

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

C. THOMAS THORNE

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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Throne prior to his death.]

Q: Today is November 11, 2007. This is an interview with C. Thomas Thorne and this is being done by Charles Stuart Kennedy on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. Tom and I go back about 45 years when we were both in African INR (Intelligence and Research) together.

Tom, when and where were you born?

THORNE: Born in Niagara Falls, New York, in 1928.

Q: Nineteen-twenty-eight?

THORNE: Nineteen-twenty-eight.

Q: That's my year, too. You're the year of the dragon.

THORNE: I can't believe it was that long ago.

Q: Now Tom, how come you were born there? I thought people went there to conceive but not to deliver.

THORNE: Well, the family was an old western New York family on both sides. Niagara Falls then was a prosperous and booming town, contrary to what it now is. My father was a pharmacist and had a pharmacy in Niagara Falls. My mother was from a nearby town.

Q: Well Tom, tell me a bit about, on your father's side and the Thornes; do you have any idea of what their history was, where do they come from?

THORNE: Well, some of them came from Quebec and obviously somewhere there were some changes of name or somebody edited the name, I think, because that's certainly not a French-Canadian name at all. But my paternal grandmother was born and brought up on a farm in western New York; in fact, my father was born and brought up on a farm in western New York. On my mother's side my grandmother- my mother's great-grandparents had been born in Ireland and had emigrated to this country. My maternal grandmother was born in the United States and she and her husband lived in the small town of Lockport, New York. My paternal grandmother, the farm where she was brought up was in an area of Niagara County known as Dublin because it had a heavy Irish settlement. She became a schoolteacher in a one-room schoolhouse. She lived to be 100, was absolutely sharp on the day she died, as sharp as she was when I remember her as a much younger person. But nothing very interesting in the family history.

Q: But it gives a feel. Who went to college, any of them?

THORNE: Only my father.

Q: Only your father. Alright, how did he, where did he go to college and get into the business?

THORNE: He went to college in Valparaiso, Indiana. Don't ask me how he went to college there but he did and in those days they gave a degree in pharmacy and a graduate in chemistry. And that's what he was working for during the First World War. He was sworn into the army and he continued to go to school. He first started out as a chemist and worked for U.S. Steel at Gary, Indiana, testing batches of steel. He grew discouraged with that. He said that when the steel was being poured they'd get a sample of it, take it to the lab and he'd do all of these tests. He said, in the meantime the foreman would just tell one of his guys to urinate on this sample and he'd study the effect of this and then say, this is okay, this is not okay. My father said he was discouraged that he had gone to college for four years and he wasn't able to do better than that. Anyway, he then went back to the pharmacy side and went back to western New York.

Q: Did he run the pharmacy for a long time?

THORNE: Oh, he ran the pharmacy for about 50 years.

Q: Did you ever get to work in it?

THORNE: Oh yes. I used to work in it for many years as well. There was a great need for people and I was in high school during World War II and there was a desperate need for people for anything. I used to be a bike deliverer of medicines and also worked in the store itself. It was interesting but I never ever had the slightest interest in becoming a pharmacist.

Q: Well, let's talk about- Do you have brothers and sisters?

THORNE: I have a sister who's younger than I am, the only sibling.

Our family in Niagara Falls was really quite small; there was just the four of us, my father, mother and my sister and myself. However, there were other family members; my father had a sister and a brother and there were some adopted children. There were some cousins who were being brought up in our side of the family. My mother's family, which was in Lockport in Niagara Falls, was fairly large; I think she was one of about eight or 10 sisters or brothers. But it was on the whole a nuclear family.

Q: Was your family religious?

THORNE: Yes. I mean, we were a Catholic family and Niagara Falls at that time, it was a great wave of emigrations and whatnot and practically everybody was Catholic. The thing is, you identified people as by what kind of Catholic; are you Polish Catholic, Lithuanian Catholic, Irish Catholic.

Q: Did the Church play much of a role in your family, among you?

THORNE: I can't really say. That's a difficult question. We were practicing Catholics and went to mass, that sort of thing. My father was sort of the unpaid pharmaceutical advisor to this big Catholic hospital right smack in the middle of Niagara Falls. But I think it played a fairly important role.

Q: Well, I was wondering whether, you know, at the time, particularly the Catholic Church, the Irish side of the Catholic Church tended to be very, very almost dictatorial on what books she shouldn't read and what movies you shouldn't see.

THORNE: Oh well, we never paid too much attention to that. We decided which were authentic teachings and which needed further work.

Q: As a young lad were you much of a reader?

THORNE: Yes. My mother encouraged that. In fact, one of my earliest memories is of being carted out to the public library and plunked down in the children's room and told to find some books for myself. Yes, I was a reader and always have been.

Q: Well, did you, you know, I mean, I'm thinking particularly about the early years, before we get to high school, were there any books, book, or series of books that particularly impressed you or not that you can think of now?

THORNE: Not particularly. My memory is not very good. My recollection was that I tended to read rather indiscriminately and if I found it and it looked interesting I would start reading. Sometimes I'd decide I'd made a big mistake and put the book down.

Librarians were always steering me towards children's book. Well, I wasn't always interested in children's books so I occasionally used to prevail on my mother to take out something else for me.

Q: Well, on sort of the history side, did any, since you're up in an area that had been fought over in both the Revolutionary and the War of 1812, and before that in the French and Indian wars, did that type of history particularly grab you or not, that era?

THORNE: You're right that that area's full of history from the Seven Years War. We read about it in school and I can remember there were local authors who used to come to school and lecture on books and that sort of thing.

Q: By the time you were in elementary school did you find that you, one, were you a good student and two, were there any courses in particular that appealed to you?

THORNE: There were some that didn't appeal to me.

Q: What were they?

THORNE: Well, I was a pretty slow performer in math.

Q: That seems to be almost a characteristic of people involved in foreign affairs.

THORNE: My more serious problems with math came a little later. Most of my elementary school experiences were reasonably happy. When I was in fifth and sixth grade I was popped into a special program for faster students. Instead of desks and things we sat at tables and studied French in the fifth grade. That was rather fun because it was less disciplined, in a way. And also there was great discussion of foreign affairs; everybody was getting ready for World War II and I can remember the National Geographic map being pinned on the bulletin board and different color pins for German divisions. All these things were put in and the war started and not a damn thing happened. Anyway, there was a lot of discussion of current events.

Q: Well, were you going to a parochial school or was this a regular school?

THORNE: It was a public school.

Q: Well the fact that they had this sort of, what we'd call it today, I guess, advanced placement and all, teaching you French and all shows that it seemed to be quite a good school system.

THORNE: I think it probably was fairly good. At the time, of course, thoughts like that didn't occur to me but yes, I think in retrospective it was a fairly good system.

Q: So, you went to high school?

THORNE: Niagara Falls High School.

Q: How did you find high school? Was this a different game or not?

THORNE: I was bored in high school, but not totally or anything. I edited the school newspaper and that was fun. And, there was a certain amount of social activity. It was not an unhappy experience but I was bored by it and anxious to get on with whatever came next. I don't know why; I should have stayed and enjoyed it.

Q: Well, since you and I are exact contemporaries, both born in 1928, I found really, during my high school years, World War II is the thing I really, you know, devoured the papers and the maps. I mean, I got a great grounding for my later work with the State Department by knowing where lots of obscure places were.

THORNE: Oh yes, the geographic knowledge is terrific from that period.

Q: Were you caught up in the war?

THORNE: Absolutely. And I still remember certain occasions like Pearl Harbor very, very clearly. And of course, prior to our entry into the war, of course just across the river were the Canadians who were in the war already. I can remember crossing the border; it was easy in those days, everybody just walked across; we used to go to Canada quite a bit, and the Canadians knew how to get the visuals right to remind people there was a war on; they used to have all sorts of strong points and every bridge over a little creek or something they'd have a platoon deployed. Occasionally they used to have night defense drills and this used to scare the hell out of a few Americans.

Q: It would take a pretty long range plane.

THORNE: That's right. The war was a defining experience for a lot of people. Of course, a lot of people who were juniors and seniors when I was a freshman went in the army. Two drivers who were working for my father were killed in action.

Q: Did- for working for your father, did you ever hear any discussions about medical cases? I don't know if there was anything about abortions and all which is always a very touchy issue in a Catholic area, or condoms or anything like that?

THORNE: Very little. Abortion was just not, I don't ever recall discussing that with my father and I don't recall a great deal of talk about it in the Catholic community at that time.

Q: It just wasn't the issue.

THORNE: It wasn't an issue which hadn't yet come out into plainer view. Obviously condoms were sold and people were using them but it wasn't a public issue.

Q: I was just curious. I mean, did your father's pharmacy sell them?

THORNE: I think not but that's something my memory is vague on.

Q: Well Tom, when you were in high school were you or the family pointing you towards something?

THORNE: No. I can remember how my mother and my father were children of the Depression, not exactly in terms of birthdays, but in terms of how it made a big impact on their lives. My mother used to say, Tom, be a teacher; they make \$50 a week. And I would say yes, yes, but I had no great interest in being a teacher. My father would really have liked if I had gone to med school but that was the last thing I had in mind. He never pushed me on becoming a pharmacist or being a doctor or anything; he was very good about that. He let me set my own direction.

Q: So, you graduated in '46?

THORNE: In '46, yes.

Q: Of course, I assume you were like me. I mean, I was all set to go in the army; there was no doubt about it and all of a sudden they stopped the draft. And I won't say I was stranded because I was ready to go to college but did you have a college in mind?

THORNE: No, I really didn't. In fact, as I look back on it I'm amazed at how casual this all was. I had nothing in mind but it occurred to me that a few miles up the road was the University of Buffalo which actually is a good school. So I decided I'll go there. There was none of the nonsense that attends getting ready for college now, none of the vast quantities of paperwork. There was some little two or three page form which I remember filling out, getting a transcript, sending it in and everything very simple.

Q: Yes, I went to a New England prep school but there was nothing fancy, I wasn't even cum laude there, and I applied to two places, the University of Virginia, which turned me down because I wasn't a Virginia resident, and a small college called Williams, which is one of the hardest schools to get into in the country today.

THORNE: Yes, yes.

Q: And I got into Williams. I mean, you know, things weren't that selective. And I think they probably ended up with a better student body rather than a little too- everybody's overly bright but I'm suspicious about that.

Anyway. But so, University of Buffalo; you went there for four years?

THORNE: I went there for three years. I got bored with that too, after awhile.

Q: You get bored easily, Tom.

THORNE: In those days I did.

Q: Okay. Well, what was the University of Buffalo like when you were there?

THORNE: It had been a small but well regarded school. Before the war it was maybe 2,500 students. By 1946 they had something like 10,000 students and they were going crazy.

Q: Because GIs were returning home.

THORNE: GIs returning home. I eventually became bored but the teaching I thought was pretty good. I cautiously signed up to be a joint history and English major, which worked very well until I was told that as a joint English major I better get ready for year of Anglo Saxon, and I said ,well, the hell with that. It's bad enough to have to read The Canterbury Tales in Middle English but to do Beowulf in Anglo Saxon was nonsense. Anyway, I thought it was a stimulating school.

Q: Well, in history, was there any particular area you were concentrating on?

THORNE: Fairly early I started getting interested in American diplomatic history. And that was a sort of consistent interest of mine and I really started out on that about 1947 or so. And we had a professor of diplomatic history who was really quite good, and a general history department which was good. Those were days in which they were accessible; you could actually go to their office and talk to them.

Q: Well, was there any area of American diplomatic history or- I was just thinking, you know, this was not, this is a pretty rare subject. I mean, people would touch on it but diplomatic history has never been in the forefront of most colleges.

THORNE: I grew interested in World War I diplomacy, especially the peacemaking after the war at Versailles. I wound up doing my bachelor's dissertation on British history.

Q: Well then, was there much concentration on the Soviets at that time in school?

THORNE: Not very much, no, not that I recall until, maybe until 1948 or '49, after the Czechoslovak business. There was perhaps more awareness of it but it was not a hot button issue around the campus that I could see.

Q: When you said that after three years you were really getting bored, what did you do? This would be 1949.

THORNE: Well, I graduated.

Q: Oh, you were able to graduate in three years?

THORNE: Yes, yes. A friend of mine was going down to Washington and asked if I wanted to come with him. I really had no very clear idea what I wanted to do so I came down to Washington in the summer of 1949 and more or less stayed here ever since. Those months in the summer of '49 the government was doing very little hiring; in fact, it was still downsizing from the war. Since I had a little bit of experience in layout and things, printed material, I got a job with the National Catholic Welfare Conference as an editor or layout man and was there for about nine months. Then I signed up for graduate school at Catholic University, which had a good history department.

I got a master's degree there and was offered a fellowship and I thought, that's great. And the damn paperwork got lost. It fell down behind a filing cabinet or some idiocy like that and so I thought that maybe I better get a job. A friend of mine said, gee, you know, one of her best friends that worked at the State Department was looking for an editor. She said I'll tell her that you might be interested. So the upshot of it was that in December, 1951, I went to work in INR as an editor on that great publishing enterprise known as the National Intelligence Survey.

Q: Well, I'm going to ask you, could you explain- before we get to that, around this time you would have seemed to have been prime material for the draft because of the Korean War.

THORNE: The draft turned me down several times because of something called scoliosis, which is backbone problems. I thought it would be good to get this over with. It didn't work that way until after working in the State Department a couple of years when I did get drafted. This was when they were at that demographic low point that occurred about 1953 and I think it was in '54 that I did get drafted. I had a great deal of fun in the army. I enjoyed it tremendously.

Q: Well, we'll come to that in a minute. We'll start with; you're an editor for the national intelligence survey. Can you explain what this was?

THORNE: In World War II there was, as there was after most wars, I think, a great deal of bitching about how the intelligence was not relevant to what people wanted. And this especially came up with, second lieutenants or others who found that they were county officers.

Q: In Germany, yes.

THORNE: Right, in Germany, or that they would do in civil affairs in Japan or something like that. One of the things this led to was a series known as JANIS, the Joint Army, Navy Intelligence Service, which was sort of a step in the right direction. But then came, in about 1950, '49, '50, the idea of an encyclopedia of the world. It was divided up into chapters which had analysis or history of the area -- a poor man's anthropology of the area, on its religion. It had whole vast economic chapter. These were chapters divided into sections. This was a major publishing enterprise. These people were right up there with the trade publishers of the day.

Q: I might add, this is about the time when the CIA was coming into its own.

THORNE: Oh, yes.

Q: I mean, this is financed by the CIA, wasn't it?

THORNE: Oh yes, oh yes.

Q: In fact, later when we worked together I ended up in a book called Who's Who in the CIA. Did you get in that too?

THORNE: Oh yes.

Q: I think all of us who worked- and there was, in INR, this was a, what do they call it, a counter, I mean, this was a publication put out by the East Germans to discredit and they took everybody who served in INR, which is probably now just put in books and all, and we all were called CIA people.

THORNE: That's right, I remember that. I remember being very indignant about that.

Q: Well, I was surprised they put more detail than- I mean, somebody had to be keeping a little careful book on it because they had me in the Air Force Intelligence Service, which I was as an enlisted man, nothing big deal, but the fact that they went that far, they found out that struck me as, you know, a bit thorough. But they were East Germans.

THORNE: That's right. The national intelligence survey was CIA money and, in fact, it was CIA money through the NIS that kept INR in existence.

Q: Yes.

THORNE: But then Roger Hilsman got rid of the NIS several years out; we can talk about that later. There was a financial crisis going on.

But anyway, I was in an office called DRN, the division of research for Near East, South Asia and Africa.

Q: It gives you an idea of how we were relegating a hell of a lot to one area. I mean, in other words there wasn't that much interest at that point.

THORNE: Yes, except, well, the Near East, there was some interest.

Q: But Africa and South Asia.

THORNE: Actually, the NIS, I had mixed feelings about it. The NIS was a real pain in the ass to work on.

Q: Very formula.

THORNE: Yes. And I was one of the first tier editors, which is okay. By the time people were dealing with the third tier editor their tempers were getting a little frayed.

A lot of good work went into the NIS. People who were really annoyed having to work at the NIS but they were really pretty talented; some of this stuff was, I think, quite good. And in DRN at the time there were some genuine Arabists, I mean, people like Harold Clinton, who have been brought up in the Middle East.

Q: Often the sons of missionaries.

THORNE: Often, in fact, more often than not, I think, the sons and daughters of missionaries. But with great capabilities and also some serious analytical ability. So, in addition to stuff that was just dreadfully boring, there was some pretty good stuff produced; but the one thing that CIA could never get through its head was that we've got to keep something like that current or you're going to have problems. And it didn't really understand that they had become a major publisher in the United States, and it just wasn't organized to be a major publishing house.

Q: Yes, and once it was cast in final form, as you say, situations, they made changes all the time. But, you know, I don't imagine that they felt they could sort of do a rerun each time.

THORNE: Right. There must have been some alternative discussed, but it finally lost support from the military, for example, who were deeply involved in it. And finally they just put it to sleep. But when I went to work in INR one of the first things explained to me was there are two programs here: there's the NIS program and the regular program.

Q: Where did you get your information? I mean, would they say "Algeria"; would you work on the political situation or the economic or the landing beaches; I mean, what were you dealing with?

THORNE: Well, first of all, I wasn't doing analysis, I was an editor. I had the great pleasure of telling people you really did a very thin job here; you'd better go back and make this a more serious work. Well, first of all, INR did only some inquiries of that sort but they did try to avoid it. The people who were working on it tended to be quite a varied crew. There were people with academic backgrounds; there were, as we mentioned earlier, people out of missionary family backgrounds. There were economists everywhere. And editing these things was not exactly the most stimulating thing in the world but it was compensated, which was nice. I remember still a lot of people from that era that I thought were really pretty sharp and it was worthwhile reading their stuff.

Q: Well, did you find it a congenial organization or a competitive one? How would you look at it- how did you look at it?

THORNE: Look at INR?

Q: INR, yes.

THORNE: I found it most congenial. I had a narrow view at that point because I really just had stacks of stuff to edit. But I think INR at that time had some really good people.

Q: Did you sense an attitude in INR towards CIA or how did they mesh?

THORNE: This was about the time that CIA was just starting to get in the analytical business. Maybe a little before. When General Vandenberg became the DCI, one of the things that he noticed was he wasn't getting very much in the way of an organization at that time. There was the clandestine side and all that but other than that there wasn't much; there was much that was visible or was supposed to be visible. So that's when they began building up the other end, the analytical side, and of course that was supposed to be the prerogative of the State Department. Well, there are various ways around that. And as the '50s wore on, I think that CIA slowly was getting more into the analytical side and the general attitude at INR was not particularly friendly. And of course CIA even almost from the very beginning had controls, maybe too strong a word, but it had the commanding voice in intelligence estimates, national intelligence estimates, which were much less common then they subsequently became. Their sort of large scale entry into the analysis business seems to me to come a little bit later down the road.

Q: I guess we're moving up to the time when all of a sudden the army was breathing down your neck.

THORNE: Fifty-four, and I was still editing away. I got married in the meantime.

Q: Maybe at this point- I've just been talking to your wife. Could you go back and how did you meet and all?

THORNE: How did we meet? A group of people, a group of us went in a bar down on the waterfront and I think she was working for Grace Line at the time. Her sister lived here in Washington. We met on that occasion and kept in touch.

Q: Well, what's her background? What's her name?

THORNE: It's Mary.

Q: Mary. Well, what's her background?

THORNE: She was born and brought up on Long Island, and went to Manhattan College, which was then in New York City. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Belgium. She worked for Grace Line and then switched to international education, doing overseas exchanges and that sort of thing. We were married in 1953 and in 1954 the Guard finally caught up

with me. I was drafted from my home state, if you want to call it that, from western New York. That made it much more fun because I knew so many of the guys who were being drafted then. And I had a very undistinguished military career that I enjoyed. It wasn't particularly onerous.

Q: Where did you serve?

THORNE: I didn't serve anywhere outside of Fort Knox, Kentucky. I was in the third armored division headquarters. The job was to run down errors in morning reports. There was a big morning report push in the army at that time and getting morning reports corrected, getting them straight.

Q: Morning reports are who's on duty, who's not on duty?

THORNE: That's right. Number of troops who were available and so forth. And that was great fun. I made a lot of friends in the army. I didn't feel any sense of great responsibility weighing down on me. Life was proceeding rather pleasantly there. For some reason, I had to get an eye exam. Well, I got the eye exam; I got a notice to appear before the medical board. Oh, what's that about? The chairman of the medical board, R.A. medical officer said, so you lied to get into the service? I said, no sir. He said, well you certainly did. He said, do you know what your eye readings are? Anyway, to my great surprise the army said that I had to be discharged, I was a disgrace to the service. So there I was back in civilian life and back at the State Department. I was back in my old job. Somebody took pity on me and suggested that there was an analytical job opening up in the Africa branch; that was the branch that was the most irrelevant part of all INR.

Q: Well of course, this is a period, before 1960, before all of a sudden the countries were becoming independent and all. It was basically undiscovered territory.

THORNE: Undiscovered was the word for it. Anyway, I was offered a job there. I accepted. While nobody was very much interested in Africa then, it had had some distinguished leadership. Bill Brown, who later became head of the Boston University African program and who, I think, had taught at Northwestern before the war. He was one of the handful of Americans who had any interest in Africa at all. He had been the branch chief up until just before I came and his successor, Bob Baum, had had some wartime experience in Africa, odd things that people got involved in in World War II; he had spent some time in Africa and he had a PhD in political science and he was a real scholar. But anyway, there was a small group, half dozen people, and they of course got stuck with doing the NIS, but the NIS was interesting to work on in that case. And there was some serious work being done there; it's just that you couldn't find very many people interested in that serious work.

Q: Yes. Most people couldn't find any of these countries on the map.

THORNE: Actually, that was one of the amusing things. I was assigned to work on West Africa. We used to get telephone calls from other offices of the Department asking,

where is Sierra Leone or what's the capital of Niger or something like that. Anyway, that's how I got started off out of the military, to my great regret, and back in the analytical business.

Q: Alright. Now, we're talking about being an analyst for INR. What does an analyst do or did in those days?

THORNE: In those days most of the analysts, not all but most, had to be prepared to work on the NIS, which meant it was like writing a book. Analysts were given areas or fields or specialization, and were required to and theoretically should be available, if any development occurred, to give some context and explanation for why this occurred, what it means, does it have any effect on the United States. The last point is that it is very hard to get people to accept such and such might have some important significance to the United States. So there was always a certain missionary impulse among the African analysts just simply to get people's attention. Every analyst had territorial responsibilities and the theory was that if something occurred there you should be ready to write on it. Some people are better at that than others, I quickly found out. They were people writing intelligence analyses. West Africa was easy in a sense because at least we had a couple of consulates there. In those days we used to read the press, read the African press, the British press, the French press.

Q: Well, they had a consular general in Dakar.

THORNE: They had one in Dakar; we had-

Q: Sort of covered the big area.

THORNE: Right. And the French areas, which were enormous. We had a consular office at Accra, Ghana. Ghana was on the way to independence.

Q: It was the first.

THORNE: It was the first. There was some vague percolating interest in that subject but not too much, especially because toward the end of the move toward independence big internal problems began to appear with opposition to Nkrumah. So there was a certain amount of serious analysis you could do. The senior guy on West Africa was Bill Berry, who was really good and he had been in West Africa during the war, interestingly enough, because there had been a transshipment point or transit point for American bombers going further east. Analysts were supposed to maintain files that could be taken over by someone else if they collapsed or something like that. And the office put a good deal of effort into making sure that they had really decent files. Because interest in Africa was still so small we probably had more contacts with the academic community than many other areas of INR did and that was sometimes useful.

Q: Just to get an idea, today we'd be using electronic means, e-mail or something but would you feel free to call Boston University's African department and chat with them about something?

THORNE: If it was somebody I knew. Our old colleague Bill Brown there was a cleared consultant to the Department, used to call him a lot. But if it was someone I knew fairly well I might do that, yes. Actually, at that early period the academics were often useful. Some really didn't know that much about the current situation but they would know about some of the background, of the origins, and so many of the political situations that we ran into in Africa actually had a history. This business that Africa didn't have a history was a lot of nonsense. A lot of these events actually had some background in tribal politics and regional animosities or regional cooperation. So there was a very good find if you worked at it. You could mine academic work, of which there was not very much at the time, I hasten to say.

Q: Well, it seems like there's a big dividing line, British, French. Now, both were the colonial rulers and they had embassies and they had specialists in their areas because people had been on the ground for decades. Could you use- was there a different way of dealing with the French than the British? I mean, for you, you know, I'm talking you as the people in INR of getting information of what is happening in a particular place, if it's an Anglophone or a Francophone country.

THORNE: Well, I think that probably we were, for obvious reasons, a lot better informed on what was going on in the Anglophone areas than in the Francophones. There really wasn't any American presence and there were a few, very few but a few, American academics who had begun to work in the field, sort of modern or contemporary Africa. But Francophone Africa, we just didn't have resources until much later.

Q: Well, I mean, essentially I would assume that we were carrying on almost a watching brief on Africa, of saying okay, here is this, we don't have any great interest but there's potential or at the time were we thinking about well, these countries that are going to become independent, I mean, was that part of the spirit and did that make a difference?

THORNE: We used to nag the policy people when we could get hold of them from time to time about this could move faster than you think. There were probably some of those who did suspect that might happen. We had this mantra which we kept using, kept repeating, that these situations may move much more quickly than you think at some point. We obviously didn't know the point exactly, but as we moved on into the latter '50s and up to 1960, when you were beginning to get signs of movement, then I think we were much more confident this is going to go even further. There were a lot of things we probably missed on, but from the late '50s we were pretty well convinced in INR that the individual African country situations were going to move much more quickly. Even so, I think that some of the movement after 1960 surprised us. We learned a bit more about politics in French speaking Western Equatorial Africa. I think we began to see that this thing was not really a static situation.

Q: Were you feeling- was there a problem with the European geographic bureau concerning what was happening because at that time there wasn't an Africa- well, Africa was lumped with the Middle East and all that.

THORNE: Oh, there was no Africa bureau as such.

Q: And at one point there was what many of us called the battle of North Africa was raging between the European- basically the French European bureau and the Middle Eastern bureau over Algeria, I mean, you know, saying Algeria's got to go and the European bureau wouldn't allow us to say that. Did that reflect at all on what you were up to?

THORNE: There was a general feeling that the European bureau was taking the wrong point. They were closing their eyes to what was really going on. That's probably unfair in any case but there was a big kernel of truth in that, too.

Q: It was Senator John F. Kennedy who called for, I guess, the liberation of Algeria which caused all sorts of heartache with the French, because this is the first almost anyone in the political- politics of America who made this point. I'm not sure how seriously he felt about it but it was an issue and he took it.

THORNE: Yes. Well, I think the European bureau took the attitude that the French have enough problems, let's not weigh in on the side of one additional problem because this really doesn't concern us; it's not going to concern us. And at the time the European bureau thought that was a perfectly reasonable point of view. It was just that they, like everyone else, didn't see what was transpiring.

Q: Well, did we see any advantage for us at the time for Ghana and quickly thereafter Nigeria becoming independent? Both of these countries were sort of relatively rich in resources and Nigeria whose huge population, I mean, did we see this as being a place we really want to get involved in?

THORNE: Well, we certainly weren't about to get involved on the aid side, at least not with any substantial amounts of money. I think there was a feeling that there was an affinity between Ghana and the United States, between Nigeria and the United States because of students. We had said at least some of the right things to them. I think a lot of Americans believed that this affinity was going to be a useful thing. I don't think there was the idea that Ghana would go sharply to the left, left in quotes perhaps. This was something that didn't occur to a lot of people. I don't think we understood Nigerian politics as well as we ought to have, perhaps, because the Nigerian coup, the first military coup, was something which came as a great surprise.

Q: When did that happen?

THORNE: That would have been in 1966, '67. By 1960 the Department was beginning to see that it needed some sort of a cadre of people on Africa. For a couple of years they had

what was called the FSI (Foreign Service Institute) African Field Seminar, which was actually bankrolled by the Ford Foundation, I believe. And you got some officers being sent to academic places to study at African studies programs which were just really getting cranked up in this country.

So there was a general awakening going on around 1960 but it was the Congo uproar which I think really jolted everybody.

Q: Yes, that was in 1960, wasn't it?

THORNE: That was in 1960, yes.

Q: Well, let's see, I can remember, I joined INR for African Affairs, I had the Horn of Africa; I was only there about two years but I remember hearing people from the western side of Africa talking about, I remember the first time I heard it, somebody had said that Nkrumah really has charisma. And I thought, oh my God, is it fatal? You know, because I had never heard the term used before. I mean, he was the first, I mean, obviously it goes back to the Greeks and all but as far as I know it was the first time I ever heard it being used by somebody and I thought it was a disease.

THORNE: I first heard the term "charisma" in INR; some analyst discussing some paper which he was writing. I can't recall the subject now, I know the word "charisma" came up and I finally got my nerve up and asked somebody what the hell does this word mean. I would have looked it up myself but I didn't know how it was spelled. That was a favorite word for quite awhile.

Q: Yes, it was, and it's become sort of a rather commonplace word but at first it was, at least in our diplomatic annals, it started in Africa.

THORNE: Yes, yes.

Q: Well, as these countries were beginning to spring free did we have any plans for what to do? I know there was a famous trip, I think by Loy Henderson, wasn't there?

THORNE: Yes.

Q: Who took a bunch of African specialists to go around, you know, 20 countries in 10 days or something, but to go around Africa on his own special plane and take a look about setting up embassies and all.

THORNE: I remember that, and encouraging consular officers to make do with things which were not quite attuned to the book. There was at that time, maybe at the end of the '50s, the first flowering of congressional interest. You mentioned Senator Kennedy before on Algeria. There was a Representative, Frances Bolton from, I think she was from a Rhode Island district. I'm not sure but also Senator Green, who was from Rhode Island, who was about two years younger than God. He and Mrs. Bolton, I don't think

they were doing this together, but were off on trips. She would come back and ginger up the bureaucracy and say we've got to do much more in Africa. That was part of the process, I guess, of building up some serious interest.

Q: Well, I can remember in '58, I was in Frankfurt, Germany, on my first tour as a vice consul and asked what posts I'd like to go to. A post in Africa was purported to be opening, which it didn't for 30 years later, and I thought gee, that would be fun. You know, there was a sense of adventure. They assigned me to Dhahran because we were all in the same basket, you know. But you know, they were talking about that. Were you involved in saying, okay, if these places, this is where we should put posts and how we should staff them and all?

THORNE: There was just a momentary hesitation about do we really need embassies in each of these countries. Maybe from an administrative point of view there's an argument there but the Africans would have none of it. If we recognize them, put an embassy. And any idea of having one embassy for five countries or something quickly disappeared. They had this thing called the French community and, for example, Senghor in Senegal was perhaps inclined somewhat in that direction. But in Guinea, Sékou Touré would have none of it and declared independence and the French actually didn't recognize him for awhile.

Q: They pulled out all the light sockets.

THORNE: Yes. The light bulbs and then took out the sockets, that's right. But that was apparently a very difficult post to staff because the first chargé asked to be relieved. The staffing of them was a problem but that was because everything was going on at the same time. Today, a new country has become independent, that sort of thing. I think INR as well as many other places in State were saying, look, this is going to move much more quickly than you think.

Q: Well, you're working, let's say on- things are changing in the French speaking part of western Africa. Did you have much consultation with the French desk?

THORNE: I never recall doing anything with the French desk. Our European INR colleagues did but I don't recall any occasion when I was involved in that.

Q: It sort of shows probably that you were- this was just not a subject for gentlemen to talk about.

THORNE: I think that may be it. That may be a good way to put it. I think that was it. But also you must remember and you do know, I'm sure, that INR was still not fully accepted in the Department at this point.

Q: Oh yes.

THORNE: Even that late. I don't recall having very many confrontations with people from the policy bureau.

Q: Well, was there more cooperation, you might say, on the British side, the European bureau, the British desk or again, was this something that you dealt with much?

THORNE: I'm just trying to think. I don't recall any case in which I was personally involved. The branch chief or division chief, whatever he was at that point, Bob Brown, probably had some relationships with them but I don't recall.

Q: Well, it does, from your memory it does seem that there was a- INR still didn't have much clout within the system.

THORNE: That's right. I think that's right.

Q: Where were you getting your information? Was it getting better or-?

THORNE: We were making better use of the press which is always an important source, I think. There was a little bit of academic work which was useful and actually a certain amount of information we got from the French or from the British not, you know, not to be scrutinized but it still could be useful. And just anybody that we could corral who might have something to say. Everybody had sort of unofficial friends but I mean people who were like businessmen or something who had had some experience in West Africa. And I think we were doing a little bit better on information but there was still an awful lot we didn't know about, especially about Francophone Africa.

Q: This is tape two, side one with Tom Thorne.

Tom, your area did not include Equatorial, did it or not?

THORNE: No. By about 1960 I had moved into a different job in the African division. For want of a better name they called them special assistants jobs. I was really a chief of staff to the director and deputy director and the editor of a lot of the stuff that went out and I generally just went where required. They had a need at that time for some sort of generalist in the office and I had that poison cup passed to me.

Q: Yes. Well, you had that editorial eye-

THORNE: I had more flexibility about the areas but at the same time you give up a little bit of intensity of information by spreading yourself thin.

Q: Well, you were there, obviously, when Soapy Williams came in as Assistant Secretary for Africa.

THORNE: Oh yes.

Q: In the first place, what was the feeling about- he was proposed by John Kennedy who proposed him early on. I think he had higher ambitions.

THORNE: Oh yes.

Q: But anyway, Soapy Williams made much of a point that he was named before Dean Rusk was named secretary of state. Just talk about Soapy Williams coming in and what the feeling was and his operation.

THORNE: Well, he was very approachable. I can recall just after he was appointed suddenly coming into our office one day and he was very affable; he was acting, as tradition required. He went around and shook hands with all the secretaries, talked with them on a first name basis.

Q: He had been governor of Michigan.

THORNE: That's right. So this was old hat to him, he could handle it perfectly. And I think he went off on a trip to Africa early on. I know the office director, Dick Sanger, went with him. He was terribly popular among the Africans. By this point, talking 1961 here, African countries had begun to set up missions in Washington. By the end of that year you probably had a number of African chiefs of mission here. He was very popular with them, used to entertain them at home and he had a terrific personality. Bob Goode and I had to go down to a briefing, and Henry Tasca was the senior deputy there. He kept saying, now, Governor, let's hear about the military situation or whatever it was. Williams was reading a copy of The Harvard Lampoon and was paying no attention. Anyway, he was good for morale, I think, because they had the idea that he was really going to do great things for the Africa bureau.

Q: Well, did this change? I mean, he was the assistant secretary for African affairs. By this time Africa had its own assistant secretary and so it was the beginning of a whole different orientation. Did he also, by the fact that he came into your office and he was briefed, did this in a way set a good example for other parts of the African bureau, to move over to start talking to-?

THORNE: I think so. The fact he took Dick Sanger along on this trip.

Q: I've heard this of presidents up to and including today, who people say well, they went to briefings and the president fell asleep while they were-

THORNE: But the other thing was that Henry Tasca was a strong deputy and of course there was also Fredericks.

Q: William Fredericks is a name that rings again and again in many of the interviews.

THORNE: He came from the Ford Foundation, was eminently approachable. You could just drop in on his office anytime. He kept the bureau on a fairly steady course saying

let's look at this from the African point of view, what do the Africans want. He was very pro-African but in a very good sense of that term. He was eminently receptive to new ideas, ideas we hadn't had before. He had great contacts in African governments, too. At the Ford Foundation he was doling out projects and money.

Q: Well, was INR getting more assignments from the bureau?

THORNE: In the 1960 political campaign Kennedy had an African task force. I'm embarrassed to say I can't recall the name of the chairman at the moment. The task force of African specialists produced a report on what the Kennedy administration's policy toward Africa would be. One of the people on this task force was Bob Goode, who I think was from the University of Denver. He was just a very talented guy and he became the head of the African office in INR and he had a lot of contacts. For example, he knew Wayne Fredericks. He just had a personality which somehow inspired confidence and he established very good relations with the African bureau. And what was also going on at this time which I think is almost as important, maybe more important, was that INR was changing drastically because Roger Hilsman had been appointed as the director of INR. Hilsman's greatest objective was to get rid of the NIS. He told CIA that we were going to get rid of it and they said, what about the money. I never have known how this happened; somehow Hilsman got the Department to take over the funding of INR. He may have conned CIA into giving a little bit, but he got rid of the NIS program and a certain number of people who went with it who went over to CIA. Hilsman was an understandably ambitious type. He had a good academic background. He saw that INR was really going to have to do more work for the seventh floor if it was to have any status.

Q: The seventh floor being the location of the secretary of state and all.

THORNE: Right. And that was a long process which went on over several directors of INR. He began that process. He made a big effort to go around to the policy bureaus and lecture them on the general theme of INR is your friend. His standard line to assistant secretaries and deputy assistant secretaries was, if over the course of the year you look back on your relations with INR you'll find that we've helped you a lot more than we've hurt you. And that was the beginning of a process that I think was important. Hilsman finally he got canned by Dean Rusk, as I recall. But anyway, I think with Bob Goode as the office director for Africa and Hilsman pushing him on, we were involved a lot more with the policy bureaus. And I'd like to admit I've lost my chronology here; Hilsman's predecessor, Ambassador Cummings.

Q: Hugh Cummings.

THORNE: Yes. Hugh Cummings was not very happy with INR's African office because he thought we were not sufficiently alert to the communist presence in Africa. So he was sort of grumping about that and it didn't help us any.

Q: Okay. Well Tom, I think this is a good place to stop and I'll put at the end, so we'll know when we pick it up, and one of the questions I'd like to ask the next time is, did you all get caught up in the, you might say the enthusiasm for the winds of change that were going through Africa and the liberalization and all. I think there were, you know, there were hopes of great things would happen and all that. How did this strike you all, and then we'll move on to, you mentioned Hugh Cummings was grumping about not being as aware of communist influence, but could you talk about the early bit about looking at these new leaders of African countries, many of whom were leaning left and not necessarily communist but also probably the more pernicious group was the London School of Economics, the Fabian socialists and all that. Were we seeing that and how were we seeing that, and we'll go on from there.

THORNE: Okay.

Q: Great.

Today is the 27th of November, 2007.

Tom, before we move on at all, something occurred to me. Did the McCarthy period hit you at all? I mean, you were sort of off to one side but did you- did any of the problems of McCarthyism hit your office or you personally?

THORNE: No. There was a pervasive awareness of the McCarthy era and what was going on, but I can't say that it affected our offices very much or any of the people that I knew.

Q: Well, I suppose one of the saving graces for particularly the African field was, unlike European, people dealt with Europe, which is full of people who either served in Europe or maybe been European and many had been involved in leftist movements and all that, people in the African field, I mean, you were all brand new and you weren't part of that particular movement.

THORNE: Yes, and then Africa was all brand new at the time, or so it seemed. When the Eisenhower Administration came in there was much more concern among the bureaucracy that they were going to make a lot of structural changes. They certainly did have a vast downsizing of the whole federal government, including the State Department. There were a lot of things which in retrospect seem nutty. When John Foster Dulles became Secretary of State he brought in someone who was the president of Quaker Oats or General Foods, some company like that, to deal with the administrative problems in the State Department. There was a great feeling on the right that the State Department is a mess and a disaster and bad administration must be part of it. This guy came in and labored for about six months or so. He was looking at the wrong problems so that sort of vanished. But somehow in all of the RIFs, reductions in force, somehow that hit home with a lot of people because the government was filled at that time with people with no civil service status. There was a piece of legislation called the Whitten Rider which, you probably know all this.

Q: No, no, I want it to be in the record here.

THORNE: Jamie Whitten, I believe, was a congressman from Mississippi. He was the chairman or vice chairman of appropriations. He decided at one point that the way to downsize the government was to just see that large numbers of employees had no civil service status. So this piece of legislation called the Whitten Rider was a sleeper so that downsizing was pretty drastic in some cases. I can remember in our small Near East Africa shop, working mostly on the NIS program, we had unfortunately fairly high departures. People were told, you can take the job at a lower grade, you know, you're a GS-12 and you can take the job as a GS-4 or something; you need a good messenger for that sort of dumb thing. Eventually things settled down, offices were somewhat smaller, a lot of people were put out on the street. But again, that was not really due to McCarthy.

Q: Well, did the- the Wriston program, which started about 1954, '55, did that hit you all?

THORNE: Oh, yes; yes, yes. I don't think the Department of State has yet dug itself out of that hole, not completely anyway. When the Wriston program was started, it was either just before or just after I came back from the army, and it was being very vigorously administered by the personnel system. I remember many cases of Foreign Service officers coming back from overseas assignments and finding they'd been assigned to INR, the "R" area as it was then called. They were absolutely horrified by that, they were enraged by it. And I can remember one guy who came in to see the office director, brought his wife along, and she gave hell to the officer. There were all sorts of civil servants, some of whom were really pretty important people in research enterprises, signing up for the Foreign Service and at the same time there were also a lot of civil servants that said hell no, I won't go, I'm going to find a way to stay.

Anyway, I think on both sides, the civil service side and the Foreign Service side, there was a general feeling that the barbarians had gotten through the gates. For four or five years I remember all sorts of floundering going on as to how you should administer this. I can remember that at one stage all civil service personnel, this was INR only, all non-clerical civil service personnel were marched out somewhere to take the Foreign Service exam, which of course, naturally there were howls of rage about that. Civil servants were being called up before boards and asked now are you ready to join the Foreign Service and if you join the Foreign Service you understand that you have worldwide commitment to serve. And of course there were various ways people would try to adjust the language so that they could get out of the room before they got into the Foreign Service.

Q: Well, I would think that something like the Wriston program said you're worldwide available and you get people who, you know, are steeped in knowledge about an area and all of a sudden they're yanked up and sent up to Ouagadougou or to Hong Kong.

THORNE: I think it had a very bad effect on INR for about four or five years. There were a lot of really first class Foreign Service officers that I can remember passing through

there. Most of them pretty unwilling, most of them eventually went on to another assignment but there was a lot of heartburn among the Foreign Service officers. Some were genuine area experts and would be an ornament to any office. Others were perfectly good Foreign Service officers but they just weren't research and analysis types. Early on, and this was one thing that the NIS program should be praised for the people who ran the NIS program persuaded the personnel apparatus that you've got to have a certain amount of permanent people to do this invaluable program. And this is an interagency responsibility and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. So persons like myself, who were being paid from the NIS program, and I spent most of my time there until later, when after I moved to the Africa branch, I spent most of my time either educating or writing NIS sanctions, as they were called. So a number of people dodged the bullet by being on the NIS program and they were just allowed to go ahead. There was so much disruption that I think productivity in the place was way off and it was not a very happy camp for a few years.

Q: When did you move over to, off the NIS and get into Africa per se?

THORNE: Well, I was moved to the Africa branch in 1955 but I was still being paid under the NIS program. For the first couple of years there I was mainly writing NIS sections on Africa. I worked on other things too; fortunately that work schedule wasn't too heavy because they didn't quite know what to do about Africa in the NIS program.

Q: Well, move to, I guess when Ghana and the other countries started to get free, what was sort of your personal view of what was happening and maybe of your fellow analysts at that time? This would be around late '50s, I guess. I mean towards, you know, the future.

THORNE: Middle or latter '50s. It was exciting to see these countries, that nobody ever thought of as countries before, to see these societies become countries. It was fascinating and interesting to watch political leadership emerge in some of these countries. A lot of these leaders probably wouldn't stand up to any ubiquitous moral examination but as political leaders they were really first class; people like Nkrumah in Ghana or Azikiwe in Nigeria were really remarkable people being negotiators with colonial governments. We felt we were watching the birth of a whole new set of countries; that sounds rather Pollyannaish but that was the sense one got. There was a sense that we were seeing something that very few people were watching. We thought that we understood what was going on in these areas better than anybody else in town, and that we were probably the only people in town who were looking at them at that point.

Q: I would think we were opening up posts there, in these various places.

THORNE: Middle '50s we started- began the opening up of posts.

Q: Well, you must have been inundated with bright young Foreign Service officers having a wonderful time being the first person to ever report on such and such a country.

THORNE: That was true about 1960, 1959, and the first and middle parts of that decade didn't have posts yet in most places. We had Leopoldville, Kinshasa, Lagos, Accra and Dakar on the west coast and the east coast lagged behind in all of this. I guess we had either Nairobi or Dar es Salaam, I'm not sure. Anyway, the inundation of eager young officers was just a little further on in that decade but it certainly came.

Q: Was more attention being paid to Africa by the front office, secretary of state and all or were you getting more requests of what's happening here or there or was this still pretty much a backwater?

THORNE: It was still pretty much a backwater. Since nobody asked our opinion we could write it up any way and get it circulated. But no, there was no substantial interest yet.

Q: In many regards you were on your own. I mean, you could dream up your own reports.

THORNE: Oh yes, yes, very much so.

Q: Rather than on demand type things.

THORNE: Yes. And you know, there was a tiny audience over in some part of NEA.

Q: Well, it's just like NEA at one time encompassed Africa and South Asia and South Asia was neglected and Africa was really neglected.

THORNE: That's right.

Q: I mean, it was all concentrated on the Arab/Israeli.

THORNE: We had, in that very small office, some people with African experience. Bill Brown was one of the few American academics who got interested in Africa in the 1930s. Bob Baum, who was the deputy director of the branch and who later became the director, had been in Africa as a meteorologist for the Air Force in World War II. Bill Berry, who worked there, had been a command pilot in Accra on the Gold Coast. And we had a couple of economists who had some African experience. So there was a small cadre of people who were pretty good, I thought. And we could more or less pick our own projects and decide this is what they ought to know about.

Q: Well, was there, in the academic world, were there any universities that were beginning to pick up African affairs? I think of where I got my Masters, not in African affairs, Boston University, but at that, you know, we're talking about the late '50s and all.

THORNE: About the middle of the '50s we had some first signs that something was going on there. And Boston University is a good example because that's where Bill

Brown went when he left the Department. He had been also building up the African library there over some period of time. I'm not quite sure what his involvement was or how he did it but he was involved in building up those research resources there. And I can remember that in the middle '50s there were a few others. The problem was, I think, that the anthropologists were still running around in the field and political scientists were trying to get space for themselves. But I think that by the end of the '50s there was a lot of interest in African programs at universities; there was a lot of wheel spinning because the staffing of these things was extremely difficult. Sometimes you could deal with those problems by recruiting overseas but even that was pretty tenuous. But certainly by the early '60s you had a full blown African industry set up in the academic community. But they were starting from the ground up.

Q: Well, did you get any feel for what the Central Intelligence Agency was doing? You know, an output of things that were coming to you, was there much coming from there or were they sort of ignored?

THORNE: They were not really interested in Africa unless you could show them a communist in which case they might be interested. There was no great CIA interest and I don't think there really was to be any until closer to 1960 than to the '50s. It took the big shock of 1960 to really get them interested.

Q: Well, in a way would you say the chaos that occurred in the Belgian Congo, was this sort of a wake up call?

THORNE: Oh, I think for everybody it was a wake up call. But when, about 1959 a couple of things had happened: the British were letting go of the Gold Coast, Ghana, and in France, somebody had come up with the idea of the French community. De Gaulle was very unclear as to what the status of a member of the French community was but it looked as if these might be sovereign states.

By 1960 everybody and his brother was headed for independence. There were all sorts of illusions about the Congo. There was a widespread thought that the Belgians had prepared the Congo for independence and it certainly had a wonderful resource base and it had strong ties with the former colonial power so it should be a successful country. Well, that idea was taken care of very quickly in 1960. You had U.S. missions being set up in a number of countries where it probably had not been anticipated. More important than that, you had countries headed for independence in the near term, countries that people had thought were rather "safe," where this wouldn't happen for a long time to come. I mean, Senegal, for example, French territories especially.

Q: Were there any, in particular the Congo at the time, I mean, you know, people who had no particular interest in Africa before, could talk about Tshombe and Lumumba and you know, all these leaders; was this when the first sort of, this quiet came about the role of the Soviet Union?

THORNE: I think so. The Soviets showed up anyway because there was a lot of fluttering in the Gold Coast. The Liberians had a presidential inauguration sometime in the middle '50s and lo and behold a Soviet delegation came to offer congratulations to President Tubman. There was a lot of sort of fussing and muttering about hmm, is this a sign that the Liberians are likely to tilt toward the Soviets. Well, we should have let them do that if they wanted to. But anyway there was, by 1960, deep concern in the foreign affairs community about Soviet activity in Africa. Congo was a centerpiece of that, although, to look back on it in retrospect, a lot of Soviet activity from the time was pretty feeble. I think what grabbed people's attention the most was that just as the Congo was becoming independent or just before, Nkrumah in Ghana had gone into his radical phase. He kicked out his British military advisors and he signed various agreements with the Soviet Union. He was running the CPP (Convention People's Party) as a Marxist oriented party, at least they thought it was Marxist oriented. And this made a tremendous impression because Nkrumah had been regarded as an example of the wonderful, responsible leaders we were going to get here. And I think that really bothered people, that he had made such a complete flip flop.

Q: Did you have, say around 1960 or so, did you have an area of concentration?

THORNE: I was working on West Africa, which meant 90 percent Ghana. We were just about to undergo a big change in INR. This was when the Kennedy Administration was going to be coming in in 1961. The Kennedy organization already had an Africa committee which had prepared a report on things that ought to be done. I was shortly to take on broader pan-African work, regional affairs. The Soviets were not just active in one country, they were active in many countries. Here again we tended to exaggerate this. And independence of countries tended to be tied to that of other countries. The Nigerians not wanting to be left behind, for example. So I was just working on broader issues.

Q: Well, were we pretty much looking at the sort of economics? Because from what I gather a good number of the states, former colonies, had fairly good economies, based off crops and mineral extraction that had been run relatively efficiently and when new leaders came leftist school of economics ideas were nationalizing and in a way were soon destroying the economies. Were we looking at that and concerned about that?

THORNE: Yes, I think so. This first became manifest in the case of Ghana which became independent with a great balance sheet; they were in pretty good shape mainly due to cocoa, which was, to a considerable extent, a peasant crop; I mean, that it had lots of small producers. There were some large scale foreign producers but they had quite a substantial peasant capability there. Of course Nkrumah, with a lot of wacko ideas, turned a lot of that balance sheet into red ink. There was the famous Volta River project. The Ghanaians had lots of bauxite and there was a great scheme to dam the Volta River on the border with Togo. Well, that project languished in endless negotiations under Nkrumah and it was sort of a talisman. If we could get this project it would be a significant Western presence in Ghana.

Well, I think we eventually did get the Volta project; of course it takes years to build these things but we did eventually get the Volta dam. I'm afraid that my memory doesn't carry me to what happened to the bauxite into aluminum phase. That was finally negotiated with the endless heartburn about is this a safe investment. What will happen if the U.S. Government has to pay off on the nationalization guarantees? This was back when OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation) was running the investment insurance overseas. Ghana was a special focus. There was an endless fascination with Nkrumah; he just mesmerized people. We probably spent too much time worrying about Nkrumah. Anyway, he disappears from the scene in a few years.

On the economic side, American direct investment was not all that significant in many of these countries.

Q: Well, what about Nigeria? Nigeria is often touted as being, in a way, the most populous country and this is a pivotal country in what's going to happen. Did we pay much attention to Nigeria?

THORNE: I think so. I think not originally for economic reasons; this was before the oil development had occurred. Nigeria became independent around 1964, '65; I think there was a tendency to believe that Nigeria was going to be a model example of democracy in Africa. I think there was a lot of optimism about the future for Nigeria. And there were some reasons for this at the time. Nigerians seemed to be overcoming strong regional tendencies and they were able to pull themselves together and work out a federalist system. Everything seemed set for a very successful independence and, of course, I think that it lasted about a year and you had the military coup and many long years ahead of domestic strife in Nigeria.

Q: During the '60s, was there any consultation or joint work with the people who were dealing with Soviet affairs, that you were aware of, talking about what are Soviet intentions in Africa?

THORNE: Oh yes, we used to debate that endlessly; I'm not sure we ever got anywhere. People working on Africa didn't have the slightest idea about Soviet policy anywhere. There certainly was an endless amount of discussion on this. I think the general tendency of most of the intelligence people, well certainly for INR, was to believe that, yes, the Soviets could be a problem but let's not make too much of this; we're in danger of magnifying a problem.

Q: Well, there was always, you know, those that were in the business of newspapers, magazines, that were always drawing big red arrows pointing here and there in Africa, showing the Soviets are going to take over the Congo or-?

THORNE: Oh yes, there was a lot of that but certainly not in INR, at least not that I'm aware of. I think there was a general skepticism. I think there was a feeling, which I think was correct, the Soviets really didn't know anything more than we did and probably knew less about Africa. And also as we built up a backlog of reporting on Soviet activity

in Africa it became clear that these guys were not that far ahead of us. They were making all the same mistakes we made, sometime even more so.

Q: It's true the Soviets seemed to not be very adept at these things. Americans kind of, you know, a lot of Americans really like working in Africa and like the Africans whereas the Soviets really didn't.

THORNE: Yes, that's right, that's absolutely right. We were spared at least that problem of having to overcome nutty thinking about the Soviets. Maybe around 1960, especially after the Congo started to unravel, I think that there was maybe a little bit of panic going on. I know that Ambassador Cumming, the new director, was very critical of our office for not having been sufficiently alert to the supposed Soviet threat. But anyway, he disappeared shortly after that.

Q: Well, I know I got a touch of this; I was chief of the consular section in Belgrade in the mid '60s and all of a sudden, there'd been some incidents and the Bulgarians, of all people, had had quite a few Africans, particularly from Ethiopia and all, coming- they were welcomed in a sort of an offshoot of Lumumba University in Moscow and they were a little tired of being called black monkeys, which was the Bulgarian term for the Africans who were there. And they all came through Belgrade, I mean, they were getting the hell out and I remember sorting them out and really helping many of them get scholarships to the United States. I mean, that Soviet style, that Eastern European thing, there was just no fit there. The people just really didn't like foreigners to begin with and black foreigners were anathema.

THORNE: We got almost a continuous stream of reports about African students in the Soviet Union mentioning this, that and the other type of problem and the Africans ending up feeling very unfriendly toward their hosts.

Q: Well, you were there at an interesting time. You must have seen a real development in the African bureau per se with the various desks of these countries becoming more mature; I mean, they were beginning to get people who had served for some time. How about the relationship between INR and the various desks in the African bureau, was that getting better or more-?

THORNE: No, I think there's always going to be friction when you have parallel organizations. But on the whole I'd say it was fairly good; it tended to vary from person to person and time to time. There were occasional confrontations about a particular situation or country but not a whole lot of that. A lot of the analysts were Foreign Service officers who may not have wanted to be in INR but who were pretty good. And as time went on I think there was less and less reluctance in the Foreign Service to serve a tour of duty in INR. In fact, I think that we probably prepared a number of desk officers for their assignments with two years with us. So there really wasn't an adversarial relationship at all; there might be differences of view on some subject but on major issues I can't remember. We certainly weren't out looking for a confrontation on any analytical issues and rarely did we have it. Sometimes you'd run into a peculiar case.

Q: Well, as we move towards the '70s, what about South Africa? Were we sort of writing that off as nothing's going to happen there? I mean, apartheid was developing and all.

THORNE: Well, I'm sure there must be books written about this or to be written. After the great independence explosion of the early '60s, late '50s, people were thinking, gee whiz, you know, maybe this will just continue right on down the continent to the Cape of Good Hope. And I'm not sure that was ever widely held but I think everybody involved in Africa at one time or another would have had that secret thought, could this be possible. Well, the answer was no, it could not be possible. It was clear that the South Africans were not about to cooperate on anything like this. By 1965 we had the Rhodesian independence issue.

Q: Yes, the UDI (Universal Declaration of Independence).

THORNE: UDI, that's right, Ian Smith's declaration of independence, that was in 1965. It was clear that this nut was going to be a little harder to crack than perhaps we thought. I don't think there were ever too many illusions about the problems dealing with South Africa. There may have been different views about how it was to be done but I think there was a general awareness that there were moral dimensions here which had to be kept in mind. But when Rhodesia and UDI came we saw how the whole Southern African economy was integrated such that if you do such and such a thing to Rhodesia and Zambia collapses there's an economic crisis. It's just astonishing how closely interlocked the economies of Southern Africa were. However, there were other things which were important for the future. In 1961 you had the first beginnings of armed insurgency in Angola when Holden Roberto came out of the woodwork. He attacked some of the Portuguese settlements in the northern region. Later on we got involved in up to our eyeballs. The Mozambique insurgency began a little later than Angola but certainly by the middle '60s.

Q: Were we able to get much of a handle sort of intelligence-wise on what was happening say in Angola and then Mozambique and also efforts to unseat the White settler movement in southern Rhodesia too?

THORNE: For Rhodesia we had a fair amount of information. We had a consulate in this region, only in Salisbury for awhile after their independence and finally we took it out. The Portuguese areas, I think, we had less information; we had some, we had some sources but in general there was an awful lot that we didn't know and I think that was true all the way along.

Q: Yes, movements were pretty hard to understand what's happening.

THORNE: Some of these things were happening in places that were absolutely almost off the map.

Q: How did we feel about Mobutu and what were we getting about the Congo during the late '60s and into the '70s?

THORNE: It's always hard to be sure of the thinking of other people but certainly what I was seeing of people in the USG (United States Government) was feeling that Mobutu was not a very upright person and likely to do outrageous things at any moment. But he is able to hold Congo together even if it involves doing some of those bad things. There's nobody else on the horizon so we better stay with him and hope that perhaps we can influence his behavior a little bit.

Q: In a way it was sort of a keystone and the feeling was, and proved to be that without somebody there the place would kind of fall apart.

THORNE: Yes, I think that was the linchpin of our policy. There were certainly no illusions about Mobutu and money; if there was money around, Mobutu would find a way to get it, to get more. We lived with him for a long time. The policy from the beginning was that the Congo should become and remain independent as a unitary state that has no independent Katanga.

Q: Now, what about Tanzania and Nyerere? Nyerere was the darling, particularly of the European socialists and all, but he seemed to be dragging his country down the road to an economic disaster. How did we feel about Nyerere?

THORNE: Nyerere certainly charmed more people than anybody else I can think of; he was absolutely a charmer. There was a belief that Nyerere had a lot of clout among his fellow African leaders. I think there was this strong feeling that trying to keep some sort of a relationship with him was important for that reason.

Q: Were we charmed by Nyerere in INR?

THORNE: Oh, no, I'm just thinking of USG generally. But I don't think in INR that he had charmed anybody. I think there was a feeling, though, that Nyerere, had influence over other leaders. He was set, though, quite clearly on his variety of African socialism and was not particularly susceptible to any caresses that we might give him. I don't think we ever had a great deal of influence with him. I think we tried from time to time. I think his thoughts were elsewhere. I don't think his socialist model was the Soviet style of socialism.

Q: Wasn't the London School of Economics- School of economic Fabian socialists.

THORNE: Yes, that's right. He was some variety of a Fabian socialist and he didn't seem to find much that we had to offer. But whether he was a great influence among his fellows I don't know.

Of all the countries I can think of, Tanzania was probably one of the least good examples of a country. People said we should do an experiment in socialism because the country

was poor and didn't have much to begin with. There was an awful lot of wishful thinking about how Nyerere's ideas could be the way forward in Africa. Well, it wasn't true.

Q: No.

Well, during the Nixon/Ford years, this would be '69 to '77, was there much interest in Africa, did you feel?

THORNE: No, no, there was not at all interest in Africa until up until 1975. In fact, I would say there was zero interest in Africa. And actually, not too much happened in Africa; the Rhodesian independence went on; there was a little activity going on in Angola and Mozambique; nothing important. We had no particular goals or objectives in South Africa except to stay out of trouble. They could have closed out the whole Africa bureau at that time and the INR office, really. We managed to keep ourselves busy but nothing that we were doing seemed to be of any great interest to anybody. The assistant secretaries, Davis and Don Easum, were perfectly friendly. We used to brief them every morning and they asked all the right questions, but it was of no policy interest whatsoever that I could see. Then it was 1975 and Kissinger is now Secretary of State and there's Kissinger out diving and swooping like a giant bat; he's into a Rhodesian settlement. He's in Southern Africa, too.

Q: And there was revolution in Portugal which-

THORNE: In 1974 the Portuguese revolution had almost immediate consequences in the overseas territories. It was clear that the Lisbon government was not going to try to maintain control over Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea, and that was a powerful precipitant of events.

Q: Alright, today is the 19th of May, 2008. This is interview number four with Tom Thorne.

Tom, how did we view the Portuguese Revolution of 1974, from the INR perspective particularly as it pertained to Africa?

THORNE: Well, people who worked on Portugal, there were damned few. They say they'd finally given up on the thought that there would ever be any change in Portugal and that this would go on and on. And certainly there wasn't a whole lot we could get our hands around. Once it started, however, the 1974 revolution, you broke down into two schools of thought. One was that the overseas colonies of Portugal, this didn't necessarily mean there would be change in them. The other school of thought was that you certainly are going to see change and you might see far more than you anticipate. And it was really the latter point of view which was the right one. And we didn't know a whole lot about the Portuguese personalities. At least, I never thought we knew that much about them. But we quickly began hearing a lot more about Angola, especially about Angola. Mozambique seemed to be a little bit behind, but it had been clear for a long time, that there was some kind of a liberation movement, if you will, in Angola. The group led by Holden Roberto. And while that eventually got pushed aside by the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) it still gave us some sense that something was going on there. And we also thought the Portuguese were more

willing to discuss the state of affairs and the overseas colonies with us that they had been earlier.

Q: Well, it was new- I mean, these were essentially officers.

THORNE: New people and they were much less reticent about discussing their affairs in the colonies. In Portuguese Guinea you had quite a well defined movement. We didn't hear a whole lot about Portuguese Guinea but what we did learn suggested that the nationalist elements there were actually a pretty serious outfit. The Portuguese were using aircraft with some success against rebels but the rebels had SA-7 missiles and were using those with even more success. The CIA was involved in some things and in Angola certainly.

Q: Well, did you feel you were getting fairly good intelligence from the Agency or from other sources?

THORNE: Well, public sources I would say probably not. There were some American correspondents, including one from The Washington Post, who spent a good deal of time in Angola and traveled widely. It was absolutely astonishing how widely they were able to travel. But there was obviously some level of information which we weren't getting. There was a lot we didn't know about the outside contacts of the rebel groups.

Q: Well, how concerned were we about sort of Soviet influence, communist influence at the time?

THORNE: I think that at stratospheric levels of the Department, the seventh floor, there was quite a bit of concern about this. I think the general attitude among the analytical community was that these nationalist movements are all alike, and they're going to be close to the Soviets for a while, and then they're going to move off, move away; maybe not sever ties but distance themselves. And, allowing for various discrepancies that always occur, that was pretty much what happened eventually. I haven't mentioned Jonas Savimbi. He was operating down in that old, vast, empty quarter of Angola. We didn't know that much about South African involvement on Savimbi's behalf.

Q: Seventy-five, '76?

THORNE: Yes. A lot of things were happening for the first time. A lot of these Portuguese colonies seemed to have been run by naval officers for some reason. Some of these guys were radical types by some definition of the term, but I don't think there was ever any sense that these people were really communists. I can recall that in metropolitan Portugal, Portugal itself, there were some army officers that were considered to be maybe card carrying communists. The impression I had was that the Portuguese officials who stayed on for the transition were mainly concerned with getting out of there and trying to do it in some sort of a way that didn't make them look too foolish.

Q: Did we have any, I mean, sort of; I'm speaking about at your level, were there any concerns or studies to figure out where do we go from here?

THORNE: People were saying that if Angola and Mozambique were passing out of Portuguese control and becoming independent countries that we'd better be prepared for a lot

more change still further south. That was a pretty cloudy prediction but I think it was basically true.

Q: What was the view of South Africa at that time? Did we want to see South Africa stay out of it or get involved or what?

THORNE: I suspect that depends who you talk to. My guess would be that the policy bureau, AF, would be quite happy to have South Africa stay out of this and I think there was a lot of wisdom in that attitude. On the other hand I think that the secretary, Dr. Kissinger, and some on the seventh floor thought that something had to be done here and this was just going too fast. This was presenting us with all sorts of decisions that were better left postponed. I think that there was always a certain duality about our policies towards Southern Africa. I certainly don't think the policy bureau would have wanted any sort of American involvement with anybody but obviously, at least in Angola, we drifted into some kind of relationship with at least a couple of the groups. How we and the South Africans related to this I don't know. But obviously the South Africans almost made it to Luanda in '76. In INR we were not getting CIA reports about the South African military adventure in Angola. Actually, it wasn't quite so crippling as we found out because we used to call up our CIA counterparts over in the analytical side there and say, guys, tell us what's going on.

Q: Did you have the feeling that at the official level CIA was not going to tell you all too much about what was going on but you had to bypass the official thing or was it just a bureaucratic problem?

THORNE: The CIA was pouring information at us about what they were doing but I also think that they would not stray beyond whatever mandate Dr. Kissinger had given.

Q: Did you get any feeling at all about Dr. Kissinger and his attitude towards what was happening there or lack thereof?

THORNE: Well, the impression I got was that up until about 1975, '76, Kissinger really had had no interest in Africa whatsoever. When Don Easum was briefly the assistant secretary for African affairs he importuned Kissinger I guess a little too much about why don't we do this, why don't we do that. Kissinger managed to find other employment for Don and he went off in dignified retirement.

When the Rhodesian negotiations started with the British and Ian Smith, white minority government, and then you have more or less simultaneously the Portuguese changes at that point Kissinger got very interested in Africa. He got deeply involved in negotiations to try to promote a settlement in Rhodesia. They were really up to their eyeballs in that negotiation which, like so many things in Rhodesia at that time, looked like it almost was going to work and then it collapsed of course. But that was the beginning of his interest in South Africa. From then on there seemed to be a greater degree of receptivity of information. Kissinger also was toying around with a plan for Namibia and a lot of this just came to a screeching halt when the Carter Administration came in.

Q: This is '77?

THORNE: Yes, right. And I think Kissinger's initiatives had pretty much collapsed by then anyway.

Q: Well, did you get the feeling among you and your cohorts that it's almost as well that the secretary of state don't get involved?

THORNE: I did although probably for different reasons. We had followed the Rhodesian thing fairly closely. The Assistant Secretary for AF encouraged us in this. Hal Saunders was the director of INR and he was probably the best director INR ever had and he certainly encouraged this. When the negotiations had collapsed, and we didn't hear anything while these negotiations were going on except maybe little squeaks here and there, some little fragments of information, one of the analysts and I were following this most closely; when it was over with we realized that there were things that we just heard little fragments on and then they just disappeared. And there were often things that we knew only under a document's serial number, or there's something called Schedule C that we were very interested in. I have no idea now what that was but we wanted to look at that and some other papers. To our great surprise one of Kissinger's young bright young guys up in SS or Kissinger's own office said, sure, come up. You can look at the stuff and see if it has what you want. So we walked up, went up to the seventh floor, the analyst and I, and there was a big conference room with the usual huge table and it was absolutely covered with documents. And it was one of those things where you were looking for document number seven but is that the same as 7a? Whatever happened to 6.9? Well, the Kissinger aide who was shepherding us there said the problem is we don't know how to put these things in order because the numbers don't always match up. In fact, apparently they'd be negotiating on some particular point and the Rhodesians would have one number on the document and we'd have the same document but with a different number. That's anecdotal, purely. But we did get some insight into that. Of course, the insight was probably of a limited time span.

Q: Well, what sort of things regarding Africa would INR do during this period?

THORNE: It was difficult to do much on those activities that Kissinger was involved in, a lot of that was "NODIS" (No Distribution). We were able to use some of it in intelligence summaries for the seventh floor but it was a little difficult finding our way around the other with NODIS. What used to irritate me considerably was sometimes the seventh floor, depending on who you talked to, somebody might say, okay, we've sent all that we had today, you've been sent and they're numbers so and so. The next day there might be somebody else there who somehow didn't think that INR needed that or was supposed to have something and you'd have to go up and shake them to get the stuff out. But we had a great advantage, I thought, over many situations in that Hal Saunders, who was the director of INR at that time, he was one of that informal, sort of kitchen cabinet of Kissinger's. He had been with him for a long time.

I'm straying from your question here, I'm sorry. The INR daily summaries that we couldn't use, well, we could use annexes to them to send things up to the seventh floor. And Kissinger was receptive to analysis. The first time when we got into the NODIS flow and started being able to use it, we sent up some memo on something to Kissinger about 6:00 and Kissinger sent it back by about 6:30 and said where is the analysis? We briefed daily the AF front office. We did a good deal of work with the AF front office. And at the beginning of the Rhodesian negotiations we did some sort of appreciation of the Rhodesian situation for the

Secretary. Fortunately we weren't involved with a lot of NIEs and things at that point, that was my great horror that we'd get involved with that.

Q: No, no, no, no, no.

How would you describe- well, when we get up to the '70s and all, how would you describe the relationship between INR and the CIA, the Agency?

THORNE: I thought that they had a tendency not to take Africa seriously; that's the best way I can put it, that they tended to think that this was not an area of major concern to the U.S. and why are we worrying about this so much. That, like most abbreviated judgments, that's sort of a caricature, I'm sure.

Q: Well, it may be a caricature but from what I understand from talking to people who served in Africa, not CIA, but they say that the CIA people stationed at embassies and all were mainly interested in trying to recruit defectors from the Soviet embassy or Soviet operations or maybe the Chinese. I mean, this seemed to be their main interest and not devoting much time to finding out what's going on in Africa itself.

THORNE: I've heard the same thing. I don't have any factual cases that I can dredge up.

Q: Well, this is, of course, true in any operation but looking, you know, there is an overall viewpoint where the individuals are important but sometimes it's how they're used and all, in both INR and CIA. Did you notice any change in thrust, interest, when the Carter Administration came in in '77?

THORNE: Well, there was, yes, I guess certainly there was so much greater enthusiasm about Africa, a lot of the attitude of, you know, a new broom sweeps clean, both in the good and the bad sense. There was just an awful lot going on where it hadn't been going on before. The Assistant Secretary for African affairs was one of these hard driving guys, stays up all night and does something and works all day, one of those. And they were just engaged in any number of fronts. The AF front office was mainly a Foreign Service front office. They certainly got, I thought, some of the best of the Foreign Service, and they were much more activists. Almost any situation they got into they were pretty activist. Their focus was Southern Africa where there was a lot of focusing to be done but in all sorts of fields I think they were just a much more active group.

Q: Well, during particularly the '70s and then we'll move to the '80s, but during the '70s how much interest was there to developments in the Horn of Africa? Haile Selassie was overthrown in that period.

THORNE: As the '70s went on I think that the Department focused more and more on the Horn, for good reason because there was some kind of a Soviet naval base on the Dahlak Island. I'd say that it was very heavily covered by us. In fact, that was some of our best coverage, I thought; we had a great analyst on the Horn of Africa and we just spent a lot of time on it. It got harder and harder because as time went on Mengistu of Ethiopia played a lot of hard ball with us. He was annoyed by things like being asked why is there a Soviet naval facility in the Dahlak Islands and of course Mengistu knew that. The policy people really were concerned. Also, the Somali-Ethiopia conflict in the Ogaden was the sort of thing which

has the potential for enlarging itself. It didn't do it at that time but Ethiopia, the Horn generally, was a major preoccupation.

Q: Well, Kagnew Station was, at that time, I mean, we always had problems with it but its use was getting to be less and less valuable, I think, as satellites began to take over.

THORNE: Before the '60s ended, or at least by the beginning of the '70s, Kagnew Station was an irrelevant issue. But I think what the U.S. was concerned about at the time was we always had such a bad conscience about Eritrea, which got gobbled up into Ethiopia in a rather blatant way. Early in the '70s, the Somalis tended to be the aggressors in the Ogaden and of course at that time the Somalis had some sort of a relationship with the Soviets. We were already concerned about the trouble the Somali aggressiveness would cause down in the Ogaden. Then Mengistu came to power. He had the great reversal of alliances. Despite Kissinger's efforts, Mengistu wanted to go with the Soviets as his principle external prop. And so we wound up with Said Barre in Somalia who was happy to have a little war in the Ogaden except that he was pushing this and pushing this. I think there was a feeling in the back of a lot of minds that this could possibly escalate into something really serious. Anyway, we never got the answer to that but the Soviets did have some sort of facility in the Dahlak Islands which I have no idea what's happened to it. I suspect that they gave it up.

Q: I'm sure they did.

THORNE: It would be no use to anybody. In fact, I don't think it was much use to them before their great internal upheaval began.

Kissinger tried to work with the revolutionary government. In some now long forgotten telegram there's some message from Kissinger lecturing some U.S. ambassador, saying that we recognize states, not governments.

And then it's a situation I've lost touch with. I mean, Mengistu eventually went the way of all flesh. Haile Selassie of course died in jail. We've always had a fascination with the Horn of Africa and I suppose some of that is represented here.

Q: Well, it does sit astride an important waterway.

THORNE: It's not an insignificant place geographically and Ethiopia had a certain status in Africa.

Q: Well, it never was-

THORNE: It was never colonized.

Q: Yes, I mean, even with the Italians there it didn't last very long.

THORNE: Exactly. It was an ancient African kingdom and that resonates to some degree or another.

Q: Well Tom, under Carter did you sense that African INR became sort of more of a player or not?

THORNE: By the time the Carter Administration came in INR's position had improved, that long process of becoming accepted.

Q: Yes, sort of part of the process.

THORNE: It was now at a plateau; it had to be taken into account. I don't know that we were better treated or worse treated, change for the better, change for the worse under the Carter Administration. It seems to me we had a pretty close relationship with the AF front office. For other bureaus I don't know. I always used to hear our European colleagues complain about EUR's attitude that they didn't need anybody to tell them anything. But anyway, I think that INR was pretty well established by that time.

Q: Well then, we'll move up to, Reagan came in in 1981.

THORNE: Yes, right.

Q: And with him came Chester Crocker. How did that- I mean, he was the head of the African bureau and with the feeling of constructive engagement, how was the initial arrival of Chet Crocker seen? Do you remember?

THORNE: Actually, I really don't. At that point I was in the process of moving to the INR front office and a good deal of the preceding year before I did that was working on the Secretary's morning summary. So I didn't really have much exposure under Crocker.

Q: Well, you worked for the front office of INR for how long?

THORNE: Well, I worked in the front office from beginning of 1983 to my retirement in 1986. But before 1983 I used to spend a fair amount of time working as one of the editors of the Secretary's morning summary so my ties with AF lessened.

Q: Well, I'm told that during this time that the Secretary's summary was also- of INR's view on things was also quite popular at National Security Council and elsewhere. I mean, it was an important document, wasn't it?

THORNE: Oh, I think so. I used to hear these stories about the NSC liked it or so and so liked it. Some of those are true, probably, and some of them aren't. I think it was a widely read document. Of course, it wasn't supposed to be widely read but yes, I think it was.

Q: What did the summary- what was the summary that you were working on, essentially?

THORNE: It was a summary of the day's events, of the day not preceding 12 hours, 24 hours, what have you. It was occasional comment plus maybe an essay or two; an analysis of some subject or subjects.

Q: How did you find this job?

THORNE: How did I find it?

Q: Yes. Was it interesting, fun?

THORNE: Dealing with analysts can often be interesting if they don't drive you crazy. And also the idea of refining a piece so it really communicated quickly to somebody who's only going to read one or two pages; yes, that can be a fun thing to do. I enjoyed it.

Q: During the time you were in the head office did you get any feedback about the summary from Secretary Haig or Secretary Shultz about what was being presented to him?

THORNE: I don't recall anything about Haig. I'm not sure, did he read? No, I mean, some people convey, I mean, you know operate by reading.

Q: Yes, and some people do it, you know, somebody briefs him orally.

THORNE: Yes, some people can't stand an oral briefing because they forget about it after the first five minutes. I don't recall anything about Haig. Shultz was a reader. There was word around that if it were an economic piece Shultz would read it no matter what the length, I mean, within reason. One analyst produced what to me was a totally incomprehensible paper. It was like nine pages of pure economic talk. And apparently the Secretary found it very interesting.

Q: Okay. Well, then you retired when?

THORNE: Retired in 1986.

Q: Well, I guess this is probably a good place to stop then.

THORNE: Perfectly good place to stop.

Q: Okay.

End of interview