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

STEDMAN HOWARD

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Howard.]

Q: Today is January 5, 2005. This is a new interview with Stedman Howard. For the transcriber, please make sure you make it, Stedman is the first name and Howard is the last name.

HOWARD: The spelling is S-T-E-D-M-A-N.

Q: All right. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. You go by Sted?

HOWARD: Yes.

Q: Can we start at the beginning, could you tell me when and where you were born?

HOWARD: I was born November 19, 1944 in Jackson Heights, New York.

Q: All right, can you tell me a bit about your family? Let's start on your father's side. Where did the Howards come from?

HOWARD: They came from Ware, Massachusetts, from Hampshire County, Massachusetts and my great grandfather had a string of grain and feed stores, mills in central Massachusetts in Ware up through a series of small towns in what is now Quabbin Reservoir. My grandfather and his brother took this business over in the early '30s and had a very rough go of it, but they managed to get my father and my uncle through boarding school and off to college in Maine at Colby and that took them up through my dad's graduation in 1942. Then, he went to New York to work in advertising. On my mother's side of the family, they come from Saco, Maine and points north, but basically she grew up in the town of Saco, which is in southern Maine about 20 miles south of Portland, halfway between Kennebunkport up on Route 1. She met my dad when he spent summers with his mother at the beach in Saco. His mother ran a guest lodge and my mother applied for a job. That's where she met my dad.

Q: Did she go to college?

HOWARD: Yes, she did. She went to Bates.

Q: Bates, so a good New England college background.

HOWARD: Solid college background. Yes.

Q: What sort of advertising business was your father in?

HOWARD: Well, at the time he worked for Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborn (BBDO) in New York. He worked there for two or three years. I remember he told me that he found himself one day writing ad copy to persuade people to buy refrigerators. Then he realized the people he was persuading were people who were just like himself who he knew damn well [they] couldn't afford the refrigerators. As a student at Mount Herman school and at Colby, he had been involved in the school newspapers. He wanted to get back involved in the newspapers so he went back to Ware, Massachusetts.

Q: How do you spell Ware?

HOWARD: W-A-R-E. Along with all the standard jokes about where is it, but its almost right plunk in the middle. He took over the local newspaper called the Ware River News as the managing editor and he did that for I think about three or four years. Then there was a management change at the Ware River News and he decided to set up his own newspaper. He did something called the Tri-County Times, which expanded its field of sales to neighboring towns, not just Ware and he ran that, I think, for another three years. At that point, he went back to advertising because journalism really wasn't paying off.

Q: But when you were born in '44 he was back in advertising?

HOWARD: Well, that was his first thing. He was working for BBD&O in New York and it was shortly after that that he realized he wanted to go home and run a newspaper.

Q: Well, then as a kid did you grow up in Ware?

HOWARD: When I was a little kid I did. I think in 1950 he shut down the newspaper and he went to work for a small advertising agency in Greenfield, Massachusetts. He wrote copy for Western Mass Electric Company and a variety of other utilities and industries in Greenfield and Turner Falls in western Massachusetts. Chain and Beeton was the outfit that he worked for in Greenfield for a few years.

Q: What was Ware like?

HOWARD: It was a small town At that time about 13,000 to 20,000. It's probably up around 25,000 now. It was a mill town. It had a mixture of French and Polish and high church Yankees, high church Yankees ran the banks and the hospital and the mills. I lived on Church Street as did the Howards.

Q: On the higher ground?

HOWARD: Absolutely. The floodwaters didn't get up there in '38.

Q: We're talking about the hurricane in '38 that hit that whole area.

HOWARD: Yes. Now, the high water marks were down on Main Street and the Howards were way up Church Street. As a matter of fact, there's a watermark on the Ware Savings Bank today that celebrates the flood in 1938.

Q: What was home life like? Did you have brothers and sisters?

HOWARD: Yes, one sister who was younger. We lived in half of a duplex that my dad and uncle owned together and the other half of the house was occupied by three elderly aunts. They lived there I guess for three or four years and we moved to Greenfield and that's when we went to work for the advertising agency.

Q: It's on the Taconic Trail isn't it?

HOWARD: No, it's on the Mohawk Trail. It's at the foot of the Mohawk Trail, on Route 91 North and its on the Deerfield River at the foot of the Berkshires. It was a reasonable little town with sort of a funny quirky mill town, quasi mill town. My sister lives just south of there in Deerfield and teaches in Greenfield today.

Q: Well, then, did you go to school in Greenfield?

HOWARD: Yes.

Q: What was school like?

HOWARD: Sort of a classic big red brick building from the '50s; a classic public school. I don't know of anything remarkable; it was called Federal Street School.

Q: Have any particular courses you liked or subjects?

HOWARD: I don't know that in the first, second or third grade I was concerned.

Q: No, I mean how did you take to school?

HOWARD: I got along well in school. I don't know that I was particularly thrilled about getting up in the morning and going to school, but I don't recall any great reluctance except for the kid down the street that tried to beat me up when I went past his house.

Q: Did you learn to go around the block?

HOWARD: I knew more ways to do that that you can imagine.

Q: I think all of us had.

HOWARD: My mother bless her heart said, there's no alternative, you've just got to whack him. She and I went out and worked out an ambush in a bush one day. She said now you get there before he does and when he comes by you come out and deck him. I couldn't believe that this sweet person was telling me to do that. She did and I was scared and I leaped out of the bush and I decked him and he never bothered me again.

Q: That was one of life's great lessons.

HOWARD: It was. One of the other great lessons was don't get your mother all locked in a characterization because it's going to surprise you.

Q: Then, when you left Greenfield, you went back to?

HOWARD: Not to Ware. We went to a little town called West Brookfield, which is about seven miles from where my dad went to work in a completely different line of work. He went to work for some friends who ran the Ware Knitting Company in Ware, Massachusetts. This is one of the mills and he worked for them for a long time writing their internal communication newsletter. So, he continued to do that and they had a part time purchasing agent position open and he took that over. He still did the internal house newsletter, but he didn't work full time for them for years and years.

Q: Well, this is where you spent most of your.

HOWARD: West Brookfield probably is all the way up to what amounted to junior high school and a single elementary school that went to 8th grade.

Q: How was that as far as, was there sort of class distinctions or ethnic groups or not? How did that work?

HOWARD: Not really. It was too small a town. It didn't have a diverse population to make it. It was clear that there were kids who had resources more than other kids, but it didn't make a whole lot of difference, at least not that I know of.

Q: Did you turn into a reader or not by this time?

HOWARD: Pretty much. Yes. We had an excellent small library and a really superb librarian. The school made a space, it did not have its own library and made a space for us to use the town library. They had, I think it was, a mandatory afternoon course in how to use a library. There were definitely assignments in class that told us we had to go to the library to look it up.

Q: Any particular author or books that you remember from the early years or not?

HOWARD: No, I read the standard stuff, the Hardy Boys. I read then as I do now for escapism. I'm not particularly a diligent reader for edification and education although I read what I need to and I certainly follow the news publications, but I'm not an avid reader of handbooks or guidebooks. I write them, but I don't read them.

Q: Then, where did you go to high school?

HOWARD: I went two years to a local school in Spencer, Massachusetts called the David Prouty High School. West Brookfield was too small to have a high school of its own so it contracted with a neighboring town and I had options of three schools. I chose Prouty in Spencer. That was kind of mediocre. Spencer was another mill town and had schools with that character. After a couple of years my folks decided that I wasn't getting out of there what they wanted me to get either in discipline or in academic progress. With more sacrifice than I realized at the time they sent me to the Mount Hermon School, which is outside of Bernardston, Massachusetts, a private school. That was the school to which my father and uncle had gone and I spent the last two years of high school at Mount Hermon.

Q: What was Mount Hermon like?

HOWARD: It's a delightful place. It's a collegial campus, off in the wilderness almost up on the Vermont border across the river from Northfield, Massachusetts which is where there was a girls' school all of which was founded by an evangelist by the name of Dwight Lyman Moody. D. L. Moody wanted a school that would be a kind of opportunity for kids of all natures to come and study in a semi-religious atmosphere. It really wasn't a church school per se, but Moody was an evangelist and the central feature on the Northfield campus was the Northfield auditorium which was built in 1890 as an evangelism hall for Moody. Bible studies were absolutely a central part of the course for

both schools. I'd say they were in the top tier of New England private schools although that probably reflects my own prejudice.

Q: No, I've heard, I went to one of those prep schools. I went to Kent in Northern Connecticut and Mount Hermon was one of those right up there.

HOWARD: Well, the schools that are better known of course are Philips Exeter in Andover.

Q: St. Paul.

HOWARD: Yes. There a variety of others. Mount Hermon had a feature that other schools didn't. Notably, arrivals in Deerfield had to do no work in their lives and thought that was a debilitating factor in their education and we worked all the time.

Q: We did a camp on self-help.

HOWARD: I worked in the laundry the first year and then I manufactured my job in the second year. I've remarkably been able to design jobs for myself that were more to my liking than what they had in mind for me to do. Mount Hermon was no exception. In fact that probably was the first major manifestation of that. I noted and sold the proposition that they needed a full time stage crew chief. They actually went and made that an official work assignment. I got four to six hours a week work credit for managing the properties and the sets and running the stage crews when we did plays. It was an entirely enjoyable year. It was the first time I had the job and maybe three years ago I met my successor now 30 years removed.

Q: By the time you got to Mount Hermon, did you find there were certain areas of study you particularly liked and didn't like?

HOWARD: I didn't like any studies. I think my personal opinion is that the academic folks at Mount Hermon said that it would be better for all concerned if I graduated, that I had probably done about as much as I could do at Mount Hermon and they didn't really want to give up. So they would stamp this as acceptable and send me off. They would find a place for me in the academic world and I should go there. I'm not a very good student and never have been.

Q: Well, then, with this, were you pointed towards, for somebody who graduates from Mount Hermon, the expectation is that they are going to go on to college.

HOWARD: Which I did.

Q: Where'd you go?

HOWARD: I went to Wake Forest in Illinois, which is a very nice small school. Point of fact it's smaller than the combined Northfield Mount Hermon. I found it was kind of a

pale imitation. The positive thing I got out of going to Wake Forest was that it got me out of New England in the first place on a very long train trip to Chicago. I became interested in economics. I declared economics as my major, but I only stayed at Wake Forest a year. Something like four days before it came time to go back out to Wake Forest in my sophomore year, I decided I didn't want to go. My father gave me $150 and a rusted up old Volkswagen and said this is it, find yourself a place to roost because it is 1962 and the draft is staring you in the face, and I want you off the street. He gave me two weeks to find my destiny and I ended up at Worcester Junior College.

Q: Where?

HOWARD: Worcester.

Q: Worcester in Massachusetts?

HOWARD: Yes. He had by that time changed jobs and he was living in an apartment in Beverly where he had a new position doing advertising for a machine tool company. He would commute back and forth from West Brookfield to Beverly. I went down to tell him of my decision and he said that he didn't find that to be unexpected, but that I'd better find a place to roost. As long as I was there, I could stay in Beverly and go down to Boston to find my way around. Everybody in Boston said, "oh you're way too late." I went out to Worcester. Why I went to Worcester Tech I don't know. They said the same thing that the people in Boston did. I just happened to be driving down Main Street and there was parking, so I stopped there. A big man by the name of George Merriam was the director of admissions. He looked at me and he said, well, you're about four days too late. They had an economics spot for a transferred sophomore, but he said, I don't have it anymore. He said, what you really ought to do is take a year off, but you're not going to do that because you're facing the draft and your father doesn't want you to do that. I don't know that that's what he told you, but I'm making a guess. He was right on. He said, I tell you what you do, you take this little card and you scribble something on it and you take this down to the receptionist at the YMCA. It's about six blocks into town. Give it to the receptionist and go where she tells you to go, which I did. She said, okay, you want to go next door to the big red brick building. You want to go up to the third floor and tell the receptionist what your name is. She'll be waiting for you. I went and told her who I was and she said, yes, the dean is ready for you. When I walked in, I can't remember his name, he said, yes I just talked to George. Do you want to pick out your courses here? I said, where am I? He said, you're at Worcester Junior College, Dean Merriam just admitted you. He said, we'll worry about the application some other day, don't worry about it. Just pick the courses because you're a little late and we have to start courses two days from now. It was one of the better years I've ever spent in school.

He greased the skids for me to get into the University of Massachusetts, which I did.

Q: At Worcester Junior College, was it the way junior colleges are today, more or less sort of colleges that are designed to pick kids up who often can't afford to go to a full time college?

HOWARD: A very eclectic student body. This junior college was run by the YMCA. It was a function of the YMCA and so its standards of admission were geared to achieving YMCA objectives which was to educate people who would have otherwise not gone to college for whatever reason. It had some excellent instructors. It had a faculty of maybe 25% or 30%, which were current hired faculty of Worcester Junior College and the balance of their faculty were borrowed from Clark Polytech or from the University of Massachusetts. They'd come in to do specific courses. They'd come in to do a variety of different, I guess there was a whole portion of the college that had trades orientation. They came from industry as well. I was in a college transfer program and so we had a rather interesting psychology professor, sociology rather. I took sociology, psych and I took history and very much enjoyed the history.

Q: Well, then you went to the University of Massachusetts?

HOWARD: Yes, and I have a magnificent history of doing more theater work than studying and so I was invited to depart and reconsider my academic objective. I did that once and I got myself back in again and it happened again. At that point I spent, the first time, I spent six or eight months in New York working for a theatrical organization.

Q: Doing what?

HOWARD: It was fascinating. I did two things. I did booking. I worked for two ladies who ran something called the Four Great Evenings in the Performing Arts. I did two things in extracurricular at the University of Massachusetts campus. One of which was, and this was the principal academic downfall, I was the managing director of the operetta guild which did musical theater and I was a student in a theatrical group that produced four shows for main stage 15 scene musicals a year. Just running that alone would have been a full time job. Then there was another theater organization that I also did work for. At the same time I belonged to something called the Distinguished Visitors Group that managed a pot of student tax money which was used to invite outside speakers and programs to the campus. We had that year decided that we were going to expand the scope beyond the traditional let's help the academic departments kind of speaker program and we pushed through a policy where we got performing arts people on campus and we got some social dissidents. I remember we had one refugee Russian poet and we had a mime troupe and we also had Isaac Asimov.

Q: He used to teach at Boston University, but he was of course the great science fiction author.

HOWARD: Yes. He was the one who said UFOs were a lot of hot air hype. I remember that lecture. I think I may even have the text remaining. He said, there are also, what is a UFO? It is an unidentified flying object. It's something that flies through the air that you can't identify, but there are UHOs, which are unidentified heard objects. There are USOs, unidentified seen objects. He said, there are all sorts of unidentified objects that fly through your life. He said, what makes them any different? He said, there's nothing really

mystical except what you believe to be the case. He said, either keep an open mind or have a closed, but equal mind. Anyway it was interesting. One of the mime troupes was run by the fair ladies of New York who also had three other shows that they marshaled under their common umbrella. They were trained to sell them as a package to colleges and universities across the United States. I spent some time with one of the partners who came with the mime troupe, and she hired me. She said, when school ends, come on down to New York for three or four months and we'll give you the territory. You can call and talk to students at other schools and tell them about the Four Great Evenings with Performing Arts, which I did. I did odd booking calls during the daytime and evenings I went to rehearsals and worked on the production of several elements of that package.

Q: You mentioned dissident groups. This is also a period, we're talking about the early- to mid '60s. At the University of Massachusetts or elsewhere, were things beginning to effect?

HOWARD: That's probably a misnomer. The dissident I was referring to was the Russian poet.

Q: I realize that, but I'm saying we had our own.

HOWARD: I didn't get much involved in that. I've never really been a political animal.

Q: So, in the '60s and the anti-Vietnam thing, this wasn't your thing?

HOWARD: No, I was too wound up producing shows and selling tickets and running a theater.

Q: Did you aspire to be a manager or an actor or what?

HOWARD: It's interesting. I started out as a stage technician and eventually went to general management. Eventually, well, it wasn't very short order. I was actually the general manager of this musical group for two straight production years. When I left I realized I caught hold early on on how they made decisions. They had a board of directors which was always fractious and a musical director and a technical director and a bunch of people who had their own ideas and a designer, all of whom had their favorite shows. The same shows were put forward every fall for the season of choice to spring for the people of next season. I would let them sort of argue their way through and then I would present them with the season that I had selected and they would vote on it and accept it. When I left, they took me to dinner at the Lord Jeffrey Amherst Inn in Amherst and they gave me a baseball cap, and an engineer's whistle, since I had railroaded through two seasons. That was fun and that absorbed almost all of my time including that which I should have spent in class and so I flunked out again. Finally, it was time to go into the army.

Q: I take it now, we're not talking about a degree holder at this point?

HOWARD: Oh, no. 144 semester hours of credit and a 1.8 cumulative average. Enough credits, but not enough grade point averages to graduate, so I left.

Q: What did the army do with you or was it the army?

HOWARD: Well, the army was interesting.

Q: When was this? When did you join?

HOWARD: '67. I had accumulated more academics because there was an extra year in there. I spent part of it in New York and I spent part of it in fact taking funny courses at the University of Maine in Portland. So, I had enough transcript credits, but the average was shot. I went into the army under a delayed enlistment. I signed up actually in February and didn't go until September. The sign up was for military intelligence. The recruiting sergeant said, last in, first out, loud noises they'll evacuate you because you know too much. I said that's perfect. I don't like to walk, I like to fly. I'd be happy to be an airborne ranger far away from the life of danger, and he said that's where you'll be. I actually took his word for it. That's how naïve I was. So, I went in the army in September about three weeks ahead of the draft board and spent three years. I went to train just up here in Baltimore at Fort Holabird and then went to Vietnam and spent almost two years in Vietnam.

Q: Where were you in Vietnam?

HOWARD: I started out when I arrived in country I was up on the demilitarized zone in the Americal division and was on the 196th light infantry brigade and came south to just south of Da Nang which is below the middle of what is known as ICOR. Da Nang itself is just south of Hue, the famous city of the battle of Hue, which had occurred about a month before.

Q: '68 and Tet of '68.

HOWARD: Tet was in January and February and I got there in April. The battle of Hue was in late February I think. At that point my unit was up on the DMZ. We came, we spent maybe three weeks up there and turned right around and turned south again, to just south of Da Nang about 25 miles south of Da Nang to take over an area of operation. That's at the point where the Americal division was formed out of a number of light separate infantry brigades and artillery and armored units and a couple of air cab units, were all put together in this funny resurrected division that derived its name from World War II, Americans in the Caledonia. We came south, and I, at that point, was an interrogator and I hated that with a biting passion. About a month and a half after we got settled into a base camp I stumbled across an old warrant officer in a club who was bemoaning he was going back to the United States so no one would take over the program he had been running. The program was an orphan kind of thing that hired North Vietnamese and VC defectors to work as field scouts for the American units known as the Kit Carson scout program. I was looking for an out from interrogation and so we

talked for maybe three straight days about this Kit Carson scout program. It sounded like a perfect opportunity to organize something. I was more than willing to take it over if only to get out of interrogation.

Q: What was there about interrogation that you didn't like? How did you work?

HOWARD: Well, I didn't speak the language and that was very much a frustration for me, not that the interpreters were untrustworthy, but what I was getting from the interpreters didn't match my interpretation of body language from the detainees. Furthermore, the garbage that was coming from the detainees was really that. They didn't know who they were, where they were. What would happen is the infantry would go into a village and sweep up a whole bunch of farmers and load them on a Huey and dump them in our.

Q: Huey being a helicopter.

HOWARD: Yes, Helicopter. Sometimes a Chinook, which is a large helicopter and so, we'd get a lot of them. They would talk about how they had never ever supported the Viet Minh. I would say the Viet Minh had been in existence since 1956. It was now 1967 and '68. Well, they would say the Viet Minh come to our village every once in a while. Eventually I was unable to sort B.S. from reasonable things. Every once in a while you would turn something that was useful, a cache of rice or a cache of weapons. Then I saw that the problem was, we would write that up in a report and submit it, and it would take almost 48 hours for it to percolate up and circulate in the heavens and be sent back upon us again as usable intelligence. By that time whatever we'd found was long gone. That was basically frustrating. I didn't think it was productive. I didn't think I was productive in it. But the Kit Carson thing. Chief Ryder sold me on taking over his program and I did. I ran it at the brigade level and had about 200, well actually the brigade level had about 50 scouts. My job was to solve their problems. Make sure they got supplied and paid. Make sure they were assigned out to units. I got to travel all over the field units. These guys acted as field scouts for American units.

Q: Did you get involved in the My Lai business?

HOWARD: No, only after the fact. I'm not even exactly sure where in my own time line that occurred as an incident. I know that after about four or five months doing this Kit Carson stuff at the brigade level, I was invited to now run it at the division level because the other chief warrant officer was leaving, and I was the most experienced of these brigade coordinators. So, I did and at that point had two priorities: one was to expand the reach of the program throughout the division and go to the non-standard units and the one I went to, the one I decided to go to was the long range recon control. Since we had a few snipers and reconnaissance intelligence types in my inventory of defectors, Chieu Hoi.

Q: The Chieu Hoi program was open arms for.

HOWARD: It was a recruiting program.

Q: Recruiting of former Viet Cong.

HOWARD: Yes. And then what we would do was go to the receiving centers and go through and select the kinds of backgrounds we wanted, the expertise we wanted, be they engineers, saboteurs, snipers or riflemen or what. Then I had sort of a table of organization for the division and assignments and where I wanted them to go and the kinds of people I wanted where. We would go and recruit and then we would put them through probably six or eight weeks of successive interrogations in attempts to determine their veracity and their sincerity. Only at that point did we confirm that they weren't going to shoot themselves in the foot, and that they were honest. As honest as we could determine them to be and hire them and bring them into the training. The last place I was going to go was to the long range recon control unit at the division and the commanding officer called me one morning and he said, well, I can't leave, but two days from now you will meet with Lt. William Calley who is my deputy for operations. I drove up to the long-range patrol headquarters and there were a whole flock of MP jeeps and Calley was led up in handcuffs and I thought well, damn, there goes my program.

Q: Lt. Calley was the point man on the My Lai massacre, a terrible scandal on the part of the military in Americal. That division was also quoted as being too much of a hodge-podge. They represented they weren't getting some of the best officers and all.

HOWARD: I don't know. I never heard that. I didn't believe it because I worked with some damn fine officers in that division. I was very pleased. There are always in any outfit no matter what it is, military, civilian or others, a total range of good and not so good people. Certainly the Americal division had it, but I don't pass judgment on Vietnam very often because it was such a confused situation and I knew it first hand and I really don't get involved in much discussion about it.

Q: How successful were the Kit Carson scouts?

HOWARD: I measured it in terms of American lives saved that I could point to. The scouts I know within two years my 250 scouts are directly responsible for avoiding the deaths of 25 to 30 American soldiers. As far as I'm concerned they're worth every cent and every minute we put into it. If you went to incidents that you believe could have gone in another way had a scout not done what he'd done and in a couple of cases they died in the action.

Q: What were they bringing to the program?

HOWARD: They were bringing the fact that if they set the ambush they could spot it. If they could lay a booby trap in the line they knew how to look for it, which they did and they proved that. If they had sabotaged a bridge they could detect that sabotage when the engineers went out to clear the road ahead of time and indeed anytime you remove a mine that would have been set off by a field truck I claim a couple of lives saved and I believe that was accurate. We had one kid who had to be relieved he was so good that the unit

called and said you have to take him back. It was an engineer outfit that was doing road clearance on road construction and reconstruction. He said, this is the kid who mined all of our roads for the two years before he defected. He said, we have people in the unit who reenlisted or extended their stay who worked with colleagues that he blew up and they had a very difficult time working with him side by side today. I'm afraid some night in a club when he was telling about all the fun things he could do that they're going to kill him, so you better come and get him. He says, he knows too much about these culverts. He knows so much about our operation it is scary, which he did. He was actually so good I took him in and made him my first sergeant, but it was an unauthorized outfit. It was fun. I was off on my own. Nobody else knew what I was doing. I worked under the supervision of the division intelligence officer who had cleared the way for me to get a course in the training camp set aside. In fact we had no budget to speak of. We were not an authorized unit. We paid scouts, first out of petty cash. It was administered in Saigon. In point of fact every time I had a scout killed or wounded in action I had to file a Department of Labor civilian accident report. I had to fill out half a page on what we were doing to correct the situation that led to the accident. Eventually I got so annoyed at this one that I wrote we have dispatched the noted historian Henry Kissinger to Paris to root out the root causes of this problem, and he is working on a solution now to improve working conditions for everyone. Nobody ever questioned this. I filled out a dozen of these things that way. No one ever came back saying you're a wise guy.

Q: Well, then you continued this until you left Vietnam then?

HOWARD: They wanted to send me to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and I knew I would be running ROK training details. I would stay there for 90 days and that would break the Fort Bragg assignment and put me in a new assignment cycle. They tried this three times. Finally I went to the general, the intelligence officer known as the G2, and I said I have a problem. I really want to go teach at Fort Holabird, the intelligence school. But every time I apply for that I get lost in the shuffle and they want me to go to Fort Bragg where there are intel analysts walking all over each other and painting rocks on detail. I really don't want to do that. He said, well, it just so happens that a personal friend of mine is the commandment of the school and they are willfully short. They are running at 40% of their authorized complement because they can't get people. He looked back over what I had tried to do and it was like 18 or 19 months in country, which was six months longer than a normal tour. He said, well, break this assignment and let it go one more cycle. In the meantime I will call Fort Holabird and see what I can do. I broke it and sure enough Fort Bragg came up again. He said, all right, don't break the assignment this time. Leave it that way, leave it Fort Bragg. Don't do anything that your orders tell you to do. Don't go to the Pentagon, don't report to Fort Bragg, do not even call in when you hit Fort Lewis in Washington State. He said, "take your orders from Fort Lewis, go directly to Baltimore and hand them to this colonel and make sure you don't get lost with some lieutenant or major on the way." Insist that you want to go and take my card and give it to them, which worked exactly that way. He looked at me and he said, go home. Two years of being over there. He said, do not respond to any telephone calls from the Department of the Army except for mine and do not do what anyone tells you until I call and tell you to do something. He said there is a 10% chance that within 30 days I will call you and tell

you to go to Fort Bragg in which case you better go. But there is a 90% chance that I will not call you for almost 60 days, and I will tell you to come to Baltimore. In 45 days he called and he said you're on the staff, and I had a nice rest of six or seven months.

Q: What were you doing there?

HOWARD: At Fort Holabird? I basically taught. I was hired to teach interrogation, which I told them I really didn't like to do. So, the interrogation section had agreements with other elements of the school to borrow instructors. So, I became their utility tradeoff instructor and I taught in the counter intelligence school. I taught in the analyst school and war and battle analysis school. I taught wherever they needed people. It was basically when interrogation needed someone from war and battle, they would call war and battle to send them the instructor and then there would be a favor owed and then I would be the payoff for the favor. Then, the interrogation section wanted to develop a short course for junior officers in logic, applied logic. Since I was dealing with marines, Sergeant Lineman and I the only ones who had ever taken a course in logic, so we were assigned to develop it, and we did. I spent two or three months trying to develop the course and tried to teach it.

Q: So, you were out in when, what year?

HOWARD: September of '70.

Q: As you came back from the Vietnam War, what did you think about it?

HOWARD: I didn't. I wanted to forget it and I did successfully. It's really surprisingly enough, it what's now 30 plus years, about 34 years, almost 35 and I haven't, not until the last four or five years have I read anything that was written nor watched any of the films that were produced. About the only thing I could bring myself to watch was a series called China Beach, which is about an evacuation hospital and it rang true. I found it far too confusing a situation to be susceptible to the kind of analysis and explanations that were commonly available in both the print media and in later analysis of Vietnam and what went wrong. I had my own interpretations of what I felt was not properly done and not understood, but it didn't really match. In fact what I realized was that your interpretation of what was going on was dependent on where you were and what the particular time of day and what particular place and time of the year. If you were in a different place at the same time and point in time, different physical place, your whole vision was changed. If you were in a different level of decision-making in the same place at the same time your vision of what happened changed. It was entirely a very narrow viewpoint of what formed your opinion of what was going on. As a result I didn't trust any of the interpretations that came from command structure, and I didn't trust even my own command structure.

Q: 1970 you're out. What happened?

HOWARD: I became officially unemployed according to the definition of the state of Maryland. At that point I had moved from Baltimore down to Hyattsville, Maryland with two buddies from when I had been a student at Fort Holabird. They were going to the University of Maryland and first I tried to get involved in a pyramid marketing scheme for cosmetics and that died a very smelly death in my trunk one night in the freezing cold. Then I took the federal service entrance exam, which was an interesting exercise, that produced a result I did not understand. I did not understand how I could get 102 points on a test that had a 100 point score. I went down to the civil service commission and the lady there said you know, you're one of maybe 5,000 people who take this exam that bothered to come in and ask what it meant. It basically means you got a 97 on the raw score on the exam and you get five points veteran's preference which gives you 102 out of 100 points. Actually its 102 out of 105, but she said, surprisingly enough there are enough 10 point veterans on the list with point scores above yours that reaching you is not going to be an immediate exercise. If you do what the instructions say, which are go home and wait for us to call you, you will be found as a skeleton clinging to the door of your empty refrigerator on the day they call to see if you want to be a sky marshal. If, however, she said, you regard this as a hunting license and you start going to every personnel office in town with your 171, standard form 171, you probably could find a job. I took her at her word and I went to a place that had, they ran something called federal careers information center and I got a partial list of 100 and something personnel offices in town. I hit every one of them by direct mail, telephone or visitation. USIA was the last. By the time I got to USIA, I had gotten two offers from personnel work for the Department of the Navy and one offer to join the DC tax assessor's office. The Navy jobs I had sort of no opinion about. The DC government job sounded like a real yawner. I realized much later how critically in error that conclusion was. I would now know exactly where all the real estate deals were in Washington and I probably would have resigned years ago and bought up pieces of property. But at the time I could see the dust settling in the office and I thought I'm going to die in here with the dust on the floor. USIA was the literally last agency in town that I was going to hit up.

Q: Were you going through this alphabetically it sounds?

HOWARD: No, I divided it geographically. I had northwest, near northwest around the White House. I had State, Treasury, Civil Service Commission, GSA, USIA and National Park Service. I did them all in about two days. USIA was the last one. They started giving me canned rejection speech number one as I walked in the door. I heard that 10 times so I had to pull my way past that. I said I want to talk to a staffing officer. They gave me another appointment and I came back and I talked to a staffing officer and he started giving me the canned rejection speech number two alpha which was the upscale version as he's looking through my 171 and all of a sudden he stops. He says, Mount Hermon School? I said, yes sir, class of '62. He said, class of '34. I called my dad and I said the $4,000 bucks paid off. That's how I got hired by USIA as a personnel management specialist.

Q: So, you were a personnel management in 1970?

HOWARD: Yes, ’71 actually.

Q: Well, how did they bring you in?

HOWARD: It was a civil service appointment; I was GS-7. I had the option of taking a practical job and doing on the job training or going into a formal internship program. I really had no stomach to go through an internship program. It was kind of an ill- defined program to start with, and I thought I don’t want to be bounced around with no fixed abode. I want a set of responsibilities that I can pick up and do. I took the job. In some ways, I’m sorry I didn’t take the internship because it involved overseas tours, not full tours, but short orientation tours of 90 days or 120 days, and it ran for a year and a half as a regular management intern program. Having said that, I was not unhappy with the fact that I had done that, and so I worked at that actually for a year and a half and then it looked like we were going to have a reduction in force and I being the new kid on the block, the last one in the door would be the first one out the door. My boss said, yes, but don’t worry about it. He said, everybody else would be fired in October, but you won’t be getting a letter before January because we need you to run the process. I said, well, I’ll tell you what, if its fairly certain that I’m going to go in January I’m going to go to the University of Massachusetts and get readmitted and see if I can plead my way back in, go in on the GI bill and get my average up and go back to school. He said, yes, all right. I went off to the University of Massachusetts, got myself readmitted for January. I went back to Washington to work the RIF and come December I submitted my resignation and it was handed back to me with a personnel action putting me not as a former employee, but on leave without pay. I said, no, the RIF, as usual dissipated and disappeared. The RIF was a public relations measure to satisfy OMB that we were doing something constructive, but we argued our way out of it so you’re not going to get fired. We think you’re worthwhile in going back and finishing your BA, so go ahead and take six months leave without pay. Off I went. Best semester I ever had in school.

The economics department’s undergraduate advisor looked like an undergraduate to me at that point. He said, wow, you have a lot of economics experience. He said, you don’t need that now. He said, you don’t have calculus. I said, yes, I don’t have calculus and there’s a good reason for that. If you look at my trade and staff grades, if you look at those and you realize how long it took me to get through those two courses, and you insist on calculus I’m going to say sayonara and I’ll go back to Washington and earn a living. He said, “you’re not going to be an economist are you?” I said, “not on your tintype.” He said, “I’ll just declare that you met all of the requirements.” Just go take underwater basket weaving and get your 4.0 and get out. I went to the theater department, called in a bunch of IOUs, took four freshman, sophomore courses undergraduate numbers. They were short grad students and I taught half of them. I had a marvelous 4.0 semester. The only 4.0 semester I ever had without doing anything. Got it done and got out and went back to work for USIA.

Q: Well, when you came back what were you doing?

HOWARD: Same thing, same job, same desk, same assignment, same functions.

Q: Was this personnel?

HOWARD: It was general personnel management, which included everything from staffing to classifications, and I hated it. I hated the classification especially. It really annoyed me.

Q: You're obviously a person who doesn't take very well to structured organizations.

HOWARD: I was very much of a straightjacket kind of person.

Q: I was going to say so, putting you in there particularly going through the classification system, which both of us are shuddering when you think about this.

HOWARD: I can do it and I'm good at it, but I dislike it intensely. I must say though in this Foreign Service career it has been exceptionally handy as I have gone from one USIS post to another as a PAO and had to cope with the classification system we've used over the last 20 years for FSNs, I've been particularly successful in getting things done for my own staff because I knew how to run the system, and how to work it. I definitely did not want to do that for a living and I quit and went into the retail bicycle business for three years. This was in '73 at the height of the oil crisis, the first major Middle East oil crisis, with a radical increase in the cost of gasoline. I opened up a small bike shop in a fairly small town in Pennsylvania.

Q: How did that work?

HOWARD: All right. It worked very well, in some ways it worked very well. In one way it was a very profitable venture and in other ways it wasn't. The business expanded at way too rapid a rate to have been done rationally. We did very minimal planning. In fact, there is now a manual from the Department of Small Business Administration that tells you common errors. If there are 115 common errors one can make when running a small business, we made 150 of them. My partner was a florist in town. He provided the impetus and the initial start up, and I contributed expertise from my retirement money and my vehicles. I always had a pickup and a car, put those into the bag, and then I ran the shop. What happened in three years was that it went gangbusters for the first 18 months and then we ran flat into this unique economic situation in the early '70s that was known as stagflation. Business activity declined or stayed stagnant and it drove price inflation based on the proposition that if you couldn't make your six unit of sales at $100, old economics would have said, well knock the price back to $80 and sell 10 units. Stagflation, the new economics said no, raise the price to $120 on the six units you could sell and bleed your six customers for more money, which itself didn't really work. So, we ran into that, but we also ran into the fact that this was located in the nexus of three major steel mill towns, Pottstown, Norristown and Phoenixville. We were in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. All three steel mills closed in an eight-month period. There went my whole family. We were not on the main line, which goes over to the Malvern end of Philadelphia, we were on the other side of Valley Forge Mountain and our clients were

mill and family people in town in Phoenixville Proper. So, the business just stagnated. There were days when the Pepsi machine did more than the shop did.

Then I refused to take on things that I thought were dangerous. I refused to sell skateboards because Phoenixville is a very hilly town and I could just envision some eight year old goes up and down one of those streets and runs himself into a bus or a dump truck, and I didn't want my name on the skateboard. I refused to take on motorized things because I didn't know enough about them. If I couldn't repair a lawnmower, I shouldn't invest in a scooter. If it depended on me to do that I was in big trouble. I didn't want to take on any mechanical obligation in the shop that I couldn't fulfill myself regardless of what I contracted out as I did the bicycles. I could buy or rent people who knew how to do it, but I needed to know how to do it, both to judge their work and know how to pitch in and get it done. My partner had no compunctions whatsoever and so eventually we came to a buyout or be bought out. I spent about a month making the decision and decided to be bought out because to buy him out would have put me in debt for up to five years and would have involved some really straitened circumstances on how to operate that shop. I just decided it wasn't fair to me or the people who had lent me the money to do that. I took my two trucks and one car and my cash and started looking for a job. At that point, my boss from USIA called and I asked him for a reference for work in Philadelphia. He said, no, but I've got a job for you and he was offering more than anybody else was, so I went back.

Q: Go back to the bike business. How was the situation regarding, I mean, was the bike business American bikes, Schwinn or that sort of thing or had the Japanese or imported bikes.

HOWARD: Americans made bicycles to suit the toy market. We did not produce bicycles as a means of adult transportation which was diametrically the opposite of what was being done in Europe by the British and the Italians and the French, same in Japan and the Far East. Bicycles were a secondary or a primary means of transportation. Especially following World War II when cars were not available, bicycles were quite prevalent; the technology was there. Schwinn had built heavyweight steel tube toys and big 40, 50, 60 pound steel frame balloon tired Cadillacs, Hudsons and Terraplanes. They never changed. The lightweight frames, the time I got into it, was a 10-speed business and the drop handle bars and all of it in lightweight frames. We sold two European brands in that shop and actually we did a very modest wholesale business on the same two European one French and one Austrian. Puch was the bicycle we sold as our upscale, and Velosolex was a French bicycle. We also had Peugeots, and a number of other brands that we handled through a general wholesaler. Then we had a couple of American manufacturers. Mossberg who were the rifle people manufactured bicycles for a while. Then we bought a product called Vista, which was an American offshoot of Schwinn. Vista was actually a competitive product of Schwinn developed by the independent bicycle dealers association as a competitive product to Schwinn. It was a Schwinn imitator, lower priced. These all competed against the Taiwanese market. It was the Japanese and Taiwanese that were in the department stores.

What was happening in the market as a whole was that the Japanese had been producing junk in say the 15 to 20 years after World War II; they were out of that. They had perfected alloys and they were building some very sophisticated bicycle frames and components. By the time I got into it, they were the major manufacturers of preferred components in bicycles and it didn't matter whether they built the frames or not, a few of them, Panasonic amongst them, made their own frames. There was a bicycle called Kabuki that we picked up that was a very fine high tensile steel lug frame, sophisticated construction. Very lightweight bike. It was entirely a Japanese product and we were competing against the Taiwanese in the department stores. We were producing a kind of welded junk and Schwinn and Vista were still producing heavyweight steel tubing welded frame, very durable Sherman tank bicycles which were great for little kids. Boys had built their upper arm and their leg strength and they endured all sorts of punishment, but they were getting, it was like the era of the '59 Cadillac. Remember the '59 Cadillac was one of the more useless vehicles known to creation right in there with the '57 and '58 Plymouth. It had more fins and chrome and weight and uncoordinated mass movement than you can imagine and that's what Schwinn and Vista were making. The American Mossberg was a little bit different. When Schwinn went to a lighter weight bicycle, they contracted with Panasonic and so it was made in Japan for Schwinn bicycles. Schwinn had two whole product lines that were lightweight and they didn't produce any of them. It was all Japanese subcontracting and the Indians were producing factory free rustic bicycles of lousy technology. We used to claim that the Indian manufacturers would manufacture the bicycle, pack it in poor quality cardboard cartons and put it on the loading dock just before the monsoon season and leave it out through the whole monsoon season and then quickly load it as deck cargo so that it would get salt spray. They would send the ship the wrong way around the world into the wind. By the time it got to us actually all of the joints were pitted rust and the wheels wouldn't move.

I remember one that was just so rusted that literally the axles and the bearings were rusted and seized up inside the axles in the wheels and simply literally would not turn. Then when they finally peeled all the paper off it, there were shiny parts to the frame, but not many of them, the rest of it was all pitted rust. It was like red iron rust. This was deep iron rust. By now the Indians were doing pretty sophisticated work. The Taiwanese at the time were producing junk, along with the Indians. Now the Taiwanese are producing some very sophisticated pieces of equipment.

Q: Well, after this entrepreneurial experience you came back to USIA?

HOWARD: I decided I would hunt for a job in personnel management in the Philadelphia area and I went to Bernan Halding and Associates which was a.

Q: Headhunter?

HOWARD: No. It was very much what the outplacement course that was here that I've just been through. They help you to formulate your own message and show you how to sell it. It was interesting to go through that and I started running myself around Eastern Pennsylvania. I had two jobs, two possibilities lined up for which I needed references and

I called my boss at USIA and asked him for a reference and he said, no, I've got a job for you. I thought about it. I came down and talked to him about it and talked to the director of personnel and they were going to offer about $6,000 more than anybody else was offering. I said the hell with it. I have no ties here in Pennsylvania. I'll just load up my truck and come South, and I did.

Q: Were you married at the time?

HOWARD: No.

Q: When was this when you came back to work?

HOWARD: This was '77. I had been in my earlier incarnation a personnel officer for security. So, I went to security to the guy who was running the personnel security branch. On the day that they did my security update interview I said, I really want to get this expedited because my three years expire the 31st of January and at that point I would lose 300 hours of sick leave. He just sat there, and he finished that clearance and they swore me in on the 28th of January. I made it by two days. I came back. What was interesting about it was that USIA and State Department in the early '70s decided that they were going to unify the personnel systems with something called a foreign affairs specialist system. The foreign affairs specialist system was intended to reclassify every civil service job in the foreign affairs community in the Foreign Service from GS-7 and up and then to persuade people to take a conversion. There were two ways that you could go. Sometimes promotions were only offered, the Foreign Service promotions or if you were a GS-7 and you were bidding on a GS-9 job you would have to agree to take whatever the FS equivalent was. The authority for this was the Foreign Service Reserve (FSR) Authority that passed the Foreign Service Act of '48, as it was amended in the early '60s. As further amended with USIA's career legislation in '68. That was the authority for this and basically everybody from secretaries to designers to all of the technical specialists were put into the Foreign Service including all domestic Foreign Service. There would be a domestic Foreign Service with no overseas requirement, and there would be an overseas Foreign Service that would be the traditional Foreign Service. I was the last civil service personnel officer hired in 1970 as a civil service officer. People came in a month later than I did, I came in April, people who came in in May, came in as FSR, I don't know what the grade level was. Same thing, same job, same domestic. Then in '77, I was the last civil service personnel officer hired into the foreign affairs specialist program. I came in as an FSR-4 I think.

Q: Had you any at that point interest in serving overseas?

HOWARD: No, I didn't come back to do that. I knew what we did. I had had an interest earlier in going out overseas as an executive officer, but it was rather a closed circuit restricted to budget officers. It was run by the assistant director of administration as his kind of personal fiefdom. He took all of his management interns from budget and it was understood that they would eventually go out as executive officers and nobody else

would get into it. I had given up on that. But I spent a year in the Voice of America as a personnel management specialist.

Q: How was that because I think the personnel of the Voice of America, I mean you've got this disparate groups of people from all over the world.

HOWARD: It is an error. The Voice of America is an expiring talent organization in a system that works toward permanence. So, just about the point where your expertise in your home country's politics and your currency and the language expires, you get citizenship and tenure. It locks you in place which means that half of the Far East Division, the East European Division, at least half, if not two-thirds of the broadcasters are out of touch with what's going on with their own countries. Then at that point once you have citizenship then you have an absolute right to a job and nobody's going to dislodge you. It's a bad move to try to run a talent organization in the civil service. The two are just completely incompatible. You ought to be able to rotate people in and out.

Here we were in 1977 and amongst my areas was the Far East Division and there was the China Branch. The China branch had 40 something employees, 19 of whom were Cantonese speakers. We hadn't broadcast in Cantonese since 1961. The high entire management structure of the Far East Division was Japanese. They were in the management positions and there was no Japanese service because we hadn't broadcast in Japanese since '55. They never fired anybody. They just farmed them out as producers or they made them managers or whatever. The Cantonese were totally useless, half the division was non-productive. They couldn't speak Mandarin, they weren't current.

Q: How did you feel in this snake pit?

HOWARD: It was a fascinating year and I got sued three times by the Spanish speaking federal employees, and at that point I said, I don't want to do this anymore. By happenstance I was sitting on a selection board for an overseas management job in West Africa, the original post management systems officer. This was early '78, late '77. It was the week between Christmas and New Year's. I was the only civil service officer in town. I was asked to come up and sit on a selection board. I didn't really understand why; I just went. It turns out I had classified the jobs three or four years before and I had remembered why we had classified them the way we did and then I looked at all the candidates and sure enough they were all from the Voice of America in my service area. I said, this job is meant to deploy multi-dimensional management experiences. These people are one-dimensional candidates, so they don't qualify. You're just going to have to go back to the drawing people and get some more people. They don't make it. I walked out and went back down to VOA. I was sitting there with the announcement on my desk two days later when a federal marshal came in with a third notice of suit.

Q: What were they suing you for?

HOWARD: The discrimination of the administration of personal policy in the Voice of America or for justice after 12 long years.

Q: You're speaking with a Spanish accent.

HOWARD: It was. It was three people in the Latin American Division who sued. It scared the hell out of me the first time it happened, but it turned out my boss said, ah, pikers, they only want $16,000 from you. He says, they want 35 from me and 50 from the division chief. I'll wager that they've already included President Carter and they probably want close to 200 and we'll be about 25 short. They wanted two and a quarter from Carter and 200 from the director of USIA and 175 from the VOA director. They just went down the whole chain of command. Basically because I had told them that this group of three people were at the limits of their classification potential. Jobs weren't there. They would have to, if they wanted a promotion, would have to seek higher-grade jobs elsewhere and they refused to accept that, so they sued.

As far as personnel was concerned, I found it fascinating and frustrating at the Voice of America. It was just this whole set of unique stories that won't ever be duplicated and Voice people know all the stories and understand all the situations and other people don't believe them. Non-Voice people don't believe. There is a nice fiction that says the Voice of America is 42 groups of Americans pursuing common objectives in 42 different native languages 4,000 plus hours a week. Those of us who live and work in the Voice of America understand it is 42 little bolt holes in the old country and whatever odd practice is followed in the old country is followed in the Voice of America. As a result there are some absolutely stunning management tactics. I certainly am not going to get into those and have it reported in the media. At any rate, in comes this notice of suit and it happened at the same time I'm looking at this announcement I'm thinking you idiot, you're a personnel management specialist. You worked three years running budgets and doing financial plans and managing inventories and so you meet all of the diversity requirements of this job and you want to get of town, you don't want to do what you're doing anymore. I turned around and filed myself as an applicant. Since I was the only qualified applicant I was selected. What made it very easy to do was that even though I was a civil service personnel officer, in effect, I had a Foreign Service appointment. It was duck soup for me to be simply assigned as a Foreign Service Officer. I came over to FSI in Rosslyn and took six weeks of French and went to West Africa as a regional post management officer.

Q: So, where did you go in West Africa?

HOWARD: I had 16 countries in the territory.

Q: But did you have a site of operation?

HOWARD: I hypothetically lived and worked out of Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

Q: You went out there when? This would be?

HOWARD: It was June of '78.

Q: And you were doing that particular job from '78 to when?

HOWARD: '81.

Q: '81. Talk about the job then.

HOWARD: I was in effect a freelance management consultant with 16, actually in effect 12 live clients and four passive clients. There were 16 countries in the territory, four of which had no USIS installation, but did have little pots of money and sometimes an FSN employee and usually with the responsibility tagged to the pol/econ officer or to the DCM or even the admin officer. I went into places like Bissau and Nouakchott. You'd have to know the geography of West Africa; they're pretty small countries. Banjul and Gambia which we had no installation. I also went to Freetown, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and Senegal. And Guinea where we had PAOs with live posts and I followed generally the coast and across the Sahel coming down to Nigeria. In Nigeria we had a full executive officer so I went back up to Nigeria, but for the 15 other countries I was the primary management consultant. I'd go and help them do their financial planning, do their personnel work, work on their real estate problems.

Q: Did you run across the situation, I'm told, which was prevalent in much of that area say with lots of State Department junior officers. Junior officers doing a first time tour and really don't know their job that well because they're just beginning.

HOWARD: Now, at the time that was not the case with us. At the time our situation was that these posts in the late '70s existed with a grade structure that still persisted, that had been established in the early '70s. A post like Sierra Leone, for example, the PAO is the equivalent to the class one officer today, which was actually a class three in that system at the time in the old service. That class one or three-grade level had been established and there were three and sometimes four officers in the post. By the time I got there there was one officer and probably half or less the number of FSNs that once were there in most of them. It didn't matter what the size of the post was; it was smaller and of lesser magnitude than it had been when the grade structure was imposed. This resulted in the proposition that we had a great number of older and far more experienced officers. It made for somewhat more rational programming activity and sometimes more rational management, but a very low energy level. These were 20% and 25% [hardship differential] posts. It was not uncommon to find someone take the assignment and come with their air freight and no dependents and mumble when you asked them where their household effects were. Then they would bail out on the 5th of January following their arrival with their air freight simply readdressed because they had come to collect the 25% on their 250 hours of annual leave.

Q: We're talking about a pay differential.

HOWARD: Yes. At the time you were paid at your hourly rate for unused annual leave at whatever the prevailing rate was at the place you were assigned. If you retired at post

overseas and you were at a 25% post and you took your base hourly rate plus 25% on your annual leave. If you had accumulated a year's annual leave on top of your ceiling and that's what many people had done, you had probably close to 500 hours of annual leave at a 25% premium. People would come out to do that. They'd retire at post. The 25% differential was not calculated into retirement annuity, but it certainly was calculated at a pay out annually. So, people retired at post and when they retired at post, they were in the Service one day and the day they got on the plane they were retired, they were retirees. They flew home.

Q: What was your impression of the operation in these areas, the effectiveness of what they were doing?

HOWARD: It varied. It varied quite significantly where you had younger officers. You had more adventurous programming. You had more elaborate programming. Occasionally you would have a very experienced officer who was quite serious about what he was doing and he was making some real serious progress. The thing about Africa, which makes it different from other parts of the world, is that you can have some very immediate impact. Situations are small enough at a level where you can walk in with, say, four journalism training programs and in a year you can improve the look of the local media market. Well, you can't do that in France, you can't do it in Germany. You can't do it anywhere else. But you can do it in Africa. Where you had good solid people who were carefully crafting a program, you got it. Sometimes they were brand new and sometimes they were old.

Many of the older people when I first went out there were just riding out their retirements. We had an awful reputation. Africa Bureau (AF) was difficult to staff because people saw that careers could be made in Europe or in Latin America. We ended up being pushed to take officers who were less than stellar, who were close to retirement. It took about a four or five year serious effort on the part of the Office of African affairs that USIA will weed that practice out, when you get to the point where you have no officers. What helped was John Reinhardt, who was the director of USIA under the Carter administration, came along in one fell swoop and virtually downgraded the whole world one grade. He certainly did it all through Africa. All of a sudden you went from a class one to a class two post. There were no class two officers much as there are none now and we were down to class three and class four, sometimes just post-junior officers. My first PAOship was in Malawi. When you get up in the morning with malice aforethought and tempted to chart your way to doing harm to U.S. national interests you failed. The country just had no impact. No matter what you did you couldn't do noticeable harm. It was a marvelous laboratory to experiment for me because I'd been telling people how to run their posts for three years. Here was my own live experiment where I had to live with what I did. I discovered that I was a little naïve in some cases and very much on the mark in other parts.

In '81 when I finished that original post management assignment, I went to be a PAO in Lilongwe. I had said to the area directors: I could fix the post's problems, but I could not do it as a transitory visitor; I had to own it. It had to be mine. I had to have the durability

to impose and work through the problems that my policies created, and I had to live with the results. I had to be there to make sure that the follow-through happened.

Q: While you were working in Abidjan, how did you find, most of the area you were covering had been former French colonies hadn't they?

HOWARD: Yes, about a two to one ratio French to British.

Q: With the French influence, were we in head-to-head competition with them or how did it seem to work vis-a-vie with the French?

HOWARD: They were close to 20 years past independence and in most cases they were the second successor if not the third or fourth successor governments to the initial post independence. So, the degree of French influence changed in each of the countries evolving in a different rate in a different scheme and so the countries where you could declare some sort of commonality and uniformity in 1960, by the time we hit 1980 it was very low. Language was a commonality and the French maintained their discipline through the financial support that they gave through the French franc. They maintained exchangeability, the exchange rate of 50 to 1, which means they carried an enormous burden in stabilizing these countries' economies because their own economies could not have carried that kind of exchange rate. In return, where their economic interests dictated, they more or less had more influence or less influence. They had very little background influence in Senegal. President Senghor was his own intellect and he had his own sense of independence from the French and his own sense of connections with the French and his French connections were through the Sorbonne not through the Ministry of Finance. Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast, on the other hand, the entire relationship was economic and indeed the French were behind virtually every ministry. If you didn't know the Frenchman who ran the ministry in the Ivory Coast, you weren't going to have anything done.

The British handed over and walked away and that was Sierra Leone and Gambia and Ghana, Nigeria, Lome, the French were not really there. There were a few Germans floating around because it had been Togoland.

Benin was a French speaking version of the Nigerian economy and they derived a lot of their business by doing business with Nigerians and the Nigerians did business with each other or other Nigerian restrictions could develop. Each country had evolved to the point where things were slightly different. You couldn't make any generalities. The generality you could make was that because there was a formal common defense agreement and there was a formal support structure in terms of currency exchanges and economic support, yes, but the countries ran all the way from complete western orientation in the Ivory Coast to Soviet bloc clients in Mali and Guinea, Guinea where they delivered snow plows. In 20 years they had become different countries; they really were. If you look at a language map of Africa it looks like a very finely drawn jigsaw puzzle. For 55 countries there were 500 plus languages. You impose various overlays over Africa you discover that the commonalties disappear. The lines run quite differently. It's like trying to

interpret what's going on in Yemen. About the only commonalties I noticed was in the French countries the phones didn't work and the mails were useless and the food was good. The British countries, the mails ran, telephones worked and the food was atrocious.

Q: As a management officer sitting there, how did you find your relations with our ambassadors and their USIA counterparts? Was it basically pretty good cooperation or were there problems?

HOWARD: All over the lot. There were problems in some places and very solid cooperation in others. It depended on how much the ambassador understood about our program and how much the PAO went out of his or her way to acquaint the ambassador with the details of the program. I would say we were not as successful nor as earnest a group of educators as we should have been in that regard. We should have been much more diligent about teaching our State colleagues. We should not have assumed that they knew what they were looking at by virtue of their having looked at it. I discovered after the fact that woeful ignorance is what we are and what we do for a living is one of the great aggravations of the consolidation. I would say that there were countries where it was a very contentious relationship and countries where it was all over the map. There's no way to draw commonalties from it.

Q: So, in '81 you went where?

HOWARD: In '81, I had bid on several Admin jobs, one in Vienna, one in Caracas and I got a call offering me two jobs in Africa. One was assistant cultural affairs officer for exchanges in Lagos and the other was public affairs officer in Lilongwe and I said that's no choice. Where is Lilongwe? So, I went to Malawi. I thought I had known Africa. So I began to figure out where was Malawi, in the southern part of East Africa. So I went and I was the PAO, and I was sent there because it was basically a management problem post. It had moved from an industrial banking center city to a brand new capital and left the university plus the media, plus the major contact base 250 miles away behind it in a funny branch post. They had taken the American officers, had taken one-third of the FSNs and they had left a PAO and a regional librarian. The regional librarian was in the original post, but he was gone most of the time. There was a major management problem. What I discovered was they wanted to close it and they wouldn't tell me. They waited until after I got there and I had only been there about a week and they said, well, we have to close this.

Q: Who wanted to close it?

HOWARD: USIA.

Q: Back here in Washington?

HOWARD: Yes.

Q: As you looked at it, should it have been closed? It sounds like it should have been the one to be open.

HOWARD: If they weren't going to staff it with a full time American officer I said yes, we should close it because it is not working the way it should. Malawi is not a rational base and Blantyre is no longer a rational base to keep a regional officer. It's nice to have him there, but he neither serves my purposes as a branch public affairs officer nor does he have the access, the hubbing routes. So, you really have to redraw the regional librarian routes and they did that. They canceled that, closed that job. They did not give me an additional American officer and they said close the branch post in Blantyre, which I did. I gave away a library that actually had been equipped from the old Kampala library and all the books in the place were 12 or 13 years old and they said Property of the U.S. Information Service in Kampala, Uganda. We gave them away. The President had formed this funny little private prep school called Kamuzu Academy and his chief consort had seen the Library of Congress once and was so impressed that she had him build a duplicate. We became the major collection of books to open their Kamuzu Academy, the miniature Library of Congress.

It was interesting because I had to then turn around and deal with the proposition that 75% of my working audience was 250 miles away. Three campuses at the university of four. The only one that was in Lilongwe the capital city was the AG School, with whom I did very little business. All of the government owned media were in Blantyre, which was 250 miles away. The cultural and sports community were in Blantyre, so I spent a lot of time on the road. The artistic community was largely in Blantyre. Lilongwe was a kind of a midwestern town, which sort of surprised by the fact that it was the capital, but nobody lived there and all the offices were somewhere else. It had shell buildings, they had a whole government complex, brand new.

Q: What was the government there? Who was the head of it?

HOWARD: His Excellency Hastings Banda was very much in control with a set of close minions around him who governed one factor or sector or another, very much a closed corporation. That's the way it worked. We didn't have very many disputes and indeed it was more keeping the idea alive of democracy and free flow of information than making any material progress.

Q: Were there any restrictions on you?

HOWARD: On how I operated?

Q: On how you operated. I mean if we're promoting democracy in a country that is a one-man country.

HOWARD: You couldn't practice political science, that was wrong. I could not get foreign journalists permission to enter the country unless, as my friend the director of information would say, unless their visits would be determined to be useful. I said you

and I read the word useful, I can guarantee you that they would not be useful. I said they will come and see what they see and report as they see it without hindrance. It may or may not be helpful depending on what they see and how they see it. He said, you couldn't assure that they would be helpful? I said, no I certainly can't. Americans who were educated in Pittsburgh. How can you come back and tell me I'm going to guarantee an American journalist is going to do this. So, he would deny them entry. A very much closed thing. They would work around this. For one thing I took the psychology professors out of the Fulbright program at the university and put in history professors and lawyers and so we taught the rule of law. We taught the constitution in history classes. Every month, I had a sequestered editors' luncheon in a Chinese restaurant at a big table in a back room.

I wasn't working against the police; they would have a luncheon there the day before with their equipment in hand. I would check that there was no interference and I would proceed with my lunch. I was able to get the editors, the primary media managers to open up in an open discussion around the table. There were eight of us. They could as they wished invite four other people. I could invite two. I would periodically bring the ambassador or I would bring a program visitor or whatever just to suit my own purposes. The discussion would be wide-ranging. There would be no quotes, no stories and nothing would be attributable. Only one person published anything that made even a passing reference to it and that person was eliminated from the luncheon from then on because that was the only place that they felt confident that they could speak out about conditions and situations without getting their butts nailed.

Q: How did you view these because in one way you're performing a political officer type job, you know, I mean sounding out these.

HOWARD: Well, these were my contacts.

Q: Your contacts, but how did this translate to their operation?

HOWARD: I built a cadre of contacts and friends who would both feed me information and who kept alive the thought that there could be a free flow of information and a free media. I don't think any of them failed to have and know where it was, the copy of the pamphlet that contained the constitution and the declaration of independence. I had seen it in two houses that I had visited. We had distributed them, the USIA pamphlets 5x8. They have the complete text and they have a bit of commentary in the back and it's in English.

Years later, '93, '92 or '93 when we were in Zambia, I went back to Malawi for a visit. I found a moderate number of, there was an explosion of publications: newspapers, magazines, broadsheets, yellow journalism, just an astounding array of unfettered publication with the death of Banda and the advent of an elected government, a democratically elected government. Most of the people running them were people who had been at the round table or were graduates of the round table. They were acolytes who

came with some of the senior managers. I had known the last three Malawi ambassadors to Washington in succession because they came from the university.

Q: So, it was a long-term investment.

HOWARD: It is. I had a question in class the other day: what was the major problem that USIA's people encountered coming into State and my answer was that it was two-fold. Part of it was perspective. I found USIA people willing to make 10, 15, 20, 25-year investments without any expectation of an immediate return. I found State people were lucky to do something they couldn't see a return in on 90, 120 or 180 days. So they weren't relatively understanding or accepting of the fact that we were going to spend 10 or 15 grand to send someone to the U.S. today who wouldn't show up in the political spectrum for another 10 years. We were regarded as useless because the minister who sat in his 60s today in office, we wouldn't send him an IV grant because he was too old. They said, but he governs the way we're going to deal with this treaty and I said fine, but we needed to have talked to him 10 or 15 years ago and a lot of the time we did, so the investment has been made and now it is paying off. I said, the investment is his third run assistant because I want to be ready in the next 10 years from now. That was something that wasn't readily understood. It's a timeline, a long-term timeline.

I discovered this in Zambia when we're dealing with the court system. I went in with what would be regarded as some fairly intrusive things. In some cases could get me bounced for interfering in the internal affairs of a foreign government. I was going to invite American lawyers and experts in to discuss overhauling various parts of the court system and the justice system. Instead I found open armed reception from people who knew exactly what I was talking about and even had names of Americans they wanted suggested. I was taken a little bit aback. I went back and checked all of the exchanges records that went back to 1960. I discovered that my predecessors going back to '78 had concentratedly tagged a third of their international visitor grantees and longer term grant programs to the legal fraternity. So, when you go to the supreme court, the high court the management court, people knew what they were talking about. The chief justice had been back on three such programs and knew that he wanted to build a judicial college in the southwest.

Q: You got there in '81. This is the advent of the Reagan administration and Charlie Wick. He's a very interesting character.

HOWARD: He dragged us kicking and screaming into the 20th Century. He made us recognize that live television, international satellite television was a reality. We felt he was obsessed. We felt that he and Snyder, his arch television sidekick, Ken Snyder, was the evil villain from New York media who didn't understand diplomacy. Charlie thought if it could broadcast on world news then it was worth doing, but it wasn't. Whole bunches of things like programs. You combine Wick's single minded focus on television and the electronic media and the Reagan administration's espousal of the Heritage Foundation philosophies. Basically we got a lot of appointees directly from the Heritage Foundation who influenced the book program, who influenced the English teaching program, who

had a great deal of influence on how the exchange program was run. Charlie said if they're our friends we'll send it, if they're not our friends we won't. This applied to Americans going out. It was probably the deepest penetration of political operatives in the agency that it had ever seen. Yet today you go over to building SA-44 and you can almost put your hand on the wall and hear the walls whisper "where is Charlie when we need him?"

Q: Yes because he's got buddies.

HOWARD: He was the last, well, he was a Reagan buddy, that's how he did it. He was the last director of any influence. Generally a very lackluster, quite disappointing series of directors after that.

Q: How did that impact hit you?

HOWARD: Impact of what, Charlie?

Q: Of Charlie. Or were you too far out of the.

HOWARD: It did and it didn't. There was a noticeable shift in priorities. Reinhardt had the most profound management impact on USIA of any director in the modern line, because he basically resolved the question which had riven USIA of who runs the place, the field or Washington. For which there is no question in State, Washington runs it. But USIA, who drives the train was often a big question because the resources were 60% in the field and 40% Washington. Reinhardt said that the field runs it. The field will develop a plan, it will be detailed, it will tell us what the problem is, and tell us what the situation is, what the problem is, what you're going to do about it, what you need to have to get it done. If we accept your plan, you'll get what you need. You won't hear about the stuff you didn't ask for. USIA's domestic components will shake themselves down around the collective demands from the plan. It will all be computerized and digested and if you have a product that no one has asked for you're going to go out of business. Buggy whips are no longer. We will no longer advertise buggy whips because as much intrinsic value as they might have, there is no program, nobody wants them, can't sell it, can't do it.

Charlie reversed this. The Reagan administration had a lot of centrally driven policies and tactics and products they wanted out there. The classic example is let Poland be Poland. We all had to use that. In Malawi, it had absolutely no relevance whatsoever. We also thought that the Reagan policy that Chet Crocker espoused, which was constructive engagement in Southern Africa, was creating such a furor that it was a deadly disaster. The word back from Washington was shut up and sell the product. That's what came on the truck, that's what you move. I must say looking back at it even 15 or 20 years later, let alone 25, he was dead right.

Q: Yes, it worked.

HOWARD: It untied, unraveled all of these little knots around the continent. What have we got, we've got three new democracies and no wars. Governments turned two and three times. We have one disaster in the middle, which is Zimbabwe. You've got one quasi disaster in Angola, but even it is coming around. You've got absolutely an astounding success story in Mozambique from a government standpoint. Zambia has turned twice. It is muddling through in typical African fashion. Malawi has turned twice.

Q: When you say turned you mean?

HOWARD: Rolled over electorally without incident. They've had two successive elections for heads of state. We now have actually new heads of state in most countries, who have gotten there without killing the old chief.

Q: Talking about constructive engagement from the prospective of Malawi when you got there, what was your initial impression? Was this a good thing?

HOWARD: Salable? Constructive engagement? I don't know that I had at that point understood all of its implications. I understood what it was. Basically the Carter administration threw human rights spitballs over the fence at the Afrikaners and Reagan said, well, we're going to stop that, we're going to talk to them. This offended all of the major black African leadership in Southern Africa. They wanted to make sure that we did as much verbal damage to South Africa as possible. Notably Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda. Maseru said zip, Banda said zip because Banda and Maseru, of course, ran an economy which was in the rand monetary area, and it was the only country on the continent that makes a profit and makes a profit with South African banking connections, and makes it on the diamond connections with De Beers. Malawi was the only country in the region that had an embassy in South African. The only black African country with a South African ambassador, a Taiwanese ambassador and an Israeli ambassador. So, he was odd man out all around and basically Banda said I'm a realist. There is no action in Southern Africa without cooperation with the Afrikaners. We reached an accommodation. I don't agree with apartheid and I told them that, they don't agree with the way I run my country, they told me that, but we agreed to disagree, and we agreed that there are areas for cooperation. So, basically, they kept Malawi alive. It also made Banda a pariah in the neighborhood.

Q: Who was your ambassador when you were in Malawi?

HOWARD: At first there was no ambassador for about the better part of seven or eight months and had not been for about a year and a half before that. One of the Horans and I can't remember, I want to think Hal.

Q: Probably Hal, because I don't think Hume was down there.

HOWARD: It wasn't Hume. I think it was Hal and he'd gone. John Burroughs came to be ambassador and he was there for much of the three years of my tour.

Q: How was your relationship with him?

HOWARD: Excellent. He was very laid back. I think I could have kept him more informed. There was nothing that we were doing that was going to produce a major problem. I don't know that I spent a lot of time telling him exactly what we were doing, just that we were running exchange programs and he knew who was going, and I involved him in the receptions and departures. So, he was generally aware of what we were up to, but not minutely on a daily basis.

Q: Did you have any problem with the selection program? Was Banda saying I want my nephew to go and that sort of thing?

HOWARD: No, what they said was, we've observed the system as it functions in Kenya with each foreign country building its own favorite cadre in our government and so you've built factions. We will not have that in Malawi. You will submit blind grant proposals to the government to the office of the presidents in cabinet. We will tell you who will go. We sat with the office of presidents in cabinet. Both John Burroughs and I said sorry that ain't the way it works. We will tell you who will travel. We worked out a system whereby we would submit what were ostensibly blank grants, but came with a suggested name listed formally under separate channel. The understanding was that if you really understand that if you don't want them to travel, they aren't traveling. And you will understand it if we don't want them to travel, they won't travel. Neither of us will explain to the other why and it worked. I would submit the grants to them and then I would go off with John and the secretary and president of the cabinet and we had lunch somewhere and I handed him the nominee list and he handed me his nominee list and we'd go through and square things up.

Q: What was in it for them? The government for an exchange program because you know, as they point out we are inserting a pro-American cadre into the government over a period of time.

HOWARD: We used it in very segmented ways. I used it with the media. This was not a broad-brush program. Today there is more distribution of these grants throughout the embassy than there ever was in any of my posts at the outset. In that case, there was a year in which I used every single one of the IV grants to advance a university linkage agenda. So we sent whole delegations of university officials back here to negotiate linkage agreements with the University of Indiana, Massachusetts and Cornell all on international visitor grants, on country grants. I used more than a whole allocation. The year after that we did some work with the court system, not quite so many people came, about half media and court system. Every once in a while just before a major election, we would send political party people. They were very much for a defined objective program. Usually it was with the connivance of the lower level. We did name the candidates, but we also needed to have people that have some say coming back and I needed John's agreement that these people would be able to come back and get them into their job, and they did. We also used the Fulbright program to build faculty at the university so there was never any disagreement over who we were going to send.

Q: Well, I take it that you had a problem to overcome, i.e., Banda and company. At the same time you were able to get things done.

HOWARD: Eminently sensible folk that worked for him, understood how to get done what they wanted to get done.

Q: I take it you came to have a very positive feeling about the Malawians, the people there as far as working with them.

HOWARD: Oh, I was delighted. I have several good friends that persist to today. I thought that they did an enormous amount with very little. If anybody learned recycling from anybody, it was that I learned recycling from the Malawians. Nothing stayed and I'm pretty good about stripping things of any useful parts before they go out, and they made my trash can look like it was a refuse, an enormous parts camp. I remember inviting two of my own staff over to go through my trash can and tell me what was useful and it just stunned them at how much useful stuff I had actually thrown out and not seen the utility of. Everything, tin cans to metal plates. Basically it improved my recycling. The Malawians had nothing and they made a lot of it. They had a middling classification of tea just enough to get their own tea classification established with the Brits. They have macadamia nuts in sufficient quantities to make a market but not sufficient to control a market or drive it. They produce enough coffee to have achieved a similar grade, but they do not have any threats for the world coffee market. They produce tobacco, which is of a second grade and generally makes its market as the result of the disasters occurring in other countries with primary markets. So, they are fill ins. They are a wrapper. They are a filler tobacco. They are, you name it. They are workarounds. Zimbabwe has primary tobacco, or did. Malawians now picks up the market slack with a slightly, actually it was the Zimbabwe farmers who came up and are now working in Malawi producing the kind of tobacco in Malawi that they used to be able to produce in Zimbabwe. The problem with Malawi is less arable land. It's a far more hilly and mountainous country and the Malawians are ingenious. The Zimbabwean will circumvent a hill or will go around it and the Malawi will farm up and over it and down each side and will adapt the fields in growth rows to match the topography. Malawians are quite proud of who they are and what they have. They have a natural pride to even go to straw huts in the middle of the dirt surround. It is the neatest straw hut and the neatest dirt surrounding you have ever seen, not the trash that prevails in South Africa or that typifies a trip through the countryside in most African countries. It's different. Admittedly, this is different. This is Banda of 25 years ago and our last look at it was 10 years ago in '94, we took a trip back with our kids to show them where I met my wife in Malawi.

Q: What was she doing there?

HOWARD: She was a Peace Corps volunteer. I was convinced that we had problems in the embassy because no one understood what we were doing so I did a series of briefings for everybody including the Peace Corps volunteers and that was the last time I got to do

it. She didn't want to look at the incoming Peace Corps class. She said, no, you send the CAO to do that.

Q: When did you leave Malawi?

HOWARD: In '84. I went in March of '81 and we left in August of '84. Three and a half years.

Q: Did you get married there?

HOWARD: Married while I was there. We got married in Haines Isle and went back to Malawi.

Q: Today is the 7th of February, 2005. Sted, you were in Uganda from what '84 to?

HOWARD: '84 to late '86. Late '84. Let's see we got there in November of '84 and I left in August I think of '86, July or August.

Q: Okay, what was the situation in '84 when you got to Uganda?

HOWARD: Deteriorating. Milton Obote was the president, had been president for several years and he was unable to reconcile the two major conflicting groups in the north, the Acholi and Lango who between them maintained a moderate balance in the army except that Obote being a Lango .The Lango had the bulk of the command slots. He was very fortunate having a Lango commander by the name of David Oyite Ojok who was managing to merge the command structures tribally and bring some peace and professionalism to this.

David Ojok was killed in a helicopter crash. There was a great deal of controversy surrounding it, but it was actually pretty much confirmed that it was an accident. It was machine failure. Nonetheless, all the integrating work that he had done began to unravel, and he had been killed about six to seven months before we got there, if I recall correctly. It was well before we arrived and the disintegration was underway.

We arrived in November and it was a situation of some considerable deprivation in terms of commerce. Although Kampala was an amazing city and Uganda an amazing country with tremendous resources, there were sort of startling shortages and it continued to politically disintegrate as Obote found himself in less and less control. In July of '85 he was overthrown by the Acholi command structure from the north. It was a rather interesting and tumultuous period that led up to a couple or three weeks in which the Acholi command structure in the army, those officers that were there and mostly the troops just simply packed up and left. Kampala went home to Gulu leaving Lango most of the command structure of junior officers and mid-grade field grade officers all by their onesies with a smattering of Lango troops and all kinds of equipment. Having been embarrassed and run out of the barracks, the Acholis had run circles around the Lango

and then they left. When they left that was kind of a quick signal that things were on a rapid down slope.

The ambassador pulled us out on a Friday night to watch television. We watched television as Obote spoke to police chiefs, a long rambling presentation telling the police chiefs that they shouldn't panic when he was out of town. After all the vice president was there, which caused frankly much greater panic among the police chiefs had he not said that. Paulo Muwanga was the Vice President, a real political survivor over a couple of decades. Then he went to talk to a class of junior officers and the whole rambling message for another hour and a half was that Coup d'etats were dangerous to their careers. We shut the television set off and the Ambassador said, "well, that's it. It's Friday night, let's see how many people we can get out of here in one context or another." Somebody said has the Department given you evacuation authority? He said "no, but I will be asking them for that directly in the morning. I will have this broadcast under my belt to justify it." He says in the meantime it doesn't matter whether they approve it or not, we will approve anyone's leave or TDY that has a shred of justification that will get them outside the borders. I don't care where they go. They can go to Kenya or back to the U.S. He said, "and we will eventually go back and we pay for that as an evacuation, but for the moment I want you out of the country if you can get there." Well, it was virtually impossible to leave after that. All commercial flight space was taken up and booked, charter flights were booked. The RSO and I did get charter space for my wife and his wife and family the following week on a Sunday morning. We went through the week rather increasingly nervous and toward the end of the week we had a meeting that concluded that they were going to come down out of the north and take the city and overthrow it probably Monday. I started buttoning up the U.S. Information Service and relocating storage and the things I could lock more readily. We were sort of well into this on Saturday morning when I got a heavy duty radio call to report for an emergency meeting at the chancery meeting at 8:00 or 8:30. The ambassador said, they're on their way. Obote left town last night. The Brits in their ultimate kindness knew this last night and didn't tell us until 9:00 in the morning. It's 9:05 and I'm telling you now so its time to button up and be on your way. I went from there back home to shut down some of the storage operations there and decided to go down to the office. About halfway to the office I heard this radio call that said they are here and there were truckloads down Kampala road. I ended up getting locked up in the USIS center. That was Saturday from 11:00 until Tuesday morning and my wife was at home. At first she started out with two of her household help and she ended up with a family of four Ugandans who were our next door neighbors and good friends and three members of a Fulbrighter's family. As things began to deteriorate I had a security meeting with my FSN staff and said if you feel nervous in your neighborhood, don't even hesitate, you come and knock at the front gate at my house and you are welcome. So three of them showed up. We had a rather substantial household, which went from three people to 14 in a matter of four or five house, and they stayed there until Tuesday. On Wednesday, we shipped 90% of the dependents out and about two-thirds of the staff in a road convoy to Kenya. That started six months of what can best be described as Gilbert and Sullivan government.

Q: First, let's go back a bit. Who was the ambassador?

HOWARD: It was Allen Davis. Allen was a delightful guy. Calm, cool, collected. He held that mission together on a radio for four days of lockup, three days of lockup until we could get out. He basically convinced me that the secret to surviving those things is information passing through a community and keeping them informed. There is no such thing as "no need to know." You need to know everything that is going on around you. People who think otherwise are foolish, and, I think, dangerous. If there was ever a situation where we needed to know and we did, that was it. Out of 90 people, not one person was at a point of being threatened.

Q: Now, prior to Obote's leaving, being overthrown, what were you doing? What were our interests in the country?

HOWARD: Our interests were really monitoring and political stability, and some public relations inroads on the dominant relationships with the North Koreans and the East Germans. I realized the situation was that the Ugandans really didn't give a damn one way or another. They just cared that the East Germans and Koreans carried money with them, so we got all kinds of press questions. My predecessor thought that this was a virally anti-American government and the press was anti-American. The point of fact was the press was absolutely pro-American. I got them together in my living room and boy you could hear them taking apart the Salas, and the East Germans, Europeans and the Koreans, and they were right. There were some very good people involved in television, and the Ugandans to their credit for having been deprived of material equipment, did an absolute superb job and left the Kenyans in the dust. The Kenyans had all of the equipment and none of the talent, and the Ugandans had all of the talent and none of the equipment. The Ugandans kept eight hours on the air a day on the television with six hours of their own generated programs. The Kenyans were on television for three and a half to four hours a day and three and a half of it was acquired programming, and it was dull. Ugandans did their own and they did very well. I spent a fair amount of my time attempting to find a part of the university that was functioning well enough for us to work effectively with them, from a Fulbright standpoint, and keeping alive a program on American literature that my predecessor had set up and then attempting to generate some program activity for the media, which had been a neglected area.

Q: Was there a functioning Fulbright program when you were there?

HOWARD: Yes, in the sense that any Fulbright traveler coming and going is a program, yes we did. We had two Fulbright professors in the country, and we had one Fulbright researcher floating around the country, and we had five or six junior faculty in the U.S. studying on the masters and Ph.D. programs. So, the answer is yes, and it was going very well.

Q: When things got bad were they moving out or did they hang around a long time?

HOWARD: One of the lecturers was on leave at the time this happened. He was actually an orthopedic surgeon working with Makerere University Hospital. The other was a

microbiologist who was studying and teaching at the university and studying schistosomiasis and he was kind of an odd duck. I had to yank him out and send him out. I sent his wife out for some reason maybe a month beforehand, but he was bound and determined he was going to stay and I finally threatened to pull his grant.

Q: The ultimate threat.

HOWARD: That's it, you're on your own, no pay after this month. Without really a good idea whether or not I could do that. There wasn't any question that Allen would endorse that. Whatever legal niceties were involved in it I certainly had local moral authority to threaten him with it. That did turn the trick. He left with the convoy. The Fulbright researcher was way up country in north of Gulu, which is in the north, heading toward the northwest and that was the center of the source of the people who took over. She was married to an Acholi. I presumed that other than being in the wrong place at the wrong time, she was no target to danger. I didn't mess with it. Since her husband and her kids were at my house I felt a whole lot better, and he was in touch with her from time-to-time by what means I know not, but he assured me that she was okay. When she finally showed up. We had a long talk about the situation she was in.

Q: What was our concern about the takeover, that the troops would be hostile or unruly?

HOWARD: Well, obviously the first concern in any situation like that was American safety and the place was chock-full of missionaries, and we proceeded on a weekly basis to have a missionary luncheon, a boiled chicken and green beans luncheon.

Q: You were getting the missionaries to leave to go to Kenya and then come back again?

HOWARD: Yes, to persuade them to go out and stay out was a hopeless effort. The only people we could send out and make them stay out were USAID, Peace Corps, actually Peace Corps wasn't there, it was us and we did. Eventually I, despite all the optimism USAID people have, we ran a short-range evacuation center.

In fact, my wife was the CLO, and she ran it from Kenya. The community liaison officer. She was the first one in Kampala and she put the office together, and she put together the manual for evacuation never thinking she'd have to use it, and did. She ran the center in the Hilton Hotel in Nairobi, and stayed there for about three or four weeks. Finally, at that point in my capacity as acting DCM, acting AID director, acting Admin counselor, grand marshal of the departure, public affairs officer and the chief of the motor pool, I went to Nairobi and handed the bad news that we were going to shut that facility down and that everybody is getting orders to go home and then turn them over to the Admin officer from Nairobi to write the orders. A lot of grumbling, but we shut it down and shut it off and that was in July, end of July, early August of 1985. So, home they went.

Q: Let's talk about why you were there. What happened? I take it then this wasn't an orderly coup?

HOWARD: It was a very messy event for about seven or eight hours in terms of blood, I mean they just shot up everything in sight. There was virtually no opposition because they were the troops, that anybody they would have fought had left. This was on Saturday morning and Obote left at midnight, cleared the border at midnight Saturday with everything he could carry. Only a few rather less than stellar acolytes got caught on the way out early Saturday morning with money because they were late into the central bank to get their share. By the time the rebels got there there wasn't really a whole lot of opposition, but they shot it anyway. It was rather a loud exercise, and then it calmed down to panic. Live on the near edge of anarchy. You can walk around and it's clam because there's nothing that sets anything off and then the lightest little thing like a military vehicle bouncing through a pothole and accidentally setting off a weapon would set off an incredible panic in the middle of town. Basically we said that our purpose in being there was to be there eventually when the whole thing settled down and there was a government. If we left now, probably half the other diplomatic missions would leave with us, which was our estimate and we did not wish to precipitate that. We thought we could hang and fold it together. We had had a mission of 60 to 70 people. We were down to eight and had basically distributed survival functions of fortifying the chancery, running an operation center 24 hours, staying on the radio, keeping open minimal channels of communication, virtually shutting down the public affairs program, closing USAID. We were at property protection and position holding and flag waving. That's what we did for six months through a government that became increasingly less viable.

It was a group of people who did not come from a very educated part of the country and the educated part of the country was running around the bowl, the Baganda, which had no use for the Acholi or the Lango from the north. There's sort of a nominal ethnic division that runs on a lateral basis halfway up the country and below it are the Baganda who are the northern offshoot of the Bantu civilizations. They are exceptionally organized and civilized and they were the people the Brits pushed to run the country. Above the line are the Nilotic tribes from which come the likes of Idi Amin and the Acholis. The Okello family were the key movers and shakers and there were two generations. Tito Okello and his son, and I can't remember his son's name. His son was a general in the army and they were particularly vicious and no good. Eventually, it emerged that he had been the responsible party for killing just literally hundreds of thousands of civilians.

We waited for that whole six-month period for the great refugee flow from the north and it never showed up. We were all prepared. The UNHCR, High Commission for Refugees had a large team there. We had two virtual refugee coordinators and nobody ever showed. We were ready, we were going to lay out supplies. They were dead.

Q: What?

HOWARD: They were dead. Okello had killed them. Routed them out of villages. There were mass graves. After several months it began to appear that there were mass graves, just incredible. The Okellos kept saying, now peace has come. The political situation had coalesced I guess. It's hard to describe this because there were three parts to the opposition. The Okellos were the force that overthrew Obote, this is a northern tribe, the

Acholi tribe overthrew the Lango. The Baganda were sitting by waiting for things to just clear out and then knowingly try and take over. I don't know that they were particularly silent. There was a low-level rumble movement in the woods under Yoweri Museveni, who was the resident Marxist. There were rumors of the return of Idi Amin with basically two Lokai of troops that had been trained and loyal to Amin left out through the northwest with him. One group went to southern Sudan and the other went to northern Zaire and set up camp. They took their families with them, maintained all of their military discipline, and waited for an opportunity to come back to Uganda and take over. This caused a great deal of rumor instability. Kampala was known as the city of seven hills and seven rumors, all of them flowering every morning. Everyday there was some kind of a rumor that would breed instability. Some of them had Museveni coming back and some of them had Museveni taking over the town on part of the Marxists. Other days, it was Idi Amin is on the march from Zaire or Idi Amin is on the march from southern Sudan. Some of this was taken up by the newspapers. There were 13 dailies in Kampala, each of them representing a political standpoint with one exception. One non or apolitical newspaper, but it wasn't particularly reliable. They were up to sell. At best, you could describe everybody as a yellow journalist. The Catholics had a newspaper. The Muslims had a newspaper and two or three other religious groups had a newspaper. Then all of the political parties, and there were a half dozen of those had them. There were ethnic newspapers. Everybody was printing everything. The government owned actually three newspapers that they published, totally contradictory.

So, reliable information was a scarce commodity and everybody believed every rumor that came out every morning. You'd be driving out to the club at lunch one day, a perfectly calm day, a beautiful day, had lunch, spent an hour out there and on the way back in, we realized that we were the only ones moving in toward town. There were sort of two lanes of car traffic moving around us heading out of town and five or six lines of foot traffic heading out of town. We were the lone rangers going into town. That had turned out to be a car backfiring in the central vegetable market, which made people think. These things were happening all the time. We had roadblocks. It was a coalition of revolutionary groups; this government finally gave way to that. This coalition, by the time it finally disintegrated, had 16 members in it, and it was like the Beirutization of the city of Kampala. You couldn't go anywhere without hitting six or seven road blocks all run by different groups. It was like running through small New England towns and seeing the Rotary and Lion Club signs. It was just Pirates of Penzance all the way.

Q: At a certain point, what was sort of the feeling? Why were we bothering?

HOWARD: Because there was a peace movement underway. What was happening was out of town in the woods. Museveni who could not do this by himself had begun to open up contact with the Amin remnants who couldn't do this by themselves. Then the third party was the old Baganda alliance that had some minor smattering of following, but had the most credible voice in Yusuf Lule the former president. So, Lule was the nominal head of this tri-partheid coalition. It included the sons of Amin, what people called the sons of Amin, plus Museveni's genuine Marxist guerrilla movement, which had been born from his own experience at the University of Dar es Salaam under Nyerere's

tutelage. This group, in rough form, was sending messages back and forth to Okello to see if they couldn't come to some accommodation. The idea was that eventually the connection would be made and we wanted to be on the ground or in the bunker if you will, when whatever came down came down so we were there the day afterwards, which is why we stayed.

Eventually, what happened was the peace talks in Nairobi broke down, literally died. Museveni acquired all of his assets, plus the remnants of the sons of Amin and put them all together in a revolutionary army, which then did have the force to push a change, and to become a threat. They all went to Nairobi to talk this out under President Moi's oversight and in about four months, they actually came to a kind of agreement. The Okellos took it back to Kampala and ratified it. Museveni took it back to the woods and his commanders said no. We can take that place tomorrow. Why should we give up half of the slots and most of the power and let these fools continue in office when we can move them out? So, they voted him down and without any further adieu they started marching on Kampala and four days later they owned it. This is January of '86.

Q: And you were still there?

HOWARD: Oh, yes.

Q: When you say Marxist, was this Marxist tie to the Soviets or anyone else or was this sort of homegrown Marxist?

HOWARD: No. It was a very unique African socialist kind of thing. It was very much Nyerere, Julius Nyerere's Tanzanian socialism. Museveni had very much a sense of Robin Hood responsibility to citizenry. He would go through the woods for example, requisitioning food and sewing machines and talent. He would leave a receipt and he said I'll be back. Well, nobody believed that was going to happen. Within three months after he took over, after he moved these people out of town, he made an extra effort, he went out and he bought up several hundred sewing machines and he took them around the countryside, and he gave them back to everybody whom he had given a receipt. They replaced the food. They were just stunning which was a lot of the basis for his popularity in the first several years. He could do no wrong. He was really very commonsense and very common based and oriented and a very smart politician, a very engaging speaker. His forces came and it started on a Thursday morning and by Saturday afternoon the place was dead quiet and there wasn't an Acholi or a Lango or anybody but this rather bizarre army in place.

Q: Were you there when that happened?

HOWARD: Yes.

Q: Then what happened?

HOWARD: It was as against other African coups and military takeovers where it seems that all chaos is bursting loose around you. This was one of the more orderly European set piece battles like World War II classic maneuver pieces that I've ever watched in Africa. I had Marines in my house. I had most of the Marine detachment in my house and I sat on the top of a hill with marvelous observation capacity. We put up the city map and we ran an entire intelligence shop out of my office in the house. We literally watched them come over one hill, fight their way up to the top of the hill and hold it the first night, that Wednesday night. Wednesday and Thursday they fought their way down the hill into a valley and up to a street level and held that until Friday morning. On Friday morning, they moved out from the street level and moved up two whole streets and they held Friday night. Then Saturday morning they swept up the hill on the other side of the valley, which is where I lived. We lived near the top of the hill and this enormously loud small arms battle just swept around us like a sea and over the crest of the hill and down the other side and that was it. They shoved all the bad guys out.

Q: Then how did we perceive the Museveni group?

HOWARD: How did we proceed? I don't know how to answer that. We found him. It took a while to find out where he was and to determine what his intentions were. His intentions were not to become the president, but he did out of necessity. Its funny that the one thing the Okellos did that earned them international recognition, the claim among all of the donors, was to appoint a Brit as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. We're now talking about 1986 or '85 and he'd been around since the early '50s as a colonial policeman, made his way up to the magistrate's court and to the high court and became a supreme court justice four years before under Obote. The Okellos were looking for a chief justice when they arrived. They realized that they could earn a whole lot of credit if they appointed Peter Allen as the chief justice of the supreme court and they did, and everybody recognized that that was an absolute superb appointment. He was the soul of ethical standards and probity, and he earned for them a good deal of positive recognition.

The unusual part about it came with the arrival of Museveni and the shoving of all the old Obote and the Okello forces out of town. With them went the Vice President, Paulo Muwanga. Under the constitution when there is no president, there is no vice president available and ready to achieve command, the chief justice of the supreme court automatically becomes the head of state. Here you had an almost impossible situation in that country with Museveni saying he didn't want to be president, and he refused to take office. It was acknowledged that they found him and made contact with him on Sunday. Peter did, and this was the chief justice on Sunday and it took him until Wednesday to convenience Museveni that he should be president. The thing that did it was that Peter was a British civil servant under overseas development on a system grant. The last thing that any Ugandan wanted to do in 1986 was to crank the clock back to 1960 and have a colonial governor and that's basically what Peter Allen would have been. No matter how good he would have been, no matter how much a Ugandan he had become. So, Museveni by default became the president, and it was an interesting blending time.

Q: This happened and we were still there, granted it was small group, but why didn't you get out after that?

HOWARD: We did. The mission came back together. We had kept the mission down to eight or nine people for six months because of this daily uncertainly because it basically was a major security risk just us being there, but we had been able to work out the routines. We had meetings every morning of where our evacuation convoy was going. We knew which vehicles were running, how they were equipped, and we knew where they were. I met with the RSO and the motor pool chief. We made decisions every morning. We knew where the Americans were. We knew how our phone tree worked. We knew what our consular responsibilities and feelings were. We knew where everything was. So, we simply held it for six months and at the end of six months when Museveni took over the security situation obviously eased, and we pulled the mission back together. I went back to USIS.A new replacement ambassador came in.

Q: We never actually shut down the embassy?

HOWARD: Never. In point of fact most of the six months we ran it 24 hours a day. Even when we did not have Marines, we had set up our own 24 hour duty roster among the seven of us. We had no idea what was going to happen. There would be parts of the day when we had to shut down travel to a whole section of town because of an unknown emergency: a loud noise could be an explosion, buses sometimes blew up, sometimes it was a rumor.

Q: How were our relations with the various elements of whatever passed for a government during this time?

HOWARD: Bizarre. Pretty friendly, but surrealistic. I mean the whole thing was... You're asking questions about what should be a normal diplomatic framework of relationships and none such existed because these people weren't for real. The head of state did not speak usable English. He was an Achoan yet he didn't speak the Achoe version that many Achoelies understood. He told the parable of the fox at every opportunity and nobody could remember what the parable of the fox was because no one could understand what Grandpa Tito had said, but he was very nice. He was a resident of Zaani and he told the parable of the fox. So everybody said, oh he's been nice; he told the parable of the fox.

Q: I mean essentially you were on your own?

HOWARD: Life without 911 for sure.

Q: What about local employees? Did you tell them to scatter?

HOWARD: We reformed the staff based on function and did a whole series of temporary assignments. Basically each of us assessed which of their employees were capable of handling which of the functions we needed to have done. Some of them stayed doing

what they were doing, GSO largely. We had some computer people over at USAID and some administrative people over at USAID and we moved them over to the chancery to do everything including route mail and run the computers in the chancery, the backup on the computers. I sent some of them over to Admin to work with the GSO. We basically redeployed people based on talent, not necessarily on jobs. We then went back and papered over the personnel balderdash. Records and what not, as temporary details and assignments. We did some minor salary adjustments along the way, but not very much. Everybody was simply delighted to have a job so they really didn't argue too much with us. Some of them I furloughed. Some of them we brought in on a rotating basis.

Q: What about the missionaries?

HOWARD: Missionaries rotated in and out. Some of them got scared and went away and then they'd get unscared and come back and by that time another bunch of them would get scared. Probably the community cut by about a third.

Q: Were you finding Americans or Westerners who became targets?

HOWARD: No, in fact just the opposite. We had 40 something residences in the inventory and there were seven of us. We locked up all the rest of the residences. In some cases welded the building shut and turned on all the lights and went away. We sent the duty officer every two days in the afternoon we'd make a tour, every afternoon he'd make a tour of one of the two resident circuits. So every two days he hit every building. In the six months that we were drawn down, there was but one break-in and they only got as far as the porch. They did not get into the main house and they stole whatever was on the porch, a minor piece of audio equipment. Though we thought that the flag might be a danger, in point of fact the flag was very positive because when the Okellos came to town they had one command, one basic general order, and that was don't mess with the Wazungu, the white foreigners, because they get all the aid money that we want after the fact. Don't mess with the phone system because we don't have any radios between military units, all of the military commanders were assigned to commercial establishment so they had phones they knew that worked. So, the answer was no, we were not a target or in danger. We were only in danger from being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Q: By the time you got there were the South Asians all gone? I mean this was during Idi Amin's time.

HOWARD: Well, 99% of them. Amin kicked them out somewhere close to a dozen years before, in the early '70s.

Q: I take it that the economy never really recovered from that?

HOWARD: No, no. There were four or five Asians who managed to stay, Pakistanis mostly. One of them did heavy duty welding and security work. Virtually the only contractor in town who did. So when we did a security upgrade in the USIS center in my house I used him, contracted with him. The only other bidder was at three times his price

and the guy had to come in from Nairobi. But yes that's true, most of the Pakistani and Indian businesses were gone.

Q: A new ambassador came in?

HOWARD: Bob Houdek came in. He was sworn in probably in the middle of the evacuation, but decided it was better to remain in Washington working in the bureau and basically manning the Ugandan branch office there. As long as we were under siege he was on the phone with us, but he didn't come until about just right after Christmas I think, before Museveni arrived. He basically sat down and said, well, you're held up with eight people for about as long as you can manage to do it without Washington getting really upset. Already they were grumbling so he had to let people back in. We were holding off waiting to see what the peace agreement in Nairobi would bring, and when it collapsed that pretty much shut things off. Then of course Museveni came the week after when the coast was clear.

Q: Now, were the Tanzanians involved in this?

HOWARD: No. The Tanzanians were very much involved when the ragtag consortium of revolutionaries meandered over from Dar and it was a Tanzanian army that provided military might and made them coordinate with each other. This is Obote and various other parties. It was Tanzanian military that sort of struck fear in the hearts of Ugandans when they came in, but that was in '79, when they overthrew Amin.

Q: How about the Tutsis later on?

HOWARD: It did not spill over except that Museveni is a southwesterner. He is a Kakwa, which is a tribe, an ethnic group, that straddles the border between Rwanda and Uganda. I do not understand all the tribal balancing in that neck of the woods, so I'm not going to begin to describe or identify them all. He was if anything a minor bit player in what was going on between the Tutsis and Hutus. This is a north-south tall-short thing that has been running for decades and the balance shifts as you get down to Burundi. It shifts back as you get into Rwanda and this kind of ethnic conflict has been raging in those hills for decades, and its still there. Museveni was an ethnic piece of one side faction. There are all sorts of charges over the first decade from '85 into the '90s with Museveni aiding and abetting various parties to this conflict into and out of Zaire. The troops were definitely in Zaire ostensibly on a peacekeeping maneuver, but probably personally and politically. I'm not there, nor was I paying close attention at that point to know what was exactly the detail of what was going on. It changed materially in years right after I left. But Uganda has changed in the 10 to 15 years since I've been gone.

Q: When did you leave?

HOWARD: I left in '86.

Q: What was the situation when you left?

HOWARD: Calm, political calm, no major conflict with the exception of a couple of groups and revolutionaries off in the woods in the far north.

Q: Did you have the army of God people or whatever they were?

HOWARD: No, they stayed out of town. In the last six months of my assignment I was exhausted. It was three governments in 18 months, and if I hadn't known it before, I certainly knew then that you have to wait 60 days to find out who they are and where their houses are and how many Mercedes they're going to have before you go propose anything to them. I was just tired of selling the same product three times. Then I was picking up all the other functions that went with a drawdown mission. It was calm under Museveni . It was marked by the absence of conflict. It was boring, and Uganda had never been boring. No one could remember when it had been boring, but it was boring because it was calm and Museveni seemed to make a great deal of sense. It was a matter of reestablishing the AID program and pulling its assets back together and it was kind of a bureaucratic exercise finding out what we could do at the university. They needed so much more physical assistance than they needed faculty assistance. They couldn't handle the faculty assistance until they had the physical assistance, physical rebuilding.

Newspapers, the situation had changed yet again with a different array of people. We went back in and started working with them on building a WorldNet audience with television and working with radio to upgrade programming. I will say this of Ugandans: Uganda is a remarkable country, absolutely astounding. In Malawi where we lived in peace, calm, law and order, which had prevailed for 35 years, there were two florists in the country. They were both British run. In fact one was a branch of the other, so really there was only one. It was based in Blantyre and had a small shop in Lilongwe. Kampala had five florists and they were the remnants of 17 or 18, and they were all Uganda run. They had a brightness and a color and a sense of flair that left other countries in the dust. It was just astounding. There was a little old man through thick and thin, and war and peace, and ethnic conflict and political strife, manufactured the best dog food in East Africa in a little place down in the industrial district and he just kept on doing it. He didn't stop. People from Kenya came to Uganda to get this stuff. The country had an amazing resiliency and a reservoir of talent and a sort of eternal survival-based optimism. It was just a delight to deal with the Ugandans. They had a group of women lawyers, the women's political movement, and they were stupendous. They were just really inspired. They had been through torture, they had been through all sorts of depredation through Idi Amin through Obote and now they were going to come into their own. They hoped, at least they weren't giving up.

Q: How did you find the universities?

HOWARD: University. Makerere University, probably the best way to describe it -- broken. Physically it was destroyed. The wars of three invasion campaigns had moved right through the middle of it. Makerere was right in the line of march and there had been an enormous amount of destruction. There was no money to maintain it. There was no

security force to protect, so it had been looted several times. The remains of Makerere's intellectual talent pool and its faculty had been chased out of town over 15 years. The Diaspora of academic talent in East Africa is almost entirely Ugandan and it spreads from Botswana to Lusaka in the south to Kenya and Ethiopia in the north, and the United States. The Ugandan faculty were superb. Makerere produced medical graduates who could walk into Guy's Hospital in London and present their graduate certificate and be instantly certified as a practicing surgeon, and this was Makerere. It had a reputation that was the equivalent of Ghana. Physically it was broken, and spiritually it was barely surviving. Talent wise it was in many ways broken. They didn't have any money to pay the faculty and so the faculty left. We had nowhere near the Fulbright or for that matter even USAID dedicated resources with which to rebuild it and yet the medical hospital, Makerere University Hospital, continued to produce some really superb candidates for other medical colleges. I would imagine by this time it has pulled itself up. But at that time it was in very sad shape. My biologist professor could not keep lab equipment. He packed up the lab equipment and everything and took it back with him. Had he left it, it would be gone in the morning along with many of the detachable fixtures.

Q: When you left there, where did you go?

HOWARD: I came back to the U.S. to Washington.

Q: You were here from when to when?

HOWARD: I came back. I was the executive officer for Africa for USIA for the office of African affairs from '86 to '89. I came over here to go to Spanish language school and went down to Nicaragua in 1990.

Q: Let's talk about '86 to '89. What were your prime concerns?

HOWARD: Computerization. I think that was probably the thing that drove my concerns for AF more than anything else. It was getting the agencies working with the other geographic area offices to focus on the proposition we had to automate overseas, that we couldn't ignore the field and that we could not operate under centralization. What drove automation for USIA in the early days were two things. The first thing was production of the Arabic wireless file. The second was that addressograph, multigraph told USIA in '77 that it would no longer produce the parts nor provide the service for the old mechanical addressograph. They wouldn't make the graphic type machines; they wouldn't make the addressograph sorting mechanism or the tabs, nothing after '79. So the agency hit the deck with a mad scramble to automate all of our mailing lists and at first they wanted to centralize all of this in three places in the world, in Bangkok, Budapest and Mexico. It didn't work. They tried and it was an absolute failure from both a political and a mechanical standpoint. The next phase, after having given up on that one after about four years or so, we had to think about doing it with personal computers, and the thing to convince them that a personal computer might work was to produce some Arabic wireless on a strange computer that had an unusual capacity. They bought up everyone of them they could find and they did the wireless file by computer. In the meantime, the

same thing that was driving computerization was the fact that we had produced all of our international worldwide communications on a short-wave teletype. The short-wave teletype equipment was breaking down and continuously functioning since World War II. There hadn't been a new facility since 1948. Some of the stuff that VOA was using in Morocco and in East Asia had actually German markings on it or Japanese markings on it and the antennae rays were breaking down and the world was actually coming to satellite communication. Charlie Wick came along in the early '80s and drove things toward television and satellite communication faster. There wasn't anything left for short-wave. So, we went to PC computers. The agency did not have a budgeted plan for automating the field, so each of the area offices were left to devise how to come up with the money out of their own hides to do this and that's basically how it was done. I spent three years building up an automation fund in the area office budget through sort of surreptitious taxation of the posts. I had 37 or 38 country budgets that I oversaw plus three domestic ones, a total of 40, something like that, 41 or 42 million dollars. Out of that, I had maybe six or seven million that was flexible, disposable and I started carving pieces of that out to buy PCs and machinery, but I couldn't get the agency to approve it. We finally forced their hand on that and then we started working on standards.

The other thing I did was to do what I could to save English teaching. English teaching pays enormous dividends, but it has no constituency. It had very little constituency in the agency at the time and it has absolutely none now in the State Department. It's pretty much mostly dead, direct English teaching that is. We had 17 programs and I spent a year-and-a-half working up a formula and the guidelines and pushing them to make themselves self-sustaining by doing a lot of travel, lecturing and teaching. I think I left with about 14 of them at the break-even point, a couple of profitable situations and two charity cases that we agreed that we'd carry. What was just bizarre was that when I came back 10 years later to be the deputy director of the office there were 17 programs and I had seven, and they were all in trouble.

Q: Had a certain number of them gone into private hands?

HOWARD: No, you could not do in Africa what was done in Latin America for example, the Bi-National Centers, or the Far Eastern Bi-National Centers or even the Middle East Bi-National Centers. There was not the local talent base nor the local disposable money base, nor the locally generated cash flow that would keep that thing going as a viable business. We ran profitable programs and had a hefty chunk of USAID participant training that was done in-country instead back here in Washington. In two countries we did almost all of the IMET military training, English training in country. We proved to the military it was cheaper by several thousand dollars to watch them out there than it was here. USAID bought it whole. The military grumbled, but took it off. This is now '89 or '90 and the beginning of the end of the Reagan administration, and there was not a great deal of sympathy for English teaching. It just wasn't carrying any weight with the Heritage Foundation group. So, I left it with the 17 programs intact, but barely afloat. We paid a tax, we were able to recycle money. We made a major achievement getting them self-sustaining was we were able to take in money now in the field and bring it back to Washington and recycle it through the budget system, and that helped a great deal. We

were able to collect money in the field from fees and book sales, bring it back here, spend it on more stuff and send it back out.

Q: I would have thought that Charles Wick's pride and joy, the WorldNet, would not have been very effective in Africa.

HOWARD: Oh, no, quite the contrary. I did more and more effective WorldNets in Africa than you can imagine. Once we got past some of the mythology in the early days of WorldNet and made it work the way we wanted it to and worked out what we wanted it to do, it was exceptionally effective. We did as a normal post, we'd do one WorldNet and dialogue a quarter in Kampala, where I went and came back in '90 and went to Nicaragua and then two years later went to Zambia. In Zambia, I used WorldNets every two to three weeks and, in fact, we ran the whole democracy programs and rule of law programs and used the hefty component of WorldNet communication to supplant visitors. It was very effective. In fact, to the point every Sunday night on Zambian television was WorldNet night. We were hard-pressed to keep the flow of new material going to keep them supplied with fill-in airtime.

Q: What was the effect when Charlie Wick left and the Bush I administration came in?

HOWARD: It didn't become immediately apparent. There was no immediate apparent effect. Bush I brought his friend Bruce Gelb who was one of his roommates at Yale. Bruce was a true lightweight. He was a cousin of the Leslie Gelb who ran Clairol. Bruce didn't get along with the guy who ran the Voice of America and they had some rather public fights. They were hauled over to the White House at one point and chastised; it was just an embarrassment. Gelb was the start of a series of weak directors. Gelb was finally fired and who was the guy who came back from London? Henry Catto. Where the damage was done was on the Hill. No one defended against Senator Jesse Helms and company claiming that World War II was over. After all Reagan had declared it dead at Bitburg. Why were we still sitting there with this agency since Reagan had knocked down the Berlin Wall and killed Soviet communism? Why did we still have an agency that was created to fight that Cold War? Why was it still in existence? Nobody effectively went up to counter that. No one had the clout in the White House that Charlie Wick did. Henry had some limited impact, but he wasn't a friend of George Bush. He was a second-hand recommendation, and so he did not carry that can. He was only there for less than a year. He was a caretaker, but he did soften and begin to repair the relationship with congress. Then Bush lost to Clinton and Clinton brought in Joe Duffy.

Q: Who was a disaster I take it?

HOWARD: Well, a standing joke toward the end of the Duffy reign was: we wouldn't be in this state if the director was alive, and he really wasn't. As I discovered from friends in Massachusetts, Duffy did similar kinds of depredations to operations in the university system in Massachusetts when he was chancellor. I gather also that he was not particularly successful in making American University run like a clock. He was just a kind of a nonentity. He did not have any clout anywhere, wouldn't have exercised it had

he had it. He looked like an absent minded professor; he looked like an arms-length academic watching a bureaucracy decline and documenting it for his next Ph.D. He was a disaster.

Q: You took Spanish and went off to Nicaragua. Is that right? You went there when?

HOWARD: 1990. Four days before Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was inaugurated.

Q: You were there until when?

HOWARD: Two years. I went down in April of '90 and back in June of '92. The object of that exercise was to do two things: to rebuild a U.S. Information Service operation in that embassy that functioned because it largely had been reduced to a single purpose operation. The single purpose was to get Violeta elected and they succeeded and along the way the staff had been cleaned out and replaced. I remember when all the dust settled after the inauguration and turned around and somebody said, well, you can put out a press release on the scholarship program on Monday and they said, what's that? I just started and that's what I did. For the first seven or eight months, I built the post back. I had two superb American officers working with me with whom I still communicate.

Q: Who are they?

HOWARD: Bob Brown was the cultural affairs officer. He had come from a consulate in Mexico where he was a branch PAO. He came down to take over the cultural program. In something under 90 days he fielded almost 70 candidates from zero. As of April, when I arrived, not one of 25 odd international visitor candidates had even been nominated. Well all of a sudden there were a bunch of Fulbright nomination opportunities laying afoul. Bob took the deck in June and by September we had everybody on the road. All the deadlines were up-to-snuff. I don't know how he did it.

Tom, I can't remember his last name right now. The IO (Information Officer) was a Cuban American and he understood me. I got along well with him and he did a lot; these were guys who did their street work. That's the essence of public diplomacy. You don't make money in the office; you make it on the street. We all hit the street and we all spent more time in the office than we cared to trying to get staff built. We had both excellent staff and roiling staff. Plus which we had a very bizarre political situation with the Sandinistas in actual control of the street.

Q: And the army, too.

HOWARD: Well, between the police and the army and the labor unions they virtually owned it. They owned the only cohesive block in the legislature. They owned the police department. They owned the army; they owned everything but the president's office and they continually made that clear with one riotous act after another one. One disruptive strike after another. When they didn't get their way they threw little petulant fits, and it

tied the place up. It was almost like white water rafting everyday. You never know where you're going to end up. You start out with a plan and you can end up in a tree by 4:00.

Q: Who was our ambassador when you were there?

HOWARD: We started out with a chargé, Jack Leonard, and eventually the ambassador was Harry W. Shlaudeman who was called off the retirement golf course in California by George Bush, personally. The Secretary of State called Harry, and Harry said, no, I've been there, I've done that and I don't want to do that again. Finally, got a call from the White House and, well, what can you say when the President calls? You just hang your clubs up and go. He promised to be there. He said he would do that for six months and he ended up spending a year, a little over a year that I was there. He was very effective. He knew all the players. He was a sort of an awesome pro to work for. Slowly the relationship normalized as these people who had been out of power for 10 years began to formulate a government. It was another very strange political situation where they had elected Violeta with a coalition of some 11 or 12 political parties who had no natural sense of cohesion apart from the fact that they wanted to elect Violeta more than Daniel Ortega. Having done so, they had no more reason to hang together as a coalition, and they didn't. It broke down and became a fragmented disaster. It's reformed and you hear we're looking at Enrique Bolaños, the current president of sort of a wave after wave of Tsunami change in Nicaragua politics.

Q: How did you find the media?

HOWARD: Divided dead down the middle like the Chamorro family. Half-rabid Sandinistas and half-rabid Somocistas, and the government not being quite sure what it was dead in the middle. We dealt with the government or we dealt with the anti-Sandinista side of it, and I had very nominal acquaintance and working relationships with the Sandinista side of it. I had a much better working relationship with some of the other parts of the Sandinista structure that remained, but not the media. I could never ever get an appointment to see the radio director. I could never ever get an appointment to go to television. The one time that IO succeeded to go see the television director, they secretly taped it and ran it. Tom thought he was going to die, that he was going to be executed in front of the embassy in the morning. You may be standing on your suitcase in front of the embassy in the morning, but you ain't going to get executed. Harry said, no, they will send us out on a railroad track, we'll know not to do that won't we. Harry really didn't give a damn what they said about it. He preferred that we didn't make major gaffes, but he didn't give them much credibility and indeed they didn't warrant much.

Q: How did you find the Somoza group?

HOWARD: That's who came back into power.

Q: What?

HOWARD: Who came into power, basically, was the allies of Somoza, the remnants of which had gone to Miami turned around and came back again. Within six to eight months after Ms. Chamorro took over, the Miami bankers were in charge, were back in town doing more business. They were bound and determined they were going to restore things. The big push in Nicaragua for these two years was restoration of land titles, and it was probably the biggest snake pit you've ever looked at. The Sandinistas had screwed up the succession of titling from land that they took, or bought, or stole, or force bought and then resold, deeded, didn't deed and just gave away over the years. It was a disaster. All of these great achievements that they had touted, giving land to the peasants, they failed to finish. If they had finished any of them it would have been fantastic. Had they finished their education program it would have been great. Had they finished the medical program it would have been fantastic. Had they finished land reform it would have been great, but they got to the point where it actually was going to hurt them, and they stopped. It was going to cost money that they wanted to do something else with, and they stopped. As a result, they left Nicaragua in a situation where no one will know what land realities are for decades. You have to go to court to get a certificate of providence before you buy.

Q: Were we pushing anything like reconciliation or down with the Sandinistas, or what were we doing?

HOWARD: National reconciliation was the general line if you will. By and large, the Chamorro government gave reasonable lip service to that. There were Sandinistas involved in the government structure, but the Sandinistas weren't interest in reconciliation. I went down there with what I felt was an open mind, and, really, I came to be an anti-Sandinista very quickly. They were not sincere, they were no different from the Somocistas, they just were 10 to 15 years younger. They had equally as much money as the Somocistas had, and they had equally as little intention of doing anything positive with it. They had produced a Corporatocracy. They said if you want it and it's not yours, take it. They basically produced a nation of thieves and people did that. We lost more out of our household staff, more articles went missing in our house and eventually about halfway through I started prepacking everything and labeling it and sealing it up. If we didn't use it and we didn't need it, I took it down off the wall and put it away and locked it up. We didn't use our own china. Fortunately, I had official china. Eventually, because we had lost bits and pieces out of two sets, I locked the rest of it and just used the house china. That kind of thing was just driving us to distraction. Kitchen utensils were the same way. Pictures. Photos. Knick knacks. They would just walk off. We'd keep the housemaid who would be taking them. If you can't trust them, then I don't really want to deal with them, but I couldn't live without them because we had little kids. This is common throughout the whole community.

Q: Had you talked to any old hands, was this a fairly new phenomenon?

HOWARD: I don't know. There were no old hands. They had all been exiled. There were no people that had been there more than seven months when I got there.

Q: Was there a Contra presence out in the boondocks?

HOWARD: Yes, because the Contras were still negotiating their role in this new fabric, and basically got stiffed by everybody. In fact, there was a hotel which was jokingly known as the Sheraton Contra down near the airport which is where the whole Contra delegation would come for public discussions. They were shut out for all intents and purposes after the election. There were some lip service appointments to the government. All the deals that they had made for reparations or settlements went by the wayside. The government would make a deal and sign it and there would be a great flurry of congratulations, and nothing would happen. It would go back to the woods. The land wouldn't appear, the money wouldn't go anywhere.

Q: You know at one time the American and European glitterati had extolled the Sandinistas as being God's gift to Latin America. Were you getting any people celebrities and all to take a look at this or had they written it off?

HOWARD: The remnants of that crowd were known as Sandalistas. They were Americans down there in ripped jeans and sandals in support of the great revolution. Basically, once Daniel Ortega lost to Violeta it became pretty clear he lost in an honest election, a lot of that kind of support dropped off. A lot of wailing and gnashing of teeth. In the radical end of the Catholic Church, they had been big supporters, the Jesuits.

Q: Maryknolls.

HOWARD: And the revolutionary theologists, but that support didn't translate into money. Sandinistas fell off the bandwagon and the support fell off the bandwagon, too. There was a weekly Thursday demonstration across from the embassy that was a real traffic choker. Just shortly before I arrived, it tapered off and rapidly in the first six months that I was there. By the time I left, they were down to every other Thursday the four of them that were left. They'd be Americans standing across the street protesting whatever town they thought that we were perpetrating through Honduras. They claimed that we manipulated, we ran the city council in Managua through the mayor who was our personal nominee, and that we were pulling all the strings behind the government of Chamorro. We were hard pressed to tell them that had we been doing that things would have worked a whole lot better than they did. They didn't really buy that. That influence was not practical at the time other than it generated a lot of money in fundraising here, and that was it and it died just as quickly as it flourished.

Q: Was there any Cuban influence?

HOWARD: Very much so. Cubans were the major Soviet nominees in dealing with the Sandinistas. They were a combination of Cuban and East German I think. Scandinavian socialists and Cubans and the subs who redid all of the textbooks in the school system in the mid '80s. They taught math by saying five rifles plus six rifles makes a squad of rifles. Six revolutionary soldiers plus four revolutionary soldiers plus a revolutionary sergeant make a squad and they used the eleven revolutionary rifles. That's math in the Sandinista Nicaragua school system. It was the Cubans who financed the publication of

these books and supervised the editing of it and the Scandinavians who contributed a lot of financing to it. There was considerable influence, certainly the Soviets were the major supporter of the military equipment and through the Cubans, they were there to train.

Q: Well, did you see the sort of demise of Soviet Cuban German influence? I mean we're talking about '92. By the end of '92 there was no longer a Soviet Union.

HOWARD: No, not only was there a decline in Russian influence over Nicaragua generally. There was a thoroughly disillusioned Russian Embassy in dealing with the Sandinistas. The Russian ambassador had been there for several years and amongst his stellar achievements was the reequipping of Radio Nicaragua with a very complete, well equipped modern radio station. He was just stunned when he discovered that the Sandinistas had stolen everything when they left. They left him with one Voice of American microphone and a stack of 78-rpm records and an old generator that worked and a transmitter.

Q: Where did these things go?

HOWARD: They eventually showed up at a radio station that the Sandinistas started on their own, same with the contents of the government television station. Virtually everything else ended up someplace else in the Sandinista structure. They literally trucked it out and left empty rooms and dysfunctioning equipment and they looted. They had a ministry of information that was the sort of Central American equivalent of NSA and they monitored things in several languages worldwide. They monitored all the major short-wave broadcasting services on a 24-hour basis and the day after inauguration we went in to see what this fantastic operation consisted of. It was corridors and corridors of empty rooms and broken chairs and two Zenith transoceanic radios. Two Zenith transoceanic radios. Everything else was gone. My Nicaragua press officer had been in there when it was just wall to wall equipment. There was one room where we'd see a table with a broken chair and one Zenith radio. You could see on the ceiling where they had conduit coming through. They really did steal it blind.

Q: Did you get a feel for what the people in the street were feeling about this or opinion polls and that sort of thing?

HOWARD: We did opinion polls and we did one baseline study of what they thought about USAID. We did it in the first four months that I was there. It was commissioned through USIA with a Venezuelan outfit. They came in and did the survey and the outcome of that survey was that the people in the street thought that USAID was a CIA front organization and that there was for no net gain to the Honduran people. We mounted a campaign of two years. We focused on telling positive stories about USAID and fortunately USAID had a lot of practical street value stuff they were doing: for example, a complicated scheme to provide oil that could then be sold and the money could then be recycled in a public service project like paving streets, which in turn generated employment. There were a couple of other similar schemes that followed that model. We went to oil distribution points. We went to business openings. At least once a

month, and sometimes twice a month, we covered something. We did it in such a way that everyday, every time we did it, we scooped the Sandinista media so that they were left reacting rather than being the first on the street with any comment. A year and a half later, before I left, we ran the same survey again with the same outfits and better than half the people, some were pretty close to 60%, were impressed at how very directly beneficial the USAID projects were on the streets of Nicaragua. So, I was pleased with that. That was a signal of accomplishment. Now, those that dealt with the practical programs. It didn't talk about money that went into a central package, probably the bulk of the cash went. You're talking about maybe $100 million out of $800 million maybe all together.

Q: What about the universities or the intellectuals?

HOWARD: The universities were in tough shape. The only university that had any money that had any assets at all was the Universidad de Central America, which was the Jesuit Catholic University, which was the seat of revolutionary theology and fed the intellectual wing of the Sandinista movement. The National University had been allowed to deteriorate and had been sent a third-rate Sandinista hack and a couple of semi-defrocked priests to run it and it had deteriorated in academic quality and standing. We were able to put some wonderful faculty members on the campus there and pulled several Fulbright candidates out. But the only two or three candidates that I could get from the UCA - the Universidad de Central America for a scholarship program would not pass any kind of a rational political stability test anywhere along the line. It's supposed to remain relatively neutral, but these guys were rabid. I nominated no one. We did from the National University. There were a whole rack of small trade schools and so we pulled people out of that to go for a Fulbright program. If they had a bachelor's degree and wanted to go for a master's, we would pull them out of there. We found our candidates from a variety of different sources and sent them back to the States on student grants. We had a raft of people coming down to study, some of them thinking that they were going to study the great gains of a revolution. The first batch of them I turned down, and the second batch of them we welcomed with open arms and watched them turn away disillusioned.

Q: The first group that came down, what happened to them? I mean were these coming out of the universities by and large were all for the Sandinista movement.

HOWARD: Well, yes, I was there by myself for about four months. I kept getting these little bulletins from Washington, from USIA, saying where is this or where is that which would cause me to go look in somebody else's file cabinet to find something. The first thing they wanted to know where was my return judgment on the 25 Fulbright student researcher applications that had been forwarded to us for comment. The deadline had passed, but they were extending it for 13 days so I could do this and I had four days left. I hunted through the file cabinets one night, and I found all this stuff and I sat down and to read it. I ended up reading it until 2:00 in the morning and got through about half of it. By that time I was pretty much disillusioned on the Sandinistas and my mind had begun to shut down and these people were proposing to come and study the inordinate

achievement of the educational system by the revolutionary Sandinista movement. I wrote a single turndown paragraph that suited all of them. "As of whatever the date was, the Sandinistas are no longer in power in Nicaragua and much of their achievements have been proven to be questionable. So the premises of your research are no longer valid, and we deem it not to be useful to spend the money to have you come and research on these premises. Please resubmit with more valid underlying premises," and sent them all back with a cover sheet. Nobody reapplied. The second batch came down with a little more neutral state. The next round of research applications came with a good deal more rational and viable project proposals. It's funny. It ran for two years of nonstop craziness. It was almost like Uganda.

Q: Did you have contacts with the Catholic Church other than the revolutionary theologists and all?

HOWARD: Yes, through a couple of the radio stations. We dealt with Radio Católica. The Monsignor who ran Radio Católica was one of the opponents of the revolutionary theologists. We did a lot of good programming with them on things that we could have done with the Sandinistas, but couldn't get to them to do. It was still verbal warfare. All they'd done was to stop shooting guns, the Sandinistas and the Catholics and the Somocistas. The war was still going verbally.

Q: Did you get any taste of the Jesuits and other there, I mean did you have contact?

HOWARD: Yes, to the point where the AID director and I decided that not only were we not going to do anything with the Universidad de Central America, which is where they were, but, we weren't even going to go to the campus any longer. We drove the car one day and almost got it destroyed, turned over. That trip was an experiment. We said we were going to talk to the assistant dean of academics to see if we came away thinking it was a crack in the façade and at that point we simply said we went in thinking there was not going to be such a crack. This was a gesture of futility and then we damn near got killed at the front gate. We said screw them, no, we don't want to deal with them, and we left.

Q: Did you get any pressure from church groups, Catholic Church groups in the United States?

HOWARD: We had an enormous amount of pressure from a lot of places that stood to make money out of it. Florida International University stood to make a lot of money out of the AID program. I think USAID got a lot more pressure than I did. I think there were certainly Catholic Church organizations that probably would have benefited from USAID funding in the normal line of activity, but basically because USAID was not funding a declared religious organization just non-recipients for that purpose who weren't getting money. Florida International University wanted their feathers on the journalism program, and we were basically useless in their eyes. The USAID director and I fought them off for well over a year and we finally had to give in and let them in the door. They raised

more money. I could do the training they did. I did do it much more effectively than they did. Cheaper

Q: We're basically up to '92. Where did you go in '92?

HOWARD: In '92 we went to Zambia. '96 from Zambia to Honduras. '99 home again to stay.

Q: Okay, we'll pick this up in '92 when you are off to Zambia.

Today is the 16th of March, 2005. Sted, how did you get Zambia?

HOWARD: We basically wanted to go home from Central America and decided that we knew, my wife and I knew precisely that we were talking about southern Africa and not Silver Spring, Maryland and Zambia was open. It was at the outset of a very exciting democratization experiment, if you will, and it was a good place to go and it turned out to be an excellent place.

Q: You were there from '92 to '96?

HOWARD: Four years.

Q: What was your job?

HOWARD: I was the PAO.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

HOWARD: We had two ambassadors. Gordon L. Streeb was there for a year or two and then he left. [ed note: Gordon Streeb left in 1993. Roland Kuchel was ambassador to Zambia 1994-1996.]

Q: When you arrived in '92, what was the situation in Zambia?

HOWARD: Zambia had just had an election. It had displaced or ousted, replaced, Kenneth Kaunda, the first independence president, with Frederick Chiluba. He was the labor leader from the north and was the candidate of something called the movement for multiparty democracy. It was funny because the whole political hypothesis in Zambia was the same as it had been in Nicaragua which was run under the union of national opposition (UNO) which was all of the miscellaneous people who didn't want the Sandinistas anymore and banded together and became a viable party. Indeed in Zambia, those people who wanted to get rid of Kaunda banded together and became a movement for a multiparty democracy. They did win.

Q: Well, how did that come about? I mean when you had somebody like Kaunda running things for so long. This was before you got onboard.

HOWARD: I don't really know a lot about the antecedents for that election. We were paying enough attention to what was going on in Nicaragua without getting involved in any part of that, but Kaunda was becoming less and less popular. His popular appeal in the street was fading. Amongst the things that kept him going was that he became the anti-apartheid leader of the neighborhood. Apartheid was beginning to crumble and the African national congress was going back to South Africa and Mandela was in the process of being elected and replacing the apartheid government, the nationalist government in South Africa. As a result, Zambia's position as the leader of the front-line states diminished and Kaunda's personal image diminished and it diminished internally with all of the dissatisfaction. He all of a sudden couldn't blame all of the hardships on his regional anti-apartheid leadership. He had to actually deal with the proposition that he mismanaged his economy and that is governance had completely fused the party with the government and so it was difficult to tell where one left and the other picked up. As a part of a trend to break away from the first generation of leadership all over the continent, this MMD (movement for multiparty democracy) proposition gained momentum and eventually had sufficient momentum to force an election and to win it, which they did.

Q: What sort of program did you have at your command in Zambia?

HOWARD: It is sort of a traditional program, but basically the situation determined what we were going to do in that framework. We had all the tools available to us that we had in any other post in terms of grants, visitation grants and speaker programs and specialized targeted, low-level technical assistance programs and WorldNets and what not, and we used virtually all of it. We decided that obviously the support for democratization was the critical unifying factor across the spectrum of programming efforts and it was easy to do a lot of stuff, and we did a lot of stuff. We did some groundbreaking things. We did a 16-week multimedia program on basic democracy, which was a different theme every two weeks, and Washington provided us with WorldNet interviews. They provided us with telepress conferences, which basically was a telephone conference call. We recorded it and placed it on the radio. We were able to place the WorldNet interviews on television and every two weeks we dealt with a different theme, a different specific topic under democratization. We did such things as constituent relations for parliamentarians, using American congressmen. How did they set up their constituent relations? What were their responsibilities toward their constituents? Eventually the programs proved popular enough that television set aside an hour for us every week on Sunday evening, it was the WorldNet hour.

Q: Now were these hand tailored programs?

HOWARD: They were done exclusively for us. I had to go back to Washington and sit with three different groups of people: the television people, the radio people and the print people to get them to develop what I wanted. What I wanted was three different programs for three different levels of audience, those who read, those who listened to the radio at the bottom, those who read in the middle and those who watched television at the top on the same topic every week. We would put print articles in the newspapers and it would be

backed up by our radio interviews and occasionally we were able to tie this in with direct VOA programming, and then the third element was the television interview. We would run this for two weeks. We would release four articles every two weeks to the newspaper and they'd reprint them all. We'd release two radio interviews, one a week and then one television interview every two weeks. Washington was just fantastic. We did this for 16 weeks, so we had eight different programs that covered voting, it covered small party organizations. It covered municipal governance, municipal elections and municipal constituent relations. It covered federal and national parliamentary relations. It covered the role of the press. It covered the rule of law. Most of the basic solid topics that we covered. It became a fairly popular thing to the point where the electronic media replayed this stuff probably two or three iterations, both the television and the radio, and they were getting fan mail from outside Zambia.

Q: I would think something like this that hadn't been done before would serve as an excellent prototype.

HOWARD: It did. It demonstrated that the three elements in Washington could get together which they had not done before. It served to support the proposition that the newly formed I bureau at USIA could function as the focal point for gathering all the several different kinds of services together and putting together a multimedia package. They did get the attention and the cooperation from television, which was a quazi independent exercise. We did ask for VOA assistance and got limited VOA assistance. Mostly, we got I bureau putting together our radio interviews that we used on the radio.

Q: It is interesting that you are talking about this. It really is both a fundamental and innovative type of approach and yet it's coming at a time when there are many complaints about USIA being on the skids because it didn't have much leadership.

HOWARD: No, basically the absence of leadership, when the cat's away the mice play, and there are no small number of very sharp mice. So, we did a lot of good things. The overall charge is not true. I think it develops a contention that we were a Cold War agency and out of step with our time which was a Jesse Helms hypothesis that was just simply flat wrong. We had evolved technically to meet the times. We had evolved in our programming, and we recognized what the nature of the threat was and what we were supposed to do with it. The other half of the problem was that we had been doing a democratization program since 1953, but until USAID came at it we don't do it with very much money. We do it in small incremental amounts. We don't expect all of the return to come tomorrow. We're investing for five and 10 years from now. When AID comes into it and does their democratization program, they come in with big bucks. They're going to build an edifice they're going to walk over and hand over tomorrow. We're not in that business. It's easy to say, well, USIA is not doing anything. It's not very effective. It's not true.

After we did that, we moved into rule of law and it was based on the proposition that as part of MMD's philosophy we espoused really a lot of bedrock, Jeffersonian principles.

Q: Where does MMD come from? Is that just a program within our larger program?

HOWARD: No, that's the political party in Zambia. They espoused a truly Jeffersonian set of principles and objectives even if they had no idea of what it was they were asking for and most of which eventually they didn't want once they got it. However, they espoused it and we were able to leap into the breach on both the democratization program with the media and with the court overhaul. With the court they said, well we want an independent court system. This instruction had come from the presidency; the office of the president and cabinet. It had been relayed along with an admin officer who was supposed to make it happen to the chief justice and the supreme court and the chief justice sent the lady over to see me to figure out how they got an independent court system. I said well, I don't know because I'm a bureaucrat. I'm not a lawyer. I'm not a judge. I don't know how you do a court system. I said I'm a good enough bureaucrat to know that you need your own hiring, firing and retiring authority. You need your own money and right now you get it all through the ministry of justice, so that's not an independent court system. That's a politically controlled court system, so you need to get your money and your operating authorities directly from parliament. She said, we had come to that conclusion, but we didn't have much and we started to draft some legislation, but we really needed some help with that.

I went back to USIA and asked for somebody, and they sent me a guy by the name of Robert Merhige from southern Virginia. Actually, he was the Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court of Eastern Virginia; he had a fantastic history going back to the civil rights days. He sat there with the Zambia Chief Justice, and the two of them finished off this piece of legislation. Then the Chief Justice took it over and submitted it to parliament. Then Bob and I hit the road to the rubber chicken circuit selling it to the various bar associations and what not and generated enough support and enough pressure on parliament to pass it. All of a sudden bang, out of nowhere, long after Bob left, but he basically was part of the architecture of it and certainly an inspiration. He did a lot of one-on-ones with parliamentarians and with the Chief Justice. Once we had that then we said, now you've got the legislation, now you need a court administrator to show you how to put this thing together. We got a guy by the name of Rich Leonard from Raleigh, North Carolina. He was a bankruptcy referee, but he was a crackerjack court administrator. He came in and I think the principal contribution that Rich made was in designing how we should automate the court administration office and in analyzing the backlogged caseload. Where the Chief Justice thought they had maybe 3,000 cases backlogged in the system, Rich showed him, based on sampling, that they had pretty close to 9,000 cases backlogged. Where they thought they had made 1,000 or 1,500 people in the prison system, who hadn't faced arraignment, according to Rich's projection they had closer to 6,000. It was a substantial number at any rate and so we just started in. We invited an assistant U.S. attorney to come out and work with the prosecutor's office. He made some recommendations that they implemented and that we helped them with. We got a team of public defenders in from Vermont under another kind of a grant. First they worked with the public defender's office, then they worked with the university and the bar association and eventually created a brand new public defender's scheme run out of the bar association, which was far more effective than the

one the government ran. The third one was a crew from Cornell. Cornell alumni and a Cornell professor emeritus came out to investigate the possibility of putting Cornell lawyers under Peace Corps appointments to teach law in the university. That began to form the third leg of our exercise and they indeed approved that and selected the lawyers and got them out there. All this took was about two years, a little over two years to do altogether and got them teaching at the university and we provided an extra two grants to Cornell to bring out an automation specialist, a professor who taught constitutional law and was really a cracker jack automation specialist. He prescribed the kind of equipment that we should donate to the university to begin to provide them with an automated system for maintaining the codification of Zambian law, which had been suspended in the mid '80s when the Brits stopped. They really hadn't codified Zambian law. There was a whole lot of law that was actually very good. They had some very good human rights law. They had some very good dependents rights law, but it wasn't codified and judges in the field couldn't get at it. They worked with the Peace Corps volunteers to create this automated database at the University of Zambia of recodified Zambian law.

Then we hooked the court system and the university up to the Cornell Law School database and this began to feed both American law into decision making. Out of it the Chief Justice wrote a decision on freedom of assembly that was a classic first amendment statement. It would have been a classic in the United States court system had it been written here.

Q: Sted, what you're telling me, I mean looking at Zambia, Zambia was more than Rhodesia, the former British colony and actually we got our court system from the mother country and all here we are sort of passing on our knowledge. Where were the Brits?

HOWARD: Long gone.

Q: Well, but I mean long gone, but.

HOWARD: The structure was there.

Q: But was there any interest in having them back? Were they playing any role?

HOWARD: They were there, but they were not in the controlling interest that they had been. There's enough anti-colonial tension in a former British colony that the colony is not going to turn around as an independent nation and go back to Britain for the advice and guidance to resurrect the system that they got independent from. So, I don't think they would have gone back to the Brits. The Brits were involved in some of it, but they weren't the prime movers. They were involved in many parts of it through the UN. Eventually we got UNDP and the World Bank to fund the majority of the computerization for the courts and the Brits kicked into that. The Brits provided some advice and guidance, but what had happened was that although the Zambian legal system is based on British common law, there is enough over time that has changed that it isn't

British common law anymore and the Zambians clearly wanted a stamp on the system that was different from British common law.

Q: There was also a feeling that the United States has been going through the last several decades or more than that, but quite a change in its attitude toward people's human rights, racial attitudes, almost anything you could think of. We served as a good source for these topics.

HOWARD: Well, point of fact, the availability of assets to do this kind of work came as a result of this. The State Department set up a human rights fund for Africa. You could apply for grants of $15,000 to $25,000 to do something in the general human rights arena. The reaction that many people had was, well, we'll convene a conference. We'll have a human rights symposium. We'll do an intellectual think piece out of it. I think that that sort of thing may have had some impact in South Africa at the time because John was able to pull together disparate elements of apartheid and non-apartheid and two or three factions of the Afrikaner kingdom and a couple of black factions into a symposium on how they manage to govern themselves in the afterlife. I would imagine that that was worth doing, but most of these conferences that I've looked at and been part of or done have been a giant waste of time. You're just blowing more hot air into the air and everybody goes home and everybody goes, well, we spent a lot of money. We did a great thing, but nobody remembers it nor did it have any of that impact. I just decided we weren't going to do that.

One of the things that we did do was sit down internally and ask what could we do if we had to do something for human rights, what could we do, where could we identify some one person or person type whose human rights were being violated and what could we do about it. The answer came oddly enough in the number of prisoners sitting in the jail and we didn't know what the numbers were. This was before we had Rich Leonard out or Bob Merhige. It had to do with the number of people in jail without arraignment. That was a tacit violation of rights. Why was it happening? The more we dug into that, the more we realized that there were some really very simple problems to solve and one of it was transportation to the magistrate's court. Another was providing paper and typewriter ribbons to solve a problem and a lot of those answers came from a visit of the prosecutor to work with the public prosecutor's office. He's the one who kicked us to get all the parties to the justice system together at a mid-, not top, mid-level working level with a confab, which eventually became a biweekly meeting in my conference room to work out. The deal was I provided them Coke and cookies. They would provide the problems and then work out the solutions with each other, and where I saw an opportunity for us to do something, I'd do it. If I didn't, all I would do then was facilitate. That solved a number of problems. It got people moving from the jail to the court by putting canvas tops on trucks during the rainy season. It got paper moving from the prison, release lists going from the prison to the various precincts around the country rather than just simply police headquarters by providing them with typewriter ribbons and multi-copy carbon paper. It is just, stupid, simple little things like that did a lot. Providing tape recorders, common garden variety cassette tape recorders to the courts all of a sudden got court reporting off the written pad where the judge's notes were the prime record of the trial to

a reproducible transcribable format that accurately produced what had happened in court. It actually spurred more useful use of the court timing. Computers in the chief justice's office dedicated the courtroom scheduling, enabled him to call up the courtroom schedule and discover who was working and who wasn't and that provoked a lot of disciplinary actions in the judge's group. All of a sudden, they went from three judges working, with the grand total of seven hours a week in 10 courtrooms, up to about eight judges working pretty damn close to 100 hours a week in all the courtrooms. Little things. I don't think we spent more than $400,000 on the whole damn thing, maybe $500,000 in three years, but a lot of little incremental progress was made in the justice system. It started from the discussion of how do we get one person freed who ought to be. It worked very well.

In another part of the program we brought out a triage team, which constituted of a judge, prosecutor, a defender, a court administrator and the Chief Justice appointed Zambian counterparts. These guys went in a trailer truck from jail-to-jail and they reviewed casework in each jail. They freed people on the spot or they remanded them for trial. They reduced the prison population. They looked at a guy and said, well, it didn't matter whether you've been convicted or not, if you had been convicted you would have served less time than you've been in jail waiting to find out, so you're gone. That did a lot of good. They remanded other people for trial before whichever court seemed appropriate. The Americans helped expedite the process and the Zambian judicial team did the work and they had pro bono representation. It really worked very well. We did a lot of that stuff in Zambia. It was really great. I think by the time I left, MMD was getting a little bit more paranoid and they were shutting down some of this latitude that they had allowed because they realized it wasn't working to their political advantage. They weren't quite as committed democratically as they would have led everyone to believe they were at the outset. That was natural. We were able to leap into the breach when it was wide open, and we had a good four years.

In quite a separate exercise, we lost our lease on a traditional cultural center and I was able to go out and get a new space and build a center to my own specifications and actually got to live and work in it for a year and a half, which was an experience I'd not had before. I'd done five centers and that was the only one I got to live and work in.

Q: What did the center do?

HOWARD: The center provides office space for the PD (public diplomacy) staff. It houses a traditional library or what is now an information resource center, a combination of books and electronic access, computer access and electronic databases. It houses a multipurpose room. We basically were renovating or completing the shell end of an office building. It had a gorgeous two story atrium that served as an exhibit gallery. We used it extensively to pay for shows and traveling exhibits and that was the lobby for the multipurpose room that we used for almost everything we did that gathered people together in the center. It was set up as a WorldNet studio. It was set up as a radio studio, if we wanted to do that. It was set up as a lecture hall or a meeting room. Really, it was a very flexible facility. So, that's what we put together, about 6,000 or 7,000 square feet altogether for a small post like that.

Q: Sometimes one can almost leap ahead if you have a lousy telephone system and you move to cell phones and all of a sudden you've got communications without having to worry about wires. It sounds like you were really able to jump into the leading edge of technology to various forms of the computer to make things happen. Not fancy stuff by and large, but allowing them to get into the 20th century.

HOWARD: It wasn't that we introduced any of that technology, we just applied it. We applied it at a time when they were ripe for change. Had they not been ripe for change, we wouldn't have done it. There's a little more than just simply the fact that we were there with the cell phone at the time that they needed to call somebody.

Q: Can you describe the "Zambian," and I'm using air quotes around the name, but how did you find the Zambians in dealing with this group of people?

HOWARD: I didn't find the Zambians any different than I'd found most African people in general. They have much of the same wants, needs, desires and hopes that we have. They have generally less economic means to acquire them. Jobs are scarce. The economy is pretty poor, but they're pretty hardworking people. Ultimately, they would like to have the kind of things that we have in the context of our own democracy in our own rule of law framework, but they don't understand how to get from very traditional authoritative central control such as they've had for decades and decades going way back before colonialism. The electoral democracy does not necessarily have, the Zambians have very little faith that it's going to give them what they want. They think it may get them closer to it, but they don't understand how it works. They don't understand the rule of law, especially as a key element. Now, it's too bad that we put them in a large container marked "they" because there certainly are first class democratic minds in Zambia who do understand it and did work at it, but it can be dangerous when you're crossing traditional politicians, of course physically dangerous. I mean there were countries in Africa that if you lost the primary you better hope your heirs and assigns got to the airport and got out before the news got out because you weren't going to get there. There was no going back to your law practice or your car dealership in Ohio. It just didn't work that way. There was certainly an element of the Wild West in the 18th Century or the 19th Century American politics and justice in Africa today as democracies begin to evolve, but slowly it is evolving. It's going through many recognizable stages that are maybe 100 years out of sync where we went through them.

What shortens their time span of course is communications, the computer, television, satellite communications, the news travels and more and more people are coming back from Western schools and taking their place in business and legal and governmental communities. So, yes, the stuff is leapfrogging. The time period is, the evolutionary cycle is shortened.

Q: Well, I'm looking at the map and Zambia has got some difficult neighbors. Zaire, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique particularly.

HOWARD: Well, Mozambique is not such a dangerous factor anymore.

Q: During that time Mozambique was not a problem?

HOWARD: It was becoming not a problem because during the '80s in the Reagan administration our policy was something called constructive engagement. It was a much debated, much maligned policy that really left Chet Crocker very much a stand alone person in the political spectrum in Washington. He basically said the only way we're going to deal with South Africa is if we untie the Angolan knots so that South Africa will have no more excuse to sit on Namibia. Once we do that, Mozambique will change, and the war in Mozambique will not have the one in Angola to feed off of, nor will Angola have the Mozambique conflict to feed off, and the two of them will separate.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, all the Marxist support from Mozambique disappeared. Then Mozambique had to come to some other accommodation, and so they did. The war in Mozambique settled down and eventually was quasi-settled. It's still not firm control over most of the country, but there is not a very active shooting war any longer. Angola is not in a shooting war any longer. Namibia is independent. Zambia largely existed without a whole lot of threat to or from any of these neighbors.

Where Zambia played a role in the '80s was that Zambia in the '70s and '80s was the seat for all of the rebel groups in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, and Angola. All had their rebels, and South Africa's especially, had their headquarters in Lusaka. This is what sustained Kaunda because he became the patron saint of rebel leaders in Lusaka. Once these elements began to bleed off in the '80s, they solved problems one at a time. Little knots got untied, little strings got pulled. Lusaka became less of a focal point for the frontline, so that now the only real problem that Zambia has is with Zimbabwe, and comrade Bob Mugabe.

Q: During your time was Zimbabwe a problem or had Mugabe turned septet *or not?*

HOWARD: Pretty much. He hadn't made as much progress as he'd made to date. It wasn't quite as obvious in the midst of other things, but it was very plainly clear that by the end of the '80s, Mugabe was not the long term solution. He was able to by that time nationalize a number of businesses and issued his land threat again and become a threat to the agricultural production in the country. While we were in Malawi, and this was in the early '80s, Zimbabwe tobacco was the standard by which African tobaccos were measured, and indeed, it had its own niche in the world market. Malawian tobacco was left to fill the hole left by crop failures in Central America, or if Zimbabwe had a short year, they would buy Malawian wrapper to put into their mix. That's all flipped. Malawi tobacco outclasses and out produces Zimbabwean tobacco today largely because Mugabe has run most of the white farmers out of town and he hasn't reestablished the farms under any rational basis. That was beginning to be felt, you could see it.

Q: What about Zambia tribalism. Had this turned political or how did tribalism play?

HOWARD: Kaunda had kept things under very firm control. "One Zambia" was his whole philosophical basis, and it was his motto. Under one Zambia there were no independent tribal governments. There were tribal chiefs and there was a co-opted tribal chiefs council that could meet and could advise the president, but the president was under no obligation to listen to them or do what they asked. He managed to do one or two things a year that gave them a fig leaf to hide behind, but he really didn't pay much attention. This rankled them, but there wasn't much they could do. He owned the central government and that was the way that it worked. Under MMD, the tribal chiefs thought that they were going to get a better deal and indeed they did not, but Chiluba was not as good as Kaunda at keeping them under control. It began to emerge, but not tribalism in the destructive sense as you find it in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire. Not tribalism as it carries in Nigeria, not tribalism as it functions in Sierra Leone and Liberia, not ethnic warfare, not the kind of little nuisance war that's going on in Uganda between the north and the south. This was not what's going on in Zambia. It's a very civilized political jockeying if you will, 20th and 21st Century political jockeying. The tribal chiefs want a voice in affairs. They want a vote in parliament which they're probably not going to get, but they're going to have enough nominees on the list that they'll co-opt parliamentarians along the way and make it work that way.

Q: How were the relations within Zambia? I mean we had Peace Corps and USAID and that sort of thing.

HOWARD: We had a tremendous USAID program. It had some agricultural projects, but largely they had government reaffirmation. They stepped in with a big foot right after the election that ousted Kaunda to help the new government get its act together. They had several very good projects. Several projects that didn't work very well. They had a hand in supporting the rewriting of the constitution and that didn't really quite go the way they had hoped it would. By the time they finished, Chiluba had discovered a number of things that he really didn't like about democracy and so he managed to get the constitution jacked around or weakened or watered down to the point where it didn't bother him too much. They had a project with Parliament that threatened to crack some rice bowls so it didn't get very far. They had an absolutely superb project with the presidency on how to develop a bureaucracy to handle policy developments and policy implementation. That worked like a charm. That gave the statehouse an operating system and structure to manage the various ministries. They had just a golden project to privatize all of the state industries and it was just gorgeous. It worked like a charm. It really was a delight to watch and a model to be observed. They had a number of things going on. The Peace Corps was back in. They were doing everything from teaching English to doing basic rural health, to some small agricultural stuff, but mostly with rural health.

Q: How about AIDS at that point?

HOWARD: AIDS was a significant problem. Another successful or very active USAID project was the AIDS condom project.

Q: Did you get involved in this, I mean selling condoms is a problem everyone.

HOWARD: Only tangentially. USAID had a contractor who came in to do the condom program. Basically, they'd develop a condom and they'd sit with very careful consultation with locals and the local ministry's help and they'd develop a sales campaign for this. Since this is not a particularly strenuous Catholic country they didn't have the usual church objection to it, but you were also spitting up hill because condoms limit population growth and population growth in a country without a social security system gets right into the whole social security pattern. Basically, it is flocks and flocks of grandchildren and in order to get them to survive through childhood you have to have flocks and flocks of children. If you all of a sudden cut down the population, you cut down the basis for carrying elders in their advanced age. There is this cultural block. There's also tribal taboos and things that you have to overcome. They were pretty good about doing that and their aims were in bars and big cities, center city kinds of venues where they could get at prostitutes and truckers , who are the major confluence of things. It was a fairly successful program as far as I could determine at least to the extent of distributing condoms and getting them used. Whether it has some kind of impact it had on the Aids infection rate, I don't know. It's been 10 years and I don't know what's happened.

Q: What was the media like?

HOWARD: The media was three-quarters absolute government-owned and controlled, and one-quarter raucous independent yellow journalism, and it was fun. It was a hell of a lot of fun. It was a risk every time you stepped out the front door, and it scared the crap out of the ambassador, and we loved it. There was one newspaper that was absolutely totally government controlled. There was one newspaper that was government funded, but independent; we were able to work with them on placement of things; there was one newspaper that was rabidly independent and they were in jail all the time; and we, the Western press attachés association, used to have a prison watch. Every time we heard that one of these guys went down to the jail, we drove one of our dip registered cars over and parked in front of the jail until he came out. Sometimes our ambassador was a little surprised to find that we had done that and they were a little annoyed that their cars were over there, but eventually they all agreed that this was workable, and it actually kept the detention periods down and got people sprung. The police would instantly know what was going on outside.

A lot of what we normally do which is journalism training and you despair after a while that that has actually taken place because some of the objective reporting that you hoped they'd learn in the class didn't show up in articles. The same absolutely atrocious treatment of the English language continued to appear on the front pages above the fold and nightly news sounded like drunk Brits, but there were little signs that the attitudes were changing and the things were creeping in, so you keep at it.

Q: How about exchange programs?

HOWARD: Very active. We were running as many as we could float and indeed we used the grant, the subsidiary of what we called citizen participation grants to double our small grant pile. We had an allocation of international visitor grants that was fairly stable at about 12 a year. We used that across the line for political and I probably had a third of the grants for specific use as contacts. We used the other two-third of AID grants to support political and econ objectives, occasionally consular objectives, once in a while military and some political and some judicial. I didn't include the judicial, but I nominated it.

Then we used all of the grant programs that we had incorporated into our democratization program that involves some movement of Zambians back to the United States with some form of experience. Out of those collective programs, I got another dozen or so people traveling. We had Americans studying and teaching in Zambia, and we had Zambians studying and teaching in the United States.

Q: What about the Zambian military? Did they play much of a role?

HOWARD: No. At least not up to their potential, neither positive or negative. They had been a factor in control that Kaunda exerted as a potential deployable force, but it really was a paper tiger. They hadn't maintained any of their equipment and they didn't have anything that moved. Zambia had been a repository for every junk pile, Soviet disposal heap that came along, and so a lot of the stuff was not only not operable, it was not repairable because parts weren't available. They had a lot of junk that didn't work and so they were not a particularly well-trained or mobile force.

Q: Also there are two sides. The positive side is peacekeeping elsewhere. The negative side is a bunch of officers saying we don't like what's going on and taking over the government.

HOWARD: There was every once in a while a murmur of that threat, but the bottom line was they didn't have the wherewithal. The other side of that is they were all sharp enough to know that they didn't know what the hell to do with it when they got it. They had watched enough neighbors change hands in quite that fashion to understand that you have a disaster. If you were a disaster after the fact and they weren't sufficiently dissatisfied with either Kaunda or Chiluba and Kaunda and Chiluba were smart enough to keep them reasonably happy so they didn't come out of the barracks. They followed a British tradition as had Malawi of "a political military" and so Malawi under Banda was a lot more rigid than Zambia. Zambia, the general assessment was that they didn't have the wherewithal to do it or to run the thing afterwards, and they knew that.

Q: Zambia sits underneath Zaire and Zaire's got the copper mines and quite a bit mineral resources.

HOWARD: Zambia's got copper, tremendous mineral resources.

Q: What was Zambia doing with it?

HOWARD: Selling it, mining it badly and inefficiently and selling it on the world market; but a combination of their own manufacturing inefficiencies, which are no less than the Zairian, and a collapse of prices in the world copper market just left them on their uppers. Eventually they failed to maintain equipment. They failed to modernize the copper mines to the point where the copper mines were losing money. The toughest part of the privatization package was the copper mines because there weren't very many people who would come in and buy them all. They had managed to tick off two or three of the potential buyers, and there were only one or two left. They wanted too much for it.

Q: How did Zambia get to the outside world?

HOWARD: By air direct to London, but also down through Johannesburg. All through this anti-apartheid era when everybody is screaming that the South Africans are bad, the Afrikaners are the embodiment of all evil; everybody did business with them. You can bash the Frikies all morning and then sit down to drink dry white for lunch and congratulate yourself on a marvelous political stance, and the South Africans were more than happy to send the wine up and to sell it. Indeed if you were going to teach Afrikaans to your kids while you were there you could do it very easily by going down to the shopping center and buying canned fruits, vegetables and packaged cereals and what not because it is all in Afrikaans on the back of the package. In fact what limited Afrikaans my kids know came off the cereal packages.

Q: How was life there for you all?

HOWARD: By general Third World standards, pretty comfortable. We had everything we needed. We had an absolutely superb school, which is why we stayed for four years instead of three. We very much enjoyed the international community and the Zambian community. We really had a very good time. It's just that four years is the mark, at which I feel I have to go.

Q: So, whither, in '96?

HOWARD: Honduras. It was an unexpected move. I thought we were going to go to Zimbabwe. Then I would have done the entire federation of northern and southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. But the sequence of decision making in the USIA personnel system was such that by the time Zimbabwe came up the counselor of the agency had priority candidates for Zimbabwe. While I had the support of the area office and I had the support of personnel, the counselor's personal agenda took priority, so they offered me Honduras. I wouldn't want to call Honduras a consolation prize, but that was the alternate.

Q: You were in Honduras from '96 to when?

HOWARD: '99. Three years.

Q: What was the situation in Honduras when you arrived there?

HOWARD: Pretty much settled down as far as the Contra war was concerned. It had been over since 1990 and the Hondurans were settling down to a second democratically elected non-military government. They were beginning to benefit from maquiladora industry in the north. The fruit companies were operating. It was a pretty conventional Central America, minus warfare operation.

Q: Who was your ambassador?

HOWARD: James Creagan.

Q: How was Jim Creagan? He had been my political officer when I was consul general in Naples. He was a real Italian.

HOWARD: Yes, and that was where his focus was. Hondurans claimed that he spoke Spanish with an Italian accent and Brazilian overtones. Portuguese overtones. I think his focus was outside Honduras. It was workable. Not one of my better working relationships in kind.

Q: Can you talk a bit about what you were doing there?

HOWARD: Very much standard programming. Not quite the range of spectacular opportunities that we had in Zambia. I looked at the court system to see what we could do there and the problem was that the courts changed hands every four years with the political orientation. As soon as the president was elected, he cleaned out the entire supreme court and most of the high court judges and almost all of the administrators. So, going in there to do a long term investment, by the time we got it invested they only had nine months to sit there before they got ratted out. The country basically was flipping between the two different parties, between the liberals and the conservatives in every election. That looked like a non-starter.

The president who served the latter part of my tour, probably for two out of the three years, was Carlos Flores, and he had a very egotistic control of the media. He used all of the influence he possibly could to see that he got the best coverage. That included harassing journalists personally, buying them off, harassing their owners with threats that he would pull both his family business advertising away, plus all government patronage and the media operates on winning a prayer and a thread with the exception of the major television station. Everybody else is struggling to keep his or her publication on the street or in the air. So, when he went after them, he went after them with some fair clout. He managed to hem a lot of people in. They were a great group of journalists to deal with on a personal basis. The game became keeping the thought of free media alive and keeping these guys committed to thinking that it could happen and pushing them when they were willing to take a risk and supporting them.

Q: I take it by this point that Central America was practically off the radar.

HOWARD: Settled right down to almost the non-end of the exercise, yes. Pretty mundane. Not quite sleepy, backwards.

Q: A little bit like O Henry used to write about the American consuls down in those places.

HOWARD: No, not anywhere near that, but closer to that than chaos. I wouldn't say it was an uneventful tour. We had Hurricane Mitch and that was preoccupying events for about seven or eight months.

Q: What were we doing? How did it hit?

HOWARD: Oh, we spent hundreds of millions of dollars. Hurricane Mitch made its way up along the coast of Honduras, headed for Belize and Mexico, except it never got there. It stalled in the islands off Honduras and just stayed there for three or four days and created enormous winds. It stayed at hurricane force. Eventually it broke down and moved inland into Honduras. It created a tidal surge that went up the rivers and that meant the excess water drainage coming down from its own rainstorms coming down the rivers and there were just enormous amounts of flooding along the coast and inland as well. It separated Tegucigalpa, which is a city of several hills, through which there is a major river, into several isolated communities for several days. Knocked down almost all the bridges. It knocked out bridges all over the country, almost 60% of the bridge stock in the country and 70% of the highways were cut one way or another. The United States provided the transportation and airlift capacity and helped get a lot of the assistance out to where it was going because we had at a Honduran airbase called Palmerola an American contingent for the better part of 20 years. At the time that I got there, they were reduced to about 500 and they'd had about 7,000 to 10,000 at one point. At this point, the base was about 500. They were a logistical support operation for training missions for the U.S. military that would come down to Honduras for medical readiness training. They would bring in engineer units from reserve forces to build schools and hospitals and what not and do civic action projects. They were there as the logistical support structure for this flood relief exercise. All of a sudden overnight, they became Joint Task Force Bravo expanded to somewhere in the neighborhood of 6,000 people in helicopters. They were in tent cities all over that base and it was rather a substantial support exercise. We provided facilitation for international press coverage for that and got local coverage. They had to move convoys at night through cities and sit down and do extensive pre-briefs for all the journalists and city officials. That kept us going for about seven or eight months. It was almost a consuming issue.

Our academic relations were funny. The National University was undergoing an enormous transformation at the time. It was a politically contentious exercise, and we really didn't get in the door very much. On the contrary, I worked with a private university in Tegucigalpa. We had a private technical university in San Pedro Sula that we did a lot of work with in English, in law and journalism. We had a very active Fulbright scholarship program. We were active in the Fulbright progressive program.

Q: The public university, was it the usual sort of leftist Marxist type situation there?

HOWARD: No, it was a lot more venal. It had to do with influence and political influence, and they were back and forth. It was not that big a Marxist community in Honduras. They were far more pragmatist. The Marxists all live in Nicaragua.

The university legal structure was such that they had some really unworkable laws that gave students and faculty almost absolute control over the destiny of the university. If the students and faculty were at odds with each other, the university just froze up. It really needed to go back to the legislature to get all of that fundamental law changed. They were having a tough time selling anybody to do that.

Q: Basically from your point of view it was a write off?

HOWARD: Pretty much. There were departments that were worth doing something with, but you really couldn't. We abolished the cultural affairs officer slot. I did some of this contact work myself and relied on two FSNs who were really excellent. We sat down early in the game and said we've got so few contacts at the national university it's really not worth pushing, but we do have a lot at the national teachers college. We did a lot of work with the national teachers college. We set up a university affiliation with the teachers' college in one state in the U.S. We set up another affiliation between a private university and one in the United States. This was intended in the long run to generate the kind of contacts to produce a flow of assets back and forth, to which we could contribute on an informal basis.

Q: Did events in Washington of the change in USIA and absorption in the State Department, did it have any affect on your operation.

HOWARD: I left in August of '99 and this occurred in September of '99. I had thought the year before that the congress was so preoccupied with the Clinton impeachment exercise that they would never get around to passing a budget; they would not have the authorizing legislation for this consolidation. I also thought that because they wouldn't do it on a regular piece of legislation, they would not do it in a continuing resolution. So, basically congress said, well, we don't have time to deal with this now, so we'll take it off the plate. They'd just write a barebones continuing resolution for the whole government. They would put the consolidation of State and USIA on a back burner until after they finished the impeachment, which we didn't expect to happen until March or April. Therefore, it would be too late to do it in that fiscal year. I made some procurement decisions and personal career decisions based on that proposition, which of course proved to be totally unfounded. I bought a new car for the PAO and it arrived only two months before consolidation, otherwise I would have loved to have just passed the trash, but it didn't work that way. I gave him a brand new Ford. As far as my career, I had decided that I was going to apply for the job of deputy director of AF/PD.

Q: AF/PD is?

HOWARD: African Bureau of Public Diplomacy Office with the thought that I would be in the deputy's position for a year and then the director's position for a year or two after that and that would run me until the end of my normal career span and I would be happy to go out on that note. The assumption was that I would have at least a year under USIA rules, which would allow me and help me to position the area for consolidation if it were to come or to position and do something else. So as it turns out, in '99 when I came back from Honduras I came back to that job, but within the consolidation and basically my function there was to do what I had originally intended which was weather the transition and help the field posts weather the transition.

Q: Well, before we move to that, when you were in Honduras and the president was undergoing his impeachment proceedings with a strong overtone, complete overtone of sex, how did that play in Honduras? Was this something that concerned them.

HOWARD: It didn't really. Didn't really. It was not a big coverage. They covered it as a news story and of course, Honduras being in approximate location to the United States got all the cable channels. Whatever went out over NBC in Denver, which was the three net cable hookup we had, we got in Honduras. It covered it as a normal news story. The Hondurans had enough to do on their own without worrying about Bill Clinton. The only excitement was that Clinton's visit to Honduras, Guatemala, Salvador and Nicaragua following the flood came on the weekend that they were to take a vote on impeachment in the house and so the big question was if he flew down military air was he going to have to go back commercial or what. That was the only impact it had. It didn't have any impact on my operation.

Q: Well, then you were back in Washington from '99 to when?

HOWARD: Well, I was in the African bureau from '99 to 2001 as the deputy in AF/PD.

Q: How did the transition work for you?

HOWARD: Mechanically it worked with halting progress, which largely has been achieved by now, but we're now six years into the exercise. I sat on a committee in USIA and continued for a year after that called the Transition Issues Committee. I represented all of the regional area offices in USIA on that committee. We had all manner of problems, getting understanding and finding out how the State funding system worked. We had enjoyed a very flexible funding mechanism in USIA that allowed us to move funds fairly freely between appropriations and allotments and State's absolutely rigid system just stymied a whole lot of things. I found myself in AF because State would not move the USAID money on which we depended for a lot of our programs. We taught English in Africa for example and USAID paid us and they paid us through interagency transfer at the Washington level. Since State doesn't accept those and doesn't recognize that procedure I wasn't getting paid or reimbursed for the cost of teaching USAID English students in the field. Eventually in the first year, I ended up using almost $1 million of our AF program money to carry the English teaching operations in the field

waiting for State to get its act together and transfer our money. It was just an endless frustrating discussion with them over that.

Eventually two things happened. Personalities changed in State's financial management program office and eventually they discovered that they really had to do some of this, that there was a flexibility that had to happen with regard to public diplomacy programs. This was not a violation of all the standard norm. State has some very rigid requirements. It took me for example almost nine months to move $15,000 from my public diplomacy allotment in AF out here to FSI to teach foreign nationals. When I discovered why it wasn't happening, I was just stunned. It was because I was transferring money and they don't have transfers. They have reimbursements. Who knew? Only when I finally went over and threw a hissy fit at FMP did I discover this. In the meantime, our PD folk over here with no money at all in their training allotment were carrying another 15 grand worth of my training requirement. Little things like that were very frustrating at the outset. There were mechanical hitches.

Probably the largest disappointment was our slow discovery about how little our State colleagues knew about public diplomacy despite 40 years of working side by side with us. Just stunning. The degree to which State people were ignorant of what we did for a living, and how it had an impact on what they did. The second thing that was discouraging was to discover the 90-day timeline. The 90-day outlook that most State officers seem to have or that most State operations seem to have, which is kind of funny because it belies what they talk to me about. They talk years in advance, but they don't act years in advance. They act 90 days out, 60 days out. So, when they turn to public diplomacy in Burundi and Rwanda for example and they wanted to know what we would do over there, we would say, well, you need to go capitalize on what we've done in the '70s, '80s and '90s because the contacts are there on the ground and we're shut down. So, we're not building new contacts and we're not sustaining our connections with them. Were we to get back in there in any reliable fashion, we could go out and begin to resurrect these lines of communication and build new ones so we would have them five years from now and they'd say no. We need to do something in the next 60 days. Because they didn't understand public diplomacy, thinking that somehow we had a magic bullet, that we could just airdrop in there and throw leaflets or something. Didn't work. It doesn't work that way.

Part of the solid rationale here at FSI is that we will take anybody who will audit the course. Our classrooms are wide open. Unless they're flat full of PD people, we'll take anybody, any walker and talker who wants to walk in and sit in. The name of that game is we'll teach anybody about PD that has the patience to listen to us.

Q: You keep saying PD, you're talking about public diplomacy.

HOWARD: Public diplomacy. That's right. PD trade craft course over at FSI. In the PD tradecraft, I'll take anybody in my class who wants to listen. If they want in, they're in, I don't care where they come from. They come from management, from personnel, they can come from budget, pol, econ, consular, I don't care where. As long as they're here,

and they're here under some auspices and there isn't somebody around telling us they're a threat and they want in and there's a seat, they're more than welcome. That has begun to help us, that plus a shortage of PD officers that prompted us to take in assignments overseas a lot of junior officers in places where we would not have normally taken them. Excursion tours from out of cone. Excursion tours from pol and econ. Officers into the PD ranks. It's begun to develop a body of awareness if not expertise outside the PD cone of what PD does and I think that's going to pay off, not today, not tomorrow, but in the long run.

Q: Again, with your long term.

HOWARD: Yes. You look out and basically we're doing an internal idea exercising five years from now. I want those JO's, econ and pol JO's we're floating through PD replacement assignments five years from now to be the pol counselor in a post where they have a PD program that he knows how to use.

Q: Then you were doing this until 2001?

HOWARD: I was the AF/PD deputy director until 2001.

Q: Then what happened?

HOWARD: Then I decided I wanted a year. I had three years left before I reached the TIC (time in class) point and decided that it didn't look like the system was such that I was going to get promoted in that three year period. I decided I would take a one year sabbatical and then look for another more relevant, more policy relevant job maybe in the bureau, but we weren't going to go abroad. My kids were settled in school, and I was well within the five-year rule here at State. I went to the Board of Examiners and what happened was I took a variety of standard, repetitive slots on the Board of Examiners. Some of them were one year, some of them were two-year and they didn't make a whole lot of differentiation between them and so I found myself in a two-year slot. When I went to bid instantly for the second year, I discovered I was ineligible. I said, oh what the hell, I'll stay with this for two years and two became three and I retired.

Q: How did you find the Board of Examiners, one the system and two the candidates?

HOWARD: I found the system at the outset one of the more frustrating. The detailed, directed things I'd done since we'd lined up for lunch in kindergarten. It's a rigid system of scripts and quite a complex gavotte that one dances all day in an eight-hour long day. At the same time, it was interesting. There was never really a dull or a boring day or very few of them, put it that way. There were some dull and boring days. There were days when we thought we should just call the whole thing off at 9:00 in the morning and send everybody home for everyone's health and safety. Most days were not like that and it provided a lot of travel in the United States so it was a very interesting exercise. I came at exactly the time that we were being hit with the demands of the diplomatic readiness initiative. I did a lot of procedural manual writing, documenting stuff that had been

transmitted by elder lore around the campfire, but because we went from 30 examiners to 70 overnight you had really to have some written kind of guidance. I basically documented my own experience and two other examiners' experiences. Then, I started documenting policy and one thing led to another and another. Now I've written most of the manuals that they use for repetitive operational things.

Candidates? Candidates were brilliant and stunningly dumb. Both ends of the spectrum, and probably a great middle ground. I would say that we are dealing with bright people. The hires out of that diplomatic readiness initiative are a very sharp group of people. We are getting the best of the best.

Q: I did the oral exam back in the mid '70s when it was just three guys and gals, three of us sitting down and talking. Later I came in in the early '80s where it was much more rigid. I had the feeling that an awful lot of this system was essentially designed to prevent the lawyers from claiming discrimination.

HOWARD: Precisely. Well, here's what happened. They said we have to have a defensibly consistent examination process, and consistency is really the name of the game. They hired some psychologists, some testing and measurement professionals and the game has changed a lot, and the industry as a whole since the '70s. It's certainly changed a lot in government and in psychology in the last 15 years. In many ways the way we gauge, the way we measure candidates today is very much a scientific outcome. It's a very carefully calculated exercise. When you're sitting in great consultative sessions working up the exercises and the questions and how you deal with the answers and how we're going to rate and grade the answers. We do it in consultation with a team of contract psychologists, industrial psychologists, and it's a very nitpicky exercise. We do little tweakings between every session. The point was it is a very complex exercise. No longer just three people sitting around having a conversation.

Q: Was the exercise one where truly smart people, I'm not talking about geniuses because we include them, but were we going for a smart norm or were we going for?

HOWARD: A skilled norm. Smart people really. Truly brilliant smart people don't pass the exam. Good people who can use what they learn in a practical way do. This is not a resume-based exam, no one really cares. Really, they care, but the resume doesn't carry a whole lot of weight. It doesn't matter where you came from, community college or Georgetown. I don't care. Georgetown thinks it's important that they send the candidates from the school of Foreign Service, but I really don't as an examiner. If they came through Georgetown and they brought with them some commonsense in how to deal with other people and how to solve problems, then they pass the exam. If they came from Georgetown thinking they're the second coming and they can sit there and every answer refer to their Georgetown education in terms of gold plated radiance and they don't give me any decent how to do it answers, then they're not going to pass.

Q: Even when I was doing the three man examination, we had somebody from different cones. I was a consular officer. I was looking for exactly what you're looking for. I want

somebody who is going to deal with the problems and present problems and often the brilliant person who knew more about Mongolia than anybody in the country, if they couldn't figure out what to do if you're caught in a tidal wave situation, how you would organize relief efforts, then they're not going to go anywhere.

HOWARD: Yes. They should go to SAIS, study Mongolia and work in Mongolia. They'll get their expertise one way or another, but that's not what we need in Mongolia. We need somebody to figure out how to get a dead body out of the country or from a consular standpoint get a visa written or get an American out of jail. That's what you want and so you start the day with a practical exercise. How well do they do advocating a point of view in a group. Then you go to a second exercise. How well do they take a management problem, which is presented, to them in a stack of documents. How well do they understand what the management problem is and what to do about solving it? A whole set of criteria to use to determine how well they did.

The third element in the exercise is a two on one, two examiners on one it's called a structured interview, and it's got three parts. It's got a 15-minute exercise on the general background and attitudes, which is probably the most free form thing in the whole exam. Then it's got some fairly tightened structured hypothetical situations and questions about those that they have to answer. Then the last part is a very structured interview that goes through six or seven of the dimensions of the testing, and ask them to pick a question. They have questions presented to them, how can you do this, tell us about a time when you did this, that or the other thing. What kind of ethical conflict, how do you display initiative and management and responsibility? How did you demonstrate cultural adaptability? There are 13 dimensions you can pick off the website, and these are the things for which there are measurements established that we apply in all three exercises. Then you do a complicated machine that handles scoring at the end of the day and they pass or they don't pass.

Q: How did you deal with the push to get minorities, mainly African Americans into the system?

HOWARD: The diplomat in residence program has tightened up considerably. It used to be that if you were a dip in residence you would go t a university as sort of a sabbatical. You'd run a couple of seminars once a year and talk to the faculty symposium or do a reception for some students and talk up the Foreign Service when you're doing your job out there. You take a rest and then come back to it. No longer. It's almost a Marine recruiting poster exercise. You go out there and you've got a quota, and you're regional. Now the dips in residence have seven or eight schools they have to cover in a circuit rider exercise, and they are tagged with producing minority candidates.

The second thing is a set of scholarship programs, the fellowships, internships that are designed to attract attention of and attract candidates who eventually go through the exam. The ultimate screening is the exam. All of these fellowships and scholarships are routes around the written exam, but not the oral exam. The oral exam is still a big megillah.

Q: Did the oral exam take into account that you had somebody with an African American face or something like that?

HOWARD: No. No, rigidly non-partisan. The input for minorities has to be on the recruiting side to get the numbers into the written exam to go to the oral exam. The presumption is that if you push that number flow out of there the law of averages is going to boost. If you boost the flow of minority candidates through the written exam you're going to have a higher proportion of them passing the written exam. If you push them through the written exam, you'll have a higher proportion of them getting to the oral exam and passing it. There is no three points for being a minority.

Q: Did you see any pattern in students coming from any particular colleges or particular regions?

HOWARD: I haven't. I know that it makes really very little difference in the scoring on any given day where people came from. There are, and believe it or not, there are some truly stunningly dumb people that come from GW. And some stunningly brilliant people that come from West Virginia State. I'm looking for that stunningly brilliant person if he can do commonsense things. There are some very startled Georgetown, GW and Johns Hopkins graduates that walk out of the exam not having passed.

Q: I know we used to tell people if they passed or failed right then and there.

HOWARD: We do at the end of the day.

Q: For some people, I mean basically just by their nature they're thinking on the exam they're smart and they've always been patted on the head and given good grades, people that have been winners and all of a sudden, maybe for the first time in their life there's somebody saying, well, thank you very much, but we don't want you. This is a horrible shock.

HOWARD: Yes, its very risky at 4:00 pm for the examiners which is why they have to go through the metal detector in security when they come in the building and why they don't know who we are at the end of the day unless they can really remember one quick introduction. That's right, there are some people who are very upset, but its funny by far the people who are most surprised are those that passed and those that passed with a high enough score to get an offer. There are two levels of passing. There's raw passing at 525 and then there's pass to get an immediate conditional offer, which is sometimes between a 55, and 56 depending on which cone you're working with. When you explain to people that they were a part of maybe a group of 20 - 25,000 people who took the written exam out of which maybe 3,500 or 4,000 people are invited to the oral, and all of this for 200 or 300 jobs, that sort of puts everything into perspective. Most of the people who come in through the oral exam would make reasonable Foreign Service Officers. If we had to hire the first 300 that walked in the door we'd have the usual 10% to 15% of absolute

surprising idiots and the rest of them would make out, but we're looking for the best of the best of the best and that's it.

Q: Okay, well, Sted, I think this is probably a good place to stop then.

HOWARD: Yes. Well, I would close on a note that it's been a privilege and 20 to 25 years of active Foreign Service to watch democracy come to Southern Africa and Africa as a whole and I remain an optimist. Despite all the tragedies on the continent I think there is progress being made. I count that as a very privileged part of my life. My kids do. So, I've had a good time. I couldn't imagine anything else I'd rather do for a living.

Q: Great. Thank you.

End of interview