guidance and consular services.

*Q: Probably to service the military.*

BUCHE: Exactly.

*Q: Consular services for the military at Kagnew Station.*

BUCHE: Yes, that was one of the Consulate's duties. The new ambassador changed priorities for the Consulate, too. He was told in Washington that Kagnew Station was one of our most important overseas strategic assets. He agreed that what the Consulate General was doing regarding services to Kagnew should be continued, but he insisted that it was critical to learn more about what was happening outside the Government offices in Asmara. Ambassador Korry was not a career ambassador. He came out of journalism. He was with UPI and then with Cowles Publications, before being asked to become Ambassador to Ethiopia. What he saw in Ethiopia was a country of extraordinary potential and an immense potential for things to go wrong. He believed one of his major tasks was to make sure that Washington comprehended Ethiopia's problems and potential as these elements affected American interests and to devote the necessary resources to working out possible solutions. I know early on in his posting, Korry saw major disconnects between Washington's professed doctrine of the acknowledgment of Kagnew's short-to-medium-term and Ethiopia's long-term strategic importance to the USG and the resources our Government was willing to make available to the country. Kagnew's vital importance was the key focus in Washington.

*Q: This was an article of faith, I think.*

BUCHE: It was an article of faith; it really was; and we were putting enormous amounts of equipment into Kagnew. We were monitoring the Soviet space shots and their development of rocketry and satellites. We had some assets in Iran and elsewhere for this purpose, but because of geography, Kagnew was of strategic importance. Kagnew Station also was electronically monitoring what was happening diplomatically and militarily throughout the Middle East. Kagnew was also a relay station for diplomatic and military communications for the USG. It was one of our primary stations for communicating with our submarines and strategic bombers in the Indian Ocean. It was an article of faith that Kagnew was strategic, and we had to defend it. The Emperor had to be on board if we were to maintain Kagnew. He was under pressure regarding Kagnew from some of his own advisers and Ministers, but also from the other Africans and the leaders of the Non-aligned Movement, the G-77, who were pushing for a neutral, non-aligned Africa. There were many resolutions on African non-alignment in the UN and the OAU. The Emperor finessed them. The Emperor or his representatives would say, "Yes, we should work for a neutral, non-aligned Africa. Ethiopia is neutral and non-aligned. We have no foreign bases on our soil. Kagnew is not a foreign base, since there are no heavy weapons or military aircraft there. Kagnew is only a communications station." We were concerned that the ELF might decide to blow up some of our antennas. There were antenna towers scattered over hundreds of acres.

They were guarded by local contract guards and were surrounded by a Cyclone fence. We knew the antenna fields were extremely vulnerable, and could be blown up by a determined group of soldiers. As the clashes between the Ethiopian military and the Eritrean insurgents became more frequent and bloodier, we were concerned how the struggle would impact on Kagnew. There were over 4,000 Americans there. I think there were about 1,200 to 1,500 uniformed, mostly Army Security Agency personnel, but also small contingents of communications and intelligence units from the Air Force and Navy. There were also large numbers of American civilian employees working for various U.S. intelligence agencies. There were probably a thousand dependents. Some of the families were living in Asmara, in rented houses. They were "on the economy". These were just a few of the issues confronting our new Ambassador.

We were curious how ordinary Ethiopians would react to the increasing numbers of African diplomats and officials coming to Addis Ababa in connection with the OAU and ECA. The ingrained Ethiopian politeness and hospitality toward guests overcame their cultural antipathy against dark-skinned people. They swallowed their cultural prejudices and treated the Africans with respect. What their thoughts may have been when the Africans badly misbehaved in public is another question. Many of the Africans in the numerous delegations or new embassies in 1963-66 had suddenly gone from being students or clerks to being ambassadors, junior ministers, and the like. When they came to Addis Ababa, there were Ethiopian officials to open doors, limos with chauffeur at their disposal, easy access to booze and women, and attention from journalists and diplomats. It was a heady time for the newly-independent Africans, and more than a few disgraced themselves and their country with their public antics.

*Q: Well, did you find in your reporting that you had to keep in mind that you had a very pro-African bureau, G. Mennen Williams and his deputy, Wayne Fredericks.*

BUCHE: Very definitely yes.

*Q: Yes, and also that this was not a Bureau at the top that wanted to hear about antics; it wanted to hear about very serious things, and probably much more was expected from the Africans than actually the Africans were being able to deliver at that time.*

BUCHE: Yes, the antics never found their way into the Embassy reporting. We had enough sense not to report the disgusting public behavior of some of the Africans. Our reports were timely, accurate, substantive, really high quality. I did not write them because I did not report on the OAU or the ECA. Don Junior was responsible for OAU issues; Art Stillman covered the ECA. When there was an important OAU or ECA conference, and there were many of the former in the first several years, the entire Embassy got involved. Ambassador Korry did much of the spot reporting, folding our bits and pieces into what he had picked up from the principals involved. He was an experienced, resourceful, competitive, and effective reporter by profession. He brought these traits with him to Addis Ababa. Korry wanted to be the first into Washington and our embassies with reports on important developments from the OAU and ECA conferences. (Developments in the former were much more important and time-sensitive than the latter.) He wanted Soapy Williams and Wayne Fredericks, plus our embassies, to hear from him first before they saw the results on the news tickers or had read-outs from interested governments. Korry regarded the BBC, Reuters, AP, and Agence France Presse as colleagues and competitors. He

knew the top reporters and had excellent rapport with them. They had useful contacts among the African delegations from the capitals and were willing to trade information with Korry. Being the American Ambassador, but more than that, being Edward Korry, meant that he quickly established effective relations with the key Ethiopians. The OAU sessions were closed to the public, including diplomats and journalists, but Korry and his Embassy team learned from various sources what was happening inside. I met a French interpreter through Anike, who proved to be an excellent source. As soon as a session was over, Korry and team would confer with our contacts and then rush back to the Embassy. Korry would sit down at a typewriter and type the report on the green telegram form. He would hand the finished product to Sheldon, Bob Wenzel, or Don Junior to read in case he had forgotten something, and then give it to the Communications Officer to transmit. This was often at midnight or later. When the Department of State and our embassies opened the next day, Ed Korry's cable was in the take. While I enjoyed assisting with the OAU conferences, my primary task was internal Ethiopian reporting.

*Q: Well, I thought we might stop at this point. We will pick it up again while you are in Ethiopia. You have talked about Kagnaw Station, the general political situation in Ethiopia, the Emperor, and Ed Korry. I'd like to ask you what you were finding out and how you operated as the internal political officer, traveling around the country. Let's pick that up the next time.*

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*Today is the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, 1999. All right, let's start. You were there in Ethiopia from when to when?*

BUCHE: I arrived in January of 1963 and left in July of 1966.

*Q: How did you get around as a political officer? The Emperor was the name of the game at that time, right?*

BUCHE: Right, everything was highly centralized around the Emperor. Issues or questions were routinely taken to him for resolution. He held court every morning when he received ministers, governors, judges, generals, and ordinary citizens. This was also the time when he summoned persons to reward, punish, warn, praise, assign, transfer, or retire. He seemed to prefer the face-to-face approach rather than through memos. The provincial governors and also the district governors came to Addis Ababa from time to time to communicate with His Imperial Majesty. He appointed them, so they were responsible to him. In their areas, they conveyed the Emperor's will to the police, the judges, the administrators, and the public and were responsible for seeing that his will was carried out.

And following up on where we left it last time, how did I get around and what did I do? I had the responsibility from the Ambassador to learn and report on what was happening internally in Ethiopia. There was practically no media coverage of the provinces other than PR for the Government. We had few sources of information on what was happening or likely to happen in the provinces. Our intelligence people or the MAAG would sometimes pick up information about the Eritrean or Ogaden insurgencies, but this was usually about skirmishes, ambushes, casualties, and other conflict-related information. I do not recall ever reading any CIA reports on causes of the discontent in the provinces, where land was taken illegally by the governors,

judgments were handed down in civil and criminal cases and licenses and concessions awarded or withdrawn on the basis of bribes or at the direction of the governor, or persons arrested and detained according to the desire of the police chief or governor. We had a good handle on what the Ethiopians were doing on the international scene, but were in the dark internally. I drew up a plan of where I wanted to go, when, why, and how. Bob Wenzel, Sheldon, and the Ambassador reviewed it, made suggestions, and approved. In addition to the means of transportation I mentioned earlier, we also had a U.S. Army Mapping Mission. There was a military officer in charge, and a mixture of military and civilians under him.

*Q: Well, there is an Army Mapping Service, which is really quite civilian, I think.*

BUCHÉ: The Mapping Service had helicopters. There was, of course, the Ethiopian Airlines, which had DC-3's which could fly all over the country. The Embassy and AID Mission had Land Rovers and Jeeps, so I had a wide range of transport options. On one occasion, I was met at a grassy landing field in Gojjam Province by mules and guards dispatched by the district governor to transport me the last few miles. (It was too muddy for a Land Rover.) I made a special effort to contact Peace Corps Volunteers and American missionaries when I was in the area. The PCVs were not supposed to be used by Embassy officers for intelligence gathering. I agreed with that prohibition and certainly did not pressure any of the Volunteers to tell me anything of a sensitive nature. When I visited with them, I usually sat and listened to what they wanted to tell me of their own volition. They would tell about the corrupt police chief, or how the governor took land away from so and so on false charges and how the judges were bribed or ordered to render a verdict. They knew what was going on in the town and surrounding area and were delighted that someone from the American Embassy was interested in hearing their views. The missionaries were an excellent source of information. They knew the local officials and languages. They were not allowed to proselytize in the Christian regions (Amhara/Tigre areas), so they went into the peripheral lands where Islam and/or animism were the predominant religions. These were the areas of the greatest exploitation by the Amhara/Tigre conquerors. Many had lived in a mission station for years. An American Lutheran missionary, Reverend Don McClure, had been born at the station, grew up there, and succeeded his father as pastor. I found that the missionaries with their long residence in an area tended to put things into perspective...things are bad now, but they were worse in the mid-1950s, or the current governor is the most capable man we have seen since our arrival in 1948, or similar comparisons. Sometimes I would have introductions from students or officials in Addis Ababa. I made a special effort to meet the university students. I invited small groups to our apartment. We lived opposite the main campus of the University. Twice a month we had open house and several dozen students would come over for beer and popcorn, and the local food, *wat* and *injera*. I would mention I was planning a trip to a district and ask whether anyone was from there. Fairly often one or two of the students were from that area. I would ask whether they wanted me to take anything to their family, and the answer was usually affirmative. I delivered parcels and usually was asked by the family to carry back something for the student. I enjoyed meeting the families of the students. They ranged from governors to peasants. On my return to Addis Ababa, I would relate some of my impressions to the student whose family I had visited to see his or her reactions. Before each trip, I had to obtain written authorization from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior. The latter would inform the provincial governor and the district governor of my visit. Without the impressive-looking authorization paper with its seals

and stamps from Addis Ababa, I could not have met with any local official. Also there would have been difficulties from the police for the Peace Corps Volunteers or missionaries with whom I met. I was often surprised to find how much the top officials were willing to tell me about the local problems. They were quite forthcoming in describing events and conditions. Where they and the PCVs and missionaries often diverged was in describing the causes or sources of the problems. The younger officials, schoolteachers, and National Service Volunteers (from HSI University) turned out to be excellent sources of information. Their views and goals were in opposition to the higher ups. The National Service Volunteers were the most critical. For the most part, they were in the provinces against their will. The National Service was created in 1964, and one year of service in the provinces was made a condition for graduating from the University. They were critical of the regime while in the university, but their demonstrations and oratory in favor of land and tax reform probably had limited effect in the capital. In the provinces, they saw up close what was happening and used their positions as teachers, health workers, engineers, et al to spread their views among their secondary-school students and coworkers.

*Q: Now let's take a city out in the hinterland somewhere in Tigre. You arrive. Do they know you are coming?*

BUCHÉ: Yes, let's take one of my visits to Makeli, the capital of Tigre. Ras Mengesha Seyoum, the Governor (and married to a granddaughter of the Emperor), would be told, by telephone or by radio, that John Buche from the American Embassy will arrive by plane or by road on a certain day for a visit of a week, and please give him all appropriate courtesies. I would often be received by a representative of the Governor, taken to the Governor's Office where I would meet him (if he were in town) and then introduced to the police chief, the army commander, the top officials in health, education, public works, telecommunications, and other ministries. On one occasion, I was invited to dinner by the Governor; on the second visit I was invited to dinner by another senior official. I would usually be escorted by a police or military officer when I traveled outside the town. Since I knew Amharic, I did not have an interpreter. I never had an interpreter. This was such an advantage, particularly in the provinces, where not many people spoke English in the early 1960s. Even in Tigre, where the mother tongue was Tigrinya, the officials had to know Amharic. Although I suspected my movements were monitored, I could call on local officials as I pleased. Sometimes we met along with their staff and sometimes alone. Spending a week in Tigre or in another province observing and conversing gave me an impression of the officials, the politics, the problems, and the potential of the area. I was not trying to be a junior CIA agent by calling on people at midnight asking what is the real scoop. Just by talking to a wide variety of local people, I could piece together enough to draw some conclusions. I believe my travels and reporting helped our Ambassador and policy-makers in Washington to understand with greater depth and more specificity what was happening outside of Addis Ababa and Asmara. My reporting was not much different than what most outside observers and analysts felt instinctively regarding the Imperial Ethiopian Government's administration in the provinces. I provided multiple and specific examples of the corruption, human rights abuses, and exploitation by the Government officials and the power structure (usually Amharas or Amharacized locals). I highlighted instances where officials and local notables seemed to be doing their jobs in a responsible manner. I reported local history, how and why certain events occurred, how certain families gained or lost power, why there were unusual ethnic mixtures, what was taking place on

the economic development side, how a new all-weather road was changing the dynamics of an area. I also reported on some armed clashes, raids, and uprisings which had occurred from a year to a few weeks before my visit to the local scene. We were aware of some of these events (from electronic monitoring from Kagnev and from the CIA, MAAG, and AID), but not many details or the causes. Some of my reporting covered areas or fields which journalists, academicians, or government offices should have published, but had not done so at that time. My reports named names, so we also expanded our biographic files considerably.) My work helped us understand the complexities and fragility of provincial Ethiopia a little bit better. In some cases the situation was better than we had imagined; in others it was much worse. At least, we had some notions of where the major problems were and the enormity of the Government's task to bring about reform, should the Emperor give his approval to move forward. In the mid-1960s, the hottest and most controversial subject was land reform. We were convinced there could be no lasting political stability or agricultural progress in Ethiopia until the land problem was resolved. There were numerous variations on the land-grab theme, but the largest chunks of land were those taken by the Government from the conquered peoples on the periphery of the Amhara/Tigre heartland and partially distributed to the Church, the victorious forces, and the ruling elite. Another category was the land taken by the power elite from the weaker parties, including Amharas and Tigres, through such means as corrupt courts, illegal seizures, or tampered documents. I had a feeling that meaningful land reform was not going to happen under Haile Selassie, despite the blatant wrongs and the seething resentment. Control of land was one of the keys to political power in Ethiopia. I did not see the Emperor as willing to take on the nobles, the generals, the Church, and other big landowners over this issue. He, however, wanted to give the appearance of doing something about the problem and set up a Government organization to collect data and study the issue. It was called something on the order of the "Institute for Cadastral Surveys and Land Reform". Funding and some technical assistance for the Institute came from the UN Development Program, the World Bank, and some national donors. Even the limited surveys and studies by the Institute began to document some of the past abuses. The students and other critics of the regime were not mollified by the creation of the Institute. The students took to the streets on several occasions for land reform. They carefully avoided directly criticizing the Emperor, but cited the Institute and some of the Emperor's own words to demand action. The students wanted fundamental change. The most frequently mentioned idea was a parliamentary democracy for Ethiopia, with the Emperor as titular head of state. This sounded progressive to the students, and was in line with what was happening in many newly-independent countries of Africa. Few students, however, seemed to think that there was any chance that the Emperor lead in that direction. For a student to speak publicly about such a change was simply too dangerous. They largely kept their revolutionary zeal under control because they did not want to be jailed or killed. They instead latched onto the theme of "land to the tiller," as a relatively safe (physically), but sufficiently progressive rallying call. There were a half dozen demonstrations by the students on that theme: "take the land away from the Church and nobility; give the land back to the tiller; set a maximum amount any one person could own." (The students during my time in Ethiopia were careful about not mentioning the Emperor in their sloganeering. Blaming the Ethiopian Orthodox Church or "the nobility" was sufficiently provocative to cause a strong reaction from the police.) A thousand students holding banners or placards would march out of the campus toward the Parliament or the Prime Minister's Office. The police would eventually go charging in and bash them with batons. Then the students would



flee, and the police would chase them down and arrest those they caught. They usually arrested several hundred.

The next day, a group of students would present a petition to the Emperor for the release of their colleagues. Haile Selassie would use the occasion to chastise the students for their disorderly conduct, their ingratitude for the reforms he instituted, and the dangerous example they were setting for the less-educated and less-privileged; commend the police for their restraint in the face of terrible provocations; and appeal to the students' parents for better control of their children. Often a delegation of parents or elders would also show up at the Palace to plead for the release of the students. Sometimes a contingent of police would be summoned and publicly praised for the exemplary performance of their duty. Usually the arrested students were released several days later. The Emperor sometimes used the occasion to make pronouncements along the lines of "We are in favor of land-reform. That is the reason We have set up the Institute to undertake surveys and to study what needs to be done. When the studies are completed, We will redistribute the land." I am not sure what the Emperor really had in mind, but my guess is that any real reform was far down the list of HIM's priorities. The students were demonstrating for land reform and had quiet, discreet support from many of their professors and from some government civil servants. (The students could demonstrate openly, with minimal consequences, but any public show of support from other elements would have been regarded as subversive.) Land reform (and the concomitant issues) was a subject we followed closely. I wrote a dozen or so airgrams on this theme. Land reform also caught Washington's attention, and the policy makers began to think about the implications for the US. They liked the idea. USAID began thinking what they could do to help. These are some examples of what I was reporting.

There was also the requirement to purchase public documents from the Ethiopian Government and send them to Washington. I also collected information from public sources about Government officials, academics, businessmen, and other leading or potentially leading figures.

I was tasked with improving the Embassy's biographic reporting program. I was fascinated by the intricate family relationships among the Ethiopian elite and realized how critical blood and marriage ties were to understanding the Ethiopian power structure. Sheldon Vance realized this and gave more attention to biographic reporting. Unfortunately, the Embassy bio files were pretty sparse when he arrived, except for the top hundred or so officials. He told the Embassy officers to concentrate on the next layer. I was told to study what we had in our bio files and to map out a plan to expand our coverage. I quickly noticed there was little information on the wives of the men covered by our files. I later learned that in some cases, those officials gained their positions through their wives' family ties. One of the reasons for the lack of information about the wives was obvious. No one at the Embassy knew enough Amharic to speak with them. When Ed Korry arrived, he insisted we give more priority to bio reporting and also tasked the USAID and MAAG officers with contributing. I spent a large amount of time working out the multilevel family ties and writing biographical reports as well as coordinating and editing the input from the country team. When I left the Embassy, there were bios on over a thousand Ethiopians.

As I followed developments in Ethiopia, initially as the Desk Officer and subsequently from other positions in the Foreign Service, I observed the accomplishments and careers of the

students, junior military officers, young academics, and civil servants whom I had come to know, had picked as potential leaders, and about whom I had written extensive bio reports. Ethiopians were not only quite knowledgeable about family ties, but usually were willing to speak about such relationships. It is a subject of importance to their culture. They needed to show family relationships in order to gain access to communal land (in the traditional Amhara regions) through their ancestry. They would use family ties, even very distant ones, to seek jobs, favors, influence, etc. Also of enormous significance was the issue of family relationships and lineage in marriage, both pro and con. Ethiopians traditionally are not allowed to marry anyone closer than the fifth degree of consanguinity, and the really devout make it seven degrees. That means they had to know who their cousins, nephews, and nieces were at least to the fifth-degree of consanguinity to avoid being guilty of incest. They were very knowledgeable about their families and often about the families of friends, neighbors, classmates, and colleagues at work. It really was not too difficult for the Embassy to chart family relationships. It required time and access, plus some knowledge of the culture. Of course the Imperial Family's relationships were well documented and publicized. Of greater interest to the Embassy were the nexus of relations several levels down

Whenever I traveled, I made it a point to find out as much as I could about the governors, the deputy governors, and the district and municipal officials, how they were related, where they were born, where else they had served, their education, and importantly, their views. The former were usually well known, and I could discuss such “facts” openly with them. Often they were flattered to think that someone from the American Embassy even cared about the curriculum vitae. Concerning the latter, namely their views, that was the tricky part if they were not solidly in the Emperor’s camp. On the other hand, there were some officials who had been exiled to the boondocks because they were suspected or proven to be critical of the Emperor. Family relationships protected them from prison, if the charges were not too grave. A few of these fellows were willing to share their opinions with me to a certain degree. Given the flexibility and the subtlety of the Amharic language, what they told me could be understood in several ways. It was clear that they were in “exile” and not thrilled about living away from their normal environment. Once I knew the family connections of an official, I could place things I had heard about him or her in perspective. For example why he could take away land from the people in his area with impunity. Simple, his uncle was the Minister of the Interior and his wife’s sister was married to a close relative of the Emperor. One of the most difficult aspects of following Ethiopian lineages is that names “disappear” after three generations. For example, the son and daughter of Mr. Abebe Getu would be named Berhe Abebe and Almaz Abebe. Berhe’s son and daughter would be named Hailu Berhe and Saba Berhe. Almaz’s children would follow the same paradigm and be named after their father. Females kept their own names after marriage, but there was no indication of the mother’s name in her child’s name. That is the Ethiopian naming system, so it is almost impossible without a chart to figure out from the name alone the person’s more distant antecedents or descendants. There were also numerous divorces and sometimes “natural offspring” who were later recognized.. We could really have used a computer in those days.

*Q: We're always looking for places of power. That's what political observers do. Did everything flow down from the Emperor, or were there perhaps other areas where the Emperor was not*

*interested in exercising power or where the governors were influential in doing something or other, or did it all keep coming back to the Emperor and the court?*

BUCHE: Without sounding too naive or too prone to oversimplify, the Emperor was the source of almost all power. His ability to move ministers and governors around, which he did periodically, so that they could not build up a power base or could not get any expertise was one way he exercised power. He moved governors and judges around, moved generals out to be governors, governors in to be ministers, shuffled the military and police constantly. He had three or four intelligence systems running concurrently, spying on each other and spying on everyone else. In his prime he was able to keep the many balls in the air. He was pretty busy keeping things in motion, but that was a source of power. There was an inherent instability to the system, since he was the only person who had the full view. While he would occasionally tolerate and even praise independent initiatives by subordinates, such actions were usually viewed negatively and punished in some way. Officials in Addis Ababa or in the provinces learned that it was safer to consult with the Emperor before undertaking an action that was not routine. We heard of many sudden assignments to the provinces or from one province to another, where the rumors had it that the cause was displeasure on the part of the Emperor at an action by the official. I can imagine a typical scenario where someone from the Imperial Palace telephones the official along the following lines: "His Imperial Majesty has graciously decided that you would be better suited to become the district governor of XYZ (about 500 miles away from where he was currently working). As of today your appointment as district governor in ABC is terminated. You will report for duty in seven days. His Imperial Majesty regrets that in this time of national austerity, there will be no funds available to cover your moving expenses." The Emperor grabbed power as a young man and held on against many rival contenders for decades. He was shrewd, cunning, far-sighted, and decisive in his prime. In 1963 when I arrived in Ethiopia, I believe the Emperor was about at the zenith of his mental abilities. What he accomplished on the international scene over the next several years was most impressive. The fact that he held the country together in the 1960s as well as he did, given the many internal and external challenges, demonstrates his extraordinary talents. By the late 1960s, however, it seemed to me that his powers began failing him.

*Q: You're talking about mental powers.*

BUCHE: Both his physical and mental powers began to weaken, and the system became unglued. You could see in the late '60s, early '70s, that things were coming undone. He could no longer juggle hundreds of important issues, keep up a heavy schedule of foreign and domestic travel, decide on the numerous personnel appointments, and continue to dispense instructions, rewards, and punishments through face-to-face meetings with his officials. He was aging and showed signs of mental and physical weariness. Concomitantly, the Ethiopian internal situation was developing in ways detrimental to the continuation of the Emperor's traditional way of ruling. Ideologies advocating basic changes in Ethiopia's political, social, and economic relationships were gaining adherents. The critics and enemies of Haile Selassie and imperial rule were becoming bolder in their opposition, as they saw the increasing support for change among the educated elite in the military and in the civilian bureaucracy.

Q: The Emperor *had a pretty good run for his money. He started out, I think, as regent in 1913 or thereabouts*

BUCHE: Yes, he had a remarkable run for his money. Haile Selassie began accumulating power already as a teenager. In 1913, he was made Regent and recognized as the heir apparent. He was crowned Emperor in 1930.. He showed his political genius in the way he advanced toward his goal of becoming Emperor. He had some advantages because of his father, but he had to outwit or defeat several formidable rivals before he could gain the crown.

Q: *It sounds like on anything government to government that there was not much need for going to ministries.*

BUCHE: We went to the ministries because that was where the decision-making process began. If a minister had not already received instructions on the issue from the Palace, he would know how to respond within a few days because the Emperor had ministerial meetings almost every day. I think once in a while the ministers would meet together with the Emperor for ceremonial reasons, but they usually just sat outside his office in the Palace, until he called them in one at a time. They would have ten or fifteen minutes to explain to His Imperial Majesty the issues involved. Sometimes the minister would get a quick decision, and sometimes he would be told to leave the papers for further study. The minister would then call up Ambassador Korry and say, "His Imperial Majesty has conveyed through me the following decision, or His Imperial Majesty is still studying the matter." Of course, there were some issues that our Ambassador had to discuss directly with the Emperor. The American Ambassador could get an appointment with the Emperor on short notice.

The Emperor seemed to be near the height of his mental powers during my time in Ethiopia. When I came back from Ethiopia, I was on the Ethiopian Desk for three years. As I recall, he still was still pretty sharp mentally. He was juggling new considerations, however. One was the rise of the independent African states and the OAU. He decided that Ethiopia was not going to be swept up in the flood of popular democracy, anti-colonialism, and "African" socialism. He saw the dangers to his power from the ideologies of Sekou Toure, Nasser, Jomo Kenyatta, et al. Haile Selassie had impeccable credentials as an anti-colonialist, but he also had excellent relations with the colonial powers. He had invited many young nationalist leaders to Addis Ababa when they were sorely in need of a little bit of money and some stroking, and he treated them magnificently. He was able to use the African independence movement to his and Ethiopia's advantage. We were amazed at how cleverly he handled this whole thing. He brought the African leaders together and persuaded them to sign the charter of the Organization of African Unity. He had set up the diplomatic work several years in advance and brought in a Chilean expert to write the charter (based to a large extent on the OAS). The Emperor was able to bring regional enemies and rivals together from the rest of Africa - the Moroccans, Tunisians, and the Algerians, Nasser and Sekou Toure. It worked, and they sat down and signed the Charter of the OAU in 1963. The Charter was not something that they saw for the first time in Addis; it was circulated much earlier. It was very cleverly written, so there was a very strong emphasis on "pre-colonial borders." There were some countries that did not want that concept included, in particular, Somalia. The Emperor cleverly isolated the Somalis before the conference, and they

had to go along. Most African countries wanted pre-colonial borders. There was no alternative to the concept, but war.

*Q: It's been an article of faith with us, anyway, that once you uncork this - whoosh - I mean, the whole Continent would fall apart into a thousand little tribal enclaves, and so like it or lump it, there it is.*

BUCHE -The Charter did allow an escape clause, something along the line that these unjust colonial borders shall remain, unless mutually agreed to by all parties concerned. That could mean the barrel of a gun, but it was enough to allow everyone to sign. Also there was a dispute-solving mechanism. The Emperor figured that his prestige could be enhanced if the OAU became the venue for intra-African dispute negotiations. The OAU had a crisis on its hands within months after the Charter was signed. It was the Moroccan-Algerian War. That crisis was followed by others throughout the Continent with numerous assassinations and *coups d'état* in dozens of African countries. Many of the disputes did end up at the OAU in Addis Ababa. The Emperor almost always was involved in some way in seeking a resolution of the disputes.

*Q: Well, the borders have been really quite stable, when you think about it, particularly because they're so artificial. You talked about the students. I was in Yugoslavia as chief of the Consular Section during this time you were in Addis, and the African students who had ended up in Bulgaria basically revolted, and they came out through Yugoslavia. They felt they had been badly mistreated by the Bulgarians, and there was much of this from coming out of Lumumba University in Moscow. Were you getting any reflection of the Soviet attempt to educate Ethiopians during this time?*

BUCHE: Well, the Soviets recognized the potential of the students, and they were trying to get a foothold at the Haile Selassie University. The University was heavily American-oriented. This was something that upset the British enormously, because they had played a key role in liberating Ethiopia from the Italian occupation and had provided the Royal Family of Ethiopia with asylum during the war years. The British thought they would be asked to set up an African Oxbridge in Ethiopia. The Americans were also eager to help the Ethiopians to establish a university, with US Government funds and foundation money, particularly the Ford Foundation. Several American universities were seeking to set up cooperative arrangements. The Emperor took his time to weigh the options. He probably also considered the state of the UK's finances and concluded that Her Majesty's Government would not have much money for a non-Commonwealth country. He chose the American concept. The Soviets were basically left out. Since Ethiopia was officially non-aligned, the Emperor had to balance what he was doing with the Americans by something for the Soviets. They were allowed to set up a technical institute in Bahir-Dar, which was a small town, a rough day's ride from Addis Ababa on the southern shore of Lake Tana. They set up an institute in Bahir-Dar as part of the University, but it conferred only associate degrees in the technical fields. The Soviets were also allowed to place a few professors on the main campus of Haile Selassie University in Addis Ababa. There were, if my recollection is correct, maybe two or three Russian professors. I think they were on the medical or the mathematics faculty.

What the Soviets did at the time was to offer scholarships to Lumumba University in Moscow, and lean on the East Germans, the Bulgarians, and other Eastern European allies to offer scholarships. The Ethiopian Government did not turn these scholarships down. There was not a long line of Ethiopians waiting to go, but if they were turned down by the Americans, the Brits, or the Canadians, they applied. Maybe their thinking went along the lines that it may not be too bad to go to Lumumba, particularly when word began circulating in Addis that if they went for a year or two and then “defected” while on vacation in Western Europe, they were almost sure of getting an American scholarship. I do not know how many Ethiopians tried the “defection” gambit, but about a hundred Ethiopian students departed the country annually for study in the U.S.S.R. and in Eastern Europe. Ethiopian policy was that undergraduates should go to the local University. At first, the USG financed some undergraduates for US colleges, but as the Haile Selassie University developed, we stopped that policy and funded only graduate students.

The Soviets were playing that game, too. They were offering scholarships on the graduate level, but were at some disadvantage: the students had to learn a new language; Moscow was cold; and the prospective students were not sure what type of education they would receive or what their job prospects would be if they returned to Ethiopia. AID had a hefty budget for scholarships at the graduate level, and there was also the Fulbright Program under the US Information Service, but not enough to meet the demand. One day, a dozen unsuccessful scholarship applicants came to the Embassy and asked to see Ambassador Korry. He met with them, and they told him that if he did not arrange for scholarships to the USA, they would go to Lumumba University. He responded, “Well, that's wonderful! We think you should go to Lumumba University. They can offer you an opportunity for a good education.” They were shocked at his response, but he was not going to yield to threats or get into a bidding contest.

In a similar fashion, the Prime Minister and the Minister of State for Education, the Aklilu brothers, at a social occasion, confronted Ambassador Korry and pleaded for another hundred scholarships through the USAID program. They threatened to send some excellent students to the USSR if they did not obtain the additional scholarships. Korry asked them whom they planned to send to the USSR. They replied they would send the most conservative students to the Soviet Union and the more radical ones to the United States. He said, “You're doing it all wrong. What you ought to do is send your most radical students to Moscow.” He then proposed a plan to the two Ministers. “I can get you some money, so that you can fund more students for the USSR. (The Ethiopian Government had to pay transport and some other expenses for its students going to the USSR.) Korry’s idea knocked those two Ministers for a loop. He said he would try to get some money from Washington to send more students. The condition was that the Ethiopian Government had to agree to start sending the most radical students. The two Aklilu brothers thought that he was pulling their leg, but Korry was really serious.

The next day he expounded on this at the Country Team meeting, and the reaction was along the lines of, “Ed, you're absolutely out of your mind. Those students are going to come back and start a revolution.” He retorted, “No, they 're going to come back, and they're going to work against a revolution, because they will have seen what Russia, what the Soviet Union, is all about.” He put his request in writing, and Washington thought the plan was crazy, so it went nowhere. Korry was certain his idea was sound, and after the initial shock, several of us were also convinced this is what we should do. Help the Ethiopian Government (covertly) to send the

radical students to Lumumba University, where they would be offended by the Russian racist attitudes, shocked at the low living levels of the people, and disappointed by the quality of education. The other side of his proposal was for the Ethiopian Government to send the more conservative students to the USA and to Western European universities. He reasoned that by continuing the current policy of sending the leftist students to the United States and Western Europe, they would be encouraged by their radical American professors to become even more revolutionary. When the army mutinies and revolts started in Ethiopia in 1973, many of the civilian leaders who joined their cause were students who had studied in the United States and France. Not many of the Soviet-trained students were involved in the early days of the revolt. The real leaders had trained in the USA and Western Europe.

Q: *Yes, like Nkrumah.*

BUCHE: Yes, and some other African revolutionaries. The Ethiopian students were seen as a critical group, along with the young military officers. Both groups were courted by various embassies. There were four Amharic speakers in the diplomatic corps at that time, one at the British Embassy, two at the Russian Embassy, and myself. The two Russian Amharic speakers were very good. We ran into each other occasionally on the campus.

Q: *How important was the army?*

BUCHE: It was an article of faith that as long as the army stayed united and loyal to the Emperor, his throne was secure. There could be insurrections, but the army could put them down. The police had only some light weapons, so they were not a real force. We were trying, through our Military Advisory Assistance Group (MAAG) and our Defense Attaches, to learn more about the younger army officers. It was difficult to get close to the group. Neither they nor their superiors (nor the Ethiopian security officers) wanted the MAAG officers or the attaches from any of the embassies to get very close. The job of the MAAG was to train the Ethiopian officers in tactics, command structure, communications, maintenance, and other military skills. They were not trained to gather intelligence on how the Ethiopian officers regarded the Emperor, their superiors, their colleagues, those advocating reform, or to how to make informed estimates regarding personal or unit loyalties. We realized we would have to help the MAAG in this endeavor. A partial solution was for me to accompany the MAAG training teams as they went out into the field. I would try to get to know some of the Ethiopian officers, to see who they were, what they were like, and to try to help the MAAG officers to do the same. After a half dozen trips with the MAAG, I concluded I did not learn a great deal about the thinking of individual Ethiopian officers, but I obtained a much better feel for some of the many, many problems of the country. About all I could get from the officers was their career path, where they had served, their education, and something about their family. It was better than nothing - which was what we had in our files on most of the young officers. The big plus was to spend several days with the Ethiopian military in the far reaches of the Empire (the Ogaden, the southern provinces of Bale Goba and Sidamo, and near the Eritrean border) and to observe their interaction with the local people. We really needed some MAAG officers who were interested in the political developments in Ethiopia and who would over several years get to know a dozen Ethiopian officers well enough that they could share with the Embassy something more than raw data of a CV. From Korry on down to me, we were convinced the military, and especially the

younger officers, the captains, majors, and colonels, largely controlled the direction and fate of the Ethiopian Government in the near future. It was frustrating that we knew so little about this potentially key group, but what was even more maddening was that we could not adequately take advantage of a superb entrée into the group, the MAAG. Despite Korry's efforts with the MAAG CO and several senior officers, we did not get very far. They promised closer cooperation, and in some cases did so (allowing an Embassy officer to accompany field training teams), but they did not see the task as a priority. The MAAG was in Ethiopia to train the Ethiopian military. The individual U.S. officers would be evaluated and promoted on the success of their achievements in the training area. They did not see gathering political intelligence as their job. They so often replied to Korry and others at the Embassy with some sort of variation of that was the military attachés' job. The military attachés in my time in Ethiopia did not do much in the line of political intelligence gathering among the Ethiopian military. They followed the order of battle, location of units, collected names and biographic data. Who were the major unit commanders, the deputy commanders, the company commanders? What was the status of the two officers going to Fort Leavenworth and who is going to Fort Benning, and who will be going to learn small unit tactics or communications at this or that school? I remember one session in 1964 with the attaches when Korry and Sheldon prodded them to learn more about morale problems of units or individual officers. Korry said there must be some colonels who are unhappy, or some majors and maybe some brigadier generals, or maybe even some generals who are discouraged, resentful, or frustrated. Do you know of any or have you heard rumors of such? Their answers were negative, and the discussion ended soon thereafter. About a month later, there was an attempted coup by a dozen middle-level military officers, all of whom were in frequent contact with the MAAG. One (Lieutenant Colonel Imru Wondie) was known to the Embassy, since his wife worked at the USIS Library. The coup was unsuccessful. (One of the co-conspirators betrayed the plot to the Government.) The local CIA Station was also focusing on the military and had developed some sources. The CIA learned about the 1964 coup while it was still in the late planning stage. I was asked to translate some of the documents the CIA had acquired. The CIA had penetrated some elements of the military and were getting some information. What was interesting about the 1964 coup attempt was the fact that the CIA had subsequently learned that several of the plotters were known by their fellow officers to be outspoken in their criticism of the top generals (and by implication, the Emperor). This was not picked up by the MAAG or the Attaches during their contacts with the individuals.

I learned from one of my acquaintances at the University that a dozen Ethiopian Air Force officers were taking evening courses there. I mentioned this to Sheldon Vance, and he passed it on to the Ambassador. Korry called me to his office and suggested that I should enroll. You will get to know not only the Air Force officers, but other students and some faculty members. So I became a student for four evenings a week in courses on political science and Ethiopian geography. The Political Science course was taught by a young Ethiopian Ph.D. from an Ivy League school, Amare Tekle. He later became the principal political advisor to the OAU. The geography course was taught by Mesfin Wolde Mariam. He was a well known critic of the regime at the time. (He eventually became critical of the Mengistu and Meles regimes and was arrested by both!) In the political science, we were given reading assignments from Plato, Aristotle, Montesquieu, the American Constitution, and Wilson's Fourteen Points. In the Ethiopian context, such ideas were bordering on the revolutionary. There were interesting classroom discussions. The students were careful not to criticize the current Ethiopian political



situation *directly*. They, instead, expressed their admiration for the ideals contained in the readings and realized to varying degrees in Western states. There were always several agents from the Security enrolled in each University class taking notes, but the professors and the students were clever enough not to say anything personally incriminating. I had had the political science material in greater depth before, but the content of the geography class was almost entirely new for me. I entered into class discussions at times, but preferred to listen to others express their views. I took both courses as non-credit, so that if there were a grading curve, I would not be competing against the Ethiopians. I got to know some of the other students, as well as my two professors. I also realized that my fellow students, Air Force Officers and young bureaucrats and businessmen, were highly critical and resentful toward the regime, even though they were careful in their actual words. They were not as daring or as rash as the full-time students of the University, but they were probably just as angry and frustrated. And in the case of the Air Force officers, they were potentially in a position to do something other than a protest march. The following semester I took courses in Ethiopian constitutional law from Professor Berekete-Ab Habte Selassie and in Ethiopian ethnic groups from Dr. Fekadu Gedamu.

To answer your question in another way, we were convinced the military was the key to Ethiopia's future. We did not know how long the Emperor could hang on, and what would be the circumstances of his removal from the scene - death from natural causes, an incapacitating stroke, assassination, arrest, etc.? Who would make the successful move? Would the move or action come from the top generals and their civilian allies because they were threatened or felt that they had to take pre-emptive action? Or was the action to come from the brigadier generals, colonels, and the lower ranks? The permutations were endless, so we watched, took notes, and did our best to get to know as many potential future leaders as possible. Ambassador Korry made that a top priority in the allocation of our resources. We even formalized our priorities under the Department's "Policy Planning and Resource Allocation Program." (This was a novel program for the DOS, although in the Pentagon and in many large corporations, it was a fundamental management tool. Addis Ababa was one of the first posts selected to inaugurate the program, largely because Korry saw the potential benefits and asked to be included in the experiment. We were extremely fortunate to have Jack Gloster assigned to the Embassy to help us get started.)

*Q: Did we get involved with the Ethiopians over relations with Somalia, over the Ogaden?*

BUCHÉ: Yes, we did not only for strategic reasons, but also because we had a clause in our agreement with them about the use of our military equipment. They could not use the equipment we provided outside of Ethiopia, and they could use it only inside Ethiopia to repulse or to defend the country against "external forces". The Ethiopian Government interpreted that to mean Somalis, whether internal or external, since they regarded any attacks on Ethiopians in the Ogaden as basically supported from outside. The Ethiopian Government maintained that the weapons and support for the attacks in the Ogaden were coming from the Somali Republic. We basically acquiesced in the use of USG-supplied weapons, planes, and ground equipment against Somali forces inside of Ethiopia, but were strongly opposed to their use outside of the country. Despite the agreement, the Ethiopian military crossed the borders. They bombed Hargeisa on at least one occasion with our planes, and took our tanks and APCs into northern Somalia in pursuit of Somali forces or to make a show of force. Once they went across the border into the territory

of Djibouti while pursuing a Somali force and ran into a French Foreign Legion unit on maneuvers, but the Ethiopians retreated rapidly back to their country.

Whenever we learned that the Ethiopians crossed borders, we raised hell with the Prime Minister or the Defense Minister. Their response was usually, "we went only a couple of kilometers inside and were in hot pursuit". I remember one time when Vance heard from the MAAG that an Ethiopian unit had crossed the Somali border. He got on the phone to the Minister of Defense and told him, "You had better get those APCs back on this side of the border immediately." The Minister replied, "I think we've accomplished our mission." So he ordered them to return. We kept saying to the Ethiopians not to overreact. There were some Ethiopian officials who had a fixation on bombing Mogadishu. We, of course, told them it was unwise to consider such an action. We all knew that it was not possible for our F-5 fighters to reach Mogadishu from any existing base in Ethiopia. That was a real problem, so the Ethiopian Government decided to build an airport deep in the Ogaden at a site called Gode. We told them they should not do that, but they persisted. They remonstrated that they were a sovereign nation and could build an airport wherever they desired. That was, of course, true, but we also held some trump cards. We told them we would refuse to give them navigation equipment and spare parts; we would forbid our MAAG teams from going to the new airport to provide technical assistance; and we would hold them accountable if any of our planes crossed a border. We could not persuade them to abandon the idea, but the Embassy successfully delayed any concrete actions. They eventually wasted money and built an airport. They did not station our planes there, however, possibly because of the vulnerability of the planes to ground attacks. The Ethiopians would have needed several battalions of troops to protect the planes from a mortar attack.

Relations between Ethiopia and Somalia were tenuous, at best. There was constant strife, friction, and fighting in the Ogaden. While I was at the Embassy, there were ambushes and small-unit attacks by the Somalis. The Ethiopians would sometimes succeed in intercepting raiding parties or engage the small units in battle. More often, however, the Ethiopians would suffer casualties and not be able to locate the aggressors. They would then retaliate against civilians, by taking away their livestock or vehicles or burning their tents. It was constantly attack, counter-attack, and reprisal.

The situation in the Ogaden was deteriorating, and both the Ethiopian and the U.S. authorities were concerned. We were asked by the Ethiopians to send Special Forces to provide the Ethiopian military with counter-insurgency training. There was some squeamishness on Washington's part about where the training would be given, but the decision was made to do it in the Ogaden. The sites selected were major Ethiopian military outposts. Washington was afraid of an attack by the Somalis on an Ethiopian unit while the Special Forces were around. The Special Forces might get caught up in the fighting. Maybe there would be a casualty or two. Then the American public would ask what were the Special Forces doing in the Ogaden? Fortunately, there were no incidents. I was pleased to be allowed to accompany one of the teams for about a week of their usual month-long training sessions. Not only did I get an up-close view of the Ogaden, with its harsh environment, but I got an earful of the views of the Ethiopian Army officers who were confronted daily with a hostile, armed population. The officers seemed to regard the Somalis the way I imagined the U.S. Cavalry thought about the American Indians in the post-Civil War era. The Special Forces team, however, told the Ethiopian military that to

defeat the insurgency they had to improve their anti-guerrilla tactics and also to convince the local population that it had more to gain from cooperation with Ethiopia than supporting the insurgency. The Special Forces spoke about winning over the Somalis. For a day and a half, the Ethiopians just kept their mouths shut and listened to the Americans speak about hearts and minds, building bridges to local Somali elders and leaders, treating the sick Somalis, giving inoculations, avoiding reprisals, etc. The Ethiopians were resigned to putting up with that. Then the good stuff began. How to set an ambush, how to defend against an ambush, how to develop local intelligence sources, how to interrogate captured fighters, etc. The Ethiopians were really interested, and the sessions lasted into the night. The Special Forces trainers were real professionals. Most of them had experience in Vietnam, and some of them also had been active in Latin America and the Congo, so they were knowledgeable. The Ethiopians I observed respected the Special Forces team and listened to their advice on tactical issues. The Ethiopian army officers, however, were unconvinced about the “hearts and minds” aspects of the training.

Anike and I departed Ethiopia in July of 1966. We were looking forward to living in Washington and seeing our families more regularly. My parents were living in Indiana, and Anike’s parents were in Huntersville, North Carolina. We were also looking forward to consulting top-notch medical specialists about Anike’s inability to carry her pregnancies to term as a result of our RH incompatibility. As we said good-bye to the many Ethiopians whom we had met and had grown to like, we wondered when we would be seeing them again. Since I was assigned to the Ethiopian Desk in the Department, I was confident I would be seeing many of them when I returned in a year or so for consultations with the Embassy. Anike had made a lot of Ethiopian friends on her own. She worked with Don Paradis and Seyoum Haregot in the Prime Minister’s Office for over a year and with Habte Selassie Tafessa, the head of the Ethiopian Tourist Organization, for about two years. As I had assumed, I did return. Anike did not return until 1970, when we stopped in Addis Ababa for a week en route to a posting in Blantyre, Malawi.

**LEWIS D. JUNIOR**  
**Organization of African Unity**  
**Addis Ababa (1963-1967)**

*Lewis D. Junior was born in Kansas in 1925. He graduated from Georgetown University and served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Mr. Junior joined the Foreign Service in 1951 and served in Nigeria, Italy, Germany, Ethiopia, Zaire, the Netherlands, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.*

*Q: Then you moved from those rather lofty concerns down to another country which had much more basic problems. You went to Ethiopia, where you served from '63 to '67, is that right?*

JUNIOR: I believe that timing is right, yes.

*Q: What were you doing there?*

JUNIOR: As an aside, I've had three on-continent tours in Africa. And if I knew to select three countries to go to, I would go to the three I went to, because they were important and different and interesting. There was Lagos, West Africa; we had Ethiopia, which is barely African at all; and then, of course, there is the heart of Africa, not only Zaire, but southern Zaire, Lubumbashi. That leaves out, of course, the important southern tier, but I was never tempted to apply for a job there because I wasn't sure I could abide apartheid; I'm not sure I could have lived happily with it.

I had a unique job in Ethiopia. I went to fill a job newly created, because Haile Selassie, it appeared at the time, and appeared correctly at the time, had managed to steal the "capital of Africa" from everybody else. That is, the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity. That was later confirmed. It was still tentative at the time the department had decided that we needed another officer in Addis to follow that exclusively. So I was, at least technically, and in many ways functionally, not involved in Ethiopian problems at all; I was trying to work out a relationship with the secretariat of the OAU. Which was not easy.

*Q: What was the American attitude towards this new organization?*

JUNIOR: It was nebulous but friendly, because one didn't know what the new organization was, what it would do, what attitudes it would take on, whether it was beast or beauty, and whether it was friend or foe. So that the initial job was to establish good lines of communication. And for those who tried, that far back, to establish friendly relationships with the haughty Ethiopians, that was a tough job. Because at that point every member of the secretariat, including the secretary general pro tem, were Ethiopians. A number of those people are now in the United States, in refugee status; but, then, they were not at all pleased to see this imperialist power showing some interest in what the OAU was up to.

*Q: How did you deal with them?*

JUNIOR: Gingerly. It took a while for the staffing to change, and eventually a number of other nationalities arrived to take over some new jobs. The first secretary general was from Guinea, and that was the famous (or the infamous) Diallo Teli, who was no friend to the United States. Then we had Nigerians and Moroccans and Tunisians and so forth, and when they began to arrive, it became easier to communicate with them. But it was always tricky, because a number of those folks were no less suspicious of American motive. So when you went around and tried to present a position on an upcoming agenda item for a meeting of the OAU, they were loath to take careful note as to what you had to say.

*Q: Did you find that the Soviets had more of an entrée? Because this was certainly at the height of their sort of opening to Africa and all of that, as fellow anti-colonialists or something like that, despite what they did at home.*

JUNIOR: Were you to ask the then U.S. ambassador, Ed Korry, you might get a different answer than I would give. I don't really think that they had much influence on the organization, as an organization; I think they had considerable influence in the constituent countries. But the emperor, who had pulled off this coup of getting the "capital of Africa," was determined that

nobody else was going to find any reason whatsoever to steal it away from him, so I'm sure he fended off the Soviets as effectively as he did us. I don't think that they had any particular influence at the time.

*Q: What about your relation with the ambassador? Edward Korry was a fairly strong character, wasn't he?*

JUNIOR: He was indeed.

*Q: And how did he treat you and the OAU?*

JUNIOR: He was a man of great passion and vigor and intelligence and ego. He had worked very hard. I think that a number of his efforts directed at the Ethiopians might have been self-defeating, in that they didn't necessarily cotton up to that open, aggressive approach that he had. But he was influential, and he managed to shake the tree of American assistance vigorously enough to produce some aircraft and other things that the emperor wanted. I think maybe the country was too small for him, but he made the most of it, and he was always making something happen.

He was not averse to picking up good ideas, no matter what the source. And any number of his staff commented, then and later, that they would come up with an idea which he would immediately pooh-pooh, but within a discernible period of time, that idea would emerge in something that he would write himself. Rarely would he say thanks, or that's a good idea, but he was listening.

On one occasion he called me into his office to rip me apart for something I had done or had not done, so I went over to the door to the office and closed it, and we had at it for about ten minutes. After that, he treated me with considerable respect. I think that if he saw someone who was unable or unwilling to fight back and to stand their own ground, then he would crawl all over them. So it was okay after that.

*Q: At that point was the height of the importance of Kagnew Base in Asmara, which was basically a listening post/communications base which we had there. Did that make it awkward as far as dealing with the rest of the African states, from your point of view? Here we had this base in Ethiopia, was that a problem?*

JUNIOR: It was more a problem for the emperor than it was for us. And if someone taxed us with that, we'd say, "Hey, we're here by invitation." But the emperor handled it right. It didn't get much publicity, and I don't think we...

*Q: The man who basically overthrew the emperor was overthrown himself today, on May 21.*

JUNIOR: Oh, I hadn't heard that.

*Q: Yes, Mengistu supposedly left for Zimbabwe or somewhere like that. So things keep changing. But what was the view of the emperor's position, and were we looking towards outside of the emperor's immediate circle, or were we under constraints for contacts?*

JUNIOR: That was *the* game in Addis: What happens after the fall? Or after the succession. I don't know of anybody who really got it right.

*Q: I was the INR officer for the Horn of Africa, from '60 to '62, '61 or something like that. I was playing the game of what happens after that. He'd been around since 1913, and I think people... up to then, and it was really into the seventies before something happened.*

JUNIOR: My colleagues did what they could to understand what was going on, but it was difficult indeed, for a whole number of reasons. One is the perception of our office in Asmara, which is not... We had little or no outreach, and it was important... importance to be able to talk to people... country. What was going on in the..., potentially Somali country. People just couldn't get there. It was understaffed... there was no way... But the... tribe... the emperor... horror... very... to even associate with... contact... It was hard to find anybody... And others were loath because of the emperor's... So we reached out... church and its role...

*Q: The Coptic Church...*

JUNIOR: But so far... I tried, I failed.

*Q: Were there any major sort of internal developments that impacted on the work you doing, either in Ethiopia or outside Ethiopia, that caused you concern?*

JUNIOR: Well, we had the crisis in the Congo, which was in part played out in Addis wherein they had special meetings of the OAU there. And that illustrates a point I was making earlier: we had things we wanted to say to the OAU, and to selected member states, about what was going to happen and why we airdropped over Kisangani and so forth.

*Q: This was Dragon Rouge? This was when there were the breakaway provinces?*

JUNIOR: That's right. In the easternmost province there was a very dire threat of slaughter of various Westerners.

*Q: This was Simbas?*

JUNIOR: Well, the Simbas were in the south, that was in Lubumbashi. There was unrest there, but at this point the problem was around Kisangani, upriver. And you recall that's where we supplied airlift. And I think...was it the Belgian troopers?

*Q: Belgian paratroopers.*

JUNIOR: ... And some of our people..., but it didn't turn out to be a major bloodbath. Well, concurrently, there were meetings in Addis, where we tried to influence African views on this,

and point out that what we were doing was looking after human life and not trying to be imperialists. But you can imagine the kind of beating we took there.

*Q: I was in Yugoslavia at the time, and the neutral nations were making a big thing about our interference in Africa. What sort of reaction were you getting from within the OAU?*

JUNIOR: Very negative. Almost universally negative. I think there were some people who did understand what was going on, but there was no particular reason for them to take up our cause.

*Q: Could you sell them on the protecting of lives?*

JUNIOR: To be cynical about it (and perhaps pretty wrong about it), there were so many African lives being sacrificed, at African hands, that there was very little interest in white lives who happened to get in the way. No, you couldn't tell them... That's the point of view you had to take in this, but they didn't really care.

**GORDON WINKLER**  
**USIS**  
**Addis Ababa (1964-1967)**

*Gordon Winkler was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1924. He received a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College in 1948. In addition to serving in Ghana and Washington, DC Mr. Winkler served in Ethiopia and Iran. Mr. Winkler was interviewed by Dorothy Robins Mowry on March 23, 1989*

WINKLER: Right. So we left just before Christmas of 1963, spent Christmas in Paris and New Year's in Rome, and arrived in Addis Ababa about the fourth or fifth of January.

*Q: Did you have any language training?*

WINKLER: No language at all. Really, no one was trained. I had a fair amount of Spanish in both high school and college, but I really couldn't handle it. Peggy spoke French before she spoke English, because she and her sisters had a Swiss nurse. Her French is quite good. But as far as the Ethiopian language, Amharic, is concerned, maybe one officer in the embassy was trained in that, and some of the Peace Corps volunteers, but nobody in USIS had it.

*Q: What was it like in Ethiopia at that time? This was in January 1964. It was still under Haile Selassie?*

WINKLER: It was still under Haile Selassie. I keep relating my recollections about Ethiopia to my recollections of my last post, which was Iran, because there was a great deal of similarity in the political atmosphere. In both cases, the United States was as close to being the metropole as is possible with an historically independent country. These were countries that had been

independent for centuries, although, parenthetically, the Iranians might say that they hadn't been that independent, given British and Russian influence in the country since the past century.

*Q: Maybe longer.*

WINKLER: Maybe longer. But technically, they had been independent. But the United States really had a very, very powerful influence and role to play in both of those countries in the modern era--that is, since World War II.

*Q: How had the U.S. come to play such a role in Ethiopia? I would have thought more the Italians.*

WINKLER: The Italians had been in Italian Somaliland, and they had been in northern Ethiopia-Eritrea. It had been an Italian colony; the principal city is Asmara. Following the war, Eritrea became an Ethiopian province, but never a comfortable one. The Eritrean liberation movement was going on when we arrived in 1964, and it is still going on.

*Q: I saw a bumper sticker this morning about Eritrea. "Free Eritrea" or "Always Free Eritrea," something to that effect.*

WINKLER: Our interests, to a large degree, in Ethiopia were military. We had a very substantial communications facility in Asmara, at a base called Kagnaw Station. That, to a considerable degree, was a thorn in the side of many Ethiopians, particularly young Ethiopians. But in comparing those two countries, while we did hear in Ethiopia a considerable amount of criticism about the U.S. role and we were conscious of anti-Americanism, it wasn't quite as clear and as sharply defined as it was in Iran. I think it was just as strong, but I suppose it relates to the character of the people and their culture.

*Q: Would it have to do with literacy and media?*

WINKLER: There were a lot of very literate Ethiopians; there was a media presence. Newspapers were fairly rudimentary, but as in Iran, there were many Ethiopians who were American-educated or European-educated. There was still the connection, to a degree, with Italy.

*Q: That's an asset.*

WINKLER: Yes. We would hear criticisms about the United States role in the country, but not quite as sharply as we would in Iran, because Ethiopians are somewhat more reserved, less direct, less forthright. Iranians, as you know, are not direct in the Anglo-Saxon sense, but Ethiopians are even less so. At the same time we had close Ethiopian friends, and the country is beautiful. We lived right in Ethiopian neighborhoods.

*Q: There wasn't an enclave?*

WINKLER: Happily, there was no enclave. We could look out of our bedroom window on the second floor of our house and see the neighbors defecating in their yard, but that's the way it



was, that's the nature of the town, and we got used to it. There was a primitiveness, a considerable primitiveness when you got out into the countryside, but the country was spectacular.

There was a huge dichotomy between the poor and the wealthy, which is standard, of course, in most of the developing world. But in Ethiopia it was particularly startling. I recall being invited to a huge dinner when Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip visited the Emperor, and the dinner was in a monumental dining room about the size of a football field under a kind of straw roof. There must have been 1,000 people invited to that. I obviously was way below the salt.

*Q: A guest of Haile Selassie?*

WINKLER: A guest of Haile Selassie. I'll never forget the beautiful china, the magnificent crystal, the very costly silverware and linens on this absolutely huge banquet table that seemed to go on for city blocks. The basic Ethiopian drink is a honey mead called tej which I found to be cloyingly sweet. At the banquet, there was crystal for about six or seven kinds of tej.

*Q: I bet it's very potent after a while.*

WINKLER: I never drank that much of it, but this tej was good. The palace tej was dry. I recall that every two guests at this banquet had a liveried butler or waiter standing behind him or her in an 18th century costume--it may have been satin. So the service was very good.

*Q: This is how it is at the palace in London, as I understand it.*

WINKLER: Haile Selassie didn't want the Queen to feel homesick. The greatest fireworks display I've ever seen followed the dinner.

*Q: Where did Haile Selassie's money come from? Was there wealth in the country or land? Was it agriculturally viable those days?*

WINKLER: In those days, it was very agriculturally viable, but underdeveloped. The country had terribly rich soil. In recent years they've had droughts. They've had periodic droughts throughout history, but it would rejuvenate itself. As in many developing countries, high-level corruption was rampant. There was great wealth in the Coptic Church, which owned a huge amount of land, probably most of the land. The country desperately needed land reform and tax reform and never really had it. We were also putting in, of course, substantial amounts of money through a very big military advisory group and an AID program. An awful lot of Americans were there.

*Q: Did you meet and encounter Haile Selassie? What kind of a person was he?*

WINKLER: I never had a conversation with Haile Selassie. We were invited to the palace as part of the diplomatic corps on a number of occasions, and I was introduced to him and shook hands with him. He was a dignified, very small man, who always had at his feet, or sitting on his lap, one or two Chihuahua dogs, or Pomeranians.

*Q: Is this where the stories come from about the lions?*

WINKLER: We had horses there, and we used to ride several times a week. When we would ride around the palace, I was often unnerved in seeing a lion sitting by himself on top of the palace wall, and wonder if the lion was hungry! They told a story about Kwame Nkrumah, who was the first president of Ghana, visiting Haile Selassie, and as he was ushered into the palace by the Ghanaian ambassador, he saw Haile Selassie seated at his throne with a couple of lions walking around in the throne room, and the Ghanaian ambassador said, "Mr. President, just ignore the lions or pet them." Nkrumah is supposed to have said, "You're out of your mind. I know better. I'm an African."

*Q: This was, after all, your first post. You were the information officer for the embassy. How was the transition from the private sector, where, in effect, you were an information officer into the government? Was it an easy transition for you?*

WINKLER: Yes, it was. I think I was selling a better product in Ethiopia than I'd been selling. There was an awful lot to do. We didn't seem to have funding problems. We had enough money to spend. I had developed a habit in the private sector--one had to--to work very hard and work very long hours.

*Q: You were dealing primarily with the print media?*

WINKLER: With the print media and broadcast. Television came in while we were there. Of course, all the media was government media. There was no private media. We could get editorials written, and we could get a great deal of material into the papers. The editors, though, were not patsies for us. Many of the editors were European or American-educated. They often looked upon us with a jaundiced eye. We had to become friendly with them. I saw an awful lot of them socially and professionally.

There was one fellow who went to Boston University, by the name of Tegegne Yetashework. He was editor of the Ethiopian Herald when I was there. We became very close. He'd come over to our house three or four nights a week, and sit down at the dinner table with us--not to eat, but to have a glass of orange juice and chew the fat and be with us and our kids.

I'll never forget, when we sent Marines into the Dominican Republic, which must have been 1964-65, I heard it on the VOA, went to the office, and got a call about 10:00 in the morning from Tegegne. He said, "Come on over to the office if you've got a little time. Let's have a cup of coffee."

So I went over there and we sat at a little sidewalk cafe outside of his office, and he bought me a cup of coffee. He said, "This has nothing to do with your job or my job, but I'm terribly disturbed. Tell me when I'm going to see American Marines coming up that street." I said I didn't think he would. They never have. But I relate this anecdote because it was things like this, events like this in various parts of the world, that concerned people about the U.S.

Tegegne later became assistant minister of information. One morning in Iran, Peg and I were at the breakfast table, and she was reading one of the Iranian papers, which headlined the fact that in Ethiopia, the new regime which had thrown out Haile Selassie, had taken 60 people out and shot them. The Iranian paper listed the names, and Tegegne was one of them.

*Q: Was there any censorship in that kind of a totalitarian state? I don't know how totalitarian that was in comparison with Iran.*

WINKLER: It was totalitarian, as Iran was. There was an absolute monarch in both places. There was a kind of self-censorship. The editors knew what they could run and what they couldn't run. There was a weakly enforced Third Country rule, which you're familiar with. They wouldn't take anything from the Russians that knocked us, and they wouldn't take anything from us that knocked the Russians. But in those days, the Russians really didn't amount to much in Ethiopia. They had a small cultural center and library--a place to play chess--which was usually empty. I walked through there a number of times. But the USIS post was very, very busy, and we had an excellent library. For a country of that size, we had a pretty substantial staff. We had seven Americans and about 35 Ethiopians.

*Q: Who was the PAO?*

WINKLER: The first PAO was a very able fellow by the name of Glen Smith, who had some problems with the ambassador, who was a terribly interesting guy by the name of Ed Korry. It was simply bad chemistry. Both men were quite talented. After two years, Smith left and was transferred to Cyprus. I became acting PAO for about six months, and then Eugene Rosenfeld, who had been PAO in Dar es Salaam, and whom Korry knew from newspaper days, was sent in. The Rosenfelds and the Winklers became very close, and still are. We coincidentally now live across the street from each other.

*Q: How very nice. These associations that you develop overseas, there's nothing really quite comparable. I have one other question about Ethiopia. I just wondered to what degree the Coptic Church was a force of the sort that Islam is in Iran, in view of your own comparisons here.*

WINKLER: The Coptic Church was a very substantial force in Ethiopia. I was much more conscious of the religion in Ethiopia than I was of the religion in Iran, believe it or not. Maybe that was one of our problems in Iran.

*Q: I was there during the year in which the religious fervor escalated and the revolution finally broke out. It was a tremendous escalation of religious power.*

WINKLER: We were, to a degree, in touch with the church in Ethiopia. There were a few church leaders who were sent to the States by USIS on leader grants. There was no restriction whatsoever by the palace on American contacts with the church. A fundamental problem in Ethiopia was that very few of the church leaders spoke anything but Amharic, and virtually none of us had the language. There is something of an excuse for that, because it is one of the most difficult languages in the world. It's just a frightfully hard language. The church was a force. As in Iran before the White Revolution, the Ethiopian church owned a tremendous amount of land,

just as the Mosques owned a vast amount of the land in Iran. So I guess there were similarities. But the revolution did not come out of the church. It's a very fundamentalist kind of religion, Coptic Christianity, and Ethiopia is one of the principal seats of it. But the revolution came from other quarters.

*Q: You had two tours in Ethiopia?*

WINKLER: No, I had two and a half years in Addis. Then I was assigned as public affairs officer in Accra.

**SAMUEL R. GAMMON, III**  
**Consul General**  
**Asmara (1964-1967)**

*Ambassador Samuel R. Gammon, III was born in 1924 in Texas. He received a bachelor's degree in 1946, a master's degree in 1948, and a doctorate in 1953 from Princeton University. He served in the U.S. Army from 1943-1946 and joined the Foreign Service in 1954. His career included positions in Italy, Ethiopia, and France, and an ambassadorship to Mauritius. Ambassador Gammon was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.*

*Q: Why don't we move on to the Ethiopia? You went to Asmara as consul general in 1964 until 1967. You had moved up rather rapidly hadn't you?*

GAMMON: There were 1,200 Foreign Service officers when our new batch came in in the summer of '54, 1,295 is the number that sticks in my mind. The service then expanded to basically its present size, 3,500 FSOs. A rising tide lifts all boats, and I was one of the lucky crowd.

*Q: How did you get your appointment to Asmara?*

GAMMON: Network.

*Q: How did this work?*

GAMMON: The political appointee ambassador was a journalist, Edward M. Korry, who was close to leading Foreign Service people from his tours in I.N.S. Publications. He had been in eastern Europe so he knew people like Luke Battle and various other senior Foreign Service colleagues. Ed's wife was a childhood friend of my wife's college roommate. The was how it always works in the "system." Ed asked me to go as consul in Ethiopia. It was upgraded after I got there to consulate general, principally so that the chief State Department man would outrank the commanding officer of the large military communications station.

*Q: This was the Kagnev station?*

GAMMON: Kagnev; he was a bird colonel. Consuls general rank, with, but after brigadiers, consul's rank with, but after chicken colonels. See your colonel and raise it one on the part of the State Department

*Q: What were our interests in Asmara in the 1960s?*

GAMMON: This was partly due to the cooperative relationship between Korry, who was a great activist, a very able, extremely brilliant, journalist, very interested in the great game of diplomacy and General Paul D. Adams, who was the four star commanding CINC, which was then the US military apparatus for the rest of the world, other than NATO and the Western Hemisphere. They decided that Ethiopia under the emperor was very important to US national security interest and a secure base, not in the conventional souse military base, but a secure place from which to maneuver in the same way that Kissinger tried to do with the Shah of Iran, though Ethiopia as an ally had a considerably longer life than Iran as the principal US ally in the area.

As the consul general in northern Ethiopia, where our single military communications establishment, plus some miscellaneous classified piggyback operations went on, the Asmara principal officership was largely a Pol Mil job.

*Q: Political military?*

GAMMON: Yes, trying to keep the military from doing stupid things, which is sometimes a full-time occupation. Total insensitivity to local feeling and the local situation is the curse of our military system in which we move the United States milieu with our forces--the PX, the commissary, the swimming pool, the bowling alley, the whole schmeer as little America.

*Q: Can you give any examples of what you would do with the military to keep them from kicking over a particular can of worms?*

GAMMON: You didn't always succeed, but you spent a lot of time with them and patted their hands. Some of the Ethiopian officials became smart enough to try and to manipulate the military's frequent innocence. At that time the still-ongoing, Eritrean independence movement was just getting under way, it really kicked on in late '60-'61, political banditry and guerrilla operations against the Imperial government. We obviously stood to gain by being as neutral as possible in that situation because if there's anything more vulnerable than an antenna garden of say 250, 40 to 80 foot antenna towers held up by guy-wires, to a guerrilla operation, it would be hard to find.

The government was always trying to involve the US military as supporting the regime of Haile Selassie and the establishment. That was mostly the most sensitive thing--trying to keep the military at a lower profile.

*Q: When the Ethiopian officials were speaking about the Ethiopian central government officials in Asmara, were they trying to get the military to show the flag?*

GAMMON: A bit, in other words, if there was a school strike or something that was politically oriented, they would decree a state of emergency. On one occasion, a very naive commanding officer at Kagnev proceeded to set up machine guns at the corners of the post and sentries and steel helmets and the whole schmeer, which clearly gave the message we were backing the government. We were backing the government, but we shouldn't have been quite so ostentatious and that was the basic situation.

At one point, there was a lengthy negotiation which I did as an addendum to the treaty establishing Kagnev. I say addendum because it was not a formal treaty instrument. We did an agreed interpretation and modification of the treaty of 1953 between the United States and Ethiopia under which Kagnev Station existed. I found, and the embassy agreed, that we could make considerable concessions in the direction of doffing our hat to Ethiopian sovereignty. Such things, for example, as changing the license plates at Kagnev station to make them Ethiopian license plates, with a nominal fee to cover the cost of manufacture, but no profit. Flying the Ethiopian flag at various places on post. Little things like that.

*Q: Sometimes these things are hard to sell to the military, aren't they?*

GAMMON: We didn't have much trouble on that. Partly because the particularly naive commanding officer, while I was on home leave, got himself in a hideous scrape with the ambassador and the chargé.

*Q: What happened?*

GAMMON: The general particulars were, he proceeded to inform them that he was in command at Kagnev station and was not obligated to take any advice or anything whatsoever from any State Department people. That was bad news when you try that on a strong type like Korry. Of course, except for major military commands, the Ambassador does have authority. So basically, the embassy told the appropriate military command "this guy must go," which he did. What always happens when the military has a mess, owing to someone of limited competence, they send in a good man to clean up. That was exactly what happened, they sent in a able man as C.O. who was then properly attentive and recognized that the State Department might be an unwelcome meddler, but at least it had power. So he had to adapt to political advice.

*Q: I think this is an important point that is often overlooked. Often a consular officer in the field, where there are American troops stationed, plays a role that is not particularly spelled out. But all the same, there are problems here, you should do it this way, not here. It's public relations.*

GAMMON: It's really what in the military establishment would be a J-5 or a G-5 local government relations function.

*Q: So one of the important ingredients to being successful is to use diplomacy on your colleagues within the American community?*

GAMMON: And anticipate as much as possible. It was interesting work, I used to joke that on the old April Fool sheet where you express your onward assignment preferences, (it used to be

submitted in the old days on the first of April--That was before the regime of bidding for assignments). I had always previously indicated Pol-Mil as a field of interest until I had actually done a lot of it in Asmara--at which point I said I didn't want to deal with the military again unless I could be Secretary of Defense. That was left to Frank Carlucci!

*Q: What was our policy towards the Eritrean separatists? Did you have any contact with them?*

GAMMON: I had a lot of contact with them. We also had a mapping mission going, we had Air Force, Army and Navy present at Kagnaw Station. The Air Force was basically cooperating with the Ethiopians in doing photo mapping of all Ethiopia. On one occasion, near the end of my stay, a US helicopter with an Ethiopian interpreter and two US Air Force types, had a little engine trouble and plumped down into the midst of a group of *shifta*.

*Q: Shifta being?*

GAMMON: The political bandit, Eritrean Liberation Front guerrillas. Who promptly burned the helicopter and took them prisoner. There were flying around landing to ask local names for geographic, "What do you call that mountain? What's that stream?" so they could put names on the maps they were constructing.

We had terrific communications of course at Kagnaw, much better than the embassy did in Addis. I got in a quick piece saying not to worry they would be released fairly soon because we were on polite terms with the political opposition, the ELF. I had pretty good contacts which I dusted off. Of course, the US military and the Ethiopian military went into a swivet at one point, CINCSRIKE sent out a planning message for a US parachute regiment to drop into Eritrea. It was a planning message only and obviously would not take place. When a copy of that reached the embassy they went into almost terminal panic! It took two weeks before the three prisoners could be released because there was so much air patrolling and hunting for them. They were walked by night over to the Sudanese boundary and released.

*Q: How did you maintain contact? In so many situations where you have a guerrilla force, we are under strict instructions you just don't talk to the opposition which is usually a bad mistake.*

GAMMON: You talk as much as you can. The instructions usually come from the existing government and if you can get away with it you do. One of the leading types that I knew perfectly well and had contact with was one of the guys who had helped Haile Selassie take over Eritrea. Yet, I knew Senator Tedla Bairo well; we had been in social contact, and he was also in touch with the Ethiopian government.

It was a slightly murky situation. I was very confident that the captives would be sprung and they were.

The main thing was to keep us from diving totally into bed with the Ethiopian government's clumsy efforts to recover them by force. They were in due time released. The MAAG brigadier was up and MAAG was all over the place advising the Ethiopian Army which was blundering around hunting. I would say that probably the best reporting thing I did was the last message I

sent before leaving Asmara after three and a half years, where I forecast that we knew that the emperor was elderly, we knew that he would be succeeded in time by a military regime and I predicted that Kagnew Station probably had, with luck, five or six good years left and then possibly five to six bad years before we'd be tossed out entirely. I left in '67, I think we were out in '74 or '75, something like that. I was not far off on that forecast.

*Q: Did you find, from your point of view, that having a base like Kagnew Station began to be the tail that wagged the dog?*

GAMMON: Not so much in my time or in Korry's time because then the embassy was upgraded from a Class III to a Class II mission in that period. I would say that the dominant foreign policy was that Ethiopia is a strong, stable and important country that can be a major asset to US foreign policy.

Kagnew was then probably our most important in-country objective along with growth and stability and MAAG improvement to the Ethiopian military.

Korry was sharp enough to design something which we jokingly called the village team in Asmara, which was a model of the country team. The village team consisted of a MAAG representative, a couple of AID nurses who were attached to the nursing school at the local hospital, the USIS PAO, obviously the CIA station man, and the commanding officer of Kagnew station who came to my weekly staff meeting. This, we referred to, as the village team, which was equivalent to the country team in Addis.

We were very closely tied in with embassy operation. Also thanks to the capabilities of Kagnew Station in the ELINT area.

*Q: That's Electronic Intelligence?*

GAMMON: I had vast access to ELINT material relating to the entire Horn of Africa and southern Arabia, which I would peruse, and then I would do a weekly summation of things. I would type it myself and send it in a single copy up to the ambassador via the weekly courier, every Thursday morning. So that he was then plugged in, without having to wait for this material to get back to Washington, to the intelligence community to digest and disgorge in much briefer and more sanitized form. That worked fairly well as a feed-in to the ambassador.

*Q: So relations in this case, between the consulate general in a politically sensitive area and a strong ambassador were effective. Although being a political ambassador, he was very much aware of what we were about and had a policy.*

GAMMON: Although he had his flaws later on in his other ambassador assignment in Chile, he was an excellent, hard charging semi-pro I would say, and really at times you would forget that he was not career. He did a quite good job.



**EUGENE ROSENFELD**  
**Public Affairs Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (1965-1967)**

*Eugene Rosenfeld began his government service in the Census Bureau. When the 1940 Census was over, his background in journalism led to a position in the Office of Emergency Management (later called OWI). Mr. Rosenfeld's career included positions in India, the United Kingdom, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. This interview was conducted by Jack O'Brien on November 28, 1989.*

ROSENFELD: I had to go to a PAO conference in Lusaka at the end of December or early January, I guess it was, the idea being that when I came back from this conference we would pack and go on up to Ethiopia.

*Q: This was to be a direct transfer?*

ROSENFELD: A direct transfer. As it turned out, it was requested by the ambassador up there of a Kennedy appointee whom I had known years and years before when he was a newspaperman. He had had an unhappy time with his PAO in Addis

Ababa and he wanted somebody he felt that he could trust and talk to. He was not an easy guy to get along with, although he was okay with me.

Anyway, whatever happened -- was there anything else?

So we arrived up there, as I recall, about January of 1965. The Ambassador and his wife were very welcoming. We had been friends many years before in the news business. I had seen him in 1957 in India. He was the European editor of Look magazine and I had helped him set up a big thing for -- a takeout by Look magazine on an Indian wedding or something like that.

*Q: Let's have his name again.*

ROSENFELD: Edward M. Korry, a guy with a distinguished journalistic record. He was a political appointee of the Kennedy administration mainly of George Ball, who had been a good friend of his. Ball had brought him in and he had done some kind of job in the department before he was sent out as ambassador, but he had considerable smarts and was very articulate.

His problem was that, like a lot of the Kennedy appointees, he despised State Department people in general. He wasn't too rough on USIS because he felt that there was a connection in terms of media connections, but he really was unhappy that State Department people seemed -- at least in his experience -- primarily concerned about promotions and whether they were going to get ahead. This translated, obviously, into a certain amount of antipathy on the part of the staff people, who felt that he was not treating them fairly. I think that they were just about as right as he was on a lot of these things.

*Q: Gene, what was the political atmosphere at that time in which we worked in Ethiopia?*

ROSENFELD: The political atmosphere was in general very good for us in terms of the government. We were their number one friend. They were our number one friend in Africa as far as I can remember, because we had a big communications station there that they let us have, in return for which they were getting quite a lot of arms aid from us and economic aid and commercial connections and so forth.

The Ethiopians, I was convinced, deserved it. They could handle it. They were highly intelligent and had a great culture that went back three or four thousand years and of which they were very proud. Their top people, most of them -- and this meant hundreds -- were well educated, mostly in America, although a lot of them were educated in Britain, some in France -- but they had a very skilled bureaucracy. Yet it was completely dominated by the emperor, Haile Selassie, and the system of government was an absolute monarchy -- a feudal monarchy pretty much, which everybody seemed to accept -- everybody, I mean, who had jobs.

To continue the political situation, the students were continually in a state of unrest if not rebellion. They felt that their futures were not being taken care of and their education would not be sufficiently supported, although every one of them got an allowance, a free college education and housing and so forth, but on a very low level. Nonetheless it was something that if they qualified for a college education they could get. This meant not just the Amharas, who were the dominating force.

*Q: Please spell that.*

ROSENFELD: A-m-h-a-r-a, and the basic language is Amharic. They were the ones who ruled everything. This, of course, led to a problem up in Eritrea, which to this day has not been settled.

So as far as the political situation, generally in terms of dealing with the elite -- we were in good shape. In terms of dealing with the students, we had problems, especially since the Soviets were working hard to influence and infiltrate them.

Naturally, by our attempting to get close to students, to do what we could with them, to help them, this immediately put us on the bad side of the elite. It was a delicate thing and very touchy, a fairly common situation for U.S. officers in an authoritarian country.

As a result, we had to tread very carefully. The Ambassador was pretty good at this. He looked forward to and eagerly sought out confrontation with students. He would go wherever they wanted him to go to talk to them about anything or argue about anything. He was an excellent debater. Not necessarily did that mean he was going to win all the arguments, but the students did respect him -- and even though there was a lot of Soviet and East German and even Bulgarian maneuvering going on there, there was still a far greater interest in getting scholarships to the U.S. than there was to the Soviet Union.

*Q: How long did you spend in Ethiopia, then?*

ROSENFELD: I was there for something over two years. I left about April of 1967 because of a medical problem I had. Chris and the kids came back in June, when school finished.

That brings up a factor about Foreign Service officers that I am sure the administration has to take into account. I had a strange kind of a tumor in my cheek and nobody there including the embassy doctor or private doctors or the hospitals diagnosed it as anything but some kind of an infection. It turned out to be cancer, but I managed to get back in time to get the thing fixed. It was a slow-growing cancer, but it was a problem nonetheless.

I felt that somehow, somewhere there has to be a better -- there has to be -- I am sure it has been improved a lot since then, but there should be a very, very careful way of diagnosing and helping people with serious illness.

Now, this is maybe just beating at an open door, but I think medicine now, compared to what it was in the mid 1960s, is a lot different, fortunately. Let's just say that there should be enough high-level care nearby, so that officers going out should not have to worry too much about illness in places like Ethiopia, where you can get all kinds of diseases and infections.

Q: Gene, I am aware that you and your wife have developed a very keen interest in Ethiopia and one that remains to this day. Would you mind explaining how that developed?

ROSENFELD: Well, it developed partly because it was such a sharp change from Dar es Salaam -- which was very provincial and tribal -- to Ethiopia, which had at least three thousand years of wonderful stories, legends, myths and history of various dynasties, various ways of governing this ancient, proud and beautiful country.

So it was hard to avoid getting caught up into all that. I think the immediate reason for it was that Chris went to the university to study Ethiopian history and got hooked pretty quickly. We talked about it and this was very helpful to me, too, because as any Foreign Service officer knows, if you really want to have a positive effect in any country you have got to learn about its culture and religion and especially you have got to be able to find out a lot about its history.

I don't think any person from any country feels more flattered than when you ask them about their history and how it came about and what the different things are that contributed to their position in the world at that time.

Similarly, the culture was totally different from what I had ever seen. Its music, its art -- and its drama--which was really not very good, the drama wasn't good -- the music was pretty good. The art was not bad at all. It stemmed from a millennia of sophisticated development compared, say, to Tanzania where the only Ph.D. was Nyerere.

Anyway, we sort of got hooked on it and we began to feel that there was more to this country than just another assignment. There were things that we could learn more about and maybe take away with us for future use, which is what has happened -- Chris has written two or three things. She has written an excellent book on an Ethiopian empress called Empress Taytu and Menelik II, Ethiopia 1883-1910, which covers this very significant, modernizing period in recent Ethiopian

history. I am also very involved in it, helping to finish up the second, updated, edition of a book on Ethiopian history that we did together about 10 years ago.

One particular story I remember now is that Ethiopians speak very softly and the children, the kids, the students all speak very softly. This is part of their culture, that when they are in the presence of somebody who is older or distinguished they are very careful to put themselves in a lower position. This is true of a lot of civilizations, but this is particularly true in Ethiopia. I had not encountered it before. Certainly it was not true in India, but maybe it is in certain places.

Anyway, one of our programs was handling the American Friends Service exchange thing. We would select kids every year to go to the States for a school year and they would come in and it would be almost impossible to try to find out from them -- and they came from all over the country -- it would be impossible for us to elicit from them because of their shyness what they wanted to do, and where they wanted to go and their new opportunities and so forth. They obviously had come out very well on the tests and on their essays and things of that sort.

A year later when they came back, or ten months later when they came back, they were totally changed. They were wearing jeans and they were pretty hip. They knew what they wanted and they could express it -- none of this soft talking anymore. They had become American and they loved it. Now, they were bound to come up against some pretty hard brick walls when they finally went back to their villages. They were going to have to cut back a lot, but it indicated to me the remarkable effect that those exchange programs had. This is nothing new to any of us, but here was a clear example of the developments that could occur essentially not a primitive country by any means, but a country that was certainly a Third World country and one that had a long way to go to become the power that it wanted to be.

*Q: Gene, I think you mentioned earlier that you would like to say something about MAAG in Ethiopia.*

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes. MAAG was a pretty important thing, the Military Assistance Advisory Group. This was the group that was set up there, generally headed by a major general or a brigadier general to administer the arms aid program and to carry out what they called civic action programs, building roads and schools and things of that sort -- a first class, hands-on kind of a bunch.

Generally they were intelligent and careful and disciplined, but every once in a while something would happen that would cause us PR problems. There was a kind of unrest, almost rebellion in Asmara, I remember, and the colonel who was up there in charge of the Asmara communications station began to get pretty panicky. He got all these military vehicles and went out and started wearing side arms and everything else, which is totally against the rule. His orders were to keep the lowest of low profiles in the town. The Ambassador was furious about it. I don't know whether he ended up getting this guy recalled but he sure chewed him out.

This is the kind of thing that you can have problems with. Fortunately, I think the MAAG being a military presence in a country has to be exceedingly careful without being totally isolated. They should mix with the inhabitants of a country but they have got to be very careful. That is

why selection of people to go out on these missions is -- it can be helpful and it can be a damned big problem to USIS and U.S.-host country relations, in any of these places, but there is nothing new in this. It is something that we have had to live with a lot in Europe, but I think it becomes even more difficult in a less developed society, no matter how much they want our military and economic help.

*Q: Earlier, Gene, you also said that you had, among other prominent visitors, Bobby Kennedy.*

ROSENFELD: Yes, Bobby Kennedy was not a great success in my view. This may have been because on -- this was in 1966 -- he was going around Africa, I think -- obviously, to me, anyhow -- trying to develop a certain amount of foreign policy experience because he knew he was going to run for president or at least run to be a candidate for president and he as therefore trying to establish some kind of a more global reputation on his own, rather than being in the shadow of his famous brother.

He made this rather rapid tour of Africa and one of his problems was that the people around him were not all that great. The advance work may have been good in some posts, but it was no good with us because they never showed up to help out on advance planning, or to indicate who was going to go where, when this was going to happen, and how many cars do you need and so forth.

The Ambassador was back in Washington, the DCM was due to leave in a week. I was the control officer on this visit. So I was a little bit nervous about how we were going to handle it, one of the problems being that I was well aware of the imperious nature of the Kennedy crowd and that if there were going to be any imperious types around it was going to be Haile Selassie and not the Kennedys. There was only going to be one emperor, but it was very difficult to tell Bobby Kennedy this.

Anyway, one interesting story arises from his audience with the Emperor. I wasn't there, but as I heard it-in discussing Ethiopia's problems with the Emperor, he remarked: "I understand that emperors are supposed to be descendants of the Queen of Sheba." The Emperor nodded. He asked, "Is there any validity in that, any truth in that?" The Emperor froze and the audience finished rather rapidly after that. It was one of the great gaffes of all time in Ethiopia, as far as I know. Because he had no real knowledge of Ethiopian history, he had, in effect, questioned the Emperor's dynastic credentials.

I assume Bobby must have recognized that he had pulled a rock on this one, so the rest of the visit was a little bit tense. He was supposed to talk to some students at the university. He wanted to do it at 11 o'clock and I tried to get the university to do it at that time, but of course the head of the university, worried about student unrest and fearing a large, unruly crowd, conveniently took a walk.

Finally I managed to get the thing set for 4:30, but Bobby was furious. He wanted to do it at his time. I said, "I'm sorry. You are going to have to realize, this is their place, this is their school, their university, and they don't like these students getting organized. There is enough unrest among the students already and for you to give an inspirational speech doesn't fit in with their particular plans of dampening things down, so I think we are going to have to play it their way."

He chewed me out for it. I said, "I'm sorry about that, but that is the way it goes. You are going to have to do it their way. It is going to be at 4:30 this afternoon. So we will get everything all set up for that, including microphones and the whole business."

So he did show up, made his speech and it was good. He had a set speech that went over well, but there weren't nearly as many students around. The university officials had seen to that, but that is the way they had to play things. They were very security conscious there, as subsequent events turned out.

I wanted to get him interviewed by one of the guys with the Voice of the Gospel, which was a radio station that could be heard all over Africa. It was a great outlet run by the American Lutherans. The reporter actually was Dave Williams who later came back to head VOA's Africa Service.

Kennedy didn't want to. He said, "You're running me ragged." I said, "Okay, if you don't want to do it you don't have to do it. Just tell me you don't want it and I will call them off. One of your guys said it would be okay."

Ultimately he did it because he couldn't resist being interviewed in that kind of situation. To top it all off, he made his tour-ending speech to a full assembly of the OAU, but the power failed right in the middle of it!

My whole point is that some celebrities or luminaries are decent people and easy to get along with and they take your advice about things that you know more about than they do. Others are not so easy.

**CHARFLES J. NELSON**  
**Deputy Director, USAID**  
**Addis Ababa (1966-1968)**

*Ambassador Nelson was born and raised in Michigan, educated at New York University and Boston University and served in the US Army in World War II. Prior to his appointment at Ambassador, Mr. Nelson served in senior positions with the State Department, AID, International Cooperation Administration (ICA), the Mutual Security Agency and the Peace Corps. These appointments took him to the Philippines, Egypt and Iran. In 1971 he was appointed Ambassador to the nations of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, where he served from 1971 to 1974. Ambassador Nelson was interviewed by Celestine Tutt in 1981.*

*Q: How receptive was Nkrumah to this?*

NELSON: I did not have an opportunity to speak with Nkrumah directly, but ministers and others within his government were willing to accept the idea of Peace Corps volunteers coming

to Ghana, and they did go to Ghana. Knowing a little bit about how these governments worked, I don't think that would have happened if he hadn't been accepting.

I stayed with the Peace Corps as the social director of Program Development and Coordination for a number of years (two or three). Then I returned to AID as director of an office that dealt with U.S. private, non-profit resources available to the Africa Bureau. [The position] had been on the organizational chart for a year or so but had not been filled. After a couple of months, I told Ed Hutchinson, who is a wonderful person, that the bureaucracy abhors a vacuum and that while this office had existed its function had been secreted away and there really wasn't much point in my being there. So I became director of North African Affairs at the same time Dave Newsom was director of North African Affairs for the State Department.

I went back overseas in 1966 as deputy director in Ethiopia; 1968, to Tanzania as director of the AID mission; 1971, to Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland as the first American ambassador; 1974, as mission director in Kenya.

*Q: Going to Ethiopia, you were there from 1966-68. What was the political situation like at the time?*

NELSON: Getting ready for what eventually happened. You had the Church; you had Haile Selassie, the Emperor; and you had various groupings within Ethiopia. I would say that the same kinds of problems that gave rise to Selassie's being removed from office were present, except they did not have the leavening factor of a severe food shortage. Everything else was there - the role of the Church, Selassie, and the lack of movement in terms of economic progress, the Tigreans, the Asmara situation, etc. But the one fact that was missing was the drought. I think the drought and the government's reaction to it, or lack of reaction to it, exacerbated what happened. It blew up some time after I left.

*Q: From our point of view I suppose the one thing that left later on was Kagnew Station. That was our sort of communications center which was considered at the time very, very important. Was that driving our policy there, would you say?*

NELSON: First, Kagnew was unnecessary. It had been overtaken by various different and new technologies. But the United States is loath to change or lose its rationale for doing something. You will find this in Morocco with the same type base we had there. It continued to be an acceptable excuse for doing certain kinds of things. I hated it because it could be asserted that the AID program is the result of this, is paying rent for that, etc. It distorts the effort, the economic rationale, and gives the Ethiopians in this particular case some feeling that they don't really have to cooperate and contribute. But Kagnew was in a sense obsolete and we haven't missed it. I don't think we have missed it.

*Q: It warped our relationship in that whole area, the Horn of Africa. It was something whose value was suspect even earlier on. At one point I was the INR officer for the Horn of Africa and the first question you asked was, "Well, can't they communicate somewhere else?"*

NELSON: This is a digression, but I think about the Philippines, the fact that Clark Field has been overtaken by a force of nature.

*Q: For the record, Clark Field was our major air base in the Philippines and last year a volcano basically destroyed it as a base.*

NELSON: The naval base is still there, although it was affected by the volcano's eruption. But you have this sort of schism in the Philippines. It makes a contribution to the surrounding areas in terms of bars, restaurants, etc. But I personally feel that the Philippines would be much better off if they didn't have Clark and didn't have Subic Bay. Because look what it does. It permits them to evade their responsibilities to make hard choices, etc., if you get base rent at \$200-250 million a year. The Filipinos are smart people. They have initiative and ingenuity. But they are being run circles around by the Koreans and the rest of the people in the Asian complex because they don't have to work because Uncle Sugar is providing them with the money. Actually, it is a very divisive influence, regardless how you manage it.

*Q: Well, this kind of thing never works. It doesn't work in a society, putting a military base in an area becomes a crunch over there.*

NELSON: The Philippines have resources, if they had to depend upon the nurturing and exploitation of their resources they could get on with it. But because of the fact that you have \$250 plus million plus other monies that come into the economy because of these bases, you really don't have to work too hard.

*Q: In Ethiopia one of the ambassadors while you were there was Edward Korry. How did you find him, his approach towards AID and how he worked?*

NELSON: A great deal of the time I was acting director so I had a fairly close relationship with Korry. Korry, of course, was fighting the battle of Ethiopia and Somalia. I found Korry not difficult to work with at all. At one time he said I had to cut the mission size, so I cut out all the public safety people. He said I couldn't do that. He was fine. What you have to do is carry your case, which is fair.

*Q: He was known as a difficult ambassador.*

NELSON: I know, but on matters of substance, I didn't fine him that way.

*Q: As you saw, what was the main success while you were there of the Ethiopian AID program and what was the least successful?*

NELSON: We had this agricultural school which was part of the University of Ethiopia, which was a fairly successful undertaking. It was difficult to wrench it away from the associated American university, Oklahoma State, that had been assisting the agricultural school. But we were able to do that because Ethiopians were being trained and in sufficient quantities to at least have a run at running the institution on their own. It was during this period that Oklahoma left



and the agricultural school didn't fall down. It continued to progress, do research, etc. We also had an involvement in the University of Addis Ababa, which was relatively good.

We had a responsible malaria eradication program. The third thing that we did reasonably well was to train Ethiopians for particular positions in government. To train them in sufficient depth that if one were promoted to this or that position you had somebody to fall in behind it. In other words, the development of the human resources of the country, I think, went forward fairly well. As for some of the programs in agriculture we had very, very limited success, if any.

I think the university, which was institution building where you weren't subject to the pullings and haulings of the society, was something that U.S. institutions presumably could do with some adaptation to the local environment. Malaria is a technological event. The school at Gondar was very well respected as an institution for training health technicians.

*Q: When you try to get right to farming habits, etc...*

NELSON: That is difficult.

**WILLIAM A. STOLTZFUS, JR.**

**Political Officer**

**Addis Ababa (1966-1968)**

*Ambassador William A. Stoltzfus was born in Lebanon in 1924. He attended Princeton University and then entered the Naval Air Corps. He entered the Foreign Service in 1949 and his career included positions in Libya, Kuwait, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, and an ambassadorship to Kuwait. Ambassador Stoltzfus was interviewed by Lillian P Mullin in May 1994.*

STOLTZFUS: Yes. Very shortly after commencement at the War College in the late spring of 1966 I was assigned to Addis Ababa, at that time our fourth largest Embassy in the world. It had a large Military Advisory Group and a Mapping Mission in addition to the regular Embassy functions. Ethiopia was our "pet" in East Africa. Our interest was making sure that it was friendly to us. Ethiopia was ours and Somalia was the Russian pad at the time. In an ironic twist of history, the inevitable revolution came, Emperor Haile Selassie was deposed and the Russians held sway with a Marxist regime in Ethiopia. The reverse took over in Somalia. The pro-Russian faction was out, so our influence was paramount in Somalia. An exact reversal of interests.

But at the time I was there, Ethiopia was in transition. Emperor Haile Selassie wanted to modernize his country, at least after his own fashion. But he was having his problems with the church, with the landed gentry, with the students - the upcoming intelligentsia, with Eritrean separatists, etc. The Emperor had his heart in the right place but the country was incredibly backward and the problems daunting. The Ethiopian Orthodox church, which is analogous to the Copts in Egypt, enjoyed a hold over the country very like that of the Catholic church over England before Henry VIII. With large holdings, monasteries, a great deal of wealth it wielded

great power. Traditionally it was the Emperor's main support. Needless to say the Church was less than happy, along with the landed gentry, when the Emperor was trying to distribute some of the land to people and to reform the agricultural side of things.

That was one side that was coming apart, with the Church very upset about being drawn down in that way. Another was the Emperor's encouragement of education in the country. After the expulsion of the Italians in World War II he ordered the re-establishment of schools and later started the University of Addis Ababa, where students began to learn things. And as students do everywhere, when they found out about freedoms they wanted and weren't getting they became restless. They began testing the limits with demonstrations, to the dismay and displeasure of the authorities. On a social level, though, Ethiopian men are generally conservative. Thus the male students didn't like the turn of events as far as their sisters and their female cousins were concerned. They didn't approve of the efforts of women to become more modern: miniskirts and running around without scarves on their heads. That was going too far.

The Ethiopians play their cards close to their chests. Theirs is a secretive and isolated existence, particularly among the two Christian tribes, the Amharas and the Tigres. They are proud of themselves and consider themselves superior to all other Africans. In fact, they don't consider themselves "black". They are very attractive people from our western point of view. The gorgeous women like to point out that they have narrow noses and thin lips and straight hair and that they are not like the lowland people who live around them. Ethiopians are reluctant to invite you into their homes for fear of being looked down on, so there is not a lot of rapport. It takes an awful lot of effort to break down the reticence and the feeling of defensiveness that is so prevalent there.

In addition to the Amharas and Tigres there are the Gallas, probably the biggest tribe and mostly Moslem. Ethiopia contains about 37 tribes and an equal number of languages. So it was an empire in a real sense of the word.

The southern part consists of wide savannas with wild animals and rain forests. In the north are ancient Christian towns, Axum, Gondar, very historic places...Prester John and all that mystique of the past. So it is an absolutely fascinating place to be in.

Our Ambassador, Ed Korry, didn't mind being...controversial, I guess you'd say. He really was his own person. He didn't have any background in the Foreign Service. He was a political appointee. A very good reporter who had been editor of Time-Life, I think. He knew how to go about getting the information he wanted. But even he had a tough time with the atmosphere of secretiveness so pervasive in that country. He didn't have much use for the Foreign Service officers. I think he felt we were a bunch of cookie pushers. We were not very high in his estimation.

We were not an entirely happy group in Addis, although I had respect for Korry as a person who tried to get to know the Ethiopians and knew what American interests were. So I guess you'd have to say that he was a good man to have sent there, but as far as the Foreign Service personnel were concerned, we didn't have much rapport.

We served in Addis from June or July of 1966 to July of 1968 and about halfway through Korry left and Robert Hall replaced him as Ambassador.

But at some point before Korry left Richard Nixon paid a visit to Africa. He arrived in Addis with only a photographer and I must say I will never forget his visit. He was with us only a couple of days. One day the Ambassador said to me, "Bill, I want you to go with Mr. Nixon to the souk (the bazaar or mercato as it was called). He wants to have his picture taken in the bazaar. You take him."

So I was in the company of Nixon for quite a while. A very quiet man. There wasn't a shadow of arrogance or irritability - very patient, almost diffident, I would say. He wandered around and had his picture taken sampling fruits and vegetables, and had his shoes shined by a local shoe shine boy. He didn't have any money with him so I paid the boy. I found him a perfectly attractive person.

Th Ambassador asked him to give his views of the world to the country team. For about half an hour or forty-five minutes he spoke about world affairs, passing from country to country and area to area. It was a fascinating tour de force. I found myself greatly respecting the man. He had so much to offer and so much going for him, and it was an absolutely ridiculous mess he got himself into later on. Anyway, that was that.

The big event in Ambassador Hall's time was Vice President Humphrey's visit to Africa and his stop in Addis. One of the reasons for a stop in Addis is that it is headquarters of the OAU, the Organization of African Unity. Every African state is represented in it, and it added a lot of interest to an Addis assignment because you weren't just involved with Ethiopian affairs. The Nigerians were prominent. The West Africans especially were always full of beans. They loved late parties and they loved music. They were fun to be with.

*Q: Which West Africans?*

STOLTZFUS: Well, Ghanaians, and the Senegalese and the Cameroonians and the Nigerians and the Gambians. They were really "rock and rollers" for sure. Anyway, Humphrey came and I was named control officer. Anyone who has been control officer for a President or Vice President knows that is a unique experience to say the least. For six weeks you are night and day involved in the intricacies and logistics of the program, who and what is to be seen, of making sure the wrong people aren't hiding behind the curtains, that you have instant communications with the White House. The Secret Service is all over, making sure there are no bombs under the cars. It is just a tremendous undertaking.

And then of course he had his large entourage and all of them had to be taken care of. The main ones coming with him were Mr. and Mrs. Andreas, who were big time contributors to Humphrey, in the grain business I believe in Minnesota. They were close to the Humphreys. Ed Bronfman and his wife were also on the trip. We had some pretty heavy hitters that had to be taken care of. Some of them were easier to look after than others. The wives came along for the ride and some were charming and interested in what they were experiencing - and some were a

pain. My wife Janet and other Embassy wives were responsible for seeing to it that these ladies were taken care of.

The Ambassador's wife controlled our wives. There was no question about it. I don't think it is that way anymore. But it certainly was in those days. My wife had Mrs. Andreas, who was a pleasure. She went into the mercato and spent a lot of money. She told Janet she had heard Humphrey's speech ten times and didn't want anything to do with his side of things.

But the visit was frenetic. Humphrey was such an ebullient person. Just bubbling over with energy. He had been to I don't know how many countries night and day but he kept up his hectic pace. He was a politician par excellence. I have never seen anyone who loved politics and loved to be in the limelight the way he did. Exuberant, ebullient, every word you can think of.

Molly Thayer was a free-lance writer who knew everybody in Washington and had traveled a lot. I am sure most people in those days knew who Molly Thayer was. We had known her on her visits to Saudi Arabia. Well, Molly showed up in the middle of one of the scheduled events. There were crowds around Humphrey, who was greeting the people when Molly came into view. He spotted her immediately, threw out his arms and shouted, "Molly!" And from the other side of the room she shouted, "Hubie!" Everyone stood around somewhat bemused while they went through their theatrical act. Another souvenir.

Humphrey hosted the Emperor at dinner at the Ambassador's residence. That became a major, major problem because it turned out that the dinner fell on a fast day. It was tough enough to figure out what to feed the Emperor and all his top counselors on an ordinary day, but about every other week the Ethiopian church has a fast day when you can't eat meat or anything that comes from an animal of any sort, fat or milk, cheese or eggs. So what to feed them?

One of the AID wives in Addis was a woman from Texas, Mildred Logan, an expert shopper and cook who was used to catering to large groups. She and her husband had been in Saudi Arabia before coming to Ethiopia. She took over the kitchen at the residence and came up with a gorgeous dinner that contained no forbidden items. A masterful exercise.

The Emperor arrived and everybody was ready. Hundreds of guests and reporters around. The photographers were ready to "click" and so they all clicked at the same time and all the lights went out. Everyone thought the coup had come. Everyone was frantic - except the Emperor, who stood quietly and calmly and suddenly there was no problem. No doubt the lights had gone out in his palace plenty of times. The only one who did not flap was the Emperor. He groped around in the room and said, "It is no problem. Just find me a seat and we will wait until the lights come on." You can imagine what the Secret Service was going through.

The Emperor left in due course - not too late - and most of the guests followed. Humphrey said, "The night is young. And I am sure there are a lot of people in the kitchen, Americans, who have been working hard on this dinner. Let's have a party." He said, "Put on the music." So he went out in the kitchen and rounded up the women of the Embassy who had been working in the kitchen and serving, and he danced with all of them. And Mrs. Humphrey danced with some of us. I think she was ready to pack it in. But not him.

Then he learned that there was a beauty contest going on at the main theater in Addis. And he said, "I want to go to that." The Secret Service said, "Hold it!" And they rushed downtown and tried to case the theater with to them dubious results, so they said, do you really have to do this? And he said, "Yes, I do. I want to get there just when the final selections are made." We timed it so he arrived at the theater about a quarter of an hour before the finals. The front row had been cleared for the Veep and his party, so we all had prime seats.

Then Humphrey was brought up to crown the winner, the beauty queen. "This is an honor," he began. He always had a speech at the ready; he was never at a loss for words. He told the audience how great the show was and how beautiful the winner was and what a fine event it was. But he added, "I have to say my heart really goes out to the runner-up because I know exactly how she feels." Whether the audience understood the significance of his remark or not, they clapped and cheered lustily.

So that was a great success, a wild event. Humphrey's visit was one of the more active events of my tour there.

As I've said, Ethiopians are reticent about having you to their homes, but we were once invited to a wedding. There is nothing like an Ethiopian wedding. We arose before dawn to attend the church ceremony, which lasted some three hours. Later in the morning the couple drove to a park near Addis with a waterfall. It is de rigeur for bride and groom to visit the falls on their wedding day - the first day, that is. The happy couple does other things which we invitees were not privy to, but the big show is in the evening.

We guests, in the hundreds, came to one of the large Addis hotels for the reception. The native drinks, Tej and Tella, flowed down everyone's throats with abandon. Tables groaned under every sort of delicacy and the walls were lined with beef carcasses, very like a slaughter house.

Ethiopians like their meat raw. You grabbed a plate, hacked off a slab of red shoulder or thigh, scooped up some hot sauce that took the top of your head off, piled on rice and vegetables and went to it. Drinking the local water was not wise, so you would try to cool your scorched mouth with draughts of Tej. An hour or two of such gorging transformed all (the men, anyway) into bellowing bulls and roaring lions.

In this state of mind the guests would from time to time climb the hall stairs to the salon where the bride and groom sat on embroidered thrones, looking as though they thought it would be nice if everyone went home. Finally, at a signal, the couple rose and tried to walk toward the stairs. Suddenly the whole salon became a mob scene. Following traditional ritual, the male relatives of the bride claimed they couldn't let her go. They had changed their minds; the bridegroom couldn't have her. The groom's relatives retorted "tant pis", or words to that effect. A mock battle ensued. Bedlam, pushing and shoving, a seething horde. Gradually the bride's army was driven back, across the room, down the stairs and out the entrance to the waiting cars. There some of the more exuberant (read totally inebriated) young men threw themselves on the hood of the wedding couple's car or under the wheels in one last ditch effort to prevent their escape. Finally the cavalcade was allowed to depart and everyone went home - or had another drink.

But there was a darker side to our life in Ethiopia. Especially in the spring of 1968, there

were major riots in Addis. Not just by the students wanting more freedom and protesting "imperialists" and western introductions of miniskirts and rock music and so on. But they took on a more general anti-American turn because the activists felt that we were protectors of privilege and the status quo, and protecting the Emperor, which we were. As the Emperor's position deteriorated, it reflected on Americans.

Our USIS library was downtown and in a very vulnerable spot. Well, it was located where the USIS wants to be. Where men and women in the streets will stop in and browse. But when trouble comes, downtown can be a dangerous place. One night USIS hosted a big reception. I had told people in my section that I didn't want anyone going to that party because I thought there was going to be trouble. Those who didn't feel I had the authority to say that went. To the women in my section I said, "I don't want you to go down there. I am ordering you not to go." My number two's wife was furious and said, "Why are you doing that? I told her, "I want you to stay home...period." The car that she would have been in was stoned and all of the windows smashed. One of the men who was in the car lost an eye. She called me up later and said, "Thank God you told me not to go." But that was the worst anti-American demonstration.

*Q: Was this Communist?*

STOLTZFUS: No doubt the Marxists were hard at work there. But the situation toward the end of outworn imperialist regimes is favorable to determined opponents whatever their political bent might be. The students were upset, the intelligentsia didn't feel it was being given enough freedom, and the Church was upset because it was losing all its perks. The Emperor was getting old. And the people began to see that things were starting to unravel.

And so I think there was fertile ground for whoever was orchestrating trouble. I wouldn't say a Communist-Marxist element wasn't present because that is what took over. It was like the end of the Shah's time too in Iran.

*Q: How big was your political section at that time in Addis?*

STOLTZFUS: The Foreign Service side in Addis was relatively small. There were three officers in our section. One of the most interesting was Allison Palmer. I am sure some people will remember who she is. She was a young political officer at the time. And she certainly had her view of things. I got along extremely well with her. She was very generous, very thoughtful. But she had very strong views even at that time of the rights and drawbacks of being a female officer.

I tried to be aware of that and I think we got along pretty well actually. I am not sure whether this was an early assignment of hers but it certainly was well before she became famous for her activities later on.

The Economic Section was probably about the same size. We had the DCM and the Ambassador of course. The Administrative Section was pretty big because there was a lot of compound to take care of there. But you know, in comparison with the military, we were not a large group.

*Q: A small Consular Section, I suppose.*

STOLTZFUS: The Consular Section was small, not more than two or three. If you add the locals, probably five or six altogether. There were a lot of Americans to service, but not that many visitors or immigrants to the US.

The visits to the countryside were by far the most interesting thing to do. I could see from my wife's letters that I always had to cajole the Ambassador into letting me go. The Ambassador was a very good reporter, but as I said he didn't have much time for Foreign Service officers. I think he also didn't like the idea that some of his officers would find out something he didn't know. He was very defensive and jealous about that. But I have always insisted on travel and would break him down.

East Africa as a whole is fascinating and spectacular, and Ethiopia most of all. It is a wild and woolly country of tremendous mountains and valleys, steppe land, bush country full of wild life, rain forest, crocodile infested rivers, multiple tribes, wild looking priests and holy men who roam at random with their long staves topped by crosses. There are canyons on the road between Addis Ababa and Gondar which rival our Grand Canyon.

I took several interesting trips in the area during our tour. One I remember least about was to Djibouti, the French administered enclave opposite Aden at the bab al Mandab. I called on the local leaders, who were testing France's tolerance for a greater degree of autonomy. I didn't have time to visit the most interesting people there, the Danakil, known for their ferocious sense of independence. My recollection is that the Danakil prefer to stay by themselves in their parched habitat, leaving the political scene to two other tribes or groupings; the Issas are one - and the name of the other escapes me just now.

Another fascinating trip was to Harar and Dire Dawa in east central Ethiopia, for the purpose of orientation and also to visit some agricultural projects supported by AID. Harar is a fortress city with medieval walls, a protection for the highlanders against the Somalis of the plains to the east. One evening we went to see the "hyena man", a famous local character. We drove out of the city after dark along the walls and parked our vehicle, leaving the headlights on. There ahead of us was a man sitting on the ground with a large bag of meat and bones. To the sides of and beyond the man in the gloom were dozens of pairs of eyes clearly reflecting our headlights. The man would pick out a chunk of meat or a bone and wave it. There would be an excited movement in the pack. Then a hyena, conquering his fears, would timidly approach the man, hoping he would throw him the tidbit. The man tossed the first morsel a few feet away. Then another hyena and another would be emboldened to approach. Gradually the man would toss the meat or bones closer to himself while the hyenas would make quick lunges for the food and dart away.

In the next stage of the performance the man held the pieces in his hand, motioning for the hyenas to come and take them. Again this required a new leap of courage on the part of the hyenas, which were pathetically timid, obviously ravenous, but not the least hostile. They would approach to within a few feet of the man, obviously hoping he would throw them the piece in his hand. But when he wouldn't and kept offering it, they would steel themselves and with a burst of bravado snap up the piece without touching the man's hand.

In the final act, the man held a large piece of meat in his teeth, bent his head forward and kept up his steady encouragement for a beast to come forward and take it. Clearly with the utmost reluctance one large beast mastered his dread and snapped up the meat. His mouth and the man's had to have touched, but the man was completely unscathed.

On another orientation trip my family and I plus a second carload of Embassy marines and secretaries visited Gondar and Axum, basically covering the core of the Amhara country. The most unforgettable part of this trip was the monastery of Debre Damo. That area is marked by flat topped mountains. Mesas, you might call them. On top of one of these is the monastery of Debre Damo, reached by an incredible, rocky road of tight hairpin curves. At a number of these curves you had to start the steep turn, then back down without losing yourself over the precipice (no parapet of course) to give yourself enough space to get around the curve. Breathless after staring at rock faces on one side and infinity on the other, we arrived at the foot of a cliff. I imagined the cliff to be a hundred feet high but I doubt it was really more than 60 to 75. The cliff was sheer, however, with only hand and toe holds in its face. The priests of the monastery apparently had watched our ascent because one or two of them were peeping over from the top and lowered a rope which my son Bill and a marine and I in turn were instructed to tie around our waist. (Since women were not permitted in monasteries, the females in our group had to stay below.) The rope was a safety measure, not to haul us up. I started to climb, fumbling nervously into each hand and toe hold. About halfway up I started to turn cold and hesitated. What on earth am I doing here, was all I could think. Then above me I heard a strong voice: "Coraggio!" That did it. I calmed down and finished the climb. Strong arms grabbed me at the top.

After collecting ourselves we looked around. Ahead stretched a large, flat, green pasture with sheep grazing on it. Another world. We toured the chapel and the quarters of the priests and the young boys learning to be priests. Best of all, we were ushered into an unlit cave where, in the gloom, we sat down on a ledge hewn out of rock. Then came bowls of Tej, the strong mead made of fermented honey. The drink you read about in histories of medieval Europe. After a bowl or two of that brew you felt like the Lion of Judah. Climbing back down to the ground was a piece of cake! Janet said later she watched an elderly priest casually approach the cliff and nimbly climb up, ignoring the hanging rope.

One of my most vivid memories of Ethiopia was a trip I took to Sidamo province in the south, bordering on Kenya, at the invitation of Sam Logan, an AID agriculturist. We had known the Logans previously in Saudi Arabia. It had been raining - as usual - and our Land Rovers had to negotiate mountain passes where the track, cut into the mountainsides, was slick as grease and often sloping toward the precipice. It was extremely tense inching along the track, as close to the cliff side as possible.

Farther south the land levels out to rolling countryside of acacia trees and bushes and grasses, where zebra, all kinds of deer, ostriches and many other beasts roam. As I recall, the AID people were surveying the water resources of the area. We camped a couple of nights in a pleasant hollow; all of the setting up, cooking and so forth were done by AID's Ethiopian employees, so we foreigners were in the lap of luxury.



One day Sam decided to make a flying tour of the border area, known for cattle smuggling between Ethiopia and Kenya. AID's pilot flew his four-seater down from Addis to pick up Sam, another AID expert and me. For about an hour we flew over the savanna, spotting water holes and stirring up all kinds of wild animals. Suddenly we came upon a large herd of cattle, driven along by several men carrying rifles. Clearly they were rustlers heading for the border. We flew overhead the first time without incident. But then the pilot got it into his head to buzz and stampede the herd. Big mistake! This time one of the herdsman whipped up his rifle and fired at us, at close range because we were low. The bullet entered the underside of the fuselage, through the pilot's seat, through the pilot's buttocks and popped - literally - into his lap.

Luckily the bullet did not hit a bone but the wound started bleeding profusely and the pilot began to feel faint. "Do any of you know how to fly?" he asked. I quickly said I did, having been a naval aviator during World War II. The pilot and Logan were in the front two seats, the other AID man and I in the back. We were all six footers plus. It took unbelievable contortions to squeeze Sam back and me forward to his seat in the front. The pilot meanwhile cinched his seatbelt as tightly as he could and this seemed to slow the blood flow. He pulled himself together long enough to get to a small strip, which we dropped onto like a ton of bricks. But we were safe. Hours later a truck came by and the pilot was transported over many agonizing miles to a mission clinic and thence back to Addis.

At one point in our tour I contracted a serious case of pneumonia. Addis, at 8000 plus feet with a clammy climate is not the healthiest of places. During my convalescence Don McClure, one of our missionary friends, suggested that I accompany him to one of his stations at Gambela, near the Sudanese border, so that I could recoup away from the highlands. We flew from Addis, down, down off the mountains to enter a flatland of elephant grass, marshes and rivers. Huge wild buffalo and elephant families frolicked in the grass and in pools. Slow moving streams were the homes of crocodiles. The land and people of the Gambela area are more in tune with southern Sudan than with the highlands of Ethiopia. The two main tribes there are the Nuers and the Anuaks. The women are especially striking with intricate designs on their necks, shoulders and breasts. These are not tattoos but tiny, artistic scars made with a pick or knife. For some days I rested in a delightful, comfortable thatched roof cottage, watched the activity of the mission and took strolls with Don McClure's son, Don, Jr. The missionaries were totally at home in this environment, and they loved their life.

Ethiopia may be different now, but the Ethiopian government under the Amharic emperors was more Byzantine than Byzantium. The Ethiopian religious authorities were not about to allow foreigners to proselytize among their own flocks. But American, British and European missionaries were welcome among the Emperor's animist, pagan and Moslem subjects. These missions might have administrative offices in Addis but their work must be conducted on the periphery, away from Prester John. Once missionaries in a given and perhaps hostile area had "gentled" the local people, the government moved in its own Christian Copt administrator and took over.

The vast area of the Ogaden, eastern Ethiopia, has always been a bone of contention between Ethiopia and Somalia. In fact the sparse numbers of inhabitants there are 99% Somali. The proud Amharas and Tigres of the highlands abhor the idea of serving there as officials or soldiers, let

alone living there. As a part of maintaining control of that despised segment of the Empire, the government had built an air base at Gode (I believe that's the name), in the flat desert, in the middle of nowhere. Don McClure and I once took a flight down to have a look. The airstrip could accommodate the largest jets, and several buildings housed maintenance equipment and living quarters. A well or two attracted an assortment of rugged desert dwellers and their goats and sheep to the vicinity. Not a place to spend time without a library of books. During the night I could hear lions arguing among themselves in the bush just beyond the runway.

*Q: When we last spoke you were talking about the Embassy in Ethiopia and the military group that was there.*

STOLTZFUS: Yes. I think what I was referring to was that Ethiopia was one of our clients in that part of the world during the Cold War, while Russia had Somalia. And later on in the usual twists of fate and politics, after the revolution Ethiopia was a client of the Russians, backing the Marxist regime. And we were backing the war lords in Somalia.

And I mentioned that we had a large post as a result. A Mapping Mission of hundreds and a MAG - a military advisory group. I did not mention the apparent Israeli interest in Ethiopia and Addis. The Israelis had a top level mission there, partly for the OAU but more importantly because Ethiopia is on the southern flank of some of Israel's enemies like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It was an important post for them.

**JOHN A. BUCHE**  
**Ethiopian Desk Officer**  
**Washington, DC (1966-1969)**

*John Allen Buche was born in Indiana in 1935. He served in the U.S. Army overseas from 1957 to 1959 and received degrees from Purdue University and Tuebington University in Germany. After entering the Foreign Service in 1959, his postings abroad have included Toronto, Addis Ababa, Malawi, Niger, Bonn, Geneva, Zambia, and Vienna. Mr. Buche was interviewed in 1999 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: We'll pick it up the next time, when you were on the Ethiopian Desk, in '66-69. Any developments then as far as how we saw things moving at that time, and was there any particular change in our policy at that point?*

BUCHE: There were some changes, some big changes. We'll talk about it.

*Q: This is the 25<sup>th</sup> of August, 1999. John, you were on the Desk. Which Desk?*

BUCHE: I was on the Ethiopian Desk, and we had a mix of countries and responsibilities within our office. There was a Somali Desk officer (Gordon Beyer), a Sudanese Desk officer (Ned Schaefer), and an Ethiopian Desk officer (at first it was Peter Walker, and later it was Jack

Gloster), who also served as the Deputy Office Director. I was the Assistant Ethiopian Desk Officer. We were all under the Office Director for Northeast Africa, Matthew Loram. The acronym for our office was AF/NE.

*Q: I would have thought the Sudan would have been more logical under the Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs.*

BUCHÉ: One time it was, but when the African Bureau was created in 1961, the responsibility for Sudan was placed in AF. In much of our work, we had to coordinate closely with the Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs (NEA). The impetus for the move was the rush of newly independent African states. I suppose the idea of consolidating all of the Continent's independent states into one Bureau made sense. There was an exception for Egypt; it remained in NEA. The countries that were still under colonial status, such as Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, and Angola, remained under the European Bureau (EUR). The Assistant Secretary for AF when I began in AF/NE was Joseph Palmer. He succeeded Williams and was succeeded by David Newsom.

But going back to what I did on the Ethiopian Desk, one of the first things was to prepare for the official visit of Haile Selassie to the United States in February 1967, and what we wanted to do in relation to that visit. The protocol aspects or the guest lists were no problem. The problem was to find agreement in Washington on what we would tell the Emperor and what we would promise to provide regarding military and economic assistance. The Embassy and Washington regarded this visit as crucial for Ethiopia and our interests in that country. Korry had been speaking to the Emperor, to cabinet ministers, military officers, and Members of Parliament, and to persons and groups outside the Government such as businessmen, professors, and on several occasions to the students at Haile Selassie University about what was needed to improve the Government's ability to function more efficiently and to provide a better and more secure life for the Ethiopian people, including more schools and health clinics, a less corrupt judicial system, meaningful land reform, and better military security. Our motives were both altruistic and calculated self-interest.

Korry had almost convinced Washington that our long-term strategic interests in Ethiopia were more than the unimpeded use of Kagnaw Station. The State Department was beginning to win the argument with DOD that the United States had much to gain strategically from a long-term cooperative relationship with Ethiopia, even without Kagnaw Station. It was also in *our* interest that Ethiopia develop economically, that the military become better trained and equipped, that the government become more efficient, that basic services be provided, and that festering land issues be addressed. Washington was leaning toward more economic assistance to Ethiopia (partly in response to the recommendations in the Korry Report on economic assistance to Africa), as well as increased and better-focused military assistance. We knew the Emperor would ask for both. There were major differences, however, between the Emperor and the U.S. Government in the desired composition of the two packages. We wanted to increase the *efficiency* of the military forces, not increase their size or provide new weapons systems. We also had some ideas about increasing the efficiency of the Ethiopian Government, starting with the Ministry of Finance. This was a necessary first step in increasing the overall efficiency of the Government, and one that would least upset the internal political balance.

We thought it could be sold to the Emperor in part as a technological advancement. The Ministry of Finance (as with most of the Ethiopian Government ministries) had grown like Topsy over the years from a small group of trusted officials who were empowered by the Emperor to perform certain functions as part of his personal entourage, in this case to collect taxes and customs duties and pay out whatever he authorized. The ministries eventually moved out of the Palace, but they were still regarded as extensions of the Emperor's personal domains. There were laws promulgated by the Emperor defining the organization of the various ministries and their competencies. There were also laws regarding tax rates, custom duties, et cetera, but they were selectively enforced. The wealthy and powerful of the Empire paid little taxes. The civil service, military, persons working for a salary in private firms, and peasants were the source of much of the revenue. The Ministry of Finance in the mid-1960s was still following many practices of the Menelik era. Employees were still going around tying up bundles of documents with red ribbon and depositing them in archives. Each office had its own storage or archive; the key was held by a guard. When an official wanted to retrieve a file, he or she had to request the guard to do so. If the guard was not available, it was difficult to obtain the file. Taxes were "negotiable" for those who were not on a salary (and the withholding system). There were many officials in the Ministry who could decide on the level of tax owed by a party. Thus there were many opportunities for bribes. If a person could not work out an acceptable level of taxes within the Ministry, the Emperor became the final arbiter. Until His Imperial Majesty decided, the parties did not have to pay.

Our Embassy and, of course, our AID Mission discussed reform of the Ministry at length with the Emperor, the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, and the Director of Customs. The latter was theoretically subordinate to the Minister of Finance, but in reality, he reported to the Emperor. We had great support and valuable "intelligence" from the technocrats in the Ministry and elsewhere in the Government. As Korry and colleagues, along with the World Bank representative in Addis Ababa, Mahmoud Burney, (he was not given strong backing from his headquarters in Washington), began to lay out the case for modernization, no Ethiopian official came out *directly* in opposition to a reform of the Ministry. They all agreed it was an archaic institution and had to be modernized. They then quietly went to work to protect their own spheres while supporting "reform" of the other parts of the Ministry. They succeeded in killing any meaningful reform. The Emperor could have decreed a reorganization, but he went along with the higher officials and decided to "study" the issue. Korry also had spoken several times to the Emperor suggesting that he devolve more power to the Prime Minister by giving him the power to select his own cabinet. Although the Department thought this concept was a necessary aspect of reform, it was too early to raise the idea in Washington during the visit.

Regarding the military, MAAG and Ambassador Korry thought a smaller, but better-trained and equipped force was essential to Ethiopia's security and our long-term interests. Washington debated whether to recommend to President Johnson that he encourage the Emperor toward reform in general and specifically the Ministry of Finance and the Ethiopian military. The Washington bureaucracy could not agree on any details so the policy makers decided on the easiest approach, namely to recommend that the President suggest to the Emperor that he seriously consider reforming his own Government and making his military more efficient, better led and trained. We all knew this was a cop-out, but there were too many disagreements within the USG to do anything else but offer platitudes. For one thing, our Department of Defense did

not have an agreed position on the optimum level or distribution of Ethiopian military forces. AID and State did not have the answers regarding the ability of the Ethiopian Government to support financially force levels at varying strengths or mixes. There was no agreement on the threat level to Ethiopia. There was disagreement among State, the CIA, and the DOD/DIA on the nature of the threat from Somalia and the role of the Soviet Union in arming Somalia.

There was also no agreement within the intelligence community on how much of the Ogaden insurgency was home-grown and how much was externally instigated. The insurgency in Eritrea was turning ugly, but the Ethiopians seemed to have it fairly “well contained” according to some of the intelligence analysts. There was, however, no agreement in Washington on how serious the Eritrean insurgency was to be regarded. The Ethiopian Government seemed much more concerned about the Ogaden than Eritrea. Since Kagnew was in Eritrea, there were deep differences of opinion on what the USG should do to safeguard that installation. We in AF/NE wrote and re-wrote position papers for the Assistant Secretary and the Under Secretary for Political Affairs to discuss in Inter-Agency meetings in preparation for the visit. Ambassador Korry had strong ideas on what the President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and Assistant Secretary Palmer should say to the Emperor and why. Korry expected at a minimum that we would not undercut what he was telling His Imperial Majesty and HIM’s ministers and generals about the need for reform and modernization. The Emperor was suspicious of any advice from the USG that involved reducing the size of his military. He wanted to expand the military to meet the threats in the Ogaden, in Eritrea, and possibly from the Sudan. Korry reported that he agreed with the Emperor there were threats from Somalia, but he tried to convey to him that there were also threats to the stability of Ethiopia from within, such as delays in land reform and modernization of government institutions.

*Q: How did we feel about the Emperor at that point? Were we feeling that he was getting pretty old? Was he able to concentrate?*

BUCHÉ: The Emperor was still sharp and lucid. He was not, however, thinking in the way that we were hoping. He did not want to think new thoughts or consider new ideas. We believed that his Government was beginning to come unglued. He apparently did not see any deterioration, and was not about to change the way he had governed Ethiopia for nearly forty years. If he had been less alert, maybe there were ways of achieving some of our goals. The Emperor came to Washington confident that he would obtain essentially what he sought.

The visit started off on a discordant note. There was a sit-in by Ethiopian students at the Ethiopian Embassy. This had not been done before. The students in the two previous state visits had welcomed him at the airport and at Blair House. From written accounts, they cheered him when he came, and he received them *en masse*. If they had petitions, he would accept them. He then ordered his private treasurer to give each student some fresh \$20 bills. In 1967, the welcoming by the students was hostile and even insulting. He was embarrassed. Most of the Ethiopian students in the US were not financed by Ethiopian funds, but by US Government contracts through AID and with various universities. He blamed the Ethiopian Ambassador for not keeping the students under better scrutiny. So he got off to a slightly less than exuberant start, but he recovered quickly. The official welcoming at the White House by President Johnson was an impressive ceremony. The official talks began the following day.

On a personal note, I served as an interpreter during some of the meetings and was a note-taker in others. I was primarily the interpreter for Ras Mesfin Sileshi, the Emperor's longtime comrade in arms and supporter. The Emperor used Dr. Minassie Haile, the Foreign Affairs Advisor in his Private Cabinet, as interpreter. Dr. Minassie had received a Ph.D. from Columbia University in political science and was married to an American. The Emperor understood English fairly well and spoke it haltingly. His French was excellent.

I was sharing interpreting duties with an ex-Peace Corps volunteer who was working at Peace Corps Headquarters and had a security clearance. I thought his Amharic was better than mine. We were splitting interpreting duties, so both of us were invited to the White House for the formal dinner. Since Dr. Minassie was assigned to a table some distance from the Emperor, he could not interpret during the meal for Mrs. Johnson and the Emperor. I handled that task. The Peace Corps fellow sat behind Ras Mesfin and interpreted for him and Assistant Secretary Palmer. As the meal came to an end, either of us were prepared to read our Amharic translation of the President's toast and short speech in honor of the Emperor. In fact, I had worked on the early drafts of the speech and had been asked to provide the White House with some additional historical facts and personal bits of information on the Emperor. We had the final text beforehand and worked with the Ethiopian Embassy to obtain a polished translation. We knew that when the Emperor formally replied to President Johnson's toast, Dr. Minassie would come to the head table and translate it into English. We also had an advance copy of the Emperor's reply and an English translation, just in case. We thought we had everything under control.

President Johnson stood up and, to our horror, immediately deviated from the text. He began telling a humorous story replete with double meanings and Texas slang. Both of us instantly realized we could not adequately translate that story into Amharic with any pungency or humor. The Peace Corps fellow and I looked at each other in shock and then imploringly to Dr. Minassie. Since the President was speaking, we could not say anything or move. Minassie suddenly stood up at the end of the President's speech and made the Amharic translation. He simply paraphrased the story and concentrated on the substance that followed. Either of us could have done similarly, but we thought we had to translate all of the President's words. As Dr. Minassie was rendering the President's statement into Amharic for the benefit of the Emperor, President Johnson glared at both of us. He expected an American to translate his words! Both of us continued our translation services after the dinner for Ras Mesfin. Minassie stood by the Emperor's side for the rest of the evening.

I translated the next morning for Ras Mesfin when the Imperial party met for breakfast with the Supreme Court justices. There was nothing that our Supreme Court really needed to talk to the Emperor about, but he wanted to meet them. It was basically a social call. We did talking points for the Chief Justice and suggested that he impress upon the Emperor the independence of our judiciary from the other two branches of government and how this separation of powers was not only in our Constitution, but was an essential element of our country's political core. We hoped the Emperor would note the contrast that the Ethiopian Constitution also called for an independent judiciary appointed by the Emperor, but in fact the judges were controlled by him. The breakfast at the Supreme Court was the last event on the program. The Emperor departed shortly thereafter. Matt Loomer and Joseph Palmer thanked me on my contribution to the visit.

They both complimented me for the interpreting duties. *State Magazine*, the Department's monthly news publication carried an article about the visit and mentioned my interpreting. The Director of the School of Languages at the Foreign Service Institute, where I had first begun my study of Amharic, telephoned me to say how pleased and proud he was with the progress of one of his alumni.

*Q: Was the issue of Kagnev Station raised during the visit?*

BUCHÉ: Yes, it was, but the issue was not discussed in crisis terms. We had expanded Kagnev Station a few years earlier and had what we wanted. The Ethiopians kept talking about the added visibility of our expansion - which was true. The big saucers and dozens of high antennae were quite visible. The Ethiopians spoke to us frequently of how severely they were coming under criticism from other African countries for their "alliance" with the United States, when Africa was supposed to be neutral and alliance-free. The Ethiopians constantly asked for more military and economic assistance in return for our expansion and continued use of Kagnev. We replied with the boilerplate line that there was no connection between Kagnev and any bilateral assistance from the USG, because we paid for Kagnev at a fixed fee in rent (which was ridiculously low, several hundred thousand dollars annually). It was a fiction that both sides maintained. The reality was that we "paid" for Kagnev through our military assistance program. This was an on-going negotiation, and involved not only dollar amounts, but also types of equipment, delivery times, and levels of support. Ambassador Korry tried to reach agreement with the Ethiopians before the visit about the dollar levels, mix, and timing of our military deliveries and economic assistance for the next two years. Since the Emperor was not satisfied, the subject had to be dealt with during the visit. The Emperor spoke to the President about the threats to Ethiopia's security and requested more American assistance. Kagnev was mentioned only obliquely, but everyone in the room knew the connection. The President used the talking points we had prepared and replied along the same lines Korry had used. Johnson offered about the same amount of assistance that Korry had been told would be available. The Emperor was too proud to haggle. He just said that his Minister of Defense would stay behind and work out the details. In the subsequent discussions, we sweetened the pot to a small degree, so that the President would appear responsive to the Emperor's request and to allow the Emperor to believe that his personal plea was effective. The Emperor ended up getting his minimum demand, and we did not exceed our maximum. Both sides knew Kagnev Station was critically important to our security at the time. We also knew the technology was moving very fast and that Kagnev was not going to be as critical in the future as it was then. I had seen intelligence reports at the time indicating that by the mid-1970s, satellites and other means would be able to take over most of Kagnev's functions. In 1967, the station was still a very valuable asset. We did not want to lose it or be thrown out, but if the unthinkable happened, we would not be without possible fallback positions within a few years, as we would have been two or three years earlier. The U.S. Government was looking realistically at an asset that was still critical, but we were not going to be panicked into paying too much. The Emperor and his advisors also sensed that.

Related to Kagnev and our close relationship with Ethiopia were agreements which dated to the early 1950s. The Ethiopians were asking for renegotiation of the agreements. They had discussed the issue with Ambassador Korry and the MAAG Commander. Both had recommended that we agree to sit down and re-negotiate the agreements. There was a type of status of forces agreement

and also a treaty of friendship and commerce which applied to rights of American civilians. Both were very much colonial-type arrangements in which US citizens had some rights of extra-territoriality. The soldiers had full extraterritoriality which meant that they could not be prosecuted by Ethiopian authorities for any offense committed in Ethiopia. There were no horrific, outrageous crimes committed by the soldiers stationed at Kagneu that outraged Ethiopian sensitivities. There was, however, the perception by the Ethiopian authorities that these agreements had been negotiated years ago under quite different circumstances and that it was time to bring them up to date in the face of changing conditions in Ethiopia and Africa. The extraterritoriality section of the friendship and commerce treaty had a provision that American citizens (civilians) could demand that they be tried in an Ethiopian court by judges who met Western educational standards and where Western-type procedures were applied. There was no record that this provision had ever been invoked. In 1966, however, an American citizen in Addis Ababa demanded this right in a dispute over rental payments. He had been arrested and was charged with a crime involving failure to pay rent and trying to leave the country while under a court order. He learned about the extra-territoriality section of the agreement, and in accordance with rights enjoyed by American citizens under the treaty, demanded that he be tried in a court with Western-educated judges. The local court authorities and the persons pressing charges were surprised and outraged, but the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice upheld the validity and interpretation of the agreement. Since there was no way the local court could comply, the American was free to leave the country. (The facts of the case were suspicious from the beginning. The man claimed he had paid the rent each month as it was due and that the receipts for about a year's rent had been stolen from his home by the landlord a few weeks before his scheduled departure from Ethiopia.)

The U.S. Government was currently involved in re-negotiating status-of-forces agreements in Europe and Asia, and so the idea was not unacceptable. We told the Emperor we would be prepared to re-negotiate the agreements. The negotiations were actually done in Addis Ababa by the Embassy and the MAAG under instructions sent from Washington. We would have preferred to have the negotiations in Washington with the Ethiopian Embassy and a team of specialists from Addis Ababa. The lack of adequate communications capabilities between the Embassy and Addis Ababa and the dearth of Ethiopian legal officials who could be spared for the long negotiations made this a non-starter. Soon after the visit, actual negotiations began. I was asked by Matt Loram to be the point man for AF/NE. The negotiations lasted about six months. In Washington, we developed a mini-team in the Department and in the International Security Affairs Directorate of the Department of Defense to coordinate our responses to the on-going discussions in Addis Ababa. After receiving a telegram from Addis Ababa reporting the latest state of play, I would confer with my counterpart in DOD, Lt. Colonel Kennedy. (Years later I worked closely with him again when he was the U.S. Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency.) We would follow up on the recommendations from Korry and obtain the necessary concurrences from the lawyers and policy makers in State and DOD. I would draft instructions to the Embassy, in effect telling them that Washington had approved their proposed plan of action and the wording we wanted them to use. Sheldon Vance was a lawyer, and there may have been a lawyer on the staff of the MAAG, but the Embassy depended on the legal expertise of Washington for exact terminology. We reached an agreement that satisfied both sides. The main change in the status of forces agreement was to acknowledge (with some



safeguards) that if an American soldier committed a crime that was *not* related to the performance of official duties, the Ethiopian authorities would have jurisdiction.

There were continuing disagreements with the Ethiopians on the levels and composition of our military assistance package and regarding our economic assistance. That was the background for another visit by the Emperor in July 1969.

*Q: This would have been an official visit.*

BUCHE: It was called an official visit and touched on similar issues raised in the 1967 visit. In 1969, however, Kagnev was less important to us. The DOD and NSA had already begun to picture a *phasing-out* of Kagnev Station, something that many of us in 1967 did not realize was moving that fast. We were aware of plans in 1967 for a probable phasing-down of Kagnev Station in the mid-1970s, but not a phasing-out. Satellite technology and reliability had progressed so fast that the technicians and budgeters in DOD and NSA were beginning to advocate a phase out within five to seven years. Kagnev was an expensive operation. The cost of transporting and maintaining 4,000 Americans in northern Ethiopia, plus the payments to the Ethiopians, was in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

*Q: And there is always the drag on relations when you have a military installation in a foreign country.*

BUCHE: There were big problems for both sides. Kagnev was an embarrassment for the Ethiopians, and they received a lot of criticism from Africans, the non-aligned group (the so-called G-77), and the Soviets. The university students used Kagnev to attack the Emperor as a lackey of America. The Eritrean insurgency was gaining momentum. We did not know whether the Eritrean Liberation Front would decide to attack American military personnel, blow up some antennae, or lob a mortar round into one of the parabolic dishes. The ELF was certainly capable of doing all of the above. There was no feasible way to defend Kagnev. The station was by 1969 a useful, but declining asset, yet, the Ethiopians were upping their demands. Whereas four or five years earlier, if they figuratively pounded on the table and said "We've got to have this or else", we would have tried to see how to work it out. We did add a little extra in 1967, but in 1969, we told the Emperor in very polite language that what we had offered was final. And we meant it! The Kagnev equation had changed significantly. On the other hand, if the Ethiopians had come forward with a well-reasoned request, we might have once again added a little sweetener. There were some extra funds available. The Emperor, however, despite the Embassy's advice, asked for an aircraft carrier! President Nixon explained that the upkeep would consume almost half of the Ministry of Defense's budget to maintain the ship. We knew where this absurd idea had originated, from the Commander of the Imperial Navy, the Emperor's grandson, Iskinder Desta. The Emperor lost many points in Washington over that request. He also asked for some advanced planes. We were talking about providing more F-5s, but the Emperor was pushing for something newer and more sophisticated. (I do not think that the US Air Force ever used F-5s, although they were reportedly sturdy and reliable planes.)

*Q: No, they were so-called "Freedom Fighters." They were a low-maintenance, pretty good plane, but they were given to countries other than NATO countries, I believe.*

BUCHE: We had promised the Ethiopians some more F-5's, and their potential enemies were the Somalis, who did not have anything as good. (The Somalis had some old MIG's, but the F-5's were superior.) The Ethiopians were not pleased with our response. We were becoming more concerned about the insurgency in Eritrea and in the Ogaden and the effects on the stability of the Ethiopian Empire. We were also concerned about the safety of our 400 plus Peace Corps Volunteers scattered throughout the country. The numbers were down from the peak of 500. We agreed to tell His Imperial Majesty in response to his anticipated request for a substantial increase, that we thought it advisable to reduce our numbers of volunteers. Our briefing papers for the Peace Corps Director, Joseph Blatchford, were written in conjunction with his staff. They carried the message along the lines of "Your Imperial Majesty, Ethiopia is now at a point where your educational system is graduating large numbers of well-trained teachers who can go into secondary schools. There are talented potential teachers who need jobs. It does not make any sense for us to send over PCV's to fill teaching positions in your secondary schools in the provinces, when your own people can do the job." That was buttering the sandwich in such a way that national pride should have kicked in, but the Emperor saw it quite differently. He persisted in asking for around 200 additional positions for new Volunteers, while we were talking about cutting back some 100, by not replacing them when they finished their contract. So there was no meeting of the minds on that issue either.

I should have mentioned earlier that we had a new Ambassador in Ethiopia, William Hall. He had come from the Agency for International Development (AID). Ambassador Korry was asked by President Nixon to serve as Ambassador to Chile. It is the responsibility of the Desk to prepare a new ambassador for the post. We worked closely with Bill to explain what we were trying to accomplish in Ethiopia and why we were having problems. Bill had vast experience in working with developing countries. He was easy to work with and seemed to take a real interest in people. Both Jack Gloster and I spent many hours briefing him on the problems he would face in Ethiopia. The old idea of strengthening the Ethiopian Ministry of Finance to enable it to serve as a fulcrum for reform and modernization was once again being discussed. Bill Hall was intrigued with the idea and convinced his colleagues in AID to come up with potential funds to make it possible. The World Bank was also more favorably disposed toward the idea than previously. There was now a chance to put some money behind our exhortations. We worked with Bill and his AID colleagues to devise a plan for him to present to the Emperor. We also had advice from the Bank, as well as discreet input via our Embassy from several Ethiopian officials (U.S.-trained economists). The concept was simple, but to achieve acceptance would take great insights and skill on the part of Ambassador-designate Hall. We finally worked out a half dozen reform measures for the Ministry. If the Emperor accepted them, we would respond with extra development funds. We knew it would not happen all at once, so we came up with milestones, which when reached would trigger the release of a certain amount of funds. What we were advocating was for the Emperor to allow the laws and regulations on taxation which he had promulgated to be carried out by the Ministry without interference and intervention from the Palace in favor of powerful friends and allies. Government receipts would thereby increase substantially. We also advocated a reorganization of the Ministry, including more auditors and modern equipment. Jack and I warned Hall that the Emperor would not reject outright the "sticks", and would thus expect the "carrots" immediately. Hall assured us he understood the conditions. Implementation, not promises alone, would bring the added funds. This was a point

our Ethiopian reformer “allies” had repeatedly stressed. They also told us they would arrange some informal get-togethers for Hall with other like-minded reformers. Some of the reformist leaders were Bulcha Demeksa (Minister of Finance), Tefferi Berhane (lawyer in private practice), Wondwossen Mengesha (National Bank), and Dr. Mengesha (Development Bank). Don Paradis (an American lawyer in the Prime Minister’s Office had some practical advice to offer.)

Ambassador Hall prepared the groundwork carefully and spoke to the Emperor about the concept. Haile Selassie was so clever. He thanked Hall and said he welcomed the advice and would consider the proposals. HIM told Hall how difficult such a move would be, especially since it was widely known to be from the Americans. It would be better to allow the Ethiopians to work out their own reforms. The Emperor told Hall that he was constantly reforming Ethiopia’s institutions and would, of course, give attention to the Ministry of Finance. He let it be known that an early release of the extra funds would help him to overcome the expected difficulties. We had anticipated this response, so Hall offered funds to purchase new equipment for the Ministry. (This was only a small portion of the package.) The reform proposals were dead, but the Ethiopian Government pressed hard for the rest of our funds. The Department held firm, but the Ambassador was caught in the middle. The Ethiopian Government was in deep financial and political difficulties and threatened to backslide on other development projects of interest to the U.S. The Embassy began pleading for a relaxation of our original strategy. Eventually, Washington gave in. There was no real reform of the Ministry of Finance in Haile Selassie’s time.

*Q: Well, how about the Ethiopian Embassy? Was it sort of the same ilk as you found the Ethiopian Government, that they could not play much of a role because everything came from the Emperor?*

BUCHE: Yes, the Embassy was seldom told by the Foreign Ministry what was happening within the Government. We got nothing of value from them. If we did not tell them what was going on in Addis, they would have been in the dark. We liked the Ambassador and his staff and felt sorry they were kept out of the loop by their Government, so we kept them informed of what our Embassy was negotiating or what we were discussing in Addis Ababa with the Government. They had their own private sources on internal developments in Ethiopia, but what I was trying to keep them informed about were official negotiations and what was happening between our Government and their own.

*Q: Were you dealing with a new breed of Ethiopian student who was getting trained in the United States, and were you finding some staying on here in Washington and calling for the removal of the Emperor and all that?*

BUCHE: That was a new thing, yes, because traditionally every Ethiopian student, except I think maybe one or two, went back to Ethiopia after he or she trained in the United States. There were more and more who were staying in the United States. They just did not want to go back to their homeland, where everything was, in their opinion, medieval and backward. They wanted to stay here for various reasons: jobs, personal relationships, better living conditions, fear of retribution for their political activities, etc. Others made the decision to stay to develop an anti-monarchist

movement. They were hooking up with their compatriots in France, Germany, Canada, England, and Italy. There were also ties with Ethiopian students in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Ethiopians are usually not terribly good at organizing, but they had some sort of umbrella Ethiopian Students Association. It was a loose association, but the message was consistent: Ethiopia is ruled by a corrupt, feudal government, a creation of the Emperor and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; the government oppresses the people; the government must be overthrown. The students also accused the Ethiopian Government of being subservient to the U.S.A. (Kagnew!). I met with Ethiopian students informally. Unlike in Addis Ababa, I did not arrange parties at our apartment. We usually met in restaurants or at student conferences/meetings held at several of the local universities. I listened to what they had to say and did not feel it was my duty to defend the Emperor. When the subject of U.S.-Ethiopian relations came up, I told them the facts and let them draw their own conclusions. Needless to say, few of the students had bothered to check the accuracy of their assertions regarding the levels and mix of our military or economic assistance, how many MAAG personnel (several told me there were over 2,000; usual number was under 100!), or whether there were “tanks and cannons” in Kagnew (there were no weapons heavier than rifles!). There was the wide belief that most of the PCV’s were CIA agents, especially those teaching at the University. Another widely-held, but factually erroneous belief was that an American company had discovered oil in the Ogaden, but kept this a secret from the Ethiopian Government in order to avoid paying royalties. The company allegedly had made a deal with Mogadiscio and was waiting for the Somalis to take over the Ogaden and in return would not have to pay as much! The students were so opposed to the Emperor and to any assistance to the Ethiopian Government (it props up the Emperor!), that the U.S.A. was also an object of their scorn. Some students saw us as the main obstacle to their crusade to get rid of the Emperor. There was no longer talk about the Emperor in a reduced-power role as a titular head of state a la Great Britain, Belgium, Sweden, et al. The students made Haile Selassie their bogeyman; he had to go! With such a mindset, it was easy for them to ignore facts or to put irrational spins on events. Our conversations about the U.S. role and influence in Ethiopia would often run along the following lines: I would point out that Ethiopia usually voted in the UN General Assembly against the U.S. position. They would reply that the UNGA was just a sideshow. Yes, Ethiopia votes often against the U.S. (Ethiopia voted together with the African bloc or the G-77), but that is not what really counts. What really counts is that you have a base out there along with combat troops. You are backing up the Emperor. Your corporations are given sweetheart deals. You have an American in the Prime Minister's office. You have military officers throughout the country. You have placed Peace Corps Volunteers in all the key ministries and the University to spy on us. You control the University. You exploit our natural resources. You have everything under lock and key. So what does it really matter if Ethiopia votes with the G-77 against something that the United States is pushing in the General Assembly? What does the General Assembly count anyway, because you have the Security Council under your control?

Since the students were passionate about their cause, they really were not interested in examining the logic or veracity of their various assertions. I came to realize I could not make any impression on them or change their view. What struck me was the vehemence of their expressions of hatred for the Emperor. They saw him as the embodiment of all that was wrong (in their minds) in Ethiopia. There, of course, were some exaggeration and posturing, but also

some very strong feelings. There were undoubtedly also students in the Washington area who did not share such revolutionary desires, but I do not recall speaking with any.

*Q: Was the Vietnam War playing any role in what we were doing there with the Ethiopian Government or the students or anything else?*

BUCHÉ: The Ethiopian elite generally were against our involvement in Vietnam. It was not a passionate issue with them, however. Even with the students, Vietnam was not a high priority. They had many other grievances on their agenda. They had a demonstration at the American Embassy, but I vaguely recall that it was small and more ritualistic than angry. There were a few signs and a banner with something like "America out of Vietnam". Ambassador Korry met them on the steps of the Embassy and offered them lemonade and invited the leaders to come inside and discuss the issue. After a while, they all marched back down the hill to the University. There may have been some other demonstrations after I was on the Desk. I can not recall. None of them apparently were big enough to make any impression on me or to prompt an immediate or NIACT (night-action) cable saying the Embassy was being besieged by angry demonstrators. Several times the Embassy was instructed to approach the Ethiopian Government for some diplomatic support at an OAU or UNGA meeting on the subject of Vietnam. If they could not support us, could they at least not join in the attack. The Emperor usually would tell the Ambassador that Ethiopia would have to go along with the majority, but would try to soften the condemnatory language. An issue that seemed on the surface to have very little to do directly with Vietnam was the perennial vote in the UNGA and other venues on Puerto Rico. The Ethiopians, however, knew how important this issue was to the U.S.A. They often would tell us that they would balance their vote on Vietnam with an abstention or possibly a favorable vote when Puerto Rico came up. They knew how to play an issue that was important to us and to them meant very little. They were masters at this.

**JOHN M. ANSPACHER**  
**USIS**  
**Addis Ababa (1967-1969)**

*John M. Anspacher was born in New York in 1918. He received a bachelor's degree in political science from Columbia University. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Mr. Anspacher joined USIS in 1953. His career included positions in Germany, Cambodia, Vietnam, Mali, Ethiopia, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed in 1988 by G. Lewis Schmidt.*

ANSPACHER: How do you follow Mali? I went to the National War College in 1966 as one of three USIS representatives and spent a year there. The late John McKnight was the USIA faculty member at the time at the college. That's where I met John and got to know him so well. I wrote my so-called "term paper"—which will not live in history—about public opinion and world affairs. It was from the National War College that I was offered my next chance to go back to Africa, which fascinated me. I had a feeling for that area more than for Latin America. I'd already had five or six years in Asia, and unless I spoke Arabic there was not really much point

in going to the Middle East. But I could get along with French in Africa and not be looked down upon as not speaking the local dialect.

So I was very anxious to find a French speaking post in Africa, particularly Rabat. I knew Morocco quite well. I had spent some time there during the war. And while we were in Mali we used to take R&R in Morocco. So I was anxious for a post in the Maghreb, Morocco or Tunisia. At that time we even considered Libya as a potential possibility. It turns out now it would have been quite an experience. There wasn't anything available. Ned Roberts, I think, was in Morocco at the time and was going to stay there until hell froze over. Where is Ned now?

*Q: He is retired in Cocoa Beach. [Note: Ned has died since this interview took place.]*

ANSPACHER: Oh, that's right. I'd heard that he was there.

*Q: Has been for several years now.*

ANSPACHER: Yes, that's right. Anyway, nothing French was open. But would I take Ethiopia? Well, sure I'd take Ethiopia.

[About two minutes of recording was lost between tapes. The conversation concerned the occasional use of contract employees, and the attitude of the Peace Corps employees who, in their attempt to maintain distance from Foreign Service personnel, sometimes failed to observe the rules of conduct under which the Foreign Service operated.]

This arrangement with contract employees it seems to me is counter productive unless it's very carefully spelled out to them, possibly even in their contract. In the last analysis the American Ambassador represents not simply the Department of State or Department of this or Agency of that. He speaks for the White House. He speaks for the President of the United States. And like it or not, he—and we—just have to dissociate ourselves from anything which is anti-U.S. This is not to say that even in this particular context one should not encourage freedom of speech. After all, it is something in which the Americans and other people believe. But as experience with the Peace Corps has frequently shown, it can get to be difficult. The Peace Corps people frequently consider themselves “contract employees,” apart from the Embassy.

USIS did have in Ethiopia, for a short while, a young Junior Officer Trainee who had come out of the Peace Corps. He forgot entirely that what he thought of as Peace Corps independence could not be translated into USIA “independence.” His value to us was that he spoke Amharic, which nobody who hadn't spent some time there would learn unless he had to stay there. It's a difficult language but he spoke it; he was very helpful from that point of view, albeit perhaps under some suspicion, which is frequently the case.

I remember harking back to days even before I got to Vietnam that one or two of our people who were expert in Vietnamese had been declared persona non grata because they were able to eavesdrop on the Vietnamese in the trolley cars and buses. The Vietnamese government didn't want us eavesdropping on their conversations. Fluency in these strange languages is sometimes counter-productive.

In Addis Ababa, there are many Ethiopians who had come to the United States and who had drawn from their American experience a good deal of affinity for things western, even things American. USIS also had some tremendously loyal and dedicated local employees, some of the best I've ever had on my staff. I must add we also had some very fine people in Vietnam. They were beautiful people, highly intelligent, educated, well thought of in their communities and certainly well thought of by us. Same thing in Ethiopia. We had a senior Ethiopian who in some ways stood up for the United States to a degree that some Americans would not, particularly in times of crisis.

We did have crises in Vietnam with bombings and attacks on the palace and our officer—and our homes—were not too far away. In Ethiopia our library was attacked on several occasions. We had crowds and mobs, perhaps instigated by other people, perhaps not, outside our USIS offices. But it seems to me that they were paying attention to us. We had a good turnover in our library, good and well-attended programs in our library. People thought enough of us to come and scream at us, at least. So I think we made some of our points. I have always felt it was Ethiopia that brought me to a proposal I made to the Agency which got about as far as many proposals to the Agency get.

One goes back to my first USIS experience, in Bonn, West Germany. There was a large Atoms for Peace exhibit that you may remember that was trucked all over the countryside in the U.S. and eventually in Western Europe as well. I proposed that we put this thing on a barge and float it through France and Germany wherever the canals and rivers connected. I thought that was a peachy idea, less expensive than putting it up and taking it down, putting it up and taking it down. I might as well have been talking up a chimney flue. Nothing ever happened, not even an acknowledgment.

Pretty much the same kind of “blank stare” reception was accorded a USIS-sponsored research project in Ethiopia. With the Agency's concurrence and collaboration, we had contracted with a Swiss public-opinion firm to do a study of attitudes among the Ethiopian population, at several levels of society. This whole idea, of course, was cleared with the Ministry of Information, albeit somewhat reluctantly (the Ministry had never dared to test public opinion in that Imperial society). We assured the Ministry that the questionnaires, as well as the responses, would be shared between us, and the Ministry's imprimatur on the project was thereby “guaranteed”...which helped immeasurably in putting the respondents at their ease, more or less.

Nevertheless, we and the Swiss team which came down for about two weeks, operated with the utmost discretion, with little direct contact between it and USIS, after the initial introductions at the Ministry. Not to labor the story, the project went off reasonably well and even the Ministry seemed gratified to learn something, at least, of what the population, in cross-section, was thinking about “public affairs.” The top copy of the final report, or study, was of course presented to the Ministry by the Swiss, with no USIS presence in flesh or in spirit. To all intents and/or purposes, this was a Ministry-sponsored project, with the Swiss, and we can only hope that someone, somewhere, in the Ethiopian government hierarchy, has made some use of what was learned.

It proved less assuring to learn that the Agency's research people had just glanced at the final report, and filed it away. I never did learn who, if anyone, had read it thoroughly enough to pass on to succeeding PAOs gleanings from it which might have been of some use. So far as I could determine, it still lies gathering dust in some archive or other. Even the incumbent Director of Research, whom I met recently, seemed surprised to learn there ever had been such a project and a reasonably valid report issued therefrom.

When I left Ethiopia, when I got back to Washington, somebody asked me what I thought about our programs. And I said I think we ought to restructure. Maybe it can be done in some places. Maybe it is being done. But the technical side of USIS, the films, production, the printing plant, should be off in a garage somewhere behind the library. All that needs to be seen of USIS is the library and the programs that are produced in the library, the auditorium that should go along with the library, and the cultural programs, the exhibits that are mounted by the people who work for the library whether they're in the library or in some school somewhere. The information department that churns out the magazines, the news bulletins, the films, the radio programs and whatever, can be back in a barn somewhere. In production, they really don't make any difference to the audience. The production mechanism is important to good program content, but it's the product that makes sense to the audience. If the product comes out through the library, so much the better. It should at least look to the suspicious less like "propaganda."

The Press Attaché also should not be at USIA headquarters, whether he's the PAO or the Press Attaché per se. Sometimes it's the same person as it was in Ethiopia. Put him in the Embassy. He's a policy maker—or a policy contributor in any event—and the Embassy spokesman. The Chief Information Officer who frequently acts as deputy PAO should be supervising the "information" output.

*Q: They had them separated in Thailand.*

ANSPACHER: Just before I left Addis, we sent a man to the moon in that summer of 1969. I was in Ethiopia starting in '67 and on through summer of '69, so this was virtually the last major program that I established there. It worked pretty well. We had a lot of models and other material support from the Agency. I got people to look up into the sky, waiting to see the "shot." This also worked in Mali at a time when the U.S. had somebody orbiting the earth. I had the Malians looking up in the sky, too. We announced the "shot" in advance, of course, and then we used our own personnel, spotted around town, looking up in the sky. They couldn't see anything, but we had a lot of the local people looking up and asking "Why are we looking?" This then gave us the opportunity to explain. "You're looking for the American astronaut." Or "You're looking for the American space shot to the moon." It was kind of a gimmick but it worked.

One particular experience closed out my stay in Ethiopia, and in effect kind of tied off my career. I didn't think of it in these terms at the time. But it did seem to cap, in a way, my career as a foreign service PAO. We established a daily news bulletin in English for about 500 so-called "elite" Ethiopian "subscribers." This was in the midst of this debate which may still be going on as to whether you target the elite or the mass. Well, we were doing a little bit of both, depending upon the medium. The news bulletin in English was "elite." Radio programs, films, and exhibits, for instance are "mass audience" media. Different strokes for different folks.



We published the bulletin in English, every day. I had put in whatever expertise I had to get this thing done properly, in good form, and out on time. It was supposed to be on the desk of its “subscribers” by ten o’clock in the morning or as early as we could get it there given the Wireless File transmission on which it was based. It was not dull. It was not textual unless something highly significant had to be handled by text.

When the inspectors—the last inspection I had a month or so before I left—came out, they made a very strong point about publishing this in English. They said the Soviet Embassy publishes theirs in Amharic. I agreed but that doesn’t necessarily make it the better thing to do. I believed then and I believed when I left, and despite the fact that my successor reversed my decision, I still believe that I was right. The elite audience has been brought up in the English language, which sets them apart and gives them the feeling of an “inside track” on what’s going on in the rest of the world. Publishing in a language with which they are preferably familiar and which in a sense honors them by reflecting their knowledge of the language and of other things worldly, is more effective than going down to their level by publishing in Amharic, which like many of these esoteric languages, even in the written form, is imprecise.

The inspectors wrote this critique in the inspection report. I objected to it. They can disagree with me, but that doesn’t mean I’m wrong. My successor read the inspection report and went to Amharic in that daily news bulletin. I think he was wrong. Now, of course, I don’t think there’s a news bulletin of any kind.

Q: *Probably not.*

ANSPACHER: Probably not. And that, I think, pretty well closed out my last program in Ethiopia. From there on I waited for another assignment, did a three-month stint as a consultant to the U.S. element of NATO in Stuttgart, projecting into the future psychological warfare plans that we had used about 30 years earlier in World War II. But you couldn’t tell the Army that. They wouldn’t believe it. And so we come to the end. I retired from USIA in 1970.

**RICHARD W. PETREE**  
**USAID**  
**Addis Ababa (1968-1972)**

*Richard W. Petree was born in Jamestown, New York in 1924. His career in the State Department included assignments to Japan and Ethiopia. He served as political counselor to the United Nations from 1976-1981. Mr. Petree was interviewed by Paul McCusker on July 22, 1993.*

PETREE: I asked for it, and the reason was simply that by 1968 when I finished the War College course, I had worked on Far Eastern affairs almost exclusively since 1943 and I thought I needed to look at some other part of the world. And by process of elimination I ended up in the African trip of the War College, and chose to go back when I was offered a job in Addis.

*Q: There was a guy who was a political officer at the consulate in Hamburg, back around that time, 1965, who said, "There's a little bit of Africa in all our futures." So you went to Addis. How long were you there?*

PETREE: I was there four years, and they got to be very, very long years because I had a hell of a time getting promoted. I was trying to make the break out of Class 3, the old Class 3, and it just didn't go very well with the assignments that I drew.

*Q: Well, wasn't there a definite slow-down at that time, as I recall, in promotions?*

PETREE: Generally speaking, I think that was true. I don't know whether it was all budgetary, or whether it was...

*Q: I think it was policy. I've been reading about it recently in the Foreign Service Journal. Now, I notice you were doing AID work, at least part of it there, in Addis. Did you run across the fellow who was AID director in Addis? You probably weren't there...*

PETREE: Roger Ernst was there when I was there.

*Q: The guy is in our retired group in New York, Dick Cashin.*

PETREE: Oh, I talked with him early on when the New York group started to meet again.

*Q: He came into it.*

PETREE: But we didn't cross-over in Addis. I think he was there earlier than I.

*Q: Well, of course, I'm sure you kept up your contacts with the local Japanese just as I did with the Italians all over the world. Wherever I was stationed in the Service I always managed to get involved with the Italians because if you speak their language, you're persona grata to your colleagues; in your case the Japanese.*

PETREE: Exactly so.

**\WILLIAM E. REED  
Deputy Director, USAID  
Addis Ababa (1968-1972)**

*Dr. William E. Reed was born in 1914 and raised in Columbia, Louisiana. He received a bachelor's degree in agricultural science from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; a master's degree in 1940 from Iowa State University; and earned a Ph.D. in soil science and chemistry from Cornell University in*

*1945. In addition to serving in Ghana, Dr. Reed served in Liberia, Nigeria and Ethiopia. He was interviewed by Henry E. Mattox on July 3, 1992.*

*Q: In '68, you moved over to deputy AID director in Ethiopia, at the rank of R-1.*

REED: That's right.

*Q: And you were there how long?*

REED: I was there for four years.

*Q: You stayed there until '72. We don't need to go into programs, but could you describe for the record what a deputy AID director usually is expected to do?*

REED: Well, my responsibility in Ethiopia was to supervise all of the divisional chiefs, and to run the mission in the absence of the director. While I was there, the mission director was ill on two or three occasions, and I had to serve as director in his absence. Or when he was out of the country, I had to take his place.

*Q: Who was the mission director when you went there?*

REED: It was Roger Ernst.

*Q: He was your director the whole time?*

REED: Yes.

*Q: I suppose it depends to some extent on what the mission director wants you to do, but would you describe the position of the deputy as one who is in charge of the day-to-day operation of the whole mission, as in the case of executive officers in the Navy?*

REED: Well, let's see how you place that. We worked as a team. The mission director and I got along very well. But you have also the ambassador. Ambassador Hall was an AID man, so the ambassador knew both William Reed and Roger Ernst directly. It so happened that Roger wasn't as good in handling people, in supervising them, as I was. I mean, this was the feeling of Ambassador Hall, so I had to handle a lot of the relationship problems with the staff. But the mission director, of course, had the responsibility of making recommendations to the ambassador and to Washington.

*Q: Was this William O. Hall?*

REED: Yes.

*Q: I remember the name.*

REED: He's dead now.

*Q: So you were there four years. That's a good long tour, probably with one home leave in there somewhere.*

REED: Yes, I was on home leave during that period. Roger was on home leave also.

**ROGER ERNST**  
**Director, USAID**  
**Addis Ababa (1968-1973)**

*Roger Ernst was born in New York in 1924. He graduated from Williams College in 1948 and the National War College in 1956. He served as an overseas Captain from 1943 to 1947. His career with USAID included assignments in India, Taiwan, Korea, Ethiopia and Thailand. Mr. Ernst was interviewed in 1997 by Arthur Lowrie.*

ERNST: Yes. Then we stepped back a millennium. And I had a direct mid-tour transfer, no home leave, to Addis Ababa, as the AID Director for the first time. And then Bill Hall, Ambassador William O. Hall, was there. He'd been in Pakistan, he'd been the City Manager of Portland, Oregon, he'd been with the Bureau of the Budget. He was Assistant Administrator of AID for Administration at one time. Quite a career. When the occasion arose, fairly shortly after I arrived, he made me Minister Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs, so I had the two hats. And then I had a third hat, which was U.S. Alternate Representative to the Economic Commission for Africa. Which was sort of a one-day-a-week thing, and I had one staff officer to cover the ECA beat. We set up a one-stop shopping center for the business community, for both Ethiopian and others and Americans. Anything the Embassy could do, it didn't matter whether you were in Econ section or Political section or AID. My office would do it. We would see that it was done for you. Businessmen, Americans, Ethiopians who wanted to buy in America, Italians, whoever they were. Very successful.

*Q: I'm surprised the programs in Ethiopia, really 25 million dollars?*

ERNST: Yes, about that. And one of my jobs there was to build a track, open the doors for the World Bank. And the bank had not been active, because they felt they were not wanted, that this was an American preserve, a Cold War preserve. And indeed, it had been. We had inherited the Kagnew station, up in Asmara, from the British, as we did Kenitra in Morocco. Diego Garcia. All three, incidentally, were on the communications tracking facility route for Presidential aircraft. The White House number one. The World Bank had not wanted to get involved, because they felt it was our show. One of my jobs was to work with the Bank, go back to Washington, talk to the Bank, get them to come, take our files, take our pre-appraisal studies, convert those ideas into projects that the Bank would want to finance. We helped build a Bank presence that got to be bigger than the American AID program. It was one of my jobs. Leverage, yes, leverage, we would put three million dollars in and they could put ten. Work together, collaboratively with other institutions. Encourage the Germans, encourage the Swedes.

*Q: What was the main objective of the AID program in Ethiopia?*

ERNST: Rural development, education. Education for agriculture because that was their business. Improvement in standard of living, water supply, public health. Preventive health...

*Q: On Ethiopia: Was the conflict with Somalia taking place at this time?*

ERNST: Continuously.

*Q: Continuously. Okay, the question is: Was our overall objective of the U.S. Government in Ethiopia, was it the, was there an intrinsic interest in Ethiopia itself, or was it only seen in the Cold War context of preventing the Horn of Africa from falling under the domination or influence of the Soviet Union?*

ERNST: 60:40, in the latter. 75:25 Prevention, hold, support Haile Selassie. Some emotional overtones, we owed him one for the failure of the world to respond when he went to Switzerland at the time of the Italian invasion. But it was more fundamentally related to prevention of further Soviet expansion. Somalia, leapfrogging. Decay in Sudan. Trembles about what was going on in Socialist Tanzania.

*Q: The reason I ask that, and I think it's very relevant, to try to put ourselves back in that period?*

ERNST: And Marxist. Across the other side of the Red Sea.

*Q: Because with the end of the Cold War, we just walked away from most of those conflicts. Most of those countries. So, you wonder, whether we ever saw any intrinsic interests in the country itself.*

ERNST: Well, there was an intrinsic interest in Ethiopia, I think. Perhaps there is in every country. Here, we were dealing with a country that had become Christian in the third century.

*Q: That influenced Washington's thinking?*

ERNST: Sure. Semitic peoples who had had elegant relationships with the west. Haile Selassie, as you may remember, was an exile in England during the Italian occupation and then during most of the war 'till late '42. Lord Wingate brought him back through the Sudan into Ethiopia. Very poor country, very beautiful country. When the emperor went back on the throne, there were about 50 to 75 thousand boys and girls in school out of a cohort of 7 million school-age children. There were 25 million head of cattle and 25 million people. Poverty. So, here was a potential also for a breadbasket of Africa kind of concept, fertility and productivity. We got involved in rural development, in education, in health, primary health services, in building a school that trained public health sanitarians for the rural areas, in helping the university train trainers. There wasn't much private sector interest. There was and is gas and oil on the Somali border. Tenneco was working on the Ethiopian side, and British Petroleum across the way in

Somalia. Nothing much happened. It's a big coffee producer. 60% of its exports are coffee. The rest is hides and skins and live animals to Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

*Q: Was CIA pretty active in Ethiopia?*

ERNST: Yes, in a small way. Small scale. Wasn't a big pond, you know, it was a puddle. Wasn't a big sea, it was a pond.

*Q: I don't know, as I recall it was considered a pretty strategic country at the time.*

ERNST: Yes, well, Soviets were active in Somalia, and in Ethiopia, the Soviets were there, but they weren't active. Their proxies were the Czechs. This was discovered once when there was a flood of leaflets all over the city that were anti-American diatribes. In several languages. And the paper was taken and analyzed, and where did the paper come from? No what they called "stockists," no wholesaler of paper [in Ethiopia] stocked that. Where did it come from? It came from the Czech Embassy; it was Eastern European manufactured paper. They got caught. I had a close Yugoslav friend there, and the Yugoslavs were, and so were the Hungarians - this was about 1970 - were beginning to split from the Sovs. And I remember at a November annual party at the Russian Embassy, Soviet Embassy, my Yugoslav friend, Ranko Radulovic, who was my counterpart, he was the economic counselor of the Yugoslav embassy. Great big fella. Six three, six four, 220 pounds. Booming big voice. And he was standing eight or ten feet away from me, and he said "Roger!" We'd just had the toast to the Red Army. He said "Roger! Free Yugoslavia forever!" And the Hungarian Ambassador took Ambassador Hall and me to the Hungarian quote model farm unquote. And he said to us, "It doesn't work. It doesn't work here, it didn't work in Hungary. Can I come and visit your farm?" We had set up, quote, model farms, unquote: this was an Oklahoma State University contract to build a college of agriculture and outreach farming demonstration centers. "Of course Mr. Ambassador." We took him. He made the swap, picked up stuff out of the American experiment, but ours wasn't altogether successful in Ethiopia either. What worked in Oklahoma wasn't working necessarily in Ethiopia. But there were the beginnings of the rifts in the Communist Bloc; this was '69, '70, '71, along in there. But it was a wonderful country to work in. We worked very closely with the University. There were a lot of Ethiopians that had been trained at Purdue in Indiana, and at Cornell.

*Q: Yes, very extensive program, too. For 25 million dollars.*

ERNST: Big program for a little country. One of my jobs was to cut the staff. We had 500 people on the payroll, including Ethiopians. We came out at 200, with about 60 Americans and about 150 Ethiopians.

*Q: When was Haile Selassie overthrown?*

ERNST: He was removed from power '73, '74. Just after I left. Not cause and effect, please.

*Q: Just after you left, everything changed after that.*

ERNST: Yes. There were some historic ties, going back to your earlier question. We went to visit the Governor of Tigray in the north. He was married to one of the Emperor's granddaughters. After dinner, he said "Would you like to see my grandfather's throne? My father's throne, in a throne building." He lived in a little Italian type villa. We said "Yes, love to." Flashlight, over we went, second floor, here's this great big chamber. Like one of the rooms on the seventh floor of the Department. There's this throne, gold throne. Where did it come from? "Victoria gave it to my grandfather on the occasion of his ascension to the throne." Links. Which were important emotionally. Attractive people, interesting country.

Eritrea, lot of unrest in Eritrea because they felt cheated. There was supposed to have been a plebiscite on their independence in '62 or '63, but the Emperor canceled the operation or smothered it, and incorporated Eritrea into Ethiopia. Eritrea became independent, if I got the year right, in '91. They're going along at a good clip now, Mrs. Clinton was just there to visit, with her daughter. I heard a briefing by Ambassador Houdek about a year ago in Washington that investment is coming. The Italians had Eritrea as a colony for half a century, so a lot of training and a lot of cultural transference took place, plus the fact that Eritrea is on the seacoast. Now here's the smart thing. The Ethiopians were very antsy about Eritrean, the Amhara, particularly, were very antsy about Eritrean independence because they would lose their ports. All the ports were controlled by Eritrea. Masawa and Assab, particularly. Assab being the oil port. The Eritreans turned around, about day three after their independence, and they said to the Ethiopians "You have rights unfettered, in perpetuity, to these ports. Any cargo inbound and outbound will be given priority one over all other cargoes." Second, the Ethiopians had a new constitution. In it, they had recognized, I think, nine or eleven peoples and languages. No one coached them to do this, history coached them. They had said "Any one of these components may elect to secede at their own option. No one will ask any questions and there will be no war. You may teach and conduct government in your own language, but when you come to the national capital, we will do business in Amharic." They've got it all set out. There may be a model for Zaire, or maybe for ex-Yugoslavia, I don't know. It, so far is working. They've had two good harvests, their exports are up...

*Q: We've got to stick to the history.*

ERNST: But it's very exciting!

*Q: It's very exciting, but it's another field.*

ERNST: But the basis was laid in the people we trained. Again, going back to the question you asked earlier, the most important thing we did was training. And we got cut way back on that in 1969 or 70. The Congress kept jumping up and down saying "We want to have projects that we can see." So AID swung to building buildings and roads, waterworks, dams, that you could show the congressmen. What they needed was another generation of training.

*Q: I thought that emphasis on infrastructure was earlier, in the '50s and '60s..*

ERNST: Well, not in Ethiopia. It came while I was there, against our judgment. I had Ambassador Hall, and then my next Ambassador was Ross Adair, who came out of Congress. A

wonderful gentleman; he's dead now, gone unfortunately. He'd been a Republican member of Congress. Number one or two ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He knew what was going on. Bill Hall was so wise that we, his counselors, could never make a mistake, because he knew enough to counsel us not to make mistakes. When Ross Adair came in, he sat at the table the first week, and he said "Now gentlemen, you are my Counselors, I don't want to make mistakes. Counsel me." So we shifted roles. For my first AID program, I had to get the Ambassador's signature on the face page to go into the Department. The Ambassador had to approve the proposed program for fiscal year 1970. Ross looked at the summary table. He said "Mr. Ernst." He didn't call me Roger yet. He said "Mr. Ernst, where's the fat?" I said "Sir?" He said "I've been in Congress, I know you've got fat in that program." I looked at him, I decided, I said "Mr. Ambassador, I have hidden a few thousand dollars in supplies, this number, in training slots, and in transport." And he looked at me, I said, "You know, Mr. Ambassador, about six months from now you're going to call me up on the phone, ask me to come over to your office, and you're going to tell me that the daughter of the Minister of Health has got to go to an American medical school for training, and I'm going to say "Yes, Sir, I have the money to do it. Because it's an important element of a strategy you have got to carry out to get a vote on disarmament, or some other subject. I'll protect you sir." He said "Good, I'll sign the paper." We had a great relationship. And Bob Yost was my DCM, the late Bob Yost, unfortunately passed away. A gem of a guy. Ambassador to Burundi and to the Dominican Republic after that. Again, wonderful people in the Service that I worked for. I can't emphasize that enough.

**CLARKE N. ELLIS**  
**Economic Officer**  
**Asmara (1969-1971)**

*Clarke N. Ellis was born in Boston, Massachusetts. He graduated from the University of Redlands in Salzburg, Austria, and Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. After entering the Foreign Service in 1962, his postings abroad included Munich, Naples, Asmara, Vienna, Zurich and Taipei. Mr. Ellis was interviewed in 1998 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

ELLIS: I was not pleased with our Vietnam policy but it didn't happen. I got, instead, assigned to--again this was before the days of bid lists--Asmara, then part of Ethiopia, as the economic officer and the number two in the consulate.

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

ELLIS: I was there from December of 1969 until December of 1971, two years.

*Q: Did you get any briefing about the situation in Ethiopia before you went there?*

ELLIS: I had a brief area orientation course. I did actually get a briefing over at Arlington Hall Station, which was then before FSI. It was headquarters of the Army Security Agency. They were the tenant or the host command for the U.S. military installation at Kagnaw Station.



*Q: You have seen that our entire policy in eastern Africa revolved around Kagnaw Station.*

ELLIS: I think it did in good part. It was, of course, an extremely important military communications base both for satellites and for the fleet operating in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the Persian Gulf for eavesdropping.

*Q: What was the situation in Eritrea when you were there in 1969 to 1971 and in Ethiopia in general?*

ELLIS: It was a difficult time in that they already had the guerilla war underway with the Eritrean rebels wanting to cede from Ethiopia. At least one of the years we were there was a severe drought period as well. It was also evident that some, if not all, of the local leaders including the governor general of Eritrea were corrupt. On the other hand, there seemed to still be considerable respect for the emperor as a person, if not for all of his cronies or administrators.

*Q: What was living like in Eritrea when you were there?*

ELLIS: Well, it was very pleasant except for several months when we were on water rationing. Aside from that, life there was very pleasant. Asmara is only 7,000 feet high so it is a beautiful climate, sunny days for the most part and cool nights the year around. It is a very bracing and invigorating climate. I was assigned there as the Italian language speaking officer. There were still 12,000 Italians in Asmara, and two of the three local newspapers were published in Italian still and one in Arabic.

*Q: You were the economic officer, is that right? But, it sounds like more than that.*

ELLIS: Well, there was a political officer but he worked for someone else. What little economic and commercial work there was, I did. I did a good part of the political reporting and a good deal of base liaison work as well.

*Q: Did you feel that there was almost an agreement from the embassy that you couldn't overtly report on the problems of Amhara rule in Eritrea?*

ELLIS: Yes, that was definitely the case. This was the days before the dissent channel but I had a very good personal relationship with the Italian consul general who was, of course, the most important diplomat in the area. From him, I also heard things that the embassy didn't find convenient to have reported. There were excesses by the Eritrean guerrillas, and the Ethiopian troops, and massacres and so forth. There was tension there between the embassy and the consulate. There was also a period of interregnum between two consuls general, and I did not have a very easy or good relationship with the ambassador.

*Q: Who was the ambassador?*

ELLIS: He was William Hall, who became director general of the Foreign Service afterwards. On one occasion, I reported that a massacre by Ethiopian troops had occurred in a church and a

mosque, and I had reported that to the embassy in a round up cable. I made the mistake of putting that item in something that went back to the Department. I got chastised for that even though everything that I had reported, which I had heard from the Italian consul general, was later confirmed through other sources.

*Q: Was it the feeling that our government policy was to protect the emperor and his cohorts from criticism? Or, was it within the country of Ethiopia from our embassy to do this?*

ELLIS: I think it was the latter because they were looking at it from the point of view of our interests in having the base and dealing with Haile Selassie. Therefore, they wanted to minimize the problems that were really occurring in Eritrea.

*Q: Did the Kagnev Station personnel there have problems?*

ELLIS: For the most part they didn't. A couple of people sometimes might be stopped if they went out hunting or something like that. There were several incidents, however, that took place while I was there. The first consul general was halted by a rebel band and briefly detained before being let go. There was a National Geographic film team that was held for 17 days before being released. In fact, their special film on that part of Ethiopia was never shown, although it was supposed to have been. My pregnant wife, our infant son, and I were in a Jeep driving from Asmara to Keren, and we were stopped by an armed band. It was never clear who they were. We were told that well, no, they weren't rebels but at least a couple of them had automatic rifles that they stuck into the window. It was clear to me that they weren't local militia. I believe that they were a rebel band themselves.

*Q: I know at one point they called the groups who were sticking rifles in peoples' windows shiftas or bandits. At the time you were there, had it become more apparent that these bandits were politically motivated?*

ELLIS: As it turned out, a number of the consulate staff were rebel sympathizers. They never said anything, of course, but they were. There was a genuine desire for independence there. Another one of my jobs was as AID officer, particularly in Food for Work programs although I wasn't employed by AID. One of the toughest jobs that I had was, on a couple of occasions, going down to Massawa on the Red Sea coast in the middle of summer to inspect grain in the holds of freighters. On one occasion, the freighter was infested with bugs, and the outside temperature was probably 110 degrees. You can imagine what the temperature was inside the hold of that grain ship.

*Q: Did you find that with the officers at the embassy it was hard to have them understand that there really was a feeling or desire for independence in Eritrea that seemed to run rather deep?*

ELLIS: Yes, it was hard. The DCM was somewhat sympathetic and helped protect me from worse consequences than I would have had otherwise. Several years later - I think it was 1975 - I filed a dissent channel message on our Ethiopia policy. I got a nice reply from the director of Policy Planning, Winston Lord, saying my message had been read by the Secretary, and that our policy on Ethiopia by then was changing to some extent.

*Q: Did our military have good feelers out, or were they sort of an alien force that was unaware of developments?*

ELLIS: They were pretty much tied up in doing their business and really depended on the consulate for political guidance.

*Q: At that particular point, your office was involved. Were there any problems with Somalia then?*

ELLIS: No, there weren't.

*Q: There were periodic forays into Ogaden and back.*

ELLIS: That wasn't a major issue. One of the interesting organizations that was based in Asmara was the Desert Locust Control organization, DELCOA, which would fly sorties to see where the locusts were swarming and then try to take action against them. It was an interesting international organization and one that played an important role.

*Q: In the area you were concerned with, what about getting food? Was there famine and food relief during the time you were there?*

ELLIS: We had quite an extensive Food for Work program. There wasn't the terrible famine of the 1980s that made the headlines on CNN. There were shortages during the job period.

*Q: When you say, "Food for Work," what does that mean?*

ELLIS: In other words, AID would provide food for farmers and peasants to engage in local development projects like building dams, reforestation, and things like that. They were small dams, not like Aswan, but little reservoirs.

*Q: Did you see a difference between the Eritreans and the Amharas?*

ELLIS: You couldn't tell physically those who were Amhara or Eritrean. The highlanders in both cases were predominately Ethiopian Orthodox Christian. The lowlanders were Muslim. Those who were of the upper crust of the society in both cases had very aquiline features. You couldn't tell them apart physically. Indeed, the people from the northern part of Ethiopia, particularly Tigre province, spoke Tigrinya, which is the language of the Eritreans, as opposed to Amharic. Because of the separate development - Eritrea having been under Italy for 80 years - the Eritreans had, I think, more worldly consciousness and more education, sort of like the Ibos in Nigeria. They were the group that seemed to be most dominant. If you even went to other parts of Ethiopia, the clerks or the managers or the auto mechanics would be Eritrean. The Eritreans had a disproportionate number of places in universities throughout the country. This created problems.

*Q: Were there major contingents of the Ethiopian army in Eritrea?*

ELLIS: Yes, they had a major division stationed in Asmara.

*Q: Did they play much of a role, or were they just busy chasing the dissidents?*

ELLIS: I don't know about playing a role. I didn't have much contact with them.

*Q: Who were the consul generals when you were there?*

ELLIS: Murray Jackson was first and then Tony Rabida. Both have passed away.

*Q: At that point were you caught up in the feeling of wanting to be an African hand, or was Europe still what you wanted?*

ELLIS: No, Europe was still my area of interest.

**BILHA BRYANT**  
**Spouse of Foreign Service Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (1969-1972)**

*Bilha Bryant was born in 1934 in Bulgaria. Bryant served in the Israeli Army and worked in the private sector before joining the Israeli Foreign Service in 1959. Bryant resigned from the Israeli Foreign Service and married Edward (Ted) Bryant in 1963. With her husband, Bryant was assigned overseas to Mozambique, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Korea and India. Bryant then began to work for the State Department and served in the Soviet Bureau, Eastern European Affairs and Congressional Relations. Bryant was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.*

BRYANT: So in September of '69, we arrived in Addis Ababa. But our household effects went to Sao Paolo.

*Q: This was Addis Ababa. You were '69 to when there?*

BRYANT: '69 to '72.

*Q: What was life like in Ethiopia at that time?*

BRYANT: Fascinating. It was the most exciting place I've ever been. Addis Ababa was not a city; it was a combination of small villages with dirt roads between them, with cows and sheep on the roads and with people dressed in beautiful white-I forget what they call those-

*Q: -like togas-*

BRYANT: Like togas. And it was just like living back in the 15th or 16th century. The Ethiopians are very nice, and their women beautiful, with big eyes and lovely smiles. When the Emperor left the palace on the way to his office, usually twice a day, everybody on the road would bow, including diplomats-well, not I. There were quite a few Italians in Addis Ababa, mostly industrialists. The Armenian community was quite large; they ran most of the super markets in town, as well as being the official jewelers to the court. We did get to know socially some of the Ethiopian princes and princesses, and were very close friends with a number of the ministers. I know it doesn't sound like it, but we all enjoyed Ethiopia very much. Ted traveled extensively, climbed mountains, and I was busy with the American Women's Club where I was in charge of publishing the yearly diary. I was also busy having another baby, so for me, it was a little more difficult to travel.

*Q: I don't imagine there was any Israeli representation in Mozambique, but in Ethiopia there was-*

BRYANT: In Ethiopia there was quite a large presence of Israelis.

*Q: -because there were close ties with that country.*

BRYANT: Yes.

*Q: How did the Israelis treat you?*

BRYANT: The Israelis treated me all right, but the Americans were not too happy about my being friendly with them. It appeared that our ambassador-Ambassador Hall-was upset after Ted and I attended a dinner at the Israeli Ambassador's residence. Instead of telling Ted or me, he mentioned his unhappiness about it to somebody else, who in turn mentioned it to someone else, when it finally reached us as nasty gossip. The Ambassador should have realized that I no longer considered myself an Israeli; the fact was that I married an American, not an Israeli and to top it all, I married a non-Jew. I was happy to dedicate my time to the US Embassy and did and we had three children who were not being brought up Jewish. I had friendly relations with the Israeli Embassy in the same way I was friendly with the Greek Embassy or any other embassy in Addis. So because of the Ambassador's feelings, I didn't see the Israelis after that any more. In fact, it was sad because the Israeli Ambassador to Ethiopia at that time was a former naval officer whom I knew from my days in the United Nations Mixed Armistice Commission. In general we were very happy in Ethiopia.

We came to Ethiopia after difficult time in Mozambique. Instead of going to Brazil, we ended up in Ethiopia. Ted was assigned to be the chief commercial officer there, and was supposed to have the former commercial officer's house. Well, lo and behold, we got there and we moved into the house, but a few weeks later we were told to move out because an AID officer outranked my husband and wanted the house. So, with both girls, off we went to our new house, far away from the embassy and the school, across the street from the AGIP gasoline depot, and next door to the slaughterhouse! In fact, our address was #2 Slaughterhouse Road! Not only that, but the girls had to cross train tracks to get to the main road where the school bus picked them up! And here we were, all by ourselves, away from the American community (there was a military attaché who

lived next door to us) because the man from AID outranked my husband by six months or something like that. It demoralizes one, it really does. We are not only talking about Ted; we are talking about the whole family. I mean, here we are, just having taught the children that we are not in Brazil. "Mommy, is this Brazil?" "No, darling, this is Ethiopia." And "Mommy, is this our home?" "No, darling, no, we have to move again." So it was difficult.

Life in the embassy was friendly and pleasant. We made good friends there that we still see today. But I do remember the unreasonable duties the wives were given by the Ambassador's or the DCM wives (or any wife that outranked us); after large embassy parties, we would be asked to stay and count the silver. You see, in Ethiopia, and especially at the Ambassador's residence, there was a large staff. You would think this would be something they could do. We ourselves had a staff of four. And here we were made to stay on and count silver! And another thing: if you talked to any of your friends for more than a minute, some embassy official would come around and say, "Circulate, circulate."

All wives were also expected to be involved in the American Women's club and all its activities. I worked on the yearly "Ethiopian Diary" which we published and sold to local companies and merchants, and I must say, I liked it. There was also an International Women's Club, where the Ethiopian princesses and diplomats' wives from other embassies got together to do good deeds for the local schools, orphanages, etc.

*Q: Who was the ambassador?*

BRYANT: The first two years the Ambassador was Bill Hall. He was a career ambassador. I think he was the inspector general before he came to Addis. I don't think he felt very well while he was in Addis - the altitude or something. His wife was an old Foreign Service wife, very determined, very serious, very demanding, really - but not unpleasant.

But you know, you look back on these things and can't believe some of it. I had two little girls and I was expecting our third. While we entertained a great deal, because we knew a lot of people, I didn't expect anybody in Ted's section to provide food for our parties. On the other hand, when the Ambassador and the DCM entertained at large parties, we were expected to bring dishes.

This is, by the way, where we met and got to know George and Barbara Bush. Bush was the ambassador to the United Nations at the time. The UN sat for a session in Addis Ababa in 1972 and he came for the session. We had met them both in Mozambique at a small dinner party.

*Q: Did you have any feel for unhappiness with the Emperor at that time? He was getting on in years by this time.*

BRYANT: No, we all thought that this man was truly admired by his subjects. On the other hand, his son, the Crown Prince, was not popular at all, perhaps because he was not often exposed to the public and had not been given the chance to prove otherwise. What we worried about was that when he died, his son would take over and this could bring unrest in the country. We were so amazed at what finally happened in Ethiopia. He had ruled Ethiopia well for most of

the 40 years. He was an old man who didn't know how to change with the times, and unfortunately his advisors did not serve him well.

*Q: Well he was essentially ruling from 1913-*

BRYANT: -through 1970. So it's 60 years.

*Q: So we're talking about 60 years. He was regent, and he went through a couple of permutations, but essentially he was ruling from 1913 on.*

BRYANT: And he loved his people, and he actually thought, really-we met the emperor and we knew a lot of his advisors-he actually thought he was doing good things for his people. They had built a wonderful university, very active and very well run. One didn't feel that people were unhappy, one really didn't; but of course, they must have been.

*Q: Well, some may have been. It depends on leadership. It was a military coup, essentially, which set up a-*

BRYANT: By a sergeant.

*Q: -a military dictatorship, quite a brutal one.*

BRYANT: Very, very unhappy. And you know, people who visited Ethiopia just at that time told us that the university had been closed, people in the government murdered or arrested and in general a great deal of misery.

**GILBERT D. KULICK**  
**Political Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (1969-1972)**

*Gilbert D. Kulick was born in Connecticut in 1942. He attended the University of Texas and graduated from there in 1963. He earned his M.A. from UCLA in 1965. In 1966 he joined the Foreign Service. His posting included Mogadishu, Addis Ababa, Tel Aviv, and Washington D.C. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 29, 1993.*

*Q: You came back to Washington for, what was it, about a year --1968-69?*

KULICK: It was for 10 months of training.

*Q: What were you taking?*

KULICK: I was studying Amharic. Before my tour in Somalia concluded, I was assigned to the Embassy in Addis Ababa, in a language designated position which required a year of Amharic

training before I went. I was delighted. To me, Ethiopia was the "big time" for an Africanist. It was the headquarters of the OAU and the oldest African country.

*Q: The OAU is the Organization of African Unity.*

KULICK: I suspect that it may not really be so united. I was quite pleased with the assignment. It was considered a "plum" for an Africanist. It meant coming back to Washington for a fairly short time, which my wife wasn't terribly happy about. That's a motif that was repeated throughout my Foreign Service career, because I had told her that as a reward for sweating it out in Somalia for a couple of years I would get us an assignment in Rome or Europe or someplace like that. Why I thought I could make such a promise, I don't know. I guess that what I meant was that I would try. She heard the commitment and held me to it. As it turned out, she loved Ethiopia and had a wonderful time there. There were no long-term recriminations about it, except for the fact that I hadn't consulted her properly. That, in itself, was a black mark on my record. I was in Washington for about nine months. The course was for 10 months. I left after about eight and one-half months because I was anxious to get out to the post. There is only so much language that you can learn in a classroom.

*Q: After about six or seven months you reach that plateau where you aren't adding anything. You might as well get to the post.*

KULICK: I was lucky. There were only two people in the class, and the teacher was excellent. I have a lot of linguistic aptitude. I had gotten myself up to a level of 2 or 2+ in Somali, just studying with a local teacher. There was no FSI program and no course material. I sort of made it all up. I've subsequently forgotten Somali completely, but it was fun learning the language. It was always delightful to surprise Somalis with my ability to speak their language a little. Of course, in one case it justified [the effort]. It saved my neck!

We went out to Ethiopia in the summer of 1969. We were there for three years. I was the junior political officer.

*Q: What was the situation in Ethiopia in 1969-1970?*

KULICK: Historians would call it a "fin de regime" period. In retrospect it was clearly the tail end of the Haile Selassie era. We were pretty conscious of that. But as we were saying earlier, people were thinking that they were at the end of the regime for a dozen years--at least since 1960 when there had been a coup against Haile Selassie when he was out of the country. The United States, in effect, helped him reverse the coup. We brought him back from Brazil where he'd been on a state visit. We didn't intervene militarily but we made it clear that he had our full backing. We brought him back, reinstalled him in Addis Ababa, and the coup collapsed. From 1960 on that was all borrowed time. He didn't use it very well. The whole thrust of our policy toward Ethiopia during that period was ostensibly, at least, pushing the emperor to prepare for the transition, to prepare for the next generation, to encourage democratic forces, to bring in new leadership, to prepare the country for a much more open, democratic system after he left power.



As Secretary of the Treasury Bentsen might say, his son was no Haile Selassie. He was a very weak sort of character. Most people thought that he would be a figurehead, and the question was, who would be the real power in the country? Unlike Somalia, we had what we considered to be important, strategic interests in Ethiopia. Not just because of its position at the entrance to the Red Sea, it was one of the largest, most prestigious countries in Africa. It was also the location of a major military communications relay station.

Q: *Kagnew Station.*

KULICK: Kagnew Station. We pronounced it "Kagnew Kanyo". Kagnew Station, in Asmara, which we had operated since the end of World War II. The Italians had been expelled from there in the early 1940's. The British operated [the station] at first, and then they turned it over to us. Our military swore that it was an absolutely critical link in our global communications chain. I think that it was a large, NSA type of operation.

Q: *You mean the National Security Agency, which is essentially listening to...*

KULICK: Electronic communications...

Q: *Eavesdropping...*

KULICK: Yes. But it was also used in the early years of satellite communications. There were satellite relay stations. I never really knew exactly what went on there, but the [U. S.] military insisted that it was utterly indispensable and that our policy could do nothing that would jeopardize our presence at Kagnew Station. Well, as has happened far, far too frequently in American history, our fixation on that kind of thing in many ways contributed to our loss of it, by completely or largely depriving our policy of a balance and perspective that it might have had, had we not been held hostage to [Kagnew Station]. That experience gave me a perspective which I have seen repeated over and over in my years [in the Foreign Service]. The United States, for all its clear superiority, militarily and economically, and its role as a super power--somehow we have often felt hostage to these small countries and have felt somehow that we needed them more than they needed us. I never quite figured out why it is that a country that can dominate the world, as we did, is often so deferential to these little countries because they have a communications station or they have an...

Q: *Airfield?*

KULICK: Airfield or something that we regarded as indispensable, when clearly, it seemed to me then, and still seems to me, they needed us more than we needed them. We were in a far more advantageous position than we gave ourselves credit for. I don't mean that we should have used [these facilities] to abuse these countries. We should have used them in ways that actually would have served their interests by encouraging democratization or greater openness. I guess the Shah [of Iran] was the most egregious example of that sort of thing, where [that kind of] policy went sour. Here we had a figure considered so critical to our interests in the Middle East--and yet, clearly, he was much more dependent on us than we were dependent on him. [I think that] we could have "moved" him much more forcefully than we did to create conditions which, in fact, would have strengthened his position in the long term. Or, to put it the other way around,

would have limited the growth of the kind of forces that ended up bringing him down. But we were scared to death of doing anything that might upset him.

I guess the Philippines is another example, with Marcos. We had these bases there and, even though they were critical to the survival of that regime, they would have done all kinds of things to accommodate us. Our view was that we couldn't do anything to put pressure on them because they would kick us out.

*Q: Well, this is the atmosphere in which, when you were in Ethiopia...*

KULICK: That dominated everything.

*Q: Kagnew Station...*

KULICK: That was the tail that wagged the dog. It was a source of a lot of frustration, particularly among the more junior people in the Embassy [in Addis Ababa], because we could all see that the result of this [attitude] was a failure to employ the kind of influence that we could have used to step up the pace of "democratization." That's something of an anachronism. Actually, that wasn't the term that was used then. Now it's kind of a standard phrase for what we're trying to do to encourage greater political participation. Of course, failure to do that led to this buildup of pressure beneath the surface which exploded when finally Haile Selassie became so weak and more or less senile that he could no longer keep the lid on things. Rather than these enlightened forces that we had been encouraging him to bring along, the vacuum was filled by junior military officers who were totally frustrated by their inability to move ahead, [in view of] the leadership's unwillingness to promote serious economic liberalization and land reform. It [Ethiopia] was still a feudal society in many ways. The evolution [of events] bypassed this intermediate stage between absolute monarchy and liberal democracy. It bypassed the stage of rule by enlightened bureaucrats, swept them all aside, and installed a radical, Marxist dictatorship.

But there was a lot of ferment within the Embassy. On several occasions there were "DISSENT" [channel] messages sent in [to the Department] on various policies.

*Q: In the first place, who was Ambassador during most of that time?*

KULICK: The Ambassador was William O. Hall, who was really quite a good person, I think. He had been a career AID officer. Actually, not career. He'd come into AID at mid-career. He had had a fairly distinguished career in AID and then he was the Administrative Counselor in London. I don't know what he did after that, but he was appointed Ambassador to Ethiopia in 1967 or 1968. The previous Ambassador had been a journalist by the name of Edward Korry, who was a very abrasive, outspoken type. He had been quite critical of the [Haile Selassie] regime. Not surprisingly, the Ethiopians were not very enamored of him. He wasn't "recalled" in a formal sense, but I think that the Ethiopians made it clear that they wanted an Ambassador who was a little less abrasive and less undiplomatic. So they got Ambassador Hall, who was more in the traditional [ambassadorial] mold.

All of the policy papers and the country assessments and so forth made the point that Haile Selassie was winding down and that we needed to do everything we could to ensure a smooth transition. But we really were kind of halfhearted about it. I think that that led to the 1974 coup d'etat which happened after I left. We spent a lot of time informally "gaming" [the situation] among ourselves--this question which you referred to earlier. What would be the scenario which would govern Haile Selassie's departure? No one really expected that it would come from the junior ranks of the military. We thought that either the senior military would take over or there would be widespread, ethnic, separatist movements, which happened a lot later. But the idea of a young, radical, Marxist, military faction taking over the country really had not occurred to us. I think that that is because we had had very little contact with the junior ranks of the military. We spent a lot of time watching students, because they were there in the capital, very visible, and very radical.

We had a large, CIA "Station" that poured out astounding amounts of material on student movements. They clearly were convinced that this was where the real trouble was going to come from, because the [students] were open, overt, radical, and a source of constant agitation. However, as it turned out, they were really irrelevant. They were swept aside along with the aristocracy. It was the Marxist soldiers who took over. The students were real Marxists. They were opposed to military rule. When the military came in, they had no contact whatever with these young, idealistic radicals who proceeded to slaughter large numbers of [the students]. So we really missed that whole phenomenon. We missed predicting it.

*Q: As a political officer, how did you go about your work?*

KULICK: I was the Amharic language officer in the Embassy, so my "beat" was among those sectors in society which were somewhat less sophisticated and less articulate in English. I covered the student scene, the Parliament--and there was a Parliament of sorts there. I did provincial reporting. I did a lot of traveling around the countryside, talking to priests, farmers, local administrators, and so forth. I had a wonderful time. I thought that this was why I joined the Foreign Service. This was what it was all about. I wrote long airgrams on the changing role of the [Coptic] Church in Ethiopia and had voluminous biographic files on every member of Parliament, student leaders, and others. I didn't deal with higher politics. That was done at the level of the Ambassador, the DCM, and the Political Counselor. I really worked at the "grass roots" level. I must confess that even I didn't discern that the junior military were going to come...

*Q: Isn't this always the problem? The junior military is the hardest place [to contact]. This has happened again and again, throughout the world. It's the hardest [group] for an Embassy to penetrate--even for our attachés. They usually are talking at one level. The people who are going to pull that type of coup d'etat probably are less sophisticated and aren't going to be the ones who will be talking to [our military attachés].*

KULICK: Yes, but I think that in Africa, at least, military intervention usually came from the top. There wasn't much precedent for [a coup by junior officers]. Later you had Sgt Doe in Liberia and people like that. But generally it was the Army commander, although Libya [was a different example].

*Q: We got caught in Greece, where I served, a little later on. We thought that in 1967 the generals were all set for their coup. Instead, the colonels took the generals' plan and staged a coup against the generals.*

KULICK: I had a very rude awakening when I came back from Addis Ababa and was assigned to the Department. I went around to the [Ethiopian] desk, thinking that they would want to debrief me and extract all of the knowledge that I had acquired there. They didn't seem to be very interested. I thought that they had at least benefited from all the reporting I'd done. I made reference to a couple of the reports I was particularly proud of having prepared--these long, analytical airgrams. I was absolutely crestfallen to discover that not only did they not remember them but, in many cases, they probably hadn't even read them! I was doing great work for some kind of doctoral dissertation, but most of this stuff was completely irrelevant as far as the Department was concerned. But there was never any critique. I never got any feedback from the Department, saying something like, "This is nice, but we're not interested in it." I had trouble finding people in INR [Bureau of Intelligence Research] who read the stuff very closely. The analyst for Ethiopia had read them, but I don't think that the Director of the Office of Research for Africa had read them. They were probably right. It probably was largely irrelevant. I'm not suggesting that if they'd read these reports, we would have been able to avert the disaster that befell our policy in Ethiopia. I wonder whether junior reporting officers get better guidance [elsewhere].

*Q: I suspect not. You never turn somebody off. But at the same time there's a different set of priorities, and maybe to the detriment of policy. But there it is--too much is coming in...*

KULICK: There's just too much information. I was sorry to see the airgram format abolished. Not that it was that much better, coming [into the Department] by pouch than by cable. When you deal with cables, there's a limit to what you feel you can comfortably write--though maybe less so than now, when it's become so automated. [When I was in Ethiopia], you wouldn't send a 10-page telegram. It would be too much of a burden on the communicators.

*Q: As I mentioned before, I was the INR officer for the Horn of Africa.*

KULICK: In what period?

*Q: 1960-61. I read everything that I could because I didn't know anything about it. There really wasn't much coming out, so I could absorb everything. But it didn't go any higher.*

KULICK: Although, hopefully, it informs your analysis...

*Q: For me it was probably essential, because I didn't have anything else to work with.*

KULICK: Did you work with Anne Read?

*Q: No.*

KULICK: She was the analyst who worked on the Horn of Africa for many years. She really benefited from all of that reporting.

*Q: How did you find the people you met [in East Africa]? You mentioned that the Ethiopians were different from the Somalis, but how were your contacts with the people you met?*

KULICK: I dealt a lot with members of Parliament. It was kind of a rubber stamp operation, but it did have representatives from all over the country. If you got to know them, outside of their official capacity, you were able to get a sense of how life was like outside the capital. For the most part it was quite quiescent. This was not a bubbling cauldron of political discontent. Ethiopian society was still largely traditional and intact. It was beginning to change.

Interestingly enough, and if one gains nothing else from this tape, it might be this observation. I think that the advent of the Peace Corps had a great deal to do with the change which Ethiopia underwent. I can't speak for the rest of Africa, particularly, but in the case of Ethiopia the Peace Corps hit that country like a tidal wave. That exaggerates [the impact] in terms of the physical scope of it, but psychologically and culturally it had an enormous impact because here was a country which was still largely feudal in its social structure and very backward. It had a very primitive kind of school system. On the whole, the teachers were a fairly timid lot. All of a sudden, in the early 1960's, you got 200-300 young, idealistic Americans moving around the country, assigned to every secondary school in the country, I think--virtually without exception. They came from an atmosphere of great, political ferment in the United States. The Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-War Movement, the Kennedy period--these highly mobilized youth. And here they were, sent off to a country that had no experience with that kind of outspokenness, that kind of challenge of authority which was the life blood of young Americans in those days. I'm not suggesting that they went out, preaching revolution or anything like that. But just by their very example, just by their teaching these [Ethiopian] kids about the U. S. constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the United Nations, and what was going on in the rest of Africa--to say nothing of what was going on in the United States--you had this sudden, sharp increase in expectations among young Ethiopians, with no real prospect of those expectations being satisfied. That had a very destabilizing effect on [Ethiopian] society, I think.

Again, this was done with the best of intentions. But you had a corps of people who were infusing ideas and creating expectations which the society was not equipped to handle. I think that this certainly spilled over into the military. After all, junior [Ethiopian] military officers were people who had a secondary education of some sort. They took this experience with them into the military, and it didn't take a whole lot of brains to see that the high school students could do something about the situation. This had everything to do with the radicalization of the university population. Unfortunately and ironically, much of this agitation took the form of anti-Americanism. These kids who readily acknowledged that they got their education and ideas from American teachers nevertheless "leapfrogged" over that and went way beyond...

*Q: Why would they turn on America?*

KULICK: Because we were in this anomalous position. Here we had these students out there--these young Americans out there, teaching them about democracy, economic development, and

the free expression of political ideas. At the same time, we were the principal supporters--in fact, the sole political supporters--of the Haile Selassie regime. They [the Ethiopian students] said, "Here you've come over to tell us about democracy, and yet you're supporting the regime which prevents the emergence of democracy in our country." So, even though, in a real sense, they owed all of their political knowledge and awareness to Americans, they looked upon America as a retrograde force in Ethiopia. A lot of the Peace Corps Volunteers were bewildered by all of this. They thought that they had been sent out there to help these people and give them the means to move into the modern world and to create a modern society--and the [Ethiopian] students were turning on them. And turn on them they did. The Peace Corps had to be withdrawn--even from small, provincial towns--because the students were throwing rocks at them, attacking them, and really making life impossible for them.

These [impressions] were from my last year [in Ethiopia], 1972, which was the zenith of the anti-American feeling. The government had to consider closing the university down, sent troops onto the campus a couple of times, and shot some students. It really was quite ugly. Meanwhile, the United States was dithering--not really knowing what to do about all this. Of course, the Emperor and his entourage played the Kagnew Station card to the hilt. Ironically, and again, I think that this was a major turning point, in 1971 Ambassador Hall completed his tour and was replaced by a recently defeated, Republican Congressman from Indiana, named E. Ross Adair, as Ambassador. He was a man with no diplomatic experience and no imagination whatsoever. I'm sure that Sinclair Lewis [the author] must have [thought of someone like] Ross Adair when he wrote "Babbitt." He was a real "Babbitt" kind of figure and was being paid off for 20 years of loyal service to the Republican Party in Congress with this ambassadorship. This was a wholly inappropriate appointment at a time when everybody could see that our relations with Ethiopia were at a critical point. What we needed was a strong American Ambassador who could really "kick ass" and exercise the influence that was ours to deploy at that point. Instead, they sent this--well, there's no purpose in using pejorative adjectives at this point. He just was not at all up to the job. He had a DCM who was a martinet and utterly devoid of any imagination--the classic bureaucrat of a DCM. It was really in that period when things began to spin out of control in Ethiopia.

I'm not saying that if we'd had the right American Ambassador there--if we'd had Tom Pickering there, for example--he could have singlehandedly rescued the situation. But I really have little doubt that the absence of a strong U. S. Ambassador and a coherent policy [affected the situation]. Those two conditions are not necessarily identical, though they are part and parcel of the same thing. This reflected a phenomenon of neglect of a very important area.

*Q: How did this affect you as a reporting officer at the junior level? If there's going to be dissent, it usually comes from this area. It's almost endemic to the system. The more senior people deal at the policy level and tend to follow that, whereas the younger officers get out on the street more often and are in contact with the students and some of the "castoffs" of the political system. This is the younger officers' bailiwick, and they're seeing a different reality.*

KULICK: Well, fortunately, the Political Counselor was not so much personally in touch [with such groups], but he respected my access and my perspective. Of course, junior officers don't make policy recommendations. They report the facts, and the policy recommendations are in the

hands of people further up the line. So I didn't find myself butting heads over policy, although on several occasions I did take issue with the more general drift of our policy, rather than with specific policies. I felt that we needed to be more vigorous, we needed to be much more pointed in our discourse, and move things ahead, such as pressing ahead on land reform. Most of the land was held by a few aristocratic landowners and the [Coptic] Church. Most of the people who worked the land were landless, tenant farmers. This clearly was going to be a source of great instability. We wanted to use the leverage inherent in the aid program or the military assistance program to pursue those kinds of objectives. We were unwilling to link levels of aid with performance on the political level. I can recall putting together several memoranda, which got a respectful hearing, but that's all.

In 1975 the Eritrean Liberation Front was laying siege to Asmara and was very close to capturing the place, which would essentially have led to the secession of Eritrea. The Ethiopians came to us in a panic, asking for emergency military aid. I took the position that, in the long run, there was no military solution to the Eritrean situation. The war had been going on for 10 years and, while we had some obligation to support them as a long term ally, we should place very tight strings on this aid. We should say that we would help them out now to prevent the government from going down to military defeat, but only if the government would use that respite to pursue a political, a compromise solution. That would mean that they would have to accord a lot of autonomy to Eritrea. Well, that idea was not accepted [in the Embassy]. We did provide aid, although not in the amounts that they had asked for or even in the amounts that we had initially intended to give them. But the basic notion of "quid pro quo" was not pursued.

We had discussions like that, having more to do with the economic rather than the military aid program while I was at the Embassy [in Addis Ababa]. There were not many head to head confrontations. We more or less recognized that it was part of the culture--the younger officers were going to take a more activist posture in a case like this than the senior leadership of the Embassy, although, again, the senior leadership was so unimaginative and so timid that it went beyond the kind of situation typical in an embassy. It had very sad consequences for our relations with Ethiopia.

*Q: You left Addis Ababa in 1972 and you came back to Washington.*

**LANE HOLDCROFT**  
**Director, Rural Development Office, Ethiopia**  
**(1969-1973)**

*Lane Holdcroft was born in Iowa in 1933. He received an undergraduate degree from Iowa State University and a graduate degree at Michigan State University. He served in the U.S. Army with a counter-intelligence specialty. His career postings abroad have included Korea and the Philippines.*

*Q: Is that where you served after Korea?*

HOLDCROFT: After serving in Korea and a year on the Korean desk in USAID/Washington, I was assigned to Ethiopia. I went out as the deputy head of Rural Development Office in the USAID Mission. A short time later, the office head departed as a result of health problems, so I headed up that office for nearly four years. Ethiopia in a real sense - its development atmosphere - was like Korea turned upside down. For example, Korea had a very low percentage of illiteracy; Ethiopia had a very high percentage of illiterate people. Ethiopia has a large land base; Korea's was very small. And on it went.

We arrived in Ethiopia mid-1969. That was an promising era in Ethiopia's development. At that time, a critical mass of U.S., Canadian, and European-schooled Ethiopians, who had a clear vision of what needed to be done in their particular field of endeavor, were back in Ethiopia. They were ready to help improve the well-being of their less fortunate fellow citizens. This cadre of well-trained young people, most in their early '30s with lots of vim and vinegar, were greatly benefitted by the donor programs that provided them with resources to move ahead in their specialties. We in the donor community were very much a part of their effort to further economic and social change in that very undeveloped nation, one of the poorest in the world.

Unfortunately the political system was still quite antiquated and the policies were in many instances not very supportive of the development efforts of these young well-trained people. For example, Ethiopia still in the 1960s had a somewhat feudalistic system of land tenure. Producers were not provided with the incentive they needed in order to make investments in improving the productive capacity of the lands that they farmed. And so their agriculture tended to be more exploitative. Still, much progress was being made while we were there, particularly in terms of training in health and education and agriculture. The levels of living of the various peoples in Ethiopia were commencing to improve. The malaria program, for example, was quite successful in reducing the incidence of malaria in the lowlands. Unfortunately, the Ethiopian political advisors who were closest to Haile Selassie were of an earlier generation. They did not understand the need to undertake some significant reforms in land tenure, economic reforms that would give more opportunities to the poor majority, reforms that would commence to spread the wealth among the population.

*Q: There were large holdings by...*

HOLDCROFT: Very large holdings were owned by many of the members of the royal family, the Coptic church, and senior military officers and government officials. They were given grants of land. They often did not use this land - they did not farm the land themselves; they simply used the tenants who may have already farmed the land. They had middlemen who would collect the rents from the tenants. A lot of change for the better was being effected, but it wasn't keeping pace with the expectations of the growing urban population, particularly the poor. And thus it was that eventually Haile Selassie was deposed. In fact, less than a year after I had departed Ethiopia, Haile Selassie was deposed and a totalitarian communist-oriented state emerged. I have very fond memories of Ethiopia and of those young Ethiopians who had been trained in Europe, the United States and Canada. The dedication that they had to improving the well-being of their fellow citizens... Most of these young educated leaders - during the ensuing regime - were either killed or left the country. Large numbers sought political asylum abroad, and went to work for various bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. Those of my Ethiopian colleagues that were not



imprisoned or killed wound up in UN organizations, at the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Ethiopia went through some hellishly difficult times as a society and a people after Mengistu assumed control of the government.

*Q: Prior to the coup did AID have a relatively large program there?*

HOLDCROFT: Yes, it was a very significant program. The geopolitical reason for the large program was the fact that in this era before communications satellites were in place, the US military maintained a communications facility in Eritrea called Kagnev Station. American economic and technical assistance was to some degree a quid pro quo for having that large, very substantial facility, in Ethiopia. After the satellites were in place, there was no longer the need for the communications facility. Part of its mission, as I recall, was to eavesdrop on radio communications from Russian and the Middle East.

*Q: Then this was related to the Cold War, at least to some extent.*

HOLDCROFT: Although I don't recall it being discussed, I understood that the level of aid for Ethiopia was a result of our having a military facility in the country. We were very proud of the institutions that we helped build, starting from scratch, such as the national university in Addis Ababa and the college of agriculture at Alemaya near Harar where the Oklahoma State University provided technical assistance for almost two decades. These institutions - during the Mengistu years - underwent some very difficult times, although they have reopened and are in operation at this time.

**ROBERT B. DUNCAN**  
**Economic Counselor**  
**Addis Ababa (1972-1974)**

*Robert B. Duncan was born in New Jersey in 1934. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1957 he served in the US Army from 1958-1960. His career has included positions in Rabat, Addis Ababa, Algiers, Paris, and Bangkok. Mr. Duncan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 9, 1995.*

*Q: You were in Addis Ababa from when to when?*

DUNCAN: 1972-1974.

*Q: What was your job in Addis Ababa?*

DUNCAN: I started out as the head of the Economic Section and then when the then AID Director, Roger Ernst, left, it was a combined State-AID operation. When he left, he recommended that it could be kept together, but I should be made the head of it. But that posed

problems. At that time, I was not a senior officer yet. So, he said, "Well, then it should be broken apart." I was made economic counselor. In other words, I was raised from the head of the Economic Section in a combined thing to an economic counselor in my own right. I also had a second hat. I was the United States representative to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

*Q: Who was ambassador during this 1972-1974 time?*

DUNCAN: Ross Adair.

*Q: He came from where?*

DUNCAN: Indiana.

*Q: Could you explain a bit about his background and how he operated?*

DUNCAN: He had been a Republican Congressman from Indian. If I recall correctly, they had redistricted Indiana. After they redistricted, he lost the next election. I think he had been on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He was given the job by the Nixon administration. He was out of a job, to use a phrase. He was a political appointee and I assume it was because of his political background that he was selected. He was clearly a political ambassador.

*Q: This was taking a Congressman from Indiana. Tell me about how he operated.*

DUNCAN: In many respects, he was one of the most wonderful ambassadors to work for simply because of the fact that his motivation was always constituency service. So, as a consequence, his subordinates in the embassy became his constituents. As a consequence, he wanted to "do the right thing." But unfortunately, he also began to think that the American people were his constituency. As a consequence, he started opening up the embassy to have tour guides come through. American tourists would be routed into Addis Ababa and then they would come up in busloads. He would entertain in the residence these tour groups. As the word was passing around, it became one of the things to do. So, I remember, the administrator counselor had to sort of encourage him to see that you can't just let yourself become sort of part of the itinerary for every tourist. You have the problem of, if you're going to say "Yes" to one, you can't say "No" to others.

He must have been extremely well liked in the Congress because he was always encouraging his former colleagues to come out and visit him. We used to get planeloads of Congressmen coming out. It wasn't just a junket. They were coming out to see Ross. I remember one particular incident had to do with the sugar quota. There was a Dutch interest in Ethiopia that was trying to see if they couldn't get a sugar quota for Ethiopia. This was a very political issue in the United States. So, as a consequence, we were talking about it. The ambassador said, "Well, wait until I get my boys out here." The Agricultural Committee members were all out there. It was an unusual way to deal with a problem. It was extremely direct. We were explaining to the local industrial interests, "You know, you (inaudible)." He was a very pleasant man to work for. He learned.

*Q: What was the political situation in Ethiopia during this 1972-1974 period?*

DUNCAN: It depended on which part you were in. There were there main factors. In other words, the Emperor had his 80th birthday at the very beginning of that period. He was getting on in years. He was becoming a bit detached from the daily running of the country. There was some effervescence, but I would call it a moderate... The Ethiopian Revolution, I always said that somebody ought to write a book some day to compare the French Revolution with the Ethiopian Revolution. I believe that, if there is an anatomy of a revolution (There was a famous guy, maybe Palmer, who wrote a book called "The Anatomy of a Revolution.")... Being familiar myself with the structure of the French Revolution, the linkages with the way that the Ethiopian Revolution evolved is incredibly similar in its main characteristics. What you had at that period was a group which, for lack of another word, we'll call our evolved middle class, small, but very concerned about the rigidity in the society, the desire for change, for greater democracy. The Emperor himself had been quite a revolutionary in his own right when he first came to power in 1913. So, as a consequence, he had been enlightened, but as you say, it's like a Franz Josef. He comes to power in 1818 as head of Austria. You had this effervescence, but it was definitely what we'll call moderate revolutionaries not "off with their heads."

There was the poverty problem, a very serious problem. But I think the thing that precipitated it was that they had a very, very terrible drought and it led to a terrible, terrible famine. The government was covering it up. They weren't, in effect, being open and honest about what a catastrophe this thing was for the country. As a consequence, they weren't mobilizing the help for the country that they could have if they had been up front about it. I think that, as the famine progressed, the exasperation level grew. In February of 1974, they had the first deposing. They had a military coup. The drought was the preceding year. I arrived in the summer of 1972. There was a drought all that year and the revolution was in 1974. Then we left in June of 1974. The Emperor died in October. I don't know if they had the absolutely final that he was killed, but it is certainly widely believed. I remember, we were back here in Virginia and we had an Ethiopian friend in our house. The phone rang and a friend at the Ethiopian embassy was calling to tell him. He spoke to him on the phone, then came back to the table and told us that there had been a massacre, that a lot of the Ethiopian elite and not necessarily aristocrats only, a whole load of them had been massacred. You can call it the beginning of the Ethiopian terror, like the French "La Terreur." It was at that period that the Emperor died.

*Q: Passed from the scene completely.*

DUNCAN: Yes. The rumor I heard was that he had been smothered.

*Q: That's what I heard, too.*

DUNCAN: I don't think that's ever been definitively proven.

*Q: I don't think so either. People just don't pay much attention. Going back a bit, you were economic counselor. You had this famine that the government was trying to cover up. Were we picking up that there is a famine out there and we should do something? Were we trying to do anything and running against problems with the government?*

DUNCAN: The issue of the famine relief basically fell under the AID mission. They were, in effect, saying that "You have a horrendous situation here." We were telling the Ethiopian government that "You have a major problem here." We didn't go to the press. We weren't publicizing... At the beginning, we did not know how bad the thing was. When you get out into the countryside, it's a very difficult country to travel around. Not only is it a very difficult country to travel around, but as subsequently evolved, when the relief thing started to begin, it's a very difficult country to aid.

*Q: There are those tremendous chasms between roads.*

DUNCAN: Airlift becomes the only means. An airlift is not only extremely expensive, but you can't carry that much stuff with it.

*Q: What sort of reaction were you getting when you would go to Ethiopian officials?*

DUNCAN: I never discussed with an Ethiopian official this direct issue myself in the period that we were talking about because this was an area that the... Remember, at that time, I was part of the joint mission and that was the AID Director with the AID program.

*Q: What was the AID Director saying about it? Were we saying, "Let's all get together and work on this" or something like that?*

DUNCAN: As far I know, yes. The first thing they were trying to do is, they were trying to get a picture of the problem. Obviously, if you're going to have to justify the relief, you were going to have to find out what the problem was. The problem there was that the Ethiopian government seemed to be covering it up. I remember at the time people saying, "Gee, the situation must be terrible because people are coming into the city and their selling antiques." They were crosses and things like that. For people to sell that to get money, they must be desperate. That's how the feel of it was. But the government during this period was not coming and saying, "We've got a disaster on our hands."

*Q: Was this a reflection of the senility of the Emperor? He ran things and if he wasn't overly compus mentus or didn't want to be troubled or what have you, the government responded that way?*

DUNCAN: We can always speculate. I think it's very clear that the Emperor was showing his age. I had a few contacts with him, but it was in an audience environment. So, he seemed to be functioning effectively. But people who had more direct contact with him than I did say that he was showing signs of his age. The government, I assume, didn't want to publicize the nature of the disaster because they were afraid of a popular revolt, which eventually happened.

*Q: How did the Revolution impact on you? What were your experiences?*

DUNCAN: The first impact of the Revolution was that we had a number of Americans in the country and we had to get them out. We had advanced inkling we were going to have trouble. So, I had gotten word the night before to contact Americans when we knew where they were to

tell them to stay in. So, I called up this one couple in the Hilton and told them to stay in. They said, "Well, we were planning on going to this restaurant because we've already had food in the hotel. We have reservations tonight to go out to this other restaurant and that's what we want to do." I was explaining to them that I could not order them not to go to the restaurant. If that's what they were determined to do, that they could do. But my instructions were to let them know that the embassy had information which would make it prudent not to go out of the hotel tonight. After going back and forth, they said, "Well, alright." The Revolution, of course, broke out that night. The next day, this particular couple went down and hired an Ethiopian taxi driver to take them on a guided tour of a whole group of sites that they had. Apparently, what happened is, whenever they would mention a site, the cab driver was well clued into the events of the day, so he knew where the fighting was going on. When they would select a spot where they were shooting, he would say, "Oh, no, we can't go there." Then they would mention something else and he would say, "Yes, we can go there." So, he spent the whole day taking them around on their guided tour, keeping away from the fire fights. We were being mobilized from other functions. The next morning when I went down to the hotel to get these people on the plane that we had to evacuate them from the country, the guy, the tourist, says to me, "I think you people are really exaggerating the problems around here because we were going all over town yesterday and we didn't see any problems at all."

*Q: After you had had this group that had come through and had seen no trouble in Ethiopia at the time, could you talk about what happened thereafter?*

DUNCAN: I've often thought of the Ethiopian Revolution as being modeled on the evolution of the French Revolution. When this period took place, there were many Ethiopians who were not aristocratic, but middle class people not aristocratic in the sense that they weren't of the titled nobility. They basically were welcoming the revolution because they thought that it would break the power of what they thought was an anachronistic and, in effect, aristocratic regime. So, there was this period that extended until October of 1974. We left in June of 1974. The Revolution began in February. One can argue that the beginning of "La Terreur," to use the French analogy, began in October of 1974. Our Ethiopian friend had been told a number of the people that had been assassinated which were friends of his. Many of them were friends of his and people that we had known. Some of them were actually people who, based on comments they made to us, had more or less welcomed the earlier February revolution. Here you have a case of where the revolution, in effect, was starting to consume its own. I suppose, looking back at it, both Faith and I think of that situation as being so sad because the Ethiopians were in certain respects less developed than many of the colonized African countries, but they had achieved quite a bit on their own. The most notable example was the Ethiopian Airlines, which had become a world class quality airline. I think I'm correct in saying that at that time the aircraft facilities in Addis Ababa were the only facilities outside the United States that were FAA approved. The subsequent period set them back a generation.

*Q: You left Ethiopia when?*

DUNCAN: In June of 1974.

*Q: What was your assessment at that time of whether Ethiopia? Maybe you can say what you were getting from the rest of the people in the embassy.*

DUNCAN: You mean at the time that I was assigned there?

*Q: At the time you left Ethiopia. I'm trying to capture the attitude of our diplomats and your attitude. Where did you see Ethiopia going and developing at that time?*

DUNCAN: I had the chance to meet the Emperor once. He was a small man, but had an absolutely incredible personal magnetism. I mean, his eyes were extraordinary in their power. You have to see it. It's hard to put into words. But at that time, it seemed very clear to me that this was a man who was in his 80s, he had been a revolutionary in his time, but he was showing his age. It is inconceivable to think that it was possible for a man like that to, in effect, have effective dictatorial control. The Crown Prince was very clearly weak. I think most people's reaction was, when they were looking down the pike, they couldn't see that an absolute monarchy, in effect, was going to continue in that country. The wherewithal was not there. It was also clear when I was there that the famine that was there was a real problem. The Ethiopian government was not revealing the dimension of the problem as serious as it was. But I think that the subsequent problem was going to grow out of the exasperation, if you want to call it that, of the people at that time. You really had three groups in the country. You had the Eritreans, the Tigrayan, and the Amhara, who shared a common tradition in many respects, but clearly there was antagonism between them. It was obvious in the reaction that, even though the Tigrayan and Amhara had a lot in common in terms of the other groups in the society, nevertheless, there was a very strong antagonism between the two. I am not surprised now to see that Eritrea eventually, in effect, became an independent country because despite all the stress and strain and everything that went on, it was clear when we were there that the Ethiopian efforts to maintain the unity of the country was facing quite a bit of opposition many years after the (inaudible) began.

*Q: We have a doctrine that we've held to for a long time, since the freeing of Africa, in that once you started breaking this continent down on tribal lines, it was impossible, utter chaos. We were trying to hang together and not allow that to happen. It does appear that in a certain way Ethiopia was kind of an exception. We didn't feel that these divisions in Ethiopia would cause the same chaos that it might in Nigeria or the Congo. Was that a feeling that was at all prevalent in our embassy?*

DUNCAN: Are you talking about the government's policy?

*Q: I'm talking about the American Foreign Service Africa Bureau attitude towards Ethiopia at that time.*

DUNCAN: We still had a significant military presence there. There was a very unusual relationship between the Israelis and the Ethiopians. There was a strong and important Israeli presence in Ethiopia. I think that there was no policy problem. In other words, the Emperor was viewed as an eminent historical character. As a consequence, while the people may have wished that the country would have made certain progress in certain areas, I never had the impression

when I was there that we had any different attitude toward it as Ethiopia being a friendly country to the United States and the regime being a friendly regime to the United States.

*Q: Was there the feeling that Ethiopia just has to hang together?*

DUNCAN: The Ethiopian government policy was to maintain the internal unity of the country. While I was in the Economic Section, not in the Political Section, I am not aware of any time when anybody was advocating that the country break up. The country's policy was that they were united and we were behind the unity of the country. We didn't think of the people in Eritrea as being friendly. But the thing of it is that it was clear that we were dealing with an empire and there were these tribal and to some degrees even racial, ethnic differences. These differences coexisted with what you might call economic class differences. In other words, you would have an Amhara middle class and you would have a Gala middle class. There tended to be a pecking order. The Eritreans thought of themselves as the top, although the Amhara (and maybe this was the source of the stress between the two of them) never permitted the Eritreans, the Tigrinya, in effect... Maybe they thought they were the best, but they would challenge that. I think that may have been an element of stress between them. Then you have the Gala. Then you have what they call the Shankela, which were the more Bantu. Then, of course, in some parts, you have the Muslims. I think what it was is that I don't think that we appreciated because they themselves didn't stress it so much how serious these tribal divisions were. In other words, I think that a lot of the revolutionary activity does have tribal routes. In some respects, you can think of it like a Gala revolt against the Amhara. But we would know people who were not aristocratic. My contacts tended to be businessmen who were clearly Amhara and businessmen who were clearly Gala. They themselves would never speak in terms of tribal. They didn't identify themselves that way. They were identifying themselves as being nonaristocratic, if you understand what I mean. I'm talking now about the bourgeoisie type deal. I think that there was still this deep tribal conflict issue in the country and I don't think that we understood how serious it was. The Muslim-Christian thing you could understand, but I don't think we understood just how the Amhara-Gala relationship was.

*Q: It makes good sense. You left there in the summer of 1974. Where did you go?*

DUNCAN: In 1974, I came back to Washington. I became the director of the Economic Policy staff in the Bureau of African Affairs.

**PARKER D. WYMAN**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Addis Ababa (1972-1974)**

*Parker Wyman was born in Illinois in 1922. After serving in the United States Army from 1943-1946, he received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1946. His career has included positions in Germany, Vietnam, and Ethiopia. Mr. Wyman was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 1989.*

*Q: At the end of your time in Vietnam, in 1972, you went to Addis Ababa as Deputy Chief of Mission. Had you asked for this assignment?*

WYMAN: No. I was not in the habit of seeking out a particular position for my next assignment. A lot of colleagues did, but I just didn't feel like doing that. I preferred to concentrate on the job that I was doing and then make the best of the assignment that came up.

*Q: Who was the ambassador when you arrived in Addis?*

WYMAN: He was Ross Adair, a former Congressman who had been appointed to that position as a reward for his long, faithful service in Congress. He was a very pleasant person to work for. Moreover, working for a non-career ambassador proved to be a very different experience from working for a career officer. There were many subjects he did not get into that a career ambassador would have gone into. This was fine with me because it gave me, as his DCM, more scope and authority. Our Mission in Addis Ababa was quite a challenge in that regard because in addition to the Embassy it included the AID, MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group), USIS, Peace Corps, and NAMRU (Naval Medical Research Unit) offices.

That tour in Ethiopia was to be an amazing experience. I thought when I went there from Vietnam that Addis Ababa would be a quiet post. After all, Ethiopian emperors had been running things there for a couple of thousand years.

*Q: But you brought the excitement with you, didn't you?*

WYMAN: Not right away! However, after some months the terrible drought started in. That was an awful situation. What made it even worse than it would have been anyway was the fact that the Ethiopian government kept us off at arm's length for quite a while as far as drought assistance was concerned. They really did not want to have any publicity about the need for foreign assistance to cope with the drought. They thought it would reflect badly on the government, so they tried to minimize the situation and said that they would be able to cope with it. If there was to be any outside assistance, they wanted it kept at very modest levels. Well, that was a tough situation to deal with. It was hard to bring in relief that they said they didn't need and it was difficult for us to judge at first how much they would be able to do for themselves. The long and short of it is that our aid, and that of other countries as well, arrived later than it should have. I am sure that some people died as a result. We all felt very badly when we eventually realized that.

*Q: How about the security situation with regard to Somalia and Eritrea at that time? Were they having problems there?*

WYMAN: Yes, but let me say one more thing about the drought. I came to the conclusion that we were poorly organized in Washington to deal with this kind of situation. There had been natural catastrophes at various recent times in different areas around the world where some American assistance had been provided. Nevertheless, when it came to relief for the drought in Ethiopia, we seemed to be dealing with people in Washington who had never had anything to do with droughts before. There didn't seem to be any knowledge as to how best to go about it, and



no requests to us for the type of information that would be most helpful to them in organizing drought relief. Everything had to be figured out from scratch. I discovered later on that this in fact had been more or less the case. There hadn't really been an attempt to establish a central repository of information about the best methods to tackle this kind of problem, nor were people assigned to deal with it who had had previous experience of that type. AID did move to remedy that problem, but only later. I couldn't give you an exact year. They set up an Office of Emergency Assistance, if I remember the name correctly, to deal with problems of that type which might arise anywhere in the world.

*Q: As a result, I think, of the Ethiopian tragedy.*

WYMAN: I believe so, and I think they were able to do a better job after that. They had a much better knowledge then of what the problems were likely to be and how best to cope with them. I wish that office had existed when the drought in Ethiopia first started.

*Q: You did have an AID mission in Addis?*

WYMAN: Yes, but its personnel hadn't had experience with drought conditions before either.

*Q: Did you have an Agricultural Attache?*

WYMAN: No, we didn't have such a person, but AID covered agricultural matters.

You mentioned Eritrea and Somalia. Just very briefly on that, the Eritrean civil war had been going on for years by the time I arrived in Addis. That was a continuing major problem for the government.

*Q: Did we still have a post up in Asmara?*

WYMAN: Oh yes, we had a Consulate General there and the Navy had Kagnew Station. It was collecting electronic information which had been picked up at vast distances from there. That information had been very important from a military standpoint in the past. Later on it became less important technologically and towards the end of my tour Washington decided to terminate Kagnew entirely. However it was still considered important when I first arrived.

Somalia was a serious threat to Ethiopia during my entire tour. Its government loudly proclaimed its historical right to the Ogaden, a huge area of southeastern Ethiopia which was mostly desert. The Somalis made it quite clear that they intended to recover this area soon by any possible means. Moreover the Somalis were obtaining a lot of military equipment from the Soviets at that time.

The Somali threat in turn put great strain on our relations with Ethiopia because its government kept pressing us for a very large increase in military assistance. We had been providing military assistance to Ethiopia for many years, partly on a grant and partly on a loan basis. It had been at modest levels of seven or eight million dollars annually. Now they wanted to increase that level a great deal, pointing to the huge amounts of equipment that the Soviets were providing to

Somalia. In response to our recommendations, the Department did obtain from Congress an increase of three million dollars or so, but it pointed out to us that that was the limit because Congress by the end of the Vietnam War was in no mood to provide increased military assistance to anybody.

We in the embassy could certainly understand that problem. But it was something quite different to bring the Ethiopian government to understand why their long-time friend and virtual ally couldn't provide them with a lot more assistance when they were obviously for the first time coming under a major military threat. Even in the first half of my tour when a normal civilian government was in power and Haile Selassie was in control, the Ethiopian government was very unhappy with us for this reason.

*Q: You mentioned the Emperor, Haile Selassie. Was there much discontent in those years with his rule? Could you see trouble coming for him?*

WYMAN: There was a great deal of discontent because Ethiopia was one of the very least developed countries in the world. It was very hard, however, to figure out whether anything would soon result from that discontent, what form it would take, who would carry it out, and so forth. It was the conventional wisdom (and by that I mean the view held by everybody I talked to out there, including lots of Ethiopians as well as people in other embassies) that there would be no serious threat to the existing regime as long as the aging emperor was still in place. When he died, that would be a new ball game. Who could tell what would happen then?

This conclusion seemed reasonable. There had been an attempt back in 1960 to carry out a coup d'état while the Emperor was out of the country, but he had rushed back and quickly snuffed it out. Since then, the situation had been quiet.

That brings us to how the situation changed so radically. Midway in my three year assignment in Addis, Ambassador Adair retired for health reasons and went home. I became Charge d'Affaires for a period which turned out, surprisingly, to be thirteen months. Four days after the ambassador left, the Ethiopian Revolution started. Its origin was hidden from public view, however. Apparently there had been a severe shortage of water at one of the Ethiopian outposts in the Ogaden Desert. The army had a number of these outposts there so they could quickly detect any Somali attempt to invade that area surreptitiously. There were perhaps 30 or 40 enlisted men and three or four officers at this particular outpost. When the water shortage occurred, the officers insisted on taking most of the water for their own use. The enlisted men decided they just couldn't live on their meager daily ration of water and mutinied. They tied up the officers and said they wouldn't let them loose until their own water ration was increased and the officers swore not to try and have them punished later. Eventually the officers, who had no choice, agreed to that.

You might have thought that would be the end of it, but the amazing thing is that the enlisted men who had done this then broadcast on the military radio network what had happened. Probably they thought that they were less likely to be punished if enlisted men in other Army units knew what they had done. Soon after their broadcast had been heard, enlisted men at a couple of other military outfits presented other kinds of demands to their own officers. They too

were successful. Then the newspapers began to pick this up and report these incidents. The next day, instead of two incidents, you'd read about four incidents. As some civilian groups such as teachers and taxicab drivers read about this, they decided that this might be a good time for them to see if they couldn't win some advantage. So they presented their demands and the crisis continued to grow like the traditional snowball that turned into an avalanche. Then all military units sent representatives to Addis to present their combined grievances to the central government. The ones sent were either junior officers or non-commissioned officers, and tended to be the most radical and vociferous in their units. Those representatives then formed a committee in Addis which was called the "Derg," a word which simply means "committee." One of those men was Major Mengistu, who would gradually come to dominate the entire group by methods which included murdering his rivals.

Meanwhile the incidents, strikes, and mutinies continued to grow in scope. The Prime Minister was replaced, the government's authority looked increasingly weak, and the influence of the Derg was obviously growing. The military rebels appeared to be the most dangerous threat from the beginning and our reports to the Department sometimes referred to the ongoing developments as a "creeping coup." The reason we used that expression was that there had been many military coups d'etat in various African states, but they had all been very rapid. Soldiers would come in the middle of the night and shoot the president and take over the palace, or something like that, and then announce a new government the next morning. This wasn't like that.

*Q: It was slowly, slowly building up.*

WYMAN: Yes. It seemed so unusual. Well, it certainly was unusual by the standards of those other coups in Africa. On the other hand, if you recall the French Revolution, that too proceeded in stages over months and years before you came to the execution of the king and the "Reign of Terror."

Gradually we began to see the collapse of the entire previously existing power structure. It became obvious that the new civilian government was being manipulated by the Derg, and we heard more and more of Mengistu's influence in the Derg. Its members had gone way beyond the role of presenting grievances and were calling the shots themselves even though Haile Selassie was still emperor and there was still a civilian government. By this time many of the most influential people in the country had been arrested and thrown into the same prison in Addis. Finally the military arrested the emperor, put him under house arrest, and installed General Aman Andom as the new Head of Government.

The next day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs telephoned me and asked me to call on General Andom three hours later. After a few seconds of hesitation I agreed to do so. When I arrived, I found that television cameras had been assigned to record this call, and later the calls of the British and French ambassadors, as proof that foreign countries recognized the new government. The Department subsequently agreed with the decision I had made.

From the standpoint of American policy, the major issue continued to be that of military assistance. Aman Andom's government believed, just as the previous civilian governments had,

that there was great danger that Somalia might soon attack Ethiopia, with Soviet support, and try to seize a huge chunk of the country. So they wanted a great increase in military assistance from the United States. I did my best to explain our position to General Aman Andom.

In that regard, there was a very tough and personal issue that arose for me. The telegrams from the Department on this subject said that it wasn't possible to obtain Congressional approval for any further military assistance beyond the additional three million dollars we had previously managed to obtain from Congress and that, in explaining our refusal to provide additional aid, I should emphasize that we did not take nearly as serious a view of the Somali threat as their government did. Our government thought they were much too alarmed on this score. It wasn't likely, in their opinion, that Somalia would attack Ethiopia.

When I received those instructions, I realized that there were two possibilities in trying to explain the situation to this new government. One was to take the line the Department was calling for, to tell them that the Somali threat was overblown, a line which I myself did not believe for a minute. I knew that the Ethiopians would not believe it for a minute either. I knew their reaction would be, "Those Americans are idiots. The people in Washington and their Charge d'Affaires here, they're all idiots! What can we hope from a bunch like that if they can't see all the evidence in Somalia? Why do they think the Somalis are getting all this military equipment from the Soviets?" I certainly did not want to invite that reaction and completely destroy our credibility with the military government.

The alternative was to explain frankly to the Ethiopians what I knew to be the primary cause for the Department's position, namely the unwillingness of Congress to increase military assistance to any country at that time because they were so upset about the results of all the military assistance which had been provided to South Vietnam. The Department wasn't willing to authorize, in a telegram which would be on the official record, a frank statement like that, putting the responsibility on Congress, for transmission to the Ethiopians. However I did not feel the same inhibitions in that regard, particularly since the statement I made would be an oral one. I didn't like to explain the situation that way, but it would be more truthful and I felt sure it would lead to a somewhat better reaction on the Ethiopian side. Such an explanation would cause them to realize that our Congress had little interest in Ethiopia, but at least they wouldn't think that all of us in the foreign policy area were just idiots, since the Somali threat was about as obvious as anything could be.

So, quite frankly, for the only time in my life I ignored the Department's instructions and presented the matter as seemed best to me. I put the emphasis on the decisive role of Congress concerning appropriations for military assistance, and on the overwhelming impact of the Vietnam experience on Congress in that regard. I mentioned that not everybody in Washington thought the Somali threat was as large as they did, but I only mentioned that in a very minor key. Furthermore, in my reporting back to the Department, I went over that part of the discussion very briefly. I simply said that I had dealt with the question of the severity of the Somali threat and had also mentioned that Congress was presently very unhappy with military assistance programs in general. I felt uncomfortable in doing that but I knew I couldn't persuade the Department to come around to the type of explanation to the Ethiopians which I felt sure was far more sensible and actually more truthful.

Looking at subsequent events, I feel they proved that I had been right. Later on, Somalia did attack with the help of all that Soviet equipment and gave the Ethiopians a terrific battle. The only thing that saved the Ethiopians was the fact that, by that time, the Soviets had switched to the Ethiopian side, which was an incredible story in itself. The Somalis, seeing that switch occur, had obviously decided that they had better attack before Soviet aid began to strengthen the Ethiopians. All that shows that it made sense for me to avoid telling the Ethiopians we wouldn't provide additional aid because the Somali threat was much exaggerated.

*Q: Exactly. I don't see how you could be blamed for that.*

WYMAN: I wasn't blamed for it. I'm sure they never realized in the Department what I had done.

*Q: Did you as Charge at that time feel that Secretary Kissinger was taking an interest in the situation in Addis, which had grown very serious?*

WYMAN: I have been told that the Secretaries of State and Defense, as well as the National Security Council, were all involved in it for a short time. Certainly our Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Joe Sisco, did get into the picture for a while. I had a nasty experience in that regard. One night about three months after General Aman Andom had taken over, the Derg killed him at his home and, without the pretense of a trial, executed about sixty of the most prominent people who were being held in one prison in Addis. These included a former prime minister, a prince of the royal family, and some of the highest ranking generals.

*Q: The night of the long knives, in other words.*

WYMAN: That's right. A day or two after we reported those executions, a telegram came back from the Department saying that, because of that event, our government was now suspending all arms deliveries to the Ethiopian government while it took the arms assistance program under review. We sent back a telegram in which we expressed agreement with this action, but we also urged the Department not to take certain logistical actions it had planned which would in our view have convinced the Ethiopians that we were definitely terminating our arms assistance to them. In that case they might immediately turn to the Soviets or the Chinese for arms assistance.

The Department did in fact accept and carry out our recommendation on this point. However, a day or two after our response went out, I got a telephone call from Sisco on the secure telephone line to the Department, which I had never before used. Referring to our telegram, he objected vigorously to one use in our telegram of the word "cutoff" instead of "suspension." He asserted in strong and intemperate language that I obviously did not understand the situation, that he did not know me personally, and that he had no confidence in my judgment. He went on to instruct me that I was not to make a move of any importance in relation to the Ethiopian government without prior authorization from the Department. I tried to assure him that we fully understood the importance and purpose of making clear to the Ethiopians that we were implementing a suspension, but not a permanent cutoff of our assistance, because of the barbaric executions they had carried out. The whole point of our response had been to make sure that the Ethiopians

understood this important distinction and we had only used “cutoff” rather than “suspension” at one point in our telegram because we were speaking of the interpretation which the Ethiopian government might first have put on our action. However Sisco only became louder and angrier and made the same remarks all over again. I'm not exaggerating that conversation. I didn't trust myself towards the end to say more than that I understood what he had said.

*Q: Not what you wanted to say.*

WYMAN: No. It was a very unpleasant experience and unlike any other one I had in my entire career.

*Q: During this period of great trouble, were there demonstrations against our embassy or against you personally as Charge?*

WYMAN: No, there were not, with the exception of a sizable rock that one of the students at the University threw at the ambassadorial car when I was riding in it with the flag flying. It came right through the windshield and almost hit the driver. That was really the only violent action directed against an American that materialized in this whole period. The military leaders weren't trying at that time to stir up anti-American sentiment even though they were angry about the lack of military assistance from us and their domestic policies were turning more communist all the time.

Many of the students now distrusted the United States. These students thought that a revolution was needed in Ethiopia and they knew that our government had long had friendly relations with the emperor. But there were certainly no anti-American demonstrations at that time, and no government attempt to stir up such demonstrations. We could not be sure that this would continue to be the case, however, and we were also deeply concerned by the possibility of anarchy and a complete breakdown of law and order, in which case only Heaven knew what would happen. Moreover terrorists attacked our embassy in Khartoum during this period and killed our ambassador there. So there was a serious question of whether we ought to evacuate American dependents from Addis. We gave that a lot of thought. I felt it wasn't needed and told the Department that when they asked about it. Then I had a meeting with all the wives and explained to them that the question would be kept under constant review but that it was our best judgment in the embassy that such an evacuation was not needed at that time in Addis. I don't think any of the dependents left and I know that no harm subsequently came to them during this period.

The situation was quite different in Asmara when the civil war in Eritrea intensified after the execution of General Aman Andom. I recommended the immediate evacuation of dependents from our Consulate General in Asmara and the Department agreed. That was carried out in the course of one day.

*Q: American business interests suffered. Wasn't there a nationalization of various properties out there that affected us?*

WYMAN: Not really. The nationalization actions had little effect upon Americans because of the very limited extent of American business interests in Ethiopia. The major American investment there was Tenneco's search for oil, which continued without interruption. Several American employees of Tenneco were kidnaped for several months, but that was carried out by the Eritrean rebels. We took an active role in the lengthy but successful negotiations for their release, and the Department later sent the Mission a formal commendation for its handling of the case.

In this connection I remember being asked by several visiting American businessmen for my prediction of what might happen in Ethiopia in the future. I frequently discussed that with our Political Counselor, Peter Sebastian. We agreed that the Derg as a collective body would not continue to exercise supreme power very long. Sooner or later, and more likely sooner, one person was going to emerge who would dominate the government. The history of many, many countries pointed to the virtual inevitability of such a development in the aftermath of revolution.

Beyond that, about all one could predict with confidence was that there was going to be a prolonged period of instability and uncertainty in Ethiopia. No matter what happened, nothing was going to be firmly established so that you could be confident it would survive for many years. No one could tell when or how the situation would eventually stabilize. Looking back, I think these predictions were accurate.

*Q: What about the role of the Soviets?*

WYMAN: I don't feel that I know a great deal about that. We knew that throughout this early period of the revolution, while I was there, the Soviets were pumping military equipment into Somalia. We knew that this put them into an increasingly awkward position in regard to Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government was now advocating and implementing a lot of policies which looked like some form of communism, and yet their major concern was an attack from Somalia based on Soviet backing for Somalia. I still don't know what the Soviet ambassador was saying in his conversations with the Ethiopian government at that time, but of course the Soviets eventually transferred their support to the Ethiopian side. How long that switch had been cooking, I don't know.

I had a good many discussions with the Soviet ambassador and their DCM about the developing situation. It was always interesting to see whether they would express approval of the radical policies being pursued by the Ethiopian government. One time, we had the Soviet ambassador over for dinner at our house. It was near Christmas. Pat had placed on a side table in our dining room one of those little candleholders with angels on it which spun around and tinkled as the heat from the candles below rose up to them from below. The ambassador was fascinated with it and said he had never seen anything like that in his life. We knew we could easily order another one like it so we presented it to him as he left. He was very pleased and thanked us.

In a few days, the ambassador sent us a present in return --- a small wooden bear clutching a honey pot in front of him, with some Russian writing on the front. It was decorative and unusual so we put it on a table in our living room. A day or two later our security officer happened to see it and immediately expressed concern that there might be a listening device inside the honey pot. Well, I confess that I had not thought of that. So, he took it away with him to have it examined. I

was not too worried but still felt relieved when he came back with it in a day or two and said there was no problem.

*Q: Did the United Nations play any role in all of this trouble? What about the Organization for African Unity (OAU)?*

WYMAN: No, because the revolution was strictly an internal question neither of those organizations got into it.

*Q: The OAU meets in Addis, doesn't it?*

WYMAN: Yes, it does, and it has its headquarters there. One of my first experiences in Addis was going to a major OAU meeting that was opened by the emperor. He was to give the first speech, as usual. I had not seen the emperor before. I was up in the balcony and was waiting with great curiosity to see this legendary person. He was late in arriving, as he usually was. Finally, I heard a door open down below and I knew that the emperor was about to enter. From under the balcony then emerged, to my great surprise, a little chihuahua! About twenty feet behind came the emperor, looking very regal despite his small stature. Haile Selassie took that chihuahua with him just about every place he went. On another occasion, when Pat and I escorted some Project Hope people to meet the emperor in his palace, the chihuahua climbed into Pat's lap! Haile Selassie looked rather amused by that but didn't say anything about it.

*Q: Did you ever get to meet with Mengistu?*

WYMAN: No, although he was right next to General Taferi Banti, the new Head of State appointed by the Derg after the execution of General Aman Andom, when I called on him. During that period I usually met with the Foreign Minister.

I have always remembered the last meeting I had with the emperor, not long before he was arrested. I had to tell him about the impending closure of the Kagnew base in Asmara. He knew that Kagnew had been one of the principal reasons for American interest in Ethiopia, so he was sorry to hear that news. Also, this was after the revolution was well under way and his own position had obviously become precarious. I remember him shaking his head and saying sadly, just before I left, "Times are changing very rapidly these days." Ostensibly, he said this in relation to Kagnew, but I felt sure from the tone of his voice and the look on his face that he was also thinking of the traditional Ethiopian political and economic structure which was collapsing around him.

*Q: That was certainly an exciting period you lived through. Any final comments on those days in Ethiopia?*

WYMAN: I think I've mentioned what I would like to say. After my having been Charge d'Affaires for thirteen months, a new ambassador, Art Hummel, arrived. Pat and I left Addis several months after that.



**ARTHUR S. BERGER**  
**Assistant Cultural/Information Officer, USIS**  
**Addis Ababa (1972-1975)**

*Mr. Berger was born and raised in Rhode Island and educated at Yeshiva and Howard Universities. He joined the Foreign Service (USIA) in 1970. Serving primarily in Cultural and Public Affairs, Mr. Berger served abroad in Kampala, Addis Ababa, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Tel Aviv and the Hague, where he was Public Affairs Officer. In his Washington assignments Mr. Berger served at USIA Headquarters as Director of Publications and at the Department of State as Spokesman for the Near East South Asia Bureau. Following retirement Mr. Berger worked with the American Jewish Committee before becoming Director of Communications of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Mr. Berger was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.*

Q: *So we are talking about '72 when you went to Ethiopia?*

BERGER: Yes.

Q: *And you were there until when?*

BERGER: April 30, 1975.

Q: *What was the situation in Ethiopia when you got there in 1972?*

BERGER: It was wonderful. Ethiopia of course was an absolute kingdom led by Haile Selassie. There was a small parliament that didn't have any power whatsoever. There was a cabinet that supposedly ran the government. But the power was with the king, his family, certain people in the government that were either related to him or from the Amhara tribe. It was a beautiful country. Incredibly poor but a very exciting place because the culture – at least to me – felt so unique. I think it is a very unique culture. And a beautiful country with fantastic weather. Sights that are hard to find anywhere else in the world. Ethiopia is very well isolated by the high mountains. It is part of the high rift valley area. We had a wonderful experience there. And Ethiopians were incredible people.

Q: *Who was our ambassador when you got there?*

BERGER: H. Ross Adair was the first ambassador, a retired congressman from Indiana. And I don't remember who replaced him. [Editor's Note: Ambassador Adair presented his credentials on July 8, 1971 and departed post in late February 1974. He was succeeded by Ambassador Arthur Hummel who presented his credentials in April 1975. Between the two ambassadors Parker Wyman served as Chargé.]

Q: *What was the political situation there? Or was it just Haile Selassie?*

BERGER: It was Haile Selassie. I would say late '72 until late '73 the situation was quite stable. Ethiopia was a major ally of the United States. This was still the Cold War. The Ethiopians allowed the U.S. to have a listening station.

*Q: Kagne Station.*

BERGER: Kagne Station. We had a very large embassy. We had a consulate in Asmara. Americans were, I think, very well liked as well. I did a lot of traveling around the country. I had two different jobs in the almost three years that we were there. One half of the time I was the assistant cultural officer, and half the time I was the assistant information officer. Roger Ross was the PAO. Art Lewis replaced him in late 74, early 75.

As the assistant cultural officer I helped to supervise the library and cultural center at the embassy. It was separate from the embassy. Security situations being what they were then, we were right downtown, plate glass window, in the middle of a huge square where thousands of people would pass by every day. We had these exhibits on America in there, book exhibits, a public library – in fact it was the only public library in the capital. We also, together with the ministry of education, ran six regional reading rooms around the country in different provinces. And I was supposed to be supervising them. So I traveled out to those reading rooms and had some good interaction with people out there and had some good interaction with people out there, in the schools, in the libraries, in the local communities, both political and economic leadership. When an American official came out – and in a number of those places I was the only American official who came out there in a year.

*Q: How did you get to these places?*

BERGER: We had a number of jeeps and we would drive in a jeep. There were one or two places where you had to fly to. And we would take a taxi or somebody would pick us up from the local ministry of education office. But most of the places I preferred to drive to, even if it took a whole day, because then I could see more of the country. And it was a beautiful country. The paved road extended about an hour in almost any direction from Addis. And then it ended. And you would be on these dirt roads if you were lucky. Trails, gravel, potholes, in the rainy season they were washtubs. In the rainy season the roads were almost impassable sometimes.

*Q: Did you run across those Falasha?*

BERGER: Yes. The Falasha. The Jews of Ethiopia. Traditional Ethiopian people from the northwest of the country, mainly from the Gondar area, who lived both in the city, but more so in small villages in the mountains around Gondar and Teaberry Province. Very, very isolated. They believed they were one of the lost tribes and that the Babylonian expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in the sixth century BC, that they dispersed and rather than going to Babylonia, they were able to go west to Egypt. Or some of them said they were part of an earlier tribe that came to Egypt during the slavery period. Most historians really don't believe it. They think there was some connection, but certainly from the temple period, because of the way the Falasha observed Jewish law and Jewish holidays. They observed biblical ones, but not any of those that were instituted from the Babylonian period.

*Q: Were you able to get in and watch the rites?*

BERGER: Yes. And they were very strange to me. First, they didn't pray in Hebrew. They prayed in Ge'ez which is the holy language of the Amhara of Ethiopia. It is the same language that Ethiopian Orthodoxy Church uses. The Orthodoxy Church grew up in the third century and has a connection with the Egyptian Coptic Church.

There was a theory that the Falasha left Jerusalem at the Babylonian expulsion and in the sixth century BCE and went to Egypt, where they stayed and became early Christians. Then broke off from the Coptic Church and went down to Ethiopia with Ethiopian Copts and adopted many of the customs. A friend of mine wrote a book, in fact, about some of the religious traditions of the Falasha and found there were many similarities, especially in the liturgical music, with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. So it was fascinating to watch them. At the same time to see that they observed many of the ancient Jewish customs – the holidays of Passover, the new year and Yom Kippur, the fast days of the year – they observed all of them, and very religiously. And they always pray to go back to Jerusalem.

*Q: Was there an Israeli embassy while you were there?*

BERGER: There was at first and it was closed down and the Israelis were kicked out in 1973, at the time of the October '73 war. So all of the OAU (Organization for African Unity) states broke relations with Israel.

*Q: Well, how did you find your work there?*

BERGER: Fascinating. I loved it. Part of it because the culture was so different. And I got to know a lot of Ethiopians. Traveled with some around the country. You see the picture on my wall of Haile Selassie and Duke Ellington. I took that picture in November of 1973. Ellington and his band came to Ethiopia as part of an "American Ambassadors of Song." And I was the program officer, the impresario, so to speak. We arranged a week of programming. Jam sessions, public concerts, invitation concerts, dinners, receptions, jam sessions late at night in the cultural center.

The Emperor found out that he was coming and liked Ellington's music. And invited Ellington to come to the palace for a reception, along with everyone from the embassy who had worked on it. So we went along as well. He gave Ellington that award of cultural contribution, the salutary award that he put around his neck. It was Ellington's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday that week, I believe, as well. It was November 1973. Ellington died the following year. Haile Selassie was overthrown in February of '74, the beginning of the coup. But that was one of the most exciting weeks that I spent there. I could see using music as a way to cross the cultural barriers and understand something about America that they loved.

*Q: How did you find the Ethiopians?*

BERGER: Very proud of their heritage. Very reserved. Always appreciative if somebody tried to learn a few words of their language, because it was so difficult. Very talented people in their creativity. Music, art. There were some incredible artists that I got to meet there. And a very rich history. A magnificent history. Unique in Africa. Unique in the world, for that matter.

*Q: Did the Cold War intrude while you were there?*

BERGER: Yes it did. Haile Selassie was overthrown in what was called the “creeping coup” from February ‘74 to September ‘74, when he was arrested from the palace. During that intervening time, what they called the “Derg,” a military committee, overthrew him and arrested, and in many cases executed, almost everybody who was around him, all the military, the government officials, high level people. And they instituted a Marxist state. And the relationship with the United State with Ethiopia became colder and colder and colder. It really became extremely difficult. There was a curfew the last year and a half we were there. I think it was 10pm to 6am, you couldn’t go out of your house.

It became extremely difficult. The American mission was drawn down quite a bit. And eventually certain of the programs, including Kagnev Station, closed down. I don’t remember, but I think Kagnev Station was closed down while we were still there. The lease was up and, of course, they wouldn’t even consider renewing it. And then they brought in Cuban soldiers as the major aid program. The Cubans came in after I left though. I don’t remember ever seeing any on the streets.

*Q: What happened with the Embassy? Was it sort of withdrawing into itself?*

BERGER: Because it was forced to. Many of the people from the former government, or anybody who had any kind of position, was warned “don’t have any dealings with Americans.” I had one very close friend who was in the Ethiopian navy. He and his wife and my wife and I were really close personal friends. His wife was very distantly related to the emperor. Very distant. Tenth cousin twice removed or whatever. But extended family meant a lot in Ethiopia. And I would sit down with this guy – I think it was Derek Gabrielzabrah. He was a commander in the navy. He had trained in Europe and in the States. We would go to each others’ houses. We would talk politics. We would talk about art. We would talk about culture. We were really close friends.

And then one day they were supposed to come over to our house for dinner. And he called me from a friend of his and said he was calling to let me know he cannot come. I said: “Shall we make another date.” He said: “No, I cannot come anymore. This is our last phone call.” He said that he was being threatened and he is told he must immediately break off all relationships with Americans. He said that if they even found out about this phone call he would be in deep trouble. So he said not to try to contact him or stop by his house. I did find out though, about two years ago from somebody who was in Ethiopia, that he did survive and is living in Addis. He was in jail for a number of years, but is in Addis now and, I think, working for a UNDP (United Nation Development Program) program.

*Q: I would imagine that your cultural centers must have been shut down?*

BERGER: Yes. Around the time that I left. Not very long before I left there was the first terrorist bombing that I ever observed. There was opposition to Haile Selassie. There was opposition because of the lack of compassion for people. There was a big famine during that time in the early '70s – and that was part of the reason why he was overthrown. But then in spring of 1975, there were some terror attacks against government installations. One of them was a bombing of the city hall, which was right across the street from the U.S. cultural center. And it blew out most of our building. It killed a number of people in the city hall. It was really frightening. It was the first time I had seen anything like that. It's a scary thing.

*Q: Oh, it's very scary. By the time you were getting ready to leave, were we essentially shutting down?*

BERGER: All of our public programs had stopped. We couldn't do any traveling to the regional reading rooms. I had heard from somebody in the ministry of education that they were shut down and they threw away all the books, because they were American books. My wife had a job teaching at the university, a sociology course. Funny, she had gotten the job not long after the revolution began, in fact. It was her first teaching job that she ever had. She worked hard to prepare a curriculum. And the first day of classes some Marxist students came into the class, disrupted it, and said: "We can't have the imperialists teaching here. This class is over. The university is closed down. We are taking over." That was the end of her teaching career.

Then the government, over a period of many, many months, closed down the university and took all the students and sent them out to collective farms. Destroyed the university. Destroyed the farming. Closed down the medical school. Everything.

*Q: Sounds like a cultural revolution?*

BERGER: It was. It was modeled after the cultural revolution in Cuba and the one in China. And taken to a real extreme degree.

*Q: During the coup, was it hard to figure out who was in charge?*

BERGER: Exactly. It was very hard to figure it out. There were a number of military officers. And then there was this Lt. Colonel Mengistu (Haile Mariam). It turned out that he was behind the whole thing. Or at least he emerged out of whatever kind of power struggle that there was.

*Q: Who was the ambassador when the coup happened?*

BERGER: You will recall, Ambassador Adair left in February 1974 so the head of the mission must have been the Chargé and I can't remember his name right now [Parker Wyman].

*Q: Were you put on a tight leash by senior officers?*

BERGER: We were told it was not safe to travel. But then travel wasn't possible because you could only travel anywhere from six in the morning until ten at night. The roads outside of town

were not safe. There were road blocks after dark throughout the city. So we basically stayed home most of the time. We went over to neighbor's houses. Sometimes during the curfew we had these all night parties, too. You went to people's homes and you brought your pillow because if you were there after ten o'clock you were going to sleep on the floor.

**ARTHUR W. LEWIS**  
**Public Affairs Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (1973-1977)**

*Ambassador Arthur W. Lewis was born in New York in 1926. After earning his bachelors degree from Dartmouth College in 1966 and his masters in 1968 he served in the United States Navy from 1943-1946. His career has included positions in Bucharest, Lusaka, and Addis Ababa. Ambassador Lewis was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in September 1989.*

*Q: You went from a country with a relative tranquility to a very difficult one: Ethiopia. You were there from 1973 to 1977. Did you volunteer for this assignment?*

LEWIS: I was ordered to go. For me, it was certainly an advancement because the position was at a higher rank than I was. It was a much larger post in terms of personnel, funds and branch offices-We had a branch office in Asmara and reading rooms in six regional capitals. It was an opportunity to go to a country which was terribly exciting and had the longest history in black Africa. The assignment could not have come at a better time.

*Q: The political situation was, euphemistically, "challenging".*

LEWIS: It is like Chinese telling you, "may you live in interesting times".

*Q: What was the situation in Ethiopia in September, 1973 when you arrived?*

LEWIS: There had just been a drought in Welo province which is in the Ethiopian north. This drought had been probably responsible for the death of a quarter of a million people. This was not the first drought that had struck Welo or that had struck Ethiopia. There is a cycle of droughts that occur there and about every 20-25 years you have these massive droughts, which someone mordantly said were like birth control because you lose a quarter of a million people--no one is quite sure of the numbers. The Emperor in his traditional fashion continued as if the drought did not exist. One of his grand-daughters was getting married. At the height of the drought, a cake that costs 3,000 pounds sterling was brought in. In taking it off the plane, in Addis Ababa, it cracked and was thrown away and another cake ordered. There was a British TV producer and cameraman who happened to record the cake caper. They also recorded scenes in the Welo area, with children dying. They also taped scenes of the Emperor throwing scraps to his dogs and the zoo animals that were kept at the palace. Earlier in the year, the teachers and taxi drivers in Addis had gone on strike. There was a lot of unrest in the country. We were the major aid donors to Ethiopia. It is said that we did not respond to the drought with adequate force. It is

said that for political reasons, the Emperor wanted this to happen and we allowed it. I am not sure about that. There were a number of things happening. Down in the Southern desert of Ethiopia in a place called Negilly, there was a mutiny on the part of some enlisted men against their officers over water. This was one of the first cracks in the formal institutional apparatus of the government. The Royal family members who were members of the Emperor's cabinet were being replaced with the hope that someone could pull the threads together. It was beginning to become clear that changes were taking place and something was happening.

Shortly after I arrived in September, the Emperor was arrested at his palace by members of the military--the Derg. This supposedly consisted of 120 military men. Shortly after the Emperor was arrested, a number of the royal family were also taken. A number of the "old guard" were executed one Saturday night. Changes began to take place; neighborhood organizations were set up; our political and military relationships began to deteriorate. Finally, our relationships went down to zero. Ethiopia became less important to the U.S. because the listening stations, particularly the one in Asmara, we had were overtaken by newer technological means. We no longer supported the military and our cooperation with the Navy went down to tube.

The next thing we knew is that the basis for our relationship with Ethiopia changed completely.

*Q: As Public Affairs Officer during an interesting period, what instructions were you receiving? Were you being advised to be aggressive or reactive?*

LEWIS: It was a little bit of a roller-coaster which we couldn't get off. Kissinger was Secretary of State and in the global scheme of things, Ethiopia's importance diminished. There were no instructions to try to preserve relationships nor instructions to allow relationships to deteriorate. It was "che sera', sera'".

*Q: There wasn't any dynamism either from State or USIA. No sense of urgency to solve a problem?*

LEWIS: No. We felt somewhat adrift. For a lot of the time, we didn't have an Ambassador. There was Parker Wyman first, then Art Tienken as Chargé. He was there when I got expelled.

*Q: Would you describe the USIA program when you arrived?*

LEWIS: It was a program heavy on information and educational exchange. We had in Asmara a fairly large USIS center--that was the Italian speaking part of Ethiopia. We had reading rooms, which were basically medium-sized libraries in six provincial centers (Gondar, Dese, Makeli, Harar, Welo and Tigre). The purpose of this program was to provide information. We understood from the beginning that something was happening to the Emperor; that feudalism was coming to an end and that some preparation had to be made to try to help the country and its people prepare for the giant step which had to be taken. Information about the modern world was absolutely essential. My reading rooms and libraries played a very crucial part. We made available a lot of material about agriculture and basic health. The AID program was quite large in those days--one of our largest programs in Africa. We were also involved deeply in educational exchanges--bringing American to teach in the Universities there and sending Ethiopians to get further

education in the United States. Essentially, information and educational exchange were the two major thrusts of my operation. We did have one or two cultural events: one was a musical group which came and gave a concert with the proceeds given to drought relief. A lot of money was collected from that concert.

My biggest job was getting around the country to the different places, providing reassurance that we would continue this or that program.

*Q: You were a member of the Country Team. You probably traveled more than the others because of your job. Did you notice a deteriorating situation in the provinces or was the uprising confined mainly to Addis?*

LEWIS: The situation in the provinces as a matter of fact was relatively stable. The real difficulties were in Addis and Asmara. Those took place once the Emperor fell. It didn't take long for the situation to collapse.

*Q: Did the arrest of the Emperor surprise everyone or was it anticipated?*

LEWIS: It was a surprise. No one really thought that the Emperor would be harmed. No one really understood. As I look back on Ethiopia, it was a society which was fatalistic. It was a society in which violence was just below the surface. I am not sure I or anybody else could have said that then or could have perceived it. We didn't understand what was going on in Tehran until it was too late. Same in Addis. The institutions--so called-- of government had reached a point at which they could no longer be supported by feudalistic society.

*Q: It is undoubtedly difficult for foreigners to perceive a revolution coming, particularly when the ruling group is also blind. Did your contacts change after the Emperor's demise?*

LEWIS: Yes. The original contacts that I had made were arrested or escaped from the country because they were about to be arrested. One of the strange things that happened was that I became the informal link between the Derg and the Embassy. This came about because one of my local employees suggested to me that I really should go up to the castle to meet the head of the derg's public affairs operation--a Colonel Asarat. I decided I would do that. I didn't check with the Embassy--we were downtown and the Embassy was in its compound above the city. I went and he received me. We talked for a long time; he introduced me to his deputy--a young major--who knew all about USIS because before joining the Army he was a shoe-shine boy right in front of our building. The major was later killed in a shoot-out and was succeeded by his deputy with whom I remained in contact.

*Q: Did the fact that you were a former naval officer help you?*

LEWIS: I don't think so. It was probably just the fact that I made the effort to talk to them and that came without any preconceived ideas of their ways of doing things.

*Q: The Derg seems to have been somewhat of a mystery to the Americans. Did you use it for your regular communications?*



LEWIS: I talked with them. As some of my Eritrean employees were arrested, I would go to the Derg. Nothing ever happened, but at least I had a contact in the Derg. Most important for me was that the Embassy was given a diplomatic note on a Saturday which expelled me and all the Americans in USIS. My contact warned me about that note on the previous Friday night.

*Q: That was in 1977. You had been in Addis for sometime by then. What were your views of your program between 1973 and 1977 as the local situation was changing?*

LEWIS: The impact of the change on our operations was significant. First of all, my center in Asmara was bombed twice. Then Asmara was put under siege by Eritrean Liberation Force (ELF) and I was caught there for three weeks. It became clear that we could not sustain that operation and we closed it down temporarily. The fighting in Welo and Tigre and Gondar closed down my reading rooms there. From time to time, my center in Addis Ababa was harassed--once a fire-bomb was thrown through the window.

*Q: Who were the perpetrators? Eritreans? Tigrenians? Members of the central government?*

LEWIS: It was probably the Eritreans and Tigreans who wanted to use the incidents as an opportunity to bring to public attention their dissatisfaction with the Derg.

*Q: How about the local employees? Were they harassed?*

LEWIS: Certainly my Eritrean employees were harassed. A number were arrested and imprisoned. The secret and military police would come to the center to take people from their offices. We tried to stop them, but it was impossible. Across the street from us was City Hall which was bombed, shattering the glass in our offices. We did not operate a normal USIS program during this period. We published and distributed a lot of printed material.

*Q: With all the various factions in Ethiopia in those days, were you not charged by one or all as putting incendiary propaganda?*

LEWIS: The charge that was levied against me in support of my expulsion was "conduct inimical to the growth of socialism".

*Q: Sounds like you were doing the job right.*

LEWIS: That was what was printed in the newspaper when my expulsion was announced.

*Q: Did the Embassy try to use AID or USIS to bolster our position?*

LEWIS: I don't think so because we had a large military contingent in Ethiopia which was being reduced rapidly. We had a Naval medical team who were at the Pasteur Institute. The Embassy had at its disposal a number of elements which were in the community and which were not closed off as the Embassy itself was in its compound. We had a large compound in Addis in

which the Chancery and the senior officers' residence stood. These people did not live in the community, while the rest of us lived and worked did. The military was sent home fairly quickly. It became clear to the Derg that they were not going to get ammunition and military support from us. A lot of that took place in the context of the Somali attack on the province of Bale in the south. After the Derg came to power, the Somali nationalists attacked Ethiopian positions in the southern part of Ethiopia. The Ethiopians went through a most perilous period during which they almost lost all of that area--the Ogaden. Because of the relationship with the U.S., we did not make the kind of efforts that normally would have been expected to be made.

*Q: Was the Embassy recommending some actions and not being given any guidance from Washington or did the Embassy prefer to stay out of Ethiopian affairs?*

LEWIS: To the best of my recollection, the Embassy's recommendations were to be more activist than the Executive Branch wanted to be. A lot of it had to do with the way policy-makers in the State Department perceived Ethiopia--how important was it in a global context? We know that during the Kissinger period we saw things in a global context rather than regional. Therefore, Ethiopia became a "second-hand" player or less of a player because of the globalization of foreign policy.

*Q: In retrospect, was there anything that could have been done, public affairs-wise, that might have made a difference and perhaps improved US-Ethiopian relationships?*

LEWIS: I doubt it. What happened was that we changed places with the Soviets. We sided with Somalia and they left Somalia and came to Addis. The die was cast at that point because Mengistu was emerging as the power in the Derg. There had been two major shoot-outs within the Derg: the first was when General Addam, who was very popular, was killed supposedly by Mengistu or his aides and the second when General Bayu, who was the acting head of state, was killed. After this second shoot-out, it was clear that Mengistu was getting advice and counsel from the Soviets. Within a short period of time, there was a flip in Ethiopian foreign policy.

The Soviets had responded very quickly to Ethiopian requests for arms, which they felt would profit them. They certainly were not profiting in Somalia. Somalia had been a morass for them. The Ethiopians had been able to maintain military superiority with our assistance until we stopped providing that assistance with the advent of the Ogaden war. Once we went to Somalia and the Russians to Ethiopia, the possibility of any positive actions in a public affairs context became even less possible. The most positive thing that ever happened in that period was when the Soyuz and Apollo space-crafts hooked up together. We showed the movie at the USIS center. The Soviet Ambassador and couple of his staff came and we had a public handshake between Americans and Soviets. But that was about it.

*Q: Were the Soviets active in the public affairs field?*

LEWIS: Not really. They weren't doing much because they were busy making certain that the politico-military relationships were staying in good shape. There was a political struggle going on concerning the direction of the revolution. There was the creation of ?????? which required the transfer of young people from Universities--Universities were closed--to parts of the country

to educate farmers and provide literacy and agriculture training. The purpose of this forced migration was to break down the various ethnicities that had developed in the feudal context of the country. The Showas and the Amharans had become one thing, the Tigreans and the Eritreans another. The Derg sent Eritreans south to the Aroma country, the Aromians north to areas where a different language was spoken. There were cultural differences which manifested themselves in physical violence against the students.

All of that was going on at the time of declining US-Ethiopian relations. So it was not a propitious time for a public affairs program.

**ARTHUR W. HUMMEL, JR.**  
**Ambassador**  
**Ethiopia (1975-1976)**

*Ambassador Arthur W. Hummel, Jr. was born to American parents in China in 1920. He received his master's degree from the University of Chicago. His career with USIS included assignments in Hong Kong, Japan, Burma, and Taiwan. He served as the ambassador to Burma, Ethiopia, and Pakistan. Ambassador Hummel was interviewed by Dorothy Robins-Mowry on July 13, 1989.*

*Q: I would like to go back and set the stage before you arrived in Ethiopia. One question concerns how the Foreign Service works. Here you were at a major post, the Embassy in Addis Ababa. We now have a corps of African specialists. How did they receive you? You were very clearly an East Asian "hand" and all of a sudden you appeared as Ambassador to Ethiopia. Was there a problem there?*

HUMMEL: No, I don't think so. I had a first class Deputy Chief of Mission.

*Q: I'm really thinking about the Bureau of African Affairs. Did you find people digging their heels in there?*

HUMMEL: If they were, I didn't hear about it and never saw any evidence of non-cooperation or anything like that. On that same subject, there had been no Ambassador at post for almost a year.

*Q: Who had been the previous Ambassador?*

HUMMEL: Ross Adair, a former Congressman from Indiana. He was a perfectly nice guy who did a fairly good job, as far as I could make out. I think that it was a relief to everyone when a new Ambassador arrived. We really needed a new Ambassador because of the political situation. Also, there was an advantage in having a professional Foreign Service Officer as Ambassador instead of a political appointee.

*Q: When you went out to Ethiopia in 1975, things were obviously in a state of flux. The dictatorship of Mengistu had not yet been established. What did you consider American interests were in Ethiopia at that time? What goals did you set for yourself to try to achieve?*

HUMMEL: We didn't have much of a trade interest, although we had rather serious squabbles with the Ethiopian Government over trade. The Hickenlooper Amendment caused us repeatedly to threaten to terminate our rather large aid program.

*Q: What was the Hickenlooper Amendment?*

HUMMEL: It concerned expropriation of American firms.

*Q: The essence of the Hickenlooper Amendment was that uncompensated expropriation of American firms would result in a cut-off of aid.*

HUMMEL: That's right. I had a lot of wrangling on that issue with the members of the Derg, including Mengistu. I pointed out to them the seriousness of this US legislative provision, which could result in a termination of all aid, both military and civilian.

One of our major concerns in Ethiopia was strategic. It involved the Soviet factor. At that point the Soviets had Somalia as their client state. They had set up a large base in Berbera formerly, the capital of British Somaliland. The status of Djibouti had not been settled at all. As you know, this territory eventually became independent, but at that time it was still occupied by the French and was guarded by the French Foreign Legion. It was a rather peaceful place in a rather turbulent area. So keeping the Ethiopians on our side as a barrier to the expansion of the Soviet presence in East Africa, and especially the so-called Horn of Africa, was one of our main concerns.

*Q: How about the status of Kagnew Station?*

HUMMEL: That was considered to be quite important. It was located in the city of Asmara in the Province of Eritrea. The Eritrean people belong to a somewhat different linguistic group, and they have a different history, too. Asmara is now the capital of Eritrea, which has been independent from Ethiopia since 1993. Eritrea was much more Westernized because of a much longer occupation by the Italians. As a matter of fact, a very large portion of the central, Ethiopian Government civilian and military officials were Eritreans and were not members of the main ruling group in Ethiopia, the Amharas.

*Q: Was there any question about Kagnew Station? How to deal with the future status of Kagnew Station was always the problem in the Horn of Africa and was involved in the Somalia issue. It was something like the question of Greece and Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean. We found ourselves in the middle in terms of giving aid and so forth. Kagnew Station was long considered an absolute, strategic "must" in the area. It was essentially a communications station, for the purpose of eavesdropping and also relaying messages. Had you talked to our military and gotten any feel as to whether this station was becoming outmoded at that time because of the existence of satellite communications systems?*

HUMMEL: No. It was after my time in Ethiopia that the U. S. military began to admit, very reluctantly, that maybe, conceivably, they could get along without Kagnew Station. Later on, of course, the Ethiopian Government under Mengistu shut it down. At the time the station was shut down, there were alternatives available for all of the missions which you mentioned-- eavesdropping, humint human intelligence gathering, communications relay, and the support of space flight.

*Q: When you went to Ethiopia were you told that Kagnew Station was vital?*

HUMMEL: That's right. It was considered vital.

*Q: Were there any questions on the State Department side regarding Kagnew Station?*

HUMMEL: No, not that I recall. I think that many of us took the military's insistence that Kagnew Station was vital with a grain of salt because we know the propensity of our military to exaggerate these matters. They exaggerate for their own reasons because they think that the wishy-washy, striped pants State Department might give away facilities of this kind too easily. So they err on one side and we may sometimes err on the other.

*Q: So you arrived in Addis Ababa in 1975. How did you see the situation on the ground?*

HUMMEL: Well, the famine period was over. The internal stresses were being handled by the military, except, of course, for Eritrea, where the insurgency had been going on for many years, fueled by supplies from Islamic countries outside--from Sudan and from across the Red Sea in Aden, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia as well. They acted for Islamic reasons because the Ethiopian Government was Christian. That was a continuing problem which threatened the continued existence of Kagnew Station in Asmara as well. So that was a worrisome matter.

There were frictions between the Amharas--who really are in the minority, although they claim to be a majority--and other ethnic groups, such as the people of the Province of Tigre, and so forth. These seemed to be fairly manageable. Southern Sudan was in a mess, but that had been the case for a very long time. I remember being instructed to try to get the Ethiopian military to halt their support for the insurgents in Southern Sudan, across the border. I was unsuccessful in these efforts. This situation was also related to the Central Ethiopian Government's need to have troops all over Eritrea and to safeguard the continued security of Asmara, in which we had a strong interest.

*Q: How did you deal with the Derg when you arrived? Could you go and talk to any of them?*

HUMMEL: Sure. I could easily get appointments whenever I needed them. They wanted to be friendly to the United States. They considered Somalia a serious threat to their security, as indeed it was, in view of the Soviet position there. They considered this a threat and therefore they were drawn to try to work out a modus vivendi with the United States so as to get continuing aid, both civilian and military.

*Q: Since the Soviets were arming the Somalis, were we in a position where we felt that we had to arm the Ethiopians?*

HUMMEL: Yes. We wanted to be a military counterweight.

*Q: What were we doing with the Ethiopian Army?*

HUMMEL: We provided them with some fighter aircraft, small arms, tanks, ammunition, and training.

*Q: Was there any concern about what the Ethiopian Army was doing to the Eritreans? Were the Eritreans still called "Shiftas," rather than Eritrean bandits? That was the term used at one point. Was it a pejorative term? Were the Eritreans also called the Eritrean liberation forces? In those days were they considered liberators, rather than bandits?*

HUMMEL: Of course, the government in Addis Ababa had its own words for them and didn't use the word liberation. However, neither did they downgrade them to the status of a bunch of shiftas or bandits. They knew that they were a very serious challenge to the government. Many of the Eritreans were Muslims. Actually, it turned out that Eritrea was about half Muslim and half Christian. However, the Muslim half was strongly supported by their Muslim friends in Sudan and also from across the Red Sea, as I mentioned.

*Q: What sort of military mission did we have in Ethiopia at that time?*

HUMMEL: We had a pretty large MAAG, or Military Assistance Advisory Group, supervising the military aid program. We had a large AID office, which was heavily involved in all kinds of developmental projects. We had a pretty large Peace Corps. The Peace Corps youngsters, who had to be pulled out shortly after I left Ethiopia because conditions became very tough because of security considerations, were quite dedicated and effective. The Ethiopians had their own views of the Peace Corps people. I had more than one Ethiopian say, "We thank you very much for these young Peace Corps people. They do good work. Also, it's very nice of you to send young ladies over, so we can sleep with them." The Ethiopians have quite a sense of humor!

One of the unlovely things about Ethiopian society was the way in which they looked down on and really discriminated against people with darker skin than they had and African features. This attitude was terribly hard on the foreign diplomatic community there. Ethiopians are very bright and lively people, and they were only half joking when they say that there are three kinds of people in Africa: there are the blacks, the pinks, and the whites. The blacks are the Bantus to the south, the West Africans, and those people who have Negroid facial features. They say, "You Westerners are the 'pinks.' We Ethiopians are the 'whites.'" I always enjoyed that. That comment went around as a "bon mot" every time the matter was mentioned. They were only half joking about their superiority. The wives of the West and southern African diplomats and their staffs who had to go to the markets to do the shopping were really despised and treated abominably by the Amhara shopkeepers. It was a kind of racial discrimination that was very difficult for them.

*Q: They had their own minority group who were looked down upon. They were the Gullahs who had sort of "African" features. Did we make a practice of sending American Blacks either to the Peace Corps or in the Embassy or in AID?*

HUMMEL: Yes.

*Q: How did that work out?*

HUMMEL: Anybody who was an American, no matter how he or she looked, had automatic status. I don't recall any signs of discrimination against African Americans who were assigned to Ethiopia by the U. S. Government.

*Q: What was your impression of our aid program at the time you arrived in Ethiopia?*

HUMMEL: I didn't have much to find fault with. All of it seemed useful and devoted to appropriate sectors of Ethiopia. I was not personally aware of any great waste or mismanagement. I'm sure that there was some leakage of aid funds through prominent Ethiopian officials. That happens in many societies. However, I didn't directly see any of that.

One thing that really burned me was the fact that the CIA people lied to me and refused to answer my requests for information about what the Israelis were doing to help the Ethiopian Government. As you know, the American-Israeli relationship was compartmentalized under Jim Angleton.

*Q: He was the counterintelligence chief [of CIA].*

HUMMEL: But he also handled the Israeli account in CIA. He wasn't going to let CIA officials tell anybody, especially people in the State Department, as I found out later, just what he knew about Israeli operations in Ethiopia or in any other country. I simply wanted to know about them both for planning purposes and to maintain my own credibility, so that the Ethiopians wouldn't think that I was so dumb that I didn't know what was going on. I also wanted to know from the point of our own interests. Who knows what the Israelis might have been up to? Later on, they were involved in some very difficult things in regard to Iran, for instance--I'm referring to the activities of Lt. Colonel Oliver North of the National Security Council staff and all that. But I could never get the CIA people to tell me what they knew. I tried leaning on the State Department and I may have written a personal letter to Secretary of State Kissinger about this. However, nobody was willing to jump in and say that I had a need to know.

*Q: Were the Ethiopian Jews, the "Falashas" a factor at that time?*

HUMMEL: No, that came later on, toward the very end of my tenure as Ambassador to Ethiopia. A man named Berger, the brother of Ambassador Sam Berger, a Foreign Service Officer and former Ambassador to South Korea, took up the cause of the Falashas, who were very dark-skinned remnants of a Jewish tribe who still carried on some Jewish religious practices, although they had lost any knowledge of the Hebrew language. Most of them were not literate, either. During my time in Ethiopia Sam Berger's brother was fighting a long drawn-out battle with the

Israeli authorities, who did not wish to recognize the Falashas as people who deserved asylum in Israel. Eventually, Berger won out, and these people began to be airlifted out of Ethiopia to Israel. I think that they have all been moved to Israel by now.

*Q: We played no particular role in this matter at the time you were in Ethiopia?*

HUMMEL: No. But at the time I was there the protection or the release of the Falashas to go to Israel was not on the official Israeli agenda that I am aware of. The Israelis had policy problems with an issue like this. They had serious difficulties in maintaining footholds in many African countries, because they were expelled from so many of them. The Islamic countries put such great pressure on many African countries that the Israelis were hard put to have places where their airplanes could land and where they could conduct normal operations. So they cultivated the African countries where they were welcome and would not want to complicate relations with pressures on the government about what they considered side issues.

*Q: What was the Embassy in Addis Ababa like--who was your DCM and how did the Embassy operate?*

HUMMEL: My first DCM was named Parker. His tour was shortly completed, and he left. He was very good and very helpful in getting me started in Ethiopia. He was replaced by Art Tienken, who eventually became Ambassador to another African country.

*Q: Mauritania, I believe.*

HUMMEL: He was really a first class officer. He had had extensive experience in Africa. He was very upset when I would go off on bird shooting expeditions on Sundays with only one junior Foreign Service Officer, who was an Amharic speaker. Like me, he was very much interested in hunting as a sport. Ethiopia was a real paradise for bird shooting. The Ethiopian Christians, who belong to a branch of the Coptic Church, had adopted many Judaic traditions. They wouldn't eat pork, but they would allow pigs to be shot by others all over the place. They didn't eat wild birds or shellfish. Not eating wild birds meant that village boys were not killing birds, or disturbing them. My junior FSO friend and an AID Director, Ted Morse, a super guy, who would go out on these bird shooting expeditions. Sometimes there would be three of us and sometimes only two of us. We would drive out of Addis Ababa about an hour or so, up into the hills. I remember one time when we brought back 50 birds which we had shot.

*Q: You kept the Embassy well-stocked with game birds?*

HUMMEL: Yes, and other Embassies as well.

*Q: Can we talk about developments while you were there? What happened when you were there as far as the Ethiopian Derg was concerned?*

HUMMEL: I think that during the time I was there things were fairly stable. We had continuing trade problems. There's a spice company based in Kalamazoo, Michigan, which was more or less forced out of business. We had to threaten the Ethiopian Government with application of the



Hickenlooper Amendment. We would make demands, but the Ethiopians never did very much about it. Aside from that, we didn't have any really serious difficulties.

*Q: During the time you were there relations weren't tense, as they became later on.*

HUMMEL: No. The Ethiopian Army was under pressure, not only from the Eritrean rebellion in the North, but also from continued incursions from Somalia. To this day the Somalis, I believe, have written into their constitution--insofar as Somalia has any constitution left--the need to reclaim the Ogaden area, which belongs to Ethiopia. Somalia also has a claim to part of Kenya.

*Q: Yes, the five stars of the Somali flag represent Djibouti, Ogaden, Kenya, the former British Somaliland, and the former Italian Somaliland. It's an "aggressive" constitution, you might say.*

*Back in 1960-1961 I was the INR specialist on the Horn of Africa. Everything there was a "zero sum" game, so to speak. If we helped Somalia, the Ethiopians got mad. The contention then was that Somalia could always be "bought." How were your relations with our Embassy in Mogadishu? Did you get together from time to time?*

HUMMEL: Yes, we did, and that's one of the things that I'm proud of. As far as I know, I invented this idea of having a mini Chiefs of Mission conference, originated in the field, among Ambassadors, only inviting Washington at the last minute. I did this again when I was Ambassador in Pakistan and we had meetings of the American Ambassadors to South Asian countries. We would send messages laterally which were not repeated to Washington to make plans. I organized a U. S. Chiefs of Mission conference for Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Kenya, which we held in Nairobi.

After we'd settled on a date and place we would use our own travel funds, so we didn't have to ask Washington for that. Only a few weeks before the meeting we let Washington know that we were going to have this conference and would like to have some modest participation by the Department. I say "modest," because I'd been through the mill, when I was Ambassador to Burma and also as Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, of having these enormous Chiefs of Mission conferences. They were attended, not only by all of the Ambassadors in the Far East (not very many--only 13 or 14). The bad thing was that the Department of Defense would send at least five people and AID would send six people, USIA, CIA, Treasury, Agriculture and all. The whole room would be crowded with bystanders sent from Washington, many just for a junket. They probably learned something from what the chiefs of mission were saying, but the whole process was terribly cumbersome and prevented confidential dialogue. It was to avoid that kind of chiefs of mission conference that I set it as I did. As I recall, we only had two people from Washington--and both of them were appropriate and welcome, and from the State Department.

There was one very contentious issue that eventually divided us in Nairobi. I flatly refused to participate in discussion of it. It involved something that had been in the American press--about aid to a rebel in Angola. The Ambassador to Kenya, a political appointee who was, I thought, quite naive, was trying to get us to send a message to Washington saying that the United States should withdraw support for that program.

*Q: I think that at that point, when Henry Kissinger was Secretary of State, we were giving military assistance to Jonas Savimbi.*

HUMMEL: I was not at all happy with American policy on this issue, but I said that I simply would not sign a declaration which only one side of the issue described. The draft he presented to us was not descriptive of the issue and only demanded one thing from the United States, stopping aid, without assessing its consequences or the alternatives to it. It was just a dumb and one-sided thing to do. However, that did not harm the conference. We got along quite well, personally.

*Q: What about your views on American policy toward Somalia? Was Somalia considered a "write-off" at that time?*

HUMMEL: Yes. It's a little bit odd, considering what we did later. However, Somalia was considered a "write-off" because the Soviets were deploying such substantial assets there. After I left Ethiopia the story of how the Soviets neatly switched their client relationship from Somalia to Ethiopia, while we took on Somalia as a client, has never really been told. It should be, because it is a rather astonishing sequence of events in the Cold War.

*Q: Did you have any dealings with Mengistu?*

HUMMEL: Yes, indeed, on several occasions.

*Q: Would you talk about how you viewed him, or is this something that you haven't thought about much?*

HUMMEL: I considered him to be intellectually several steps below the intelligence of his two superiors in the Derg. A triumvirate ran the Military Committee, which had about 40 members. The three men I refer to formed the Executive Committee. Taferi Banti was the top man, Atenafu was number two, and Mengistu was number three.

As I said earlier, Benti and Atenafu were pretty savvy people. I felt much more comfortable dealing with them than with Mengistu. I had no idea that Mengistu would turn out to be the monster he became. However, I certainly felt that he was of lesser quality as a leader, trickier, and somewhat hostile in his manner. I mean that he was not very sympathetic to the American point of view. The other two were more sympathetic, or at least showed some understanding of American positions. Mengistu didn't want to show such understanding. My talks with him were usually somewhat confrontational.

*Q: Didn't we still have a Consulate General in Asmara?*

HUMMEL: Yes, and we had a Consulate General in Djibouti, which was not, of course, part of Ethiopia.

*Q: Regarding the Consulate General in Asmara, did they suffer from what you might call localities in their view of the Eritrean independence movement?*

HUMMEL: No, they had a kind of siege syndrome. It was indeed a siege-type situation, and security was very poor. The people assigned there served for short tours because of the danger to everybody in Asmara. There was no real contact between the Eritreans and our people in the Consulate General because of the civil war that was going on. If anything, they had sympathy for the efforts of the Central Ethiopian Government in its efforts to unify the country and not let it fall apart. The key port in Eritrea was Massawa. Land communications between Asmara and Massawa were continually being broken by the insurgents. This situation greatly affected the viability of Asmara itself. The North-South road, I think, was generally kept open to the rest of Ethiopia, so that food and other supplies could get in that way.

*Q: What about political and economic reporting in Tigre and other parts of Ethiopia, including the Ogaden area? Were your officers able to get out and around and report on the situation?*

HUMMEL: Yes, quite satisfactorily. Conditions were not so bad that people didn't want to go. On the other hand, travel is always an adventure, and there were lots of volunteers, including myself. I went to Asmara and to Harar and other places. We also took family trips down to the lower altitudes, to get out of Addis Ababa, which is 8,000 feet above sea level. The climate in Addis Ababa is very nice because of its altitude. However, it takes a little while to get used to it. During the first week or two that I was in Addis Ababa, I used to run out of breath, walking from the Ambassador's Residence about 100 yards to the Chancery. It was all in one compound.

*Q: Did members of the Haile Selassie regime try to cultivate Embassy people, or were they so much "put down" that there wasn't any real contact with them?*

HUMMEL: We had no real contact with them. However, a good many of the government officials at the ministerial and vice ministerial level had been to the United States for an education. They were not all military men. The military government allowed quite a number of talented people to serve as ministers of education, for example. One interesting aspect was that the Minister of Defense, whose name I can't recall at the moment but whom I can visualize very clearly, had been "recruited" by the CIA as an extremely useful informant. This has been in the press. This was a great help to our appreciation of what was going on in Ethiopia. However, even he didn't know all of the things that his own government, and also the Israelis, were up to. I didn't feel that we had enough of a handle on what the Ethiopian military were doing.

*Q: In subsequent years and since you left Ethiopia, have you learned what the Israelis were up to?*

HUMMEL: They were involved in the training of special, elite units and the provision of high-tech hardware. How high-tech I don't really know. It was not terribly high, because the Ethiopians couldn't have handled it. However, the Israeli motive was, as I said, to maintain a foothold in Ethiopia. Essentially, this did not clash with any American interest--certainly not in my time, but it did mean that our own military aid planning was defective.

*Q: What about the ties between Ethiopia and American educational institutions? These ties go 'way back. Was this a factor when you were there?*

HUMMEL: Yes. The flow of scholars back and forth between the two countries was continuous. The number of young Ethiopian university graduates who came to the United States was very large. They went back to Ethiopia. It was quite a close, intellectual relationship.

Toward the end of my time in Ethiopia, Mengistu began to show his power. Where he got his far left impetus from, I'm not sure. Probably, looking back, it was the work of Soviet or Ethiopian agents of one kind or another. Anyway, he organized the "Zemacha", a sort of "Red Guard" movement. He armed some of them and organized and indoctrinated them in a thoroughly Marxist way, to try and get a foothold in the villages of Ethiopia, which they did fairly successfully. He promised the villagers a new kind of regime, land reform, official assistance, and so forth. These young "Red Guards" became more and more menacing and more anti-foreign and eventually became the basis for Mengistu's total usurpation of power. After I left, of course, Mengistu shot his two superiors across a conference table and took power in that fashion. That was a symbol of the way he ran the country afterwards. There was a horrible weeding out and massacre of liberals and non-Marxists after he took over.

*Q: Going back to the 1960's, Emperor Haile Selassie had made the deliberate decision to send a number of students to the Soviet Union and other countries of the Soviet bloc to show a certain balance. They were not treated very well because of racist attitudes, which were really rampant, even against the Amharas. In 1964 there was a sort of mini revolt of Ethiopians in training in Bulgaria. I felt some of the consequences of this when I was in Yugoslavia as a consular officer because there was a big exodus of these Ethiopians. Did you notice any influence of Soviet education at the time that you were there?*

HUMMEL: No, not directly. However, I noticed it indirectly through the actions of Mengistu, who was basically supported by groups of far leftist thinkers.

*Q: At the time you were there, were we concerned about the far left in Ethiopia?*

HUMMEL: Yes, we were. However, we thought--at least I thought, mistakenly--that the weight and political center of gravity of the Derg itself would prevent a communist takeover. There was also the fact that the main enemy of Ethiopia, Somalia, was Marxist-oriented and supported by the Soviet Union. We felt that this would deter any internal shift toward Marxism in Ethiopia because the Ethiopians were so conscious of what was happening in Somalia. It turned out that it didn't work out that way at all. Mengistu was able to jerk the whole system around to a really silly and extreme, Marxist mode.

*Q: I think that this points out something that is important for anybody studying diplomacy to understand. That is, when you're in a country or looking at it from outside, you can make all of the predictions you want. However, if you find a ruthless man or woman who wants to change things around, they can [often do so], essentially in an unpredictable way.*

HUMMEL: That's right. You do not have the capability to predict coming events. CIA is quite often blamed for not foreseeing these things. Well, the people in these countries themselves do not foresee them, either.

*Q: Most coup d'etats are not overly predictable, because if we can predict them from the outside, the people who are really concerned can predict them from the inside, and they stop them.*

HUMMEL: I remember later on when Deng Xiaoping re-emerged in China in 1973, I was back in the Department. Yes, I was Deputy Assistant Secretary then. Deng re-emerged and came to a special session of the UN in New York. We knew of his background. He had been dismissed from office during the Cultural Revolution and had only recently been rehabilitated, and came out and was visible. He and the Foreign Minister of China, Chiao Guanhua, came for a small, private dinner given by Kissinger. It was an extremely interesting session. It's always fascinating when you can see Kissinger deal with these people, like Chiao Guanhua as equals. At that time, by the way, Deng Xiaoping was very tentative in what he said. He hadn't had time to absorb all of the briefs about situations all around the world. So he kept turning to other people to discuss these matters. He was completely different from what he was later on, when he had a full grasp of the substance of the various issues. I enjoyed such sessions, too, when I was in Beijing.

The point of this was that shortly after--I can't remember the year--Deng was again purged by Mao Zedong, allegedly for promoting a capitalist road. Henry Kissinger only half joking asked me, "God damn it Hummel! Why didn't you tell me that our friend, Deng Xiaoping, was going to be purged?" I said, "Henry, Deng himself didn't know that he was going to be purged. Otherwise, he would have behaved differently. How can you expect me to know what he himself didn't know?"

*Q: One last question before we leave Ethiopia. How did you find working with the OAU, the Organization of African Unity? How did it operate as you saw it in those days?*

HUMMEL: They had some very bright people associated with it. One of the brightest was an Egyptian with an Italian name, and there were others like him, too. They were some very savvy people but they couldn't get the OAU to intervene actively in problems as they arose. For instance, a problem with Mauritania.

*Q: This concerned the "Polisario" question.*

HUMMEL: Western Sahara. They couldn't get together to do anything. They couldn't handle that. Of course, as it turned out in later years the OAU has not been a factor in the solution of any of the major problems of Africa--such as Southwest Africa or Namibia. The whole business of intervention in Liberia was handled by a consortium of neighboring, West African countries. There was the Mauritania problem--all of these things. It is a great tragedy that the OAU could not get itself together to act effectively and collectively on any issue that I can think of. Yet the people in the OAU were very good as sources of information. I enjoyed good personal relations with them. We would go to dinner or talk about these issues, during a call. Of course, the OAU was founded when Emperor Haile Selassie, in his post World War II prime, brokered an agreement between North and South Sudan, with the help of this fledgling organization, which later became the OAU. So the OAU was founded on the basis of a successful solution to an African problem, organized by Haile Selassie. However, as far as I can remember, the OAU never pulled off anything substantial like that again.

*Q: Was this an endemic problem?*

HUMMEL: It was an inability to go act because of the different factions involved--the Islamic faction, the West African faction, and so forth.

*Q: Then you left Ethiopia after not too long a period. You left in 1976. How come?*

HUMMEL: It was my good luck to be saved from the debacle of our relationship with Ethiopia by being promoted back to be full-fledged Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, because Phil Habib, who had held that job, was moved upstairs to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs. He arranged for me to come back to EA and take over his old job.

**FRANK PAVICH**  
**Rural Development, USAID**  
**Addis Ababa (1975-1977)**

*Frank Pavich was born in 1933 in California. He graduated from the University of Southern California 1955 and then served in the US Marine Corps. Pavich served in the Peace Corps before joining USAID in 1966, with whom he served in Vietnam, Ethiopia, the Yemen Arab Republic, Somalia, Ghana, Pakistan, and Egypt. Pavich was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.*

*Q: I suppose they weren't necessarily refugees. The Somalis must have been effected by the drought.*

PAVICH: These people were war refugees, they were chased across the border. Some of the clan was on both sides of the border. You would have say 50 percent of a family in Somalia and 50 percent in Ethiopia and both would be in camp. So, how to you figure out who is and isn't a refugee? That was the question.

*Q: What were some of your other major problems besides the numbers.*

PAVICH: Relief people were getting beat up. The major programs were health, rehabilitating people, giving them food.

*Q: How did you rehabilitate them? I suppose the main objective was to get them back across the border?*

PAVICH: Feed them so they could regain their strength. Getting them to the point where they could get some more animals and go back out on the range.

*Q: Would they go back out?*

PAVICH: Well, they wouldn't go back to Ethiopia because they would get shot at. They were at war. That was the problem and I'm sure it still is. There is really no law and order because people did what they wanted to do and if you pushed too hard you were likely to get beat up or something. You weren't in a town but out in the bush where there was nothing except refugee camps. The only law out there was the army if they were around and the camp officials. It was kind of tough.

In terms of development, we tried to get some to grow some crops along the river, but that was pretty meager.

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PAVICH: I left the Office of Housing to take an assignment in Ethiopia in 1975.

*Q: Right after the coup.*

PAVICH: Right. Haile Selassie was under house arrest. Teferi Benti was the chairman of the Dergue which was a secret organization that ran the country. It was a very tense time. There was a lot going on there that wasn't very nice. People were getting killed at night. There were mass executions. It was pretty bad. I was assigned to the Rural Development Office. My job was drought relief in the four southern provinces of Ethiopia.

*Q: Which ones were these?*

PAVICH: Bale, Sidamo, Gamo-Gofa and Harar. It was an ideal job for me.

*Q: What were you supposed to do?*

PAVICH: There were thousands of refugees who were stuck in the huge area of southeastern Ethiopia called the Ogaden. These people were Somalis, and Oromo peoples. Because of the drought their livestock were dead and they were starving to death. Our job was basically to organize a group to go out and find them, get them settled, organize a program of relief for them and try to find ways to put them into productive work to grow their own food or do something for themselves.

*Q: You worked with the Ethiopian Relief Commission?*

PAVICH: I worked with a very wonderful gentleman, Shamalis Arjuna. Because USAID had the capacity, we would put together four or five vehicle safaris to the drought stricken areas about once every six weeks. We would send the vehicles out to jumping off points. The travelers would fly out there and join the vehicles and go for five or seven days into the Ogaden to the areas where the refugees were located. We would have medical people, relief people and other donor agency people with us. We would do an assessment, file a report. Based on the report findings, regular relief mechanism would take over, consolidate the refugees into staging areas, settle them, feed them, get them back to health. Once the refugees were taken care of, we would try to put them into agriculture or road work cutting new roads so relief vehicles could get into isolated

areas with food and medical supplies, or redoing the regular roads which were in pretty bad shape.

*Q: Your job was mostly the reconnaissance aspect?*

PAVICH: My job was to organize our trips and coordinate them with the other agencies and do a trip report. Then I would work on follow up things like a project to provide whatever assistance the U.S. could to support refugee development activities. It was pretty interesting. It took me all through southern Ethiopia. There were some wonderful areas that were pretty primitive and wild. It was camping out. It was a good experience. People were paying thousands of dollars to go on Safari to do what I was doing every six weeks.

*Q: You had an Ethiopian team you went with?*

PAVICH: Yes. I had two Ethiopian assistants and a team of drivers that did the driving and cooking. Some agencies and donor offices didn't have the capacity to go to the field, so we provided this service.

*Q: So, you took them along with you?*

PAVICH: Yes. We took UN and World Food Program people along and anybody who had a legitimate reason to go. You didn't go there on your own because it was dangerous. There were bandits who would rob you and kill you. If you broke down and you were alone, you were at risk, after the jump off point there were no more gas stations.

*Q: Where was the jump off point?*

PAVICH: There were a number of them. We would take a truck full of 55 gallon drums of gasoline. Often we would send it ahead and stash it at the police post, so we could go there and get our gas.

*Q: How was the situation in Ethiopia at that time? It was getting rather difficult wasn't it?*

PAVICH: It was pretty difficult and probably the worst it had been. Teferi Benti, who was the chairman of the Dergue, was murdered in a staff meeting by Haile Mariam Mengistu and there was a reign of terror. They were throwing people out of windows and doing all kinds of terrible things. It was very bad.

*Q: Was it dangerous for you and your family?*

PAVICH: There was a curfew and you just didn't go out after that time because that was when all these terrible things happened. It was secure during the day. (End of tape)

So the development program there was really in agriculture and we did get involved a little bit in that trying to work with the drought victims. In the Western part of Ethiopia we were doing road projects, pretty much putting roads in areas where there were no roads and working with some



very primitive people who were basically pastoralists who were also affected by the drought, but not as seriously as the people on the eastern side. One of our main programs was the roads program. We would go out and do the survey work for the roads and develop a project to do the roads and bring in technical assistance.

*Q: Did you have to work with the government?*

PAVICH: Yes, with the water authority, road authority, etc.

*Q: How did you find that?*

PAVICH: Pretty good. The Ethiopians liked us. There were a lot of AID people there who had been there for years and were running these agencies and had been taught their trade by an American technician. I can remember sitting on the banks of the Omo river in Southwest Ethiopia with these old water engineers around a camp fire and they were telling us about Mr. So-and-so their AID teacher. They would do their water business during the day and at night the AID technician would teach them their job, help them understand new methods while sitting around a camp fire. They were still doing the same work, the way they were taught by the AID technicians.

*Q: Was the politics at the moment making it more difficult to work with them?*

PAVICH: What do you mean?

*Q: They were hostile toward AID at one point weren't they?*

PAVICH: Well, they were, but once you got out of the city and away from the provincial flag pole, people were people and a lot of them were in bad shape and needed help. They didn't mind the Americans, in fact, they liked us. Quietly they would say, "Can't you do anything about this?" Unfortunately, there wasn't much we could do.

There was a reign of terror going on in the country. The government had organized what they called "Kabellies," or cells. Everyone was in a Kabelli and had to report to somebody. There was always somebody in the system who was accusing someone of being a traitor to the revolution and the next thing you knew after curfew that person would be taken off and sometimes never seen again. A lot of personal vendettas were worked out that way. It was a bad time.

*Q: The AID program had to phase out at some point didn't it?*

PAVICH: It phased out because the Ethiopian government defaulted on a loan. I was in the United States in the Development Studies Program and was told that we couldn't go back.

*Q: This was what year now?*

PAVICH: This was 1977. For me that was really a sad situation because I looked forward to going back to Ethiopia, I loved the work. It was incredible.

*Q: Were you able to get people settled and back into productive life at all?*

PAVICH: The Horn of Africa has always been a problem. The area went from drought to floods so we went from drought relief to flood relief. Then there was a war so there were refugees. It is still going on today and I guess it will always be going on. It is a very bad situation because the area is over populated and the people and their animals can't really support themselves on the land any more, and there isn't any industry. Agriculture is sparse. It is a very problematic area.

*Q: Were you able to develop a sort of permanent indigenous capacity to address these problems as opposed to having outsiders do it?*

PAVICH: The nomadic people have been coping with disasters for ages, they could learn very little about survival from outsiders. They needed food and medicine when the situation got very bad.

*Q: I mean Ethiopian government or private institutions.*

PAVICH: No. There was a certain amount of capacity in individuals, but the longer they labored under that kind of regime the less effective they could be.

*Q: What about this relief and rehabilitation commission?*

PAVICH: The "RRC" did all right. They were helping the people. The reason that they brought down Haile Selassie was that he was not able to take care of the people during one of the droughts. So, the RRC was under pressure to do a good job or the same thing might happen to them. They did a good job and had a lot of help from the outside. Unless there was an on-going World Bank or FAO project on the area, there wasn't much going on in terms of government service in any sector.

*Q: Were you involved in any of the long term development projects?*

PAVICH: Yes.

*Q: Which ones?*

PAVICH: I don't remember the names but they were agricultural mainly. There were some test farms and seed farms and developing different crops that were drought resistant. That was pretty much it. We did have a pretty big agricultural program there.

*Q: Did you have any contact with the agricultural university?*

PAVICH: I personally did not. My relationships were basically with the relief and rehabilitation people and the water and roads people.

*Q: Did you have any contact with the embassy at all at that time?*

PAVICH: Yes. They were always interested in what we were doing because we were out in the field, the frontier. Sometimes I think we were across the frontier. We were sometimes the embassy's eyes and ears in the eastern and southwestern parts of Ethiopia.

*Q: They were getting reports from you about what was going on in these areas?*

PAVICH: They always read our reports and if there was something else they were interested in they would call and ask questions.

*Q: Was the AID mission shrinking at that time?*

PAVICH: It was a large mission.

*Q: Who was the director?*

PAVICH: John Withers and then Princeton Lyman. It was a great working setup. Some of the people who were there went on to bigger and better things.

I left in 1977 and went to the Development Studies Program after which I couldn't go back to Ethiopia.

**ARTHUR T. TIENKEN**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Addis Ababa (1975-1977)**

*Ambassador Arthur T. Tienken entered the Foreign Service in 1949 after serving in the U.S. Army and graduating from Princeton University. His career included assignments in Zaire, Washington, DC, Zambia, Addis Ababa, and an ambassadorship to Gabon. Ambassador Tienken was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.*

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.

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*Q: Moving from that--I think somebody must have been playing a little balance game and said, "Okay, Art, you have had a nice time there, I think we will keep you in the African continent, but we are going to put you to what at that point was probably our most difficult post in Africa." And that is Ethiopia, where you were deputy chief of mission, and I imagine chargé for quite a bit of*

*time from 1975 to '77. Could you explain what the situation was in Ethiopia in 1975 at the time you arrived?*

TIENKEN: Yes. I arrived in Ethiopia having received a telegraph from the Department saying, "You have an outstanding opportunity to serve in an interesting area."

Q: *[Laughter] This is the kiss of death.*

TIENKEN: "As DCM. Would I go?" The "would I go?" part was largely because I hadn't even done two years as DCM in Tunis and wasn't up for assignment at the time. So my wife and I thought it over, and we decided, okay, we would go.

We got there a month before the first anniversary of the overthrow of Haile Selassie in '74. At that time, the worst atrocities of the immediate post-revolution--in my view, it really was a revolution--period were over. Many of the high-ranking and high-born Amharas, which formed the core of Haile Selassie's government, had been jailed, imprisoned, killed, or otherwise disposed of. Things were somewhat quieter by the time I got there. They were anticipating that the first anniversary of independence in September of '75 would be the announcement of a political party, which presumably would be leftist in origin. In fact, it did not happen.

But what you had as a government was a group of army types. Nobody ever knew the exact number, but it was estimated at around 120 officers and non-commissioned officers. The military, I believe, were not supposed to rank higher than major or lieutenant colonel, but I am not sure that is true, they constituted something called the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), also known as the Derg.

Q: *D-E-R-G-E.*

TIENKEN: D-E-R-G.

Q: *D-E-R-G.*

TIENKEN: Yes. And they were the real power in Ethiopia. But they also had a whole, what you and I would recognize, as a whole government infrastructure. You had ministers, and you had ministries, and you had all the people doing the kind of things that they were supposed to be doing as though there were no Derg at all. The only problem was that if you went to the foreign minister, for example, with a request of one sort or another or any ministry, you could never get an answer because they couldn't answer. They would have to refer the question to the Derg, and the Derg would make the decision, which was somewhat frustrating, to say the least. And you, as a diplomat, had no access to the Derg. You only access you had was to the civilian ministries. So you found yourself in the position of not being able to deal with the power structure but having to deal with an intermediary, in effect, namely, the civilian ministries.

Q: *You couldn't approach the Derg directly?*

TIENKEN: You could try, but you would never get appointments. Nothing happened.

In '75, relations with the United States, because of the fact that the Derg gave every sign of being far more left than Haile Selassie's government was, were beginning to go downhill. We still had a considerable AID mission. We still had a considerable military mission. Those were to erode in the next year and a half until the spring of '77 when Ethiopians told us to send all of our military home; close the consulate general in Asmara; close Kagnev Station, which was a military communications station in Asmara; send home USIA; leaving a skeleton of what I originally knew when I first went there. The story of how the relations deteriorated is long, and we can go into that if you want.

*Q: Why don't we go into that. In the first place, you went out as deputy chief of mission. At that time, the ambassador was Ross Adair.*

TIENKEN: Art Hummel.

*Q: Art Hummel, who was a professional officer. Could you describe his style of operation?*

TIENKEN: Art Hummel was former USIA. He was basically a China expert. And his real expertise was China and the Far East, but he had become ambassador in Ethiopia.

*Q: Why was he in Ethiopia?*

TIENKEN: I have no idea. [Laughter]

*Q: [Laughter] Just the system. No opening for an ambassador in China.*

TIENKEN: There certainly wasn't an opening in China.

Art was one of the most competent Foreign Service personnel I ever served with. His style was relatively low-key. But I can often remember when something would come up, more often than not on military assistance matters, suggesting to Art that maybe we ought to try out this idea or that idea on Washington. And Art would look at me square in the eye, and he would say, "I am not going to do that. All Washington is going to tell me is 'shut up and drive.' And that's what I am going to do." And that's what he did. And I think he is very good at it.

By that time, the Derg had begun to go fairly far left. By the end of '75, they had already established some contact and probably made some commitments to the Russians. Ethiopia, then as now, had a variety of insurrections they were trying to control. The largest one being in Eritrea, but they had some others as well plus a number of dissident groups outside of the country that would have dearly loved to overthrow Mengistu and company, Mengistu being the most noted figure in the Derg although he wasn't the chairman at the time.

Military assistance was important to the Ethiopians. We had a long-standing military assistance program with the Ethiopians. But the Derg was beginning to make clear that they wanted military assistance, among other things, to put down some of these insurrections, notably in Eritrea, and that did not please us. So the issue began to be joined over whether we would

continue to provide military assistance or not. The fact that the Derg was pretty much leftist was beginning to turn off people in Washington. And as time went on, the Ethiopians in '75, early '76, asked for \$20 million more in military assistance. Washington elements were not strong on that. We eventually gave them seven in ammunition, and that upset the Ethiopians.

I am fairly sure, although I can't be absolutely certain, by that time, they had decided that their military future was not going to lie with us but with the Russians and/or the Cubans. And they had begun to turn to them already.

Our failure to provide the kind of military assistance they wanted escalated over time. By the time Art Hummel left, which was the summer of '76, there wasn't very much an American ambassador could do to maintain normal relations with the Ethiopians. I was then chargé. We had not replaced Art Hummel as ambassador. As a matter of fact, I spent sixteen months as chargé and turned my job over to another chargé.

We had notified, the Ethiopians we were going to close Kagnev communications station in Asmara. This came at no great surprise, in my view, to the Ethiopians, but they took it as another example of the United States wishing to disengage itself from--

*Q: Why were we closing it? I mean, we had lavished so much, you might say, political capital, as well as AID money with Kagnev Station being the focal point of all our policy in Ethiopia for years.*

TIENKEN: Well, Kagnev was, in fact, a communications station. By the middle '70s, its utility as a communications station was being overtaken by newer and better methods of communications: satellites for one. So that even before I got there in '75, we had cut back what in the late '60s and mid-'60s was a complement of well over 3,000 in Kagnev to maybe as many as twenty. We maintained a skeleton station there, but that is all.

In effect, the answer to your question is it had been overtaken by technology, and we no longer had a particular use for it. And besides that, the political climate was getting worse and worse. And it would be harder and harder to maintain ourselves there.

So we notified them we were planning to close the base. I don't personally think that was a great surprise to Mengistu and company, but they seized upon it as another instance of lack of American support for the revolution. And shortly thereafter on one Saturday afternoon, I had been working much of the day, for reasons I don't remember, I went out to play nine holes of golf.

*Q: You were saying you got four notes--this is in case we missed it.*

TIENKEN: Yes, four notes. Close down MAAG the Military Advisory Groups, close the consulate general in Asmara. Send home the naval medical research unit. Closing Asmara also involved Kagnev Base. "And send home USIA." And we had four days to do it.

This was on a Saturday afternoon. The next day, Ethiopia was shut down, so, in effect, we had only three days to do any talking at all with the Ethiopians. The Ethiopian Army, in effect, occupied USIA and wouldn't let our USIA people in.

On Sunday, I finally got a hold of somebody and said, "Look, four days is a little short for all of this." Eventually, we got it extended to seven days. But by that time, we had geared up an evacuation. The military sent in a commercial aircraft to get out all the dependents and most of the military people. The MAAG chief had managed to get permission from the Ethiopians to fly in four C-141s every day to take out equipment. We managed to get at least one or two flights into Asmara and close that. So by the time I managed to get an extension of three days, most of the work had been done that we could do. And we got the people out in the four days all right, but the other three days were spent getting equipment out and assembled in the compound in Addis.

I had some doubt that that was the end of the story, and it turned out it wasn't because that was April. By the end of May, chapter two arrived in the form of three more notes, this one sending the military attaché home, cutting the embassy in half, and cutting the Marine detachment, which was then ten, by two-thirds.

By this time, I had actually seen Mengistu, who was then the undisputed leader of the Derg, mostly at his request in a totally unrelated matter. He wanted us to provide additional military assistance, mostly in the form of spare parts. Again, mostly in support of F-5Es that we had provided somewhat earlier.

Q: *These are fighter--*

TIENKEN: Fighter aircraft, yes.

Q: *Fighter bombers.*

TIENKEN: With the Ethiopians claiming that we had agreed to provide it, and the Ethiopians had even paid for part of it, which was in fact true, as a matter of fact. So I had a long conversation with Mengistu basically on this subject earlier. I had to go back and tell him that we weren't really interested in providing very much with all this equipment. By that time, Somalia had become an important item in the equation. And that's a different story; we can come back to it in a moment, if you like.

So by the time I got the second note, I asked the foreign ministry if we do slightly better than 50% in the State Department complement. And typical Ethiopian operation, the foreign minister couldn't answer that question. I would have to go see Mengistu. "Can you arrange another meeting with Mengistu?" They thought they might do that.

So I had my third meeting with Mengistu. And the third one was to ask him if we could maintain a strength of twenty-eight people at the Embassy, which was slightly better than 50%. And he sort of dismissed that and said, "Work with the foreign minister." He eventually agreed with the twenty-eight, by the way, which I think is still the number of people. That was ten years ago.

I said, "On the question of Marines, Mr. Chairman, you're a military man, those Marines' sole purpose in life is to guard the embassy 24 hours a day 7 days a week. To cut them from ten to three, which is what you asked, would make it impossible to do that. You know very well that you can't use three men twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to guard an embassy."

He said, "Is that their only job?"

I said, "That's their only job."

"Do I have your word on that?"

I said, "You have my word on that."

"Okay, two-thirds you can keep." And I think they have even added one since then.

We sent the military attaché home, as well. This time, the British and the Egyptians got in the act. Their military attachés also were sent home at the same time. And that was item number two, or the second shoe drop, if you like.

A bone of contention at the time was Somalia, because this was May of '77. The Somalis were making loud noises about recovering the so-called Ogaden, which is mostly desert in southeast Ethiopia. The Somalis had a doctrine, and I guess they still do, of greater Somalia, which includes part of Ethiopia, part of Kenya, Djibouti, and--

*Q: They have a five-pointed star in their flag.*

TIENKEN: That's correct.

*Q: Which represents a bone of contention with every one of the surrounding states.*

TIENKEN: Yes. Up until then, the Soviets had been strong supporters of the Somalis and provided all kinds of military assistance. But when the Soviets began flirting with the Ethiopians--I think the Soviets would have liked to have made it possible for them to provide assistance to both of them and be the great friend to both of them--Somalis didn't see it that way. And a series of events led up to one of the curious switches that I had ever had anything to do with in my Foreign Service career which is the Somalis then turned to us--Somalis being one of the most radical countries in Africa at the time--for further military support. And the Soviets were left with the Ethiopians.

We were all for--at least Carter I think was all for--lining up the Somalis on our side, but there was a strong feeling in Washington that some of that military support was going to go for Somali efforts to recover the Ogaden, which we didn't want any part of. So we made a great pitch that any military assistance that we provided the Somalis would be for defensive purposes only. And I had to take that line with the Ethiopians, who didn't believe it for a moment.



Q: *You didn't either. [Laughter]*

TIENKEN: Well, as it turned out, we never did provide the Somalis with weapons until something like five years later.

Q: *Oh.*

TIENKEN: But by that time, the Ogaden War was long over, and lots of water had gone under the bridge.

But back then in the spring of '77 when they were sending our people home, this was an element. No question about it. I did my best to convince Mengistu himself and the foreign minister, Feleke, that these weapons that being rather absent for the Somalis were, in fact, for defensive purposes only, and we weren't going to provide them for assistance in making war on Ethiopia. As I say, I don't believe for a moment that the Ethiopian government had placed any credence in that at all.

Q: *Well, while much of this was going on, did you have any feeling about, "Oh hell, why don't we just shut the place down?" Or was anybody making these noises?*

TIENKEN: There was some thought about it in Washington, but I felt then, and I still do, that Ethiopia was of sufficient importance in the Horn of Africa and in Africa itself. It had a certain strategic location, as you know, because it is on the Red Sea, it is on shipping channels. That in itself, although it never really had the strategic importance that some people thought it might, nonetheless, that was an element.

But I always felt that even after being battered by all these various notes and sending people home--we should stay. The Ethiopians were attempting to cope with a variety of political movements in Addis itself, and had initiated something called the Red Terror, which in its ultimate manifestation was bazookas, machine guns, and rifles being fired every night along about dusk, and people getting killed. Fortunately, they were not foreigners. I felt it was important that we retain a presence in Addis in the realization that we were going to have no influence worth anything for the foreseeable future as a result of almost severing relations, sending all these people home, and the switch to Eastern bloc assistance, Russian assistance. Still, I thought it was important to stay there as a listening post, as a presence, and just to be there should there come a time when the Ethiopians felt that they didn't really want the advice of the Russians and the Cubans.

Q: *This is always the thing. If you are not there, you are not there.*

TIENKEN: That's right.

Q: *At the time. If you can hang on, I mean, particularly a government such as this--I mean, there is the knowledge sitting off to one side that there could be a palace revolt or anything could happen, and you might as well have somebody on the scene to work for our interests.*

TIENKEN: Yes, that was my view.

Q: *Were you getting any different view from Washington?*

TIENKEN: For a while there was some thought that we ought to close the embassy, but it never got much steam in Washington. I think it is fair to say that certainly the State Department and eventually the NSC and the administration itself, in effect, came to the same conclusion that we ought to keep a presence there. And so we did.

I even felt that we ought to make an effort to assign an ambassador back on the assumption that no chargé, whether it was interim or permanent, would have the access to the Derg, if there were to be any, that an ambassador could have. The State Department was rather cool to that one for a while, but they finally decided that they would try. And they did pose a name for ambassador toward the close of 1976. I guess I can't tell you who it was, but he was given agreement. His name was submitted but never acted upon at the end of the Ford Administration. And it died in the interim between the Ford Administration and the Carter Administration that was elected in '76.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopians, rather surprisingly, nominated an ambassador to the States. We gave him agreement, and he did go. He almost did not because shortly before he left, he was driving from the palace down to the foreign ministry on a kind of a S hill, and his car was attacked by a machine gunner. He survived; he was not hit. But he immediately decided it was best to get out of the country, which he did. And to all of my efforts to have him introduced officially into Washington as the new Ethiopian ambassador and being met by protocol and all the things you do with a new ambassador, he said, "Don't worry." He called me before he left. "Don't worry. I'll let them know when I'm there." [Laughter]

He did not last very long. He had been the minister of defense. Shortly after he got to Washington, Mengistu called all his ambassadors home. The ambassador, Mandefro, I think read the handwriting on the wall, and he did not go.

Q: *Oh.*

TIENKEN: Shortly thereafter, he was no longer ambassador, but I think he is still in Washington, as a matter of fact.

Q: *Okay, we have just come back from lunch on the same day. Art, at that time, I guess it was a major revolt in Eritrea, isn't it? How did we view that?*

TIENKEN: Yes, there was a major revolt in Eritrea, and it had been going on since 1960. There were two main Eritrean resistance units, if you like, both of them leftist in orientation. But we had taken the position beginning in 1960 that Ethiopian territorial integrity should be preserved. Therefore, we never did support, and do not to this day, the Eritrean separatists. They are politically more left than we would like, in any case, but that has not been the major concern. The major concern has been, as it has been in much of Africa, to avoid this sort of thing that would break up the Ethiopian state, which the succession--

*Q: We have quite a consistent policy throughout Africa. We just don't want to see it breaking up into a whole series of places.*

TIENKEN: That's right.

*Q: Well, while you were there, was our consulate in Asmara playing any role at all? Or was it just sort of a housekeeping organization?*

TIENKEN: Yes, it played a role to the extent that it could. For much of the time until it was closed by one of those four notes that I told you about before, their movement was restricted to the city of Asmara itself. Any time they got out of that, if they could even get out, and they couldn't, you were in dangerous territory. You used to be able to go down to the Port of Massawa, but you had to fly. There is a road down, and I gather a fairly decent road, but I don't recall any of our people ever being able to drive it. I almost got to Massawa once, and then the Ethiopians decided that they wouldn't be responsible for my safety if I did go down there.

*Q: In Massawa?*

TIENKEN: Yes. And turned it off. But the major role of the consulate general was observing and reporting, which you could do within limits. And it was virtually the only information that we had that we felt had any reliability at all as to what was really going on in Eritrea. They did a good job, again, within the limits of what they could do.

*Q: Well, there were some kidnappings--over six Americans in total were kidnapped. I am not sure if they were quite during your period or not. Did you get involved with these?*

TIENKEN: Yes, there were a number of kidnappings. I can't think now, Stu, whether any of them were when I was there or not. My memory is no.

*Q: Well, okay, it may well not have been. My question was, did we play any role in it? But if you don't recall it--they were taken and then eventually let go?*

TIENKEN: Yes. In all cases, they were, that's right.

*Q: While you were there, were we doing anything to help the former ruling class and the kin of Haile Selassie get out or try to protect them?*

TIENKEN: The answer is no.

But while I was there, two American missionaries--they were husband and wife, particularly, the wife--were determined to get out a number of the royal family children. The woman has since written a book on the subject, Codeword Catherine. And they got them. They got eleven of them out on a fancy little operation of landing a plane on the shores of Lake Langano, which is three or four hours south of Addis.

But that was a private operation. They had let me know when I was chargé that they might try this. I had no instructions one way or another on the subject, but I was not going to get involved in it, and we didn't. My concern, however, was that the Ethiopians were so unpredictable that if they tried it, there would be repercussions on the Americans remaining in Ethiopia, and I told them so. That, however, didn't stop them, and they did run the operation, and they did get eleven children out.

Q: *Were there repercussions?*

TIENKEN: No. That was one of the curious things of Ethiopia.

Another one I can remember was the foreign minister when I first got there, Kifle Wodajo, who was fairly pro-West. He went off on a--I think it was a OAU meeting somewhere in Africa, and did not return. And we began to be concerned that he had not only defected but probably had gone to the States, where a good many of the Ethiopians did go. And sure enough, about a month later, word came to us that he was in the States; he had defected. We were fairly sure the Ethiopian government knew it by this time and waited for something to happen. And nothing happened.

Q: *Well, now, this was somewhat after you left, around--some other time, I don't know--was Elizabeth Raspolic there while you were there?*

TIENKEN: No.

Q: *We have an interview with her, and she was in charge of the consular section, I think, from '78 to '80 and saying one of her major problems was tied to these defections. A number of American women had married Ethiopian officials. When the officials got orders to go somewhere, they would leave, they wouldn't come back, leaving the American wives and their children there. It was quite a problem to get them out of the country because the Ethiopian government wanted to hang on to these women and the children in order to attract the husbands back. Did you get involved in any of those?*

TIENKEN: I had enough problems, and, fortunately, that wasn't one of them, although I can well imagine that could have been a problem.

Q: *Well, that probably was taking place at a later thing. This is a major difficulty.*

TIENKEN: You weren't always to predict the Ethiopians. We had a case somewhat in reverse. Right after all these various things had happened in expelling the people in one site or another, one of the USIA officers wanted to marry an Ethiopian girl. He had been expelled and I think was in Bulgaria at the time, if I remember right. And he asked for permission to come back and marry the girl and take her out of Ethiopia. Well, as an expellee, I thought he had as much chance as a snowball in that warm place of getting permission to come, let alone marry the girl and take her out. And it was only a month or two after he had been expelled. I tried it anyway on the Ethiopians. And to my great surprise, they said okay. So he came, married the girl, and left, and the girl went with him.

*Q: Tell me, in this--and again I have to caveat this as saying obviously this is an unclassified interview--but how well were you served by the CIA in what was a very difficult and unpredictable and dangerous situation?*

TIENKEN: Oh, I can say very, very well. They were very good. Our intelligence was not lacking, I think it is fair to say.

*Q: And you were fully, you know, as best one knows, anyway, you felt that this was a good, strong arm of how you made judgments. In other words, it wasn't being done and sent somewhere else, and you weren't the beneficiary.*

TIENKEN: No, no. I was well served. They made no judgments that I was ever aware of that were--they may not have always agreed with what I and the State Department political people said, but they always let us know what they saying and gave us a chance to comment. I remember doing that one time. And the relationship was very, very harmonious.

*Q: How about with the desk and the rest of the State Department? Obviously, an extremely difficult situation. Do you think your difficulty was appreciated, and were you getting the support you needed? And the instructions, do you feel they were forthcoming, or were you left in an ambiguous situation?*

TIENKEN: No, no. Not always the case in my Foreign Service career, but in this case, we and the country office worked very closely together. The country director was Dick Post. He and I saw eye to eye on practically everything.

*Q: He is an old horn of Africa hand, anyway.*

TIENKEN: That's right.

*Q: This is Richard St. something or other--*

TIENKEN: St. Francis Post.

*Q: St. Francis Post, yes.*

TIENKEN: He and I saw eye to eye. We got along very well. I think his boss at the time was probably both Bill Harrop and Talcott Seelye as senior DASSs, deputy assistant secretaries, in the Bureau of African Affairs. And Dick Moose who was Assistant Secretary for Africa. But I detected no particular differences with them either.

*Q: So, I mean, you all knew your brief was basically to hang on in there and see what developments were.*

TIENKEN: Yes.

*Q: Did you have relations--how were you calling the Soviet and Cuban penetration? Did you see this as going to be effective? How did you see it?*

TIENKEN: Well, I think that it became clear--I think it is fair to say that probably the earlier contacts with the Soviets in terms of actual assistance was probably kept fairly closely held. I doubt if the U.S. Government, and certainly I didn't, knew about it because I think it began shortly after I got there as DCM. But as time went on, this relationship began to become clearer and clearer. And by the time I left in the fall of '77, you were beginning to see the first real outward manifestations of the new presence, both in terms of equipment and people, troops mostly.

By the time of the Ogaden War, that is, early '77, it was fairly clear that that's the direction the Ethiopians were going. As long as we were taking the position that we weren't going to supply the Ethiopians with the military assistance they wanted to cope with their various insurrections, that they were going to get it from somewhere, and it was clear that the Soviets were going to do that. So I don't think it was any doubt in our minds that the two were drawing closer together. Our relationship was suffering. As far down the road as we could see, it would probably remain that way, at least as long as the Soviets and/or the Ethiopians, but particularly the Soviets, found it to their advantage to maintain that relationship.

*Q: Do we ever take a look at something of this nature in the long term? I mean, it is easy in hindsight, but at the time when you are under the pressure of saying, "Okay, let them get mixed up." I mean, this is an insolvable problem, particularly when you talk about the civil wars that are going on there, the Somali-Ethiopian conflict, including some problems with the Sudan, and to say, "Okay. Be my guest." I mean, it is somewhat the same way as saying, "Okay. Americans going to Vietnam. I mean, we are not going to stop you." I mean, do we see this like that, or were we sort of narrowly focused in saying this is going to hurt us?*

TIENKEN: I would have to say that I had a certain feeling of my own and indeed communicated it to Washington, but I can't say that I did it all that strongly, i.e., the "be my guest" feeling. But the government doesn't work that way, my friend, as you know. The State Department works in terms of the immediate and the near future. Administrations don't last that long. Long-range planning of the kind you are talking about is not all that common--it may be done, but nobody necessarily acts on it.

*Q: Well, also true, I suppose, is the other side. I mean, particularly in a case like this, is who lost Ethiopia to the communists, too.*

TIENKEN: Yes.

*Q: Because somebody is going to come up with a map showing a big red blotch in the horn of Africa.*

TIENKEN: That's right.

*Q: And even in the short term, politically, that is a no-no.*

TIENKEN: Yes. It would be nice to think that you could do that sort of thing, plan and whatnot, but it doesn't often happen.

Q: *What was your evaluation of Mengistu?*

TIENKEN: I met the man three times. He is very charming to talk to, I must say. Each of the three times with the exception of a couple of individual questions that I had proposed to him on the cutbacks, we, nevertheless, basically talked past each other. He made his points, and I made mine, and they weren't necessarily the same thing, and we didn't resolve very much. He spoke English, but he never interviewed me in English. He would speak in Amharic, which was then translated. I would reply in English, which was not translated. And I gather from a couple of my successors that happened to them as well.

Was he and is he a communist? Or was he simply an Ethiopian nationalist who was willing to look to any source to keep the country together? That was the great question. Personally I leaned towards Mengistu the nationalist and less toward the pure, outright communist point of view. Anything he did in communist terms was what he felt he had to do to placate his Soviet and/or Cuban benefactors. Some of my colleagues today maintain that he, in fact, is a communist. And I think as time has gone on since my departure, his actions have indicated that he does feel more to the left than I necessarily thought he was when I saw him.

He certainly is a ruthless man. He was only one of three vice chairman of the PMAC when I first came to Ethiopia. One of them he certainly eliminated about a year later. And the second one was eliminated shortly after I left, along with a variety of other members of the government. Shooting down students seemed to cause no great problem. He once during one of his long sessions in Revolution Square railing at the, among others, the CIA and the United States in general, emphasized his point of being anti-American by throwing a bottle full of allegedly blood--actually it was wine or some other sort of stuff--on the ground to emphasize his point. I didn't happen to be at that one because we weren't invited, but it is just as well. What do you do? [Laughter]

Certainly a nationalist. He certainly has tried hard to keep Ethiopia as a single state. But his methods are, for my money, deplorable.

Q: *Well, is there anything else you would like to say about Ethiopia at that point?*

TIENKEN: I think that's enough.

**KEITH L. WAUCHOPE**  
**Deputy Principal Officer**  
**Asmara, Eritrea (1975-1977)**

*Ambassador Wauchope was born and raised in New York, graduated from Johns Hopkins University and, after a tour in the US Army in Vietnam, in 1966 joined the Foreign Service. His specialty being African affairs, Mr. Wauchope served in a number of African posts, including Ft. Lamy, Asmara, Bamako and Monrovia. In 1989 he was appointed Ambassador to Gabon, where he served from 1989-1992. In his several Washington assignments Ambassador Wauchope dealt with personnel, cultural, Latin American affairs and Sudan affairs.*

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

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

*Q: Yes, talk about that.*

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

*Q: What in particular?*

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



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

*Q: You were there from '75 to when?*

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

*Q: Okay.*

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

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

WAUCHOPE: The remarkable thing about the Italian experience in Eritrea, and this addresses the cultural issues and the differences in the way in which colonial experiences vary in Africa. Some Eritreans, and particularly the insurgents, were favorably disposed to the Italians. The Italians had invested in Eritrea, they had businesses there. They ran the brewery, a big textile factory and the Coca-Cola bottling plant, and they had trained Eritreans up to a certain level, mainly technical skills. Yet they had never established a college. It was only after the British administration under the United Nations mandate that they the first university was established. The Eritreans intermarried with the Italians, and they felt the Italians were sympathetic people. They got along with them quite well, so it was not the insurgents' intent to drive them out, but the Italians felt they were in danger of being caught in the middle. After the Derg drove the rebels out of Asmara, the Ethiopians were very harsh in repression and they shut the city down. Asmara became much less a pleasant place to live. For Italians who first colonized Eritrea in the 1890s this had been a sweet existence, I can tell you. There were third-generation Italians there

who had lived in Eritrea all their lives. First, you have to remember that at 7,700 feet, so the climate is cool, pleasant, and sunny virtually all of the year round. In the rainy season, it rains from about 3:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon, and then that's that. They had these very productive farms, not to say plantations, and they ran all the industrial activity. They played bocce ball and sat around drinking and talking in the afternoons under the big shade trees. Life was very, very nice; not unlike what the British had in Kenya during its heyday. The possibility of being driven out was very difficult for these people to accept. Nonetheless, the Italian population dropped drastically, as they realized that this was probably not a long-term situation that they could hang on to. In any event, when I arrived in July of 1975, the population of the city was down probably by a third from what it had once been. There were whole middle class neighborhoods that were abandoned, including both Italian and matesse communities. All major buildings were pockmarked with bullet holes, and heavily armed guards in sandbagged positions at all the government offices. There were roving patrols and machine gun jeeps throughout the city. Most particularly, there was a rigid curfew. The curfew was from 7:00 at night until 6:00 in the morning.

*Q: Oh, that's a rough one.*

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

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

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

*Q: ELF being?*

WAUCHOPE: Eritrean Liberation Front. Then later and more importantly there was the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front, the EPLF, which was a Marxist-Leninist, largely Christian group with some Muslims. It was more disciplined and it became the more powerful and more coherent of the two groups. But both of them were significant political organizations and had a structure and a leadership hierarchy. They were not people to be taken lightly. They had some successes in the countryside even after the failed January attempt to take over Asmara. They had excellent

intelligence and they knew virtually everything the Ethiopians did. They made a point of taking actions that would tend to demoralize the Ethiopian garrison. For example, they blew up the Coca-Cola factory shortly after I arrived. There was great consternation over that in the expat community, no soft drinks and no mixers for their gin and tonics. Also, the rebels had factory owners they liked and the ones they didn't like. So, they tended to target the former.

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

In any event, as that whole process was unfolding, there was a growing problem in terms of how the consulate viewed the insurgency in Eritrea and how the embassy in Addis viewed it. That is not an uncommon problem, yet we felt it was our obligation to report things as we saw them. In the time that I was there, some 21 months, there were at least 450 Eritrean civilians killed in reprisal actions by Ethiopian government security or military forces. In some cases it was parallel police. Shortly after I arrived there had been an assassination of an Ethiopian officer in a

certain neighborhood. That very evening, troops from units that he had commanded came into that neighborhood and dragged people out of their homes and eviscerated and left their bodies around the assassination site. There were 45 people killed in retaliation. We quickly learned of it. The Eritrean staff, our FSNs, would tell us without embellishment what happened. So, we would attempt to confirm it, to get good solid information, and then we would report it. We had the right and authority to report directly to the Department, and we'd also send copies to Addis. That was never really challenged. Our embassy was trying to retain a shred of proper and friendly relations with the Ethiopians, and these atrocities placed a strain on this process. We still had a functioning military mission in Addis. We had a fairly large defense attaché office as well. By reporting these things and sending them to Washington, we could be seen to be undermining that effort to retain the basics of a relationship. The Embassy conveyed a sense that we could be a little less sensational in reporting these incidents. We said when one person is assassinated and 45 people are killed in retaliation, it's very difficult to put any other face on it than as an atrocity. To be fair about it, Art Tienken was the DCM and he's a very good and decent man, and he could see our perspective. As such, there was no real effort to censor or quash what we were reporting, thank God. This was not always the case with his successor, Peter Sebastian.

*Q: Who was the ambassador?*

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

As I say, Ambassador Hummel was a very decent fellow, of the old Foreign Service, but there was one issue that I brought to his attention that I was disappointed with how he reacted. In Asmara, whenever you went for an official appointment the Ethiopian security guards insisted that you submit to a search. I remember going to see the mayor of Asmara and the guard kept insisting that I had to go through a body search and of my briefcase. I had an appointment made well in advance, so I just got my back up. I refused as a consular officer to be searched and insisted that the guard call the mayor to tell him I would not be coming because of the search requirement. I tried to make it clear that they had to respect my rights and immunities. Of course, that effort went over the guard's head, but he did call the Mayor's office and was told not to search me. I was trying; one by one, to preserve my rights and the respect to which a consular officer is entitled intact. Another time, I was a non-pro courier bringing a classified diplomatic pouch to Addis and airport security insisted that I open the pouch. I told them that, if they insisted, I would take the pouch and go back on the plane to Asmara. The confrontation kept escalating to higher and higher levels. Eventually, I won the point, although it took over an hour.

It took that kind of willingness to face these people down. So, I brought this issue to the ambassador hoping for his and the Embassy's support. He said that even when he went to the movies the Ethiopians insisted on searching him and he didn't it was big deal. So I didn't get any satisfaction on this, so we just had to carry on the fight ourselves. I must say, however, we pretty much made the point and increasingly they didn't hassle us. They eventually realized that we did have certain rights and privileges.

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

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

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

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

Beyond that when the war ended the British continued to maintain their communication, telecommunication facility there so they could communicate throughout south Asia and relay communications, and they probably did some intercept work. In 1952 when the U.N. mandated Eritrea's semi-autonomous federation with Ethiopia, the Americans negotiated an agreement to set up a telecommunications facility in Asmara called Kagnaw Station. It became more and more sophisticated as time went on, and at its peak in the mid-1960s, there 6,500 Americans there. It was a massive operation with 13 sites. It did telecommunications relay, and telecommunication intercept work. Increasingly, Kagnaw got more and more sophisticated equipment. It had a huge dish antennae that was some 80 feet across and it took them weeks to get it up from Massawa, up the winding road to the heights of Asmara to install it. It cost millions of dollars. I remember in my time we sold it for scrap for \$6,000. In any event, Kagnaw had been a tremendously successful operation over the years. For example, it had provided the communications relay for Kissinger's early trips to China, first the secret mission and then the Nixon visit. It had the capability to communicate directly to Beijing from Asmara and then relay to Europe and then to the U.S. Telecommunications technology was constantly changing, and while I was there, DOD was considering its options. First there were the costs versus the efficiency of the technology; then there was the threat from the insurgency which included safety risks to its personnel. Our

profile, while much reduced from its peak of 6500, was still very high with some 60 Americans and three sites plus the main base compound still in operation. We were still viewed as we had been in our heyday when Kagnev employed thousands of Eritreans. We had operated our own television and AM/FM radio stations. They had a big R&R facility down in Massawa for the Kagnev families. They could go to the Red Sea and go swimming and rent boats and all that. They had helicopter communications between those R & R sights. They had a hunting lodge in Keren and other recreational activities in the region. The Americans had also become involved in charitable activities. They supported an eye hospital, and had programs to fly people, especially children, back to the United States for medical treatment. Americans had an excellent reputation. The Eritreans really liked the Americans because of all we had done there and because they had treated the Eritreans with decency. Our reputation, however, had begun to erode by the time I arrived. There were about 55 to 60 Americans operating three sights at that stage because satellites had taken up much of the burden. We still had interception capabilities and other telecommunications relay capabilities. The U.S. Navy was now operating the facility primarily for communication relay for the Indian Ocean fleet. Kagnev still provided useful and reliable telecommunications relay activity. There were 11 or 12 U.S. Navy personnel and the rest of the Americans were contractors. They lived on the main base, the American part of which was one tenth of what it had once been, the rest having been taken over by the Ethiopian military. The outlying facilities had been automated to a certain degree and they were at some distance from the main base. The issue of whether the DOD was going to retain Kagnev was an open ended question. From a budgetary perspective, they basically wanted to retain it at a minimal cost since no money had been budgeted to replace it. This was fine for the near term, but as the political situation evolved and the tensions between the U.S. and the Ethiopian government increased, the future was very uncertain. Among the insurgents, the “fighters” as the Eritreans called their countrymen, out in the bush, there was a sense that the need to maintain Kagnev was why the American continued to support the Ethiopians despite the increasing friction. Despite the residual friendly and cordial relations between Americans at Kagnev and the Eritreans, the insurgents tried to figure out ways to get this message across to the American government. This resulted in their actions against Kagnev operations and particularly the Americans operating them. The insurgents had just begun a campaign of kidnapping foreigners to get some international attention. They seized the British honorary consul, a British businessman and marched him off in broad daylight into the bush. He was released almost a year later, and was the better for the experience reportedly having lost weight and being more fit than ever. The first kidnapping of Americans was when they overran one of our outlying facilities at night. There was a just skeletal staff there, and no real guards to speak of. They took the two Americans hostage and marched them off into the bush. In total there were five Americans kidnapped; two more at a remote site and one from his home in Asmara. They were all eventually released, having been held for about 10 months to 15 months. They were all treated well. When they were released, in Sudan in every instance, they had no complaint. Things became much more somber however, when two Americans were killed. I remember as I was the acting principal officer at the time when the two Americans were killed in a land mine explosion. The insurgents had planted a land mine on the roads to one of the outlying sites. It was placed in a mud puddle and, as such, the American couldn't see any sign of it. Two civilian contractors were driving a pick up truck when they hit the mine. They were blown right through the roof of the cab and were killed instantly. That event cast a pall on all of Kagnev's operations. We were surprised and much taken aback that the insurgents did this. We never learned whether they were after us or whether they were

after Ethiopian patrols. We were certain that they knew damn well that the Americans came down that road and, if they really cared to avoid harming Americans, they would not have done that. That was the only such deadly incident, but it was bad enough and it accelerated planning for alternatives to Kagnew. We did close down that sight; it was just too remote. The Navy shifted to using two sites closer to the main facility. The Navy's general sense was, whatever the threat, they were tolerable for the time being, so let's try to keep this thing going if we can. We did, and Kagnew personnel came in and went out. The contractors were paid well, and they were basically self-sustaining. Kagnew hired very substantial numbers of Eritreans on construction and maintenance crews and this kept whole facility running at a relatively low cost. All the costs were largely sunk costs and they had already been amortized.

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

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

WAUCHOPE: There was a consul general, yes.

*Q: Who was the consul general?*

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

Again, their community went back up to over 9,000 after the January '75 draw down. The Ethiopian government preferred that the Italians not come back to Eritrea, and they put restrictions on their return, in part because it thought that the Italians were colluding with the rebels. In some cases, the Italians would sneak back through Sudan to Asmara through the rebel side. They were welcomed by the Eritreans, who felt that the Italians, at least recently, treated them decently. I will say that, while the Italians didn't provide the Eritreans a university, they did provide them vocational training. As a result, Eritreans learned to do just about anything a

European could do in terms of operating and maintaining equipment and doing whatever was necessary to keep things running. For example, the Eritreans ran the power plant and the water pumping station in Addis. As there had been some acts of sabotage in Addis, the Ethiopians decided that the Eritreans were a threat to the security of their capital, and began to expel the Eritreans. Once they started the process, they quickly realized that the Eritreans ran all these vital operations and that there were no Ethiopians who could do it. Then they had to relent and allow them to stay. Of course, Ethiopian Air Lines was operated almost entirely by Eritreans. Likewise, most of the pilots, both air force pilots and the airline pilots were Eritreans.

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



kidnappings continued, we reached a point where it was considered too hazardous for dependents and they were sent to Addis or back to the U.S. Even the RMO would only come up for an afternoon. He'd come up and he'd say. . .

*Q: RMO being?*

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

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

*Q: Were you able to talk to Eritrean insurgents?*

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

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

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

Another time, I was down in Addis when a member of the Derg, Colonel Sisay, also an Eritrean, and the deputy commander of the air force met his fate. He had been sent by the Derg to Eritrea to do an assessment of the possibilities of winning the war there. He returned to Addis and told the Derg that there was no way that it could win militarily. They had to make peace, had to find a

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

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

WAUCHOPE: Yes, we used to ask why we are going down this path with the Ethiopians so slavishly. Part of the explanation we were told at that time was that, under Kissinger with the withdrawal from Vietnam in April of 1975, there was a question about American reliability and about its commitments to other countries. As a result the U.S. felt it was important to maintain our credibility by trying to maintain a relationship with Ethiopia even though Haile Selassie who had been our special friend was gone. Haile Selassie, in his later days, became increasingly

repressive because, like many of these chiefs of state in the Third World, he had created the conditions for his own overthrow. He established the national university, actually Haile Selassie University. It was highly regarded and was very successful in its international connections. There were many academic exchanges; the Ethiopians went overseas, Americans came to Ethiopia on the Fulbright program and other schemes. At universities people asked questions; for example, why do we live under an absolute monarchy; there's got to be a better way to rule our country. It was these university students who led to the popular uprising, which the emperor tried to suppress, and after many bloody confrontations, the military said enough, we refused to shoot anymore young people. They rose up against the emperor and their leadership formed the military that became the Derg. Even as this group became increasingly radical under Mengistu, the U.S. government still tried to maintain a relationship, claiming that it was important because of the withdrawal from Vietnam. We recognized the emperor had his shortcomings and tried to moderate his actions. We hoped that this military government would transition in to a more democratic process. It didn't prove to be the case and increasingly it went the other way.

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

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

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

*Q: Were there still the Falashas there?*

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

*Q: The Ethiopian Jews.*

WAUCHOPE: Right. The Ethiopian Jews. They were not at that time the particular focus of anybody, nor were they being subjected to the abuses that came later. In any event, the Israel connection was reflected in the fact that most Ethiopian security forces on the streets carried Uzi submachine guns. There were Israeli advisors assigned to the police and the internal security

organs as opposed to the army. They thought that they were ensuring that Eritrea not fall into the hands of Islamic groups and become a radical Islamic state on the Red Sea, i.e., Eritrea under the influence of some nation like Iraq. In reality, that was not really likely because, while Islam bound the ELF together, it was not what motivated the insurgency. Ethnicity was a more important division in Eritrea, which was split almost a 50/50 between Muslims and Coptic Christians, with the Muslims being in the low-lying areas and the Christians in the highland areas. The Christian groups were the more sophisticated and the more connected with the larger ideological movements, where the Arabs were more traditional and local in perspective. The rebels went to the Iraqis only because the Iraqis would help them create trouble wherever they could. While the rebels received some help for the Iraqis in the early 70s, they were not beholden to the Iraqis. The Israelis were misled as to the threat that radical Islam constituted in Eritrea, but they wanted to keep their finger on the pulse because it was an area of importance to them.

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

*Q: Did the Soviets play much of a role?*

WAUCHOPE: Well, there was some concern that the Soviets were looking for a Red Sea port for rest and refit, and refueling their ships. Ethiopia's relationship with the Soviets began to improve under the Derg because it was looking for alternative source of weapons, and the Derg leaders started parroting leftist jargon. Mengistu declared that he was a Marxist-Leninist. The Soviets were very pleased, they thought they had a convert, and did not have to try very hard to persuade them. Marxist Leninism, as was the case in many other Third World countries, was an

instrument of maintaining political control over their people more than it was philosophical conviction. If you had asked Mengistu what the tenets of Marxist Leninism were, he would have a damned difficult time telling you. Basically it was it was a unifying concept that allowed him to require loyalty of all his subordinates, and he was the head of the Supreme Soviet, if you will, of Ethiopia. As this process developed, there were concerns that the Soviets moving in to replace the U.S., and there were reports that the Soviets were seeking the right to take on fresh water and to refuel in Massawa. This had a very sinister tone. We didn't like the concept of the Soviets being in the Red Sea in any capacity, but the Ethiopians were going to do what they were going to do. We didn't have much influence remaining as we were increasingly viewed as an unreliable arms supplier by this time. So, we were concerned.

*Q: Did you go down to Massawa?*

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

*Q: That was because of insurgency?*

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

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

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

and become a landlocked country. They acknowledged that Massawa was part of Eritrea, but they tried redrawing of maps to claim that Assab never really was part of Eritrea. That was a great concern to all Ethiopians; to become landlocked was intolerable.

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

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

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

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

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

WAUCHOPE: Well, I was the DPO, I was the consular officer, political officer, and the economic officer, as well. In the consular we had a very fine consular assistant who did most of the work, and I didn't have too many problems in that area. The economic and political side of it was very difficult because all representation efforts had to be done at lunches. Some people used the few hotels to host a decent lunch. But, generally you would do representation at our homes. The first residence I had was right across the street from the Consulate. When I went in to look at this place which they were fixing up, there was a 50-caliber bullet hole all the way through the house. It had come from the pillbox at the Naval HQ and had gone from the living room, through the dining room and out through the kitchen. I thought, this isn't really very encouraging. They did patch it up, and I lived there for a few months until there was a fire right across my

house and I spent an hour or so on the floor. For security and representational reasons they found me a very nice villa on the other side of the Consulate. That one had 36 bullet holes in it, but it was above the Naval HQ so no one could shoot across it. They fixed it up and furnished it. I hosted lunches there as it had quite elegant gardens. I was the only consulate officer to live off the compound, and after the kidnappings, I was required to move back to the compound. We retained this villa so I could continue to host representational functions. I had a adequate cook and a gardener who did quite a good job. Representational lunches were confined to businessmen and government officials. Businessmen were very constrained in what they would say because of the threat of nationalization, and the government officials would blatantly lie to you because they didn't know what was going on and they were terrified of departing from the party line. I did get to know General Getachew, the Martial Law Administrator, but he would not come to my home. Most military officers kept their distance from the Americans, although our Kagnev managers were in contact with the second division commander

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



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

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

This brings me to the closure of Kagnew and our expulsion from the country. It turned out that the relationship was now very bad and we were receiving reports that the Soviets and the Cubans were gaining influence in Addis and that they were prodding the Ethiopians to change the relationship with the United States because the Americans were unreliable. Our consul general, Bob Slutz had long planned a trip to Europe for R&R. He departed on a Friday morning. I remember because it was the Saturday afternoon that we learned of the expulsion order. We had just come back from playing volleyball over at Kagnew when I got a call from Addis saying that they had just received a diplomatic note saying that five U.S. activities in Ethiopia were to come to cease operations and depart the country in four days. They included Kagnew and the consulate general in Asmara. Also it was the U.S. military mission, the DAO and a naval medical experiment facility. Those three were in Addis. We were to make plans right away to how we would carry out the closeout. I said, all well and good you in Addis, you can move around without a curfew. We were facing in one hour's time a curfew that's worth your life to violate. I got on the phone with the Kagnew navy commander, and the ranking leader of the contractors,

and we started our planning. The next day was Sunday. Of course they the expulsion order on a Saturday because they knew Sunday was a non-functioning day and it would make things that much more difficult for us. The expulsion was an extraordinary exercise that ended up lasting six days. We got a two-day extension on the third day. I was the Chargé. The thought of getting Bob Slutz, the CG, back quickly vanished when they figured they couldn't get him back in any reasonable period of time. So they had to count on me, an FSO-3, to manage the evacuation. It turned out to be just constant chaos. I remember the first night we had all these plans by phone and radio, constantly calculating what we would need to do, what the phases would be, what we needed to get out and how we would get the people out. I got two hours of sleep that first night. On Sunday we started to get things together and immediately found that we had two Americans down in Massawa on R&R. The two liaison guys had been transferred out; but Kagnew folks still went on R&R down there. I went to the new martial law administrator and asked his help in getting these people out. He immediately saw an opportunity to essentially he them hostage to be sure that we behaved ourselves and followed their orders. Unfortunately, at the first facility that we started to shut down things went awry. The Ethiopian guards, who were supposed to protect us, now turned against our people and came onto the compound. They went into the buildings and prevented them from destroying the classified equipment, and there was a confrontation. The men at the site foolishly tried to sneak out some firearms in the trunk of a car, and they were caught at it. That tore it. The Ethiopians said we could no longer go back to this compound. Well, we had a lot of classified equipment still there. We communicated the situation to Washington in a flash message because American lives are at risk. The Navy said we had to destroy this communications equipment that is very sensitive, but they had no suggestions as how to do so. So, on Monday we started negotiations with the Ethiopian authorities. I had taken a course on emergency evacuation several months before, and this was one of the times when training actually served some benefit in the course of this negotiation. In the negotiating course we were told that every detail is important. The first thing you want to figure out is what should be the physical location of the talks. You want to take the opposite sides of the table and put them at the greatest disadvantage that you can. Things like having the sun shine in their eyes. Also, they said, if you know the size of the other delegation provide one less chair than that number so they are scrambling around for a chair and it puts them at a disadvantage. So, I dredged up all the things that I had learned in this course, which at the time thinking I thought was kind of silly.

The Ethiopian delegation was all senior military officers and there was the pre-planned scramble for seating. I was able to lay out for them the issues that we absolutely had to have, and one of them was access back to this facility. Among other points, I asserted the that we were immune from search. They countered that everybody's baggage would have to be searched. We went back and forth on this point. Just to give you an idea of this issue, at the consulate we had something like 30 or more firearms. We had perhaps seven carbines left over from when Kagnew was a bigger operation. Our local Ethiopian guards were paid off and told to leave the compound. .So, in the dead of night, I had our marines, smash all these weapons into pieces and threw them down the defunct well. We didn't want to turn weapons over to the Ethiopians. They did insist that we turn over the 45 automatics from our contract guards. The marines had several Uzis, shotguns and their side arms and we just simply weren't going to turn them over. We had seven classified communications machines at the consulate. We immediately destroyed five of them along with all of the classified material in the consulate. We kept two machines operating, and

one principal and one backup. Throughout the negotiation, I sent messages to Addis and Washington and asked that they squeeze the Ethiopians because they are the host of the Organization of African Unity. We had friends among the African delegations, and I wanted the U.S. to go to the government in Addis and demand that they not search our materials. The argument was Ethiopia cannot be the host of the OAU and yet treat consular officials without regard for internationally recognized privileges and immunities. The embassy did prevail upon the authorities, and after awhile the Ethiopians relented. They let us go back to the abandoned facility and agreed that they would not inspect our effects. Before we went back to the site we worked out a destruction plan in advance. First, we decided the essential equipment that we had to destroy, and then a strategy to do so while the Ethiopians weren't paying attention. We decided to have our people carry clipboards as if they were inventorying everything. When the guards got bored with following them around, then they would actually remove what they had to destroy. Things worked out remarkably as we had planned. Those pieces they couldn't disable they destroyed by putting them in a drainage sump with an automatic pump. They would detach as much of the components from the circuit boards as possible and put the pieces in this sump. Whenever anyone put their hand in the sump, the pump would automatically roar into action which would make people disinclined to probe into the sump. They were able to take every element out of it that was classified and needed to be destroyed.

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

all working together and to prevent our people from doing stupid things. One of our contractors who was packing out his household effects at his villa downtown had too much to drink and he started throwing his clothes and possessions over the wall. This created a disturbance. Of course the police arrived and threatened his arrest. This is just what we didn't need. This fellow was sent out on the first plane.

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

In terms of executing our evacuation, I think we all did an excellent job. My only regret was not packing up the CG's silverware, but I did make the Ethiopians sign for the compound. On the very last day, it was a Friday, I made out a receipt for the Consulate and our property. The last C-141 was to take us out that early afternoon. I organized a ceremony formally closing the consulate with our heads up. We had three marines left, and they were in their dress uniforms. We ceremonially lowered the flag. All the FSNs were there, we played the national anthem on a tape recorder. The marines lowered the flag, folded it and they handed it to me and I marched out with it. We then got into a convoy joining the last people from Kagnev and drove down the main

streets. People lined the streets to see the Americans leave. Some people were in tears to see the Americans go. In part, they were concerned for themselves, but also, they were sorry to see the end of that relationship which had been a very good one for both sides. We headed to the airport and we said tearful goodbyes to our FSNs on the tarmac, and wishing them the best. We got on the plane and taxied to takeoff. When we were wheels up, we all had a great sense of relief. In that six days of the evacuation I'd probably had a total of ten or 12 hours of sleep. When the plane lifted off there was a great cheer from all the people on board. Off we went to Athens. My one regret was that my wife at this point was assigned in Nairobi. After a few weeks in Athens for debriefings with the embassy and talking to people who came out from DOD, I wanted to try return to the U.S. via Nairobi to see my wife, as we had been married for just six months. Unfortunately, any flight going from Athens to Nairobi went through Addis. So I asked the embassy if they would see if I could get an Ethiopian transit visa. I found out through this effort that I had been PNG'd. I was not allowed even to transit Addis. So, I didn't get to see my wife for another five months. Anyway, I received a presidential letter of commendation and a superior honor award and other recognition. I sent out a final telegram from Asmara explaining what we had done, how our group had operated superbly as a team, and of course, praise for all the help that they'd received from all American agencies. I tried to make our evacuation an exercise we could take some pride in doing professionally and with dignity. I had served in Vietnam and the departure of Americans from Saigon was, I thought, disgraceful, and I just wanted to make sure that we weren't being driven out with our tails between our legs. So we made a proper show of it. Everybody seemed to appreciate the effort that we had made in that regard.

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

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

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

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

**CYNTHIA S. PERRY**  
**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Addis Ababa (1976-1978)**

*Ambassador Cynthia S. Perry was born in Indiana in 1928. She received her bachelor's degree from Texas Southern University and her doctoral degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Her career has included positions in Kenya, Ethiopia and ambassadorships to Sierra Leone and Burundi. Ambassador Perry was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 1999.*

*Q: What about Ethiopia? You were working there at a time when Haile Selassie was emperor, or at least towards the end of his time? He had been there since 1913. What was your impression of Ethiopia at the time, particularly in contrast to Kenya.*

PERRY: Ethiopia was beautiful, is still beautiful. During those days, it was peaceful and tranquil and I had little inkling of the undercurrents which later surfaced in the most devastating way. The city of Addis Ababa was well laid out; there was a lot of poverty, lots of beggars, in the midst of great privilege enjoyed by a few. I knew there was dissent, but it didn't show. It was a society full of tradition, history, pride and respect. When the Emperor would ride down the streets in his chariot drawn by his beautiful white horses, it was amazing-- the people would fall on their faces as he passed, even those who were well educated. They had such respect and fear of the Emperor. He was gone when I went back to work there from 1976-78 at the Economic Commission for Africa and things were vastly different, with deadly changes rapidly occurring under the Dergue - many being killed on the streets. But, again I had the opportunity to know the Ethiopian people and I developed a sense of family and kinship with them. In later years, when my son Mark grew to be a man, he married an Ethiopian girl, whom we dearly love.

As you can see, most of the carpets and artifacts I have in this house are from Ethiopia, and I have gathered them over many years of travel to Ethiopia. I was there when the Russians and Cubans came. I remember so clearly going into the grocery store where I had always traded and the owner, I think he was Greek, said, "You know the difference between the Americans and the Russians? Five Russians will come in to shop and leave with one bag of groceries; one American will come in and buy five bags." The Americans wherever they had gone in the world, have left a lot, have supported the families of their domestic staffs with food and schooling, and had also helped them to leave the country when things got bad. Regardless which country I have been in, it has been true. The French don't actually leave; they will stay there. The English take everything with them when they go, leaving nothing.

*Q: The Russians, too?*

PERRY: Development was not a part of their presence or foreign assistance. They brought nothing in, so it wasn't necessary to take it out.

*Q: How did you find working in Ethiopia with the Mengistu regime which was about as bad as they come? Were you able to do much?*

PERRY: I didn't have to because I was with the UN. I worked within the UN system, and the system negotiated with the Mengistu Government. I did very little with government officials and it was seldom necessary to visit government offices. Everything was very restrained and there was an element of fear because you didn't know what might happen. We were warned not to travel around at night, and certainly not to be out after curfew. A U.N. colleague from Benin, a young man very involved in courting the beautiful Ethiopian women, ignored the warning. Trying to beat the curfew, he turned on the wrong street. The soldiers shot through the roof of the car, severely injuring him for life. Even with U.N. plates on your car, you could not be safe. They used to stop me in my car even though I had UN plates on it, and even though I spoke some Amharic, I pretended not to understand them. I'd try to be as American as I could possibly be to

get away from them. Of all the countries that I worked in I still think Ethiopia is by far the one that I respect the most.

*Q: Were you keeping your political credentials up?*

PERRY: Yes it was in my mind at all times. This is what I need to know. I need to know the African languages, I need to know how these governments work. I need to know how to be sensitive to what they are saying and to analyze their meanings. All of these things I was thinking about not as a job, but as ways to get to know the people and the government, and from my part, to establish trust, how to know their problems, how best to know their needs. In mixing with American officials in these countries, I learned about American foreign policy and America's goals for that country. My thinking included questions on my country's interests and programs and how I could best serve my government while keeping the needs of the people in mind. These thoughts were always foremost in my mind.

**PRINCETON LYMAN**  
**USAID Mission Director**  
**Addis Ababa (1976-1978)**

*Ambassador Princeton Lyman was born and raised in San Francisco. He was educated at Stanford University, University of California and Harvard University. In 1961 he joined the Agency for International Development (AID), where he served as Program Director in Korea and Ethiopia. In his long and distinguished career, Ambassador Lyman held a number of high positions at AID Headquarters in Washington, D.C. as well as with The Department of State. After serving as Ambassador to Nigeria and later to South Africa, Ambassador Lyman was Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations from 1996 to 1998. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.*

*Q: We are now discussing a period which was the height of the Cold War. Did that have any influence on our Sahel rescue program?*

LYMAN: Not at that time. Later when I became the AID director in Ethiopia, this factor became the over-riding consideration. The Cold War and our concern for communist penetration of the continent played a major role in such programs as those we carried out in Angola and on the Horn. But it didn't effect our programs where the possibility of communism was so remote.

*Q: Did you run into a lot of problems as you tried to organize the Sahel program?*

LYMAN: We had a lot of organizational problems inside AID. Finally, we organized a separate Sahel office. A lot of resources became concentrated in that office. In that regard, Congress eventually appropriated a specific amount for the Sahel programs – a move which ran into a lot of opposition in the rest of the Africa Bureau. That eliminated the flexibility of moving money

from the Sahel to other programs in Africa. I myself had some reservations about this Congressional initiative which lasted for several years.

For Congressmen who opposed the Vietnam war and who didn't like the use of AID resources to support our efforts there, the Sahel crisis represented to them a golden opportunity to authorize an assistance program for something they always thought aid was for. The Sahel had no strategic significance for the U.S. Our interests were essentially humanitarian. That made it a perfect area for a U.S. assistance effort in the eyes of the Congressmen. Those Congressmen therefore loved the Sahel program. So we had a curious situation where an area where we had no strategic interest was popular with the anti-Vietnam crowd. Later on, of course, people wondered why we were dumping all this money into an area of no strategic interest.

*Q: What did you do with the media?*

LYMAN: We did a lot of work with the media. That is how I became good friends with David Ottaway of the Washington Post — we traveled through Mauritania together. The media was initially very critical of our response to the crisis – we were accused of not doing enough. But we worked with them so that they would have a better understanding of what we were doing.

*Q: Beyond the Sahel, what other areas were you concerned with?*

LYMAN: I did a lot of work on the Horn of Africa. Eventually, in 1976, I became the mission director in Ethiopia. At the time, we were not very active in southern Africa because South Africa was viewed as a pariah state; we did have programs in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland largely devoted to training. We had a major program to provide Americans to work in those governments while their bureaucrats came to the U.S. for training. It was a rather extraordinary effort. We actually had quite a few American citizens working for these foreign governments in southern Africa. Eventually these efforts were phased out as these countries acquired their own well trained bureaucratic cadre. But for a while, it was a very large program.

*Q: What was the situation on the Horn of Africa during this period and what were we doing?*

LYMAN: In the early 1970s, the Soviets were deeply involved in Somalia. Our ally in the region was Ethiopia. We had a sizeable aid program there, but we were struggling with the Ethiopian government because we felt that land reform was essential for economic development. Ethiopia had a very feudal system with a lot of absentee landlords. The Swedes were very active in Ethiopia working very hard on this land ownership issue. The emperor and his advisors resisted changes in land ownership. So we had a large aid program, but it was always surrounded by tensions, particularly on the land issue. We were caught in the familiar dilemma of how far to push to a valuable ally in the region.

In 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by a Marxist-oriented military group. After that, our relations steadily deteriorated. During my tour there, it got even worst. This change in regimes forced the Soviets to make a choice between Ethiopia and Somalia who were at war with each other during most of this period. They finally chose Ethiopia and abandoned Somalia. The Soviets poured a lot of resources into Ethiopia. This Soviet reversal caused a response from the



U.S.; we allied ourselves with Somalia. The whole history of the Horn during the 1970s and 1980s was very much entangled with the Cold War.

Sudan at the time was sort of an ally of ours. Nimeiri was the president. He had just ended the civil war in the south which gave him a reputation of being a relatively good leader. We had a fair sized aid program in the Sudan which was also a part of our foreign policy strategy.

*Q: What was the situation with our Kagnew situation? [The U.S. had a large military base and communications center at Kagnew in northern Ethiopia, an area that is today the independent country of Eritrea.]*

LYMAN: It was a very dicey situation. In 1977, the Ethiopians ordered all our military to leave the country. They gave us four days to leave. The embassy pleaded for more time, but it didn't get anywhere. The U.S. military sent in all sorts of air transport which helped getting our people out within the four days. Before the military left, it destroyed all sensitive documents and equipment; that was the end of the Kagnew station and U.S. military presence in the region. Ironically and fortunately, this happened at a time when Kagnew was becoming less significant. It had been a very important communications facility, but with the advent of satellites, ground stations were becoming less important.

*Q: What happened to our aid programs after the change in government in Ethiopia?*

LYMAN: We continued our program in Ethiopia but at a decelerating rate. By the time, I got there in 1976, our program was focused almost entirely on drought and drought relief – purely humanitarian. When I suggested that we start a rural road building project, it was vetoed by the Congress. There was a lot of suspicion in the Ethiopian government about our motives and that too limited us to drought relief. This drought had started in 1974, which was covered up by Haile Selassie for a long time. A lot of people died. When the world began to hear about this drought, it attracted a lot of media attention and enabled us to start our drought relief efforts. In fact, the drought and the lack of government action on it was one of the reasons the military coup was successful.

We established an institutional relationship with the leader of the Ethiopian drought relief program. That continued even after the coup with its anti-American bias.

*Q: What was our response to the military coup?*

LYMAN: We tried to figure out what to do. We wanted to hold on to pieces of our program. For example, we had a large program at the university which we wanted to continue. But that gradually deteriorated. We tried to continue some of our agricultural programs and that effort also deteriorated. We faced not only an anti-American regime, but the domestic U.S. support for our Ethiopian program also diminished considerably. There was a lot of anger about what had happened during the coup and immediately thereafter. Many members of the emperor's family were executed; others were held in captivity for many years. My predecessor in Ethiopia became very much anti-regime. He knew a lot of the people who were executed and so he was not a very strong proponent for an aid program in Ethiopia.

We did send out feelers to the military government in Addis Ababa. We tried to find out what the limits of the regime's tolerance was. But as I said, there was considerable negative feeling in the U.S. against the new regime and that also limited our flexibility. Some people pointed out that the new regime was conducting a land reform program which we had pushed for many years. It was a sweeping reform program using university students to mobilize the peasants. But this program soon turned sour. It became a violent and arbitrary program with political control exerted over the peasantry, and the land collectivized rather than turned over to the peasantry. Thus Americans who had been in Ethiopia before, during and after the regime transition turned strongly against our further involvement in that country. I couldn't even encourage my predecessor to think constructively because he was so negative towards this new regime.

*Q: What about Somalia?*

LYMAN: Our efforts were very much for political reasons. It was primarily in response to the Soviet moves in the Horn. That program was also very much drought relief oriented. We cooperated with Siad Barre because the Soviets had left him high and dry. We saw Somalia as our new base to combat the Soviets in the Horn. It was somewhat awkward because later when a full scale war between Ethiopia and Somalia broke out, we could not endorse Somalia's efforts to seize Ethiopian territory, but did continue our assistance programs in Somalia. It was not much of a program; it was there primarily for political reasons.

*Q: In general, did AF feel that it could do something permanent to relieve natural disasters?*

LYMAN: I think there was a very strong feeling in the Sahel group that there were some exciting things that could be done to arrest these processes. We commissioned a large research project – \$1 Million – with MIT to look at alternatives including irrigation and other preventative measures. People were very positive about things that could be done. There were a lot of meetings to discuss remedies; it was a very activist period.

As far as Ethiopia was concerned, the consensus was that the emperor and his cronies were the problem. If land reform were instituted, then it was felt that the situation could be changed, even though the land did not produce much.

Nigeria was a different situation. There we had one of largest programs in the world beginning in the 1960s. But when oil was discovered in the early 1970s, we phased out our program. When I was later working on Nigeria, the residual projects were primarily training and some educational projects. I think our rapid phase out turned out to be a mistake because the Nigerians essentially squandered their resources. Oil prices were high; they did not join the oil boycott against the U.S. in the 1970s, but the Nigerian government was so full of corruption that by the 1980s the country was littered with projects started but never completed. The Nigerians were more interested in the pay-offs than they were in the projects; the "earnings" were then salted away in overseas accounts. It was a great waste, which was exacerbated by the fall in oil prices in the 1980s leaving Nigeria in a state of ruin. The only encouraging aspect, which was short lived, was that in 1979 the Nigerians held an election and returned to civilian rule. That raised some hopes

for improvement in the economic situation; they were also dashed. The military returned to powering 1983.

*Q: In 1976, you went to Ethiopia. Why?*

LYMAN: I was asked whether I would like to become the mission director there. I had been in Washington a long time and the AID personnel people were raising their eyebrows at the length of my Washington tour. I agreed with that. Also my wife had finished her work for an M.A. So the time seemed propitious. I looked on the assignment as a challenge. I found Ethiopia a fascinating place. It had a lot of issues: land reform, social pressures, etc. It just fit my agenda. Also we still had hopes of doing business with the government.

When I went out, I was encouraged by AID to see if there were areas besides the drought relief that we could cooperate on with the government. I took with me a very good team and we tried very hard to sell a range of programs to the Ethiopians. We were not successful, but that had been our mandate which I took on as a very interesting challenge.

*Q: You were in Ethiopia from 1976 to 1978. What was the situation when you first arrived?*

LYMAN: It was an interesting time. We did not have an ambassador; the president had nominated someone whom the Senate refused to confirm. He was very controversial for what he had done in Southeast Asia. So for my entire tour, I did not have an ambassador. The chargé – Art Tienken – was very, very good. Art realized after a while that he was just not holding the fort, but in fact was there as the head man for a long period. He did a super job. He was low key and understood the political situation thoroughly.

At the senior levels of the government – Mengistu and his cohorts (the Dergue) – were moving up, killing their way to the top. It was a mysterious group; there was no public knowledge of who belonged to that group. Right after the 1974 coup, the men at the top were not that radical. Some even wanted to settle the war with Eritrea which had been draining the country of valuable resources for many years. Mengistu used the Eritrea issue to rise to the top. He accused his opponents of trying to sell out Ethiopia. Then he killed them – one after another. He literally shot his way to the top in 1976-77 period. So we lost the people we thought we might be able to work with. What we eventually ended up with was a rabid anti-American regime.

As a result, little by little, we had to withdraw much of our presence. For example, we had a military assistance program; it ended in 1977 when Mengistu took over. Cyrus Vance was under great pressure from the Congress to terminate our assistance to Ethiopia. There was a wonderful moment in a public hearing when Senator Inouye asked Vance if the military assistance program to Ethiopia had been terminated. Vance said that that decision had been taken. Then Inouye asked Vance whether the Administration has informed the Ethiopians. The answer was “no”. Then Inouye said: “Well, you have now!”

That termination became very controversial because, as in the case of Pakistan, the host government had put up a down payment on some military equipment, which we did not deliver but didn't return the money. Art was trying to balance all of these pressures, but slowly he began

to realize that the Mengistu government was not one that we could work with, certainly not on security issues, but also on political ones.

On the other hand, there were elements in the government that we knew well. I don't know what the CIA was doing at the time, but there was suspicion in the American community that the agency had continued its ties to the Ethiopian security agencies and might even have been supplying them with military equipment. I don't know whether that was true, but that was the sentiment in our community.

For my part, we found that there a lot of ministers who were very sympathetic and who wanted to work with us. However, they had no more influence with the Dergue than we did; there was so much suspicion of the U.S. that the leaders would not consider any new projects. The press reflected the leadership's view of the U.S.; it provided a drumbeat every day of anti-American sentiments.

*Q: Where did this sentiment come from?*

LYMAN: I don't really know. How can a country which has had so much western presence develop a core group of Marxists and anti-Americans? In part, I think it was the university. Sometime, in the 1960s, someone decided that it would be good if the military were exposed to higher education. So some military officers went to Addis Ababa University. Unfortunately, much of the faculty was very radical – including some American radicals. They taught a lot of Marxist theory and propaganda, to which the military was exposed. So that was one reason.

The other reason was that the ideology of the revolution was against the emperor. He represented feudalism and all old fashioned, passé views. The antidote was radicalism – mobilize the peasantry, break down the feudal hierarchies, destroy the royal family and the upper classes. Marxism fit into that view well. So the West was tainted by its relationship with the emperor which served the Dergue well. It was a further excuse to eliminate their opponents.

*Q: I know that the emperor sent many students to communist countries? The ones I met were turned off by their contact with Marxism. How did you find it?*

LYMAN: The same way. I experienced elsewhere that Africans who studied in the Soviet Union came back very negative. I think the military was more influenced by what they learned outside the communist bloc. They were interested in their own power-grabbing. The alliance with the Soviet Union proved to be very profitable; much military hardware poured in – far more than we were ever willing to do. Furthermore, the Soviets were willing to back the nonsensical war against Eritrea. So the Dergue was opportunistic as well as ideological.

While we were there, a very strange split occurred. In the country, there was a very, very radical group. It thought that the revolution had become too military. They were ideologues who had studied in Europe. When they returned they became the ideological gurus. They became disillusioned because they found Mengistu was first and foremost a military dictator. He didn't understand the purity of the ideology. So these people formed an left opposition and started shooting ministers on street corners, etc. This situation ushered in what was called, "The Red

Terror.” The government went into homes, arrested or shot suspected dissidents, while the leftist rebels continued their killing.

There was a period when we had a 6 p.m. curfew. We heard shooting every night because the conflict between Mengistu and the ideological left was intensifying. It was a very violent period. Yet we had a well functioning drought relief program. I had good relations with the leaders of Ethiopia’s drought relief agency and with a number of ministers – almost all of whom defected eventually. I have seen them in Washington over many years. They were decent people trying to do the right thing, who eventually just gave up. The situation became intolerable for them. In fact, the Dergue was very suspicious of the permanent bureaucracy. The internal situation and the war with Eritrea began to drain resources, both human and capital.

Then there was a legislative issue we could not solve. The issue was the compensation that was given (or more exact, not given) for expropriated property. By congressional mandate, this dispute put a stop to all our programs except emergency relief. Eventually, this issue was resolved, but it took a long, long time.

I tried to develop two regular assistance projects – one in agriculture, which the Ethiopian leadership vetoed, and a rural program that Congress turned down. So while I was there, although we recommended a couple of new initiatives, our main effort was drought relief. I should note that under drought relief, we actually did some agricultural development projects with the Ethiopian authorities.

Shortly after the Dergue ordered the American military to leave in 1977, the Ethiopians ordered half of the embassy and USIA staffs to leave. There is always some humor in these situations. USIA had a very small movie program which allowed Ethiopians to see American movies. The last movie they showed before the “leave order” came down was The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming. So half of the embassy and the USIA was ordered to leave, but not the AID mission. Art Tienken said: “You guys must be wearing the white hats.” This was a traumatic moment for the American community. The people who were ordered out were only given a few days to depart. The Navy medical research program had to be closed down completely. So we were all very demoralized. USIA in fact also closed down leaving a small truncated embassy and the AID staff. Later in 1978, I left.

*Q: Why did the Ethiopians, with all their Soviet assistance, do so poorly against the Eritreans?*

LYMAN: The Eritreans were tough; they were highly motivated and disciplined. The Ethiopians thought they could just outnumber their enemy. They would throw a whole host of peasant soldiers against the Eritreans, who would mow them down. The Ethiopians did control the major cities, like Asmara, but the Eritreans ruled over the rest of the land and conducted a classic guerrilla war. They controlled the country-side and hampered all Ethiopian efforts. Every time the Ethiopians tried a frontal assault, the Eritreans would just shoot them down from their well hidden positions. The Eritreans had major support bases in the Sudan. There were a lot of refugees in camps there which served as a recruitment base and as back up facilities for the soldiers. So the Eritreans could always move back into the Sudan to regroup and then return to the front. Furthermore, Mengistu had other fronts to defend; there was considerable tension with

Somalia. He threw considerable manpower and resources into these wars, but he did not really succeed in winning any of them.

*Q: How was the drought relief delivered in light of the transportation problems in Ethiopia?*

LYMAN: It was very difficult. We had to truck the goods as far as the roads would let us and then people had to come down the mountains, get the food and carry it back. We didn't want to establish drought relief camps because that would make the population entirely dependent on relief. So we tried to steer away from those as much as possible which meant that people did have come a good distance to pick up the food stuff. There was no way to distribute it to all the villages because many of them were unreachable except by helicopter.

This relief effort was seen as a temporary measure. Hopefully, the rains would return allowing the continuation of the self-help efforts by the villagers. When I was there, there was not only a drought, but also an outbreak of a terrible disease called ergotism. That came from a fungus found in grain, which we in Europe and the U.S. guard against very thoroughly. In the Middle Ages, it was believed that it caused such things as "Saint Vitas Dance"; it effects the human circulatory system and leads to auto-amputation because the blood circulation ceases. It was striking a lot of Ethiopians way up in the mountains. In fact, this was an area which I had not been allowed to visit – the government would not let us go there. But when the disease struck, I was allowed to go to the area – driving with my team as far as we could and then helicoptering the rest of the way. We brought an expert on this disease – some fellow from Oregon. He was just marvelous; he discovered the source of the disease – in some of the grains that people were eating. Then the Ethiopians launched a big education program which tried to teach the villagers which grains should not be eaten.

When the rains did come, people would return to their long standing food production efforts. But I think since food delivery was so difficult, drought relief was not a long term solution.

*Q: Did you have any problems with the local warlords who in other places would control the food distribution?*

LYMAN: There was relatively little of that. We had AID inspectors looking at our programs, accounting for our resources – vehicles, etc. There was no sign of theft. Later, in 1980s, the situation did change for the worst. In that drought, there was considerable diversion of assistance – much to the Ethiopian military – and there was considerable corruption. We were very fortunate because in my time there was still a revolutionary ethic which put great emphasis on the absence of corruption. That lasted until the early 1980s and then it began to fray. So we didn't have much corruption.

*Q: What about the Soviet efforts?*

LYMAN: The Soviets and the Cubans were steadily increasing their presence. The Soviets were mostly military men who were providing training. The Cubans were into ideological training. We saw that they would take young children – preschoolers and higher – to go through an ideological training program. We could see these kids running down a road chanting ideological

propaganda, all generated by the Cuban teachers. In the American School, the Ethiopian kids also attended this Cuban brain-washing program. When they returned, they exhibited considerable distrust which our children felt. That was an upsetting experience.

*Q: So you really were in the middle of the Cold War.*

LYMAN: Absolutely. We had no contact with the Soviets and none with the Cubans except when we saw them running down the streets. It was a very difficult period for U.S.-Ethiopia relations. It was hard for the embassy to do its job, even though it was staffed with good people.

*Q: Were you under pressure to close the AID mission?*

LYMAN: That in fact happened right after I left. My successor closed the program. The relations had reached the point where we decided that our investment was not worthwhile. When I was there, there was still some hope, based on the beneficial results of the drought relief program, that the right people in the government might become amenable to expanding the assistance program. But more and more of the people we worked with defected to be succeeded by people who looked at us with great suspicion. It eventually became impossible to conduct any kind of program. Our decision was discouraging to some Ethiopians as well as to ourselves.

*Q: How was it to live in Ethiopia in the late 1970s?*

LYMAN: My wife and our three children were there with me. The kids attended the American School – one in first grade, one in ninth grade and one in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Later on, I understood that their Ethiopian experiences had a greater impact on them than I realized at the time. I recognized it when I read my daughter's essay – for her college application – about the violence that she saw and heard all around her in Addis Ababa and what happened to her good friends after they participated in the Cubans' ideological training. It was quite an experience for the kids. On the other hand, their life was somewhat isolated. The American school did have to close on a couple of occasions because of the violence – or threat thereof. And that made an impression. But they also went horse-back riding, etc. There were certain areas outside of the city which were safe to visit. So they did get a chance to get out of town. But it is still was a highly restricted experience because there were a lot of places which we could not visit. One of my daughters loved her time there, her friends in the school, etc.; one of my other daughters could not wait to get out; and the youngest daughter didn't really care one way or another.

My wife taught at the American School. She went through one very scary period. The emperor had given the school his approval and had said that it could teach whatever it wanted. The new government, being suspicious of any American tainted institution, sent representatives one day to inform the teachers that they had to go to a police station to get a work permit. The principal of the school became concerned for his teachers. He asked those teachers who were spouses of American officials – and who thus had diplomatic passports – to be the first to go to the station. My wife went down and said that it was the scariest experience of her life. She was questioned repeatedly and finally was asked by a military man to sign a statement written in Amharic. She and the other teachers refused. They were asked whether they had told the truth. They said they had, but that they couldn't read the document that they were supposed to sign. Under the

circumstances, they would not sign something they didn't understand. The situation got very tense. Finally our consul general arrived and he got them out of the station. But my wife said that it was a very scary situation. The school stayed open, but it was understood that it was being watched which made everybody uneasy and worried.

Q: *So you left Ethiopia in 1978.*

**RICHARD C. MATHERON**  
**Chargé d'Affaires**  
**Addis Ababa (1977-1978)**

*Richard C. Matheron was born in California in 1927. He received his bachelor's degree at University of California in Berkley during 1948. His career has included positions in Cameroon, Zaire, Ethiopia, and ambassadorship to Swaziland. Ambassador Matheron was interviewed by Lee Cottman in Mark 1989.*

Q: *To keep the discussion on Africa, perhaps we could march along to somewhere almost a dozen years later, when you became chargé d'affaires to Ethiopia. You were chargé d'affaires in Addis Ababa. That was 1977-78. Why did we not have a U.S. ambassador assigned to post then? Had we terminated development aid, for instance, at that point?*

MATHERON: You recall that the Ethiopian revolution took place in 1974, and Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown and kept in prison, and he died a year later. Nobody to this day is sure exactly how he died.

1974 was a period where America's focus was not on foreign affairs so much as the Watergate problem. Ethiopia didn't have very high priority in the administration's considerations. The previous ambassador had left, and the administration really went for many, many months before even thinking about appointing a new ambassador.

At that time, the first person then named was Ambassador Godley, the same Godley who had been on my panel years before. He had, just previous to this nomination, been ambassador to Laos. He had also been named Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, but was turned down by the Senate. I think his nomination was withdrawn, but it was obvious that he was not going to get the East Asian position, because people in Congress were unhappy with the role that he had played in Laos, a very activist role, quite similar, or even more, than the activist role that he had been when I knew him as ambassador to the Congo.

Although the Ethiopian Government had originally given agrément, there was an article in one of the Washington newspapers where somebody referred to him as "the butcher of Laos." The Ethiopians saw this and asked us to withdraw his assignment to Ethiopia. This did not make the Department very happy. They thought that we were naming a good man and the Ethiopians were being too radical in turning him down.



Then in 1977, at the beginning of the war between Ethiopia and Somalia, all of a sudden the Ethiopians closed down our mission in Asmara, up in Eritrea, where we had had a very important communications station and a big consulate staff, and they also closed our military mission and also picked off USIS at the time and reduced the size of the embassy, primarily because they interpreted our actions as being hostile because we had not come to their assistance. Despite the fact that they were quite radical, they used to make the point then, and to me afterwards, that Ethiopia was a natural, historic ally of the United States. When Somalia had invaded, we had not helped Ethiopia to defend itself, and if we were not going to help Ethiopia defend itself, then get out. Well, this was not very conducive to improving our relations, so we still did not name an ambassador.

In 1978, it was decided that there must be some way to improve relations, and a special mission came out from Washington, headed by David Aaron, with Ambassador Bill Harrop, who discussed the state of relations with Ethiopia. Concurrently, at the same time, we had proposed Fred Chapin as ambassador to Ethiopia as a sign that we hoped to improve relations, but the Ethiopians dragged their feet for weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks before granting agrément to Chapin. We said, "If you don't grant agrément within a few days, we're going to withdraw the nomination." At that point I was called in and told, yes, they would grant agrément to him. So Ambassador Chapin arrived in July of 1978.

But the period when I was there, from October of 1977, was referred to as the period of "Red Terror" in Addis. There were thousands of people killed by one leftist group fighting against another. It was probably one of the grimmest periods of my whole career, although we felt relatively safe within the embassy compound. Addis was one of the few capital cities in Africa where all of the major embassies had compounds. In Addis these dated back before the turn of the century, when Menelik had given grants of land to foreign governments on the edge of the city, mainly to help protect him from feudal lords who he was afraid might come in. Although we felt that we were not personally the targets of animosity, that our lives were not really in danger, we still went to bed every night to the sound of machine gun fire just a few hundred yards away, where the government was really killing people who were accused of not being 100% loyal, even anybody having a one-dollar bill.

Previous to 1974, American dollars circulated in Ethiopia, much as they do in Liberia and in Panama, as normal currency. So a lot of people had American currency from way before. Anybody discovered with any American currency was summarily shot on the spot by the "Kebeles," and it was a very grim period.

*Q: Did not a lot of people, to escape the indiscriminate killings, flee to the Sudan during that period, also?*

MATHERON: Yes, exactly. From then and continuing on, but the situation in Sudan was bad. It was really a very brutal period.

*Q: I read in the history of that era whereby at one point the Israeli foreign minister had disposed selling arms to the Ethiopians to repel the Somalia-backed invasion, while Ethiopia, at the same*

*time, denounced the U.S. and other nations for perhaps backing and aiding Somalia. Of course, today that would be a little bit strange that our ally in the Middle East would be supporting one side, and we were supporting the other. Maybe that's strange; I don't know. How do you feel about that?*

MATHERON: I don't have proof of that, but I suspect that it was correct. Although the Ethiopians did not have formal diplomatic relations with Israel, they had informal relations. Ethiopia, despite the fact that it was a Marxist country, still saw itself as the old Christian Ethiopian empire surrounded by Islam. There's always been sort of a natural alliance between Ethiopia and Israel, because if you remember, even the Ethiopian monarchy traced its origins back to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. There's much more of a special relationship between Ethiopia and Israel that dates back so many hundreds of years.

*Q: It's an interesting point in history, that connection.*

MATHERON: Very interesting.

Discussing American aid at that time, we could provide relief assistance to Ethiopia. While I was there, we invoked the Hickenlooper Amendment on regular development assistance, because Ethiopia had failed to show movement towards reimbursing the companies that had been nationalized shortly after the beginning of the revolution. Just a little show of good faith on their part would have been enough to keep us from invoking the Hickenlooper Amendment. It was the first time that Hickenlooper was invoked in the history of the amendment. But relations would warm up just a little bit, and then something would happen, and they would cool off. I must say that Washington, over the years, has become less and less tolerant of getting kicked in the mouth, in the rear, whatever it is.

I remember when Congressman Tsongas came out. He had been a Peace Corps volunteer there. I was with him at a ministers' meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The head of the Americas Department, who had studied in America, said, "You know, Congressman, we are poor and we are weak, but we are proud."

And Congressman Tsongas, much to his credit, said, "I know exactly what you mean. We are rich and we are strong, but we're proud, too." And they understood. You could talk about pride to the Ethiopians, and they understood that very well.

That was certainly a very exciting time in my career. At one point I take credit. ---We got word in the morning that they were going to break diplomatic relations in the afternoon. I sent a flash to Washington and told them what I proposed to say, because I was sure that Washington couldn't get a coordinated position back in time. I got an answer back within about half an hour, saying words to the effect, "Use your approach and good luck." I always felt that if you could present a position to Washington that didn't require a lot of coordinating between all of the agencies, which was based on a common-sense approach, you usually got the go-ahead.

So much has been talked about, whether diplomats are just messengers for Washington, or whether they actually have influence on diplomatic relations. I think a good diplomat can often

lead the superiors in Washington to come to a position much faster if he or she takes the lead. One of the sources of my personal pride was that relations were not broken at that time, and continued on. It's always been touch and go, but at least there was not a complete break that day.

**ELIZABETH RASPOLIC**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (1978-1980)**

*Elizabeth Raspolic worked for the Peace Corps in Pakistan, Thailand, and Tunisia before joining the Foreign Service in 1973. She served mainly as a consular officer in France, Korea, Ethiopia, and China. Ms. Raspolic was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.*

Q: *Your next post was Ethiopia. You went there when?*

RASPOLIC: July of 1978 to July of 1980.

Q: *You were essentially the consular officer there.*

RASPOLIC: Right. For one thing, I was the main consular officer. I had some help from a political officer who used to come in and help me with NIV interviews from time to time.

Q: *Could you describe the political situation in Ethiopia when you were there, and what you were doing?*

RASPOLIC: I got there toward the end of the Red and White terror. I must say the revolution had been three or four years beforehand. There had been sporadic uprisings since then. When I arrived, the first week that I was there, my predecessor was still in town, and so I was very graciously invited to all of his farewell parties.

I went to one downtown in an apartment building really about two blocks away from the building that I ultimately ended up living in, and it was a buffet. We were maybe on the third or fourth floor. We were all standing in line, waiting to serve ourselves at the buffet table, and there was gunfire out in the piazza, out on the square. The hostess dropped to the floor, crawled over to the French doors that opened onto this tiny little terrace, closed the French doors, turned around and urged her guests to fill their plates! (Laughs) I was sort of standing there thinking, "Oh, my God! What have I gotten myself into this time?"

I must say it all went uphill from there. It was relatively calm, although the Ethiopian public was generally very ill at ease and quite concerned about civil unrest.

It was the second country in a row where I had served where there was a curfew. We had curfew from midnight until 5:00. They were quite serious about it. In Korea, sometimes with diplomatic plates and smiling graciously at the guards, you could get by if you were 15 or 20 minutes late

getting home. Not in Addis. In Addis, they were serious about it, and they would start shooting. So you just simply left wherever you were at 11:30 to allow yourself time to get home in case you had a flat tire, which was also very common in Ethiopia. (Laughs)

We were not permitted to travel outside of Shoa Province, where Addis is, and I'm not sure, that might still be the case. The government explanation for this was that it was for our own safety, that they could not guarantee our safety if we went any further. I think in some instances, that might have been true, but in other instances, I think it was just more convenient for them.

The country is amazingly poor. I think to a certain extent they simply didn't want us to see what the conditions were in the countryside. Once during my second year there, the Minister of Foreign Affairs organized a trip only for diplomats to Lalibela, which is a city in the north. It's not exactly in the north, but it certainly is halfway north. It's a city well known for its churches carved from rock. It's absolutely beautiful. We went by jeep. It took us two, two and a half days to get there. We had to take all of our food and all of our water, even for the time that we were in Lalibela. The ministry sent a plane in to pick us up, and we were there for a couple of days and came back. It was fascinating, well worthwhile, lots of fun.

Consular work there was very, very interesting. Our staff at the embassy had been cut down considerably in 1974. USIS had been thrown out, the DAO [Defense Attaché's Office] had been thrown out. AID had been cut back tremendously. So I think with the Marine guard, there were only 30, 32 of us or so. First there was a chargé. I think we were between ambassadors. Then Ambassador Chapin came out. He left after I left, actually, but when he left, he was never replaced by another ambassador. There's still, to this day, only a chargé.

Officially the relations between the two countries were not terribly friendly and, in fact, at times became quite aggravated. But unofficially, the man on the street, people were extremely friendly. People were very supportive of the Americans.

*Q: What were your major jobs in the consular section?*

RASPOLIC: Visas were minimal. This was primarily due to the fact that most Ethiopian citizens did not have permission to travel. They could not get passports from the new regime, which ultimately was to my benefit, frankly, because it left me much more time to deal with ACS cases, and I had some humdingers of ACS cases.

*Q: Why would you have American Citizen Services cases?*

RASPOLIC: What I had was a very interesting kind of case. I had two main groups of American citizens still in country. I don't think I had more than 50 or 75 American citizens in the entire country. They were either missionaries who had been there for years and years and years, and certainly weren't going to let Lieutenant Colonel Haile Mariam Mengistu force them out. Until he wanted them out, they could stay. Some of them really were providing wonderful service. We had working missionaries. These were not people necessarily spending full time proselytizing; these were people who were working as physicians, as veterinarians, as teachers, what have you. They really performed some admirable services for the Ethiopia.

The others were much more of a problem to me, but a fascinating problem. They were generally American women who were married to Ethiopian citizens. Generally they all followed the same pattern. They had met their husbands while they were in the U.S., both attending universities together, fell in love, married, went back to Ethiopia, had lived there for X number of years, anywhere from five to 15 or so years. Now they wanted out. The husbands, generally, because they were foreign educated and well educated, had relatively responsible positions either in government offices or in private industry. The husbands couldn't get out, not if it was known that they wanted out. Their permission to travel would also be taken away. So invariably, what would happen is, particularly those who worked for the government, they would be sent abroad to attend a conference, and then they would skip, leaving the wife and children and the home in Ethiopia. The wife and children were documented as American citizens, but they could not get exit visas because the Ethiopian Government would not forgive the husband for having skipped.

So that's when the friendly consular officer would come in and say, "You can't do that. These people are American citizens." We would go round and round and round. I finally got it down to a science, and I sort of sent the informal word out to those who were still in country, saying, "If you're planning to do this, for God's sakes please come in and see me beforehand. We'll talk very low key, we'll talk elsewhere. I'll meet you for tea in the piazza. I don't care, but let me tell you what you must do before your husband leaves town, because we've got to try and play this as best we can to your benefit." And it worked out quite well. By the end of the second year, we had things moving rather freely.

What would happen is that in those cases where they hadn't come to see me, the husband would leave town, the wife would be there. In one instance, I remember the family had just a lovely, lovely home that they had built themselves, had an architect come in and design, well furnished. They had a very comfortable life. The wife wanted to leave. She wanted to sell the home, sell the furnishings, and leave. They would not let her sell the home, sell the furnishings. The Kebele, which was the local political action unit that covered that square mile or whatever, was confiscating all the contents of the house. The government would not let them transfer title on the house. They'd frozen the bank account. The government was claiming that the family had to pay the government the equivalent of the husband's salary for the entire year, because they would be losing the services of the husband. They would make up these things as the case progressed, all these obstacles.

I ended up going with the wife to each one of these checkpoints, primarily with Public Security, arguing the case, arguing on behalf of the woman, saying, "You can't do that. You can't do this. This woman has a brother-in-law here in town. She will transfer the house to the brother-in-law, not to the government. You have no right to come in and confiscate all the contents of the house. You have taken this women's personal belongings that she purchased. She was working also. She purchased half this stuff. She's still here. You have no right to confiscate her personal effects." We were going round and round and round.

Of course, they had every right to do whatever they wanted! We had no bilateral treaty with them. But I would go in and argue. So we would get into some wild discussions.

I had one very interesting case, the daughter of a very prominent symphony conductor here in the States who had married an Ethiopian, and she was wonderful. She should be on stage, because we would go into the Public Security Bureau office. She and her husband really had nothing. They lived in a rented apartment, they had very few things, and whatever they had, they had borrowed in the first place. The Kebele could confiscate whatever they wanted; there was nothing there to have. Still, they wouldn't give her an exit visa. So we had it down to a science. I would go in and give my five-minute spiel, and then I would say, "Jenny, take it away." And Jenny would burst into tears. (Laughs) We would go through this, and I'd say, "Look at this grief and aggravation you're causing this American citizen. You can't do this!"

So finally, it took us about two or three months to get her out. There really were no physical possessions that we were arguing about, no money. We finally got her out, but it was wild. So we had serious cases like that.

Some of the cases are still there. Some of the people just refused to leave, actually.

*Q: What sort of pressure were you getting from Washington on this?*

RASPOLIC: Very little.

*Q: Surprising.*

RASPOLIC: Very little. I was quite surprised, too, particularly after coming from Korea, where there oftentimes was congressional interest expressed in a case. I was delighted, frankly, because it made my life a lot easier. I think that the whole problem of congressional interest in a case has been carried to absolutely ludicrous extremes. If you devote the man hours among congressional staff members that are being devoted to immigration cases, you could probably staff a subsidiary of INS. Why doesn't INS just put an office on the Hill? It's a waste of their manpower and it's a waste of our time overseas, and I think it is a terrible misuse of the system primarily by recent immigrants or even illegal aliens who write to the congressmen. And the congressmen's staff can't even sort out who's illegal and who isn't. I think it's a terrible waste of their time and our time. But I'm digressing.

*Q: That was your main task in Ethiopia?*

RASPOLIC: Yes. I spent an inordinate amount of time on it. I did issue some immigrant visas, but not to Ethiopian citizens, generally to Armenians who had immigrated to Ethiopia years ago and who were now trying to get out, and this was their only way out. There were some Ethiopian immigrant visas that I issued, but I had to develop a new twist in that I could issue them in Ethiopia, but I couldn't give them to these people and have them hand carry them out through the airport, because they would go through customs, their visas would be found, and their passports had not been issued for immigrant purposes.

So what I worked out, with the concurrence of the Department, was that I would issue an immigrant visa. Fortunately, to go through Ethiopia to the United States, you had to transfer some place in Europe, either Athens or Rome or Geneva or wherever. So I would ask the family

where they were going, find out where they were going, and make sure they went to a city where we had a post. Then I would issue the immigrant visa far enough in advance so that it could be pouched to that post. Then I would issue the family, in their passports, a tourist visa. I would tell them to take that passport as their identification into the post, and have the NIV canceled, and they would pick up their immigrant visa and then use that to enter the United States. It worked out every time. It certainly wasn't all that frequent, because we weren't issuing that many.

**FREDERIC L. CHAPIN**  
**Ambassador**  
**Ethiopia (1978-1980)**

*Ambassador Frederic L. Chapin joined the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included posts in Austria, Nicaragua, Brazil, El Salvador, and ambassadorships to Ethiopia and Guatemala. Ambassador Chapin was interviewed by Ambassador Horace G. Torbert in 1989.*

*Q: Okay, maybe I can switch a little bit to Ethiopia. There you were Ambassador many years later. What did the Department tell you? Ethiopia had already been a problem. I myself was there as you know during a hectic period. I was very much in favor of sending an Ambassador of the United States to Ethiopia and you eventually became that Ambassador. There was another charge between you and I. Without going into a lot of detail, would you share your reflections a little bit on your experiences there?*

CHAPIN: The decision to send an Ambassador was based on an evaluation following a National Security team going out to Ethiopia and talking to the ruler of the country, Mengistu Haile Mariam. He indicated that he was prepared to receive an Ambassador. The issues that were front and center had not only been the forced draw down of the American presence which took place during your time, but the question of human rights had played an important part during the early years of the Carter administration.

Mengistu indicated that the human rights issue would be moderated and the question again was one of whether our aid program might go forward. We had serious problems with the Ethiopians because they had nationalized a series of small American enterprises and some of personal property, including airplanes of American missionaries. These issues had never been really sorted out. There was also an AID financed housing development which had run into some problems and that had been nationalized by the Ethiopian government. The issues were: would we be able to make a new beginning and would it be possible to go forward and have a meaningful relationship?

In the first meeting that I had with Mengistu upon my presenting my credentials, we discussed the possibility of going forward with a project which had been fully approved and staffed out of about \$4.5 million to provide a resettlement area in the western part of Ethiopia for people who were starving even then in the north and north central part of Ethiopia. As a result of that initial

meeting, we were able within one week to sign an initial agreement which established this project and brought it up to date.

Almost immediately, the only two AID technicians of the United States who were in country were severely harassed by Ethiopian authorities. One of them, who was an expert on crops and was developing a series of fields in which crops particularly suited for Ethiopia were ripening, was prevented from going and carrying out his research because the Ethiopian officials were concerned about the radio that he had in his jeep which allowed him to stay in touch with headquarters located elsewhere in Ethiopia. They threw him into jail and denied him access to medications which he needed and shipped him up to Addis Ababa, the capital and refused to allow him to carry out the project for which we had spent a lot of money. The other technician in the extreme western part was encountering similar hostility.

I said to the government authorities that it was incomprehensible that we had just signed a four and a half million dollar project agreement which was going to require a number of technicians in country, and here they were harassing the only two technicians. We had to evacuate both of them. The Ethiopian Government was simply totally unresponsive. The result was that we never conducted our project, and we shut down our AID Mission. The Ethiopian Government had not provided any compensation during four years for the property that had been taken from American private citizens and corporations; and our laws, the Hickenlooper Amendment required we cease aid where there was no compensation or no effort to provide any such compensation.

I offered the Ethiopian government a whole series of imaginative solutions that would allow them to begin to compensate us in some form, including the addition of some part of the value of the missionary planes in the price that they were going to pay for two American Boeing aircraft. Ethiopia bought the Boeing aircraft, and I fought against the establishment in the Department to allow them to buy these two aircraft for Ethiopian Airlines, and I was successful in that regard. On the other hand I was equally successful in convincing the Department that since there was no give on the part of the Ethiopian government that they had to invoke the Hickenlooper Amendment. Before that, the matter really became moot because the Ethiopian government was in arrears over the period of a year with regard to debt service payments. Under the Brooke Amendment by being more than a year in arrears in debt service payments, all economic assistance had to be terminated in any such country. That is why even today, we are able to provide only humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia, and we are not able to provide trucks to deliver food to the starving Ethiopians.

We tried. I made an effort for six months before I went back to the United States to have a second meeting with Mengistu. I was in fact, the only western Ambassador to be granted a second audience with Mengistu. Having outlined the problems to his ministers, I outlined them to him and said that while we had negotiated this \$4.5 million dollar AID project, we had not been able to carry it forward, and we were not going to be able to continue any economic assistance unless there was some progress with regard to the compensation for American properties. I'm happy to say that quite recently, about a year and a half ago, the Ethiopian government reached an agreement at about the figure that I was prepared to negotiate, namely seven million dollars as a lump sum payment - exactly one of the proposals that I had offered.



This agreement still does not settle the aid problem, because the Ethiopians are unwilling to make any kind of a payment with regard to their military credits, thus curing the Brooke Amendment.

*Q: Tell me a little bit more about Mengistu. He was a very controversial gentleman even when I was there. You had an opportunity to deal with him, what were your impressions?*

CHAPIN: Mengistu is a very able individual. He has taken on all of the aspects of Ethiopian culture and assumed some of the prerogatives of the Ethiopian emperors. There is a great tradition in Ethiopia about space, and we had some anthropologists who were out in Ethiopia measuring the space between leadership figures and the next most important person.

As Mengistu grew in importance, he expanded space between himself and the other people. You could see and measure this during the time that I was there. There are pictures of your time when Mengistu was on a small box, and the entire group of his associates in the Derg or committee, were around him. Then, he was in an area where his immediate associates were gathered around him. By the time I left, there was enormous space in the stadium or reviewing stand. Only he and Fidel Castro were seated on chairs which had been taken from the Imperial Palace and there was at least twenty feet between them and the next closest person. This is a concept which the Ethiopians have always reserved for real leadership. Space is an important concept.

He was of course brutal, I never saw him shoot anybody across the table, but I'm told he did. He certainly was remote; the other diplomats never saw him except on their initial call when they presented their credentials. I saw him only on a second occasion when I insisted on seeing him on the question of whether we would have to invoke the Hickenlooper Amendment and terminate our aid program. I was declared persona non grata and, of course, I didn't see anybody on my way out. I was given forty-eight hours to leave and I left on the first Lufthansa plane in order to not leave on Ethiopian Air.

*Q: Mengistu is a somewhat controversial character to say the least. There were those that say he is a confirmed Communist, there are others that say he is a confirmed Nationalist; what is your view?*

CHAPIN: There is no question in my mind, and I was able to convince the Carter government that he is a convinced Marxist-Leninist. The evidence is as far as I am concerned, conclusive. Those who thought he was a Nationalist were arguing against us, and we had a prolonged debate within the Carter administration, and we won and we were able to document it.

*Q: When you were there the Russians and the Cubans were a fairly dominant force. Did you have any relations with them? Did you converse with them, did you talk, could you do anything with them?*

CHAPIN: Yes, I had formal relations of course with the Soviets. The first soviet Ambassador who had been Ambassador in Guinea with Sekou Toure was an experienced African hand and a very well traveled, internationally sophisticated individual. In my first meeting when I called on him, I said, "There are some who thought there were aspects of Chinese communism in the

Mengistu government;" the Russian ambassador, surprised me by saying: "No, they can't have Maoism here and they can't really have a true communist party because you cannot socialize poverty. You must first create wealth, and then you can nationalize and communize. Until that time, we cannot have a communist state."

The Soviets were very reluctant to see Mengistu create a communist party, that came only very late during the time that I was there, and it was the first congress of the true Bolshevik party, but the party itself was really only an incipient party. They were reluctant to introduce Ethiopia to communism as such.

*Q: Let me go back, Ambassador Chapin, to Mengistu. What was your own personal assessment of Mengistu?*

CHAPIN: My own assessment was that he had sold out to the Soviets, he certainly was a nationalist and could have maintained a nationalist position, but he needed the Soviets for massive military assistance. The Soviets never provided any economic assistance. He thought that he could play the United Nations and the western powers for economic aid, and the Swedes went along with this, and the Europeans were willing to play along for quite a long time; the Europeans would provide the economic assistance for quite along time to keep Ethiopia going. We as a country did not provide economic assistance, but our coffee companies bought for some years the bulk of the Ethiopian coffee crop and thus provided them with the foreign exchange for the necessary commodities they needed to stay alive.

Famine is endemic in Ethiopia and was prevalent in the previous Imperial government. The waste of the hillsides, the erosion, the misuse of land for hundreds and hundreds of years is being reaped by the current inhabitants of that country. I don't think personally that there is any solution permanently other than massive birth control measures and a massive voluntary resettlement program. The problem is that Mengistu is trying forced resettlement of people in order to curb the various regional dissident guerilla movements which exist not only in the north, not only in Eritrea and Tigre, but elsewhere throughout the country. Ethiopia was an empire and the Amhara exerted their influence over a whole series of lesser peoples. Those peoples have resented the Amhara dominance, even though the Tigre and even Eritrea, have considerable Amhara influence. The famine which you see and have seen in recent years is nothing new. The country was never able to feed itself.

In the beginning, when the present regime threw out the emperor, the forced flow of grain from the countryside toward the capital of Addis Ababa stopped, but the people in the countryside were better fed. The problem is that this did not solve the basic problem, which is storage of any surplus which they maintained on the land to hold them over from one year to the other. The storage facilities were so bad that anything that was kept from one crop was virtually eaten up by rats and by spoilage, so that at the end of a season there was nothing left over to serve as a granary for any deficiencies that might come in the future.

That was the whole thrust of the AID program that we and the United Nations wanted to set up. We, the United Nations and the European donors were prepared to provide better facilities on the land, but the Ethiopian government's program of nationalization of the land, which initially

provided the individual farmers with a better livelihood and more food to eat, was not followed up because they proceeded to try to collectivize the farms. Collectivization went against the grain of individual Ethiopian peasants, and they saw no reason to exert their efforts: to combat the various dissident groups who were in arms and were against the central government. This is something which has gone on for over a thousand years in Ethiopia. It depends on the strength of the central government as to whether it is able to impose its' will on various dissident and diverse religious and ethnic groups in what is described geographically as Ethiopia. I have no great hope for Ethiopia, and I think that the whole area is going to continue to see famines, and unless the world community is prepared to insist which I don't think they will or can - on extensive family planning projects that there will be too many mouths to feed and not enough food to go around, and the erosion will continue.

*Q: When you went out there as Ambassador, which you were, the first Ambassador after a hiatus of several years, What did the Department expect you to do? What were your marching orders, in short?*

CHAPIN: The Department really was not very specific. The effort, of course, was to reestablish good relations with Mengistu Haile Mariam, and to see if we could reactivate the AID program in a cooperative way, so that we could begin to work together to deal with some of the tremendous problems that Ethiopia has. Ethiopia has demonstrated since that it still has tremendous problems in terms of feeding itself. We also wanted to get some kind of solution to our nationalization problem that would allow us to go forward. I worked very hard on the question of nationalization, brought out some experts, offered a wide range of different possible initial steps so that we could say that they had begun to do something. The requirement was to show some forward progress. It was not necessary to reach a complete agreement, it was necessary to just show some forward progress. We couldn't find anything which would interest the Ethiopians, and as I have said before; at the same time that they were not making any forward progress, they were harassing the two workers that we had in the field.

*Q: Who in Washington was calling the shots then? Who in the Department was there? Were there differences of opinion in Washington, or were they unanimous? Who was calling the shots to you?*

CHAPIN: Well, in terms of the Hickenlooper Amendment, I came back several times, twice anyway. The first time the Carter administration was very reluctant to take any action, I went back and came back again. On these issues, Secretary Vance and Deputy Secretary Christopher were the people with whom I talked and I was finally able to persuade them. Deputy Secretary Christopher was very reluctant to invoke the Hickenlooper Amendment; on the other hand, he was very reluctant to approve the sale of Boeings to the Ethiopian Airlines, which had a balance sheet which showed profits. The airline was paying all its debts, unlike many African airlines and they were a good credit risk.

I thought that we should promote American exports and that we should sell planes to a company that was airworthy and that had been set up with a lot of assistance from TWA, was flying properly and had very good maintenance facilities. This was a way that we could demonstrate our continuing interest for something that was positive and meaningful. Finally, I was able to

persuade Christopher to approve the Export-Import Bank loan. As far as I know, there has not been any default on those loans, and I think that it was worthwhile.

I simply believe that the government should honor its obligations in terms of the Ethiopian government, and that we should make sales and offer facilities where there is a reasonable interlocutor and person, or corporation in this case, that could receive and benefit from what they wanted to buy from us.

*Q: You talked about the Hickenlooper Amendment, tell our listeners a little bit more about what the Hickenlooper Amendment was.*

CHAPIN: The Hickenlooper Amendment had not been enforced for many years. It comes from a Republican Senator from Indiana, if I'm not mistaken, who was the author of this provision. It states that a country which nationalizes or appropriates property of American citizens and does not within a reasonable amount of time enter into meaningful negotiations to compensate them for property which has been seized should no longer receive American economic aid. We had gone for four years and had been unable to get the Ethiopian government - my predecessor as Ambassador, and you Art I think were also involved in these negotiations - made various efforts to get the Ethiopian government to consider some kind of plan. I had spent some time on various kinds of claims negotiations by Austria against the United States and by the United States against Austria, and so I spent some time before going out with our legal advisor in trying to frame something which might be acceptable, and trying to find minimum steps which would satisfy our law but none of those were acceptable to the Ethiopian Government.

*Q: When you dealt with the Ethiopian government there were two tiers, namely the provisional military government with Mengistu, and the civilian side of the house which was the ministers. Whom did you deal with?*

CHAPIN: By the time I got there, there was really only one government. The civilian ministers were totally under control of the provisional military government. It was all amalgamated and there was no real distinction. They were reporting to Mengistu. Naturally, I went through the ministers, but the ministers had no authority to say anything; they would merely listen, and there was an advisor to the President with whom I would make the case. That wasn't going anywhere. He seemed to understand the legal issues and had some legal training. I said "We're not getting anywhere. We have to have meetings with the only person who can deal with this problem who is Chairman Mengistu," and that is why I had the second meeting. I made the case to the Chairman and he seemed to understand the issues, but he gave no indication that he was prepared to budge and that is exactly where it was left. My decision was ultimately made that the Hickenlooper Amendment had to be invoked. That was really after the fact because the aid program had to be cut off earlier because of the failure of the Ethiopian government to make any payment on their debts, the Brooke Amendment. That amendment had already come in to force with regard to Ethiopia in February, 1979.

*Q: You said earlier, Fred, that you were persona non grata, why is that?*

CHAPIN: Well there were a variety of alleged high crimes and misdemeanors that I committed. The government of the United States maintained that all of those allegations were not true and supported my position one-hundred percent. I'm going to leave that to the historic record and statements made by both governments.

*Q: Were you ever able to travel in Ethiopia?*

CHAPIN: Yes, I traveled down to the extreme southwest to see the AID program where one of our AID project advisors was subsequently harassed. I went down there very early on, and I traveled also with the Diplomatic Corps. We went to Harare, we went down on the railroad on a trip, and I was able to see the Eastern part of Ethiopia. We were at the beginning very restricted in how far we could travel outside the city - all Westerners - it was not limited to Americans.

Then there was an opening and some Westerners went to Lalibela which is one of the big religious sites where they have the churches carved out of stone. It was a very expensive trip. We chose for various reasons not to do it; we were going to do it later on with our children who were coming out. We did travel by car and we organized an expedition with the Swiss Minister and his family, and with the wife of the Italian Ambassador. We had a jeep and our new vehicle and we went to Gondar. We went up to Lake Tana and came back. We went as far north on the eastern side as we possibly could, and then I took a trip also out to the coffee growing area from which our American coffee companies were buying a lot of coffee. This was the Kaffa province, which of course is the origin of coffee, coffee - Kaffa. Coffee originates in the Ethiopian highlands, and I went out there and visited a European Economic Community coffee development farm where there are three-hundred and one different varieties of coffee. On the other hand, in Brazil there are only three varieties of coffee, so that the Ethiopian claim to be the origin of coffee has a very solid basis, and we saw all different kinds of coffee growing there. I've served in five different coffee producing countries, and so I've spent a lot of time on coffee in my life.

*Q: In the embassy itself how was the staff? Were you happy with it? Did it support you well?*

CHAPIN: Oh, yes I had an excellent staff, it was very tightly knit. Much of the activity centered around the two tennis courts in front of the office building. The two tennis courts were in between the house that I lived in and the office and I walked by there and everybody played tennis, even people who had never played tennis before began to play tennis. We had a lot of people from the international community, and some Ethiopians who felt that they could still be in touch with us would come and play tennis; and we had quite a number of Africans who would come and play on our courts, that was the center of activity. We had a very good and very close, very small staff - very close knit group.

*Q: When I left Ethiopia in 1977 there was no USIA, there was no Military Attaché, there was still aid. Had that been changed since you were there? Were there other agencies?*

CHAPIN: No, no that had not changed. We had no USIA, and we had a very small AID agency representation. As it was a small program we phased it out. Aid of course has come back in the famine relief area, and we have emergency relief programs. Before I left, the Ethiopian government took us down to the extreme southwest to show us famine conditions. They showed

us some tribes that were in really desperate straits north of Lake Rudolph. My acting aid administrator immediately sent off a telegram to Washington. I was entitled to call forward thirty-thousand dollars in immediate emergency assistance. We requested drought aid and rehydration packages for the people down there in the southwest. The US response was immediate. We brought in a plane-load from London, and the Ethiopian authorities kept it on the runway for twenty-four hours before we could ship it down and people could eat or be treated.

The Ethiopian government did not want to have an immediate American response to even a project that they had prevented us so long from seeing.

*Q: Were you ever able to go to Eritrea or to Tigre?*

CHAPIN: No, I never was. The Italian Ambassador was allowed to go to Asmara, but I was not allowed to go there. The American Consulate General at Asmara was taken over by the Ethiopian government and became the naval training school. We never advanced in our claims discussions the official claims of the United States government. We were only advancing the claims of American citizens whose property had been taken. US Government claims remain to be discussed at a future date.

*Q: Your feelings about Ethiopia itself, where is it going?*

CHAPIN: Well I think it's going nowhere. I also have that same feeling about a large part of Africa. The population is increasing; birth control is not being advocated; there are large parts of Africa in which AIDS is rampant that may mitigate the population problem in certain urban areas, but it is going to kill off the intelligentsia. So far, it is not known and probably is the result of lack of information, whether AIDS has arrived in the urban population of Addis Ababa. What is known from the days of the League of Nations is that Addis Ababa has the highest percentage of prostitutes of any country and any city of the world.

It is documented in League of Nations issues that predate by many, many years any question of ideological concerns. So it is likely that AIDS once introduced into Addis Ababa will spread quickly and far. It has already reached the intelligentsia of many of the countries that I am about to visit; Zaire, Burundi, Rwanda, and it is an extraordinarily serious problem because it can destroy the efforts to create an intellectual elite. It is a tiny minority. It appears that AIDS does not spread along the ordinary rural areas of Africa as fast as it does in the urban areas where the use of prostitutes is widespread. So, you have serious erosion over centuries if not millennia in Ethiopia, a progressive deforestation. You have no adequate price incentives for peasants to produce crops; you have no adequate storage facilities to store your surpluses from one year to carry you through lean years of famine years. There are progressive cycles of famine which have been documented historically, and you have a disincentive for foreign donors to provide substantial external resources. So I think that the prospects are dim.

*Q: One last question. You have been there, you have had your difficulties with the Ethiopians. What do you think our own United States relations are, or can be with the Ethiopians in the future?*

CHAPIN: Well, I think we have to find some kind of common ground. So far we have had difficulty finding common ground. I think the settlement of the claims of American citizens, which should have been settled much earlier, is a step forward, but I don't think that the Ethiopian government is prepared to work with any international donor in a really confidential, meaningful way. That is, when I say confidential, I mean having confidence in their programs and working together in a real spirit of cooperation. The Ethiopians are very reserved, extremely nationalistic. It is probably correct for them to ultimately control the policy.

If they are not willing to cooperate and find meaningful joint goals I think that it will be very difficult for everybody, whether it is the United Nations, whether European countries, whether the United States, to work with Ethiopia.

The Soviet Union and its block countries have been totally unsuccessful in providing, and unwilling to provide, meaningful economic assistance to Ethiopia to deal with its fundamental agricultural and population problems. Those are the two issues.

*Q: The Ethiopians, I recently asked you a question, but I will ask you one more. The Ethiopians recently declined to participate in the 1988 Olympics in Korea, even though the Soviets have. Do you have any thoughts about this?*

CHAPIN: Well I don't have any. The Ethiopians with their high altitude have turned out some marathon runners, some long distance runners who would be great competitors in the Olympics and I am sorry that they are not going to be there.

**OWEN W. ROBERTS**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Addis Ababa (1979-1982)**

*Ambassador Owen W. Roberts was born in Oklahoma in 1924. He received his A.B. from Princeton University and his M.I.A. and Ph.D. from Columbia University. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Army. Ambassador Roberts entered the Foreign Service in 1955, serving in Egypt, the Congo, Nigeria, Upper Volta, Ethiopia, Gambia, Seychelles, Chad, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.*

*Q: Today is June 3, 1991, this is a continuing series of interviews with Ambassador Owen Roberts. Owen, we had left the Sinai peace force, and now we move to your next job, where you served in Ethiopia from '79 to '81. How did that assignment come about?*

ROBERTS: I was, at the time, in the Defense Department's International Security Affairs Office, a policy outfit, as their head resident Africanist. Fred Chapin, who was ambassador in Ethiopia, then asked for me in particular as his deputy. I learned later that he did this largely because he had known and worked with me before, and particularly because he expected to try to do something difficult, and he was afraid that he might be PNGed...

*Q: For the record, PNGed means declared persona non grata.*

ROBERTS: And he wanted somebody that he knew left in charge of the post. I might say that Fred Chapin was a particularly smart, rational, non-emotional guy. Very few people would plan out a course of action, consider they might be PNGed, choose a deputy in terms of that contingency, and furthermore, tell him all about it ahead of time.

Fred's problem was that he was supposed to resolve a very long standing disagreement between Ethiopia and the United States over expropriated American property. Under international law, some restitution is supposed to be made. If it isn't, then under United States law, Washington should cease loans to that country and should also cancel AID programs.

Well, at the time Fred was assigned out there, we had a fairly significant AID program of about 25 or 30 million dollars. AID was very gung ho to be working in Ethiopia. Ethiopia had a lot of supporters, people interested in it back in the Department. And it was clear that if Fred pushed for compensation and the Ethiopian government did not respond (and he believed the chances were 50-50), then he was going to recommend to Washington that, in accordance with U.S. law...

*Q: This was the Hickenlooper Amendment.*

ROBERTS: The Hickenlooper Amendment, that we terminate loans and assistance to Ethiopia, which would cause a big fuss.

It would have been far easier not to have pressed the issue, to have simply tried to get the compensation, reported no success, and promised to continue making best efforts. This is what earlier Embassy leadership had done. Fred was the first to take the law seriously and not finesse the issue.

Fred valued maintaining the best possible U.S.-Ethiopian relations, but he did not, as many others did, put this before U.S. law. He had prepared himself very carefully, before he went out, on the merits of every single case and on all the law regarding compensation. He tried extremely hard for the first months of his assignment to get the Ethiopians to make some slight payment so that they wouldn't be subject to the law. He explained it to them all very carefully, and if you read his oral history, he deals with this in tremendous detail. He really was an extremely capable guy.

Well, the Ethiopians did not respond. Fred did make a formal recommendation to the State Department. It did cause some concern in the Department, because it was during the Carter period and we had an assistant secretary who was very pro-Africa and who basically thought that Mengistu was not all that hard a man, it was just a question of how you dealt with somebody like this, and if you really shook his hand and got to know him, you could overcome problems such as...

*Q: Who was the assistant secretary, Moose?*



ROBERTS: Dick Moose, yes. Moose did have lots of personality and capability, and in Africa you can solve a lot of problems that way. But there are people with whom that doesn't work. Mengistu was somebody who had shot his way to power several times. He was a very strong, determined, rigid man and he was not going to be influenced by handshakes and friendship.

Fred had fully reported his basic analysis of the Ethiopian government and of Mengistu, and he was not popular with Moose, who felt that Fred was a little conservative and didn't appreciate that a certain amount of Socialism and Marxism was natural in Africa, and that Fred perhaps did not have the personality to be friends with Mengistu. (Nobody was friends with Mengistu.) So that when Fred's recommendation came in that the Hickenlooper Amendment be applied in accordance with its clear stipulations, there was considerable consternation in AF. Also within AID/Africa, which had a big investment and a fairly big group -- about ten U.S. and 15 local staff -- in Ethiopia, and a particularly committed AID director.

The Legal Office, on the other hand, was absolutely behind Fred. And the higher you went in the State Department, the more people looked at it in terms of the law and less in terms of Africa and Africa relationships. So, very slowly, the Department swung around, agreed with Fred, and the first public statements began to be made.

The AID people were very bitter. Our AID director went back to Washington and fought Fred's recommendation, including visiting Congressional offices to advocate his case (giving priority to development over law) outside official channels. So, as Fred expected, his recommendation and views became public. And that was when he expected to be PNGed.

Rather surprisingly, he wasn't. The shoe never dropped.

Next Fred talked with European NATO member ambassadors and tried to get a consensus as to what the future was going to be like under Mengistu, and whether or not we should be trying to help the Government, or whether we should all back off and say we can't do anything while this rascal is here.

The Italians didn't want to back off. They felt that this had been their ex-area of influence and they wanted to stay with a presence. The French were inclined to agree with Fred, as were the British. But the Swedes, in particular, had quite a strong socialistic element in their outlook at the time, and they had a very big aid program they were reluctant to jeopardize.

*Q: Sweden traditionally, even way back before World War II, had been involved in Ethiopia.*

ROBERTS: I went to visit the Swedish ambassador once, early in the morning, about nine-thirty, and there was a delay of about 15 minutes, which was unusual. When I walked in, his coffee table was wet, there were stains on the rug, and there was some broken crockery off in a corner. After a while I asked the ambassador just what exactly had happened. And he said, "Well, we were having a staff meeting, and I had to tell my aid assistance group that we were going to have to tell the Ethiopians that we would be cutting back unless they stopped persecuting the Swedish missionaries. The aid people said, 'Absolutely no. Religion has nothing to do with this.' But back

in Sweden the churches have much political influence, and I had received specific instructions to do this. So we had quite a warm staff meeting."

Fred's efforts to get consensus among the European ambassadors on how to deal with a very authoritarian regime were essentially futile. However, some of the NATO ambassadors mentioned it to other ambassadors, and the word got out that Fred Chapin was organizing a counter-Ethiopian bloc. And he was ordered to leave the country in 24 hours.

*Q: This happened about when?*

ROBERTS: As a matter of fact, it was one of his good friends, his frequent bridge partner, the Swedish director of the UNDP, who squealed to the Ethiopians. He presented it as a plot against their efforts at socialistic development. So Fred was PNGed, in a sense, accidentally.

*Q: When did this happen?*

ROBERTS: This would have happened in '80.

*Q: In the time when Chapin was there, how did he use you as his deputy?*

ROBERTS: I basically did the things that he did not want to do. He divided jobs into things that he was going to do directly with the government, and a lot of things for me that had to do with running the mission, the relations with the other Agencies, and with AID in particular. I was responsible for the embassy reporting program and for day to day supervision of the administrative and consular sections, the basic role that the British Number Two has in an embassy.

Fred was always very open. He always took me with him when he went to the foreign minister. But this wasn't, I think, as much from a sense of how to negotiate as it was that he wanted to make sure that there were two people to report what had been said. The Ethiopians were giving us a very hard time and Washington was somewhat discounting our messages on the basis that Fred was unsympathetic to the regime. Fred wanted to make sure that it was clear that the Ethiopians were terribly unsympathetic to the United States.

*Q: While you were the DCM, how did you and the other officers view the situation in Ethiopia?*

ROBERTS: An embassy's outlook is shaped a good deal by the ambassador. I don't know the extent to which the CIA and myself and Andre Navez, who was the political officer, developed individual outlooks, or the extent to which we were shaped by Fred Chapin.

We had all been in Africa a while and were very interested in Ethiopia. We were agreed that under Mengistu Ethiopia was being run as a traditional empire. It had always been ruled on an authoritarian basis, under a long series of emperors. Somewhat to Ethiopia's later discomfort, the colonial period had come along just when Ethiopia had expanded to about its maximum size ever. The French and British signed agreements with the Ethiopian government back in the late nineteenth century which accepted its then existing frontiers. This included a lot of territory

which Ethiopia had just recently conquered. So later Ethiopian governments were left with boundaries which they had to struggle constantly to maintain. Haile Selassie, and then Mengistu after him, inherited an empire which was always trying to break up, like the Austro-Hungarian one. Both men went about it in the same way, basically militarily. In Eritrea, at our time, a full scale secessionist war had been going on for 17 years.

We watched Mengistu and his government officers closely. There was complete uniformity, absolute control from the top. Mengistu did institute some needed economic reforms and tried unsuccessfully to nationalize agriculture. He certainly was relying on the Soviets at that time, for about two billion dollars worth of military equipment. We had no influence whatever on him, nor did any other European Embassy.

Our Embassy was agreed that we could not do business with this man and that the real issue was: did it matter that much, should the U.S. be making any big effort about it? Should we, for instance, be trying to overthrow him? Or should we be trying to make life uncomfortable with him? Should we decide we don't have enough U.S. interests here to put money into CIA operational activities, but instead suggest to Arab countries that they might support the Eritreans and the Tigrean movement and the Somalis?

We basically decided, within the embassy, that it was not sufficiently in the U.S. interest to try to mount any anti-Mengistu activity, and that we were basically going to be a political reporting post. Our CIA group agreed. When the AID contingent was withdrawn, with the application of Hickenlooper, we were then about 30 people, half-State, half-CIA.

*Q: Were there many Americans working there at the time?*

ROBERTS: No, Mengistu had earlier instructed the U.S. to withdraw the military mission, the Peace Corps, and USIA. Most American businesses had been expropriated, and all businessmen had left. The missionaries had also largely been expelled; there were maybe two or three very small missionary groups left. Some of the missionaries had helped members of the royal family and their children to escape. Much of the missionary movement had been expelled partly for that activity. As with the Swedish missionaries, the regime was making sure that there were no foreigners out in the countryside who in any way would be encouraging any kind of activity or any kind of free thinking which would lead people to be independent minded.

*Q: In your political reporting, outside of explaining how you felt about the situation, were you able to get any insight into the Tigrean revolt, the Eritrean revolt, and the Somali business?*

ROBERTS: Right, the Ogaden Somalis and the Oromo in the southwest.

*Q: This was sort of a new one. We're talking right now on June 3, 1991; we're in the first week or so of the takeover by the Tigrean and Oromo movements of power in Addis Ababa, and a new Ethiopia may emerge...may, I say.*

ROBERTS: All those opposition elements were present when we were there. The Eritreans at the time were the best organized. The Tigrean movement was just beginning. You have to remember

that this was only four or five years after the terrible civil war within Ethiopia and Addis, as the revolution progressed from being a kind of parliamentary revolution against Haile Selassie into being a radical revolution and then a fight between the radicals--the military and the civilians--as to who was going to control the radical revolution. A military element led by Mengistu won out, largely by shooting all other groups that opposed them. During those four years of civil war and revolution, so many people got killed and driven out that for quite a while there was no real opposition movement in the country except for the Eritreans. They were way up in the north and could get support from outside the country. There were a few elements left who fled into Tigre and into Gondar, but they were insignificant at this time. We had no Embassy contact with any of them.

The difficulty from the reporting point of view was that the government did not allow us to travel outside the central Shoa province. I think there are 11 provinces, and we were only allowed at that time to travel within the Addis Ababa area. Our requests to travel were always turned down, and we couldn't get out into the countryside.

We relied in part on what we could learn from third-party people. There was a very large diplomatic representation in Addis. The Organization of African Unity had its headquarters there as did the UN Economic Commission for Africa. There were about 45 African embassies, 12 international agencies, and a good number of European embassies. We particularly talked with such locally acceptable Third-World Missions as the Yugoslavs, Indians, Indonesians, and in fact anybody who had a program going on in the countryside. It was the only contact insight you could get as to what was happening outside Addis.

The CIA provided separate, excellent sources of information, both through human contacts and through intercepts. We had a very good working relationship there because basically the CIA station chief and CIA Washington agreed with us State officers that Mengistu was not to be won over and should not be courted.

There were one or two CIA officers who felt we should take an activist role and try to overthrow Mengistu. But most of us felt this wasn't practical, that we would have to mount a major program to succeed -- if possible at all -- and that we didn't have enough U.S. national interests in Ethiopia to justify trying. We were in competition generally with the Soviets, but there were no specific strategic interests at stake. Also, Ethiopia was not exporting its revolution anywhere. They were cooperating with the Russians, but this was for arms, a question of expediency.

So the CIA agreed on a reporting role and cooperated very closely with me in discussing who our contacts would be, what kinds of intercepts they would set up, where they would try to put in bugs, where they would try to get line-of-sight pick-ups. It was the best working relationship ever with the CIA.

*Q: What you're saying I find very interesting, because I think there is a tendency on the part of Americans, really, not to write anything off. If you're in a place, let's do something. Or if you're dealing with it back in Washington; this is what I've got. Ethiopia is not like the Central African Republic or something; it's been there a long time, everybody knows about it.*

ROBERTS: That's why I give Fred a lot of credit, because he was very pragmatic, establishing policy on the basis of U.S. law and the presence or absence of significant U.S. national interests.

*Q: Did you have any congressional opposition to this? Because so often you find that if you're dealing with Morocco or something, all of a sudden you find a staff member who has control over a congressman, who gets highly emotional on this. And I would think Ethiopia, either within the Black Caucus, or somebody who maybe had missionary antecedents, or somebody like that, either a Congressman or a staff person... Were there problems?*

ROBERTS: We had some problems under the Carter administration and AF Assistant Secretary Moose, as discussed. Then the Reagan administration came in with a different point of view. They were far more willing to believe that Mengistu was in fact a dictator, committed only to his own ends, and if he wasn't a friend, why pay any attention. And so life after the change of administration was easier.

After AID was withdrawn and the mission was reduced, Fred looked at me and said, "You know, we've got too much staff here. Why don't you give me your suggestions on what to do about it." So I gave him some suggestions, and he said: "This is all very good, but as you probably realize, we don't need a DCM. You and I are now doing about the same thing here." I had to agree, but said that it was a bit hard. Fred replied: "Yeah, but that's the way it is." So he sent off a telegram proposing our changes for reducing the embassy some more, including removing the DCM.

Well, the Administration had really changed. Fred got back a cable saying, "We agree completely with you on reducing the embassy. We agree too that currently nothing constructive can be done with the Ethiopian government. So we think you should come home, and we'll just leave a chargé." That was bitter-sweet support for Fred. But at that point the Ethiopian government PNGed him.

I thought of this again, much later, when I was ambassador to Togo and Secretary Shultz sent out a message saying to all embassies, "I want you to send me plans on how to reduce your mission up to 50 percent. We have got to make some real savings." I did exactly the same thing: I asked my DCM to draft proposals covering both State and other Agency personnel. His plan cut the embassy about 20 percent. And I said, "But, look, the instructions were 50 percent." He replied this would mean cutting the front office. I agreed -- and believe that at small posts the Department does not need two good senior people full time.

*Q: How did we view both the Soviet influence and, as far as America goes, the Soviet menace at that time?*

ROBERTS: The Soviets had a broad relationship with the government, including several hundred military advisors and other people in most of the important ministries. They had the same kind of relationship we'd had with Haile Selassie. There wasn't really anything that we could do about it. The Soviets did not get too much in return: some support on international issues and common rhetoric. Plus once concrete benefit: the Ethiopians allowed the Russians to use the Dahlak Islands as a small naval base. These islands are in the Red Sea, northeast of

Massawa. We followed this very easily through satellite reconnaissance. In some of the pictures, which I'd seen back in Washington, you could actually see the names on the stern of the ships.

After Fred was expelled, I was regularly given a very hard time by the foreign minister. He always started off our meetings by asking me how many American Indians we had recently killed and by ticking off a series of our latest "imperialistic" activities. In response, I finally noted the Government's dependence on the Soviets and their navy's use of Ethiopian islands. The Minister was furious, absolutely denied it, and asked for proof. So I got authorization from the State Department to show him satellite photographs of the Russian ships at the Dahlaks .

The Department sent a very good series of photographs, starting with the whole Red Sea, narrowing it down until you saw the islands, then the base, next the Russian ships, and finally you could see the people standing on the stern of a Russian ship with its name in Cyrillic writing. I then told the Minister I had received photographic evidence. He examined the pictures carefully and was thoroughly upset. So he turned to attacking the map that was keyed to the photographs, saying, "Oh ho, you're using a map that's six years old. These photographs are tied to it and must also be out of date; it's no good." This did not improve relations, but it wasn't meant to. It did show that we knew what we were talking about and could find out matters of interest to us. There was no constructive way that we could deal with Mengistu's people. And there was nothing we could do about the large Soviet presence. Relations consisted of going to their national-day party, sending one person, either myself or the political officer. Our policy was to abide and report all the spots.

*Q: Did you, every once in a while, sort of sit back and say, "Well, better they than we," as far as dealing with this rebellion that was going on and the poverty and everything else? Did we ever sort of tweak the Ethiopian foreign minister, saying, "Well, that's, of course, a Soviet problem, not ours," or something like that?*

ROBERTS: We were fairly serious about our situation. We concentrated on being diplomatically correct and minimizing getting caught out in our reporting activities. This was more a practical approach than a philosophical one. It wasn't yet clear that Mengistu and the Russians were bound to fail and that it would cost the USSR a lot. The ordinary Ethiopians did not like the Russians and would even pat the official car when stopped in the streets. But they had no power and all local political groups had been eradicated. The only effective opposition were the Eritreans, and at that time it looked as though they might very well be overrun. I think they saved themselves by the skin of their teeth at Nakfa in 1980-81. It seemed possible that Mengistu could hold on to the whole empire, with military force, indefinitely. This kind of territorial warfare had been going on in Ethiopia for about 1,000 or 1,200 years.

I remember being told by a European colleague, when I went off to Ethiopia, "Why don't you do something about this silly little warring between Ethiopia and its neighbors. After all, look what we've managed to do in 30 or 40 years in terms of relations in Europe, resolving problems between the Germans and French and English." I didn't have much to say to that, but I went off to Ethiopia and learned that the Ethiopians had been fighting with the Somalis since about the year 670. And in 670, the Europeans had been running around in bearskins and didn't even know

who they were. The Ethiopians had been bitter enemies with their neighbors for many centuries; the Russians were just the latest handy instrument in the struggle.

*Q: Did you or your staff feel under any danger at all?*

ROBERTS: No, because we were living under an authoritarian regime that wanted to ensure there was absolutely no possibility of anybody getting loose with a gun, or any crowd getting out of hand. You could travel around, where allowed, quite safely in terms of terrorism or physical threat. Mengistu had, however, organized down to the village level, encouraging local authorities to watch for spies and arrest anybody who looked suspicious or was not known. Despite diplomatic identification, embassy members were likely to be stopped if off the beaten track.

As Chargé, I was detained once despite the official car, flags, identification, and an Ethiopian bodyguard. It happened up in the far corner of the province to which we were limited. I also had with me the visiting Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of Washington, who had expressed interest in a little known monastery which I wanted to find, a walk of about six miles from the road. I had informed the Foreign Ministry in advance, as required, and traveled visibly official. But after we returned from the monastery, I was detained for about five hours by the local, armed authorities. They insisted that I write out a statement saying that we had made contact with unfriendly elements in the countryside. I refused to write anything more than that I had visited and that my trip had been authorized by the Ministry. By being very patient, simply sitting there, and being responsive but absolutely unmoving, they finally said, sometime around eleven o'clock at night: "Well, okay, you write down what you will write down, and we'll turn you over to the central authorities." Which meant that I was free to go.

This kind of thing could happen almost anytime because there wasn't much telephone or other communication between Addis and the rural areas. Local authorities mostly took local affairs into their own hands.

*Q: Was there any change when you were chargé, as far as dealing with the Ethiopian authorities? When the Reagan administration came in, were you delivering more abrupt...*

ROBERTS: No, it made very little difference. The diplomatic language of demarches and notes remained the same. A politician may speak of another state as an "evil empire" but official exchanges tend to remain in terms of one sovereign entity to another. The Foreign Minister did slang us in private, orally, but not in writing. There was mostly a freeze; it was like serving in Moscow.

*Q: Was there any consideration of shutting down the embassy?*

ROBERTS: We did cut back three or four more staff after Fred's being PNGed. But we were getting enough interesting information, and occasionally frustrating Ethiopian initiatives, so that we earned our keep. We were almost closed down, however, by an off-hand decision of Secretary Haig's. We had managed particularly good access in some places. As a result, we were able to report that the Ethiopian government had drafted a diplomatic note expelling the embassy, but was undecided on whether to send it. Haig had not been Secretary long and was

anxious not to have any embassies taken hostage on his watch. So when briefed on our report, he ordered that we all be withdrawn immediately.

He didn't ask for any opinions on a hostage situation developing, he just ordered the withdrawal. His cable was certainly an unexpected bolt. We didn't know if Washington had learned something we hadn't, or if this was a small move before some greater development, or if maybe the Department had just become fed up with Ethiopia. After thinking about it a while, and assuring ourselves there was nothing special brewing locally, I called our Office Director in AF on the secure phone. He explained the home situation to me, guardedly. So I suggested our sending back a temporizing message: "Yes, Mr. Secretary, we are preparing to evacuate as ordered. But we believe the Ethiopians are not going to order us out yet. And we are in no danger as they have never used mobs or hit-men, just power politics." The cable would present an account of past Ethiopian diplomatic practice -- pretty punctilious -- and hopefully not show there had been any back channel discussion of the Secretary's order. Our Office Director -- Curt Kamen, a good man -- bravely agreed and promised to hold off any follow-up actions until our message arrived. This worked. Haig had many more important concerns and the order was not pursued.

*Q: What about the Ethiopian Jews, was this an issue while you were there, and did you get involved with that?*

ROBERTS: It was indeed a continuing issue. I don't believe that the Falashas are part of a lost Jewish group. It appears more likely that they are an off-shoot of the early Hamitic people in the northern Ethiopia-Yemen area. The Ethiopians became Christians in the fourth century, when their ruler in Axum adopted the Coptic faith. The Ethiopians, as you probably know, do trace their origin back to the union of their Queen Sheba with King Solomon in Jerusalem. And for six hundred years their supreme Bishop was sent them from Alexandria. It was only late in the 19th century that they won the right to select their own Bishop. Somewhat similarly, I believe the Falasha derive their origins from Jerusalem. But a "lost tribe", no. The Falasha did practice elements of the Jewish faith, but most of the orthodox leadership in Jerusalem did not accept them as fully Jewish.

Most of the Falasha did not want to leave. The terrible drought conditions in '83-84, plus the later advance of the Eritrean-Tigrean military forces from the north, combined to drive them out. There were several Jewish groups in the United States that firmly believed these people to be the lost Jews. These Americans were committed to getting the Falasha out of Ethiopia and wanted our embassy help in making contacts and in arranging permission for departure.

We had to be as correct as possible, because the Ethiopian government was very cautious about letting any of these people leave. I could make representations, which I did to the Foreign Ministry, but I was not about to get involved clandestinely in helping make local contacts or trying to set up some system to buy their way out. At that time, there was no pressure from Washington to do so. The Falashas were of interest to parts of the American Jewish community, but not to a very large part of it. Some Jewish elements from various parts of the U.S. visited Addis and made arrangements on their own, but it wasn't a centrally organized Jewish effort, and we did not have to get involved.



*Q: Before we leave Ethiopia, is there anything else we might touch on?*

ROBERTS: Well, I think I might give you an example of what you can do if you have really good intelligence capability. The CIA had, as often, an intercept capability. In our case, it was very good and constituted an important reason for maintaining an embassy.

*Q: What do you mean by an intercept capability?*

ROBERTS: Intercept capability is largely a NSA (National Security Administration) function. You set up antennas so that you can listen in to local radio broadcasts, whether they're Defense, Foreign Ministry, or other departments. You listen to military broadcasts between sub-units, to police broadcasts, and you try to listen to local administrative broadcasts in the countryside. Remember, we couldn't develop any open Ethiopian contacts, or travel much, so we resorted to intercepts.

*Q: And, of course, there's not a wide telephone network in Ethiopia, I take it.*

ROBERTS: Well, there were both radio and limited phone networks. You tap into these in several ways. You can place bugs on electronic equipment or in places where there are such instruments. Or you have line-of-sight pick-ups, and local places under your control for re-transmission or collection of the data. Then of course you have various antennas for picking up different types of emissions. This can't be too obvious. There are real risks involved, and I reviewed the essentials carefully with the CIA.

In most embassies where there is such intercept capability, the transmitted material is sent back to Washington, where it is decrypted, translated, and published. The embassies get back only what Washington chooses -- or remembers -- to provide. And with considerable delay. In Ethiopia, because reporting was our primary function and there was so little other means of getting information, the CIA and NSA were willing to provide a minimal computer decryption capability at post. This decryption, of course, comes out in Amharic, so you've got to have, if you want real-time intelligence, a 5/5 Amharic speaker.

*Q: Five-five being absolutely fluent.*

ROBERTS: Absolutely perfect native speaker. Well, in all of the United States, there were only two or three of them. Both Washington and the embassy had to exercise considerable encouragement to get one of these people to come and spend two to three years locked up in our 18 acre compound being the cryptologist-interpreter on the spot. But it was managed. We thus had the capability to make intercepts, decrypt many of them, translate them and have real-time information. This provided a mass of material, much of it relevant as we carefully targeted the networks. Mostly it was good background material and not time sensitive or actionable. But it was occasionally.

At one period when I was chargé, the intercepts showed that all leaves for Ethiopian military personnel in the Ogaden area had been canceled.

*Q: That's the Somali-Ethiopia frontier area.*

ROBERTS: Yes. Then they indicated medical personnel had been told to report to their stations in the area. Further intercepts showed that all vehicles in the area were to draw three-days' worth of gasoline. At this point, Mengistu flew off to have a meeting with the President of the Sudan. We put two and two together and thought that he was preparing a move on Somalia, and at the same time, he was going to Khartoum to allay any worries that the Sudan might have if a fellow Islamic neighbor were attacked. So we alerted the Department and suggested that maybe while Mengistu was up there, we should have the Sudanese weigh-in and say, "Hey, we hear rumors of some movements in the Ogaden, should we be concerned?"

The clincher came when we got an intercept which instructed the engineering units to start clearing mines on roads leading to the frontier. It was fairly clear what was happening. At this point, Washington would normally be urgently trying to get good overhead photographs of the region. But there was no satellite making passes over Ethiopia. No need, ordinarily. At that time the U.S. was not covering the whole world, so Washington had to move a satellite in order to get such a picture, which takes time. So we could not get confirming pictures of an Ethiopian buildup to attack Somalia.

But the intercepts were pretty damn clear. The advantage of an intercept, of course, is that there is just no questioning the accuracy of it. Whereas if we had had oral information, say from the Indian military attaché, that something was going on out there, it was hardly the kind of evidence on which Washington could base any important action. But this was clear enough so that Washington did in fact authorize our ambassador in the Sudan to tell the president of the Sudan pretty much what was happening. The president of the Sudan was indeed interested, he discussed it forcefully with Mengistu, and when Mengistu came back to Addis all those orders were countermanded. So there are times when you can do things behind the scenes.

There was another action development that shows what can be done on just the diplomatic level, even if you are only a small embassy. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) usually met in Ethiopia. We did not really try to affect its sessions and resolutions. Too big a job and mostly of too little importance to us. We would assign one or more of our young officers to cover the meetings -- a hard job as access to most meetings was closely controlled. But we had a particularly capable officer in Frank Day, who covered many of the sessions. He was a particularly ingenious, if not crafty young man who could get in almost anywhere, and he did some marvelous reporting. So we were satisfied with just getting good coverage of what the OAU was doing.

A frequent issue on the agenda was whether or not the rebel movement in Mauritania, the Polisario, was to be seated. This was of vital concern to Morocco, where we had real interests. A minority OAU group, mainly French-speaking states, did not want the Polisario to be seated. There were security and political reasons; also the Polisario was a movement, not a state. These countries constituted, if organized, a clearly blocking vote. The issue had come up previously but had always failed to get the necessary two thirds majority. I went to the formal opening meeting. Just before all the delegates trooped in, a lot of turbaned, blue-robed Polisario representatives came in and sat down at a table with a Polisario flag. It became evident that somebody had

administratively made a decision to seat them -- to present a fait accompli. Well, all the delegations came in and settled down, most not aware of the situation. The president of the OAU came up to the podium and looked down, and there were the Polisario. Drama. He made some polite remarks and then said, "I think that we have a question here which has not been resolved, and I suspend the meeting until it is settled." I talked to a few delegates and reported the impasse and strong pressure from the pro-seating faction.

It turned out later that the secretary-general of the OAU, the head of the OAU staff, had made the decision, probably under some pressure--or possibly payment--to set up the seating. He may also have thought that this time arrangements had been made for a two-thirds vote and he wanted to be on the winning side. Well, the outcome wasn't all that clear, and the OAU suspended meetings for about a day and a half while the delegations negotiated among themselves. This provided a diplomatic opportunity.

I got a very strong message from the Department to do what I could to help block the Polisario from getting into the OAU. A blocking third was needed. The Department got involved partly because Morocco felt very strongly about Mauritania and weighed-in with Washington, and partly because Senegal and Abidjan also did. These were important countries for our African policy. Remember now, we're under the Reagan Administration, and they were good conservative regimes, and Morocco was very much on our side when it came to the Mediterranean issues and relations with Algeria. So I got strong instructions to do what we could.

I first met with the Moroccans for a vote count. They identified some of the fence sitters: the Liberians, for instance, and the Upper Voltans. I went to see those delegations and found that their problem was that they didn't have communications and therefore they didn't have any instructions. The Ethiopians were not allowing outgoing international phone calls from the minority Embassies. They also closed down the telex that the Moroccans were using. So I fixed communications through U.S. Embassies, both cable and radio telephone, with the appropriate Foreign Ministries so these delegations could contact their own people and get instructions.

This is a little dicey because foreign ambassadors don't necessarily like to go to somebody else's embassy or to rely on somebody else's equipment, and they aren't quite sure that what they're getting is really their own message. But it worked, and we managed to get a blocking third, and the Polisario was unseated. From that time on, they went downhill. We thus managed, through good technology (as in the Sinai), to exercise a little bit of influence on history. Which is what the Foreign Service should do.

*Q: You then left Ethiopia . When was that?*

ROBERTS: Oh, I think it was in June of '82. It was the end of a three-year tour.

**LAWRENCE C. WILLIAMSON**  
**Acting Director, East Africa**

## Washington, DC (1980-1982)

*Mr. Williamson was born and raised in Arkansas. After graduating from the University of California and serving a tour of duty with the US Marine Corps, he entered the Foreign Service in 1958. His foreign assignments took him to a number of African posts, including Sierra Leone, Northern Rhodesia, Tanzania, Kenya and Gabon, where he served as Ambassador, and in England. He had a number of assignments in Washington, several dealing with African Affairs. He also served in the Department's Executive Secretariat and as Assistant to the Counselor*

*Q: Let's pick up the various areas. Let's take Somalia. During the '80-'82 period, what were you up to?*

WILLIAMSON: Up to that stage of the game we were very busily engaged in trying to keep the embassy open in Addis which was not easy.

*Q: The DIRG was in.*

WILLIAMSON: The DIRG was in and was becoming more and more anti-U.S. The Soviets were really nesting in there. The short lived and ill fated Somali drive for Ethiopia had burned itself out in the late '80s. "Maintenance" is not a word in either language. Both Ethiopians and the Somalis drove as far as they could get their tanks, and that's where it stopped. Then we had the civil war breaking out in Ethiopia.

*Q: This was the Eritrea.*

WILLIAMSON: The Eritrea and the Ethiopians. The DIRG was taking a creaming at that stage of the game. The Somalis decided that this would be a great time to take the Ogaden back again. There was a great hullabaloo in the Socialist bloc. Fidel Castro came out and with the Soviets tried to talk Siad Barre out of an invasion. Castro argued that these were Socialist comrades. You can't go to war with them. Barre answered in effect, "The hell I can't. What's this Socialist brotherhood stuff? These are Ethiopians, and that's my land!" The Russians apparently told Barre, the president of Somalia, that if he went ahead with his plans to invade the Ogaden they would drop him as a client. By that time Ethiopia looked like it was falling to pieces internally.

*Q: Was Kagnew station closed?*

WILLIAMSON: Kagnew station was still intact. That was the other thing Fidel Castro raised with Barre. His brother came out and talked to him about Socialist brotherhood and uniting against the Imperialists.

*Q: Raul?*

WILLIAMSON: Raul. The idea was to form a great, huge Socialist power in the area: Yemen, Somalia and Ethiopia would all be Socialists together and protected by the Soviet Union. All that

was fine but Somalia didn't want to be protected by the Soviet Union. They wanted and indeed Siad needed to reintegrate the Ogaden into Somalia. The Somalis took off and damn near occupied the entire Ogaden, but the Ethiopians with the aid of Cuban troops beat them back. The Somalis were left high and dry, the Soviets did drop them. Bam! Left everything. They lost the war, and the Ogaden: clans in Somaliland were pretty irritated about the whole thing anyway as well as the fact that what had been the old British territory up there in British Somaliland was in then a state of clan warfare. We showed up and said, "We'd like to talk to you about Berbera," and it was like manna from heaven as far as the Somalis were concerned. We had a huge effort to come to an agreement with Siad: Access to Berbera in exchange for a security package of some sort.

Dick Moose came in to do the negotiating. The first Somali demand was for, in effect, free access to the U.S. Treasury in perpetuity. We talked them out of that!. We were talking and talking and talking and talking, and we tried another agreement where we would come in and fix the airfield up and make it work. There was some land involved in it. We put a minimum amount of money into it. The Somalis began to talk about their brothers in the west, the benefits of the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Alliance, etc. We accepted some Somali students in our military colleges around here.

The fact of the matter was when we got to Berbera and everybody took a look at what we had there, it wasn't much. It was a hell of a long way to anyplace. Even your drinking water would have to be flown in. You couldn't put a permanent base in there. The harbor was very shallow, and extensive coral reefs would need a lot of dredging. You could probably get destroyers in there but not much more.

I think we actually used Berbera for three or four exercises staged through Egypt, all of them satisfactory but nothing brilliant. In no way could you put in ahead of time the stockpile that you would need to mount an effective operation in Iran. You can imagine, every Somali tribesman in 50 counties would be down there pilfering and sniping away. Besides, I kept telling everybody -- it didn't seem to make an impression, but it's true -- that the minute we started talking about using Berbera strategically, i.e., bringing the Soviets into the operation with a possible Soviet strike down there, you could watch that permission to use being yanked out from underneath you and the wells poisoned if necessary. It never came to that, but that was how I occupied myself. That was about nine months of work.

*Q: The military at the Pentagon, were they as dubious as you were?*

WILLIAMSON: I think at heart they were, but it was a whole different atmosphere. Dick Moose didn't like the deal at all, and I thought it was stupid and told everybody including the military. The military however received orders to do it. Brzezinski said, "Get that airfield," so that was all there was to it. There were no ifs, ands, or buts about it. I started talking about the price and so did Dick, and we actually got a price reduction. The overthrow of the DIRG brought the whole issue to a halt and we never consummated the deal. The next year Siad was overthrown and Berbera was forgotten.

*Q: What about in Ethiopia. We had Kagnev Station. In a way technology was beginning to move away from...*

WILLIAMSON: You know how the military is. Something like that's always vital to the security of the U.S. – faced with a fait accompli they discover that they can live without it after all.

*Q: We still have forts to deal with the Apache.*

WILLIAMSON: That's exactly right. Actually, the rebels had some of our guys kidnapped and that cooled our contractors down no little end. You probably know there are several substations out there. They were inviting trouble, and finally one of the rebel forces got well into Asmara. There was street fighting, and we decided to evacuate the thing and never got back in.

*Q: By the time you were there, had we essentially written off Ethiopia?*

WILLIAMSON: Officially, of course not. Unofficially, there was nothing much you could do. The DIRG was dependent on the Cubans and the Soviets. It wasn't until the up- country tribes decided that they didn't want any more of this stuff...

*Q: Tigrean?*

WILLIAMSON: Tigrean! The big problem came when—and I don't know enough about the internal workings over there in Ethiopia—somehow or another, Mengistu and his merry men seized upon land redistribution as the wave of the future. This is what a good social state does. That's what set the flames burning out in the districts. Pretty soon there were three or four good sized rebel armies marching on Addis Ababa, and the Tigreans are relatives to the Eritreans, so they joined up forces right off the bat. The Eritreans came out of the trenches and came on down to Asmara. The Tigreans marched down along the border beside them and outflanked the Ethiopians who were not too charmed about the whole thing anyway.

*Q: Being the Soviets and the Cubans had thrown their hands in with the Ethiopian government, the DIRG was a military consul..?.*

WILLIAMSON: It was a military consul.

*Q: Were we tempted or did we say, "Well, their enemy is our friend." Did you try to do anything to the Tigreans and friends?*

WILLIAMSON: The spooks may have.

*Q: When you say spooks you mean...*

WILLIAMSON: CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). It was very low key and very small effort.. The big supporters of the Eritreans were, of course, the Sudanese. The Sudanese and the Saudis always kept enough stuff going in there to keep the insurrection alive. It wasn't until the Tigreans particularly but other tribes, too, starting mounting these militia attacks that news of

what was happening on the land redistribution front reached a lot of the troops, and the troops were very affected. Their mothers and fathers were being thrown out of their farms. The army was very disaffected and mutinied. Eritreans and Tigreans met at the border, marched straight down and beat back the Ethiopians. Internally the other militia had gone down to Addis Ababa. It looked for a long time like we were going to have a real debacle in Addis with the DIRG settling into the fight to the last man.

*Q: At the time and, again, we're going back to '80-'83ish, did we feel that we had any real interests in that? From your perspective, what were American interests and concerns?*

WILLIAMSON: Our concern was that the biggest geo-political factor in East Africa was Ethiopia, not Somalia, for God's sake. It wasn't then; still isn't. Ethiopia is well worth our time, an essentially viable country, which is hard to come by in Africa. We were very interested. In fact, you know the Irv Hicks story.

*Q: No.*

WILLIAMSON: You don't know the Irv Hicks story? I don't think it's a secret. The Somalis were again trying to do something in the Ogaden, and it looked like they might succeed in reuniting the Bantu and Nilotic Ethiopian tribes against the outside aggressor. But the Somalis blew it and Siad was pretty well castrated by then. It did look like there was going to be a hell of a battle for Addis Ababa with the militia and the Eritreans outside; and the DIRG, and what was left of the army inside.

*Q: I know Irv Hicks.*

WILLIAMSON: Irv was a deputy assistant secretary. He went out to the Horn. He was sent out there. We had gotten an agreement from the Rhodesians that they would offer refuge to Mengistu. Irv went into the city with all that fighting going on. God bless him, he went in there, and he talked to Mengistu, and he said, "We can get you and your family and anybody else you want to take out of here, but you've got to get out now before the fighting starts because we can't abide that." Mengistu gave it about the same consideration that I gave the assignment to London, and we got some unknown aircraft into the airport, packed that whole bunch in, sent them south, and the next thing you know there's a triumphal entry into Addis Ababa by the Tigreans and the Eritreans. We worked hard at that one.

*Q: What did we see coming out of this from our perspective?*

WILLIAMSON: The place was a potential Soviet human base. It was certainly a base for exporting trouble. The Saudis were very interested in getting the Soviets out of there. This was a cheap, easy way to get about.

*Q: Basically we weren't looking at this as a base but trying to strategically deny that area to the...*

WILLIAMSON: Yes. The Soviet Union was beginning to look a little shabby. We were not able to put a lot of resources into this thing. We could handle it without doing that. We didn't want the 82nd Airborne dropping in for God's sake because nobody likes foreigners as we're learning once again in Iraq. We had a lot invested in that. By the way, the Hicks thing happened after I left AFE.

*Q: That was later. While you were there, one of the potential problems in that area was the perennial draughts. Did that happen in your time?*

WILLIAMSON: With great regularity, I'm afraid. What's happened is the growing population pressure has moved towards the north. There's no more land down south. Destitute and poor people moved north looking for new land to farm, into this really bad part of the world where rain is not as regular as it is in the south, face more and more failures of seasonal monsoons. When the rains fail, the people don't have any way out or anywhere else to go. They go up there and although they know people will starve to death over a period of time, they have no other option. We have a very extensive network of European and Japanese and American philanthropic NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) who are very accomplished at drought relief. Being up there begets its own problems because once you start putting in great stores of food, that becomes a cash crop as it were for bandits and thieves and everyone else. That got us in trouble in Somalia later on.

*Q: At the time, how entrenched did we feel the Soviets and the Cubans were?*

WILLIAMSON: I don't know what the official line was in those days. I was always under the impression that the Ethiopians didn't like the foreigners, period and that the only reason these foreigners were acceptable was because Siad Barre of Somalia, the idiot, had taken the one step that could unite the Ethiopians behind this group, the DIRG. They invaded the motherland. No Ethiopian worth his salt could deny the call to spring the colors and shoot the first Somali you see. Self-inflicted wounds -- the Somali inability to be self-critical at all!

*Q: By the time you left, the place was still...*

WILLIAMSON: It was still a fiefdom of the Soviets, but it was at a very shaky stage.

*Q: These forces were beginning to gather.*

WILLIAMSON: Yes.

**DAVID A. KORN**  
**Chargé d'Affaires**  
**Ethiopia (1982-1985)**

*Ambassador David A. Korn was born and raised in Missouri. He entered the Foreign Service in 1957. His career included positions in France, Lebanon,*



*Mauritania, Israel, and India, and ambassadorships to Ethiopia and Togo. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.*

*Q: We are referring to Ambassador Korn's time in Ethiopia. One of the things I should mention is that Ambassador Korn wrote a book Ethiopia, the United States and the Soviet Union, which was published by British publisher Croon Helm in 1986. It is a solid study of the time you were there as the Chargé from...what was the time...*

KORN: June of '82 to July of '85.

*Q: So we are going to be covering some of the things that weren't covered in that.*

KORN: The main thing was that the Reagan Administration came in with the idea of roll-back. This applied to Ethiopia and one of the things was that the Reagan Administration took covert operation that had been begun on a very small scale under Carter and made it into an activity to be carried on inside of Ethiopia. Not a great threat to the government of Ethiopia. This was something I didn't believe could go undiscovered and tried to get stopped. I was sure that given the surveillance the Ethiopian government exercised over us that this would be discovered. It was and the Agency officer who was involved, assigned to run it, was arrested along with all the poor Ethiopians who had been brought in to this activity by the Agency. The man was held for 40 days and beaten, kept in an unlighted cell most of the time, and kept on a restricted diet and interrogated, etc. Our main effort was concentrated on getting him out. The Ethiopians did not tell us they were holding him. At first I couldn't imagine that they were holding him because it seemed so naive. This was an accredited diplomatic officer and you just didn't hold officers. They seemed to have the idea that they could blackmail the United States over this and thus made certain demands. This is how we got confirmation that they were holding him. At that point we tried to find various ways that we could put pressure on them. One of the points was that we had agreed to sell the Ethiopian Airlines two Boeing 767s on which the Ethiopians had paid \$20 million down on but the delivery was not scheduled until some months later. At one point the pressure was that we would keep the airplanes and the money too. The way it was worked out was that Mengistu finally came to realize that this was a game he couldn't win at. Reagan wrote him a letter clearly warning him that if this matter wasn't cleared up there would be serious consequences in our relations and offered to send Vernon Walters out to talk to him. So when Mengistu accepted Walters' visit we realized that this was going to be the way out. Walters came out. He was a very savvy operator--quite a showman; having dealt with many enormous egos and knowing how to flatter a leader and manipulate him. It was a very intense time. There were a lot of Ethiopians arrested.

*Q: Did you have the feeling while you were there that we were on the right track? It must have been tempting to say, "Oh, the hell with this, is it worth keeping an embassy there"?*

KORN: The main concern was that we were going to get involved with all the various regional insurgencies. I very much opposed that. There was constant temptation for the Reagan Administration to get involved with the Tigreans or the ELF's.

*Q: ELFs [Eritrean Liberation Force]? Were the Eritreans more leftist than the left, or something?*

KORN: Not so much. I think there was a general recognition that an independent Eritrea would really pose more problems for the United States than it would solve.

*Q: How would that be?*

KORN: If Eritrea becomes independent it has no resources whatsoever. It is an absolutely impoverished country. No government would accept the independence so you would have an Eritrean government who would turn anywhere for aid and assistance and being in perpetual war with Addis Ababa. So I think there was a realization that if we helped the Eritreans they might well succeed and then we really would have a problem. But there was constant temptation to get involved with the Tigreans who were much less a threat but who could weaken the government in Addis Ababa. My own feeling was that we should not get involved with these groups but should wait it out and see what happens.

*Q: How about the role of the Israelis at this point?*

KORN: The Israelis were delighted to be chosen the recipient of this information about the arrest of the Agency man. They came rushing in to Addis Ababa thinking they were going to play the role of savior by pulling the American chestnuts out of the fire and we would then have a great debt of gratitude towards them. But the Ethiopians didn't want to deal with them at all. They stayed a couple of days and then turned around and went home. The Israelis were carrying on a kind of clandestine relationship with the Ethiopians. It was one that they were buying. They very much wanted to have a presence, some influence in Ethiopia and Mengistu was playing on this. The Israelis would sell the Ethiopians various items of military hardware--not weapons at that time that I knew of, but communications, etc.--and the Ethiopians could not pay for them. There were also commercial ventures that the Ethiopians would not pay for. At one point the Israeli representative there who was supposedly the representative of one of the major state-owned industries, became so discouraged with the whole thing that he just packed up and went back to Israeli. His bosses in Israeli sent him back.

*Q: They were, as we have done, sort of buying there presence.*

KORN: Yes. The one thing that they did get was overflight rights over Ethiopia. They could fly over at midnight, once a week on their way to South Africa.

*Q: Did we get very much involved in efforts to get Ethiopian Jews out?*

KORN: Well, the embassy got involved to a certain extent but most of them went out through the Sudan. That was where we got involved. The embassy did get involved with those who came through Addis Ababa and helped them to work with American organizations which came there to try to get them out. We got them visas--you had to have a visa for a foreign country in order to get out of Ethiopia. So once an American organization came and got the various other permissions we arranged with the Department to give them visas.

*Q: Did you see a sort of a change during the time you were there under the Reagan Administration--one obviously having been burned with this one very minor operation of sort of learning that these were local problems and not to put everything in East-West terms?*

KORN: The Reagan Administration never looked at things like that. [laughter] The Reagan Administration wanted to shut down the humanitarian aid program for Ethiopia. When it came in, the first think it did was to make a note to take out the CRS program for Ethiopia in the next year's budget. But we managed to get it kept in. When the big drought and famine came along, the Administration went much further then I think anyone expected it would in extending humanitarian assistance.

*Q: You already had the infrastructure there...*

KORN: Not for such a big program. No, the embassy supported CRS (Catholic Relief Service) and got grants from them. You are talking about 20,000 - 30,000 tons of food. In fall of 1989 it went up to the hundred of thousands of tons and the AID mission was established. Then CARE came and everyone else and his brother came in wanting to get a part of it.

*Q: What was your feeling as you were there and had a chance to look at the situation about whether Ethiopia...?*

KORN: Clearly Mengistu's regime was ruining the country. It was splitting it apart and causing it to fall further and further behind economically. At the time there didn't seem to be any solution to this. He was firmly whetted to the Soviets and the Soviets were whetted to him. He saw a military resolution to his problems. I left in the summer of 1985 and that was the way it looked.

*Q: On your own part, did you say, Well, although maybe the Administration in power was also in a way seeing things in a military way....I mean who is with the Soviets and who isn't with the Soviets and all that. Did you see this as being a morass and let the Soviets get involved in it?*

KORN: There was no way that the United States in short of accepting Mengistu's regime that we could hope to gain good relations with Mengistu at that point. But things changed afterwards. No, I felt it would be a mistake to get involved with the separatist movements and there were people in Washington who toyed with that idea.

*Q: Did you get any emanations from the National Security Council which was being very activist in things like this?*

KORN: The NSC was where the radicals who wanted to toy with the various secessionist groups were. But the NSC didn't really play a very big role in all this because... there were a bunch of unreasonable people in the NSC and throughout the Administration who wanted...

We did set up a public affairs program. My wife set it up and ran it. We had a great deal of trouble getting approval for this, because the initial reaction was that we wanted to do something favorable to the Ethiopian government. We wanted to re-establish the cultural relations with the

individual Ethiopian which would undermine the stance of the Ethiopian Government so it took a while to ....

*Q: Is there anything else that wasn't covered in your book?*

KORN: No.

*Q: I found the book a very interesting one. I take it this is what you did when you went to the Royal...when you got yourself a year at the Royal Institute and you wrote your book. Did you have a chance to sort of pick up some of the official British view but at a different level? Were you working with other seconded British foreign affairs officials?*

KORN: It was a year's sabbatical during which I wrote a book. I went to a number of lectures and wrote articles...

*Q: And that was what you did. Well then you were appointed as Ambassador to Togo from '86 to '88. How did this come about?*

KORN: Well, Togo was what there was left after a certain number of other things went by the way. It was of no political or substantive interest. There was nothing of particular interest going on there.

*Q: Was the dominant presence in Togo still the French?*

KORN: Yes. They were pouring an enormous amount of money into the country. We had a small AID program as well. Then President Eyadema felt it was a good thing to hedge his bets on the French by having some Americans around. I always had plenty of access to him and he was always very friendly. There is nothing going on in Togo basically.

*Q: How about United Nations vote?*

KORN: ...at all small posts, as you well know, the main value of the host government is to get them to vote the right way at the United Nations.

*Q: I interviewed somebody who was in Mali, I guess, and was saying that he had to go in and try to get support for a "save the whale" vote in the United Nations and had to start out by explaining what a whale was since it was a land locked country. He was assured that if a whale ever appeared up the Niger River they wouldn't kill it.*

*In a way things were going well and there were no particular problem?*

KORN: Right.

*Q: Were there any American business concerns?*

KORN: We had an American who leased the government steel mill when it went broke and got it back into operation.

*Q: Well, how did you spend your time?*

KORN: (Inaudible). I decided to retire while there.

*Q: Because at some of these posts "challenge" wasn't even a term.*

KORN: Well, because of the nature of the regime people were not free to talk. You would have Togolese over and ask them the most harmless questions and they were afraid to talk.

*Q: What type of regime was there?*

KORN: It was a dictatorship. In many ways a benign dictatorship--it wasn't a bloody one. Eyadema didn't kill anybody unless he felt threatened. This never happened while I was there. People could be thrown in jail if on the wrong side of him and they could suffer materially. So not many people wanted to speak out. During the time I was there my wife was very active in promoting a local human rights organization. Eyadema got on this band wagon and the organization was actually set up and has been functioning since then. If I have to look back and think of a contribution that was made there that would probably be it.

*Q: Just a final thing. How did you feel about the Foreign Service as a career?*

KORN: That is hard to answer in a few words. It has advantages and attractions. I don't know if I would necessarily do it again. Maybe I would, it is hard to say. There are other things in life. It has changed a lot over the years. Certainly the Foreign Service today, I am not sure I would want to go in to. The one that I joined in 1957 I would.

*Q: You also were fortunate with Ethiopia and the part you played in the peace process.*

KORN: What I am referring to is the bureaucratization of the Foreign Service. When we entered the personnel system was a rather simple one and as the years passed it became more and more complex. Now it would be the admiration of some Byzantine....

*Q: You really need to have a lawyer or agent to represent you when you enter.*

KORN: To guide you through all of this. It has become so rigid and bureaucratic in so many ways. Not just the personnel system but the whole system of embassies, having to file reporting plans, etc. All this is fine in theory but what it promotes is people going around making busy work. You have to put something in the plan so you have to do it. That part of it probably would discourage me now from going in if I had to start all over again.

*Q: I think this is not an uncommon reaction.*

**JOSEPH P. O'NEILL**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Addis Ababa (1983-1986)**

*Joseph P. O'Neill was born in New York in 1935. From 1953-1956 he served in the US Army. After joining the Foreign service in 1961 he served positions in Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, India, Portugal, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Sudan, and Eritrea. Mr. O'Neill was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in May 1998.*

*Q: We had no women in my time. Those were the benighted days. At the end of that year, you went to a different part of the world, Addis Ababa, as DCM. Was that an assignment you looked forward to? How did that come about?*

O'NEILL: When I had left Bangkok and went to the National War College, for some reason, David Korn, who was my consul general in Calcutta, wanted me to come out and be his DCM. David was going to be ambassador to Mauritania, but there was another Korn in the Department at that time, a political appointee, Korn. He was a very Zionist Jew. Mauritania wouldn't take him. They confused the Zionist Jew with my David Korn. So, that finished him. But when he was going out to Mauritania, he called me up on the phone and said, "Come out and be my DCM." I said to him, "Ambassador, my function is not political." "It will be all right." I said, "I have to worry about the children's school." "It will all be all right." I went to the National War College. He gets Addis Ababa. I get Addis Ababa. I knew that he wanted me and I wanted him. So, I went out.

I'm very fortunate in that I always follow people who are not terribly industrious. So, I again follow a very unindustrious number two, who goes on and becomes consul general in Salzburg. So, I went out and it's Mengistu's time of bloody murder, 20,000 Cubans in the country, thousands and thousands of Russian advisors, Yemeni air force people up in Asmara, just littered with all types of Bulgarians, Hungarians, Poles, the rest. We had a very small embassy. We had three or four station people who eventually got PNGed out. We had four or five State officers. We had a big communications staff. We had "listeners" and others. There were about 12. There were a couple of secretaries. We had a six or seven man Marine guard detail. All told, we had, I think, 28 people.

*Q: Were dependents there?*

O'NEILL: With dependents. It was a great dependent post. I came in to see David. He says, "I want you to report. We aren't doing enough. I can't do it all. I'm glad to get rid of this idiot. I want you to really start focusing on the African embassies because my predecessor did not focus, didn't do anything. He did the British, the French, the Italians, and the Germans." So, I do that and I start to pick up contacts. The British had a really excellent embassy there. Ambassador Barber. The second man's name was David Bowman, later chief of Protocol at the FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office]. The Germans had a good embassy. For some reason, David did not get along with the French. I think it was because the French did not like the fact that David spoke

French so well (He was a graduate of the Sorbonne), and because he was not terribly good with the chargé or ambassador. They weren't entirely open with David. David was cold. He can turn into ice. So, I had that. So, I did just a whopping amount of reporting. It was so much reporting that Josephine was very upset with me at times because I spent hours and hours at the embassy. We all lived on the compound. I was about 30 yards from the house. It was just a terrible amount of time that was required for political reporting.

Mengistu had also East Germans there, with whom I became very close. I became close with three groups: the East Germans, the Chinese, and the Russians on that side, which the security people even now bitterly ask me about. Here we had the problem. We have a station which was good, has some good contacts, and we don't have any overt reporting. So, I go on and start doing all this. To be honest, you could be out every night in the week there. I was out five nights a week and one night we'd entertain. Josephine's cooking and friendliness were a real asset. So, we start to get this reporting. I do the writing of it. David does the rewriting, writing, rewriting. But we turned into a fabulous team. Pretty soon, David and I know as much about what's going on in that town than all the other embassies combined.

We find out a number of things. One, the Russians did not get along well with Mengistu. Mengistu loves the East Germans. But the East Germans [look down on him]. Mengistu hates the Americans because when he was in training in the United States, people treated him [condescendingly like a black American]. He's not a nigger. He's not a Negro. He's not an African. He is an Ethiopian. It's a mindset. It's terrible for our relations, but we understand it.

*Q: Did Mengistu ever receive David Korn?*

O'NEILL: Oh, yes, he received me, too.

*Q: Oh, good.*

O'NEILL: He had a good foreign minister, a good deputy, Ato Bekele. He had good people. When we were there, he was okay. He had a nice wife. She was very, very religious. She could sort of break on his more erratic and murderous moods.

Let me tell you a story about Mengistu. Mengistu is the son of an imperial lord. The father took extremely good care of him, saw that he went to a good military academy, arranged for his training in the United States, took care of his mother. This kid (Mengistu) had it going for him, notwithstanding the fact that, by our standards he was illegitimate. When he comes to power, he is the chairman. His father dies. (After Haile Selassie was killed, Mengistu buried his bones under his office and has killed hundreds of thousands of others more, including one of his ministers in a cabinet meeting. This was a bad boy.) His father dies. A man of honor, a man who was loyal to his emperor, etc. So, they have a great funeral for his father. His wife goes to the funeral. He doesn't. He sits off in a car nearby. The funeral goes on for hours as the people praise the honor, the nobility of his father, everybody knowing that the son is sitting out there and he's hearing this, knowing that in praising the father, they condemn him. He couldn't do anything because Mengistu knew as the people were praising his father, they were never going to say anything like that about him. They never did.

Another story: Josephine goes out to do the shopping. This tells you about Russian- Ethiopian relations. She goes around to all the stores and she complains to me that she's always being followed. So, I say, "Are they bothering you?" "No, they're following me." So, I go and I see Lev Mironov, who was the deputy at the Russian embassy and later the ambassador there. I said, "Look, we've done business together. When my Marines caused a problem, we settled it out. When one of your people caused a problem, we settled it out. We've exchanged information. I've never lied to you. Now I have a real problem. People are following my wife. You know my wife. She's been here in your embassy. You've been to my house. She is not involved in this business." He says, "I know." "So, why are you doing this?" "Because I've been told to." So, I said, "It upsets her." He said, "Why don't you tell your wife that these people are only for her protection and that's it. Then Lev said, "When my wife goes down to shop, she doesn't have any bodyguards and they spit at her and the other ladies of this embassy." [The Ethiopians] hated [the Russians]. They called them "poor Americans, poor white trash."

*Q: This is in Ethiopia.*

O'NEILL: This is in Ethiopia.

*Q: Run by Mengistu.*

O'NEILL: Run by Mengistu.

*Q: And supported by the Russians.*

O'NEILL: And supported by the Russians. It again shows the relations. The East German Stasi, absolutely first class. The deputy head of their mission was Stasi. I knew him very well. While we were there, around Christmas, David Korn is not in the country. He's gone back to see the family.

*Q: You were in charge.*

O'NEILL: I was in charge. The Stasi catch one of our CIA agents with his hand in the pocket book. I mean, catch him with people. Regrettably, this agent without any physical coercion but to save his own ass, this American rolls up the rest of the organization, gives it away. We don't know that he's been captured. All we know is he's disappeared. I hear but I don't know that he's been picked up. This is when the Agency and State worked really the best I've ever seen in my life, not because I'm involved, but we really worked correctly. I went over and saw the two CIA guys. I'd give you their names, except they're still active. I say, "What are we going to do?" So, we sit down. I said, "I will go down to the Foreign Office and say that's he's missing, that he's been on the booze, and he's having trouble with his wife and that he's sleeping with somebody else. We can't find him." We don't want to turn the guy in. We'd like to have him back before David comes back and maybe save his career. The Foreign Office says, "Don't know a damn thing about it." They really didn't know a damn thing about it. So, we start making all sorts of inquiries. I start some messages back to the Department. Every message I send back to the



Department I immediately tell the Agency the State number. When they send their message back, they tell me the number so we are able to keep each of our own sides informed.

*Q: So you're coordinating.*

O'NEILL: Coordinating. We had a disagreement about how to handle it. I can't remember what the disagreement was. I think it was modalities. We both reported exactly the differences we had in both our channels. Finally, I'm out at some party and I see the Minister of Justice. I say to him, "Look, we are having some really terrible problems about this. We know you've got him." I don't know that. He might be dead in a ditch. He minister says, "Yes." I say, "It's time that we get this thing settled out. You have to pass this to Mengistu." So, I go back and tell the chargé, David Korn. The Ethiopians because they won't talk to us tell the Israelis in Nairobi that they have the CIA agent. President Reagan sends General Vernon Walters, who was in Africa at that time, to go to Ethiopia and get the agent. This is the first time that I met General Walters.

*Q: The famous general.*

O'NEILL: By this time, David is back. So, we go out to the airport to see our friend, General Walters. The first time I've seen him. This great hulk of a man, obviously with gout, comes lumbering off the plane, flops in a car, and we go up to the embassy, and we say, "What are you going to say to Mengistu?" "The President of the United States wishes to have back Mr. Timothy Wells," who was the officer who they picked up. His name is no longer classified [Goshu Wolde]. We said, "What else?" "Nothing more." We go down and see the Foreign Minister. Walters says the same thing. Our friend Mengistu is up in Asmara because he's having military problems up there, [needs] to put some spine in some of his soldiers. So, we have to fly our friend, General Walters, up there. David goes up. I stay in Addis Ababa. Mengistu wants to negotiate. Walters has no instructions to negotiate. His instructions are to bring him back, nothing more. That's all he has to say. "My instructions from the President of the United States are to bring back Mr. Wells." Mengistu gives him a three hour lecture on Ethiopian history. Walters goes back to Addis, decides he will not sleep in Addis, but he'll go back to Nairobi and sleep in Nairobi. He sleeps in Nairobi. We get a message saying that General Walters should come back the next day and get Wells. So, we get Wells. But then they PNG the whole station. The whole station is gone. I remember how this all happened because I was at dinner with the Finnish chargé and I get a call. I've got to go to the embassy. So, I leave the dinner and go to the embassy. I'm told to put our staff aboard a Lufthansa flight. I go to Lufthansa and I (You understand how much I had to pay for this) ask Lufthansa to delay a flight. For Lufthansa to delay a flight is sort of like asking God to put the world on hold.

*Q: Germans are very punctual.*

O'NEILL: Raised to let the sun set in the west and rise in east or something. I have no idea. So, I get them to hold the plane for about 45 minutes. We get them out. It was just miserable. The whole station was wiped out - every single person.

*Q: How had they captured this fellow?*

O'NEILL: The Stasi was very good and they had obviously been following him or following somebody involved in his cell and they raided the house and they caught him.

*Q: And they turned him over to the Ethiopians.*

O'NEILL: The Stasi were never visible. We never, to the best of my knowledge, saw a white face. But they did it. I know because the East German who was-

*Q: They trained Mengistu's bodyguards, too.*

O'NEILL: Yes, they did. Before this, there was another man at the East German embassy who, just after I had come in, started to spread a lot of very bad news about [me], specifically that I was chief of station, and that I was involved in all sorts of shenanigans. I went and saw David. The next day was going to be an East German national day. We would go. If he would go, I would go. David who hated these things with a purple passion said to me, "You go and you tell the East Germans that you're coming, you're going to stay for a few minutes, and leave, and why." So, I did this. I embellished on it. I said that "I personally will have nothing to do with any member of your embassy as long as he's here." Within months, he was gone.

*Q: How long did they hold our man? Was it a matter of weeks?*

O'NEILL: Weeks, probably as much as a month. It was a mess because he disappeared, his wife was around. She's still in the Agency, by the way, under her maiden name. His girlfriend was around, I believe, pregnant, though I can't recall. When he comes back, he's with his wife and he gets her pregnant. It was "Peyton Place," a real repugnant situation.

*Q: Yes. Talk a little bit about the famine in Ethiopia.*

O'NEILL: In '83, we had no AID mission in Ethiopia for political reasons and for aid reasons, aid reasons being that AID did not believe there was any need for it. There were a number of NGOs and they were doing some work: mother healthcare primarily. We were providing some small stuff. Since there was no AID officer there, I was the AID officer. I would sign all the necessary papers to get stuff in. But it also gave me an excuse to travel because I wouldn't let the food in unless I could see it. I used that reason through my whole more than three years in the country. So, that all went along. There was a deep dispute in Washington. On the AID side, was a man by the name of Francis Xavier Ready, who said we should not give any food at all to Ethiopia regardless of the famine because all we would be doing is to support Mengistu and his people because even if they didn't use the food, other food would be used by him. So, all we were doing in one way or another was feeding the Ethiopian army, which was not [in our] best interests.

*Q: This was not a State position, I think.*

O'NEILL: There was no common position across AID, State, and CIA. There was no one group being for it and one group being against it. I, who had served in Calcutta and was in Vietnam - was used to seeing dead bodies and famine and all the rest, was upset by what I was seeing. I

knew what was going to happen because they were starting to eat their seed grain. David had me write an "O'Neillgram," which in effect was very stark. "We can tell how bad things are because the children are dying. The children have red hair. The women are self-aborting and many women have decided not to have children. The water is dirty. Communications are bad. Humanity deserves-"

*Q: Are we talking about one region?*

O'NEILL: No, it all began up north in what is now Eritrea. It was a disaster. Then, if anything was grown, one side or the other would steal it. So, we had this very difficult problem. David for moral reasons because he was a very moral person, and I because of maybe a mixture of morality and politics, or because I couldn't see any utility of letting people die... Ronald Reagan, the great conservative, said, "We do not make foreign policy on the bodies of women and children." So, that broke it out. But they eventually had to get rid of Francis Xavier Ready, who was a political appointee, he was made the ambassador to Equatorial Guinea.

You'll appreciate the humor of this because that was the last TDY post I ever had. I closed down Equatorial Guinea. I'll give you a story about this. Senator Kennedy comes out with his children, a man whose politics I don't like, but who I like as a human being. He takes his boy who has lost his leg and his daughter, who is a very smart, tough, intelligent young lady, up to Mekele. We arrived in Mekele a little late, but on time for the Kennedys. We stand out there with a Jesuit, who was at that time head of the Catholic Charities, the only decent person I ever saw running Catholic Charities. You heard this horrible moan and the wind comes sweeping down the mountain. The temperature had to have been 10 degrees Fahrenheit. It was about 6:00 pm. The weather was so cold that refugees were huddled and the Kennedy boy started to cry. A tear falls down his face. The tear froze on his face. God bless him, Kennedy; he came back and helped to move more food in that area. Mickey Leland came out later, but was all show. He had with him a black congressman from the first district of Philadelphia (Gray), who had a mind like a computer. He was a brilliant man. He left the Congress, I'm sorry. He went to take over the United Negro Fund. He did a tremendous job in getting more food out. It was terrible. But there were, again, because of personal relations, things that could be done then without regard to politics. We were trying to get food into an area. We had the food, the Russians had the plane, and the Poles had the helicopters. We also got a couple of DC-3s. There were the four of us. We went around. David did not do it. He sent me to do it. I say, "What can you do" and Fracher from AID and Machmaer from AID. We did do this. The Poles would spot the area with helicopters. We supplied the gasoline for the Russian aircraft and all of us delivered food. A small thing, I told Lev Mironov at that time the reason why Lev and I should be friends was that sometime in the future there was going to be some really bad problem and there would have to be a bridge and we would solve it. I said, "The chances of our countries ever being friends in our lifetime is nil." Of course, look at us today. We're friends. The politics were horrible because Mengistu killed people. He killed some of his best generals.

The papal nuncio there, Monsignor Thomas White, always cheated at tennis. It was his great flaw in life. He cheated at tennis. Anyway, he had great information and managerial experience in refugee matters there.

The other thing was that even the Poles and the rest wanted to talk and they wanted to talk in a manner in which they wouldn't get their ass in trouble. So, at these big cocktail parties, I did as much work as I did in the office.

*Q: What you're telling me is that we have to combat this in conjunction with people who we considered our enemies at the time.*

O'NEILL: Absolutely. We did more because we had all the food. Let me also say that Mengistu and some of his crew stole millions of tons and made lots of money out of it. Francis Xavier Ready was right: we did help the government. It was our own choice. We wanted to feed them. It's just awful.

*Q: Was it during this period that Congressman Leland was killed in that crash?*

O'NEILL: No, that was five or six years later.

*Q: Did we give any assistance to getting the Jews (Falashas) out of Ethiopia into Israel?*

O'NEILL: Yes. That was again that horrible person, Lou Goelz, who was now deputy assistant secretary of State. There was a Jewish organization whose name I won't mention because they still do work like this (and I'm not talking about Mossad) who also had people in Ethiopia, in Addis, who I knew well. They wanted to get people out, but to get people out through the airport, they had to have a visa to go someplace. My feeling was "Let's give them a visa, but let's give them a real visa with a fraudulent number on it." We've got A visas and B visas and L visas and all. "Let's give them (because we didn't have that type of visa) an X, Y, Z visa. So, if they have this visa, then they can leave. They can get their exit permit."

*Q: You did this to show Ethiopian authorities.*

O'NEILL: Right. They had no intentions of going to the United States. They were not getting a visa which they would use to enter the United States legally. They were getting a "visa" to nowhere.

*Q: That would get them out of the country.*

O'NEILL: Right. I sent this information back to Washington and Lou Goelz goes through the goddam roof. I never got another job in the consular cone after that. He wrote that such an issuance would violate the integrity of the visa. What we had to do eventually was to give a visa to go out with the assurance that these people would fly to the United States and then go back to Israel. It shows you how-

*Q: You mean from Ethiopia to the U.S. and back to Israel?*

O'NEILL: Yes. It goes to show the weird stupidity of this. Lou had served on the border in Mexico. He had served in Iran and given thousands of visas to Iranians who were not eligible to enter the United States. He goes and gives us this trouble. We help with the Falashas by going up

into Gondar, where they were. I made half a dozen trips up into Gondar. One time, the governor of the province beat up one of my local employees. Fortunately, I was traveling with Senator DeConcini and Senator Tribble. I immediately met with these two senators and protested immediately to the governor. I told her, "We're going to protest. We're going to see Mengistu." But they had a nut up there as head of security, a man who was sent out on a regular basis to East Germany to get his head screwed on right. It was bad. We would go up into the villages. I will say about the Falashas that I did make one mistake, an egregious one. I didn't know they were so many. I thought they were in the many thousands. I didn't think they were in the tens of thousands. I was off by a significant number.

*Q: Did the Israelis know how many there were?*

O'NEILL: No, they did not know how many they were because they were constantly on me to find out how many there were. I don't think it became obvious how many there were until we got up into the late 1980s.

*Q: You often wonder, if they knew how many they were, whether they would have been so eager to take them all in, where they were having a tough time assimilating.*

O'NEILL: You know, believe it or not, they had an easier time assimilating the Ethiopian Jews, the Ethiopian Falashas, than assimilating some of the ones from Morocco and some of them who have just recently come out from the Soviet Union. The Ethiopian Falashas have turned out to be excellent soldiers and border guards and things like that. They are still discriminated against because of their color. We have a friend who is an Ethiopian-Amharic who recently visited Israel. She said that many of the children cannot speak Amharic anymore. They only speak Hebrew. She said some of the older people are starting to lose it. She said that sometimes it's difficult for them, but she noted, "My son has trouble when he goes down to Georgetown because he's half Amhara, half American."

*Q: Well, it will work out. I remember, when I was in Israel, we had only a few of them there and they were having a tough time then.*

O'NEILL: Now there are more.

*Q: Then they brought in thousands.*

O'NEILL: And now they're a voting block. There's nothing like the ballot to make people sit up and take notice.

**TIBOR PETER NAGY, JR.**  
**Administrative Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (1984-1986)**

*Ambassador Nagy was born in Hungary and came to the United States as Political Refugee in 1957, settling in the Washington, D.C. area. After graduating from Texas Tech University, he entered the Foreign Service in 1978. During his career he served in Lusaka, Victoria (Seychelles), Addis Ababa, Lomé, Yaoundé and Lagos, as well as in the State Department in Washington.. From 1996 to 1999 he served as US Ambassador to Guinea-Conakry and to Ethiopia from 1999 to 2002. Ambassador Nagy was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2010.*

*Q: OK, what was the situation in Ethiopia in '84?*

NAGY: We had the worst relations of any country with Marxist Ethiopia. At the time of the dictator, Mengistu Haile Mariam, the embassy was literally under siege in that the Ethiopian Government very strictly constricted the number of American employees that we might have there. It was an extremely Spartan environment, extremely hostile. We could not leave the capital city without permission, which we rarely ever got. David Korn was permanent chargé. Joseph O'Neil was acting DCM. Morale was very, very difficult. It was -- it was -- it was extremely difficult to get anything done. There was a rebel movement in the countryside in the north that was actively fighting the Marxist army. And during my time there -- very quickly during my time there it became evident that there was a very severe famine going on in the land. So all of a sudden this very small embassy -- I think we only had like, 12 embassy officers, something ridiculous -- from having had a huge embassy staff earlier during the time of the emperor, all of a sudden we had to respond massively to this famine. And we went in and asked the Ethiopians that we had to expand staff, so I was -- in the administrative offices we were working on furiously to bring in people from the USAID, to bring in the AID supplies all within an extremely hostile working environment. I arrived there literally a couple weeks after our entire -- how can I discuss intelligence? I really can't.

*Q: OK.*

NAGY: There were a number of American officers who were expelled, kicked out of the country prior to my arrival. Also General Vernon Walters came into the country to retrieve an American diplomat who was being held against his will under conditions of imprisonment by the Ethiopian Government. That's how --

*Q: Oh boy. Well, weren't you apprehensive about arriving with wife and triplets?*

NAGY: No, not really because I mean I knew the historical Ethiopia and the historical relationship, and it proved to be right. Our personal relations with the Ethiopian people were phenomenal. Our official relations were horrendous. My Soviet colleagues, on the other hand, had wonderful official relations and they had horrendous personal relations. We -- an American could go into a state store, which was set up for diplomats, and they were told that nothing was available until people found out that we were Americans, at which time all the goods would come out from under the -- under the counter.

*Q: Oh my God.*

NAGY: So I always said that I would much rather have it in that direction than in the other direction.

*Q: Yeah.*

NAGY: I'd rather be an American there than a Soviet. The working environment was extremely frenetic, extremely -- I burned the candles at both ends, I'll put it that way.

*Q: Well --*

NAGY: We did things like fly in -- fly in, mind you, a prefabricated construction house -- constructed houses, put them up on the compound because we had USAID officers that were literally sleeping in their cars. There was no housing available. The embassy went I think from 12 people, when I arrived there, to something like 30, you know, within a two-year period as we geared up to help the famine really.

*Q: Well, what was going on in Ethiopia at the time with Mengistu and all?*

NAGY: Well, they were scrambling to help with the famine at the same time. There was a growing insurgency in the countryside at same time that was making more and more progress against a much better armed Ethiopian Army.

*Q: Well, was this a Tigrayan, Eritrean --*

NAGY: Yep, it was Tigrayan, Eritrean, the Oromo, they all had their rebel groups. But the Tigrayans and the Eritreans were making very, very quick and dramatic progress and also at that -- remember, this was also the time that we worked together surreptitiously with the Sudanese and I think paid off the Ethiopians to get the Ethiopian Jews out of the country.

*Q: Oh, the Falashi.*

NAGY: Yeah, the Falashas. Yeah. So there was a lot going on.

*Q: Well, did you get involved in the Jewish Ethiopian exodus?*

NAGY: What I got involved in, I was -- I was doing all the logistics for everything. I mean during my two years there we had, if I remember the count, like 150 members of Congress visit for the famine issue and also for the Jewish issue. We had planes full of congressional people that we had to deal with. So in addition to trying to get our work done, which was tremendous and demanding, we also had to deal with congressional delegation. And we had -- I remember we had a Somali airliner hijacked with U.S. Military personnel on board that was there for several weeks at the same time that we had a congressional delegation. I mean the work was unbelievable.

*Q: Where did you put the congressional people? I mean were there hotels?*

NAGY: There -- oh yeah, there was a Hilton Hotel. Yeah, there was a Hilton Hotel and we had excellent relations with the management. And there were times though when there were no hotel rooms and we would put some people up sometimes in the chargé's residences or in other residences. I was also the chair of the school board, of the international school so we had a large international school with about 400 students, and that took a lot of work. I've never worked that hard in my life.

*Q: Well, I'm just wondering, I mean this sounds like an impossible regime to deal with --*

NAGY: It was.

*Q: Yet -- except that a hell of a lot of very positive things were going on.*

NAGY: Well, the morale was phenomenal. I mean it was just morale -- phenomenal because everybody was pulling together, everyone felt like they were contributing to the greater good, and we got along well. Everybody did.

*Q: Well, was there concern about a collapse of the central government?*

NAGY: Not then yet. That came several years later, about four or five years later I think during Bob Houdek's time.

*Q: But at the time this was just something on the horizon.*

NAGY: Absolutely, it was very much on the horizon.

*Q: Did you get out? I mean was it possible to get out and see things?*

NAGY: They gave permission to visit some of the feeding centers. We had a campsite at Lake Langano, which was within the permissible area to visit so we -- the embassy staff could occasionally go down there just to relax. Aside from that, like I said we were constrained to the province of the capital and beyond that -- if we had a congressional delegation coming the government begrudgingly would give permission to fly them up to Asmara or Mek'ele or one of the big feeding camps because the government knew that we were the ones supplying the food.

*Q: When you say feeding camps, what were these?*

NAGY: Well, these were where thousands and thousands of Ethiopians from the countryside would gather and that's where the international NGOs would try to find them and deal with them.

*Q: How were relations with the NGOs?*

NAGY: They were very good; they were extremely good. I mean we all depended on each other so -- so yeah, we made due. I mean they were working their hearts out just as much as we were.



*Q: Was there still the Swedish hospital?*

NAGY: For -- for what?

*Q: Well, there used to be a rather sizeable -- I'm told, people I've talked to talk about a Swedish hospital. But that I guess was --*

NAGY: There were NGO hospitals all over the place. There was -- I mean there was -- yeah, the NGOs were there delivering services the government was not. There were literally thousands of Ethiopian soldiers with lost limbs. I mean the situation was just absolutely incredible, that you had this hardcore Marxist government try to run a centralized state while everything was collapsing around it.

*Q: What about relations with Somalia?*

NAGY: Well, it was just before I got there I think that we and the Soviets did a flip, because the Soviets in the mid '70s to late '70s, the Soviets were supporting Somalia, we were supporting Ethiopia. The Somalis invaded the Ethiopians and the Soviets very quickly realized that they were backing the wrong people, so they switched to the Ethiopians. And then we got Somalia, you know, kind of like goodbye, just because they were the ones leftover. So no, there's always hard feelings with the Ethiopians.

*Q: Well, were there any elements of the government that you could deal with?*

NAGY: The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, because we were the main suppliers of food.

*Q: Well, had Mengistu by this time -- I mean I understand he at one point went into a Cabinet meeting and shot all the people.*

NAGY: Oh yeah, that was during the Red Terror when he was taking over. During -- that was in the -- like I said, I got there '84. That was in the years leading up, like late '70s, early '80s, something like that. When I was there in '84 the regime was celebrating it's 10 years in power, and that was one of the things that they spent millions of millions of dollars on a celebration while people were starving to death in the countryside.

*Q: Well, was there sort of a -- a colonel's mafia or something? You know, a ruling class or?*

NAGY: Well, there was the Derg.

*Q: The Derg, yeah.*

NAGY: Yeah, the Derg. And it was the young officers who had gone Marxist. And the funny thing was of course that the rebel groups fighting were also Marxists in orientation. So you had this anomaly of a Marxist dictatorship being, you know, fought tooth and nail by Marxist rebel groups.

*Q: What was sort of our relations -- I mean your relations and looking at Asmara? At one time we had Kagnev Station, which I take it had been shut down.*

NAGY: Oh yeah, that had been shut down I think --

*Q: But you know, at one point our whole relations on the horn of Africa revolved around Kagnev Station.*

NAGY: That's right.

*Q: And you know, how we dealt with Somalia, how we dealt with Ethiopia, because of its strategic importance. But now did we have any particular interest in -- in Eritrea?*

NAGY: No, because at that point it was just part of Ethiopia, and that was the center of the, of the insurgency along with Tigray. And our relations with the insurgents was done through our -- I believe our Embassy in Khartoum because the rebels maintained their liaison offices there; relations between the Mengistu Ethiopian Government and the Sudanese were awful. The Sudanese were supporting these insurgencies.

*Q: Well, the Falasha -- I mean there was this peculiar thing of they were being flown out of Ethiopia into the Sudan and then flown to Israel.*

NAGY: Yeah, that's right. It was all -- it was all very surreptitious, very hush-hush.

*Q: And a lot of money was being passed.*

NAGY: A lot of money, that's right. And a lot of money ended up with the Ethiopian Marxist Government too. You know, who paid who how I was not privied too. It's written about.

*Q: But -- but it was a well known -- I mean you knew that this was going on.*

NAGY: Yeah, yeah, that that -- but the big operations I think came after I left. The big operations came just in the months and year prior to the government's collapse. Because at the end of the day Mengistu got on a plane and instead of flying off to visit the front line as he said he was doing, he flew off to Zimbabwe to seek political exile because he knew that his days were up. So that I think was much later in the '80s.

*Q: Did the Coptic Church have any particular role as far as we were concerned at this time?*

NAGY: No, the Coptic Church at that time I think Mengistu -- the patriarch of the Coptic Church in Ethiopia was a Mengistu appointee and the government had basically taken all the land away from the church. And so all the churches were under siege. The church we attended, the International Evangelical Church, that was about the only evangelical church that Ethiopians could go to. The Ethiopian Government was brutal on Evangelicals. I suspect they also were brutal on ethnic groups. So it was -- it was -- it was a tough time for -- it was a tough time for everybody.

*Q: Well, so did you sort of have a responsibility for keeping up the morale, or did everybody have to do that?*

NAGY: Well, I -- I mean that, that fell to me because if people didn't get their shipments and the residences were not taken care of morale would suffer. And I did all kinds of stuff. I remember I had very good working relationships with the support organizations in Washington. We had a shack on the compound which one night fell down, and I called -- and I needed housing desperately. And I called the Foreign Building Office, FBO, and I said, "Listen, I've got a deal for you guys. I know that we can't build a house, but how -- but there is a regulation which says that I -- I -- I can build something to restore it to its original condition, so how about if I restore the shack to be able to house a family of, you know, with three bedrooms." They said they had the money to move the next day and basically I locally built a house. I mean I had to be extremely ingenious, but we got things done.

*Q: How were the Ethiopian employees, the Foreign Service nationals?*

NAGY: Best -- best local employees in the world. And they were under tremendous pressure. They were picked up, they were arrested, they were tortured, they were kept in prison. I mean I, I figured half the people were reporting on us on a regular basis because they had to, and the other half were being picked up and beaten up because they weren't. So it was very tough for them. It was a pleasure for me of course later to go back as ambassador and reward their, you know, some of the employees who were there when I was there in the mid '80s were still there when I went back in the late '90s, and I did what I could to help them get their special immigrant visas.

*Q: Well again, delightful people. I ran across the Ethiopian connection in a peculiar way. I was chief of the consular section in Belgrade from '62 to '67 and at one point there was almost a complete exodus of Ethiopian students who'd gone to Bulgaria, of all places and one of the -- they just decided they were being treated abysmally by the Bulgarians who were trying to emulate the Soviets, but Bulgarians just weren't up to it and the Ethiopians were called black monkeys by the Bulgarians. And so we got this exodus and we were -- the Yugoslavs said, you know, you take care of the problem. So we were getting them into American schools and all this. But I was very impressed by the people who were coming out.*

NAGY: Phenomenal people. Well, as I tell my Africa class, Ethiopia was the only country in Africa that is a result of history and geography and not, you know, made up by people drawing lines on a map.

*Q: Yeah, and of course they had done a number on the Italians at the Battle of Adwa I guess back in the --*

NAGY: Oh yeah.

*Q: -- turn of the -- just before the turn of the century.*

NAGY: The largest, you know, single loss for a European power against a native army, ever. So yeah, no, the Eth -- and they were -- Ethiopia was never, ever really colonized.

*Q: No. And actually the Ethiop -- the Italians I'm told had done a pretty good job with roads and things like that.*

NAGY: Yeah, they were very good at it. They did a number of roads mostly in Eritrea and railroads and -- but like I said, they never fully -- they were never able to colonize the southern part of Ethiopia.

*Q: Now, was there any connection with Djibouti at all?*

NAGY: Oh, absolutely because Ethiopia depended on -- Djibouti was one of the ports. The connection was much tighter the second time I went back as ambassador, because by then Ethiopia was the world largest land locked country. At this time (1984) there were still two Ethiopian ports, Massawa and Assab, which were operating, although both ports were under siege. The countryside around them was occupied by rebels. So they had to have armed convoys going into and out of the ports.

*Q: Kenya, how stood that?*

NAGY: Mombassa was a little too far away. The Somali ports -- again at that time Somalia was a hostile country. Port Sudan again, was at that time a hostile country. So Ethiopia basically, they were depending on Assab, Massawa, and to a lesser extent Djibouti, because the railroad out of Addis went to Djibouti.

*Q: How were relations between Ethiopia and Kenya?*

NAGY: They were OK. They were OK. They were about as correct and civil as possible. Kenya's northern frontier is a very lawless area, so you know, for Kenya the Ethiopian border was kind of their wild border.

*Q: Yeah. Were there any missionaries in --*

NAGY: Oh yeah, we had very, very good friends. Sudan Interior Mission, SIM, now I think they call themselves just SIM, they were there. And they were missionaries, but they were also doing development work. They were some very long-term missionaries there we became very good friends with.

*Q: And the Ethiopian Government sort of let them do their thing?*

NAGY: They did. They kicked -- if someone got to be a little bit too active they would get kicked out. But they were a number throughout the country who were doing like, water projects, and they were very loved by the local people. So the government was somewhat careful to not screw around with them.

*Q: Well, now you know, in the international sphere, I take it Ethiopia was probably the closest to the Soviets of any of the countries in Africa in a way.*

NAGY: Oh, absolutely. Down the line.

*Q: But did the Soviets get anything out of this?*

NAGY: Well, not really -- I mean the Soviets were supplying Ethiopia with arms. Ethiopians were supplying the Soviets with diplomatic support, but that was about it. And you know, once Gorbachev came in and he realized what a -- what a loss it was, I think he very quickly cut his losses, and that's when the Ethiopian regime really went down the tubes when there was no more Soviet weapons.

*Q: Well, then you left there in '86?*

NAGY: Left in '86 and I went back to Washington to take the econ course and study French because I was -- I was designated to go off as DCM to Lomé because my first chargé in Ethiopia, David Korn was named ambassador to Togo and he asked for me as his DCM, even though I was under grade at the time. So that was very fortuitous.

*Q: Yeah. I interviewed both David and his wife.*

NAGY: Roberta.

*Q: She was quite active in Ethiopia, wasn't she?*

NAGY: She was very active because she actually served as a public affairs officer. We had this situation, you know, which I mentioned. The government limited the number of employees we could have there, so every single spouse was strongly encouraged to work. And Roberta was acting PAO (public affairs officer). For a while my wife was acting PAO, and she was also the CLO (community liaison officer). I mean it was a situation where everybody worked.

*Q: Well, in many ways that of course helped the morale a lot, didn't it?*

NAGY: Absolutely. Absolutely.

**ANNE O. CARY**  
**Position not specified**  
**Addis Ababa (1985-1989)**

*Anne O. Cary was born in Washington, DC in September of 1952. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin and entered the Foreign Service in 1974. Her career included positions in Brussels, Port-au-Prince, Paris,*

*Addis Abba, New Delhi, Casablanca, and Washington, DC. Ms. Cary was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 30, 1995.*

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

CARY: February 1985- June 1989.

*Q: This was a very crucial period*

CARY: Yes. While we were studying Amharic the news journalists came out with video footage of the famine in Ethiopia. The outpouring in response to these pictures of starving kids was just tremendous. They raised more money than I think had ever been raised for a foreign disaster. It was complicated by the fact that the Mengistu government was Marxist and leaned very much towards the North Korean model, absolutely antagonistic towards the United States, towards the West. The Ethiopians, themselves, are very insular in a way. They don't believe the outside world should have much to do with what they are doing. But it was so clear that they could not handle the extent of the famine which was caused by drought and the 15 year old civil war.

A further complication for the US government existed. The person I was replacing was a CIA employee who had been caught red handed paying off one of the rebel groups, captured and held by the Ethiopians and tortured. Vernon Walters had to fly in and get him out. The Ethiopian government threw out almost everybody in the mission and restricted the US mission in Ethiopia to 18 people including the marine guards.

*Q: Before you went out there was the whole idea of having a mission there up to question?*

CARY: We had a permanent Chargé, there was no Ambassador, and had not been one for three or four years, I think. The idea always was that we would be thrown out or asked to leave because the regime was so disagreeable. The reason for continuing a mission there was the Horn of Africa was very, very important. Ethiopia then included Eritrea and the access to the Gulf and the ability to keep ships from going in or out was absolutely imperative. There had also been an important installation at Kagnew station.

*Q: This was a communications center, but that had been gone hadn't it?*

CARY: Yes, that closed in the 70's, but the Ethiopians held technicians for three or four years a spies. When Mengistu broke with the US the government sent a diplomatic note giving 24 hours for almost everybody to get out. They allowed a small number to continue. So it was a very, very lean mission. When we arrived we were told to keep a bag packed. We expected to leave at any time.

*Q: Going there with a little baby, did they still have the Swedish hospital or something?*

CARY: No, actually the Russian hospital was the best one, but we didn't allow anybody to be really treated for anything. If anything happened you went to Kenya. We had a nurse with a good medical unit there. In fact, when other people in the diplomatic community were injured they

would come to us first. There were no medicines, this was an austere regime. You couldn't import anything, everything that was imported was a luxury and that included medical supplies. Casualties from the war going on with the Eritreans were everywhere, you should have seen these kids. It was Civil War style medicine. They didn't have enough antibiotics or equipment to treat things. So, if you basically had anything they amputated. People were very, very leery about having their kids go off in the army because you just didn't know what was going to happen. The Ethiopian government would sneak through the streets and pick up any male who looked old enough to be inducted. Boys regularly would disappear and their families wouldn't know what happened. Of course this was a regime that picked up people anyway and took them out and you just had no idea what was going to happen to them.

There was a curfew which was strictly enforced...I thought this was great because you had to be off the streets by midnight which meant if you had a baby sitter you had to take her home, so all parties broke up around 10:30. Everybody really appreciated that.

*Q: I know, I lived with a curfew in Korea, delightful.*

CARY: It was also the first time I had been in a country where we didn't have good relations, where the newspapers said nothing, so you really had to use the diplomatic circuit to get information. That was the only way you could find out what was going on.

*Q: Who was the Chargé there?*

CARY: It was David Korn when we arrived and he was an interesting person to work for, extremely intelligent. He writes beautifully. He didn't get out and yet he wrote the best analysis. He listened. We would go out and he would listen. His wife, Roberta was the PAO. She had been deputy assistant secretary for human rights when they got married and then went out to post. She decided...the USIS program had been shut down when everything else had been shut down...that it was really time to do something. She spent an awful lot of time out meeting people, going to the universities and making cultural contacts. She got out quite a lot. Joe O'Neill was the DCM and Joe hustled more than any third secretary you have ever seen. He knew everybody and had no problem talking with the third secretary at the Italian embassy and no trouble talking with an ambassador. So, David would take in all this information, asking good questions and then write these wonderful analysis. It sort of made me think of Gary Trudeau. I have often wondered how he does it because he is not there. He draws these things and captures just exactly something. He did some strips about Ethiopia at the time and it was amazing how accurate it was.

*Q: At this point what was the government of Ethiopia?*

CARY: The government of Ethiopia was Mengistu and a politburo, the gang of five who were his closest advisors and were really thugs. We are talking murderers.

*Q: We are talking about a time when they had cabinet meetings where they shot each other and these were the ones who survived.*

CARY: Right. Originally when they overthrew Haile Selassie the government was a collective group called the Derg. Mengistu was a colonel. There is a story, apparently true, that he came on a military exchange program to the US in the late '50s and while in the South he was insulted. Because of the racial incident his experience in the United States was a negative one he never forgot. That contributed to where he came out. But, he was a ruthless person and indeed when it looked like it wasn't really clear who was going to control things there was a shoot out at one of the cabinet meetings and he basically killed his opposition. I mean he was firing as well as other people. When we were there it wasn't nearly as bad as it had been earlier when thousands of people were killed in the streets. It was real terror. You had no way of knowing if it was going to happen to you. It had nothing to do with what you had done. It wasn't, "Oh, I had been doing this so I am at risk." Everybody was at risk. Every single person could be picked up and pulled off by the goons and beaten or held or whatever.

The rest of the royal family was also in prison at that time. They were virtually all female, the government having made sure they had killed off all the males there were. Haile Selassie's son was in London where he had been on medical leave when it all happened, but he is kind of off in his head.

But, it was a strictly Marxist government with a politburo. They wore little comrade suits. Traditional Ethiopian dress is very attractive. It is usually a white gauze fabric with very fine embroidery in a strip and sort of jodhpur type pants with more or less a cape, a real attractive thing. Then they came out with these sort of Mao suits, -- we all called them comrade suits. They were sort of shiny blue and very ugly. If you were a bureaucrat you had to wear either that or on occasion you could wear traditional, but you couldn't wear Western clothes. It was a real attempt by Mengistu to split the society from its traditional roots. The Coptic Church, particularly in Ethiopia, amongst the Amhara was very, very important. This is a Christian religion which dates before Christianity in France, about the 4th century. They kept trying to break that link with the Church and they finally decided they couldn't break that link so appointed the abuna, the patriarch, and more or less made him toe the line to do what they wanted. But people would still go to church on a regular basis.

There were also very strict social conventions. If you were in mourning you wore black. During the time we were there virtually everybody was in black almost all of the time. There was a lot of death.

*Q: From war and brutality.*

CARY: And from the famine.

*Q: Did the embassy have any real contact with the government?*

CARY: In a very limited way. I can remember trying to get my first appointments with the ministry of trade and ministry of external affairs, and I waited and waited and waited. I couldn't get in to see anybody. It seemed my first couple of calls there was a pattern. I would finally get an appointment, usually with the vice minister, that was the level with whom I was dealing, and they would be very lovely and pleasant people and then they would defect the next week. So, I



was beginning to think that the only people who were going to see me were those who were going to defect and were not going to do me any good. How was I ever going to know what is going on. But eventually I did start to know different people.

There was a very limited business community that had continued, so I got to know those. There was the international aid community and also the ECA, the Economic Commission for Africa, the UN's body for Africa, was located in Addis. So, even though you had this very strange situation you still had about 70 diplomatic missions in Addis at the time.

*Q: How did you see the role of the Soviets at that point?*

CARY: They were the chief advisors, they were ubiquitous, they were funding the arms. Without their money, just nothing would have happened. It was interesting because the Chinese were there and the Chinese were our allies in Ethiopia. Some of our best information would come from them. The Chinese ambassador was very friendly. They would have great Chinese dinners and invite everybody, virtually the whole diplomatic corps. They really played an important role. The Chinese kept arguing that their form of development was much more appropriate for Ethiopia than the North Korean model. Mengistu kept wanting to do large scale communal farms, steel plants, etc. and it just didn't make any sense. Here Ethiopia is an agrarian society in Africa with some of the greatest potential. It had great coffee, had been a grain exporter in the past, a lot of possibilities if they were well done. But Mengistu would come up with these collective villages which just went totally against the grain of any Ethiopian. They would fly us all out to see these things. We would go off in these Polish helicopters and visit. It was interesting because I could speak Amharic and talk and ask questions of the people. You always had a minder in Ethiopia to make sure you didn't go anywhere you shouldn't, but when they took the diplomatic groups out everyone didn't have a minder. So you could go and ask people and they would say, "Well, you know, yeah, it is clean and they paint the walls and all that, but the tractors don't run or this, that or other thing."

*Q: Were the Soviets pushing Mengistu to go in for steel mills or something? The Soviets were beginning to move into that downward spiral that...*

CARY: No. The Soviets kept saying they were not going to give them all this industrial stuff, it was mostly military material they really wanted. The Soviets had totally switched from massive industrial development to much more agrarian small scale. So Mengistu would fly off to see his great friend in North Korea...

*Q: Kim Il Sung.*

CARY: Right. ...to put some pressure on. So, you would talk to the Russians. They bemoaned Mengistu's wrong-headed development approach.

But it was a very odd...most Ethiopians hated the government and would go out of their way to let you know that they thought it was miserable even though they were at risk by doing so. Everybody you visited, everybody who came to see you would get a visit by security. "Why did you go see the Americans?" John asked to be able to do consular work part time because he said

nobody would talk to the political officer, but everybody will talk to a consular officer because that was their only hope. Except for the really top politburo members, everybody was sending their kids, not just their college age kids out, but their seven and eight year olds to get them out of Ethiopia. So, everybody wanted to talk to the consular officer and would tell him anything he was interested in. It was an excellent source of information and you could see just how deep the dissent really ran.

*Q: Let's talk first about the famine and then about the civil war. With the famine, here is something an economic officer could really sharpen their teeth on because stuff was coming from outside and you were trying to find out what was happening. How did you deal with this?*

CARY: It actually worked very well. We were restricted on staff...with the famine they increased the number of permanent Americans to five. So, AID had five slots to run the second largest aid program in the world and did it wonderfully. They brought in TDY people as well because there was just a lot of logistics. This was a country where moving things around was extremely difficult. There were no trucks, no roads. And people were visibly dying. Actually the UN appointed a coordinator who was very, very good. When it came to overall donor coordination it was imperative that the coordinator have access to the government. The government had to come up with certain things and certain information.

The emergency was really for me, a way to get out into the countryside to see everything. I just attached myself to an AID trip and...US policy at this point was to do only emergency. We would not do anything that was considered development. We would only feed the people. So, we did get out. I got an opportunity to travel around an awful lot at that time and see how bad it was and it really was...

*Q: Was this a government induced famine?*

CARY: No, it was drought for the most part. Certainly the ability to move food from one area to another was impeded by the civil war, but the real problem was drought. And then with the famine, livestock died, and with that hard soil you really needed oxen or a tractor to work it. If the oxen died...and the traditional way of plowing was with a two oxen plow. By necessity ILCA, an international research center based in Addis, developed a one oxen plow so they could at least get something planted.

The topography of Ethiopia is just one grand canyon after another. Large-scale food distribution was very difficult. The cheapest means is trucks, and there weren't any trucks. So all of the donors contributed money, this included the Chinese and the Russians, and they bought a fleet of more than 200 trucks. The UN coordinated the movements. Once that was in place it worked pretty well.

*Q: If you have grand canyon after grand canyon how do you get the trucks around?*

CARY: Long convoys were part of the solution. But many areas were not readily accessible by road. The old warhorse of a transport plane, the C-130 was used extensively in conjunction with helicopters. The US and the British sent in a lot...the British were great and sent a steady supply

of aircraft and crews. They said they used them as training missions. They would load them up and come down to about 30 feet above the designated drop zones which would be on hill tops. The cargo doors opened and the crew would push out the pallets loaded with food. They would drop and then the Polish helicopters would come in and take those to even more remote places. The idea was as much as possible to keep people where they were.

*Q: Oh yes. So often they all move to one place and there is no way to sustain them except emergency aid from then on.*

CARY: Right. There was an awful lot of effort to get the food out there and it really was very, very difficult logistically. There was a lot of cooperation among nations who normally didn't work much together. Poland was still on the negative list. I can remember flying to one model communal village that the Ethiopian government was showcasing. I had the North Korean on one side the Vietnamese on the other.

*Q: Both of whom we don't recognize.*

CARY: Right. But that was just the nature of the operation, you always found yourself in different situations.

*Q: Was their within the diplomatic community sort of a bureaucratic infrastructure built up with everybody working on this because you had the British, Americans, Chinese, Polish and North Vietnamese, etc.?*

CARY: Yes, and it was pretty much the UN structure that pulled it together. There were always some problems, but there was agreement that we can't have everybody going off and doing their own thing, we have to decide what the priorities are. For example, the US didn't have any development priorities and most everybody else believed it was critical to do long range development. At the same time the Ethiopian government imposed a resettlement policy, forcibly moving people from part of the worse eroded areas saying that these places will no longer sustain life. So, they moved people en mass and built new settlements in different areas. Some went from highlands to lowlands and people who had never been exposed to any of the lowland diseases got sick and some died. So, there was a lot of that going on. This was forced resettlement. People didn't want to leave and it was a very controversial project. The diplomatic community was taken out to visit the resettlement sits. The Ethiopian government wanted us to see that it really wasn't so bad; that people had crops to bring in now which they didn't have in their homeland. Indeed 15 years before USAID had proposed exactly the same thing. Of course, it shouldn't be done forcibly, but the Ethiopian government's point was these people won't leave any other way. And people did leave the camps. There was early talk about people being shot trying to leave. What we could verify was that after some time with the policy, some people left the camps and walked back to Tigray or Welo or wherever they came from and were neither assisted nor hindered by the authorities.

There were some pretty awful incidents at feeding camps. Again we would fly out to see these things. Most of these trips were under the auspices of a non-profitable organization. If they were doing something, we could get an extra seat on their airplane. There were a lot of congressional

visits at this point. It seemed as if everybody wanted to have their picture taken holding a starving Ethiopian kid so we had an awful lot of CODELS and staffdels...but then we couldn't have anybody too high level because it was such a miserable government. I must say Bob Dornan came out and I was his control officer.

*Q: He was an extreme right wing California Representative who made an abortive run for President this last time which faded rather early. What was he interested in?*

CARY: He had actually been in Nigeria during the Ibo crisis and had done air drops and was interested in the process. In the feeding camps there were just thousands of kids and he loved being surrounded by them. He would clap his hands or shout a phrase and the kids would repeat it. Very much the politician. I think he did genuinely like the kids but he was a very strange person who always seemed to be focused on something else. He kept talking about Nigeria and I would say well, this wasn't Nigeria. I assume what happened was he went back after having had the Ethiopian experience and talked about Ethiopia. The odd thing to me was he shared a room with his aide at the Hilton. Now, congressmen when they travel get a fair amount of money, but he watched his pennies and was very careful that way.

*Q: Did you have a lot of press there?*

CARY: The press people got thrown out on a regular basis. Blaine Hardin was covering the famine and he got thrown out. If you wrote something negative about Mengistu then they wouldn't give you a visa to come back in or they threw you out. They escorted you to the airport and said goodbye. But there were a lot of people who would come in periodically and then a lot of people who came in to do stories. We had the "We Are the World" performers who would come in who had done this huge concert to raise money and produced a record. Many of the artists did come to see what was happening. Bob Geldof was the one who organized it and he came through regularly. Because it was a circus in a lot of respects, the question always was, is the food getting to the people or is it getting diverted. And for the most part, because this was something we were very concerned with, it was getting to the people. The losses that occurred were due to storage difficulties. And then the war, there was a train that went up to one of the ports and every once in a while the rebels would blow up the tracks so nothing could move for a while while they had to rebuild the bridges. And then there were just times when you simply could not go into an area. Mickey Leland, the congressman, was supposed to come, he came frequently.

*Q: A congressman from Texas.*

CARY: Right. He was supposed to come at epiphany, which is a big Coptic holiday and we were going to go to the rock churches in Lalibela which had been closed because they were under rebel control. But the government basically could guarantee daylight access to the churches, if you came in and out by 2:00. Everybody was all excited because none of us had had the opportunity to visit the churches. And then, Leland canceled his trip and we couldn't get permission to get in any other way, plus we couldn't afford the plane. The reason he gave for the cancellation was because his wife was expecting twins. And we all said, "He has known for

months that his wife was expecting twins. Why did he cancel three weeks before the scheduled trip?" Of course, he was eventually killed in a plane crash in Ethiopia.

*Q: He was killed in an airplane with somebody from AID, was it?*

CARY: My successor and my husband's successor were on that plane. It made you think.

One hand you had this Marxist regime and on the other you had the Ethiopian Airlines which had more or less been run by TWA for years and years and still followed the TWA rules and regulations. They had a great relationship with EX-IM Bank, they turned a profit. And Mengistu didn't touch the airline's management. Every once in a while he would take one of their planes, they had 767s, and go off and do something, but he didn't go out too often just in case he got overthrown. Ethiopian Airlines bought 2 Boeings while we were there, making Ethiopia one of the most important US markets in Africa. It was just a very interesting contrast.

*Q: While you were there I take it, particularly with the famine and all, that the idea of maybe just pulling completely out had slipped into abeyance?*

CARY: Yes. It was clear that there was a real mission for the US to play. The change in the Russian position by cutting back on weapons sales was another good thing. Somalia which was starting to turn back to the United States. So, there was an interest in staying. We had a change in the Chargé at the time and Jim Cheek, who had been a Latin American hand. Jim was one of the people that Jesse Helms said never, never, never, you are out...

*Q: It was sort of to hide him away from Latin America wasn't it?*

CARY: Yes. He had been DCM in Nepal and then came to Ethiopia. He felt that no money had been spent on the mission for ten years, because everybody was afraid it was going to be closed down, but he reasoned that we have people here and we need to spend money, we need to build things up. We needed temporary lodging to put people. Because we couldn't get permission from the Ethiopian government to build, we brought in prefab houses and put them on the compound, which is absolutely a lovely compound. Jim was one of the best people from whom to learn how to deal with an adversarial relationship both with the Ethiopians and with Washington. He understood that the mission couldn't ask the US Government for anything positive for Ethiopia because Ethiopia is bad, but we still had an interest and we needed to be present and we needed to have some ability to say that we were guiding the way things were happening in terms of development and human rights. I mean, the foreign minister had defected at that point. It was looking more and more like this was a sinking ship and it really was only a question of time. So Jim played a very deft game with Washington, always being sure that everything was presented in terms of US interests, not that we have to do this for Ethiopia. It was very much the human rights concern.

An embassy employee was beaten up during a congressional visit. While the congressman was having dinner with some government officials, the goons took out one of our chief political FSNs and beat him up. The synapses were starting to slow down, the strains, the government really couldn't manage the situation. The war was going badly. The rebels were gaining more and more

control. There was a flow of people coming in and out of Sudan. Then we had the Dinkas. Talk about John Gerang...these are Sudanese Christians, who are all about 7 foot tall at least and very thin. They would show up at the embassy and come in and have talks. Well, you know, you can't hide talks with Dinkas because they are so obvious who they are, except John Gerang, who is a real short guy.

*Q: Who is John Gerang?*

CARY: He is the leader of the southern Sudanese liberation movement seeking independence from the Muslim north. The US was having problems with the Sudan at this point. They would close borders so refugees couldn't move. Ethiopia was both a refugee generating and receiving country. You had Sudanese and some Somalians because of the drought there, so keeping track of the refugee situation was a very dynamic situation. There was the sense that things were changing...the Russians and the whole relationship between the US and the Soviet Union was changing. So, there was a reason to maintain a presence and indeed increase it if possible.

*Q: Could you explain what the origins were of the war and how you viewed it during this period?*

CARY: Historically there has always been tension between the Eritreans and the rest of Ethiopia. Eritrea was a separate state under the Italians from about 1890 through the Second World War. At the end of the Second World War the UN made it a protectorate of Ethiopia. In 1956 or so Haile Selassie incorporated it as part of Ethiopia proper, claiming historically the borders extended that far. This directly contradicted the UN mandate. He had no right to do that and the Eritreans just simply didn't accept it. So basically from 1956-57 the Eritreans had been fighting a movement of resistance and never gave up. So Mengistu was fighting the same war that Haile Selassie did. It escalated. No one was supplying weapons to the Eritreans or the Ethiopians under Haile Selassie. Well, I guess we were doing some. That was one of our contentious issues with the Ethiopian government. They had paid for F5s pre-DERG and we didn't deliver them because it was after the coup. The Mengistu government kept saying we owed them the money for the F5s and we refused to pay them back. Then the Soviets started providing tanks and planes and missiles and heavy artillery which the Ethiopians hadn't had before. And the Eritreans and then the Tigreans, another province, also got into the act and war continued. So, it was really guerilla warfare with the Eritreans and Tigreans becoming more and more sophisticated in battles and you just got to the point where Ethiopia could not sustain it any longer and that was what brought down Mengistu, it wasn't anything else.

*Q: While you were there what was the general feeling at the embassy about the military situation?*

CARY: Actually it was followed very closely in terms of what was going on and what was lost, the ordinance, and we were aware that the Russians were not going to maintain the level of supply, in fact, were cutting way back. Mengistu would periodically fly up to Moscow and plead for more materiel. And the Russians just simply weren't coming up with it. Another interesting part of the equation was the territorial integrity aspect. In Africa a whole issue revolved around the accepted the 1960 borders. Eritrea was part of Ethiopia and that really was what the

discussion was about. Historical Eritrea had been separate...Eritrea and Tigre, the now country of Eritrea, has all the sea coast. Ethiopia no longer has any sea coast. Well, historically that is a bad idea to cut somebody off. But the argument was if we agree in a change in the boundaries of Ethiopia, what is that going to do with the rest of Africa.

*Q: That has always been a great dilemma. Biafra was a great challenge at one point. Was this debated within the embassy?*

CARY: Absolutely, should Eritrea be a separate country and how do we get around it? A lot thought it should. Then there were others who thought that the unit works as an economic unit as well and should be maintained. Eritrea is where an awful lot of the environmental derogation has happened. It is going to be very difficult for Eritrea to sustain itself.

It had been self sufficient under the Italians. A digression. There was a special relationship with the Italians. Of course Italy had controlled Eritrea for 80 years and the infrastructure there was very Italian. There were lots of vineyards and fruit trees, and it was more industrialized than any other part of Ethiopia.

So, you are talking about splitting a country where historically you have got antagonistic ties...3,000 years of tribal distinctions, there are 200 dialects in Ethiopia...

*Q: And basically Ethiopia is still run by Amharas, were they?*

CARY: Right.

*Q: And the gallas, were they...?*

CARY: Galla is a pejorative term that means slave. The Eritreans, the Tigreans and the Amhara were all fairly sophisticated groups. You knew which of the foreign service nationals were which group and people were very distrustful of each other in the midst of all this. If you were a Tigrean you didn't trust anybody unless he was another Tigrean and if you were an Amhara you felt everybody was out to get you. And then you had all the people in the south that basically all three of those groups looked down on. These were the slave population. That was one of Mengistu's issues. He felt he was treated as a gala, as a slave.

*Q: In a way, unlike Nigeria, the US was not particularly called upon to make this, whether the country was split or not, an issue because by being somewhat removed we could finesse this one. Just stay to one side and say maybe theoretically we have the policy of such and such but it doesn't amount to anything.*

CARY: Right. Our only real interest was strategic because of the Horn of Africa. It kept coming back time and time again. That is what we care about, we want to be sure that whoever controls the straits is on our side. Because, if you block that off you have to go all the way around.

*Q: This is tape 4, side 1 with Anne Cary. You were talking about the emotional side of the famine.*

CARY: There were a lot of people who had never given money to a foreign cause and because of the photographs of the starving children coming out of Ethiopia gave something and felt personally that we should be doing something else. The US walked a line of what is development and what is emergency assistance. US policy was only to provide emergency assistance. But is supplying clean water emergency assistance or is it development? Education is development, but basic health education is emergency assistance.

*Q: Were you at all looking beyond and saying, "Okay, after this regime falls, what will be next?" On the economic side that is what you are supposed to do.*

CARY: Right. I think it is a viable country. Again, you have lost so many of your educated people that the question is will they come back. The regime and the situation forced people out during the civil war. If you could get out you got out.

*Q: Here at the Foreign Service Institute we are about four blocks from a major Ethiopian settlement, more or less. They have been quite a contribution to the economy of the Washington, DC area.*

CARY: But, it has more resources than most countries in Africa. Because of the high plateau it has the ability to raise livestock without a problem with the tse-tse fly. So, Ethiopia could supply all of Africa with its meat. It has got good potential with grain. Pioneer Seed was in there doing an awful lot of interesting things. It has possibilities with good management to be a grain exporter. So, it can feed its people and be a very viable economy, but can't do it without its trained people coming back and contributing. It has been three years now since Mengistu left and the civil war ended and Meles came in, and there are still some of these tensions. People still haven't gone back. You talk to Ethiopians and they say it is not quite right yet, although they still haven't given the impression that they are here permanently, although a lot of them now have kids who I can't see could possibly go back.

Our commercial specialist immigrated to the United States and took advantage of the special visa program. She was Tigrean and had five kids. When her oldest, a boy, turned 12, he was tall. She was so afraid that he was going to be picked up and impressed into the army. She also was harassed because she worked for the embassy. So, she is here with the five kids. She would go back and maybe one or two of the kids would. But there has to be the development, the possibilities. There is a lot of money going in now. But, it still takes a certain amount of time.

*Q: You left in 1987. What was the situation when you left?*

CARY: It has rained, so that was good. There were people still trying to get out, doing everything they could to get their kids out. The people who stayed were the ones who felt strongly this was their country and they had to stay there. But they also felt there is no hope for my child, so they would send out their kids. A lot of other development was going on. A lot of other countries...Sweden had a fairly major development program. The World Bank had a large development program that was going on. Roads were going in. I had been out traveling with Brown and Root people, a big engineering firm, who were building another bridge over the Blue



Nile and putting a road from the coffee producing region into the grain producing region. It was very interesting to see how that worked. There was hope but Mengistu had to go and you thought he was going to go.

The other interesting aspect that I want to mention is the Falashas, the black Jews of Ethiopia. That was a situation which made me wonder why on earth the US was involved in getting black Jews out of Ethiopia to Israel. The Beta Israel (house of Israel) better known as Falasha, traditionally has been a very poor group of people who were potters, tanners, certain positions that statuswise an Amhara would not hold. Falasha claimed to be descendants of the Lost Tribe of Israel. The international Jewish groups, a lot of money coming straight from the United States, were basically paying off Mengistu to get people out for a long time. They smuggled them out through Sudan, this became another of our irritants with Sudan. The Sudanese authorities knew it was going on but when it became public that Jews were going out through Sudan to Israel they made a...

*Q: Of course, Sudan is a fundamentalist Islamic country and was Israel's sworn enemy.*

CARY: Right. There was an awful lot of money paid to Mengistu to get the Beta Israel Jews out.

*Q: Were you at the embassy involved in this at all?*

CARY: Yes, in an indirect way. Many of the contributors were Americans. People coming through and being involved with the AJDC (American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee). They had projects, which now are not needed because everybody has gone. Yes, the US was certainly aware of what was going on and we did what we could to make sure people got out.

*Q: On the strategic thing. By the time you were there it was becoming more and more obvious that the Soviet Union was changing, was trying to get the hell out of Afghanistan, was going through the Gorbachev reform and all this. One of the major aspects was lessening the tension around the world. Was the control of the Red Sea still as much a problem as it was before?*

CARY: Well, it wasn't necessarily just the Russians or the Soviets controlling it, it was the fact that there still is an awful lot of shipping through it. It became less a political issue and more a "if we can't ship through there, it has an economic cost," and we didn't want to have that happen. The arguments of having physical control of the seas become much less important as technology means you can bridge them.

**DAVID HAMILTON SHINN**  
**Ambassador**  
**Ethiopia (1996-1999)**

*Ambassador David Hamilton Shinn was born in Washington in 1940. He received three degrees from George Washington University. During his career he had positions in Kenya, Washington DC, Tanzania, Mauritania, Cameroon, Chad,*

*Sudan, and ambassadorships to Burkina Faso and Ethiopia. Ambassador Shinn was interviewed in July 2002 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

SHINN: I spent the spring of that year transitioning from East Africa to Ethiopia. I had initially been proposed for the position of ambassador to Zaire. But that was torpedoed by a senior official in the Department with whom I had a policy conflict. I mentioned that as office director under George Moose, I had more authority than other office directors outside AF and more than office directors had had under Moose's predecessors. During the internal battles concerning our policy towards Somalia and to a lesser extent Sudan, I managed to make some enemies. I am not known for being a wall-flower. In meetings with high officials, I would express my views, sometimes forcefully. My views were not necessarily held by some senior officials. Their memories are long; this posed a problem when George proposed me for Zaire. I was led to believe that there were not other serious candidates, but my nomination was vetoed by someone on the Seventh Floor.

As luck would have it, our ambassador in Ethiopia decided to leave a year before he was scheduled. That position came open unexpectedly. AF proposed me for Ethiopia. The person who opposed my assignment to Zaire apparently decided he had made his point and did not object to the Addis Ababa assignment. As a result, I came out ahead of the game. The Ethiopian assignment was a blessing in disguise, but at the time I had no way of knowing that. I was disappointed when Zaire fell through.

*Q: What years were you in Ethiopia?*

SHINN: From the end of June, 1996 to August, 1999.

*Q: When you went to Addis Ababa in 1996, what did you see as the main issues that you would have to deal with?*

SHINN: The major issue was the democratization of the Ethiopian political system and where the government was taking the country on this question. The future of the political opposition loomed large. Up to 1996, the opposition was muted. It was apparent that the government had to, and still has to, deal with the role of the opposition because there was a significant portion of the population that objects to some of the government's key policies. Our goal was to find ways to allow us to have better access to the opposition groups, on the one hand, and then to develop activities that could bridge the gap between the government and the opposition. That meant we had to convince the government to be more even handed during elections so that the opposition had a chance to contest in a fair election. We also were interested in promoting various democratic institutions, like a free press, that would allow the opposition to discuss its ideas and programs among the electorate. We hoped this would stimulate a real dialogue and discussion in the body politic. A free exchange of views did not exist in 1996. That was our initial focus.

After I had been in Ethiopia for a while, the HIV/AIDS issue became a major focus of my attention. I will discuss that in a moment. To continue on democratization issues, I decided from the day I arrived to visit every nook and cranny of Ethiopia, at least all those areas that one could reach. That was no mean feat in a country the size of Texas and California combined and with a

difficult topography of mountains and desert. The transportation infrastructure of Ethiopia was rudimentary at best. Many of the roads are unpaved and constitute little more than tracks. Some travel was by air, but we did most of it on the ground. That provided the opportunity to stop in villages and hamlets en route. Air travel limits one to regional centers, missing very important aspects of Ethiopian life.

My program kept me on the road about one week out of each month during my three years in Ethiopia. I had a very good DCM, Martin Brennan, who subsequently became ambassador to Uganda and then to Zambia. (My philosophy on choosing DCMs is the same as that of Hume Horan. Every deputy I chose in AF/E, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia reached the rank of ambassador.) Martin's presence allowed me to be absent from the embassy, and I do mean absent, because once you left Addis Ababa you were essentially out of contact. We checked in periodically by radio but I might as well have been on Mars. There wasn't much I could do about events in Addis once I left the city.

I considered the travel so important that I maintained this routine throughout my tour. I must admit that the rest of the diplomatic community began to shake its head. They didn't understand how one could spend so much time traveling, particularly in light of some of the arduous trips that I undertook by four wheel drive vehicle. After about eight months in country, I developed a pattern for these trips that became enormously successful because I reached Ethiopians from all walks of life who had never met an ambassador before. I usually took an Ethiopian employee with me who spoke both Tigrinya and Amharic to serve as translator when needed. My staff developed a program in advance for each town we visited for a half day or longer. The overnight stops involved a more complete program. Sometimes I would stay for two nights. That would allow me to spend a whole day meeting with government officials, NGO representatives, tribal elders (a very critical part of society), business persons, media representatives, etc. At the end of the day, I invited the different groups to dinner. That was fascinating because even in small towns there were people who had never met each other before because they came from positions where they did not interact with each other. Following lunch and dinner, I would invite the guests to ask any questions on their minds about the U.S., American policy in Ethiopia and the role of the embassy. My goal was to get our message out to people who normally never heard from us. I should amplify on the term "elders." They were the tribal leaders of the predominant ethnic group in the town; some were not that old. We found after a while that the media became a strong proponent of my travel program. Media representatives filed stories about my visit that were printed in Addis Ababa, noting especially the free flowing discussions in which I would engage. By the time I returned to the capital, virtually everyone in Addis knew where I had been. It was a hugely successful way to engage in dialogue with elements of Ethiopian society that had never had contact before with the American embassy. At the same time, it emphasized how the democratic process can function. This was a new concept for Ethiopians.

*Q: You referred to our interest in pushing democracy in a foreign country. What business was it of ours to do that?*

SHINN: I was not pushing democracy per se either in Addis or during my travels. I talked about any AID projects that we had undertaken in the area I was visiting in the last ten years. If Peace Corps volunteers were assigned near by, we invited them to the meetings and we discussed their

programs. I brought boxes of books for distribution to local schools, both secondary and universities if they had them. I answered scores of questions. For example, I received questions from the business community about land policy. I couldn't speak for the Ethiopian government, but I expressed U.S. views on the issue. I emphasized that the U.S. government was always interested in encouraging more liberal policies on some of these matters. We did not always agree; sometimes there would be strong disagreements. That was of secondary importance; what was important to my audiences was that I had shown up and had been willing to discuss issues with them. No one from the diplomatic community had done this before. It was important for the elders to be invited to sit down with the American Ambassador in their village. These sessions sometimes became memorable events, particularly in the smaller towns and villages that rarely received visits by anyone from the government. That left an indelible and positive impression.

One of the other issues I was pursuing in Addis was encouragement of the private press. I was rather outspoken about it. One of the challenges was that some of the private press in Addis was outrageous. We tried to stay away from what might be called the "yellow press," but there was a category in the middle that had elements of "yellow press" syndrome that we could not avoid because it was so important. To exclude it, would leave us with precious little to work with. I learned the hard way that being so vocal on the issue of freedom of the press created enemies in the government. The government saw the private press as essentially a band of brigands who were undermining the regime. We had a completely different view of the role of the press in society. (The government subsequently became more tolerant of the private press.)

My interaction with the private press led to a difficult relationship with the government. The combination of my travels, which the central government initially viewed as "spying," and the visit of Secretary Warren Christopher at the end of 1996 got my tour off to a poor start. The Secretary's visit did not go well. It began on a sour note. As Christopher left Washington for his first stop in Ethiopia, a professional organization of journalists issued in Washington a scathing attack on the Ethiopian government's handling of the free press. It was excessively critical, but some of the points were well taken. One member of Christopher's party, James Steinberg, picked up on this criticism and encouraged the Secretary to make a major issue of it. The Secretary's party seems to have decided to focus on this issue before arriving in Addis Ababa. Steinberg was disinterested in my views. The visit, as a result, moved away from what I thought was the goal of the visit - strengthening U.S.-Ethiopian relations and became instead a harangue of the government's handling of the free press. Since I was already under suspicion for having raised the free press issue before the Secretary's visit, the government concluded that Christopher's criticism had been instigated by me. After Christopher left, the Foreign Minister called me in for a good dressing down. The Prime Minister subsequently pointed out that the visit had gone so badly that the government seriously considered canceling Christopher's meeting with the Prime Minister. At the last minute, the Prime Minister decided that cancellation of the meeting was a mistake. The meeting was okay, but not particularly friendly. As a result of this combination of events, the U.S.-Ethiopian relationship reached the low point of my three years in the country.

When Prime Minister Meles complained about my frequent trips around Ethiopia and extensive meetings with Ethiopians I tried to explain that he totally misunderstood the purpose of my visits. They were designed to try to understand Ethiopia and to make contacts with all elements of society. That conversation was the low point of my relationship with Meles. I continued and

even expanded my travels around the country, but I was more careful in my contact with certain elements of the private press. I stopped seeing that part of the press that was especially scurrilous. Some of these journalists turned on me even though I had been open with them. My efforts with the press not only lost me some trust with the government, but backfired in terms of my relations with certain elements of the press. (During my farewell call in August 1999, Meles praised my willingness to travel around Ethiopia and learn about the country!)

*Q: What were you seeing out in the country?*

SHINN: I saw a lot of poverty and of hard working people, mainly peasant farmers, who were trying to make the best of a difficult situation. I could not help but notice the absence of significant economic development efforts. Women did much of the work while the men tended to be more passive.

I did see progress in certain areas, such as terracing of land that was accomplished in a rudimentary but effective fashion. The farmers built small stone ridges that followed the contour of the land. This backed up small amounts of water as it rolled off the hills. I saw significant airport development; in fact, Ethiopia made enormous strides in improving airports and airfields around the country. I saw a fair amount of road improvement. But the overwhelming sense one gets is one of poverty. Ethiopia is an agricultural society; its population is just fighting to survive. Under those circumstances, it is not surprising that there was little interest in politics or the issues that were being debated in the capital.

*Q: Were the ethnic divides beginning to change with the advent of communications?*

SHINN: Interestingly, the ethnic divisions were more noticeable in Addis Ababa because all the groups were represented in the capital and vying for political and economic power. Representatives would come to the embassy to vent their concerns. There were some indications of these splits in the countryside. The Oromo people were especially outspoken about the mistreatment they believed the government inflicted upon them. There were similar complaints in southern Ethiopia. Marginal areas like Gambella and Benishangul along the Sudan border and regions in the southeast inhabited by Afar and Somalis were also the source of frequent complaints. The complaining concerned lack of resources more than ethnic differences. These groups believed they were not receiving their fair share of the financial pie. These perceptions were frequently inaccurate because the government divided the national budget more or less based on population numbers. Nevertheless, in light of the huge needs, whatever development funds were sent didn't make much of a dent. The marginal regions were just too far behind from the beginning. When these people traveled to Addis, they saw a living standard far above their own and undoubtedly felt short-changed. I heard a lot of complaints as I traveled around, including negative comments about the way opposition groups were treated, e.g. arrests of Oromos and southerners. There was no shortage of concerns in the countryside and I heard most of them.

*Q: Did you notice any hope for the future?*

SHINN: There were reasons for hope, but the obstacles are enormous. The population was growing at about 3% annually. It reached 70 million in 2004 and is the third highest in Africa after Nigeria and Egypt. With such a high growth rate, limited natural resources, outdated agricultural techniques that in some cases have not progressed since the stone age, Ethiopia confronts a huge challenge. They have made progress in the use of fertilizer although that may come back to haunt them in the future. At the moment, agricultural production is increasing. They are also making good use of hybrid seed, which appears to have had positive impacts. But farming techniques in many places remain rudimentary, poking the ground with a sharp stick and then spreading some seeds. It is hard to imagine that Ethiopia will become agriculturally self-sufficient in the foreseeable future. That is a serious problem because as long as Ethiopia depends on outside resources to feed its people it is hard for it to progress, especially with such a high population growth.

There has been some progress in mining, especially gold. The overall impact on the economy is minor. There are other developments that will have a negative impact on the country. For example, the exportation of qat, a narcotic, has become the second largest foreign exchange earner for the country. It is legal in Africa, but not in the U.S. It is a product that doesn't use much land and offers the farmer a good profit. That may be good for Ethiopia's economy, but not for consumers in Yemen, Somalia and Djibouti. It is now being used increasingly by Ethiopians. Consumption in Ethiopia will have a negative impact on society as well as that of its neighbors.

*Q: Let's go on to the HIV issue. You wanted to speak about it.*

SHINN: It is an interesting story and one in which I continue to be involved by working with an NGO in Ethiopia. This also gets me back from time to time. HIV is an issue that I tried to convince the Ethiopian government to pursue soon after my arrival in Addis. My interest stemmed from some outstanding briefings I had received in Washington from USAID personnel. They made a very effective case for getting a handle on the epidemic in Ethiopia and other African countries. It was an issue that the U.S. needed to focus on and one in which ambassadors might play a role by urging change in local attitudes towards the disease. I made a number of efforts during my first year as ambassador to engage the government, which was barely interested in the issue and may have been hoping that it would just go away. A few NGOs were working on the problem, but not the government. We brought several experts from Washington who put on a "dog and pony" show at the residence for an audience of ministerial level government officials in the health field. We made our case to the government and then I beat the bushes around town trying to drum up interest. But I got nowhere.

At one point, I was told by a senior official that malaria was the number one health problem in Ethiopia. They had so many medical problems. They feared that dealing with HIV would distract the government from other serious health issues. At that stage, I let up for a while because it was clear my pleas were falling on deaf ears. Behind the scenes, I did urge the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abuna Paulos, and President Negasso Gidada to take a personal interest in HIV/AIDS. The President is not the most important political figure in the country; he is more alike a German president. An Ethiopian President has more available time; it struck me that serving as the HIV/AIDS czar might be a constructive role for him to play. Initially, these

efforts didn't go very far. I planted a seed, however, which took root later, to my surprise. By the time I left in 1999, both the Patriarch and the President had taken on the issue and become outspoken leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Both remain fully engaged today, although there has been a change of presidents.

By the time my tour was winding down in Ethiopia, I had become discouraged by the lack of progress on the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. It had transformed what we were trying to do in Ethiopia. Consequently, I returned to the HIV issue in a major way. USAID fully supported this effort. It provided grants for HIV/AIDS projects to a number of organizations, including the major church groups, e.g. the Supreme Islamic Council, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and Protestant churches. These religious organizations mounted information programs focused on explaining the nature of the HIV epidemic. We were also in contact with the labor unions on HIV/AIDS funding. By the middle of 1996, our HIV/AIDS assistance programs were becoming a major part of the U.S. assistance effort in Ethiopia.

*Q: We have heard of course of the major epidemics in such places as South Africa. How was the disease affecting Ethiopia?*

SHINN: It was beginning to have an extremely detrimental impact on the economy and on the social fabric of the country. No one knows for sure the HIV prevalence rate. The government's estimate is about seven percent of all adults. Others place the rate somewhat higher. In terms of total numbers, Ethiopia is the third most impacted country in the world after India and South Africa. It has already reached the pandemic stage. It is effectively out of control. Only a Herculean effort will get HIV under control at this stage. Anything less than that, will allow the disease to continue to spread, infecting an ever increasing population. Everyone in Ethiopia has a relative or friend who has already died from AIDS or is suspected to have died from the disease. Certain industries are severely impacted; they have to hire new employees to replace those who died.

The disease spreads in Ethiopia in the traditional way. The most impacted areas are the urban centers and along the major transportation routes, especially the truck routes. The peasants come to town for a week-end and following sexual encounters become infected. Then they take the disease back to the rural areas where they infect the spouse. It is clearly out of control.

*Q: You mentioned the Ethiopian-Eritrean relationship. Would you expand a little on this?*

SHINN: For most of my tour, relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea were excellent. In 1996, the Eritrean ambassador to Ethiopia, Haile Menkerios, who defected from his government after serving as Eritrea's permanent representative at the UN, had the best access to the government of any ambassador in Addis. He had strong personal ties with senior members of the Ethiopian government. I only overlapped with him for about a year. Upon his departure, he was the most feted diplomat to leave Ethiopia. This close relationship masked a festering problem which was unbeknown to us. There were a few indications of building tension, but it broke out publicly in May 1998 when Eritrean troops occupied a small piece of border territory known as Badme in Tigray Region that was administered by Ethiopia.

One indication of potential trouble was the issuance of the nakfa currency by Eritrea. It replaced the Ethiopian birr, which had been in use in Eritrea since independence. That decision led to some tension between the two countries. I think the Eritreans had some misconceptions about the consequences of this action. They thought they could just trade the Ethiopian birr they were holding for hard currency once their new nakfa had been issued. That was never going to happen. Ethiopia issued a new version of the birr to ensure that the old birr would no longer be valid in the country.

There was a highly inefficient oil refinery in Assab that provided much of the petroleum used in Ethiopia. In the period prior to May 1998, Ethiopia realized that it was paying more for petroleum from Assab than it would have to pay on the spot market. Ethiopia canceled the contract; the Eritrean refinery went bust.

Other new problems concerning trade relations developed between the two countries. They added to the tension. There was a border problem in 1997 that appeared at the time to be of minor consequence. With the benefit of hindsight, this incident was considered much more significant in Eritrea. Even though minor, neither side handled this problem brilliantly. All of these relatively minor issues added to the anger that surfaced in May 1998. There were also some personal differences between the leaders of the two countries that we did not fully appreciate. They harbored some bad feelings that dated back to the rebellion against the Derg regime. Meles and Isaias also had different visions for the future of their respective countries. Meles envisioned a decentralized state while Isaias was creating a highly centralized state. There was a sense among Tigrayans in Ethiopia that the Eritreans saw them as under-educated peasant farmers who might be useful as maids and common laborers in Eritrea, but not much more. The Tigrayans felt that the Eritreans considered themselves as superior and better educated. This view apparently was widely held, although we didn't really appreciate its impact at the time.

When you add these issues to other perceived slights, it turned a bed of smoldering embers into a wild fire. There was on May 6, 1998, a very minor border altercation, an incident that may well have been the fault of Ethiopia although we are not certain what happened. It involved a small number of Ethiopians and Eritreans near Badme. A team from Eritrea was in Addis Ababa trying to resolve the problem between May 6 and May 12. The Eritrean members without notice left Addis Ababa and returned to Asmara before May 12. On that day, a large Eritrean military unit entered the Badme area, which Ethiopia had administered for decades. It was not certain which country owned the territory based on colonial treaties and maps. The rest is history; from that date on, there was a major conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia. From the beginning, Ethiopia declared the conflict would not end until Eritrea retreated back across the border. If the Eritreans were willing to do that, then the Ethiopians were willing to discuss border demarcation or any other issue that the Eritreans might wish to put on the table. That did not happen; in fact, Eritrea subsequently occupied additional border areas that had been administered by Ethiopia. This resulted in severe fighting.

There was an effort by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Susan Rice, and her team to resolve the issue soon after the May 12 incident. It was a sincere and serious effort, but it failed. The team, in cooperation with senior Rwandan officials, made a series of recommendations that were accepted by Ethiopia, but rejected by Eritrea. The U.S. effort came



to a halt. The issue then went to the Organization for African Unity. Ethiopia achieved a military victory in June, 2000 and the two sides signed a peace agreement.

*Q: What did you observe as being the effect of this war on Ethiopia?*

SHINN: It was the largest conventional war in the history of sub-Saharan Africa. The two countries fought over principles and tiny pieces of territory. In the early weeks of the conflict, I felt that Eritrea had perpetrated the problem. Washington decided, however, to take a balanced view and treated Eritrea and Ethiopia in an even-handed manner. Washington liked both countries and thought that Meles and Isaias represented the best of Africa. Washington decided that taking sides was not useful in the long run. Susan Rice's efforts arguably favored Ethiopia; in any event, Isaias came to the conclusion that the U.S. initially had taken the Ethiopian side. I don't think that was an accurate analysis, but it seems to be the conclusion that Eritrea reached. That was the situation in the first few weeks. The U.S. commitment to an even-handed policy, irrespective of who started the conflict, guided American policy throughout the conflict. That was not in my view a useful approach. We were too reluctant to criticize either side whenever one or the other was responsible for exacerbating the problem. Both sides made serious mistakes. For example, the Ethiopians bombed the airport in Asmara, followed by the Eritrean bombing of a school in Makele, the capital in Tigray region. Ethiopia expelled Eritreans from Ethiopia in a harsh way. Eritrea forced Ethiopians working in Assab to return to Ethiopia. It was not orchestrated like the Ethiopian expulsion program, but the net effect was the same. The U.S. criticized Ethiopia's expulsion of Eritreans, but it never held anybody accountable.

*Q: Who was our ambassador in Asmara?*

SHINN: Bill Clarke.

*Q: Prior to May 6, were you in close contact with him?*

SHINN: We didn't have much personal contact. I had not visited Asmara and he had not visited Addis Ababa. He had not been in Eritrea too long. Bob Houdek had preceded him and there was a *charge d'affaires* for a while. Bill was relatively new when the conflict broke out. There was not much opportunity for consultation prior to the problem. On the other hand, we had in Addis people who had regional responsibilities; they visited Eritrea regularly. They knew what was going on there and would periodically brief me upon their return to Ethiopia.

*Q: What did you think of Susan Rice's regime?*

SHINN: Susan took an interest in the Horn of Africa, primarily because she had such an interest in Sudan. As I suggested earlier, she and I did not see eye to eye on Sudan. But as for the rest of the Horn, I thought her views were constructive. Her leadership of the team that dealt with the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict was strong and positive. The fact that the effort failed was not her fault. It was the responsibility of the leadership in both countries. They were not willing to make sufficient compromises to resolve the outstanding issues. Both leaders were so stuck on their "principles" and so hard-headed that I don't think anyone could have found a peaceful solution. Had the U.S. sided at the beginning with Ethiopia on the grounds that Eritrea initiated the

conflict, it might have ended the problem. But I am not certain this would have worked; Isaias Afwerki might have refused to budge regardless of the consequences.

*Q: What was the popular sentiment in Ethiopia about the war?*

SHINN: They didn't like the idea of a war. They didn't like sending their sons off to fight. The war was not particularly popular. On the other hand, they were angry at Eritrea. There were no tears in Ethiopia when Eritrea lost the war. My guess is that the Eritreans were assuming serious tensions would arise among the ethnic groups in Ethiopia, leading to divisions and internal conflict. That did not happen; the other ethnic groups, although not enthusiastic, did send their sons to fight against Eritrea. Many died. In fact, the Eritrean invasion strengthened the sense of nationalism in Ethiopia and temporarily diminished divisions among the various ethnic groups. This also blunted opposition criticism of the government for a period of time; in fact, the opposition supported the government on the war against Eritrea.

*Q: Rice's team, I gather, shuffled back and forth between Asmara and Addis Ababa? How were its contacts with the Ethiopians?*

SHINN: It got along very well with the leadership; that was not an issue. The team was fairly over-bearing; I had to be assertive in dealing with it. I think Susan had enough respect for our mission that she welcomed our views and she did solicit our advice. I assume she did the same thing in Asmara. She was very intense.

*Q: Who was on her team?*

SHINN: I think it consisted of six officials. Gayle Smith was one; she is an expert on the Horn of Africa. She was at the USAID mission in Addis Ababa prior to going to the NSC, where she replaced Susan. Bob Houdek, another expert on the region who had served in both Addis Ababa and Asmara, was a member. He is now the National Intelligence Officer for Africa at the CIA. There were several officers from DoD on the team. They were experts on specialized military issues. It was a team of area and functional experts. It was a good team.

*Q: Were there any efforts made by outside parties to resolve the Eritrean-Ethiopian dispute?*

SHINN: There was a Rwandan member of Rice's team. In fact, it was a joint U.S.- Rwanda effort. Initially, there were no other foreign efforts because everyone was happy to let the United States try first. When our effort failed after several weeks, all kinds of actors seemed eager to get involved. There were various African leaders who took an interest. The Italians got involved. The OAU officially assumed responsibility. It got involved, although at a snail's pace. Later, we re-engaged when Tony Lake began to make periodic visits to the area. By the end of 1998, when no one seemed to be making much progress, Tony Lake became the President's special envoy for the Horn. In a sense, he picked up where Susan and her team left off. By this time, there were a multitude of actors, including the UN.

*Q: How were things when you left in 1999?*

SHINN: As far as the war was concerned, the situation was pretty dismal. There was nothing on the horizon which suggested there would be a solution. There had been a number of false starts; once or twice we thought real progress had been achieved. But it never happened. I must say that I would have preferred to leave Ethiopia in a more optimistic atmosphere. My personal relationship with the government was fine; that was not an issue. But to leave a country in an atmosphere that was so negative is not the way an ambassador wants to depart. There was a lot of unhappiness in the government and among Ethiopians with U.S. policy. By this time, we had supported some UN resolutions that were critical of Ethiopia and sometimes Eritrea. The UN had taken some harsh steps that the Ethiopians believed we had engineered, although we had little to do with initiating most of them. By the time I left, Ethiopia was quite critical of the U.S.

Q: *What did we criticize?*

SHINN: We were very critical of the Eritrean expulsion and said so publicly. We also condemned the Ethiopian bombing of Asmara. Eventually we also criticized the Eritrean bombing of Makele. The critical UN resolutions that we backed were more general, e.g. calling for a cessation of all arms shipments to the warring countries. That sounded like a reasonable approach, but the Ethiopians were super-sensitive. They argued that Eritrea had a sea coast which made it easy to import arms secretly while Ethiopia could only receive shipments by air. Ethiopia viewed the embargo as more damaging to it.

Each side found the slightest excuse to be critical of us. In part, this was a tactic; it was their *modus operandi*. They figured that the more they criticized, the more responsive we would be to their demands. Both sides also criticized other countries; we were not the sole target, but we probably took more blame than our share.

Q: *How was the diplomatic corps in Addis Ababa?*

SHINN: It was a congenial group. We saw our diplomatic colleagues frequently. There was a very large African diplomatic corps because the Organization of African Unity is headquartered in Addis. Nearly every African country had an embassy. There was a fairly large European diplomatic presence. The representatives of the major donor countries held regular meetings. It was a nice diplomatic corps; I enjoyed their company.

**TIBOR PETER NAGY, JR.**  
**Ambassador**  
**Ethiopia (1999-2002)**

*Ambassador Nagy was born in Hungary and came to the United States as Political Refugee in 1957, settling in the Washington, D.C. area. After graduating from Texas Tech University, he entered the Foreign Service in 1978. During his career he served in Lusaka, Victoria (Seychelles), Addis Ababa, Lomé, Yaoundé and Lagos, as well as in the State Department in Washington.. From 1996 to 1999*

*he served as US Ambassador to Guinea-Conakry and to Ethiopia from 1999 to 2002. Ambassador Nagy was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2010.*

*Q: Well then, you left there in what, '90 --*

NAGY: I left there in '99, July of '99. And I was -- and I was nominated to become ambassador to Ethiopia from there.

*Q: Well, while you were still there President Clinton was going through his impeachment procedures. This must have been a very embarrassing time, wasn't it?*

NAGY: Not really. I mean his impeachment didn't -- the, the ill-fated election in, you know, the Bush/Gore one was a lot worse than --

*Q: That was after you'd left.*

NAGY: That was when I was in Ethiopia. So the Clinton impeachment didn't bother us at all because, you know, most of the time our colleagues there just couldn't understand what the big deal was. I mean every president had at least one mistress.

*Q: Well, then so Ethiopia, how'd you feel about Ethiopia?*

NAGY: Well, I was going back to Ethiopia because I had been administrative officer there in the mid '80s so it was a very emotional experience for me to go back as ambassador to a country where I had been as administrative officer. I always loved Ethiopia. My last time there was during the bad old communist days and I was going back to be ambassador to the group that kicked out the communists. But I was going back in an extremely troubling time because the year before Ethiopia and Eritrea had gone to war just about the time when President Clinton and Assistant Secretary Rice had named the presidents of Ethiopia and Eritrea as models for the new African leaders. So they -- Eritrea attacked Ethiopia and Susan Rice was very much trying to be evenhanded between the two countries, which outraged the Ethiopians because they felt very strongly that they had been the ones to attack, that they were in the right, and that the United States should be on their side on this conflict and not trying to be evenhanded. So I flew in to an extremely hostile environment, even more hostile than the one I found when I went into Guinea.

*Q: You were there from --*

NAGY: '99 to 2002. So I literally arrived with the two countries having massed hundreds of thousands of troops facing each other and it was the largest World War I style war since 1919 basically.

*Q: Well, what was it all about?*

NAGY: Well, what it was about basically was that Eritrea had a leader who, who felt like he was the one that kicked out the communists and that -- Eritrea remember, seceded from Ethiopia with both countries agreeing to do that in 1993. So Eritrea became its own country and they felt like

they were being unfairly treated by the Ethiopians. They had a minor boundary dispute. And the Eritrean president thought that the Ethiopian regime was much weaker than it was. I mean there's a lot of domestic politics that goes into this. But basically the Eritrean president thought that the Ethiopians were not happy with their regime, that because the Ethiopian president, Meles, came from northern part of Ethiopia, which spoke the same language as Eritrea did. So the Eritreans saw their enemy as the 4,000 -- I mean the four million Tigrayans. They did not see their enemy as the 84 million Ethiopians. And in fact that's what they got. The Ethiopian Army had largely disbanded. They had sent their army south to the Somali border whereas the Eritreans kept their very, very large army. And the Eritreans thought that they could just march into Ethiopia and, and force the Ethiopian Government to accept, you know, a settlement along with what they wanted. In fact they found out very quickly that they bit off a heck of a lot more than they could chew, that the Ethiopians, even the militia in the area where they invaded the militia stopped them, and then of course the Ethiopian giant, when it started reconstituted its forces, it could field an army much, much larger than what Eritrea had. And at the end, the Ethiopians were brilliant strategically because they used donkeys to cross the minefield, the Eritrean minefields and clear out the mines. And they could break through the Eritrean lines and Eritrea sued for peace when they were on the ropes. But like I said, it didn't help my case because I arrived in an extremely anti-American environment. And I also arrived in a country which was the number one interest of then Assistant Secretary Rice, Susan Rice. We worked very closely. The former national security advisor, Anthony Lake, Tony Lake, was involved in type of shuttle diplomacy, trying to bring peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Ambassador Holbrooke showed up at one point with the entire United Nations Security Council to try to help the peace process, which in my view they did not do, but you know. During my three years there I had the war, I had a potential famine, and I had September 11<sup>th</sup>.

*Q: Good God.*

NAGY: And all the while I was working, I was doing my best to, to warm our relations back up, which we did very, very quick. The relations went fairly well very quickly.

*Q: Well, tell me, first place you're in East Africa and the -- I would imagine that, the threat of what happened in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam would be hanging heavy on you, wouldn't it?*

NAGY: Well, to a certain extent it was, but then again, the Ethiopians were the absolute best in intelligence and in counter-terrorism. They were extremely sensitive to Islamic terrorism, being the regime was mostly Highland Christian, even though the country was about 50/50. But the Highlanders, the orthodox were extremely sensitive to an Islamist threat. The security service was very effective, very efficient. They were fighting a handful of insurrections within the country. One of those was the Somalis and they'd had a long history with this. I felt very secure in Ethiopia. I mean my greater concerns, quite frankly, were the government's total unhappiness with us, including the government organized a demonstration with us, which was extremely nasty and quite violent. But the -- but the government protected us very well from any external threats.

*Q: Well, did you see a righteous cause on either the Eritrean or the Ethiopian side on the war?*

NAGY: Oh, they both saw the struggle as a righteous cause. And the war -- let's see, I got there in '99. By late I believe 2000 the war had been basically settled when the Ethiopians broke the lines and the Eritreans had to sue for peace and they went back to status quo ante with the agreement then to survey the border and, you know, a number of things. And even today it still stands at the armistice line. So once that was resolved and our -- Tony Lake did a phenomenal job of hanging in there, not taking insults personally. John Prendergast, Tony Lake, Gayle Smith, Susan Rice, you know, they followed this issue very, very closely and they managed to end up with a peace treaty, a document. And to this day I mean neither country really wants to resolve it. I mean Ethiopians would like to resolve it. The Eritreans are unwilling to resolve it. And that regime has become more and more troubling for us and for the region, you know, as the years have gone along. Because you know now they're providing weapons for the Somali Islamists. So that -- the war passed and then just as the war was kind of wrapping up Ethiopia faced famine again and we were very quickly to respond to that, which further cemented our friendship. And then of course when September 11<sup>th</sup> came along then finally we became very, very close friends and partners in, you know, in combating the terrorists.

*Q: Well, I'm just wondering, Susan Rice came out quite often, didn't she?*

NAGY: She was out a couple of times. Tony Lake was out a number of times. I had members of Congress. It was so funny. I had a fairly large congressional delegation and I think Senator Kyle was there. It was a fairly large delegation and they went upcountry to see something and they put the Republicans in one helicopter and the Democrats in another. And the one with the Republicans in it came close to crashing. I mean it was, you know, looking back on it -- I could talk about it lightly but it came close to crashing but the helicopter pilot was quite good. It was a military -- we rented copters from the military. And the one staffer, one congressional staffer was irate and I had to laugh because what he was most upset about. He said, "Do you know if that helicopter had crashed then that would have changed the balance of power in Congress?" He said, "From now on whenever we go anywhere we're going to make sure that we put both Democrats and Republicans in each helicopter."

*Q: (laughs) Oh, God. Oh boy. Well, did they make any -- did anybody pay attention to them?*

NAGY: Who, the Ethiopians?

*Q: Ethiopians and Eritreans?*

NAGY: You mean pay attention to our folk?

*Q: Yeah.*

NAGY: Well, they, they really -- OK, the congressional people didn't start coming out until after the war ended.

*Q: Ah.*

NAGY: Susan and Gayle and Tony, yeah, they did. Because they sometimes would come out and shuttle back and forth between the capitals for a while and then go talk to the Algerians because the Algerian -- Tony Lake was working with the President of Algeria, who was the OAU (Organization of Africa Unity) chair at the time, you know, to try to resolve this issue. So they worked very, very closely. And yeah, they, they maintained -- I don't want -- at that time it was not cordial, but they maintained civil relations with both sides. But like I said, what really resolved the problem was when the Ethiopians just beat the Eritreans. And if they had wanted to they could have marched into Asmara. Prime Minister Meles was much too smart for that. Of all the heads of state I ever worked with, Prime Minister Meles was without a doubt the most brilliant, the most far sighted, the strategic thinker. Here was a man who had spent decades up in the mountains as a rebel. He left to join the rebels when he was a student and when he came out of the mountains and took over the country the world had totally changed. He had left to become a Marxist. Then when he came and took over power there were no Marxists left anywhere. So he had to do a quick change of his worldview, which he did to as much an extent as anybody came. And then he also enrolled himself in London's Open University I think by distance education. He got his master's degree. I mean the man was intellectually brilliant. It was a real pleasure working with him. And he also understood the problems of the country, but there were some fundamental aspects that he just -- he just could not bring himself to bridging certain gaps. For example, he just could not accept the principle of private ownership of land. So Ethiopian farmers cannot own their land. Now they can lease it for long term, but they -- you know, he just -- he could not come to that point. He also had problems with the concept that food security does not necessarily equal food self-sufficiency. You know, food security comes from cash in people's pocket.

*Q: Yeah.*

NAGY: Not necessarily how much grain they can raise. We would go, you know, we would go around and around on a number of topics. What I would do on the advice of Irvin Hicks who was one of my predecessors, was I would often get books, academic types of books on topics that I really would like the prime minister to consider. And I would send them to him. And his ministers hated me because he would send the books around to people and make them read it, so. So I would order things like from the Conservative Book Club, which talked about privatizing water resources, things like that, because of course for Ethiopia the Nile is one of the biggest issues. You know, aside from the crisis of the day, I mean one of their long term issues is they are the source of 80% of the Nile waters. Oh, and then you wanted to talk about September 11<sup>th</sup>.

*Q: Yeah, but I'd like to talk a bit about the tribal make-up. How did Tigre fit in?*

NAGY: You know, Ethiopia is the only country truly in Africa that was not a result of the Europeans standing around and carving up a map with imaginary lines.

*Q: Yeah.*

NAGY: Ethiopia is the only true country in Africa that's a result of history and geography. It was officially the second oldest Christian country, after Armenia, you know AD 350, whatever the Ethiopian emperor, Ezana, made it a Christian country. And it has been an empire. It's been a

bureaucracy. It's a real state. I compare it very much to the Austro-Hungarian Empire or to the Ottoman Empire. It was a number of ethnic groups that were thrown together, but they lived more or less harmoniously under imperial edicts. Emperors throughout much of the history came from the Amhara ethnic group and then more recently at the Tigray, the Tigreans, who are in power, although ministers represent all ethnic groups. There's one large group, the Oromo, which is probably the majority of all of the groups and traditionally the Oromo have been kept out of power. So they have very strong self-perceived grievances, issues of inequality. This government has tried something which has never been tried in Africa, which I think in the long term might be a good model for other countries, and they call it ethnic federalism where they actually admit and recognize that there's an issue with ethnicity so they created the states more or less along ethnic lines, the regions, they're along ethnic lines. And a lot of power devolved through the states. So unlike most African countries, which were overly centralized, in Ethiopia the true power does lie in the center. But the stuff that people have to deal with on a day-to-day basis, you know, traffic or transportation or roads or education, the school system, medicine, divorce, personal disputes, those are handled at the locality or the state level. And those are handled in their own languages. There are a number of official languages. English also is one of them. So whereas I had been in Ethiopia in the mid '80s the preferred language was Amharic, when I went back as ambassador the preferred language was English. Because Amharic when I went back the second time was seen as an imperialist language. So it was very interesting what they were doing and I really hope that this model works.

*Q: Well, then turning to 9/11, where were you when this happened?*

NAGY: Well, September 11<sup>th</sup> was Ethiopia's New Year's Day, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. I was at home, because it was a holiday, and my deputy, Tom Hull, called me and said, "A plane has crashed into the World Trade Center." So I turn on the TV about the time to see the second one. And it was -- it was so interesting because I started getting phone calls from every single member of the Ethiopian Government, including the prime minister, including the Ethiopian president, which is a ceremonial position, but all of my ambassadorial colleagues just expressing -- expressing their support.

Couple of interesting things. I think that night or the next night there was a state dinner for the president of Djibouti. And I had received instructions to talk to Ethiopians about over flight clearances for our planes on a need basis. And I took the -- at the state dinner I took the prime minister aside and I said, "Mr. Prime Minister, can -- you know, I may be calling on you to give us over flight clearance for planes flying missions on a short term basis. You know, can you help us with that?"

And he said, "You know, you give us 10 minutes advanced notice and we'll get you clearance." So that was extremely supportive. I cannot even begin to say how supportive the Ethiopian Government was and the Ethiopian people. You're dealing with people who make \$150 a year and they -- they started bringing flowers to the embassy. And I had the marines put them around the flagpole and before we knew it this mound of flowers was inching its way up the flagpole. And these were not rich people bringing flowers, you know, these were taxi drivers, trades people, I mean everyday Ethiopians were bringing them. The pope of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church -- they have a good 40 million members -- did a special mass for us and had me speak at



the event. I mean it was just one thing after another after another just to show the tremendous support that they had for us in that -- in that crisis. It was not easy being ambassador, you know, because in times of national tragedy someone needs to kind of keep it together and be the adult of the community, and I, I'm the -- I had to do that. I had to, you know, do all the community together, do memorial service, be the guest of honor at the marine ball, you know, not much later, and just do a one on -- one-hour one-on-one with Ethiopian Dan Rather, as they called him, you know, on a TV show. It was -- it was professionally, personally extremely, extremely difficult time. Extremely. You know, just keeping that calm when you have a lot of people who want to panic.

*Q: Well, did you have much contact with Pru Bushnell, our ambassador in Nairobi?*

NAGY: I knew her, of course, and then also about a, a year after I retired I helped her with one of the sessions of the ambassador's training class, you know, Ambassadorial Charm School. She was the coordinator for that. So I helped her with a session of that. So, so I mean that -- that's the extent that I know her, but of course we've had interactions. I think she was deputy assistant secretary and we had meetings and stuff like that. But mind me, my crisis wasn't anything like hers. Our embassy was just threatened; it was not actually blown up. But we had quite a large American community and like I said, it was not an easy time to be ambassador. Because Ethiopia of course was right in the, you know, it was on the target if it was not the bull's eye, because we were right next to Somalia. And of course a lot of the mess out of Somalia washed over us.

*Q: How about Djibouti? How did that fit into the --*

NAGY: Well, Djibouti was extremely important because Ethiopia is the world's largest land lock country. And Ethiopia desperately depended on the port of Djibouti. The president of Djibouti -- think his name is Guelleh -- he had grown up in Ethiopia and so he speaks Amharic. And so Djibouti had a very complicated relations with Ethiopia because Ethiopia was the elephant and Djibouti was the grass, and Djibouti was very independent minded. But they also knew that -- then they had a French, you know, they had French forces in Djibouti and then the United States takes Djibouti as a site of our African base. But the Djiboutian also knew that they could only twist Ethiopia's tail up to a point - or they could ignore Ethiopian interests only up to a point, because if Ethiopian's national survival was threatened by closing the port, Djibouti wouldn't last 10 seconds. And also there were a lot of Ethiopian ex-pats in Djibouti working in Djibouti, because you know the Djiboutians are amongst the highest consumers of Khat (or Chat) and in the afternoons most work there stops as people chew. So there are a lot of Ethiopians doing jobs in Djibouti.

*Q: Yeah, well I'm -- I'm just pondering now on this. Was there anything in Ethiopia that would constitute recruiting grounds for a Mahdi type thing or something?*

NAGY: The big problem -- like I said, half Ethiopia is Muslim. And the Wahhabi were growing fairly quickly amongst the Muslims, which was of great concern to the government. And of course these Wahhabi ventures were being sponsored right out of the cultural sections of certain embassies there. So the Ethiopians were in a very delicate situation because on the one hand they certainly appreciated assistance from, you know, all other countries. But on the other hand, they

were extremely concerned and the Wahhabis were very smart because what they did was they often would purchase land close to water points and build a mosque there. And if someone converted to Wahhabism they could water their animals free of charge.

*Q: Ohh.*

NAGY: And if they were not Wahhabi, whether Christian or other kind of Muslims then they could not water their animals there. So they were -- I forgot, my last year there, whether it was 56 such mosques or something that they built. I wish I could remember the number, but the thing was that while the immediate converts may have been economic converts, you know, along with that would go the madrassas (Islamic schools) for the children and so --

*Q: I would think the government could step in?*

NAGY: Well, they eventually did. When I was there the government was really in a quandary as to how to deal with it. And they eventually did. But it shows you what happens. You know, the Ethiopians I have to say, it was at that point for me the most non-corrupt, the hardest working society I had ever been in contact with. Given the other countries in Africa, I mean the people were just having such a sense of honesty and dignity and hard work, you know, literally trying to raise a living from land that only contained rocks and were really more suitable for growing rocks than anything else. And -- but they were dirt poor and famine continuously stalked the land. The years between famines kept getting shorter, largely probably because of -- because of climate change. So they were desperately poor, and it took a while for the government to just realize well, this is not the kind of monetary assistance that we're going to tolerate. Religious relations were very delicate because traditionally in Ethiopia Muslims and Christians had gotten along phenomenally well. Ethiopia was the land where the prophet Mohammad had to send members of his clan -- family when they were threatened on the Arabian peninsula early on. And the Ethiopian Christian emperor at the time gave refuge to Mohammad's family. So as a result -- I know the Koran has some verses saying, you know, do not mistreat the Ethiopians. As a result you have even in mixed villages in Ethiopia you have Muslims and Christians would celebrate each other's holidays. These Wahabi were introducing a new tone, which the Ethiopians really did not want to see, because they understand the precarious future they would have if it became like Nigeria, you know, with religious distrust. And even though for the most part the lowlands are Muslim, the highlands are Christian, you know, you have a lot of cities with large Muslim minorities, you know, on the highland. So the government fully understands the delicate nature of that. And then you have certain of the Ethiopian ethnic groups, which are almost all Muslim, like the Ethiopian Somalis. And you know that in Somalia you have this force of irredentism, which has a goal to bring all of the disparate segments of Somalia in other countries together under one flag.

*Q: Yeah, the five points of the star.*

NAGY: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. But I -- I mean I loved Ethiopia. I think of all of my tours I feel a closer link to Ethiopia than I do to anyplace else. And for me -- I'll tell you one of my -- the most touching moments was a couple of weeks after 9/11 -- well, let me go back to the Ethio-Eritrean War. After the war the border area where the fighting had taken place had been totally

devastated. So I was talking to my aid director and we were trying to decide how, how we could do the most good to help them recover from the war. So we picked this one, one part of the border area called Irob. It was the district of Irob, which had been hit harder than any other part of Ethiopia. And when the Eritrean came across here they destroyed everything, including the churches. They raped as many of the women as they could. They destroyed the livestock, poisoned the wells. So we put I think significant funds in there, but we were going to rebuild -- we were going to do housing, we were going to do water, we were going to do livestock, demining, everything, and we were going to cut the ribbon on the first project. And so I decided am I going to go up there? You know, it was really close to 9/11. Can I actually go out there? And I said, you know, the heck of it, I am going to go up there. And it was a real difficult place to be. I mean just fly and then drive and then up mountains and bounce around. And I got to the little village and we -- we did very nice speeches and everything and then cut the ribbon, turned on that first well, and then my driver came up and said, "The elders would like to talk to you, Ambassador." And I thought oh, my God, here it goes. Because I've been to so many of these things before where, you know, we do something and then afterwards the local people come with a list of things they still need to get done. So I thought here it goes, you know, I'm going to -- they'll hand me a list of -- they started speaking and I was kind of halfway paying attention, you know, to the interpreter. And instead of -- instead of asking for anything, what they said was that, you know, we the people of Irob are so sorry as to what happened to you, the United States of -- and we would like to help in any way we can. Well, that really staggered me because here we are the richest, most powerful country one earth. And here they are probably amongst the most abused and mistreated people, you know, who had suffered unbelievably during the war in the occupation. And they were offering to help us. So it was kind of near the end of my tour and I was -- and I thought oh, my gosh, you know, this -- his all made it worthwhile for spending almost 25 years in Africa and having endured really miserable living conditions and, you know, putting my family through this. Because really the place had unbelievable dignity and you know, human interaction and human relationships, which are very difficult to find anywhere else.

*Q: Well, where I'm talking now in Arlington there's a significant Ethiopian and Somali community.*

NAGY: Oh yeah, absolutely.

*Q: Was there any sort of back and forth between the American Ethiopians and the Ethiopian-Ethiopians?*

NAGY: The American Ethiopians for a long time aided the government. I mean you had a lot of Ethiopians that came out during the communist days. And then you had some who came out before that and then you had some that came out after the current governance is over. And a lot of the Ethiopian community look at the current government as authoritarian because they -- they strive in their heart for the days of the emperor having forgotten that those were not very good days either. You know, I was a member of the Hungarian Diaspora and I understand the mentality of exiles because you're always about 10 years behind the times.

*Q: Yeah. That invariably happens.*

NAGY: So I understand the frustration of the Ethiopian community, but I always -- when I met with Ethiopians in America I always said go back and take a look and see what's going on in your country because you will be amazed because you're caught in a time warp and look and see that yes, the current government is still authoritarian, but they're becoming less so. And the current government is the freest and most liberal government that Ethiopia has ever had in its 2,000 years of history, and the next one will be even better than this one, you know. So the community out here has their differences, but even they are mellowing somewhat. There are huge, huge numbers of Ethiopians. I think Dallas and Houston both have about 50,000 each. I think Washington area has probably a million. It's not -- not a million, I'm sorry, several hundred thousand. They claim that there's more, but there's a lot of Ethiopians in the United States. And they do extremely well. You know, the first generation are the taxi drivers and then the next generation will be professionals. There are more Ethiopian doctors in Chicago than there are in Addis Ababa. That's why I didn't give visas to Ethiopian doctors. But that's another story.

*Q: How did Kenya fit into this whole thing?*

NAGY: Well, Johnny Carson was ambassador in Kenya when I was in Ethiopia and -- (*clears throat*) excuse me -- the Ethio-Kenyan frontier is kind of a no-man's land, though it really doesn't figure prominently to those two countries. It's much more abandoned and interethnic fighting and things like that, but not a major, you know, problem given the other problems that those countries have. Where we fit in with Kenya more was on the external side because we were both extremely interested on what was going on in Somalia. And we saw the Somali situation somewhat differently. I -- I will admit to a certain amount of clientitis on my side because from the Ethiopian perspective Somalia was a huge sore spot and I often sent in advice to Washington on Somalia, which my dear friend and colleague in Nairobi would see differently. And the Ethiopians to a certain extent were supporting some of the warlords in Somalia, but of course we were too, off and on. So everybody had their, you know, their, their, their folks in Somalia that they, they supported and opposed. And of course for us Somalia had been a disaster.

*Q: Well, when you were there how stood things between Somalia? This was before Somalia collapsed, wasn't it?*

NAGY: No. No, this was after. Somalia collapsed I believe in '89.

*Q: So you had Ethiopian --*

NAGY: This was 10 years later.

*Q: You had Ethiopian troops in Somalia?*

NAGY: They would go in from time to time at that point. What they did was they had a client state more or less in Somaliland, you know, which wants to be independent.

*Q: \_\_\_\_\_ and that?*

NAGY: Yeah, and it's working really well. And so often the Somaliland president would come up to Ethiopia -- I'm trying to remember the guy's name because I met him a couple of times -- and also in between Somaliland and Southern Somalia was the semi-autonomous area called Puntland. Somaliland wanted independence. Puntland did not want independence, but Puntland wanted nothing to do with the rest of Somalia until they got their act together. So they were running their own affairs as well. The president of Puntland was a man named Abdullahi Yusuf who then became president of larger Somalia. He was an old security guy going way back. So Ethiopia told Somaliland that they would be happy to recognize them once someone else did. So they would not treat the president of Somaliland as a head of state, but almost. And the problem was with the poor Somaliland folks is they can never find anyone to recognize them first because there are a whole lot of countries that would be willing to recognize them after someone else has. Of course the Africa Union, for whatever reason, is bitterly opposed to Somaliland going off in its own direction, even though they will now likely welcome Southern Sudan, you know, as a new country and they welcomed Eritrea as a country.

*Q: Well, then what about the Sudan?*

NAGY: Well, the Ethiopians have had complicated relations with the Sudanese, but during the Independence War against the communist government of Mengistu, the Sudanese supported the Ethiopian rebels. Once they came into power the Ethiopians had problems with -- certain problems with Sudan, but at the same time they also realized that they were neighbors and they had to get along. Now I think the Ethiopians will try to make it work when the Southern Sudanese vote for independence. But the real client support for South Sudan comes from Kenya. Much more so than Ethiopian. Ethiopia has a region in the west, which is inhabited by the same people as the Southern Sudanese, the Dinka and the Nuer. But these folks are always at each other's throats, the Dinka and the Nuer. So to a certain extent South Sudan is going to complicate things for the Ethiopians on their western border.

*Q: Okay, today is December 7, 2010. Well, let's have at it. We can finish her off.*

NAGY: Sure. I was thinking about what we talked about yesterday and let's see, we talked about the war, we talked -- but I wanted to add one little something about an averted famine.

*Q: Sure.*

NAGY: In Ethiopia, is that OK?

*Q: Oh, absolutely.*

NAGY: OK. Because like I said, just as the Ethio-Eritrean War was winding down we heard rumblings that the rains had failed in the lowlands of Ethiopia. And myself having been there in the mid '80s during the great famine, you know, where millions were faced with starvations and 10s and thousands died, my AID director and I were both absolutely adamant to do everything possible to prevent it and keep it from happening again. So I had my AID director charter an airplane and fly down to some of the riskiest parts of the country. You know, he literally risked -- his name was Doug Sheldon -- he risked life and limb to see firsthand what was going on. And

he came back and in fact did confirm that the rains had failed and that considerable numbers of people were facing starvation. So we did not call it a famine because, you know, we were not into crises. But we called it a hung -- an emerging hunger emergency. And working with all the emergency response agencies of the U.S. Government we were able to get massive grain shipments on the sea very, very quickly. So the first trucks out of the port of Djibouti to deliver food to the, to the affected areas arrived, you know, fairly quickly. I think like five, six weeks from the time we raised the alarm while the Europeans were still talking about it, you know. The trucks were already delivering American grain. And I was extremely proud of -- of the U.S. Government response. So from my perspective Ethiopia was a very, very productive tour.

*Q: Well, tell me, where did the grain come -- I mean did we have this stuff on ships ready to go somewhere or what?*

NAGY: No. No. It was a -- I mean the Food for Peace Office, I think it was done through that, and the Foreign Disaster Assistance Office, Office of Foreign -- you know, OFDA, that heart of USAID, or at least related with them. They knew exactly where the surplus grains were so I think they made very quick purchases. And it was -- I remember I think the first shipment was put on a U.S. flagship in the port of Houston and hit the seas very quickly. And like I said, I went down to Djibouti. I flew down there to see the grain shipment arriving. And it was, you know, it makes one very proud to see the U.S. of America do very well that it can do very well. They did -- it came out of the Midwest, it came out of Texas, you know, Louisiana, the usual grain belts.

*Q: Well, I've heard that one of the big problems of Ethiopia is that it really doesn't have a good road system. So it --*

NAGY: It does now. I mean when I was there in the, in the '80s it was atrocious. When I came back there in the late '90s, early 2000s it was much improved and the Chinese mostly -- but there were some other international contractors were laying blacktop all over the country, and now it's -- I'd say it's one of the better -- maybe the best road system outside of Southern Africa. Of course Southern Africa has a wonderful road system.

*Q: Question occurred to me before we leave there. What was your impression of Susan Rice and the AF (African Affairs) Bureau? Because she was very much involved with the war, wasn't she there?*

NAGY: Oh, she was extreme -- yeah. She was -- for Susan, Ethiopia was her country of greatest interest. She had a lot invested, you know, both Ethiopia-Eritrea, with the leadership there, having identified both presidents of Eritrea and prime minister of Ethiopia as being among the youth type of African leaders who were bright, energetic, and cared about their people. So the war was a devastating personal blow to her. And honestly, you know, there were times when I definitely felt micromanaged. But once I gained her confidence, you know, that I was actually an adult and I could exercise adult supervision both over managing the mission and managing policy, you know, the straight bilateral policy, then she left me alone in that regard and she listened to my advice. She was very, very, very positive in my evaluation reports. And the, the bilateral -- not bilateral, but the stuff between the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict without -- with the OAU at that point, now AU (African Union) -- and the Algerians was handled by Tony Lake

who was the special envoy. So it, it worked out very well. I had an extremely positive working relationship with her and also with, with Gayle Smith who was the NSC director for Africa. And then in turn Susan was replaced by Walter Kansteiner again. I thought I had tremendous amount of support from Washington for what we were trying to do, because Walter was on, you know, with the September 11<sup>th</sup> and thereafter. Susan was there during the Ethio-Eritrean War and the hunger emergency. So I had my share of crises in each of them. But they were extremely supportive. I enjoyed it.

*Q: All right, well then you left Ethiopia when?*

NAGY: I left Ethiopia in July of 2002 for my final Foreign Service tour as the diplomat in residence at the University of Oklahoma.

**LUKE KAY**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Addis Ababa (2001)**

*Luke Kay was born in Greece in 1969. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan in 1991 and attended the School of International Studies, Bologna. After joining the Foreign Service in 1998 he has held positions in Brazil, Ethiopia, and Uruguay. Mr. Kay was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in June 2004.*

*Q: How did you find it hard, Amharic?*

KAY: Difficult. It was not as close to Arabic as I had hoped. It is a Semitic language but a distant cousin. It's not as close to Arabic as I had hoped, but the alphabet is fabulous; syllabic characters, difficult to learn because it had much more of a non-Semitic African influence and a very weak or tenuous Semitic influence.

*Q: So you went where?*

KAY: Addis Ababa. After six months at FSI learning Arabic, I had some African regional studies classes and whatnot, and an official tour, so I would do consular and economic affairs.

*Q: What was the situation in Ethiopia when you got there? This would be still in 2000?*

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

KAY: In Ethiopia at the time, the ambassador was Tibor Nagy, a Hungarian-American.

*Q: What was the state of relations in Ethiopia?*

KAY: It was very good, obviously, and we were coming up to a very crucial day, if fact. According to the Ethiopian calendar, it was mid-year 1994 at the time. So they were about 7 years behind us according to their own calendar. Of course, they have a different calendar altogether, 13 months instead of 12, with some other idiosyncrasies, the Gregorian calendar instead of the Julian calendar because they are Orthodox Christians. Ethiopian New Year's every year falls about September which actually makes sense because it's close to the Jewish New Year and Coptic Orthodox New Year, both derived from ancient Egyptian New Year, all related to the harvest season and ancient pagan rites. The school season in the U.S. and the farming season, are all tied together to our common proud pagan past. So Ethiopian New Year was in September of that year; we all went, of course, to the Hilton or the Hyatt to celebrate at big parties, just like a regular New Year's with dancing, eating, music and drinking. The next morning, I happened to go back into the embassy because I wanted to check my E-mail and work on New Year's Day! I had CNN on in the background as I was typing away sending E-mails telling people Happy Ethiopian New Year and no, it's not a joke. It was Ethiopian New Year 1994, September 2001 to us. Suddenly I hear shouting and screaming behind me. I looked on the TV monitor and the first plane had hit the World Trade Center. It was 2:45 p.m. local time in East Africa, about 8:45 EST. I thought, oh, it must be a mistake or something. In fact, I was on the phone with an embassy friend of mine, another American colleague at home. We were just talking, and I said, "Oh, it must be a mistake, a little Cessna probably hit, the pilot lost control or whatnot." And then, as you know, as history has recorded, a second plane hit, and I thought, "Oh my God, this is not an accident." I immediately the Ambassador and told him, "Mr. Ambassador, you might want to turn on CNN right now because something strange is happening." I also called the DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission, and that day will live on as 9/11. So, in fact, I was the first one to know, by chance, because, of course, being New Year's Day, embassy were dead drunk, crashed on the couch or recovering from the lewd night before. That became a long day as you know. People started streaming into the embassy, "special" embassy people with work to do. The rest of us went home and watched with horror the events unfolding on our TV screen.

*Q: Did you go on heightened alert?*

KAY: We did. The next day the embassy was closed to the public. We had obviously a big meeting, the entire staff, full embassy team meeting. The ambassador was very somber, very sad because we didn't have all the information. Initially we thought up to 800 people had been killed in the Pentagon. We didn't know. Of course, there were a lot of military staff, dependents, friends and family in the embassy, so we didn't know who was alive, who had perished. The ambassador had wanted to say what a great year it had been in Ethiopia, Ethiopian New Year's here, and the country was moving ahead, moving forward. And yet we had to focus on this macabre moment.

*Q: What type of work were you doing in Ethiopia?*

KAY: The first year was consular affairs again. Infamous consulate affairs. In Ethiopia consular affairs is very difficult because there's so much fraud in terms of fake marriages, fake birth certificates, fake HIV test results, bogus marriages, fake families, everything. There were very few, if any, bona fide tourists who travel from Ethiopia. So, the main thrust of the work was immigration. Anyone and everyone would or could get out did so. Of course, the alternate visa



program was big and is, as you know, basically a visa lottery. By sending a letter to New Hampshire, they take several lucky thousands of out the millions of desperate letters they receive. Each country I think is allotted a ratio or of 1200 every year, of lottery winners. So we had to deal with all those, a lot of fraud in terms of family fraud. One would win the lottery and suddenly his twelve supposed brothers and sisters (who are only his neighbors!) would try to come in on his coattails and whatnot. So we'd do a lot of DNA testing analysis.

*Q: So, you moved into the DNA...*

KAY: We did, absolutely; the internet had become an integral part of work in Brazil, at the UN, and in Ethiopia. But Even DNA was fraudulent; they would bribe our nurses and doctors.

*Q: Where were the Ethiopian communities? Where were these people going to?*

KAY: As you know, Washington, DC has the largest Ethiopian community in the world outside Ethiopia.

*Q: Yesterday I bought something at Best Buy and there was a young girl who spoke Amharic. She was born in the United States. Her name is Ferlan, and she is Amharic. Specifically, we have a very large community. Were there any other spots that they were going?*

KAY: The vast majority were going to Washington, DC. Also, Seattle has a sizeable community. New Jersey, too, but mainly Washington, DC. This area, the DC metropolitan area, NoVA and suburban Maryland.

*Q: Basically, what were you doing, refusing visas?*

KAY: Oh, yes! "Dr No" they called me. And with good reason; fraud, even alien smuggling, i.e. trying to smuggle in fake relatives with failed the DNA tests. The new stipulation was you had to be HIV negative. HIV is a major problem in Ethiopia. Some got excluded on that or on marriage fraud. One person would win the visa, then sell to the highest bidder, would marry the highest bidder for a free ticket to the U.S. Visa fraud was rampant!

*Q: How did you find working under those conditions?*

KAY: Difficult. Very difficult. The embassy also is very cramped in the sense that the consular section had at least 30 souls in one office, in one room, really. Very cramped conditions. I was lucky to have a desk and air to breathe!

*Q: Did the ambassador show much interest in what was going on?*

KAY: He tried his best. But again, because the conditions were so difficult in the consular section, and our building abutted the exterior wall. We were exposed, dangerously juxtaposing the exterior wall; dangerous because of past and current unrest in the country, replete with gun shots. In short, we were really in an unsafe area. We were thinking of trying to move that section to another point on the compound.

*Q: How was life then in Ethiopia?*

KAY: Very difficult. Again, I was basically the only American at the embassy who spoke Amharic. I'm not talking about Ethiopian Americans, but the only blue-blooded non-local Americans who spoke Amharic. The same with Brazil. I was not the only one there who spoke Portuguese at all, and I spoke the best Portuguese, completely fluently. Even though I spoke Amharic there, it was still very lonely, a very closed society, in many ways also very xenophobic. Ethiopia was a major empire in history. So, they conquered their neighbors, quite frankly, quite viciously and still have a xenophobic culture, a proud culture, obviously. But they tended to look down upon those who were not Ethiopian Orthodox or Amharic.

*Q: Did you find any fraternity as a Greek Orthodox? Any Coptic church?*

KAY: Yes, I did. In fact, there is a Greek Orthodox Church there, of course, a plethora of Ethiopian Orthodox churches. As you know, Ethiopia did have a quite large expat community, historically of Greeks, Armenians, and Italians. Of course, the Italians came in the shadow of Mussolini's tanks, but the Greeks and Armenians were there historically. The Armenians were survivors of the 1915 Ottoman genocide, survivors of the Turkish genocide of the Armenians. The Greeks, I believe, historically came from Alexandria. So there were still some small communities of Greeks, Armenians and Italians. I say small because after the Communist Revolution, the DERG (Communist government of Ethiopia) had made conditions difficult for non-Ethiopians. As a result, most of the expats fled. But still there were actually two or three other Greek Americans in the U.S. Embassy. We would occasionally go, rarely actually, to the Greek Church there; they even had a Greek dance there at the Greek Orthodox community center, some Italian and Armenian restaurants. So, yes, there was a lively expat community.

*Q: It seems a little bit odd that you were speaking Amharic. Did they use you for political purposes?*

KAY: No, they did not. You definitely needed Amharic to get in the visa window. We did have interpreters because Ethiopia has a myriad of languages, like India. Amharic is the Hindi of Ethiopia, if you will. Amharic entitles you to speak with only one-third of the people of the country.

*Q: What are the other languages?*

KAY: Oromo in the south and Tigrinya in the North; Tigrinya is a linguistic cousin of Amharic. But also in many other tribal languages, even Arabic within the walled city of Harare, conquered the Egyptians. So, no, Amharic was not used in the political section, but the consular section definitely needed Amharic speakers.

*Q: What were you getting from the rest of the embassy about relations with the Ethiopians. Was this a period of tension between Ethiopians and Eritreans?*

KAY: It was, indeed a period of tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea. That war had just ended a year or two before my arrival. However, given 9/11, the government supported the U.S. and remained helpful. As I mentioned before, diplomatically speaking, they had a very proud culture. It was definitely a very Ethiopian-centered, an Orthodox country from the top on down. The Muslims were a large minority kept under guard, especially after 9/11. The government support the US position very much and was very helpful.

*Q: Did you get to travel much?*

KAY: A little bit. Again, because the conditions are so difficult, quite frankly, traveling there is expensive. Economically speaking, there are very few flights and quite expensive. The roads are in decrepit condition. I did fly once to Harare in eastern Ethiopia, not far from the Djibouti-Somali border, a Muslim and Arabic town. That was very interesting, fabulous. We did a little bit of hiking in the mountains, and other than that, I just did small day trips into greater Addis. Visited a small town called Nazareth, where they over simplified their alleged ties to Zion. They believed that Ethiopia's king, Emperor Haile Selassie was a descendant of King David in the line of Judah.

*Q: Queen of Sheba?*

KAY: Queen of Sheba, exactly! Queen Sheba and King David. Yes, it is. So that myth has been part of their national story, a national myth. In any case, there is still a town called Nazareth, a total shit hole, if you ask me. I also did day trips in the Abula area for mountain hikes; beautiful mountains, beautiful scenery!

*Q: Was the Fallujah an issue anywhere?*

KAY: No, they had already emigrated to Israel. Maybe one little town had a few Ethiopian Jews left, and that became almost like a little bit of a tourist trap. So basically, no.

*Q: You were there until when?*

KAY: I was there actually less than a year because I curtailed. Many people curtailed, actually. The DCM and the ambassador curtailed too, if I'm correct. Several other people also curtailed. It was a very difficult life. Truly a hardship post, very lonely and difficult; you could not get close to the Ethiopians as much. Because of their extreme and overwhelming poverty, you could not find a true friend. Sooner or later they would reveal their ulterior motives and true intentions. "What can you give me?" Very pathetic because they didn't ask for food or clothing but for stereos and the best of what we had! Not even "What can you give me?" but rather "Give me now!" A shameless attitude; no self respect.

*End of Reader*