

ANGOLA

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GEORGE B. HIGH Economic Officer Luanda (1959-1961)

Africa Bureau Washington, DC (1961-1962)

George B. High was born in Chicago in 1931 and was raised in Blue Island on the far south side of Chicago. He majored in economics at Dartmouth College and went on to study law at Columbia Law School in 1953. In June 1956 he entered the Foreign Service. High served in Angola, Lebanon, Ecuador,

Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico before he was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs in 1985. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 26, 1993.

Q: At that time I remember being told that Iraq was the great hope of the Middle East. It was one place that was going to make it due to a small population which was well-educated and there were good resources, not only oil but the Tigris/Euphrates area. But, it has just gone down hill since.

HIGH: For me personally, it was really part of the formative years of observing, learning, participating tangentially on the edge of a crisis and seeing some of the players at a distance. At the time it gave me the feeling, "Gee, wouldn't this be a terrific part of the world to specialize in. It has petroleum. It has all these internal clashes between ancient society and modern society, and personalities and different cliques and intrigues of the Muslim world." My assignment to the task force was a very brief eight or ten months exposure, but it demonstrated that foreign affairs were fascinating and challenging, especially in the Middle East. It led to a misstep a little later in my career that subsequently required a course correction.

Let me digress at this point. As a typical American, I entered the service as a language probationer. Despite high school and college Spanish, and having a mother who taught Spanish, I did not pass the written language exam. For a number of those early years, I trudged over to FSI for Early Morning Spanish. The teachers were great, and especially one, Vicente Arbeliez, who remained at the language school for years. As testing time approached, he would even call me at home in the evening and we'd talk Spanish for 10 or 15 minutes. Thanks to considerate help like that, I passed the exam -- finally! At this stage of my career, we were ready for our first assignment overseas

Initially, we were to be assigned to Bogota, Colombia. I have forgotten what I was to be there, probably a consular officer. However, in the course of taking medical exams for clearance to go overseas, we discovered that my young son Mark, age one, had a heart murmur. That wouldn't work out at Bogota's altitude. Actually, I think the ending of the assignment to Colombia may have been what projected me into the Middle East task force. That temporary work carried me to the next assignment cycle.

In late 1958, we discovered suddenly that we were going to Luanda, Angola where I would be the economic officer in a three person consular post. Formally, the consulate came under Embassy Lisbon, in the field; but it worked more closely with the new African Bureau in Washington. In a real sense, the consulate was caught between the European orientation of the embassy and the European Bureau, on the one hand, and the African Bureau in Washington on the other. There were policy differences from time to time that were difficult to bridge or were unbridgeable. As the years went on, in too many instances, the national policy interest came down to protecting our Azores bases (vital parts of NATO) and US support for independence in Africa, peaceful transitions there, and access to African resources.

All of a sudden, after all the language training in Spanish, we were going to a Portuguese-speaking country. There wasn't time for taking any new language class, much less an area studies

class. We were in Luanda, Angola in a matter of weeks. I hadn't even had the time to pick up a phrase or two, really, even to say, "Hello. How are you?" in Portuguese. We just arrived by way of a nice ship voyage from New York to Naples and a couple of days in Rome to catch our breath, and then on by air to Leopoldville.

In Luanda we had a three man post. On our arrival, it was headed by Dick Fisher, the consul, an old African hand who had served in Ghana and some other territories. My position in the consulate was new. Fisher lasted about a year and was then transferred out and replaced by Bill Gibson, who had not had previous African experience. He was a very good writer. Bill Simmons was the other vice consul; he did the administrative and consular work and reported some. Actually, most of the reporting was done by Bill Simmons and me. Bill Gibson went out and made contacts and did his thing, and left a lot of the reporting work to us. I enjoyed the work because African independence was in full swing and I knew that Washington was dying for information. Independence sentiments were also beginning to reach the Portuguese territories.

We were also beginning to get visitors at this remote post. John Foster Dulles' sister, Eleanor, even visited us. We understood that she was encouraged to make this trip by her brother to give him her views on the continent. She was a renowned German expert. She asked very good questions of us, even if she lacked Africa experience, and she listened.

One of my memories of that visit was Bill Gibson trying to ply her with martinis. He didn't have success with Miss Dulles; the potted palm beside her chair bore the brunt of Bill's cocktails. Bill liked to drink and seemed to feel that a test of friendship and of people was whether or not they drank. He professed not to understand missionaries partly, it seemed, because they didn't drink. That proved to be a double weakness because missionaries were prime observers of what was happening in Angola and some of them were very astute.

Angola was a fascinating country. There were major tribal differences between the north and the center and the south. It is a beautiful country with all kinds of potential, at least it had in 1960 -- minerals, including petroleum, agriculture, and fisheries. Luanda was changing overnight. Modern buildings were going up, trade was developing. There were diamonds up in the northeast. The Portuguese were paying more attention to it finally, after centuries of neglect, thinking mistakenly that Mozambique on the east coast of Africa was the colony that held the real potential. And, of course, the Portuguese were blind to what was happening elsewhere on the continent. In their view, that couldn't happen in Angola because they understood the Africans and knew how to work with them.

Bill Gibson was influenced by some of that wishful thinking, and so was Dick Fisher, his predecessor. The people in the Africa bureau in Washington were very keen to get a sense of what was happening in Angola; they didn't believe they were receiving very perceptive reporting.

It was rather difficult for us to have contact with Africans because the Portuguese police and authorities weren't keen on seeing foreign diplomats talking to them, and there really weren't very many opportunities to do that. For that reason, one of our main sources of information was simply talking to the different missionary groups. The missionaries had many different nationalities -- British, Canadian, and American, not to mention the Portuguese. Some of the

missionaries were politically astute and some of them were very naive and really disinterested in politics. The latter were there to teach religion. We made good friends with a number of the Methodists and others who did not involve themselves in politics but were knowledgeable.

Q: *What was the situation, were there blacks in the government?*

HIGH: There were no blacks to speak of in the government. There were a few mulattos and the differences in treatment between blacks and mulattoes (and whites) were very substantial, the mulattoes having had a better chance to get at least some kind of education. The blacks had virtually none. Protestant missionaries sent some of their promising black church goers to Brazil and to Portugal to study. Once in a while one would go to the United States, but language often inhibited that.

Needless to say, the Portuguese authorities were very suspicious of the foreign missionary groups. The fact that foreigners were involved and religious differences made the missionaries problematic for them. I saw no indication that foreign missionaries were "conspiring" against the Portuguese, but of course they were helping to educate Africans, and the Portuguese saw this as a threat to their integrity.

It was just very difficult under the Portuguese system for blacks to do much of anything beyond menial labor. Out in the countryside the small *commerciantes*, traders, were largely Portuguese. They themselves were poor people who didn't have much opportunity in Portugal so they came down to Angola. There were lots of Portuguese businessmen in Angola. Portugal sold a lot of its cheap products to Angola, products they couldn't sell elsewhere. There was a certain amount of talk among the Portuguese, and some fear in Lisbon apparently, that these European Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique might form separatist movements and declare independence for those colonies on their own. They didn't seem as concerned over the prospects of an African revolution, but a European revolution in their colonies.

I got to travel around the country a fair amount. One of our visitors was an agricultural attaché, Steve Stephanides. His office was in Leopoldville in the then-Belgian Congo. His trips to Angola provided us a marvelous opportunity to see settlements, projects, plantation owners and what was going on in the interior. Stops with him included Nova Lisboa in the center, and Sa da Bandeira and Mocamedes in the south. There were significant commerce, agriculture and some industry in the interior, all protected for Portuguese interests.

When we arrived in January 1959, there was little talk about the wave of independence crossing Africa and what this meant for the Portuguese. Later in 1959, a *London Times* journalist named Holden, I think (not to be confused with the rebel leader Holden Roberto), came to Angola -- the first of many journalists we were to see. He talked with us at the American Consulate. Subsequently, his article "Standing Firm on Shifting Sand," appeared in the *Times*. His basic conclusion was that Portugal was unlikely to be able to avoid what was occurring around it. It simply couldn't resist the tide. Other journalists followed, and we talked with many of them, even traveled with some. One person I traveled with was Joe Stern of the *Baltimore Sun*. He had a firm grasp of what was going on.

While we were in Angola the Belgian Congo blew up shortly after it received independence.

Q: *You were there 1959-61.*

HIGH: At the time of the crisis in the former Belgian Congo in 1960, a lot of the missionary and business and families came across the border to Angola to flee the violence. That included a number of American missionaries who came to Luanda. We helped them, with help from the Methodist mission station in Luanda, to catch their breath and proceed onward.

We received a visit at the time, I think it was simply fortuitous, by Dick Sanger, who was the Director of Research for the Middle East and Africa in the Department. He proved himself more astute than we were at the consulate. He went out to the Luanda airport to interview refugees coming out of the Congo. He talked to Bill Gibson to make sure he had no trouble with him doing this, and I don't think Gibson realized what was going on. In effect, he asked, "Do you mind if I interview these refugees, hear what they have to say, and report?" So, Sanger for a time virtually became a member of the consulate staff and sent out cables reporting what the refugees were telling him about different parts of the Congo. That struck me as probably among the most effective reporting that came out of our post at that particular period of time as far as Washington interests were concerned. We covered the meaning of this to Angola and reactions in Angola. Sanger covered the more relevant Congo developments.

But again, even with all that going on next door, the Portuguese were saying that it couldn't happen in Angola. They "knew" their Africans.

Well, it did. What started to precipitate things and garner further attention to Angola, at about that same time, was the takeover of the Portuguese ship the *Santa Maria*, which was traveling between Portugal and Brazil. As I recall, it was led by Henrique Galvao, a dissident Portuguese nationalist opposed to Portuguese Prime Minister Salazar, who called for European independence for the colonies. He took over the passenger ship and sailed around the Atlantic for a while. People didn't know where it was going to alight, but there was a good bit of suspicion that it might go to Angola and Galvao would declare the colony independent.

That brought an enormous number of newspaper people to Luanda, waiting to see if the *Santa Maria* would arrive there. The incident produced a lot of reporting in the world press on Angola and Angola's prospects, but not much of anything happened. The ship never arrived in Luanda.

The first attack by African nationalists against the Portuguese in Angola that set off the war of independence occurred a couple hundred yards from our house. It was an attack by a nationalist band from what turned out to be the MPLA, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the mulatto-led independence movement which is now in control of Angola. Or was the band from Holden Roberto's Union of the Peoples of Angola (UPA), which also undertook attacks on plantations in the north of Angola? I think it was the latter. The attack in Luanda was against a police station that was near us. The small number of attackers tried to free some of their members who were being held prisoner there. The early morning attack was repulsed. Several policemen and attackers were killed.

It scared us because the police post was only several hundred yards from our house. My wife awakened me to the gunfire, and we heard people running through the neighborhood.

This happened at the time people were expecting the *Santa Maria* to arrive in Luanda, and many of the newspaper reporters were still around. A day or two later, a public funeral with procession was held for the several policemen who had been killed. As we neared the cemetery, there were shots fired and some in the procession, made up almost entirely of Europeans, struck out at any African who happened to be nearby. There must have been four or five Africans killed in that spontaneous reaction of fear and hate. I think it doubtful that the persons killed were involved in the shootings, but I never felt I knew how that incident began.

This was my first introduction to fearless journalism. Part of the time I was at the public funeral, I was accompanied by an awfully nice, sharp *Life* magazine photographer, who went charging off toward the gunfire when he heard the shooting. I think his last name was Burke.

I confess that I had difficulty understanding his reaction. My inclination, on hearing the shots, was to move in the other direction and go back a little later to see what was going on. Sometime later, he sent me a picture he had taken of the participants in the funeral procession -- a line of concerned, very short Portuguese colonists looking in one direction, and me -- a tall, contrasting figure, looking in the opposite direction. I read years later in *Life* that he died in India. He leaned out over a precipice while taking a picture and fell to his untimely death. I'm not sure what that tells us, but he had guts.

At that time there was a vote in the United Nations calling for independence for Portuguese Africa. The United States voted in favor of the resolution. The Kennedy Administration was in power. The Portuguese really looked upon our vote as a betrayal by a trusted friend and NATO ally.

Shortly after the vote, someone decided that it was important to react to that betrayal. There was a demonstration by some hundreds of European Portuguese in front of our consulate in Luanda. We were on the third floor of an office building on the water front. A delegation came up to the consulate door to talk with us; we didn't know the intent behind the banging on our front door. It didn't sound particularly friendly. We had locked ourselves in the vault with the regional security officer, Jim McKinley, who happened to be visiting us at the time. So there was nobody to talk to them.

Unfortunately, we had overlooked the fact that the official car was parked on the street right outside the consulate. Someone got the idea to turn it over and burn it. Satisfied with that action, the demonstration came to an end. That was our excitement for a day or two.

Much more serious were the major outbreaks of violence in the north of Angola. The war was on. The attacks on a number of isolated plantations, trader stations, and a few towns were led by Holden Roberto's UPA, Union of the Peoples of Angola. It operated from the former Belgian Congo. The results were pretty gruesome -- people hacked to death by machetes.

Q: By this time were you having any contact with the Portuguese who were there?

HIGH: We were going about our business as usual and reporting what was going on, and explaining the reason behind our UN vote. Not many people were prepared to accept the latter, but they listened. Our hope was that we could encourage Portugal to undertake a peaceful transfer of power over time so that it would retain constructive relations with an independent Angola. It would be to everybody's advantage. That was the tenor of discussions between American and Portuguese officials in Washington, New York and Lisbon, and it was reflected in our conversations in Luanda.

Q: *How was this received?*

HIGH: I don't think our Portuguese contacts were listening; they were intent on convincing us of the importance of their continued presence in Africa. Their pitch was, "It still can't happen to us. This is just an outlaw band. Your vote and statements are encouraging them and undermining our position." We were getting the party line, the myth that the Portuguese understood the people and that Portugal was unmovable. That myth had sustained Portuguese colonialism through centuries. The myth and the realities of Angola were well described by a book published about that time, James Duffy's *Portuguese Africa*.

Several months after the outbreak of violence in Angola, we received a visit from a group from the US National War College. In fact, I think there were separate visits from both the American war and the Canadian defense colleges.

The Portuguese were great at taking people out into the countryside to show positive developments. There was a minor game reserve near Luanda and with luck you could see something wild. That, at least was the program for the National War College. For the evening there was a big dinner and some Africans were brought in to dance in a little soccer stadium. The evening we were there the local head of the secret police danced among the Africans and I heard him saying, "These are my people." This was the party line; it was said so often, I'm sure many Portuguese believed it.

Q: *What was your impression, particularly as economic officer, of how the Portuguese were using the black population?*

HIGH: The Portuguese were long criticized for the practice of contract or forced labor of Africans, requiring hard manual labor on plantations and government projects for little or no pay and certainly with few if any rights. The story was told that in the early years of this century when automobiles first began to arrive in Angola, the governor general would notify a district governor distant from Luanda that he would be making an official visit by car on a certain date. The district governor then used forced labor to build a road for the car so that the visit could take place. That's how the road system was begun. It was built by African labor directed by Europeans.

When we were in Angola, very few Africans were allowed to advance even into very low positions. Even then, they became the show pieces that Africans were assimilating and able to join with Portuguese when they reached the cultural and educational level of the Europeans. Of

course they weren't. The black Africans were the people to carry bags of grain onto ships, to dig away the dirt in the diamond fields, to uncover the veins of ore, and they were also the purchasers of Portuguese products.

Mulattoes were treated better; they were somewhat higher on the social and work scales, but they weren't treated like the Europeans, either. It was clearly a very colonial, paternalistic society that was supported by all Europeans, even the Church.

At the same time, the life of the unskilled, poor Portuguese colonists wasn't an easy one, either. They provided unskilled labor, one step up. They were the small *commerciantes* (traders) and farmers at the colonist settlements, like Cela in central Angola, named after Salazar's hometown, or living alone in the bush, or the occasional highway maintenance person, living in an isolated house with his family and charged with the upkeep of a section of the roadway.

Q: I take it the role of the Church was in accord with Portuguese policy?

HIGH: Oh, yeah. Across the field from our house was a seminary that had a number of Africans in it. It wasn't a very big seminary, but there were a number of Africans there who would go out as assistants to priests in the bush. But not with much of a chance of rising significantly in the mainstream European society.

The African independent groups were organized largely outside of Angola. Some started in Metropolitan Portugal, where a few Africans, especially mulattoes, got their education. The MPLA's mulatto leadership was educated there. Others, like Holden Roberto's UPA, were up in the Congo organizing themselves and doing things more or less secretly there. Jonas Savimbi, the man who became the leader of the tribes in central Angola, was schooled in Switzerland, as I recall.

The Angolan nationalists had to organize abroad because the Portuguese informant system was pretty effective and the authorities in Angola were determined to crush whatever was going on. The fact that there was an unexpected outbreak of violence in 1961 and that it spread quickly simply said that even though the Portuguese made their best effort to crush independence thought, the police and information systems weren't perfect. Once the rebellion got going in Angola, Mozambique, and Portuguese Guinea, the national government of a relatively small, poor European country, unsupported by its natural friends, wasn't able to repress it. Time had caught up with the centuries-old Portuguese system.

Q: You weren't having contact with Africans coming in and asking for your support were you?

HIGH: No. On rare occasion, there might have been rumors of an incident somewhere or that an alleged "trouble maker" had been put in prison. Not much information filtered through to us in Luanda. Our understanding was that "trouble makers" disappeared. No, the nearest contact we would have with Africans would be when we visited a mission station or went to church with them or talked with them with some missionaries. It was hard to grab hold of African views. And there was little political content to the brief discussions, only a sense of deep unhappiness.

The missionary groups were also very careful about how they related to Africans for fear of creating problems for themselves and for the Africans. They were dedicated to the spiritual and educational advancement of Africans. The fact that they were Protestants also placed them in a sensitive role.

Of course, the Portuguese concluded on their own that the Protestant missionaries were conspiratorial. When violence broke out in Angola, some Methodist missionaries we knew very well were expelled and missionary activity in general was severely restricted.

Q: Did you feel any constraints on reporting either from your principal officer or Washington about what you were to report, or were you working on the assumption that this place is going to blow and we want to have the record straight that we know it is going to blow?

HIGH: I think there were some informal constraints. The first consul that we had upon arrival by and large bought the colonist view that there might be some trouble but the Portuguese would take care of it and it wasn't that big a challenge. I remember in those youthful years of making a bet with his wife that Angola would be independent in five years. She joshed me and said, "Not on your life," and she took the bet. As a matter of fact my timing was a little off. I had to pay the five dollars. It was six years later that Angola became independent.

Perhaps it was the repressive system, but it seemed to me there were few indicators inside Angola that the place was about to blow up or that large scale violence was at hand. Our first consul wasn't pursuing the situation; the second one wasn't focusing on it, either, and both by and large were influenced by Portuguese views.

There was an interlude between the first and second consuls (principal officers) of about three months. During that time, I was the acting principal officer and I thought at the time, "Boy, here is an opportunity for me to say to Washington what really is going on. There really are problems here and we had better look out." For years, my recollection was that I wrote a long airgram with the message of approaching crisis.

But my memory was gilded by time. Fifteen or so years later, I got the message out of the archives at State and read it. It suggested that problems were coming and waved a warning flag, but it sure didn't unmistakably say, "Hey, it is here and here is all the background on it." It was a pretty timid flag waving.

When the rebellion broke out in 1961, our aim at the consulate was to report things as we saw them. We wanted to be accurate, neither alarmist or pollyanna. We felt that the African Bureau was "happier" with bad news. We felt that the European Bureau and Embassy Lisbon would be happier with more tranquil reporting. Calling it as we saw it was comfortable to us. I'm not sure our analysis was particularly remarkable, but we weren't criticized for it. Washington was hungry for information.

Q: I was in African INR under Bob Baum in 1960-61 and I recall that the folk wisdom of INR was that all of Africa is going to go independent except for South Africa. It looked like South Africa could hang on for a long, long, long time. But that was sort of the folk wisdom. We looked

at the Congo as sort of the model because of the way they were treating the Africans, etc.

HIGH: Well, that one analytical airgram I wrote touched on that, but I wish in retrospect that I had been more outspoken. I wasn't quite sure how much I could say authoritatively in a three-month period as the acting principal officer. But I wanted to get something on the record to say that trouble was coming, particularly since post reporting had ignored the subject. My report certainly didn't approach the caliber of analysis that Smith Simpson was providing from East Africa.

After our second principal officer arrived it was anticipated that he could do the political reporting. He didn't do much. For my part, I returned to the economic reporting I was assigned to do. I thought it would be useful if the Department had more basic information on the Angolan economy. That didn't touch on these very major political affairs going on around us.

Another aspect of reporting from Angola was the difficulty of grasping the real political forces that were at work in the territory because a lot was just plain hidden. You could talk to missionaries who were politically astute and they would say how distressed and disturbed the Africans were and how repressive the police were. Lacking an entree into what African national circles were saying or doing, we were bound to miss substantial parts of the picture. Yet if we had tried to make contact with African nationalists, the Portuguese police would have learned of it, and we wouldn't have lasted long in Angola.

Nor could we have tried to carry on such contacts by visiting Leopoldville, again because the Portuguese were virtually assured of knowing that and such activity by diplomats from Angola would not have been tolerated. The embassy in Leopoldville naturally concentrated on the momentous events in the Congo. I understood that there were some contacts with Holden Roberto there, and there was a report from the CIA of UPA plans for violence before the major outbreak in northern Angola. Washington had a little forewarning of trouble in Angola. I do not recall that we at the consulate were aware of that report prior to the attacks.

Q: You left Angola in the middle of 1961. As you left were you still opting for the five years [for independence]?

HIGH: Oh, yes. I would have even made it three or four. This was the first brush. There were lots of incidents. The Portuguese were still in shock. Several books had come out with some frightful pictures of the victims of the violence, pictures of grotesque bodies strewn across some of the plantations of northern Angola. There were rumors in Luanda that the water supply would be poisoned and everybody would die, and that the dam holding Luanda's water would be attacked -- the kind of scare rumors one hears in crisis situations. Luanda really was a city in substantial turmoil with troops all over the place and a lot of fear. It must have been worse further north where most of the attacks occurred.

Before leaving our discussion on Angola, I would like to mention something about my wife Beth's side of living there. We arrived in Angola without my wife knowing a word of Portuguese and with two very young children (Mark, age two years, and Susan, age three months). We had household help who of course didn't understand a word of English.

There was a Foreign Service ethic at the time that when you were invited to go out, you accepted invitations and your family concerns came second. The wife was left to fend for herself, she would cope, and by all means she would do everything I did socially because that was her role. We lived by that code, but it was difficult for Beth because there was little support for her from the post, a circumstance of that moment and the small size of the post. We would go out to bridge or cocktail parties for contacts and we would leave our kids at home with the non-English-speaking household servants. We were fortunate, the servants were honest and helpful; but the communications gap during our early months at post was not helpful.

Beth would do the shopping, initially unfamiliar with the system and without the language. We learned that you chased down your turkeys or chickens at a farm outside of town. The turkeys were so grisly that before you killed one you gave it some cheap brandy or vinegar which relaxed those tough tendons and muscles. Then they could be cooked. It's fun to relate that now, but at the time it was very challenging.

Our first guest for dinner was Bill Wight, the Consul General in Mozambique. He experienced our first chicken. (We didn't know the brandy trick at the time.) He got a spare leg and thigh. My wife got the other leg and thigh. I got the carcass, which was skin and bone. Bill understood; it was all in the family.

This was rather primitive living and not necessarily part of Beth's fondest service memories. The first consul's wife wasn't well and wasn't that much help in settling in. The second consul was a bachelor and the third officer, who became a lifelong friend, was a bachelor. So, Beth was the "official" American lady at the post for much of our tour. There was no one to understudy. That did not really start my wife off with the fondest feeling for the Foreign Service, though she coped very well.

She learned the language and quickly picked up shopping at the native market. She was an occupational therapist and did volunteer work at the local TB sanitarium. That professional interest was a major plus for her in this posting. When the missionary refugees came through Angola from the Congo, she helped house and care for them during their passage through the country.

Q: Then, following your Angola assignment, you came back more or less within the African business.

HIGH: Well, not really, because at that stage of the game I made one of my relatively few career mistakes. My wife and I had learned Portuguese very fast. We had to. There weren't that many Portuguese in Angola who spoke English. The post language program was very helpful. I would say that in about four months my Portuguese was doing just fine, so that I could function effectively and the longer we were there the more comfortable it became. But it gave me a false security that "if Portuguese came so quickly, others like Arabic could be conquered, too." So my transfer preference was the Middle East. And lo and behold, in came a telegram saying,

"Congratulations. You have been selected for Arab language training in Beirut."

Off we went to Lebanon to learn Arabic. Fritz Frauchiger was head of the program there. There were 20 of us or so in this 18 or 19 month program. Beirut was fascinating, but it was a terrible place to have a language school. The Lebanese, having been occupied by so many people over the centuries, were very cosmopolitan and had command of so many languages. When you went into virtually any store and perhaps found the salespeople talking Italian to a customer or Arabic among themselves, they sensed you were American and switched to speaking together in English. That didn't give you much chance to practice Arabic in your day-to-day activities.

Some people were doing very well at learning Arabic. Generally most students had had a tour of duty in the Arab world, so the sounds of the language were familiar and they probably knew a little Arabic to begin with. For me, it was another world. The only word in Arabic that sounded the least bit familiar was "influenza," which is the same in both languages. I tried to learn the language but without much success. Some of my classmates weren't really doing much better, but they were toughing it out. I was concerned over the capability I would be likely to have at the end of the course and then have to work with it, particularly if I ended up in North Africa where you had a very different dialect.

About nine or ten months into the course I decided that Arabic really wasn't for me and without the language it would be foolish to specialize. I made that point to the deputy chief of mission of the embassy, Evan Wilson. Wilson was an old Arab world hand, but he didn't have a working use of Arabic. He couldn't understand how I felt that you had to have the language to understand the people. His unwillingness to acknowledge the point made me feel all the stronger that there was something lacking here and it was time to do something about it.

I informed the school and the Department that I thought it would be a wise investment to move me elsewhere, and nobody disagreed. My classmates were understanding and supportive of my decision. I stayed on a couple of months in Beirut helping out in the administrative section and then was transferred back to the Department.

One of my former classmates in the A-100 course, Chuck Grover, was finishing up being Portuguese Africa desk officer and the African Bureau was looking for a replacement. I got the job.

Q: You served there from 1962-65?

HIGH: Yes. But before I began to work on Portuguese Africa, I was the acting South African desk officer for some months. Jim Durnan, who was a long-time, very wise, civil service desk officer for South Africa, retired. He had been an "institution" on the desk. The bureau was waiting for Walter Campbell to replace him. Waldo was an FSO with years of experience in the country and was a virtual "institution," as well. I found it very useful to learn more about southern Africa and where Angola and Mozambique fit into the total picture.

In 1964 and 65, I also was the desk officer for Madagascar, the Malagasy Republic, owing to a reorganization within the bureau. We were courting Madagascar quite a bit because we wanted

to put in a NASA space tracking station there. The president of the republic came to Washington on a state visit during that period. It was the first state visit I was ever involved in, and it was exciting. As a policy matter, we were looking for some meaningful AID projects that could be concluded during the visit to firm-up the bilateral relationship and lead to opening a NASA tracking station on the island. It was to be an important link to the Space Program's communications system.

This was my first introduction to AID's reluctance to have its funds used for "political purposes." AID insisted that it didn't do aid projects for political purposes; projects had to be economically justified and the Madagascar proposals just didn't meet the criteria. It was interesting to see those issues work their way through the intransigence and inertia at the desk level up through the bureaucracy to the point where an assistant secretary called the AID Administrator and said, in effect, "You know we have to come up with something that meets your criteria of meaningful development, but we need to have a couple of AID projects that would be helpful to Madagascar so that we can do this other thing." My recollection is that several modest assistance projects were approved.

The president of the Malagasy Republic was taken out to the Goddard Space Center in Maryland and given a briefing there. He made several other stops out of Washington, and the visit was regarded as a success.

That president of the republic was overthrown a few years later and replaced by Marxists. He was a member of the minority highland tribe that had ruled Madagascar for decades. The Marxist government that came in was made up of blacks who were the coastal people of Madagascar.

Anyway, Portuguese Africa included Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, and Sao Tome (though virtually no time was given or needed for the latter). I was the desk officer from 1962 to 1965. I really looked forward to and enjoyed that experience because of my prior service in Angola. There was attention to Portuguese Africa at the White House and in the State Department. The country director at that time was Elbert Mathews, who had been ambassador to Liberia and would later go on to Nigeria. He was a warm, intellectual person, but not to a point of being theoretical. His deputy initially was Bill Wight, the former consul general in Mozambique. Then for much of the time it was Jesse McKnight, who had had experience in Africa and was very much of a political animal. For much of this period, we were in the Office of Southern African Affairs. Later, in a reorganization, Portuguese Africa was moved to the Office of Central African Affairs under Mac Godley. The highest priority of that office was the crisis in the Congo.

Those were really three years of struggling with the White House, the Defense Department, and the European Bureau over what we should be doing with Portugal and Portuguese Africa. Soapy Williams, the former Governor of Michigan, was the Assistant Secretary in the African Bureau. He had a high profile in Washington and did a lot of traveling in Africa. Wayne Fredericks, of the Ford Foundation, was the senior deputy assistant secretary.

Q: Soapy Williams was a very important figure in the AF Bureau in those days, wasn't he?

HIGH: Yes, and a very positive one. There were those who felt that Soapy was just a politician and grand standing, doing things for political reasons without any substance. But for whatever peculiarities Soapy brought to the office, he made important political statements about newly independent Africa. He raised the level of attention and concern in Washington over Africa and US interests there. Wayne Fredericks was also very important in the AF front office, because he provided substance and seriousness to the enterprise.

The European Bureau tended to dismiss whatever came out of Africa as being just Soapy politics. It felt that US interests in Africa were generally inconsequential in contrast to our overriding national interests in Europe. For its part, the African Bureau attracted many people who were fascinated with the transformation and developments in Africa.

Q: You must have had the Azores thrown in your face. Because when you talk about the European Bureau and NATO, it is all Azores, the transatlantic station there.

HIGH: Time and time again NATO and the Azores bases were raised to counter initiatives proposed for Portuguese Africa. If ever there were war in the Middle East and suddenly we had to move troops and supplies, the Azores would be absolutely essential. There was a study at the time -- this was relatively early in the Kennedy Administration -- that indicated that there were alternatives to moving supplies to the Middle East other than through the Azores; i.e., that the Azores were not indispensable. But the Defense Department dismissed that conclusion, the European Bureau didn't pay any attention to it. By and large, the Azores argument was very influential in the Department and at the White House, though we won points from time to time.

When I first came into the desk job, Chester Bowles was at the State Department as Under Secretary. He had the reputation of being a very bold thinker, of challenging conventional wisdom, and trying to take new directions. He was very strong on getting the United States behind constructive independence for Portuguese Africa; that is, independence that still permitted Portugal to have some influence there.

He proposed very early on that the United States help Portugal and the Africans as an intermediary to reach a peaceful solution. The United States would guarantee to both sides that the Portuguese wouldn't be summarily dismissed and moved out, that they would retain some influence in Angola and a presence there, but that the Angolans were to become independent. He hoped that peace and independence would be compatible, and he recognized that Angola needed the skills the Portuguese and friendly relations with Lisbon would assure. He would have had the United States provide significant economic assistance to the metropole for badly needed development there and to Angola. You know, it was a nice idea, but very unrealistic. The Portuguese were very suspicious of what they saw as United States designs on their territories. The Bowles proposal looked to the Portuguese like an effort to buy their colonies.

I did a paper expressing this view at the time; it came to light later out of a Freedom of Information request. The paper was an information memorandum from me to Mathews, the office director, saying, "The Bowles Plan is a great idea but what we are saying is that we want to buy Portuguese Africa from Portugal. The Portuguese would never consider accepting such an offer; they would see it as an American effort to expel them from Africa. It is a nonstarter."

The Bowles plan did enter into our dialogue with the Portuguese; nothing came of it.

The dialogue we developed with Portugal provided me another perspective of the professionalism of the Foreign Service. When I was stationed in Angola, Burke Elbrick visited Angola on an orientation trip. He had been Assistant Secretary in the European Bureau. His sympathies for Portugal and concern about what. . .

Q: He had been Ambassador to Portugal.

HIGH: He was Ambassador to Portugal at the time of his visit. After being Assistant Secretary in EUR in Washington, he was rewarded by being named Ambassador to Portugal. This was early in his period in Portugal and this was a get acquainted trip. He spent a couple of days in Angola and several in Mozambique.

We at the consulate had some very good conversations with him. We felt we could be very frank as a group or individually with him. He was the kind of person who was very decent to his staff, "Come on over (to his guest house, a lovely mansion overlooking the sea) and let's talk." The informality of his invitation was a very effective way to get people to open up. We could sit down with him very easily and say, "This situation is untenable, there are major problems." We were very frank. I believe he understood the difficulties we were describing, but I don't think it changed a principal concern he had -- what would happen to Angola without the Portuguese. The disaster of the Congo was fresh, and it was next door. And, of course, he was concerned about NATO and the Azores.

The particularly high degree of professionalism he displayed came fairly early in my time on the desk in Washington. Apropos of the Bowles initiative and our desire to persuade Portugal of the soundness of the US view that peaceful change in Africa was in Portugal's interest, we sought bilateral talks on the matter.

Salazar agreed to the dialogue. Elbrick received detailed instructions negotiated minutely in Washington between the African and European bureaus and others. He sent back lengthy cables reporting the content of his conversations with Salazar. The cables reported a forthright presentation of US views by Elbrick that impressed even us in the African Bureau. They also contained strong arguments by Salazar that Angola without Portugal was not viable and he needed US support.

What impressed me about Ambassador Elbrick was that here was a person who by in large was very sympathetic to the European Bureau views, but his handling of that dialogue with Salazar, three or four long meetings anyway, was something that nobody in the African Bureau could criticize. He presented the US case very succinctly, very logically, and persuasively. He didn't get anywhere because the Portuguese didn't want to change anything, but it was an impressive example of someone who wasn't necessarily fully sympathetic to the case but was very professional and doing what he was instructed to do. But, as you pointed out, Stu, the Azores argument came back at us time and time again.

If you want to put it in bureaucratic terms, the African Bureau was trying to say, "Let's limit the

impact of the bases and be more involved in forcing the Portuguese to adjust in Africa." The European Bureau stymied that, pleading the Azores case.

One of the interesting figures at that time was Roberto Mondlane, who was a black Mozambican. He was a US university graduate, who was on the staff of the United Nations. At the outbreak of the revolution in Angola, he visited Angola very briefly and traveled to Mozambique trying unsuccessfully to get the Portuguese to moderate their colonial policies. He left the UN and became very active in organizing the nationalist rebellion that broke out shortly afterwards in Mozambique.

Mondlane claimed after that visit to Angola and Mozambique that he had met an American military officer on the flight to Luanda who described US plans to fly American troops to Angola to fight on the side of the Portuguese. Over several years in conversations with Mondlane in Washington, I tried to convince him that there were no such plans or intentions, but he chose to think otherwise. He raised the matter at convenient points in discussions with high American officials. My feeling was that this was his contrivance to challenge American officials friendly to African causes and to seek from them further evidence of our friendliness toward the Africans. That wasn't easy for us to accomplish because some US arms sold to Portugal for NATO purposes were diverted by Portugal for use in the African provinces.

While I was on the desk, somewhere around 1964, Mondlane, who was working out of Dar-es-Salaam in neighboring Tanzania, came to Washington to seek support. He had sessions with Soapy Williams, with Wayne Fredericks and various other people. I accompanied him to most of them. He also had an appointment with Attorney General Bobby Kennedy. I accompanied him to Kennedy's office at the Justice Department, too. As Kennedy's door opened and Mondlane and I started to walk in, there was a growl from across the enormous room, "Get out." It was obviously directed at me, not at Mondlane. Needless to say, they had their private conversation.

One of the developments in that private conversation, it turned out later, was that Robert Kennedy wrote out a personal check to Mondlane. I don't think it was ever cashed. Mondlane used it in his contacts around the world saying, "Here is an indication of my support from the Kennedys," which probably was the way it was intended in the first place.

Another incident was indicative of the stalemate of African Bureau efforts in our contest with the European Bureau. I recall one meeting during the presidential campaign, Lyndon Johnson was running for reelection against Barry Goldwater. The European Bureau sought approval of the sale of certain fighter aircraft to Portugal. Portugal was pressing hard for the sale as a NATO ally, and basically it felt that its NATO allies owed it support in Africa.

US-supplied arms for NATO purposes, including fighter aircraft, had been used in Africa against the nationalists. We saw the danger of further diversions. African states had criticized US arms policy at the United Nations because of the diversions. The African Bureau argued that it was important not to sell the planes to Portugal. Of course, the European Bureau was arguing, Azores, Azores, Azores.

The person who ultimately made the decision on this particular matter was Averell Harriman

who was at the time, Under Secretary of State. Normally, he was sensitive to US interests in Africa and supportive of applying pressure to Portugal to moderate its stand there. I went into Harriman's office feeling hopeful. The various interested bureaus all made our cases. That day the African Bureau lost. We lost because Harriman said, "I have one overriding purpose at this time of my life, and that is to utterly destroy Barry Goldwater politically. I don't want to make a decision that could give him any kind of ammunition in this election campaign." The Azores argument prevailed and the aircraft sale was made to Portugal.

One of the few things we had going for us, other than UN votes and occasional hortatory statements supporting Africans, was a student exchange program at Lincoln University, a historic black school in Pennsylvania. By this time, cultural exchange money brought a number of blacks from Portuguese Africa to the United States for university training. A strong promoter of that was Bob Stevens, an educator, I believe, who came to the Bureau of Cultural Affairs during the Kennedy-Johnson years. Another prime figure in this effort was John Marcum, an educator who headed this exchange program at Lincoln.

Another place the African Bureau generally received support was in the Department's Bureau of International Organizations Affairs. Joe Sisco, Mike Newland, and others had to deal with African and other criticism of US policy at the United Nations. They supported pressing Portugal to change its policies in Africa.

Toward the end of my time on the Portuguese Africa desk, which would have been in mid-1965, there were new efforts to try to get a solution to this policy standoff between EUR and AF. Neither bureau was satisfied with the way things were going. We argued over language and nuances that had some importance, but really only reflected the stalemate in policymaking. More often than not it seemed like a fight at the OKAY Corral, but neither side won anything significant. Then there would be another day, a week would pass and we would go through the whole thing again.

Efforts to reach accord on policy were taken up by an interagency effort led by the State Department to draft overall policy papers. They were intended to focus attention on hard decisions that needed to be made. A Brigadier General from the Air Force was placed in charge of the effort. He was assigned either to the Department's Policy Planning Council or somewhere or other up in that neck of the woods. Bob Ginsberg was his name. He was a very attractive, dynamic young Air Force officer who had a background in international affairs. He engineered over time, with inputs from the European Bureau and the African Bureau, a draft overall policy on Portuguese Africa.

As part of that exercise, Ginsberg took an advisory team to Portugal and to Africa. In Lisbon, we had discussions with Elbrick. Then we flew to Leopoldville, where we met briefly with Ambassador Godley, and on down to Luanda to see what it was like and to mix with the Portuguese there. After that we went over to Mozambique.

I went on that trip, as did Bob Funseth, the Portugal Desk Officer. No wild insights from that trip. The Portuguese displayed their own intransigence. You could see in Angola and Mozambique how militarized the situation was. We got back to Washington and there were

further drafts of the policy paper. It was one of those projects where the hope was to clarify issues, raise them out of the bureaucratic morass, and to facilitate decisions. But the issues raised have to be ripe for decision, with differences ready for bridging. Political leaders were not ready to stick out their necks in this case. And the US approach to the problems of Portuguese Africa continued to fester.

About this time the African Bureau bolstered its personnel to deal with Portuguese Africa. Matt Loram, a recent graduate of the Canadian Defense College, was assigned to the African Bureau. He became my boss as a second deputy office director who would focus strictly on the Portuguese territories. The other deputy worked on the Congo. Matt added insights and stature to our treatment of the issues, and that was important since most of the high level personnel in the office were preoccupied with the Congo.

Q: So when you left there in 1965 nothing was really resolved?

HIGH: No. The wars were getting worse. There were brutalities on both sides. The consulate in Luanda had by now been elevated to consulate general status; it remained an important listening post. Harry Reed was the first consul general. He was masterful in maintaining contacts with the Portuguese in Angola, while providing thoughtful, skillful reports on developments there. Completing his duty there, he next became consul general in Mozambique and continued his impressive reporting from there.

Again, what happened throughout my period on the desk was like the playout of a chess match. The European Bureau had its Azores bases and it effectively protected them. The African Bureau had the winning side of nationalist conflicts, but we were unable to capitalize with the Africans because of the standoff in Washington. Angola slipped into a prolonged war, a pawn of the cold war, that is still with us today.

There was another side to the picture, which I saw or was aware of only occasionally. Holden Roberto had been close to the CIA, but he lost out to the other nationalist leaders. There was also contact with Jonas Savimbi, leader of the nationalist group in central Angola. Subsequently the press disclosed the supply of funds and arms to his movement from the United States. During my work on the territories, diplomats were largely precluded from open relations with them.

EDWARD MARKS
Consular Officer
Luanda (1963-1966)

Ambassador Edward Marks was born in Chicago in 1934, and received his BA from the University of Michigan. He served in the US Army from 1956 to 1958. Entering the Foreign Service in 1959, his postings included Nairobi, Nuevo Laredo, Luanda, Lusaka, Brussels, Lubumbashi and Colombo, with ambassadorships to Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 12, 1996.

MARKS: I left in July or August, 1965.

Q: Where did you go then?

MARKS: Luanda, Angola.

Q: How did this come about? Had Africa whetted your appetite or was it just Personnel?

MARKS: I have to admit that I have gone with the flow a lot. I cannot remember exactly how Africa came up, although I believe I put some African posts on my preference report. My first notice was that I was being assigned to Lourenço Marques, Mozambique. I went back to Washington to do a language transition course from Spanish to Portuguese. My Spanish had gotten rather good in Mexico, to be perfectly honest, the transition into Portuguese and Lourenço Marques sounded very interesting.

Q: Your wife was from where?

MARKS: From Iran. I met her in Nairobi at a classic cocktail party. I started the transition course and one day went to the Desk to do some background reading when I ran across a document in the files that said my next assignment was being changed from Lourenço Marques to Luanda. I was rather furious about this as nobody had told me, nobody was bothering to tell me. This made me rather irritated with +the personnel system and with the desk officer, who I had thought was a friend, but who had kept the change a secret from me, for reasons I never did understand. In the end, however, off we went to Luanda which turned out to be interesting in its own way.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MARKS: From August 1963 to August 1964. It was a two year assignment broken after about 11 months by a direct transfer to Zambia.

Q: What was the situation in Luanda?

MARKS: Here I was again, back to a European colony in Africa. Luanda was an old fashioned Foreign Service consulate, in a very old fashioned colonial situation where the metropole was still unwilling to accept that the winds of change were blowing; even though the other colonial powers had by now all packed their bags and left. Portuguese officials were quite aware of the situation, but repeated constantly the unofficial position which was that they were the first into Africa, and would be the last out. They had another motto: "Us, us alone." I learned a lot about the Portuguese in Luanda. They are a very interesting and stubborn people. I have become very fond of them.

Angola was a very classic settler colony, and was very much cut off from the wider world, as was the Portugal of the era itself. The only Portuguese sign of recognition that the world was changing was the retitling of Angola as an "overseas province." Remember this was the Portugal of Salazar. There were only a couple of Portuguese airline flights a week that into Luanda airport

direct from Lisbon. In fact, one of the favorite and very social events of the week was to go out to the airport when the plane was coming in or going out to say hello and goodbye to friends. Often after a party we would jump into a car and head for the airport.

It was a lovely town, all pink red-tiled roofs and Mediterranean looking, some of it quite old, from the 18th century and even earlier, the Portuguese had been there since the 1500s. There was marvelous old fort right in the center of town, overlooking the ocean. Luanda is located on a little bay with magnificent beaches on both bay side and ocean side and excellent local seafood.

The Portuguese had their own view of history which was very Portuguese centered. At that point, they had no intention in any way, shape, matter or form to give way to the "Winds of Change", because this was not a colony but an overseas province and every inhabitant was a Portuguese citizen. The permanent population, that is those other than military, police, or officials on tours, was made of three groups: Africans, Mestizos, and those originally from the metropole - all of whom were, as I noted, Portuguese citizens. Despite this legal situation, Angola was obviously a classic settler colony. There were 500,000 residents of Portuguese origin (some there many generations) in among a total population 5 or 6 million. But that figure included quite a few mestizos as well as Africans who constituted the majority. The Portuguese pride themselves on not being racist, although in fact it was only a relatively short time since they had extended citizenship to all residents and eliminated the distinction between "indigene and "civilizado." However, they were clearly free of the more obvious and extreme racial attitudes of most European colonials. Did you ever hear that tacky but very Portuguese "witticism:" "God made the white man, the Devil made the black man, and the Portuguese made the mestizo."

It was in Luanda that I began to develop my view that there was not much difference between the various European colonies in Africa. The British always claimed that they were the only ones who know how to properly run and develop a colony, while the French said the same thing. Both the English and the French - officials, academics, journalists, and colonists themselves - all also held the opinion that the Belgians, on the other hand, were terrible and the Portuguese even worse. I later decided that that was a bunch of nationalist nonsense spouted by the apologists of colonial offices, and that there really was not much difference between colonies. Differences did exist, but they arose from whether or not a specific colony was run by and for settlers or by an administrative system, and depending its realizable wealth.

In Angola most senior people in the government and in the commercial and professional classes were "white" Portuguese, but there were also significant numbers of mestizos and a few token Africans. The peasant class was essentially African, but the working class in the cities and small towns also included "white" Portuguese as well as mestizos and Africans. For instance there were Portuguese cab drivers in Luanda. The racial question was blurred and just not as clear as it had been, for instance, in Kenya.

And the Portuguese are stubborn. The story that illustrated to me their stubbornness was an incident in the global war between the Portuguese and the Dutch in the early 17th century. The Dutch tried to take over the Portuguese global empire, global because it included holdings in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. A Dutch fleet took Luanda from the Portuguese in 1610, but the defeated garrison did not surrender but instead retreated into the hinterland. The Dutch followed

them and there was a series of little skirmishes until finally the Portuguese, with some native allies, finally held at a place called Massangena, about 110 miles inland from the coast. They built a fortress and a church, a really elegant structure which is still standing. They held out and waited for relief, these 60 or 70 Portuguese in the middle of Africa in 1610, and relief did come - eight years later. Now, I call that stubborn. Given that history, I could understand - without necessarily agreeing with - the boasts the Portuguese officials and colons would repeat in those days, rejecting the "Winds of Change" and them anti-colonial attacks they were receiving from many quarters: "Us, Us Alone!" and "We were the first in Africa, we will be the last to leave!"

Our little consulate general had three American officers and one American staff and was relatively cut off from the world. Telegrams were transmitted through the international telegraph system. We used to obtain our classified pouches by making our own courier runs to Kinshasa, and surface pouches were received via American flag freighter. We would actually seal the outgoing pouches and carry them down to the port and hand them over to an officer of an American flag freighter. Really very old fashioned, and very much fun. In fact, Luanda was for me a living representation of a conversation I had listened to a few years previous. Three or four young officers were sitting around the old DACOR [Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired] house about four years before our first tour. We were listening to an about to retire FSO who went into the old litany that about how soft the Service was now. His theme song was "When I was a vice consul in Tegucigalpa in 1932..." Well, Luanda was my Tegucigalpa.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about who were the officers there and how they dealt with the government?

MARKS: The Consul General, Harvey Summ, was an officer with a good amount of Brazilian and Latin American experience. His wife was Brazilian and he spoke excellent Portuguese. He was a good, experienced substantive officer in his middle forties. His number two was almost as old; a sardonic, sarcastic, and experienced officer who retired shortly after leaving Luanda a year later. He was probably pushed out by time in grade. But he also had excellent Portuguese and was a good contact officer as well as a good drafter. So, I was with two colleagues who I liked and respected. Neither of them were stars and even the CG did not go much further in his career. But they were solid, responsible, intelligent professionals who [were well-grounded in the basic work] of diplomacy. They didn't have much Paris or London, but a lot of Africa and Latin America. They were good officers. Good to work with and good to work for and I learned a lot from both of them. They helped me with drafting, which needed work, and they helped me learn context. My primary work responsibilities were administrative and consular, but they encouraged me to try my hand at political and economic [reporting].

We were operating with a Portuguese colonial administration which was quite willing to deal with us, at least on consular and commercial questions. Although we technically came under the authority of Embassy Lisbon, as Angola even in Portuguese terms was an "overseas province," in fact we operated as an independent post reporting directly the African Bureau.

Now, to back up a bit. A rebellion against Portuguese rule had broken out in 1960. It was one of the first armed rebellions in Africa, as a matter of fact. By the time I arrived in Angola in mid-1965 the Portuguese had the situation pretty much under control. The remaining rebels were up

in the north or across the border in the Congo but could not threaten much. The rebellion had been pretty bloody during the first year and there had been a period lasting until early 1961 when the situation looked very dangerous for continued colonial rule.

When the rebellion broke out the Portuguese had very few troops in the country and they almost panicked and broke. But after a crucial incident in a northern town, where the civilian residents fought and won a battle against the insurgents, Salazar decided to hold firm and rushed troops to Angola. By the time I got there in mid-1965 the armed rebellion had been essentially defeated. Holden Roberto was the best known leader of rebels but he was physically out of the country, mostly in Zaire, and armed insurgents no longer posed a threat. Anyone could travel in safety, pretty much anywhere you wanted in the country.

At that time, the Portuguese had approximately 50,000 troops in Angola and the security situation well under control. Interestingly, they also had about 50,000 troops in Guinea-Bissau-Bissau (Portuguese West Africa), a much smaller country where they were losing an independence war. I later served there and we can talk about that situation in more detail later. But in Angola in the middle sixties it was quiet, and the sunbathing and food were excellent. The economy was starting to boom and the Portuguese were in firm control with no sense of being seriously threatened, unlike Mozambique and especially Guinea-Bissau.

This was the situation we were trying to monitor, and we had to report that the winds of change were not yet blowing in Angola. Remember this was the period when only the Portuguese, the South Africans, and the Rhodesians were holding out against African independence.

As I noted earlier, Luanda was an independent post, as was Nairobi, reporting directly to the African Bureau. But, in fact, it was a smaller and less prestigious post than Nairobi, and faced a different and more demanding attitude in Lisbon than had existed in London. This was partially due to the character of the ambassador in Lisbon, a very conservative retired admiral, Admiral Anderson. He was focused on NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and Portugal's membership in it. He was supportive of the Portuguese government's attitude towards its "overseas provinces," and the arguments as to why they should not be subject to the "Winds of Change." His attitude, reflecting it must be said, the general viewpoint of the European bureau and the military security-NATO crowd, impacted on our policy towards Angola which was much more ambiguous about independence in Angola than it had been elsewhere in Africa. We in the Consulate-General were pretty much imbued with the African Bureau attitude but we had to watch our step vis-a-vis Embassy Lisbon.

Q: You had that, but you also had an African Bureau and sort of a spirit of the times which was very American seeing independence everywhere and this was a good thing. In a way you had the pragmatists saying who cares about that we have NATO to worry about and Portugal boils down to the Azores which is American geography with Portugal. But at the same time there was the feeling in America that all of Africa should be free.

MARKS: There was that conflict. Also, communications were not very good in those days so we were cut off from the world in a manner much different from today: no TV [television], CNN [Cable News Network], e-mail, or even direct telegraphic traffic. In addition, South Africa had a

very big presence in Angola. Angola was part of the Southern African holdout region. And remember for a long time our relations with South Africa were mixed.

Q: Oh, yes.

MARKS: So with the dual pressures arising from our military interest in Lisbon and the South African economic and political involvement, we were a bit out of sync with the "Winds of Change." Actually few in Washington cared very much about Angola and we just did not feel or sense the African Bureau pressure about independence which I had noticed, certainly, in Nairobi a few years earlier. We at Post certainly thought independence would eventually come, tried to maintain establish contacts outside of the official and colonial communities, and tried to report on the evolving situation - but at that time the evolution was certainly moving very slowly.

One amusing story illustrates this whole question. Our deputy principal officer spoke excellent Portuguese and did a lot of political contact work. He had been in Angola about four years by this time and knew many of people up and down the social scale. One friend he knew quite well was Ernesto Lara, a member of a very important local family, one of whom later became vice president after independence. The family was mestizo, large, and prosperous. They were also very nationalist and anti-Portuguese. Ernesto, called Tio Ernesto by everyone, had been involved in the various anti-government activities at one time or another but was now back in Angola. Actually he was a bit of a drunkard and the Portuguese authorities had obviously decided he was not really much of a threat. He fulminated a lot but didn't appear to do much concretely. The time had now come when Bob Flenner, our DPO [deputy principal officer], was due for transfer. Tio Ernesto dropped by to see Bob one day, at the Consulate General, and we - Tio Ernesto, Bob, and myself - were sitting in Bob's office chatting. Bob mentioned that his time had come and he was being transferred. Tio Ernesto became quite exercised and said, "No, you can't leave us. You know us, you understand Angola, you sympathize with us, and you can not leave us. I am going to send a cable to President Johnson saying that you can not go, you must stay here because you understand us and we need you." Bob made the usual polite remarks and Tio Ernesto asked if he could use the telephone to send a telegram to Washington.

Bob, in his usual relaxed and quietly humorous manner, replied, "Okay, if you want to, be my guest." Tio Ernesto then dialed a number and the ensuing conversation went something like this. "Ola, Joao, this is Ernesto. I want to send a telegram through to Washington to the American President about our good friend Bob Flenner who they want to send away from Angola. I don't want him to go and I want that telegram to go through and I want you to make sure it isn't stopped. Okay?" Tio Ernesto then hung up and explained. "That was Captain So-and-So, the secret police who handles my case. I want to make sure that my telegram to President Johnson is sent. He then picked up the phone again and called the telegraph office and dictated a cable to ask President Johnson to keep Bob Flenner, American Consul, in Angola because he is understanding and sympathetic to the people of Angola."

We laughed and Tio Ernesto wandered off, weaving his way down the corridor. But damned if two or three week later a request didn't come from the Department to provide a reply to the telegram, which the White House had bucked over to the State Department for action.

Essentially, we assumed that independence was coming, even if the possibility did not look promising at the moment. We tried to make contacts across racial and political lines as best we could, and we had reasonably success. The Portuguese did not run a tight political or social ship, and we reported how the Portuguese were handling the economy and political developments. Basically they were standing pat, thinking (or hoping) that they could ride out the storm. We didn't think so, but we also felt that the change would not occur soon and would actually not happen in Angola. The Portuguese were too solidly implanted, with close to a half million pure Portuguese and mestizo residents, many of them with several generations of residence in Angola. A greater danger to Lisbon's rule was a Rhodesian type independence by the local elite. I felt at the time, and later wrote a memo on the subject, that the change would occur in Lisbon when there would be a post-Salazar government (possibly revolution) which would cast off the "overseas provinces." And that is exactly what happened. Up to the time of the revolution in Lisbon, Portuguese control in Angola was not effectively challenged.

Q: Were you getting good reporting? We had not sent our best people to Portugal which showed up particularly when there was the revolution. It was sort of a restful place to put somebody like a former admiral, etc. Did you have any feel for what was happening in Portugal?

MARKS: No, if I remember correctly we didn't get much that was useful to us. What we got was focused on NATO concerns. As I noted, when I was in Luanda the ambassador in Lisbon was a retired and quite conservative retired admiral who was primarily concerned with the Azores and NATO.

We didn't get many visitors in Luanda in those days. It was a very out-of-the-way place, but really quite charming in its own way. It must have been the way many posts were in the twenties and thirties. The National War College group came through for a three or four day visit, which was good fun. We took them into the country a bit, to see the big power plant at Massangena. One very interesting day there was a briefing on the military situation by the Portuguese military. It was a full, classic military briefing maps and all. As the visit control officer I was with them and sat in the back row. The Portuguese military described the war from the beginning and explained where it was now. The Portuguese not having heard about service unification, there were - in sequence- separate army, then air force and finally the navy briefing. It had been largely an army war so the army did all the charts and had young captains with pointers indicating items on various charts, as they described how they had won the war.

Then the air force did the same sort of briefing with the message being pretty much how they had won it, air power and mobility being the real key factors. And then the navy gave its best. They clearly couldn't claim they had really won the war but they concentrated on themselves nevertheless. As we were leaving I heard two of the NWC students commenting that it "was a pretty good briefing. Just the way they do it at Leavenworth. All these guys must be Leavenworth trained." The NWC students thought it was super briefing and gave the Portuguese high marks for the quality of the briefing. There was little or no comment about political aspects or about the implications of guerrilla war, and no reference to Vietnam.

Q: Were there any events during your time there? Were you under restraints not to preach independence?

MARKS: No, we were not under policy restraints or instructions, but the situation was such that we didn't preach independence, although we made no effort to hide the general U.S. support for the "Winds of Change." This occasionally produced private discussions about Portuguese policies, but the Portuguese themselves were actually fairly relaxed and spent their time trying to convince us that they were good "colonials" and/or that Angola was not really a colony but an integral part of the Metropole. As I said the general tone was that this would change in due course and that independence was in the future.

But there was another consideration which complicated the situation. There were close to 500,000 Portuguese settlers in Angola; some had been settled there for generations. There was also an important mestizo community, some of whom were quite prominent and allied with the Portuguese "white" settlers. Lisbon not only had to worry about an African independence movement; it had to watch out for a Rhodesian style "UDI" [Unilateral Declaration of Independence] with the local whites taking over control and declaring itself independent à la Southern Rhodesia. There was a great deal of interest in that option among the local whites, and I think it could have become a very real possibility if the African rebellion in 1960-61 had not required Lisbon to send a large number of metropolitan troops to Angola. By the time that the Rhodesians had set the example, 50,000 Portuguese soldiers in Angola made it no longer a realistic possibility for the local whites.

The U.S. overall official tone was also muted because of our relations with South Africa and our security relations with Lisbon. Therefore, as diplomats do, we accommodated ourselves to the local situation. We certainly didn't defend the Portuguese position and we talked quite openly about changes occurring all over Africa. And we certainly tried to extend our contacts beyond the official community, including the opposition. But, it was a limited involvement because there weren't many of them around, except, if you will, the Portuguese version of "parlor pinks," who were in fact even invited to Governor General's house for official parties and could socialize with us. We obviously weren't meeting any African militants in the bush. We were on the leading edge locally, but not certainly over it.

Q: How did the events in the Congo, which is now Zaire, weigh on Luanda? You looked at Kenya and other places where the transition was made fairly well. The Congo was closer. Things went to hell in a basket, which would serve much more as a role model. How did that effect Luanda?

MARKS: Congolese (Zaire) independence in 1960-61 had been pretty nasty, and later got even worse. In 1965 and 66, commercial planes were still flying between Luanda and Kinshasa. For the Portuguese, the Belgian Congo was an example of what not to do. They interpreted that recent history as confirmation that they were right to stay and continue to impart civilization over a period of time. They felt they were better at the civilizing mission because they were devoid of the racial hangups which the other European colonizers suffered from. They had been in Africa longer, they understood it, they were a mixed racial society themselves and therefore they would be able to build a society in Angola which could survive. At least this was the line they were taking, interpreting the problems in the Congo as confirmation for their policy.

The other side of the Portuguese situation was close ties to the South African. In fact, the

Portuguese disliked the South Africans enormously, especially the Afrikaners. The South Africans reciprocated... You can imagine the attitudes towards those "funny little Mediterraneans, mostly interbred with Africans as well." But, given developments and geography, they were now allies and partners. On the one hand, the Portuguese felt the Belgian reaction, the way they had managed the Congo and then scuttled and left, was a bad example, while on the other hand, they felt the South Africans weren't doing it right either because of their racial bias. They claimed that they had the right balance between the Belgian and the South African colonial policies and practices.

Q: Were you all getting any emanations from Kinshasa about what was happening there? What was your mind set on this?

MARKS: We saw some of the reporting on Congo-Kinshasa developments, and we occasionally had visitors from the Embassy come down to Luanda (usually carrying a diplomatic pouch) or on R & R [rest and relaxation] who would bring us some news. But essentially we were just watching the Congo like everybody else. Remember communications were much more limited in those days, and even the international press arrived days late. Also, there was little fighting in Angola. In a sense, we were in a bit of a trough then, in the Congo as well as in Angola.

Q: Did oil come into play while you were there?

MARKS: No. There was talk about oil and a certain amount of exploration, but it hadn't begun to be exploited. There was certainly interest, especially in Cabinda where development and some exploitation was underway. Copper was a more pressing question. A new copper development was underway, with American participation. Angola is an extraordinarily rich country, with continental agriculture in the highlands, tropical agriculture on the coast, major coffee plantations, some of the world's best off shore fishing grounds, diamonds, oil, and superb natural ports.

Q: Were the Portuguese doing much with it at the time?

MARKS: Yes, although development was limited by Portugal's poverty and the government's reluctance to open development to outsiders. They didn't really allow a lot of foreign investment. Later they did, and there was an economic boom in Angola in the late sixties and early 1970s, just prior to the revolution in Lisbon.

Q: I take it from both the Portuguese attitude and the way they had control that there was no Soviet threat there.

MARKS: No, not at all. This is still the era of the Salazar regime which was very anti-Soviet, and fervently anti-Communist. They would, of course, wrap that attitude into their opposition to the African independence movements, calling them Communist inspired. There was no Soviet consulate or any other sort of representation.

A funny place Angola, as Portugal itself was not an open, democratic society. In one sense you had equality of treatment. The political environment, the role of the political police, and

limitations on discussion and behavior in Luanda was no worse than it was in Portugal itself. So you didn't have that bit of hypocrisy found in the French and British colonies with democracy at home and autocracy in the colony. Angolans and Portuguese were equal before the law and political power.

I don't know if you are familiar with Portugal, but one of the great amusing aspects of Portuguese society under Salazar was the passion for anti-Salazar jokes, common among government and military officials as well as political opponents and outlaws. Everybody told anti-Salazar jokes. Travelers returning from Lisbon would be expected to bring back the latest such jokes. I was quite friendly with an air force lieutenant colonel who swore that his mother had been Salazar's secretary for many years and had, as one of her jobs, the responsibility for keeping up to date Salazar's own "joke book" on anti-Salazar jokes. Salazar ran an autocracy with a Portuguese style.

Now that I think of it, there were three other officers at the consulate general, not two. We had a CIA officer. He, of course, would not admit that he was from the agency, although it was well known around town, certainly in the consular community. A standing joke among the consular corps was the observable fact that only two consular officers in Luanda had their own "personal" Land Rovers. One was our "Vice Consul for Visas". The other one was a South African vice consul who used to do his weekend gardening in what looked suspiciously like fatigue pants and army boots. We all assumed he was South African military intelligence, and some years later I was amused to see a newspaper report of his appointment as Chief of Staff of the South African Army.

Q: It was the same in Saigon. The CIA people all had guards in front of their houses who were Hmong, quite different than Vietnamese, and they all had the same kind of car, too.

MARKS: Anyway, our man was there to do what the agency is supposed to do, make contact with the other side. But it was such a tight community, and I believe he was under instructions not to take chances (or at least he so implied) that he was very circumspect that I think we did better opposition contacts than he did. Some years later, a South African diplomat who I had known in Nairobi told me that when he visited Luanda after I had left, he discovered that it was accepted knowledge that the American CIA person in the American ConGen was Ed Marks. I took that as a professional compliment, as well as naiveté on the part of these so-clever observers.

Q: Did you have the feeling now that you were becoming an Africanist within the Service? Was this sort of a calling? How did you and your wife feel about this?

MARKS: Yes, I did feel I was becoming one. For the next ten years I continued in African affairs, even though I did spend a tour in Brussels, and I was quite comfortable with it. The posts were small and it was a time of great excitement and change. The work was interesting and seemed to be a high priority activity. Now, I was fooling myself to some degree as we all were. What we used to tell each other, particularly when we ran across colleagues who had been in Europe in the big posts, doing the traditional diplomatic stuff of junior and middle grade officers, was that it was better to be a big fish in a small pool than a small fish in a big pond. We used to

point out that while important events were happening there, the place is crawling with people and our peers were sitting down in the bottom of whatever section they were in so "don't tell me you are doing anything serious up there, my dear friend."

So we told ourselves, with some degree of validity I think, that we were more actively involved, that as there were fewer of us we were individually doing more interesting, more substantive work. And, I still think there is something to that perspective.

Although I did become an Africanist by definition, spending most of my early career in African affairs, I did not become an enthusiast, or ideologue so to speak. I was interested in Africa but I never became an African "groupie" to use a later term. Some of my colleagues did. For instance, later when I was Kenya desk officer, I remember a long discussion with a colleague who was the Guinea-Conakry desk officer. Along with others he would almost become "more Papist than the Pope" and I remember his fervent defense of Sekou Toure arguing that Sekou Toure was only doing what was necessary in order to recreate a new African society. Now Sekou was a bloody tyrant, up to his armpits in blood, a thug. And yet, all the liberals of those days would go through contortions to defend Sekou and other tyrants in Africa just because they were African. The political groupies from the West especially focused on Julius Nyerere, who was their ideal African leader...modest, calm, educated. Actually in retrospect Nyerere does look pretty good but he was nevertheless a statist in terms of approach to governance and his legacy is mixed.

Q: He particularly enthralled the Swedes, Scandinavians, and socialists.

MARKS: And almost every American journalist, academic, or anyone else interested in Africa. I was just contrary enough to argue that Kenyatta was an interesting and important leader. Most other observers dismissed him as an old fashioned tribal and a capitalist who doesn't understand Africa's future. I would still argue that he left a better legacy than he is generally given credit for.

Q: You know there is a certain parallel to this to the twenties and thirties with the Soviet Union with the intellectual community. Here were some real tyrants, Lenin and Stalin, really nasty people. Yet, somehow or another you had apologies going on and in this case the right was right.

MARKS: Yes, "no enemies on the left." This was a legacy of the thirties when many people thought they had to make a choice between Fascism and Communist. If you were anti-Fascist you had to join the left, and for awhile the Communists owned that phrase and that turf. There were only a few clear-sighted, objective people like Orwell who was able to see both sides. Most people chose and went one way or another.

You had that phenomena in spades in Africa. Remember that almost all of the new African leaders were educated in Europe although some had gone to the United States. Now if you were an African student in London, Paris, Brussels or the United States, where would you find a welcome? Largely in the world of the academic left. An African student in an American university wouldn't end up in the fraternity crowd, but rather among the Bohemians. The same thing happened in Europe where they learned their politics and economics from the European academic Left - which, by the way, is why I have always thought the Indian Brahman class was and is so anti-American. They learned their politics and world view in Oxbridge [contraction for

Oxford and Cambridge Universities] and the London School of Economics, that part of the English academic community which was not only left economically and politically, but also fervently anti-American. And the same thing is true of those who came from Africa. That perspective was reenforced by the left-liberal attitudes of those who went to Africa in the sixties and seventies, those I call the African groupies. They kept encouraging the Africans in their European learned statist, centralized governance approach. All sorts of people, especially Americans, who wouldn't recommend socialism for their own country nevertheless encouraged it for newly independent African countries.

Q: Yes, because it fit the African tribal...

MARKS: Also because of then current economic development theory. In those days, even anti-communists would feel they to admit that despite its horrible political record, the Soviets had done an impressive job of industrializing and modernizing the Russian economy. Only later did we learn that the Soviet success was a facade.

Q: Yes, since 1990 or so, we learned of the disaster that the Soviet economy was. I have often thought that the most poisoned chalice you might have was that which the British and French socialists passed on to the Africans.

MARKS: There is another aspect of Africa which I had not noticed or appreciated in Kenya but began to see in Angola and Zambia, which was that colonial societies in Africa were basically socialist or state-run economies. Therefore when the Africans took over at independence, they were not about to change it now that they owned it. If you were the new political leadership, why would you break up an economic system which the guys you just replaced ran very comfortably. Both the intellectual perspective you [gained] at Oxford or the London School of Economics, and your own instinctive desire to maintain control led to espousing socialism which allowed you to maintain the old colonial, state-managed economic system which was now called progressive socialism.

Q: Was there anything else we should cover in Angola before we move on?

MARKS: One thing I can not resist quoting, a very cynical but funny remark by old, senior colleague, Dean Brown, who visited us as a Foreign Service inspector. Over drinks one day, he laid out what he called the two rules on folk culture. Rule 1: All folk culture is interesting for 20 minutes. Rule 2: All folk culture lasts longer than 20 minutes.

Q: Where did you go after Angola?

MARKS: I had only been in Luanda for about 11 months when I given a direct transfer to Lusaka, Zambia to replace Hank Cohen who had been the regional labor and economic officer for the Central African Federation.

G. HARVEY SUMM

**Consul General
Luanda (1965-1969)**

G. Harvey Summ was raised in New York City. He attended City College of New York and received a degree in business administration. He entered the Foreign Service in 1948 and went to serve in the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Ecuador, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, and Angola. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 5, 1993.

Q: *You left there in 1965. What did you do then?*

SUMM: Transferred to Luanda.

Q: *This is quite a career change wasn't it?*

SUMM: I didn't want to go to Africa. The idea of being Consul General had its appeals, but I knew that Africa, in general, was not where all the action was going to be and that I, at an independent post, unless something unusual happened, would be forgotten and would not help me careerwise.

Q: *Angola at that time was a Portuguese colony.*

SUMM: There was an insurgency going on there.

Q: *You were there from 1965-69. What was the situation in Angola at that time?*

SUMM: There were two insurgencies going on when I arrived and a third developed while I was there. So the Portuguese were having to deal with these in various parts of the province. It became clear quickly that there was going to be no early solution to this. That the insurgents operated from privileged sanctuaries, countries on Angola's borders, Zaire and Zambia. So the Portuguese could keep them from advancing, but could not eliminate them. Therefore, among those of us in the consular corps, who watched this, it became clear that the solution would have to come from Lisbon. Sooner or later when the Portuguese tired of this, that much as in the case of Vietnam, the solution came here in Washington rather than on the ground. Life in Angola, perhaps surprisingly, was very pleasant, in Luanda, at least. My wife and I, when we didn't have anything social on, used to walk our dogs out in the park or near the fortress where the Portuguese command headquarters was, because the Portuguese had urban terrorism under control. None of that happened there. However, in order to inform myself, I traveled constantly and was all over the province going to all fifteen districts. I was in convoys, flew in small planes, right down to places where a lot of the fighting took place in the recent civil war. I was familiar with all these places.

Q: *You were technically reporting to our Embassy in Lisbon. To whom did you belong?*

SUMM: My efficiency reports were written by AF, Bureau of African Affairs. But I was also instructed to keep Lisbon informed of everything I was doing. So in effect I had two bosses. I don't mind this. I am a sort of agile sort of person. I like dealing with complicated situations.

Ambassador Tapley Bennett came down and spent two weeks in Angola and we traveled the province together, found that we shared views about many things. Let me put it to you this way, my brief, in terms of what I was to accomplish, was to try to persuade the Portuguese to allow Africans more of a say in how things were run. And I attempted to carry that out to the best of my ability, even knowing it was impossible.

Q: How does one do this?

SUMM: Well, you talk to officials or you try and make contacts with blacks who seem to be loyal to the Portuguese. You try to encourage activities that are aimed at improving the welfare of the blacks. When the Portuguese tell you that, "We have been here for 500 years and we, unlike the other European powers, will never abandon Africa," you look at them very seriously when they talk, but when you have gained their confidence you find that they didn't believe this either.

My wife was an enormous help to me, by the way, with her Brazilian background. I used to describe her as a ping pong ball which the Portuguese and I used to get at each other. They didn't trust us. The Portuguese thought we were after their colonies, as ridiculous as it may seem. Giving up their colonies has turned out to be the best thing that has ever happened to them. But they didn't think this.

Q: One hears that the Portuguese had not made much effort to meld the Africans into their government there.

SUMM: Hardly anything. They had this myth, which many of them believed themselves, that the Portuguese have a unique multiracial skill that no other Europeans have. And that Brazil, they say, is the best example. And that the blacks were really loyal to them, but that just wasn't so. And the intelligence officials there knew it wasn't so. I am dubious how successful they have been in multiracial terms, even in Brazil. But in Angola they had an African society which was intact with its tribal arrangements, which just rejected them, in contrast to Brazil, where the Africans themselves were uprooted.

And, in fact, looking at their own census activities, the numbers of Portuguese who had actually come to Angola was pitifully small. I think by 1940 there were only 50,000 Portuguese in the colony of 5 million people. So it was only from the forties on that Portuguese immigration began in large numbers. So their claim that they had been there for 500 years was largely specious.

And the Portuguese had done very little to prepare the Africans. One has to look at Portuguese resources themselves. They had very little with which to do it. They were a poor country. So there was a lot less than meets the eye in terms of their ability to prepare for independence.

Q: Did you have any contact with the various rebel groups at all?

SUMM: No, we couldn't have. Their representatives outside Angola, whether in African countries or in the US, were in touch with US officials. But I couldn't.

Q: What were American interests there?

SUMM: Toward the end of my stay, Gulf Oil Company discovered offshore oil. Other than that, nothing really. So, the objective was to prevent an African colony of the Portuguese from going communist afterwards.

Q: Did the Soviets have representation there?

SUMM: No.

Q: How about you? You were saying they viewed you with suspicion?

SUMM: Yes, at the beginning. The Portuguese wondered why the US was not supporting them wholeheartedly. Their conclusion was that we wanted these colonies for ourselves. This gradually dissipated as I made it clear that my job was really to keep informed about what was going on. I was not making representations to them for any change in their policy. . .that was being done by my Embassy in Lisbon. So what I found was that I was able to travel rather freely, got a lot of cooperation from people. When we had visiting delegations. . .War College, etc. . .we were able to be briefed by their officials. That suspicion dissipated and we had good relationships and, as I indicated to you, good enough so that we got to the point where they confided to us their own apprehensions about the likely longevity of their stay.

Q: Did you feel in talking to people back in the African Bureau that Angola was pretty far down the line, that Africa was not on the front burner of American foreign policy anyway and that Angola was pretty far down on the African Bureau's agenda?

SUMM: As you recall, in 1961 when Kennedy came in, Soapy Williams was made Assistant Secretary for Africa. This was to give it high prominence. This was the period of decolonization. The US was going to make common cause with these countries. But as time went by, again once Kennedy was no longer on the scene, Africa did assume that. . .and Angola was less important than others. Perhaps, if any importance only because of its proximity to South Africa. Even there, Mozambique was much closer to South Africa.

Q: So you didn't have the feeling the South Africa was looming over you, or anything like that?

SUMM: No. The South Africans I knew there maintained a very low profile. They cooperated with the Portuguese in a military sense.

Q: So you left there in 1969. Then what did you do?

SUMM: I came back to become Director of Research for Latin America in INR.

MARK LORE
Consular Officer
Luanda (1966-1968)

Mark Lore was born New York in 1938, and graduated from Bowling Green State University. He served in the US ARMY from 1961 to 1964 as an overseas captain. His positions include Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Luanda, Rabat, Brussels and Lisbon. Lore was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 26, 1998.

LORE: I left in '66. We had planned on at least a year in Brasilia. The Department at that time assigned junior officers on a "central complement" basis that is over an above normal staff. At a large post, when the powers that be decided that you were okay -- you were not going to be an abject failure -- you became fair game for assignment into a regular funded position someplace else. In the second half of '66 Ed Marks was the junior officer in Luanda, Angola, a consulate at that time in a territory under Portuguese control. He was transferred to an economic officer position in Zambia and I suddenly received a cable saying "Proceed directly from Brasilia to Luanda." So by October of '66 we were in Luanda.

Q: *Luanda being the capital of?*

LORE: The capital of Angola, a Portuguese colony on the west coast of Africa.

Q: *For the record I've interviewed Ed Marks on this so the story will pick up. What was Angola like? First place you were in Angola from '66...?*

LORE: It would have been October '66 until December '68.

Q: *What was Angola like when you arrived? What was the situation?*

LORE: Angola was on the surface a kind of baby Brazil. The topography, the vegetation, the Portuguese culture and the racial mix all suggested a kind of a Brazil in Africa. There were a lot of links. So it was a comfortable environment. Of course, politically, it was very different. It was a colony of Portugal. The Portuguese had been engaged since 1961 in a very vicious war against black nationalist insurgents who were trying to kick them out. During the time I was there, '66 through '68, the Portuguese effort had doubled and redoubled. It had reached its peak during my time. There were, as I recall, something like 50,000-60,000 Portuguese troops in Angola and that, along with a large-scale campaign of moving poor Portuguese settlers down to Angola to inject a white presence and a sort of stability in the interior created a situation where the insurgents were fairly marginalized. The insurgents themselves were fighting tribally based vendettas amongst each other. So the Portuguese were pretty firmly in control but only by dint of force of arms, not by the fact that they had any significant allegiance among the African population.

Q: *It would have been a consulate general at that point, right?*

LORE: That's right.

Q: *What was Luanda as a consulate general like? How was it staffed and all?*

LORE: It was a very small post. It had the consulate general rank for a number of reasons. Portuguese Africa was a problem for the Kennedy administration. We wanted to keep good relations with our NATO ally Portugal. We particularly didn't want to endanger our presence in the Lages base in the Azores. At the same time Kennedy was under some pressure to accommodate African-American opinion on the colonial issue. So, symbolically, these two little posts, the one in Angola and the other in Lourenço Marques in Mozambique were put under the African bureau in the State Department -- to the great unhappiness of our ambassador in Lisbon. They were upgraded to consulate general rank to convey that we saw these territories as other than colonies of Portugal. We had taken some symbolic anti-Portugal votes in the UN which, just before my arrival, resulted in some serious violence against the consulate. The U.S. vote against Portugal in the UN, voting for self-determination of the Portuguese colonies, caused a mob to attack the Consulate general cars and throw them in the bay.

Q: This would be Portuguese?

LORE: It was a Portuguese mob, a white Portuguese mob. The consulate had four officers; the consul general was Harvey Summ. I was the junior of the four. I had a great job for a junior officer. My duties were essentially to take care of the administration and the consular obligations of the post which were minimal, and spent a good bit of my time traveling around the province, as it was called, and reporting on the guerrilla war.

Q: First place, when you reported, was there any connection to our embassy in Lisbon, or was it just sort of...sent something, information?

LORE: We never cleared anything with our ambassador in Lisbon. In fact, to do so would have subjected us to criticism from the African bureau. We were supposed to be independent. As I say, our ambassador in Lisbon wasn't crazy about that. They were, during my time, Ridgway Knight and Tapley Bennett. They were both professionals and they understood. They visited Angola. While it's hard not to act as the ambassador, they understood there was a certain difference in how a US official dealt with our hosts down there since we had this political objective of seeming to not recognize Portuguese dominion there indefinitely -- although we did recognize it in fact. So the division of duties was fairly clear. We didn't clash very much with the embassy in Lisbon. We reported on what was going on the ground in these areas, how the war was going, what these colonial societies were like. Were there winds of change? To the degree we could, we reported on local African attitudes, although these were very hard to ascertain. The embassy in Lisbon really reported on how the Portuguese government viewed the question and on the terms of the bilateral relationship.

Q: This was still Salazar, wasn't it?

LORE: It was Salazar when I got there and Caetano by the time I left.

Q: What about your dealings with this? First place, it sounded like it would have been a difficult situation if the Portuguese were putting in essentially blue-collar Portuguese and giving them a hunk of land and all of this, that they wouldn't be very amenable to dealing well with the black population or...It would be a rather intractable sort of (inaudible).

LORE: I think the Portuguese were trapped by their own myth of racial harmony, their own so-called civilizing mission. In point of fact, by injecting significant numbers of white settlers into Angola, they created racial tensions and a racial pecking order that didn't exist before. American and other foreign visitors would come to Luanda and Portuguese officials would show them around and brag about the fact that here, unlike any other place in Africa, you had white taxi drivers, you had white ditch diggers, you had white waiters, you had whites doing menial jobs and living in the poorest areas. It was a point of pride -- this showed the racial democracy that was developing in the colony. The reality was, in fact, that Africans resented this tremendously since importing whites barred the way for them to be taxi drivers, or waiters, or ditch diggers and they didn't see this as a desirable state of things.

Q: What about blacks? Were there many blacks who had moved up through the bureaucracy or in business and all who became contacts?

LORE: Very few. Virtually none. There was a small group of mulatto, what we would call blacks, but they were distinguished as mulattos. They often moved in white society, often had white wives, had received education in Lisbon and were in the professional class and in some cases, in the bureaucracy. But they constituted very small number and many of them had become disaffected. Some of them had become active and were leaders in the resistance movements, others had just left the country or moved to Portugal to be away from the war. So you dealt almost exclusively with a white bureaucracy and power structure in Angola. Now there was a white settler elite that never reached the level of what you had in Rhodesia next door. There was some nascent complaining about Lisbon and some would occasionally expressed a desire to break away Rhodesia-style. It never came to anything because they knew that if the Portuguese government left, they wouldn't have a chance against the black majority.

Q: I assume you were dealing mainly with Portuguese bureaucrats, weren't you?

LORE: That's right.

Q: What was your impression? Were they sort of the typical, what one thinks of as colonial types?

LORE: Yes, I would say so. Many of them, particularly out in the field, were quite similar to what you see in films, and histories of the British or French empires. Being Portuguese, they lived more humbly than perhaps some other Europeans did. They often came from a poor or humble background. There was not a lot of ostentation and pomp in Portuguese colonialism, even in the capital, Luanda. It doesn't go with the Portuguese character. Portugal at that time was trying very hard, pouring an enormous amount of money and military force into Angola and Mozambique. In fact this led directly to the eventual revolution in metropolitan Portugal in '74 because the country itself was bled white. It's a good example of how a colonial power's attempts to sustain its possessions becomes suicidal because in order to keep the lands you have to put so much into them that you pauperize your own constituents in the home country.

Q: What about the Portuguese military? I would have thought they would have not have been

very forthcoming to the Americans there since we had this pretty obvious anti-colonial thrust to our African policy.

LORE: There were individuals who were suspicious. There were individuals who would make snide remarks. But during the time I was there I think the feeling among the Portuguese was that Portugal's attempts to stabilize the situation were on the upswing. They were looking for investment from the Western countries. They thought that they had suffered the worst they were going to suffer in the UN. And as Portuguese, they had for the most part a very favorable attitude about the United States. Some of the settlers were actually more difficult, but the settlers didn't have much political power. They made noise, but they didn't have political power. So I would say that my experience was largely a friendly one.

I remember that we did a little sort of homegrown USIA effort in the consulate for Portuguese who were interested in learning English and practicing their English. Every week we would get together. I decided at one point it would be fun to show the movie about Kennedy which was around at that time, *Years of Lightning, Day of Drums*, you remember that. George Stevens, As an American I found it a very moving movie. I showed it, the lights went up, and there was a very, very chilly reception. Remember that these were people coming to the consulate because they liked Americans and they wanted to learn English. But they immediately said, "You know, he's the guy who voted against us in the UN. We'll never forgive him." They were very resentful of that. But Kennedy had been dead for several years by that time and I think their feeling was that relations with the U.S. were now on a different track.

However some Portuguese, more in the civilian side than in the military side, would say that, "You Americans, you just want to get us out of here so that you can have this for yourselves." My answer always was, look; we were at the worst point of...the high watermark in Vietnam. We had enough problems. We didn't need another one in terms of instability in a resource rich country in the third world. We wanted Portugal to be a force for stability, we just didn't think that it was going about it in the right way, by denying eventual independence and self expression in the African territories. But you wouldn't find much of an audience for that point of view.

Q: What some of the African nationalist leaders? Did you have, you, I mean in the consulate general, have any particular access to them?

LORE: No, we had no access to them. They were on the other side of the line. To have contacted them then would have required that we be out of country. Even then, if the Portuguese learned of such contacts, we would probably have been expelled from Luanda. So we left those contacts to our colleagues in embassies in independent African countries on the periphery - in Zambia or the Congo, Zaire, and elsewhere such as in Europe, where these organizations had representation. We did not have contacts with them.

Q: In Rhodesia had the UDI, Unilateral Declaration of Independence, taken place?

LORE: Yes, I'm trying to remember. It was during that period it took place, right.

Q: I was wondering whether that had any impact or was Angola one world and Rhodesia was

another?

LORE: Well, as I say, the white settler elite in Angola, which was a small group, felt to be Angolan, not Portuguese. They had lived most if not all of their lives in Angola...They looked at the Rhodesia events with sympathy and would have liked to have been able to do the same thing but they did not have the power position or the military position to protect themselves and they knew it. They weren't big enough and so they never made any serious attempts. Plus the fact that those 60,000-70,000 troops in Angola from the metropole were also a force for making sure that white settlers didn't cause any problems.

Q: With your military background what was your impression of the Portuguese army and how they were doing the '66 to '68 period?

LORE: They benefited from having farm boys as troops in that these men were able to put up with a relatively low level of comfort. They could live in the field for long stretches easily and without complaint. They required less of a supply chain than, say, a American army would. But they also showed very little interest in aggressive pursuit of the guerrillas. They did only what was absolutely necessary. There was not the kind of imaginative initiative that might have possibly curtailed the threat definitively. That's, of course, also on the political side as well as on the military side.

The Portuguese took a very limited military approach. Units went out, they basically oversaw the collecting of large groups of native Africans into secure villages. They were a presence and yet there was no real political agenda in terms of the underlying issue of white foreign rule. So without that, the military didn't have much to do except to keep the guerillas marginalized. As for the guerillas themselves, they did suffer some deaths, but were left largely alone. It was rather a stalemate. The Portuguese were able to control a good part of the country but at any given time, the insurgents, if they wanted to move in an area probably could. This undercut the psychological security of the white population and of the troop units.

So the Portuguese, despite their overwhelming presence, never felt very secure. The Portuguese military was armed at a fairly basic level. Most of them viewed the war as something to get through, to put in their time. This was true of officers as well as enlisted...put in their time and get out without being hurt rather than going in there with any enthusiasm to accomplish a larger geopolitical goal.

Q: Were there any reflections from our consulate general in Mozambique? Did you see that as sort of a mirror image of Angola?

LORE: We certainly read each other's reporting. During the period I was in Angola, the Portuguese were in a much more tenuous position in Mozambique. This was both because of the geography of the country because there were far fewer whites in Mozambique. Also, there were strong white supremacist views among the settler whites in Mozambique due to the racial influence of South Africa. The Portuguese authorities were distressed by such racism, because it undercut the multiracial image they were trying to propagate. Finally the Mozambican guerilla group was larger, better disciplined, and a more formidable force, with secure bases in Tanzania

next door. The Portuguese largely were not in control in northern Mozambique and accepted that. That didn't really have a correlation in Angola.

Q: In sort of trying to capture the spirit of the times, how much would you and your fellow officers of the consulate general...Do we feel there was the Soviet hand in what was happening there?

LORE: I don't recall seeing it as a Cold War issue. I don't think the administration in Washington did either. We were constrained in that we had this tremendous need for the Azores. But we in Angola didn't live with that day by day. That wasn't something we had to worry about. We saw the situation on the ground as something that was doomed to change, winds of history and all that, and we didn't see it really as a Cold War issue. It was obvious that the Chinese and the Russians were exploiting the situation for their own ends, but we primarily blamed the Portuguese for allowing inroads by these unfriendly powers in important segments of the African populations - probably including the future leadership - by their obdurate policy.

Q: What were the dynamics of the consulate general? How were relations there?

LORE: It was a small group. Like many African posts there is really a lot of reason to stick together and be tolerant of other people's behavior. We all had our jobs to do. I remember relations as being fairly good. Towards the end of my time three of the four officers were all about the same age, with broadly similar personalities. Several of us remain friends to this day. So I think relationships were good. The consul general, Harvey Summ, made no bones of the fact that he had been sent there with instructions to tighten things up a bit. This had been a very sleepy equatorial African post in years past; he was interested in instilling some more discipline into the operation, but he was a good manager and I think he was well liked. There were remarkably few tensions given the possibility for them in the consulate during my time there.

Q: Social life? How was that?

LORE: Social life was active, it was good. There were a number of consulates there so you dealt a lot with the foreign community. You dealt a lot with the Portuguese bureaucracy and elite. You did not deal much with Africans for reasons I've mentioned. There were very few Africans of any prominence. I, as a junior officer, had particular responsibility to develop relationships with the sort of mulatto elite, which was very interesting. These people seemed to be quite apolitical and never talked about politics and I didn't press them because it was a serious business. This was an authoritarian state. The secret police were omnipresent and you could get people in real trouble, you might even be risking their lives by compromising them. But I was struck by the fact that when Sandy and I were about to Angola, we were offered a goodbye luncheon at one of the mulatto's houses - just when Salazar had taken his spill out of a chair from which he never recovered.

Q: What happened? He just collapsed?

LORE: He fell out of a chair and as an elderly man, you know, falls are often fatal to elderly people, and he never really recovered and he was replaced a few months later by Caetano and

then eventually he died. But he had just taken this fall out of his chair and I was struck by the very sharp and acerbic jokes at this luncheon about Salazar himself and about the white Portuguese. I had to conclude that, since I was leaving, people felt free to talk in a way they didn't when I was there.

Q: Did you feel yourself attracted towards might be called the Africanist core in the Foreign Service? What did you feel career-wise you wanted to point towards?

LORE: In Angola, of course, one often didn't have the sense of being in Africa. You were in Africa physically, but you were dealing with whites. When I left Angola, I was assigned to be the Portuguese African desk officer in the African Bureau. Probably during that time I felt more of an attraction to an Africanist specialty, since I was dealing with people who had served around the continent. But it never really developed that way for various reasons.

Q: You left in '68 and went back to Washington?

KENNETH N. ROGERS
Deputy Principal Officer
Luanda (1966-1968)

Kenneth N. Rogers was born in New York in 1931. He received his BA from Ohio State University in 1953, and his UJD from George Washington University in 1958. His career includes postings abroad in Hong Kong, Saigon, Luanda, Kingston, and Tangier. He was interviewed on October 21, 1997, by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Today is November 5, 1997. You were off to Angola. You were there from 1966 to when?

ROGERS: 1968.

Q: What was the situation in Angola from 1966-1968?

ROGERS: It was still a Portuguese colony. Some guerrilla warfare was still going on in the northwest in an area called the Dembos. In various areas of the country were three competing groups: FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola), UNITA, and then the major one was the MPLA. They were competing to a certain extent among each other, but mostly against the Portuguese central government.

Q: Before you went out there, did you talk to the desk?

ROGERS: Oh, yes.

Q: Was this one of these situations that happened in Algeria? First of all, was it part of the French desk?

ROGERS: No, Africa.

Q: But it was Portuguese territory at the time? Was there the normal tension between NATO people and the Azores and all that?

ROGERS: Yes. I think the EUR Bureau was supportive of Portugal because of our interests in the Atlantic Alliance. The Africa Bureau was more inclined toward decolonization. I don't think we had a very fixed policy at that time. It was more or less to monitor the situation and see how the internal struggle was going. The South African government clearly supported the Portuguese. The Congo, Zaire, supported the FNLA, Holden Roberto, who actually lived in Kinshasa. Gradually, the war struggled on.

Q: What was your job?

ROGERS: I was in Luanda. That's a beautiful seaport, a very ancient town. When the Portuguese explorers first landed about 120 miles north of there at the mouth of the Congo (Zaire) River, they found a very organized kingdom called the Kingdom of the Congo. Its capital in northwestern Angola was renamed by the Portuguese Sao Salvador (Savior). The Portuguese regrettably, although they were most welcomed by the indigenous people, didn't take too long in corrupting them. The Catholic priests who were then headquartered at Sao Tome, a Portuguese island out in the Bight of Benin, gradually became slavers themselves and got into the slave trade, had numerous fights with the indigenous tribes who believed, sadly, that if they became Catholic, they would be saved from these rapacious priests. They were sadly disappointed because their kingdom was destroyed. As with many parts of Africa, part of that kingdom was inside what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or old Zaire. The straight lines that the Europeans drew had nothing much to do with where the tribes were. When I was there, the Portuguese were still very, very severe with the population, forcing them to do road maintenance. Essentially, the local chief would be assigned work products and he had to get those accomplished. The Portuguese were still fairly brutal in those days. There were harsh physical punishments for not completing a task. They had another concept for persons called "assimilados" (to assimilate). Africans who would adapt a veneer of European (meaning Portuguese) civilization were treated a good deal better. There was a great deal of intermarriage. The Portuguese, wherever they went, often married into the local population. The country was certainly very, very rich. It had diamonds and wonderful coffee, the largest coffee plantation in the world. "CADA" is south of Luanda. There was copper and marvelous forest products. Of course, Portugal exploited that. Luanda was one of the stops around Africa where the caravels or small ships had station stops on their way to the spice islands, the East Indies and India. These were more important to them as way stations to their greater goal rather than just in their own right. When I was there, the revolution, the guerrilla warfare, was not resolved. Portugal put a lot of effort into it. At the same time, Portugal had revolutions going on in Guinea Bissau and, to a lesser extent, in Mozambique, so they had their hands full. When I left in 1968, it was not by any means over. Portugal controlled all the main cities and towns, and the Benguela railroad from Lobito port, all the way to Zambia. That was absolutely fascinating. I rode on it. It had coal burning trains. The train would often catch on fire from its own fireboxes and they would stop and put it out and keep going. It was a very, very beautiful country. There were great deserts in

the southwest, deep jungles in the northwest, and in the center a beautiful 5,000 foot high plateau of great beauty and perfect weather.

Q: What were you doing at the consulate general?

ROGERS: I was the deputy principal officer.

Q: Who was the principal officer?

ROGERS: Harvey Summ (He is still living in Arlington).

Q: What were we doing there?

ROGERS: The main task was to report on the revolutionary activities and to assist U.S. Navy ship visits. In those days, COMIDEASTFOR had what are called short hull destroyers. They couldn't make it all the way around to the Middle East on their own. They had to make at least one stop. At that time, the Suez Canal was closed, so they had to go the hard way around the Cape. They often stopped in Luanda. In fact, one of the most fascinating visits was the USS Liberty, AGTR. Commander McConaughy was the captain. They had been there at least twice. Their last visit was cut short. Of course, the rest is history. They went up to offshore Israel, where they were severely damaged and took heavy casualties from the Israeli Air Force. McConaughy [Note: McConaughy died in 1999] received the Medal of Honor and invited me to the ceremony. Other than that, U.S. commercial interests were important. Oil had just been discovered in Cabinda while I was there. That was U.S. Gulf Oil. Later, Texaco and one or two other American companies came in. The oil exploration in the northwest of Angola was of great value. We had a number of American citizens throughout Angola. There were about 150 missionaries who had been there for generations, Seventh Day Adventists to evangelical groups. We tried to look after their safety.

Q: Were you under any constraints? You obviously could talk to Portuguese authorities, but what about the rebels? Did you have any contacts with them?

ROGERS: Not knowingly. I knew a lot of people who later turned out to be MPLA sympathizers. These were mulattos, people who at least for one or two generations had been Portuguese assimilados. The MPLA was essentially a mulatto structure, while the FNLA and the UNITA were totally African tribal based. The famous Jonas Savimbi, whom I've met in this country, was raised in a U.S. Protestant mission in central Angola, which I had visited. He learned English there. I don't think he was a physician, but was sort of a nurse's aide in that compound. The center of Angola was very sympathetic toward UNITA. There were no particular restrictions. I could talk to anybody who was willing to talk with me. I traveled extensively.

Q: Unlike some of the other places, you mentioned the assimilation that was happening. At your office or at receptions, were Africans as well as Portuguese attending?

ROGERS: Yes. There were a lot of, in the academic world, Portuguese-trained Africans, a lot of teachers, some in what was called the merchant class. Given another century or two, they might

well have developed, as the Portuguese had hoped, into “good” Portuguese citizens. Ultimately, most of them decided that their future was with their African roots and when the opportunity came, cast off the Portuguese. What happened was, a coup in Portugal ended colonialism. That happened after my first service in Angola.

Q: What was your impression of the Portuguese government then?

ROGERS: They espoused a very strong, almost zealot-like, missionary creed that they were right, they were civilizing this African nation, and that, eventually, it would be understood that this was merely a part of Portugal that happened to be in Africa. One of their examples was, well, after all, Alaska is not contiguous to the U.S., but it is nonetheless part of the U.S. They would say, "See, we have parts of Portugal that just happen to be overseas." They had great pride in the glorious age of discovery and Diego Cao, who was the first explorer there. Henry the Navigator sent these fellows out. Portugal had been in Angola for more than 400 years. It had been partly occupied by the Dutch at one time. They had to deal with that, eventually. They were very proud of their heritage. As far as I could tell, they all felt that if the world would just be patient enough, everyone would understand that they were civilizing responsibility to an indigenous people.

Q: How did we act there? This was still part of the changes in Africa. Basically, we had welcomed the expulsion of the Europeans and new African countries developing. How did we all play it in Angola at that time?

ROGERS: I think the policy of the Africa Bureau was in due course: independence. At the same time, the European Bureau said, "Wait, don't forget that we need the Azores and their friendship in the Atlantic Alliance and SACLANT." So, there was a dichotomy in policy, no question about it. The Africa Bureau did not have the influence, strength, or perhaps even access to overcome the stronger hand of the European Bureau. Angola was an absolutely beautiful country, very unforgettable. We had a lot of sickness. My wife got malaria there and our child did, too. I had met many American missionaries. He was in town and I went to get him. I hoped he would help me with this malaria. His theme was, "Oh, well, of course, there is no medicine. You just pray by them, and it will work out." I wasn't too pleased with that.

Q: Were there any developments or incidents while you were there?

ROGERS: Not this time, but later when we get to 1975 when I go back to Angola, we'll have some.

Q: You left there in 1968.

RICHARD ST. F. POST
Consul General
Luanda (1969-1972)

Richard Post admits that he is a proud "Westerner." He was born in Spokane, Washington but grew up along the Bitterroot Range in Idaho. The family moved to the Bay area of California and then to Montana; he was disappointed when the family decided to settle down in Darien, Connecticut. He attended Harvard University and in 1952 entered the Foreign Service. He served in Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Somalia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Angola, Portugal, Canada, Pakistan, and the United Nations. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: We might move onto your next assignment, unless you have something further to add. Then you really move to these places to a place that was quite a change and a much more dangerous and volatile situation. Going to Luanda from 1969 to 1972, the capital of Angola. What was the situation when you arrived there?

POST: It was a Portuguese colony. The Portuguese called it an overseas province. It had been a Portuguese colony since the 15th century. I don't want to get too far into the history of the colony.

When I arrived the Portuguese there were very hostile to the United States. There was an insurgency going on. There had been an insurgency going on since 1960. The United States had voted in the UN in favor of decolonization in this part of the world and had an arms embargo, although we supplied Portugal with a certain number of arms, in exchange for the use of the Azores as an air base, but we insisted that they could use none of what we provided in Africa. One of my predecessors as Consul General in Luanda, following a vote by the United States against Portugal, had his official sedan dumped in the Bay of Luanda. That is an indication of how welcome Americans were.

There was an insurgency going on but it was a long way out of town. I guess one of the major tasks that I had was reporting on what the situation really was like for blacks in Angola. The Portuguese maintained that they had this great non-racial policy, that everybody was equal and all the rest of it. In fact that wasn't the case at all. It was very clear, the Portuguese whites were at the top of the society whether they were the lowest born or the highest born. They clearly had advantage over blacks and *mestiços*. The *mestiços*, the mixed blood, they had a somewhat privileged position in the society. I should give the Portuguese some credit in that the *mestiços* were provided with this larger role than the African. The *mestiço* class, of course, was created before there was any treatment for malaria and therefore before any Portuguese women went out to the Portuguese colonies. Men would have liaisons, almost never marriages, with African women and produce children. They would recognize those children, you have got to give them credit for that. They would have the benefits of education for their children. They also allowed *mestiços* to have a reasonable amount of representation in the administration. The blacks, no. Their position in the society was much, much more marginal. I tried to get at it by finding some reliable figure for the number of blacks that were in the university. Of course the answer I would get from the Portuguese was, "well we don't have statistics on that sort of thing. We are a multi-racial society. We are color blind." In fact by getting in touch with some blacks and *mestiços*, I finally got something that looked like a reasonable figure. Something like 5% representation by blacks at the university.

Q: What were American interests in Angola. We are now at the start of the Nixon Administration. Was there a change of interest in Africa?

POST: I actually didn't sense as much of a change as was actually going on apparently, in relation to policy. When I went there, my understanding was that we did see this place as being a Portuguese colony, that we were in favor of the country becoming independent. That we were in effect aiding one of the liberation movements, the FNLA of Holden Roberto, clandestinely. I wasn't given much in the way of details about that support and I was just as happy not to have the details, because then I could plausibly deny to the Portuguese that I had any evidence that we were in fact supporting these people.

My understanding of our interest in Angola was to see it proceed towards independence. It looked like it was going to be a difficult thing to do. The Portuguese were in fact going to have to be convinced of the need for change. But if changes did seem to be coming, that we should encourage that sort of thing. In fact, our embassy in Lisbon, when the Caetano regime came in and replaced Salazar, our embassy in Lisbon did see some things that they were doing as looking to be genuine steps to reform in Angola.

I and my people in Luanda saw things very differently. We saw that the things that the Portuguese came out with were largely cosmetic, designed to get the kind of reaction from the Embassy in Lisbon that it did. So there was a certain amount of tension between our Embassy in Lisbon and our Consulate General in Luanda. Because events would happen in Lisbon and we would report on their effect in one way and the Embassy in another. That is why it came as such a surprise to me when towards the end of my tour in Luanda, I was in Lisbon on a R&R trip, and I got a call from the ambassador to go and see him.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

POST: Ridgway Knight. He asked me if I would have any objection if he asked for me as his DCM. I was quite surprised. Except that he had come down on a trip to Luanda several months before that and I had taken him around the country. When he got back to Lisbon and reported on what he had observed, it was the sort of report that I could have written, it bore out more or less what we had been saying. He tacitly admitted that he had been hoodwinked by the Portuguese authorities.

Q: From the Luanda viewpoint had this been a problem?

POST: Yes, it had been something of a problem for us. It meant that when we sent in contrary views, they came as a big surprise to the Embassy in Lisbon. We did have a few officers come out from time to time. And some of them were sympathetic to the way we were reporting things and skeptical of what they were hearing from people in Lisbon.

Q: Was there any tension between the European Desk, which of course was terribly interested in the Azores, as in the case of Kagnev Station, did you feel anything like this in Luanda?

POST: No, not really, because I reported to the African Bureau. I didn't have anything to do with

the European Bureau. This was a source of great unhappiness for the Portuguese because to them, Angola was a Portuguese overseas territory and they should look to our ambassador in Lisbon as their point of contact, whereas we were going through the hated African Bureau.

Q: You came up to Lisbon as DCM from 1972 to 1975. What was the situation in Portugal when you got there?

POST: Certainly the Azores was one of our interests. But I think we were also encouraging, to the extent that any embassy can, or another country can, we were anxious to encourage evidence of motion towards a more open society, a more democratic society within Portugal, not to mention the overseas territories, as we could. There was by that time in Lisbon a group of members of the National Assembly who were rather liberal, and who were challenging, in a rather gentle way, the policies of their country. These were the kind of people who were advocating change that we would be pleased with. So there were some allies from within the Assembly. Certainly part of our mission was to give them as much encouragement as we could.

Salazar retired as a vegetable and I think he died while I was still there. He was out of it.

Q: Who took over?

POST: Marcello Caetano.

Q: What kind of government would you call it?

POST: It was pretty much a continuation of the dictatorship that existed before. Although the term dictatorship is a kind of a harsh term to apply to anything Portuguese. The Portuguese are not that nasty. There were a lot of Africans in jail in San Tomé who would have thought different. It was a semi-fascist system but the Portuguese were not efficient enough to make it a thorough-going fascist system.

For instance, one example was when I was in Luanda. I guess it happened just after I left. A bill came to our Consulate General from the Post and Telegraph Office, which was a government office, and it was for 50 *escudos* for the month of whatever, for a "*linha de escuta*," which means a telephone tap. They sent the bill to us instead of to their secret police. You can't run a thorough-going fascist state if you are that inefficient.

KENNETH N. ROGERS
Consul General
Luanda (1974-1975)

Kenneth N. Rogers was born in New York in 1931. He received his BA from Ohio State University in 1953, and his UJD from George Washington University in 1958. His career includes postings abroad in Hong Kong, Saigon, Luanda, Kingston, and Tangier. He was interviewed on October 21, 1997, by Charles

Stuart Kennedy.

ROGERS: Suddenly, a call came that "We need somebody in Angola right away, because there has been a coup in Portugal. They're going to have independence in about three months. Could you go? We have all kinds of terrible problems on reporting, refugees, American citizen protection, that sort of thing." I said, "Sure, whatever is needed." I was delighted to escape ACDA. It still was an exciting and dramatic challenge. Within 36 hours, I was on my way to Angola.

Q: This was when?

ROGERS: I will say early September of 1975.

Q: You were there until when?

ROGERS: Four days before independence. That was approximately November 10, 1975.

Q: So you were there a relative short time, but a very crucial time.

ROGERS: Oh, yes.

Q: What was the feeling when you went out? They said they had to get somebody out there in a hurry. What were our concerns?

ROGERS: There were three parts to it. They needed somebody who knew the country to go out and find out what was going on in the bush and who spoke Portuguese. At the same time, there was an enormous refugee problem, airlift and sealift. They reached back in history and found out that I had a lot of sealift experience in the Navy, moving people about. I don't know if they could find anybody else or not, but they sent me. It worked out. It was very exciting and extremely dangerous. When independence was about to occur... We were phasing down. We had tremendous difficulty with our missionaries who were in danger. We had to help some of them escape. They had radios. The MPLA, which was winning, felt quite correctly that the missionaries were sympathetic toward UNITA. I went in and helped a number of them get out. Some of them went south across the border into what is now Namibia. Some went out by air and various other ways. It was an exciting time. I went all over Angola at that time in a small one engine airplane. There were refugee movements...

Q: Who were the refugees?

ROGERS: The Portuguese who wanted to get out of there and go back to Portugal. There were hundreds of thousands, poor farmers, shopkeepers deep in the interior, colonists who had planned to stay there for their lives and were suddenly terribly frightened. The Portuguese government, with help from Germany, Britain, and Belgium, helped move them out. It worked out pretty well. Curiously, it was on the news (my wife heard it) that our post had closed and that we had withdrawn except that they had left one officer behind. She said, "I know who that is." It was indeed going to be me. I was supposed to stay behind with one radio man to describe the

transition from independence. But I later learned that Kissinger personally said, "Don't leave anybody." I was ordered out on the very last airplane, which was a charter flight from World Airlines. We packed it with everybody. Some MPLA armed youths tried to stop some of our non-American passengers. I said that they could not be released because they were my prisoners. I got away with that! We knew it would be the last plane. When we got on the plane, the tower operator, whom I knew, came down and said, "Can I go, too?" I said, "Sure." His name was Coehla, which means "rabbit." We flew to Abidjan for refueling, then to Lisbon, and a couple of days later went to New York. Curiously, that very same airplane crashed and burned six weeks later on a runway in New York. No one was killed, but it was destroyed. I have a photo of that.

Q: Why were we trying to keep a presence in Angola at that time?

ROGERS: My memory of it is that because the MPLA appeared to be a communist government and would provide base rights to the USSR, we were hoping that UNITA would prevail. The U.S. and South Africa were supporting UNITA at that stage. We didn't want to recognize the MPLA government in Luanda until UNITA had taken over. I think that's historically an important building block. In fact, the South African Army got as far north as about 50 miles south of Luanda. When I was there, I drove to the port of Novo Redondo and saw the first Cuban troops come in by ship. The Cubans had several major fights with the South Africans. Eventually, the U.S. disengaged and the South Africans withdrew. Later, the South Africans again engaged the MPLA and their Cuban allies. Some years later, The USA recognized the MPLA.

Q: How did you feel about this and what were you reporting back? Did you see an opportunity for us to stay on or was this really called from Washington as far as them trying to send a message or they were too pessimistic?

ROGERS: My estimate is that Washington saw that the MPLA, with Cuban support was going to win - and they didn't want to have American staff there with the issue of formal recognition. Several Americans and British mercenaries were captured. One American was executed after I left. He was from Wheaton, Maryland. The whole thing was in utter chaos at that time, really a mess. Our leadership decided everybody would leave, probably rightly so.

Q: With the airlift and the sealift, what were some of the problems you faced? Were there other people there during the same time?

ROGERS: The Red Cross from Switzerland was helping. They were a marvelous help. But other than the Swiss, I don't remember anyone else. The Portuguese Red Cross helped, too. There were large camps outside of Luanda where these people would assemble deep in the interior. They would go to the army camps and then they would try to compose lists, put the families back together again before they left, but if not, ship them out and sort it out in Portugal. It was ordered confusion.

Q: As the Portuguese pulled out, I recall dimly somebody saying that the Portugese military deliberately turned all the arms over.

ROGERS: That was a Portuguese Army unit in the southern Port of Moçâmedes, who turned over their weapons. A motley crew, I remember them well. In some of the barracks east of Luanda, the Portuguese were pro-MPLA. Why? Because they were “assimilated” and they wanted the MPLA to prevail. Indeed, at that time, the coup in Portugal was certainly radical socialist.

Q: They were leftist. The officers were way over to the left, but the people in Portugal were mainly communist.

ROGERS: Yes. So, my memory of it is, the Portuguese left arms not to just anybody, but to the MPLA, which was seen as communist. Angola became the victim of the East-West struggle that went on for another 15 years. I was given the Award for Valor for this exercise, which is a rare decoration.

Q: It is. I'd like to get some personal accounts. Were you fired on? What was happening?

ROGERS: I rented a car from a friend of mine who owned an automobile rental agency. There was firing on the street. I don't know if they were trying to hit me for sure, but my car was fired at. I could have been seen as a white South African. The South Africans had deeply penetrated. I suppose I look South African. But it was, in the end, a terrible tragedy. There was enormous suffering. Of course, that was just the beginning of the terrible suffering in Angola. It was utterly unnecessary. It could have been handled so much better.

Q: What were you getting from our consulate in Luanda? How were they seeing the situation?

ROGERS: The principal officer at that time was Tom Killoran, a wonderful, very brave guy. He lives in Cape Cod. I hope he is still living. He got malaria while I was there and he was very weak. One of our last tasks was to destroy all the communications equipment. Tom came out with us. I haven't heard from him in a long, long time. He was very calm and relaxed and was a good leader. He gave the feeling of “everything will work out if we remain calm.”

Q: Had we made at this time any contact with the MPLA?

ROGERS: Yes. At one stage, just before I got there, the three groups came together in Luanda and set up a committee to organize the government, except that on one fateful night, the MPLA shelled the compounds of the other two groups who had to flee to the forest again. So, only the MPLA stayed in Luanda. We knew who they were, sure. Killoran was in close touch with them.

Q: Sometimes, you have a situation where the people on the ground (the people at the consulate) would say, "Let's stay here and work with them" and back in Washington, the concern is "This situation is beyond control. Let's get out." Was there any of that or was it pretty well agreed?

ROGERS: I don't think our opinion was asked. We were just told to leave. For a time, it was proposed (I don't know who proposed it.) that I stay behind. Then the Secretary of State himself said, "No."

Q: You left there in 1975. You had only been there really for a very short time.

ROGERS: About 12 weeks.

Q: But it was a long 12 weeks. What happened then?

ROGERS: I became a Foreign Service inspector.

Q: You were an inspector from 1975 to when?

ROGERS: Probably from 1976. After I came back, I worked in AF on Angola problems and then was a Zaire desk officer for a while awaiting the arrival of the person who was assigned that job. In the spring of 1976, I became an inspector, and did that until August of 1978.

DONALD B. EASUM
Ambassador
Lagos, Nigeria (1975-1979)

Donald B. Easum left Madison, Wisconsin for Washington, DC to enter the Foreign Service in March, 1953. He served as ambassador to Upper Volta and became Assistant Secretary for African Affairs in 1974. A year later he was appointed ambassador to Nigeria. He was interviewed by Arthur Day on January 17th and March 12, 1990.

EASUM: We were talking about the swearing in ceremony and Kissinger introducing me as a bearded Assistant Secretary, and so when I got my chance I said, "Mr. Secretary, I'm going to give you the real reason for this beard. I haven't given it ever before, and this, I think, is the appropriate moment. I grew this beard to cover an old dueling scar." I was told later, when he fired me, it was clear to a lot of my friends he would eventually have to because of that interchange.

At any rate, it was after that that we had this problem of the Portuguese, and the airplanes, and from then on it was one problem after another. Why were these problems confronting me this way? I think the real issue was that Kissinger didn't understand Africa, or Africans, and didn't want to, and didn't want to be bothered, and thought that somehow I could just keep everything quiet, and wouldn't bug him. But the issues were of sufficient importance, I felt, over the ensuing year that I had to try to get his attention. And by my so doing he became impatient, and annoyed, because to his credit he didn't like to take anybody else's guidance. He always liked to feel he understood exactly what he was doing. And he didn't want to do anything if he didn't feel he understood, and he didn't have time to understand, to take me as a mentor, because he was in the Middle East, and he was all over the place doing things that probably were much more important. But I kept pushing, and let me give you an example.

He had a system -- I mean, in a way he asked for this. He had a system called "the big brother reports". Do you remember that? Was that something that you all had to do?

Q: I don't remember the name, no.

EASUM: "The big brother report" was a nightly, one page memo, that SS, the Secretariat, required of all Assistant Secretaries and above, including the Deputy Secretary of State, including Joe Sisco who was Under Secretary for Political Affairs. All of us from the Assistant Secretary level up had to get this report up to the Secretary's office by 6:30 every night. And if the Secretary was traveling, it didn't matter. The Secretariat would put these things into telegraphic form and the Secretary, wherever he was, would get these "big brother reports" every 24 hours whether he was in Mexico, or Southeast Asia, or Moscow, or on an airplane, or wherever. And you couldn't tell him what your Bureau did. He also didn't want to know what had happened that was important in your area. For example, we could have a coup in Kenya. He didn't want to know that. He wanted to know, "Easum, what did you do for me today." It had to be purely personal. I couldn't say, "One of our officers testified on the Hill on the question of sanctions against Rhodesia." No, no. If I had testified on the Hill, fine, but he didn't want to hear about anybody else.

And one day Eagleburger, in a staff meeting or something while Kissinger, I think was gone, said to me -- no, it was Joe Sisco. He said, "Don, I've got to tell you something. You would not believe how carefully the Secretary reads what you send him every night." I think that was because he was becoming increasingly frightened. It wasn't because he was becoming increasingly interested in Africa. It was because Africa was beginning to scare him, and his African Bureau, he began to think, was headed by -- he used the term -- a missionary zealot who was out there leading troops in the jungles, and tilting with official policy. I think he began to feel that way.

So at any rate, the first real issue we had in that regard was testimony that he presented on the Hill with regard to sanctions against Rhodesia. President Johnson had signed an Executive Order that made it US law to apply those sanctions. That meant that we could not trade with Rhodesia. We had to stop chromium imports -- oh, no, that was the exception, that's right. But we couldn't bring tobacco to this country. We couldn't ship things. We couldn't accompany. . . a travel agent could not advertise a tour to the Rhodesian waterfalls because that meant supporting the economy of Rhodesia. It was pretty tough stuff.

At about this time President Bongo of Gabon put forward a request to the US to buy a couple of US airplanes, cargo airplanes. That request came through our Bureau. I don't remember whether it was munitions control, or some other people who had to pass on that. But at just the time that Bongo told us he wanted to buy some airplanes, it had become apparent that an American soldier of fortune with a small aircraft charter company established in Gabon was running a leased DC-3 back and forth between Gabon and Rhodesia carrying. . . I don't know what into Rhodesia, but bringing back Rhodesian beef and Rhodesian wine and peddling it in Gabon. And we had some very activist officers, one wonderful young woman named Alison Palmer, who I think since become an Episcopal priest, bishop, or whatever. She was my Gabonese desk officer, and she was all over the place with her concerns that the US in effect, was sitting back and permitting

this American company to violate sanctions. The company happened to be based in Gabon, but that didn't matter from Alison's point of view. She probably was quite right. And she was actually active out on the street in getting petitions moving, and talking to the press, but quite in line with US policy. Kissinger became aware that there were these kinds of firebands working for Easum. And when Bongo asked to buy airplanes we decided, in the African Bureau, that we had a real problem on our hands -- selling him those planes, that if he at the same time was consenting to some sanction busting by American planes based in his country. And then we began to learn he was involved with that operation too, because he wanted the beef, and he wanted the wines, so we decided we couldn't do this. And we, of course, consulted legal advice and L, the Legal Office, or our Bureau's part of the Legal Office, said, "You're quite right. You've got to be very careful about selling those airplanes because none of us trust Bongo as to what he's going to do with them." So I got involved with communicating with President Bongo, saying to him. . .I developed some kind of a scheme. I developed with Alison very elaborate language that we thought we could hold him to, and we obliged him to write to the President of the United States, the White House, and virtually promise that if we sold him these airplanes, they would be used for his own personal transport use, or they would be used for Air Gabon or whatever, but they, of course, wouldn't be used for anything as naughty as flying in and out of Rhodesia.

Kissinger couldn't understand this. He said, in effect, "If that bloody president wants to buy our airplanes, sell them. What's all this mess? This African Bureau is spending all this time on this crazy stupid issue." And about that time he went up on the Hill to testify on something. And in the testimony he was asked his view of sanctions against Rhodesia. And he said, in effect, "I don't believe in sanctions." Now, when we got the text from Congress -- as you know you get those, you've had them many times, and people have reviewed what you've said up there. You get them in double or triple space, and your staff is permitted -- the staff of the person who did the testimony -- is permitted to go through them, make sure that the language is clear, and you can amend within certain limits. You can change the testimony a little bit if you don't completely alter the sense of it.

In a staff meeting Kissinger had talked about his testimony on the Hill and asked for comments, and I said, "Mr. Secretary, when you spoke about sanctions against Rhodesia, you're leaving yourself open to some pretty heavy weather because the way what you said will be interpreted is, that you don't accept the US law on this. And if you permit us to, we're in the process of modifying that language for your review." Well, the staff meeting went on, and I got back to my office and the minute I got back the phone was ringing, and it was Joe Sisco saying, "Get up here right away." So I got up to Joe Sisco's office -- he didn't even ask me to sit down -- I virtually get just inside the door, and he says, "Don't you ever criticize this Secretary of State --don't you ever tell him he made a mistake in front of other people."

This was the spirit. This was the environment, and if you're kind of a soft-skinned person who likes to have fun with people, and doesn't like confrontation, as I am, that effects your work habits. It effects your efficiency. I tried to make sure it didn't affect my relationships with my staff. Every time I had one of these experiences, and there were lots of them, and every time I came back from a staff meeting with him, we would have our own staff meeting -- our entire Bureau, though not everybody; I mean we couldn't get them all in our conference room. But we

had 20 or 30 of our people, and instead of dumping on them the same kind of stuff that I got dumped on me, or like Sisco, he gets dumped on by Kissinger, so he dumps on somebody else, I didn't. I said, "Hey, here's how I suffered today. Now how are we going to work our way around this one?" And I think the Bureau respected that. And, of course, that was my only defense. I could never get anywhere by pounding on those wonderful people. We just had to take all this together. This was our Secretary of State and we had to somehow make the best of it.

So that was the kind of difficult circumstance that I dealt with, not really understanding why it was that he didn't want to hear these things. Why it was that he seemed so uninterested, and above all, why it was that he wasn't looking at Southern Africa, and saying to himself, as we were, "Things are now happening there very fast. Angola is now independent. Mozambique is now independent. That means (we all knew this, but we had a hard time telling him) that means that the nationalists in Rhodesia have access, not just to Zambia, but now on the other side they have access to Mozambique, they can go across that border, they can pick up support whereas before they couldn't because it was Portuguese. This means that Smith's days are numbered, and if his days are numbered, what's that going to mean for South Africa?" And we felt that Kissinger surely understood South Africa. In fact, there's been a lot of suspicion all along the line that he had friends and connections, and that he permitted certain information to flow independently of official State Department channels to Vorster. I don't know this for a fact, but when the South Africans invaded Angola massively in what I think was called the Proteus invasion in October of 1975, there are many people who believe that he let -- was it then Botha? He let Botha know through business contacts, or whatever, that Botha would be supported if he did that. And when Botha didn't get that kind of US military support, Botha was downcast, and said he'd been betrayed by the Americans. And many of us think that Kissinger, for whatever reason, couldn't follow through on pledges he had made.

At any rate, we couldn't understand why he wasn't interested in this. I decided that whole Southern African scene was so important, and I also knew that I knew so little about it, that near the end of that year, in October of '74, I had to get out there. I'd been to Africa several times during this eight months in office, but not to the south or the east. I'd been twice to West Africa. I still didn't really well understand what was going on in the southern area, and obviously that's the place where the US national interest was most at stake, and where we felt that Kissinger would be most interested.

So I planned a trip there. I informed the seventh floor, as we were supposed to, and the night before I was to leave -- well, I planned a trip that would take me to Lusaka; and in October I'd been invited personally by President Kaunda -- for the tenth anniversary of Zambian independence. And I had figured out a way of having a subregional Chief of Mission meeting. We brought in seven, or eight, or nine of our Ambassadors and Charges from that area to Lusaka and we met for four days. I explained in a memorandum to the seventh floor what I was going to do, and the night before I left, Joe Sisco called me and said, "Don, what's this trip you're going on?" And I said, "It's a trip to Southern Africa. I'm invited by Kaunda, and we're going to link a Chief of Mission meeting with that, and then I'm going to visit the capitals of six or seven countries, and I'm going to finish off in South Africa." And he said, "Does the Secretary know about this?" And I said, "Joe, I don't know. I followed the rules. I sent you up my. . ." And then he said, "Did you send us your concept memo. . ." -- that's not quite what it's called. Maybe you

can remember? There's a memorandum that an Assistant Secretary has to send up -- its got a name on it -- if you're going on a trip, you have to let the big guys know what your objectives are, and how you will achieve those objectives, etc. I had sent that. I said, "Joe, yes, I sent that." He said, "I didn't see any memo like that. Does Kissinger know?" And I said, "I don't know whether he saw that memo. but I think I mentioned it in a staff meeting." And he hung up, but I felt he was in a quandary. He realized that I probably, by going out there, was putting him on the spot. He probably knew that three or four days later, or who knows, two or three weeks later, Kissinger was going to say, "What in the hell is Easum doing out there? Get him back." So I went.

And sure enough, I had an absolutely fascinating trip. I went to see Samora Machel in Dar es Salaam. He'd not yet moved south to the newly independent Mozambique, but he had a cabinet in place that was allegedly supervised by a Portuguese admiral who was head of a transitional government, but the current president of Mozambique, Chissano, was in charge of Samora Machel's government there. Machel authorized me to go to Mozambique, and I spent a morning there with the cabinet, and proposed to them a new approach toward our relationship with Mozambique which up to that point had been terrible because they were viewed as Marxists and communists, and they were fighting our Portuguese allies and so on. Samora Machel had said to me, "I'm prepared to let bygones be bygones, if you are." And I said, "I can only speak for my Bureau, and my colleagues, but we are." He said, "Okay. Go to Maputo and see what you can work out." And I worked out a scheme for a study team that would come out to look at the development needs of Mozambique, and there was already \$5 million dollars of Congressional money that Teddy Kennedy got into the legislation, and we would try to start a modest A.I.D. program.

I was in Angola, and Zaire, and I saw Holden Roberto, and I saw the people of UNITA, and I saw Neto. I saw the whole panoply of groups there, and, of course, I saw Nyerere, and I saw Seretse Khama in Botswana, and I saw Kaunda. I saw all the presidents and heads of state in the region, and then I went on to South Africa and I saw Vorster. There was a lot of press all over Africa, and quite a bit in the United States, about that trip. Africans were saying, "Is Easum bringing the long awaited new policy of the US government now that Secretary Kissinger is the Secretary of State? At last are we going to see something different?" And they really hung on the things I said when they would ask me questions like, "What is your new policy towards South Africa?" And I would have to say, "I have no new policy at all, I'm simply here to learn." And they'd say, "Well, what do you think of apartheid?" And I would say, in effect, "I think it stinks." And I was quoted in the Dar es Salaam airport as saying, "One man, one vote, as being my own personal feeling -- that that's the way one ought to move."

And I went to South Africa, and I saw Vorster, and there were big headlines such as, "S.A. must change." That's one particular one I recall. And after that week in South Africa, I went to Gaborone in Botswana, and I telephoned Ed Mulcahy, who was acting in my absence, and said, "Ed, I'm on my way back now." And he said, "Well, it's about time buddy, you're going to have an interesting time when you get here. The knives are out."

So I got back in November, or maybe it was December, of '74, and Ed had said on the phone, "You're getting back on a Sunday, we're all going to be at the office. Come on in to the office

before you see anybody else." So I went into the office, and there were six or seven of my colleagues and they said, "Don, we think, based on the scuttlebutt, that you're going to be moved and there's going to be some other changes." And indeed there were.

It wasn't the Secretary who called me, it was Ingersoll, who was Number Two, his Deputy. Right? And he put it very nicely, and it's very interesting. I'm not sure -- I've never discussed this with Mr. Kissinger, and I have no desire to do it but I wonder how he would respond to my interpretation of the reasons behind what I was told he wanted to do. Here's what he said. Ingersoll said, "There are some personnel changes that the Secretary thinks he should make. He wants to bring John Reinhardt, Ambassador to Nigeria; he wants to bring John back and make him Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. Right now, in that job, is Carol Laise, who was Ambassador to Pakistan, I think?"

Q: I think it was Nepal.

EASUM: Ingersoll said, "He's going to appoint Carol as Director General of the Foreign Service. In that job now is Nathaniel Davis, and he's going to put Nathaniel Davis in your job, and he's going to send you to Nigeria because you've always been talking to him about how important that country is." Now this was something I'm sure that Kissinger cooked up. I'm sure he had some help, but I think the concepts were his. The motivations were his, and he asked Dean Brown, and Larry Eagleburger, and others, to work it out. What were the motivations? Number one, and I think the most important probably in his mind was, "get Easum out of here." He had called Dean Brown in, Dean told me this, after I'd had a press conference or something, and he said to Dean, "Dean, get that son of a bitch out of here."

Q: Dean was Director General of the Foreign Service at that time?

EASUM: That's right, unless he was the Under Secretary for Administration. But I think you're right. This was '74 now. Dean told me that story after he'd left the Service.

So, that was one, get Easum out of here. He's a trouble maker, he's got all those missionaries there working with him, and he wouldn't recognize the US national interest if it came around the corner and hit him in the face, he wouldn't know what the US national interest was. He's always hobnobbing with his black friends. I have a feeling that was the main thing. But he had some other major concerns. He had been widely criticized by women as being chauvinist, and he'd been widely criticized by minorities as being insufficiently attentive to the concern of minorities for a stronger role in the State Department's high positions. So he brings Reinhardt back, and makes him Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, obviously a very visible position, and one that made a lot of sense given John's tremendous abilities. And as you know, John later went on to become Director of USIA, so that appointment made a lot of sense.

Nathaniel Davis, he couldn't stand. I had seen poor Nat suffering in staff meetings almost as badly as I suffered. Nat is, in a sense, (I don't think any of the people I'm mentioning would mind this) he's in a sense like Tony Ross. He's polite, he's bright, he's smart, he's intellectual, he's super careful, cautious, and goes a little slowly, and Kissinger just lost patience with him time and time again. And, of course, Kissinger didn't want to know about all the labyrinthine

problems of Foreign Service administration, and personnel policies.

Q: Actually I think Nat was the Director General at that time, and I think you're right about Brown.

EASUM: Of course, that's right.

Q: Brown was administration.

EASUM: That's right. Oh, I didn't tell you about Carol. Okay, he puts Davis in my spot because he feels, I think, he can keep Davis quiet. Davis is very different from Easum. Kissinger is saying to himself, "And I get Easum out of here, and we'll see how we work out with Nat." By clearing that slot of Director General, he found a wonderful place for Carol Laise because he could move a woman up to that terrifically important position. These are genius type moves, and it's like his brightness to pull something like that off. And so, of course, I took it, and off I go. But the press landed on it, and the Africans landed on it, because they didn't like Nat Davis. He'd been Ambassador to Chile. He didn't know Africa. He didn't speak French, and they saw him as an inadequately experienced person.

Q: Well, they also saw you as an adequate person having been canned, and here is this man who was down in Chile plotting with the CIA, and ITT against Allende. I've read some of those articles too looking forward to this interview, and it was immense, the uproar from the Africans themselves, and also on the Hill.

EASUM: That's right. It was less an affection for me although they liked me. It was much more their concern about Nat and Chile.

Q: . . .and what it meant having the change take place.

EASUM: Exactly. The Africans protested at the OAU. This now must have been maybe January of 1975. There was an OAU meeting and Bill Eteki, a Cameroonian who was the Secretary General of the OAU, gave a press conference after a meeting in which he said, "We Africans are very disturbed to learn that Don Easum is being replaced by Nathaniel Davis. Nathaniel Davis. . ." and he went on to explain the alleged evils of Davis, and Kissinger blew his stack. I have seen the circular telegram that he sent immediately after that to all of our Chiefs of Mission, dressed up, as you well know, with the traditional "Eyes Only", "Chief of Mission Only", etc. And the message was, and personal from the Secretary, "I want you to go to the highest authority, to the head of state, and inform him that I make the personnel decisions in the State Department, and that they have nothing to do with these decisions, and particularly this one with regard to Davis as Assistant Secretary for Africa."

At some time after that I was in Dar es Salaam with our Ambassador there, Bev Carter who had his own difficulties with Kissinger. And Bev showed me his copy of that text, and he said, "Do you know how I handled this, Don?" And I said, "Well, I can guess." He said, "I didn't go across to the Foreign Ministry. I didn't even give it to a Second Secretary to carry over there." And he said, "They knew how to handle it. They probably threw it away." So that's really the next sort of

big landmark in my life with Secretary Kissinger.

Q: Actually, breaking in a bit to finish off on the Assistant Secretary, Davis didn't last very long in that job, did he? That was quite quick and then Bill Schauffele came in and the whole scene during that year of the shuffling of the Assistant Secretary slot really kind of reflected badly, I think, on Kissinger's interest in Africa, and on the US ability to cope with it.

EASUM: I agree. I think that's a good way to put it. I would only add to that, that it showed, I think, a demeaning kind of attitude toward Africa, and in the minds of Africans. It was demeaning to them that these kinds of things happened on their beat.

So I went off to Lagos and we can talk some more about this perhaps another time, but I can just tell you that the story didn't end because for the next year before the change of administration, I was dealing with Kissinger from afar, and my concerns about Africa, and his approach to Africa, were very much echoed by Nigerians. I didn't have to suggest anything to the Nigerians. They came up with their own analysis of US policy toward Africa. They were incredibly critical of it, and every time I would submit their criticisms to Washington, I'm sure that the Secretary felt I had egged them on to do this. So much so that one time he called me back. He called me back with a telegram from, I think, Khartoum, or maybe Nairobi, where he'd been to a UN meeting. Bill Schauffele was with him, and Schauffele drafted the telegram of Kissinger's instruction, and it said, "I want to see you in my office as soon as I get back to Washington day after tomorrow. Why is it that every place I go, my African policy is maligned by the Nigerians, and they seem to have got there first. Now is the time to be more assertive on behalf of US policy, and less considerate of your clients." It was a message that said virtually that. I've joked with Bill Schauffele about that since. I said, "Bill, I don't want to think you wrote it." And Bill has said sort of, "Well, I knew what I had to say."

So I went back to Washington, went in to see Bill, and said, "Bill, it's time for the appointment. Let's go." And he said, "Don, this is your meeting with the Secretary." I said, "Bill, you've got to be kidding. I'm your Ambassador in Lagos, and I don't think it's right that I should go up there and face whatever this music is. It affects the whole Bureau, and it affects our relationships with Nigeria and, of course, those are important to us. You can't bug out on me." And he said, "Well, do you really want me to go?" And I said, "I sure do." So we both went up.

Q: This is Arthur Day continuing the interview with Donald Easum in Ambassador Easum's apartment on West End Avenue in New York City on the 12th of March. Don, the last time we ended the interview roughly with your return as Ambassador to Lagos. Perhaps we should start, in general, from that point today although it might at times lead to some repetition. I think it's a logical starting point for us. Why don't you just pick up the scenario at that point, and continue.

EASUM: Okay. I had had a most fascinating year as Assistant Secretary from April of '74 until April of '75, exactly 12 months. And in April of '75 I went off to what I think Henry Kissinger figured was some kind of an exile, to Lagos, Nigeria, and arrived virtually in time for the deposing of the then current head of state, General Gowon. A remarkable individual, but he had not been able adequately to handle the incredible oil boom that had hit Nigeria in the early '70s. Thus, when we arrived, the economy was in a state of full bloom, but absolutely out of control

with 800 ships hanging outside the port of Lagos. It was said one-eighth of the entire world merchant fleet was there. There were highways, airports, schools, skyscrapers being built and he was deposed while out of the country at an OAU meeting. There was no blood shed, and I think as people look back, they consider it one of the smoothest transitions to take place in Africa, except those that take place by election, which aren't too many, and many of them aren't very smooth.

So I arrived there in April. The change of guard took place at the end of June, and a new military administration took over in Nigeria headed by a very progressive, radical, pan- Africanist kind of colonel named Murtala Muhammed. The story that I want to continue to tell really is, the way in which our Ambassador in Nigeria, namely myself, related to the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, during the ensuing year, an election year back home. A year during which Kissinger was the Secretary of State until January of the following year, 1977.

So, Kissinger was, in fact, in office for two years during the time I was there, and those were most interesting two years because of what was happening in Nigeria, and what was happening in Southern Africa, and what the US policy was in Southern Africa, and particularly in Angola.

The first five or six months of my tenure there were largely uneventful. Murtala was a real hustler. He wanted to deal with the United States. He wanted to have the representatives of American companies come out and talk with him personally, not with any of his associates, and contracts were being signed right and left with American companies. I can remember that Mack Truck signed one of the largest contracts they'd ever signed anywhere abroad. Ford Motor Company came out, talked directly with Murtala and sold an incredible number of trucks and other vehicles to the Nigerian army. Another company, Genesco, from St. Louis, made a major contract to produce and send to Nigeria all the shoes and the uniforms for the Nigerian army. It was a very exciting time in many ways for us although in a sense it was a false prosperity, and a false feeling of confidence that we had.

The first major change took place in October. In October of that year the South African military forces invaded Angola for maybe the first of about 14 subsequent invasions over the next ten years, or 15 years. And I was summoned to the Foreign Ministry, then headed by Joe Garba; in fact, he's here right now as the Nigerian High Commissioner, or Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Joe Garba was the Foreign Minister. He'd been the person who had announced the deposition of General Gowon because he'd been commander of the palace guards. He said, "Donald, I need something from Henry Kissinger in a hurry. You've got to get for me a denial from him that the US is supporting South Africa in Angola. We understand the reports are that thousands of South African armored troops have entered Angola." At that time there were three contending forces. There were the FNLA from the north supported by Mobutu. There was Savimbi in the South, UNITA. And there was the MPLA government which had been recognized by many countries, but the issue was still in dispute. The South Africans sided with UNITA, and as we know, they continued to do so for some 15 years. He said, "Get a denial that the US is supporting South Africa and UNITA. Because if you can't, I have to tell you that something is going to happen here that's going to be very important. I can't tell you what it is, and I don't want you to imply that I've said this to you, but its going to be difficult for the United States and Nigeria if you can't get a denial." This, by the way, is reported in his book that he published two

or three years ago.

I, of course, sent a message back to the State Department explaining what he had said to me, and I got virtually no response. I got nothing within the 24 hours that Garba had asked for, and what I eventually got was something that was not useful and not very informative. As a result of that failure on my part, a few days after that the government of Nigeria announced that, instead of being neutral with regard to the Angolan struggle, and instead of trying to use their own best offices to bring the three groups together -- in fact, Joe Garba had invited the three of them to Lagos, was in the process of organizing a conversation between the three -- instead of that the government of Nigeria said, "We're going to opt for the MPLA. It is clear that the MPLA is defending itself against the racist South Africans, and there is no way we can continue to be neutral. And the US is evidently assisting the South Africans." So the Nigerians did precisely that. They sent a high level emissary who was in fact the chief of the secret police -- I don't remember his name, it will come to me -- as the personal representative of Murtala Muhammed to Augustino Neto in Luanda, and arrangements were made to ship massive amounts of surplus Nigerian military equipment to the MPLA, and the die was cast. The MPLA is the current ruling party; I was instructed by the Department to protest this. I did the best I could to explain the US position to the Nigerians, but they were impatient with me, not wanting to understand what the US policy was, and I had some problems understanding it myself, but I did what I was told to do without great success.

In December the South African military forces were still moving hard in Angola but were coming up against some very stiff Cuban resistance. In December I learned that at the upcoming meeting of the OAU, which would take place in January of '76, I think in either Nairobi or Addis, I can't remember, the Nigerian head of state was going to deliver a very tough speech, insisting that all of Africa opt for the MPLA; that it was clear that that was the only way to withstand South African aggression. And that speech, it was clear to us, was going to give the United States a lot of heartburn. I received a personal message from the Secretary of State asking me to go, at the highest level, to the Nigerian government and try to do what I could to moderate what we thought was clearly going to be a very tough speech to be made by Murtala.

Subsequent to that. . .and I did that, again without great success. I did not go to head of state. I went to the Number Two, General Obasanjo who was chief of staff of the army, and subsequently, as I will tell you, became the head of state, and is now a retired senior statesman. A few weeks after that the West African Ambassadors, that is, the American Ambassadors in West Africa, were summoned to Abidjan by Bill Schaufele who was then the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, where we had a special meeting with Bill at the residence of our Ambassador. And he said, "The situation in Angola is getting very dicey, and we're very much concerned about the upcoming meeting of the OAU, Organization of African Unity, and we want all of you to deliver a letter from President Ford, which you will be getting in a few days. You must deliver it to your head of state, and it will put forward our concerns about what is now happening in Angola. The letter will in essence put forward the thesis that, whereas the Angolan government has a security concern with regard to South African military incursions in the south, the South African government has a counterpart, or analogous security concern, because of the presence of the Cubans in Angola."

As I thought about that letter in our residence in Abidjan, it seemed to me that given the tenure of opinion in Lagos, and given the personality of the head of state, Murtala, that letter was not going to be received in a friendly fashion. I knew from what I'd learned about Murtala that he was not at all ready to be patient with the concerns of South Africa with regard to anything in Angola even if it was the presence of Cuban, communist, Marxist troops. I knew that Murtala would argue that that was the concern of the Angolan government alone, that they invited the Cubans to come because they felt threatened by the South Africans. I knew that was the way Murtala would respond, and I felt that delivering that letter might well be counterproductive for us. And I explained my concerns to Bill who, of course, listened to them sympathetically without agreeing that they were proper concerns on the part of the Nigerian government. And I can remember his reply. He said, "Don, you've got to deliver it. After all, how many times in our careers do we get a personal letter from our President to deliver to the host country president?" I said, "Well, Bill, I'll deliver it but I just have to repeat that I can't predict the response."

I did not deliver the letter personally. I knew Murtala would not receive me. I simply sent it. And the very next day, in all of the Lagos newspapers. . .and this must have been maybe the first week of December, maybe the second week of December, 1975. . .the very next day headlines appeared in all of the major Nigerian newspapers. Now I mean that's a lot of press. *The Daily Times* alone printed something like half a million copies a day -- that's the size of what I think *The Philadelphia Inquirer* turns out -- and this is a city of five million, and I'm speaking just about what happened in Lagos. In the other cities of the country there were, I'm sure, similar printings of the full text of President Ford's personal note to the Nigerian head of state. The headlines read as follows. . .one of them I can remember said, "Insult to Black Dignity". Another one said, "American President Lectures". That was the tone. And there's a humorous aside. The text was printed perfectly, and it was within quotes, but every time the term "Prime Minister Forster" or "the Pretoria Government", or the "South African Regime", anytime that kind of terminology appeared in the text of Ford's letter, the word 'racist' was put in front of it because that was the habit, if not the instruction, of all Nigerian press people in those days. Whenever they referred to South Africa, it was always Racist South Africa, the Racist Prime Minister, the Racist Regime of Pretoria, and so we had President Ford being quoted as using the word "racist" something like a dozen or 15 times in one letter.

That letter provoked demonstrations the next day in front of our embassy. And they were not trivial demonstrations.

Q: Excuse me, Donald. Would these have been genuinely provoked by the letter? Or would they have been organized by the government in Lagos?

EASUM: I do not think that the military government organized those demonstrations. That's a good question, and I've thought about that a lot. The reason I don't is, that as best we could tell the bulk of the demonstrators were students, and young intellectuals. They were not labor union people. They were not the kinds of people to whom one might expect the military regime would go and attempt to crank up something. I don't think, given the independence of the Nigerian students, and the Nigerian intellectual community -- not all of whom had great love for Murtala, some of them thought he was a really crazy, wild, radical, violent kind of fellow, and he had that reputation. I think it was not turned on. However, it was not prevented. It might have been

because it took some organization for them to get themselves together and march down, and they were not harassed by police on the way, or accompanied by police.

The Marines behaved with moderation under our instruction, and locked the place. And the only real damage was a lot of windows were broken by rocks and bricks that were thrown through the windows. The next week or two went by without too much new event. Of course, I had to report all of this to Washington, and I explained the reasons behind this growing Nigerian attitude of hostility toward the US, now being picked up by the intellectual community, and the students, based on the feeling that the US was in effect siding with racist South Africa against the legitimate government of Angola. [The US was now providing military assistance to UNITA.]

Murtala went to the OAU meeting, and I told you of the instruction I had received which had been designed to try to get him to be moderate. That, plus the Ford letter, obviously did nothing, if not maybe fortify his determination to give a tough speech, and he did provide the leadership for his African colleagues to opt, all of them, for the MPLA at the time when Portugal was still trying very hard to bring the three groups together, and many other people were too. But the situation in Angola was fast deteriorating with warfare that was on a rising scale. More Cubans arriving with Russian military and logistic support, and more South Africans arriving. And therefore the possibility of bringing three groups together was pretty much lost. Murtala's speech was...the thrust of it was, "Let us all opt for the MPLA and give them all assistance and support on behalf of the OAU." That, in fact, yes, was a very close vote. There were others who felt that there were ways still. More moderate African countries -- Senegal, I think, was the leader of the group trying to bring the more moderate African countries together in an attempt to stop the fighting, and to bring the three groups together in some kind of national unity coalition. It was a vote nonetheless that was a great disappointment to the United States, and Murtala was the reason for it.

He came back and was assassinated. It wasn't quite that simple, but indeed a month later, just on a street about three blocks from where I lived, he was shot down in an ambush prepared for him by an army major named Dimka, and some of his young military associates. They shot him in his car, moved off to the radio station where they had already prepared a tape, and the tape was broadcast saying, "We've got rid of the tyrant. Revolution is all over the country. There will be a curfew from dawn to dusk." This was not a very bright major. "There will be a dawn to dusk curfew". . .in fact he was speaking in pigeon English and his broadcast said, "We have now taken over and it is all over the thirteen states." Now, nobody knew quite what he meant. We think, in retrospect, he meant that he had people and his fellow plotters, planted in each of the capitals of the thirteen states, and that they were going to assassinate the heads of government in those individual Nigerian states. That didn't work. It was not "all over" the thirteen states, although they had made a faint attempt, there were some killings, maybe a half dozen or so, in two or three other states. The revolution hardly caught hold. But the country went into a state of really serious mourning partly because of his tough personality, and what he had done at the OAU, had developed in a very short time, a very fanatic devotion on the part of Nigerians, young and old.

And interestingly enough, we were hosting, at that point, the first major international tennis tournament that Nigeria had ever organized, and I'd been very much involved in assisting eight or ten American professionals in getting there. I was involved in the planning for the tournament.

It was sanctioned by the ATP, the Association of Tennis Professionals, and it was the first time a Nigerian tennis tournament would permit participants to win points on the world computer in the sky. Those who came included Arthur Ashe, Stan Smith, Tom Okker of Holland, Karl Meiler of Germany, El Shafei of Egypt, Dibbs and Stockton, and Solomon from the US, Fibak -- he was then from the US. We had a tremendous international tournament, which that very morning of the assassination was supposed to pick up its third day. Ashe didn't have to play that day, so he was on the golf course, which was right next to the place where the assassination took place, and he heard shooting. The tournament of course, and all sports events, were canceled while preparations were made for the traditional Muslim burial of Murtala in an open, unmarked, grave in a field in the north of Nigeria. So for four days all activities of that sort were suspended. No one knew where the assassin was. He fled from the radio station. The army managed to get back in charge during the day of the shooting. And it was clear that the revolution did not succeed, and that the government was back in control. But during that first day things were pretty dicey. We had tennis players in one hotel, and the army came in and went all through the hotel rooms, and some of these kids had never had this kind of experience before, and they got scared and we managed to send transportation through the roadblocks, and so on, and get everybody out to my house where we had about 15 professional tennis players. We had British journalists, and we had all kinds of people hanging around for two or three days until we were able to house them, not in hotels anymore, but in the homes of Americans and others. Nobody could get out of the country for a week. Even Pele, who was supposed to give demonstrations in the national stadium, couldn't move. He was stuck at the home of the Brazilian ambassador. All that is just a little local color and not really very significant. The key point is. . .well, I can tell the story, it will move to the key point.

We were finally, after about a week, instructed to resume the tournament. Instructed by the government, and we did. Ashe was serving to Borowiak at one-all in the second set after taking the first set 7-6, when troops came into the tennis stadium with guns, yelling, "Get out! Get out!" We didn't know what was happening. There was panic. Fortunately nobody was killed, but a few people were beaten up by the police. We managed to get people in their cars, send them home, and I walked from there, with a young Marine guard, a corporal in civilian clothes, who was scared to death. He didn't know what to do. He knew he was supposed to protect the American Ambassador, but he had never had an experience like that. We started walking toward our embassy, which was only five blocks away, and we suddenly saw this demonstration coming toward us, and the crowds were such that we couldn't get out of the street. And so we just had to stand there. And this parade walked right through us. They didn't harm us at all, but the big signs. . .the first one we saw was, "Down with the CIA." The next one said, "Hang Dimka" -- he was the assassin, and he was on the run. "Yankee, go home." This was fairly heavy duty stuff.

And the next thing that happened was, within a day, another demonstration at our embassy. And this time they went to chase the Brits first. The British High Commissioner was just next door to ours, and the assassin had made a major mistake. He had gone, after securing his radio station, and putting his tape on the radio, he had gone to the British High Commission -- walking in in his military uniform with three other soldiers, all of them with guns. They walked right into the office of the British High Commissioner and somehow it wasn't very well protected that day by his staff -- and said, "Sir, do you know who I am?" And the British High Commissioner, who was a very starchy, formal kind of fellow, said, "No. Not only that, I don't know what you're

doing here." And Dimka said, "Well, I'm surprised you don't know who I am. I was just on the radio. I'm the person who assassinated the head of state." And the High Commissioner talked with him for something like 15 minutes. Dimka then said, "Well, I've got to go back to the radio station." So Dimka left, and the High Commissioner made a serious mistake. He did not notify the government that he had just talked to the assassin. Instead, he sent his -- I've forgotten what they call them in the British system. We would call them our SRF types. He sent his intelligence people out to try to find their police counterparts, and their counterparts in the local FBI -- I've forgotten what it's called, CID maybe, something like that. And they scurried around and couldn't find out very much. Lunch time came. The High Commissioner went home to lunch, and on his way home he encountered the Reuters correspondent, and he said, "Hey, Bill, you know what happened this morning? Dimka came into my office and talked with me, and he asked me to contact General Gowon (who was in exile studying in Britain) to tell General Gowon that the deed's been done, and he was waiting for instructions." And Reuters put that on the wire, and by the afternoon the Nigerian government was hearing on the radio that the assassin had talked with the British High Commissioner, who was asked by the assassin to contact Gowon in London -- outside London, Suffolk, or some place, for instructions.

Well, you can imagine what happened to the High Commissioner. He was thrown out within about three days after that.

Q: I'm surprised he wasn't yanked out.

EASUM: Well, he probably should have been for protection. He should have been yanked, but he was thrown out but not before we had the second demonstration. And this one was a lot tougher. First, they went after his place. It was on a Saturday, and they got inside, and they just ripped it up. They threw over the typewriters, and ripped up the counters. They didn't, I guess, get any secret information but they really tore up the downstairs.

Then they came to us, and we were right next door, and it was a lot tougher this time. We hadn't yet repaired most of our windows and so those windows were fair game for people to get in but fortunately. . . I guess they must have been barred, I can't remember now, because they didn't try to get in the windows, but they broke all the other windows. And then they went after the flag pole which the Marines had greased with lard because the first time around the youngsters had managed to climb up the flag pole and get the flag -- and you know how the Marines feel about the flag. This time they had greased the flag pole, and the youngsters couldn't climb it. But they managed to figure out a way to yank on it, and they managed to bend it somehow. But they didn't get the flag. The Marines still view this as their great triumph. But they almost got inside. They were pounding on the door, and the Marines asked me to throw tear gas, and I refused saying, "No way. If any Nigerian is hurt out here, we're in real trouble, and I think the police are coming." The sergeant called me. I was at home and my telephone didn't work, of course, but I did have a radio, and the sergeant told me on the radio, "Sir, the police didn't come." I said, "Well, give them another ten minutes." And I know he thought that I was a useless pacifist. He wanted to throw that tear gas so badly. I had instructed them to lock up their weapons. So at any rate, the police did come. They threw tear gas and the crowd was dispersed.

Now, to get back to Henry. That's the environment of early 1976 when he, back in Washington,

finally decided Africa was important. Mind you, all throughout 1974, as we told in the other tape, I had been laboring valiantly to try to get him to pay some attention to Southern Africa, and he hadn't been interested. Now he was, and he decided somehow he could be useful with his own particular snake oil, and genius, in bringing some kind of resolution to the Rhodesian problem. In Rhodesia we had unilateral declaration of independence which was viewed as illegal by the British, and so you had a white minority regime headed by Ian Smith. Meanwhile you had ZANU and ZAPU, those were two independence movements, nationalist movements, "terrorist" groups in the minds of some.

Q: Don, why don't you just pick up where you left off at the end of the previous tape.

EASUM: Okay. We're now at the beginning of 1976, and I've just recounted the deep trouble in which the US found itself then, all to be attributed to the policies of the US in Southern Africa, and particularly in Angola as perceived by the Nigerians.

The purpose of this little chronology has been to come back to Henry Kissinger who, during the previous year when I was his Assistant Secretary, refused to take Africa seriously. People used to say to him, "You don't have any Africa policy. What are your people doing in Africa? Why don't you come up with an Africa policy? You've got a Middle East policy, you've got this policy, that, . . ." And he used to say, rather proudly, "How can I have an Africa policy when there are 51 countries out there? It's impossible." And I would, from time to time, try to say things to him, and once I wrote a memorandum to say, "It is simple to have an Africa policy. We don't have to agonize over this. It can be based simply on two things, and they're valid for every country, and every situation. One, is respect for, and concern about human rights. And the other is concern for the economic development future of Africa, and the role that the US can play in assisting that economic development. It's easy. We can construct a policy for you along those lines." He didn't want to. He was afraid of the human rights one, and he was also all bottled up by his previous belief that minority white regimes were here to stay in Africa. He'd been quoted on that before when he was National Security Adviser to Nixon. And he also had a thing about populist revolution when it became violent. He could handle the revolutions of Germany in the middle part of the nineteenth century, but he could not handle the nationalist movements fighting against the Portuguese in the five territories. He couldn't handle that. Nor could he handle what was happening in Rhodesia.

However, to his credit, belatedly he came to recognize it was important. And I think Bill Schauffele deserves some credit for this. Bill took my place after the unfortunate three or four months of Nat Davis. Bill, or somebody, persuaded Kissinger to take a look at Southern Africa, and he did. He decided that he could play a role with regard to the independence struggle in Rhodesia. And he went to Lusaka, just next door, the capital of Zambia, and made a major speech. The first time he'd ever made a policy speech on Africa. And in that speech he said some very brave things, brave for him. A lot of us had been saying them for a long time, but for him this was quite revolutionary when he said that he thought that the future of Rhodesia depended on majority rule. And he managed to persuade Smith to fall back from where Smith had been before. Smith had previously insisted stubbornly, "There will be no majority rule in my lifetime." And Smith made a statement when Kissinger was there indicating some flexibility -- I wish I could remember the exact statement but I don't. It was a good speech [Kissinger]. It sounded a

lot like a speech that I had made a year previously. And Don Peterson, bless his heart, or maybe it was Wil De Pree, at any rate one of our fellow Africanists, told me that in fact his speech writers had borrowed from that speech I'd made a year earlier. At any rate, I don't want to insist on that because I'm not sure it's true. I haven't checked out the text.

So Kissinger made that speech, and he sent me a telegram saying, "I would like to come to Nigeria and explain to your Nigerian colleagues our new policy toward Africa, and particularly towards Southern Africa." I couldn't even get to first base with that request. Of course, I tried valiantly, but the Nigerians were no way going to receive him. The excuse that they used was, that if he came there would be student protests, and the military regime did not want to use military force against the students in Lagos. That was the argument they used. The real reason was, there was no way they wanted him to come because they were persuaded. . .first of all, they weren't all that excited about the speech which for Kissinger was a very liberal speech, but for the Nigerians, not at all. It certainly did not opt for the MPLA in Nigeria. It did not pledge undying opposition to apartheid, except in ritual terms, and it did not speak about the independence struggle in Rhodesia in a fashion that most Africans considered adequate. It was very conservative in that regard even though Smith viewed it as a pretty dangerous speech. So I had to tell him "no".

However, before sending that message back, in the meeting I had with General Obasanjo, who had taken the place of Murtala, when Murtala was assassinated and Obasanjo was the head of state for the ensuing four years, I asked Obasanjo were there someone else who could bring the Kissinger message if they would not accept Kissinger. And they said, of course, which made it clear it wasn't so much the message they were worried about, it was their personal antipathy to Henry Kissinger that kept them. And I said, "For example, he has with him John Reinhardt." John Reinhardt had been the US Ambassador to Nigeria prior to my arrival. He had been a splendid ambassador. He was in Lagos for something like three years, and he was part of the intricate switch that Kissinger orchestrated in sending me to Lagos. He sent me to Lagos to take John's place. John Reinhardt was brought back and made Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, and Kissinger had the wit to put John Reinhardt on his team when he went to Lusaka. So I sent the message back to the Secretary saying, "They would prefer John Reinhardt." And he sent John Reinhardt. I wonder what went through his mind when he did that.

John came, and John and I went to see General Obasanjo and talked about the new approach by Kissinger to African policy, and Obasanjo found it unimpressive, but interesting.

That's the first time that I had to say "no" to a Kissinger request to come to Lagos. In June of '76, Kissinger was visiting Europe. He was already clearly sensitive to the Nigerian attitudes because he sent me a message saying, "I'm going to be in Europe anyway, do you think that you might be able to get me in? Do you think the Nigerians would receive me if we could, in effect, say, 'Well he's in Europe anyway, and he'd just like to drop down'". Well, that didn't sound to me as if it paid much attention to the Nigerians. And I was on the point of sending back. . .I waited a day or so, and I was on the point of sending back to him a message suggesting there might be some other way to couch this request, when he, maybe by telepathy, canceled. He sent me back a message saying, "Never mind." If I'd been able to go back quickly and say, "Come ahead," I'm sure he'd have come. But the delay, I think, made him think, "Oh, oh. I'm going to get another

negative" and he didn't want to have that on his record. So he said, "Never mind. I can't make it."

Meanwhile, our situation in Lagos was moving reasonably well. The British ambassador had been thrown out. Our contacts, and my personal contacts, were excellent. I think because the Nigerians recognized that, although I was a faithful supporter of US policy in my official contacts, I had a lot of personal concerns with it. So I had excellent access, and the British, in fact, were saying, "How come Easum has all this access when our guy got thrown out?" Well, for whatever reason, we were beginning to be able to build some new US economic relationships, and some new cultural exchanges, and I felt we were getting somewhere even though there was this grave, grave difference of view with regard to US policy in Angola where we were still assisting UNITA, and with regard to an inadequate -- in the Nigerian view -- an inadequate adoption of the African National Congress in South Africa which we, in those days, didn't really talk with very much. They felt we were essentially much too friendly with, and concerned about, the problems of the Pretoria government -- notice I did not say, "The racist Pretoria government," although they are.

This takes us now to September, and this was a fun adventure. This was the third request of Henry to come to Nigeria. He and Bill Schaufele were at a UNCTAD meeting October '76, in Nairobi or in Khartoum or Addis just before our election. I think it was Nairobi. Nairobi is more logical. He put a third request to me, and for a third time the Nigerians said "no". Now I understood, and was not unsympathetic with the first two refusals, but I was a little annoyed at the third. I thought the Nigerians were pushing their luck pretty hard. Mind you, the first time in April the Nigerians managed to persuade the Ghanaians not to take him either. And Shirley Temple Black was our Ambassador to Accra, and she just loved Henry Kissinger, and he just thought she was the greatest thing in the world. And he had sent his request there, as well as to Lagos. And Joe Garba, the Foreign Minister of Nigeria, went to Accra shortly after sending his own negative response back, and talked to Acheampong, who was the head of state. . .talked to Acheampong, and in effect, I think, I don't have fact for this, put some economic leverage on the Ghanaians who were then importing a lot of oil from Nigeria. And Garba said in effect, "We don't think any of us should see this person, and if you do, it's not going to look very good." And so Acheampong sent back, through Shirley Black, the most asinine excuse. He said he had a boil on his neck, and he would have been very uncomfortable, given his physical pain, to receive the Secretary of State. Can you imagine?

So, of course, Henry Kissinger never saw Foreign Ministers except in European countries, and I guess even there not all that often. Never would he go to a developing world country and see anybody other than the head of state. Of course, that tended to gravel some of our developing world people, too, and in particular such proud ones as Nigerians who felt, "He's your Secretary of State, why can't our Secretary of State see him? Why does it have to be that he insists on seeing our head of state?"

Okay, so the third time, refusal. And I sent back a message to Kissinger in Nairobi doing my best to explain the reasons. I got an immediate rocket back, which Bill Schaufele admits to have drafted, but under instruction from Kissinger, which said something like, "It is time for us to be less concerned about the sensitivities of our host governments, and more concerned about insisting on the US national interest." Some such message. And it ended up, "I want to see you in

my office day after tomorrow in Washington." Ha-ha! So Easum thinks he's going to be fired for the second time. So I dutifully go back and the first person I go to see when I get back, to check up on the appointment, is Larry Eagleburger. And I say, "Larry, what's this all about?" And Larry says, "Don, I don't have to tell you. You've been a thorn in Kissinger's side for the last two years. He just doesn't understand why the Nigerians are so nasty to him, and he's going to tell you that." And I said, "Well, are you going to be in there with me?" And he said, "No way. This is your scene, buddy." So I go down to Bill Schaufele, the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, and I said, "Bill, what's going on?" And he said essentially the same thing. And I said, "Well, you're going to go with me, aren't you?" And he said, "I don't want to go with you. Why should I?" I said, "Bill, come on. You're the Assistant Secretary of State, this is not a personal thing. I'm out there doing my best, and Nigeria is an important place. They're sending us half of our imported oil. . ." and that meant 25% of our total consumption. . ."You know how important Nigeria is. I'm out there doing what I can do. This is not an issue of. . .even if the Secretary may think it is. . .this can't be permitted to be an issue of personal animosity. It's got to be looked at in terms of US interests with regard to Nigeria. As long as I'm there, as the Ambassador, I have things to say about that country and you are my Assistant Secretary, and I think you should go with me." And so Bill said, "All right."

So we had our meeting with Henry. And the first thing he said is, "Don, you tell me. Why is it that every place I go in Africa, trying to explain my new policies, the Nigerians have been there first bad mouthing me?" And I said, "Mr. Secretary, I've tried to explain in my despatches and so on, why they feel the way they do. I'm doing my best to explain our policies, but they're not ready to listen." So he said, "What can we do about this? We've got to do something about this. What can we do?"

Now, Bill and I had anticipated that, and we decided that Bill and I would go up to New York where Joe Garba, the Foreign Minister, happened to be at some kind of UN affair. And we would meet directly with him, and try to present to him some of our concerns, and some of the Secretary's concerns. And so Bill said, "Mr. Secretary, Don and I have a plan to go to New York in a couple of days and see Joe Garba." Immediately the Secretary interrupted, and he said, "Joe Garba in this country? And I can't go to his country? Can't we keep that son of a bitch out of here?" Of course, we said, "Mr. Secretary, he's the Ambassador to the United Nations. You can't keep him out of the UN. It's a different scene." He said, "Why won't he let me into Nigeria?" And I said, "I've tried to explain, but for one thing he doesn't want to have riots in the street." And Kissinger said, "I didn't know I was that important." And immediately we're beginning to see a little bit of his wit, and his egocentricity, and he's beginning to cool down a little bit. Somewhere I've got some notes on that conversation. But that was the tenor of it, and he then began to soften up considerably, and he said, "You know I've just got to succeed with this new policy on Southern African." That was an interesting statement because there was no way he could succeed with the policy as he'd put it together. It didn't have any substance to it, and the main problem with it was, in my view, he had no credibility with Frelimo which was the independence movement in Mozambique, then in charge of the new independent country. He had no credibility with Mugabe and his ZANU part of the patriotic front in Zimbabwe. He had no credibility with the more radical Africans, or with the Nigerians. And he hadn't talked with any of them. He had talked with no Africans about his idea for some kind of negotiated solution of the Rhodesian problem. He'd had no conversations with anybody except Smith, essentially. And

I indicated something like that to him, putting it as nicely as I could. And then he said, "Well, what I need is a Sadat. I'm looking for a Sadat." He said, "Do you think maybe Nyerere could play that role?" And, Pete, you would understand this better than I would. He was using his Middle East -- obviously his shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East -- as his model.

I think he was beginning to think that he could do something like he'd done in the Middle East in Rhodesia. And that statement, "I'm looking for a Sadat, could Nyerere be that person?" was so indicative of his mind-set. I don't remember much more about that conversation. He did not fire me again. It was actually the best conversation I had ever had with him on Africa.

Q: This was after the election? At this point he knew. . .

EASUM: No. It must have been just about at election time. He was still thinking that maybe under the next administration, if Republican, that he would be able to really go to work on some kind of shuttle diplomacy between Washington and Harare, which was still called Salisbury. Fascinating. And then shortly after that, of course, we had the election and that starts a whole new story, and in a sense it's a real watershed when he left. A real watershed with regard to US relations with Africa, and particularly with Southern Africa. It was like night and day when the Carter administration came in.

Q: How did this come to you first in Nigeria? How did you first detect the shift? You were certainly anticipating it, but what was the grass roots look of it?

EASUM: Well, I can tell you a quick story about that, that I think answers the question very directly. In December of that year, the election having taken place, but Carter not yet having been inaugurated, Dick Clark, Democratic Senator from Iowa who had been, and was at that time, the splendid chairman of the Senate Subcommittee for Africa -- the Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations. He had taken a trip to East Africa, to Tanzania, maybe South Africa -- I'm not sure -- and he was now in December visiting me in Lagos on his way back to the US. We sat around my swimming pool one evening just talking, the two of us, about ways in which the Carter administration might sketch out a different approach to Africa. Mind you, Andy Young had been to Lagos by then already a couple of times under my regime. I'd been there almost two years. Andy had been there a couple of times, and had put forward his own particular views of how he thought a Carter administration, if elected, would approach Africa. And it was already clear that there would be a human rights flavor, or thrust, or foundation, to the policy that would be very, very different from the previous Nixon-Ford-Kissinger approach. Dick Clark put forward the same kind of prediction as to the way the administration would move, and he paid tribute to Andy Young, and to the role Andy had played as a personal associate of President Carter's in talking about civil rights, and human rights, and so on, in the United States, but also alerting him a bit to the African scene. And Clark said, "Don, I think what we really need to do is get the President very quickly face to face with one of these wonderful African heads of state so he can hear directly about some of these concerns, and what would you think about Nyerere coming as one of the first heads of state to visit President Carter in the new year, 1977, the first year of the administration?" And he said, "I've just talked with Nyerere and he's just an absolutely incredible person." Clark, of course, knew Nyerere already. Clark had traveled widely in Africa and knew a lot about it, and had as his staff aide Dick Moose, who soon became the

Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. And Moose had been with Clark on this trip but had left from Lagos, had not been able to stay for the Lagos part. I said I thought that was a great idea. I said, "But let's talk about this again after we've seen General Obasanjo." We were schedule to see the Nigerian head of state, General Obasanjo, the next day. "Because you'll see there a person who's the antithesis of Nyerere, and yet who in many ways represents the same kind of approach to human rights, and development, in Africa that Nyerere does, but from a completely different philosophical standpoint. Nyerere is an ideologue. He's a convinced egalitarian. He's a socialist. He's a school teacher by training and trade. He impresses you as being unable to swat a fly with a flyswatter. Not only because he isn't strong enough, but because he is just a complete pacifist in his approach to problems. Smiles constantly. Witty conversationalist. Obasanjo on the other hand outweighs him three times, physically. Has arms the size of tree trunks. Is a general in the army who accepted, if not produced, the surrender of the Biafran troops. Not an ideologue at all. He doesn't like ideology, and philosophy. He's a pragmatist, hard-nosed soldier, who wants results. Let's think after you've seen Obasanjo tomorrow, whether we could get both of them, at different times of course, in to see Carter during the first year, and see what kind of results that might have in helping President Carter shape his new approach to Africa." And I remember Clark's answer after we saw Obasanjo. As Clark left the meeting, he said to me, "This would be terrific if we could get both of them together." He said, "I'll talk to Fritz about it," Fritz Mondale, of course, being the Vice President. It worked.

I had the challenge, once I heard back from Washington that the idea was worth exploring with Obasanjo. . .we, of course, didn't want to put the official request to him before we knew he'd say yes. You don't want to say, "Our President wants you to come," and then get yourself up against a negative answer.

And so I played it out with the Foreign Minister with whom by then I had a really good relationship. This was Joe Garba, the one I mentioned to you before, whom I first got to know on a basketball court. Sports keeps coming into my career. He had been the captain of the Nigerian National Basketball Team before he announced the deposition of General Gowon, and the first thing that happened to me in Nigeria when I arrived several years earlier, was to be invited to a basketball game where the national team, captained by Colonel Joe Garba, whom I didn't know, was to play a young team of American missionaries who not only played basketball, but brought their guitars and sort of evangelized the crowd during half time. And forgive me that I digress again, but it's fun. I'm seated there on the bench with the young Americans, and I'm watching this first half of the basketball game, which is played out-of-doors on a cement court -- miserable circumstances, but it's the National Basketball Stadium, so called. And I see this tall dude out there, whose launching these shots from mid-court, a kind of combination of overarm baseball throw and a push shot. And they never go in, and he's stepping out of bounds all the time, and the referee is not blowing the whistle but he's clearly in charge. And I find out as the game goes on, that that's Colonel Joe Garba, the commander of the palace guards, and he's the captain of the team, and he's an inveterate optimist. He always thinks these shots from mid court are going in. They never do, but he keeps thinking some day they will, and nobody dares blow the whistle on him when he steps out of bounds -- that was Joe Garba. And his team was completely exhausted by first half time. These are the best players they had in those days. I don't know where Olajuwon was. He wasn't around obviously, and the score was something like 40 to 20 in favor of the young American missionaries, who then take over at half-time -- breathing quite normally

-- playing their guitars, singing songs, and then they go out and clobber the poor Nigerians the second half. The final score was something like 80 to 50. And we had a reception at our house afterwards, and Garba comes to the reception, and I meet him. And a few weeks later he takes the radio and says, "We've just overthrown General Gowon." So it shows you how sports can introduce you to key people. You never know how they're going to be important later on.

At any rate, where are we now? We've got to bring us back to the visits. I worked out with Garba this idea. I said, "Joe, if we were to put a request to Obasanjo (this is late '77 now, the summer of '77), if we were to put a request to him, what do you think the response would be? Is it too soon for him" The heritage of our difficult times was still very much in all of our minds, of course. And he said, "I don't know, but let me try, and I'll come back to you." And after a while, a period of weeks, he said, "Don, I think it will work. Let's try it." So, of course, I communicated with Dick Moose, the Assistant Secretary, and he got the necessary authorizations. And I'm then authorized, still informally, to go to Joe Garba and say, "Yes, we will invite Obasanjo to the White House if you can assure me he'll say yes." So after a day or so Garba says, "Yes. He'll say yes."

So then back to Moose over in the White House. I'm sure Moose goes one way or another, or through the Secretary, and we get a letter from President Carter inviting General Obasanjo to make a state visit. And he does. I go back, of course, as is the practice, and the visit went awfully well. Obasanjo recognized in Carter somebody who was really committed to work for change in South Africa, not just talk about it, and to pull out our assistance from UNITA, as did happen under the Clark amendment. No more assistance to any military groups in Angola. He also saw, he sensed. . . Obasanjo did, that under Carter the US might really push Britain to push Ian Smith to sit down with the Nationalists, and work out some kind of majority rule scheme for Rhodesia. So the visit went beautifully. And we sensed that probably Obasanjo would then invite Carter. So this was all dramatic change -- black and white from what I'd experienced under the previous administration.

Q: All right, Don. Pick up where you left off.

EASUM: Fine. We left off with the Obasanjo visit to Washington. Very successful. Obasanjo's return to Nigeria, and our orchestration then of the return visit with Obasanjo calling me over, I don't know, I suppose a month or so after he returned, and talking to me about his desire to bring Jimmy Carter to Nigeria. Mind you, no American President had ever visited independent black Africa in history. We knew a visit, if we could arrange one, would be historic. So, of course, we went back, our embassy did, to Washington and indicated there were very promising signs, that Obasanjo would invite Carter if Carter could give us a tentative response indicating he'd be willing to consider an invitation. He did that. And to make a long story short, President Carter visited two African countries, Liberia and Nigeria, in late March and early April of 1978. And those were historic visits.

We were very uneasy about the visit to Nigeria. Nigeria is a country with great proclivity for sudden violence, for breakdown of public order. Mind you, a city of five or six million crammed in to a very small geographic area. An infrastructure that doesn't work. Telephones don't work. Just to get messages around the city you have to send them on a motorcycle, or you have a whole

elaborate system of walkie-talkies and radios. The power system still -- but at that time even worse -- is very undependable. So that every home, or residence, of any standing has its own private stand-by generators. The Central Bank of Nigeria had a whole floor of car batteries hooked up together to provide emergency power to the computers of the bank, and the car batteries would heat up so much that they had something like 127 electric fans hooked up to blow air on the car batteries. No elevators work. You're constantly tramping up anywhere from five to thirty-five stories. So we were very much worried about this visit. And, as you know, for visits like that the US government sends out a team in advance, and they walk through every single thing that the President of the United States is supposed to do. And they do this about six weeks in advance, or two months in advance. And that team came out, and they were horrified. Absolutely horrified by everything they saw in spite of the fact that we were doing our very best to assure that it was going to work. And we felt it would work.

Reluctantly they. . . I don't know what kind of agonies they went through, but they said, "All right. We'll try this." But we were scared to death until it was over. Well, to make a long story short, it went absolutely to perfection. It was absolutely splendid. The streets were blocked off when necessary. We had, for the first and probably the last time in history, we had, we felt, control of the Nigerian police. Our people did. They were talking to them through their little microphones in their wrists, and the Nigerian police were absolutely fascinated because they were all given all this equipment. And for the first time in their memory, they all had telephones, they all had walkie-talkies. We used to take Nigerian Ministers for fun, up to the top floor of one of the hotels where all the communication gear had been set up, and we'd give them a tour of the gear, and then we'd say, "Do you want to telephone anybody?" And they'd say, "What do you mean anybody? Anywhere?" "Yes, anywhere." I can remember the Minister of Economics, three times he wanted to telephone some relative in Texas, and we were able, of course, to put him through just like that.

And I had my own exciting experiences because I had telephones in the house that worked for a change. I even had a phone call from Jody Powell when the advance team left Rio and he called me on the telephone when they were airborne from Rio, and talked to me in my residence in Lagos. Well, today, of course, all that stuff is normal but when you're in -- as you well know -- when you're in the developing world, and you can do something like that, and mind you this was thirteen years ago, that's pretty exciting stuff. Well, anyway, the visit went absolutely splendidly. And to show you how a powerful country can be turned around in a year and a half from riots in the street, death threats to me, jailings -- I didn't mention this -- jailings of American businessmen without our knowing it. And they'd spend the night sleeping on a table in a security chief's office with one bare light bulb up there, and be questioned about what they were doing where. If you wore a camera around your neck, you were immediately arrested. American companies were being just automatically rejected on contracts. And you know, it's heavy duty stuff. And to have this kind of change take place so fast. Why? Well, because a different policy on human rights. It's as simple as that. That's the simplest way to put it. Make it a little more complicated and explain it a little better, a different policy with regard to racism in South Africa.

And then the personality. Who could be more different than Kissinger on the one hand, and Carter on the other? Or Carter and Vance on the other? Here were two decent, humane

individuals, willing to listen. On the other side, I won't use adjectives, but you had somebody unwilling to listen, only interested in pushing his own particular brand of policy which he would argue was in the service of the US I won't argue about that. With a style that was seen as manipulative and untrustworthy, and a style that Nigerians felt, and many Africans felt, was derogatory to them as people. So much for that.

We had a meeting that was an extraordinary meeting. Obasanjo talked with Carter about the need to support the Patriotic Front in Rhodesia. The Patriotic Front was the alliance between Mugabe and his ZANU on the one hand, and Nkomo and his ZAPU on the other. They were now fighting from safe havens in Mozambique, which was now independent, and from Zambia. And they were putting terrible pressure on the Rhodesians, and the Rhodesians in turn were escalating the level of their warfare, and you had a terrible situation. And Britain had not yet come down hard in favor of getting everybody together, and talking over for a new future based on majority rule. That was the situation at the time.

Obasanjo said to Carter, "I like very much what I hear you saying about the Rhodesian situation." "As you know," he said, "at the moment we're at a stalemate. We can't get the ZANU and ZAPU people, the Patriotic Front people, to talk with the Smith people, and we can't get the Smith people to talk with them. What we're pushing for is All Parties Talks. That is the big issue and nobody can seem to produce it."

The Foreign Minister and I had arranged that in Lagos at that very same time would be the Foreign Ministers of the Front Line countries [Southern Africa]. We didn't tell Washington in advance. In fact, Garba really confronted me with a fait accompli. He simply said, about the day before Carter was going to arrive -- and this was very clever of him -- "Donald, I've arranged for all of the Front Line Foreign Ministers to be here. And I hope you can get Cy Vance to talk with them." Well, it was a genius move on his part, because that's exactly what Vance wanted to do. And after Obasanjo and Carter had sort of agreed together on the approach to the Rhodesian freedom struggle issue, it was the natural thing for Garba to say to Carter, "Well, sir, we've got the Front Line Foreign Ministers here, why not let Cy Vance talk with them while you and General Obasanjo do some other things?" And that's exactly what we did. We had side conversations that included Andy Young and Don McHenry, and Brzezinski, who wasn't really on the team philosophically. I didn't sense he was really with it. And, of course, Dick Moose, and myself, and Tony Lake, and one or two others.

We had those conversations, and based on an agreement Carter and Obasanjo made, we agreed a team would go to Dar es Salaam as quickly as possible [to talk with the Patriotic Front if the Front Line Foreign Ministers could arrange it]. That we would persuade David Owen from London to come down, and we would try to get the All Parties Talks resuscitated. This all was as a result of the fact that Obasanjo found Carter attractive, philosophically speaking. And, indeed, that's what happened. I'll tell you about that in a minute.

The other thing we agreed was on Namibia where Carter explained what the Group of Five was trying to produce a democratically elected government in Namibia, withdrawal of South African control, and the UN's sponsoring this in resolution which finally became Resolution 435. Obasanjo liked that, and he said, "Have you put it to the UN Security Council yet?" And Carter

said, "No. We're planning to, we're worried about the Russians." And Obasanjo said, "I will lean on them not to veto." And he did. He called in the Russian Ambassador, and he told him, "Don't you people veto." And he sent the Nigerian Ambassador in Moscow in to see his counterpart to say, "We, the Nigerians, do not believe you, the Russians, should veto this which is sponsored by the major five allied powers. We think this makes sense." And they didn't veto.

That was a really interesting example of how a powerful Third World country -- much more powerful than it is now for economic reasons -- a powerful Third World country, Nigeria, could play our game, in a sense. But it was also their game. So it was a tremendously successful visit. The British High Commissioner from my telephone, which again worked -- well, yes, it was working then because the US telecommunications people had insisted that it work -- we telephoned David Owen in London and woke him up. I didn't wake him up. I was standing there and the British High Commissioner, Sir Sam Fowle, woke him up, and said, "David, can you show up in Dar es Salaam three weeks from now to talk to Mugabe, and Nkomo, and Chikerema, and Tongarara, and the other Patriotic Front leaders?" And David Owen said, "It sounds useful but they haven't been willing to talk to us. Who's guaranteeing they'll be there?" And Sir Sam Fowle was able to say, "General Obasanjo, and President Jimmy Carter, because they're right here, and we just met with all the Foreign Ministers of the Front Line states, and they guarantee that they will deliver these people. The only quid pro quo is, that we deliver Smith and Muzorewa subsequently in Salisbury." And so it happened. And I was asked by Vance to go.

So I went. Dick Moose was there, Andy Young was there again, Cy Vance, McHenry, David Owen, and all of the Patriotic Front people that I've mentioned. And we sat for three days under Nyerere's hostship and talked about the All Parties Talks. What would the Nationalists need to have to really come to Salisbury and sit down with Smith? After we got that more or less sorted out, we went to Salisbury and we met with Smith, Muzorewa and some of his people, and talked with them about what they would need. And we then went to Johannesburg, and talked with the South Africans about the arrangements. All that just because we had cooked up -- I like to put it this way, but it's much too egocentric -- Dick Clark and I sitting beside my swimming pool, and saying to ourselves, "The way to get Jimmy Carter started right, is to get him to talk to some African leaders," and Nyerere and Obasanjo were the first two. So here's this wonderful sort of bringing that wheel full circle. That's really the story, Pete.

We could talk about other things at some other time perhaps, but I think this is essentially a story that connects an American Ambassador with his Secretary of State -- with two of them really. First of all Henry Kissinger, and then secondly, Cy Vance, who was a tremendous colleague in all of this, who took a great and sympathetic interest in Africa, and with Dick Moose, and Don McHenry, and Andy Young, and above all, President Carter who managed to fashion some policies that I felt were very wise, and that proved very productive. Unfortunately the Angolan-Namibia part of it was frustrated when the Reagan administration came to power and took eight more years to spin out.

Q: How long were you in Lagos then after this visit?

EASUM: After the Carter visit to Lagos, which was in the spring of '78, I was there until October of '79. And I chose my time of departure to coincide with the handing over of power by

the military regime, headed for one year by Murtala, and for three years by Obasanjo -- the handing over of power to a civilian elected regime. Murtala had pledged, "In four years we're leaving. We're going to spend this four years setting up a new constitution, a new system for the country patterned somewhat on the US with bicameral legislatures in the states, a unicameral legislature in the federal capital." And that worked itself out all the time I was there. And in October the election took place. Shehu Shagari, a civilian from the north, who had been a Minister of Finance in previous governments, was elected president. The military regime stood down, a civilian regime was elected, and I was then offered the presidency of the African American Institute. So I retired then the Foreign Service and came back to New York, and I've been here ever since.

CHESTER ARTHUR CROCKER
Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
Washington, DC (1981-1989)

Assistant Secretary Crocker was born and raised in New York and educated at Ohio State University and the School for Strategic and International Studies (SAIS). He served on the National Security Council (1970-1972), as Professor at Georgetown University (1972-1977), and as Director for African Affairs at the Center for Strategic and International Affairs (1976-1980). In 1981 he was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and served in that capacity until 1989, at which time he rejoined the faculty of Georgetown University. Mr. Crocker was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

CROCKER: So eventually we figured out that there were probably four or five types of Angolan officials and that we had to maneuver through them and to get to the right ones.

There were the totally committed ideologues in the foreign ministry, who were hopeless, absolutely hopeless. They were great at drafting UN resolutions condemning linkage and the evils of constructive engagement. They were hopeless interlocutors, who saw it as their job to prevent us from getting through to any of their fellow countrymen.

There were some interesting generals, senior generals and once we got them at the table we began to get a sense that perhaps they were an autonomous, distinct voice with a point of view of their own.

There was a key guy who was the minister of interior, Kito Rodriques by name, whom we cultivated as we believed him to be very close to the president.

There was the president himself, who was a young man when we started this process, he's my age today! He's been in office since 1979 without a break, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, a Soviet-trained petroleum engineer who became president of a country when his predecessor suddenly got ill and died on a Soviet operating table. People have often speculated about that, but that's another story.

Anyway, dos Santos was a young, technocratic guy who wasn't really fully in charge and not really a free agent. But gradually, over the Eighties, he became more of "the decider," he got more into the saddle.

There were young soldiers, there were older soldiers and there were party ideologues who were keepers of the communist flame. There were a variety of people to deal with.

We had to penetrate that and figure out how do we get an authoritative Angolan proposal as to the timing under which they could see Cubans leaving their country as it was linked to a withdrawal schedule for South Africans from Namibia. That was the goal.

By the end of '84 we had accomplished two major things in this effort. One, we had negotiated a disengagement agreement that didn't last very long, but while it lasted it showed what could be done between South African forces and Angolan and Cuban forces inside Angola.

We negotiated a stand down and a disengagement agreement and set up a joint military commission between them. It gave them a taste of what this kind of diplomacy could look like when the time was right, but they were never serious about fully implementing it. They used it as a breather, rather than using it to create momentum for the ultimate peace. I learned an important lesson from that process and have often reflected on the futility of partial or interim ceasefires that are not related organically to the broader political issues of a settlement.

But at the time it seemed to us like a significant accomplishment and I think it was, because it introduced them to each other. You had South African defense ministers sitting down with Angolan defense ministers and talking turkey. So that was important and setting up real time military-to-military radio links for a while in southern Angola, which was a real breakthrough.

Secondly, on the diplomatic track, we got a commitment, a public commitment from the Angolan leadership, signed by the president, to something which was called in Portuguese a *plataforma*, which I think we would call a declaration of principle, which basically said the Cubans will leave, in the context of a peace settlement in Namibia and the Cubans will leave by the sovereign decision of the government of Angola and that there will be an appropriate, I think the term they used was *calendario*, which we would call a withdrawal schedule.

So the magic words were uttered by this public, unilateral declaration coming out of Luanda. It was not something we could begin to sell to the South Africans (or accept ourselves). But the point was, if I can put it this way, it may sound a little crude, they had lost their virginity. They had begun to deal. They had begun to see the point of using the words we were wanting them to use, in order to keep open the idea of a package deal. And that's what we were driving for, a package deal of reciprocal binding commitments.

Q: Did you find the head of CIA, William Casey, playing dog in the manger or screwing things up or was he not a real problem?

Casey pushed hard to get the Clark Amendment repealed in July of 1985, but then so did we,

because we all agreed. The Clark Amendment was an amendment passed at the initiative of former Senator Dick Clark which prohibited direct American assistance and involvement in Angola after the Angolan civil war. It was passed in the mid-1970s, and what it did was to make it impossible for the CIA or for any U.S. agency to provide assistance to any Angolan party.

We tried, actually, in '81 to get the Clark Amendment repealed, because it would be a Reaganite signal that, to use the phrase, "America is back," we don't have both hands tied behind our backs, we're capable of competing with our global adversary, that kind of thing.

We failed in '81. We succeeded in '85. But of course Casey saw that as the opening of the door for him to take over our Angolan relationship and so we had a tussle about that, and I remember Casey coming down from Shultz's office to my office to ask if he could have a word with me, this is the CIA director, cabinet rank and he didn't have an appointment but I didn't know he was coming.

Anyway, he sits down on my couch and says to me, "Chet, what about Stingers?"

Q: We're talking about missiles that were quite effective in Afghanistan.

CROCKER: He didn't beat around the bush. Anyway, so we had what I'd call a long, drawn out arm wrestling match, once the Clark Amendment was repealed and to get the chronology right, July of '85, what kind of a new Angolan policy do we have and is it really new, or is it just reinforced and what do we tell UNITA and what do we tell the MPLA with whom we are trying to negotiate Cuban troop withdrawal?

I'd been meeting with UNITA all along in the process, to keep them briefed, try to keep them with us, try to keep them sweet, inform them and get input from them. But what the Agency folks wanted to do was to jump into bed with these Maoist freedom fighters under the mistaken assumption that this would constitute a 'policy toward Angola'.

Q: What about sanctions on Angola?

And there is an Angolan side to the story that parallels the South African saga. The point is there were developments on the Angola track at the same time that led to the repeal of the Clark Amendment as we've discussed earlier, the decision to provide covert aid to Savimbi and what that did to our Angolan connections while we were having difficulty with our South African connections.

The American political right reacted to the sanctions movement against South Africa by saying, "Let's have a sanctions movement against Angola! If they're going to beat up on our friends, who helped us in World War One and Two and who are staunch anticommunists, the white government of South Africa, if that's what the Democrats are going to do, let's beat up on Marxist Angola and let's wage war on them!"

And so we saw a major movement amongst Republican conservatives to repeal the Clark Amendment. The Clark Amendment banned any U.S. covert involvement in Angola and it had

been passed during the mid 1970's

Q: The Carter Administration.

CROCKER: I think, in the final phase of the Ford Administration that it was put in place, but, anyway, it had been there for some time.

I never liked the Clark Amendment because it tied my hands. I always felt it was better for us to be able to say to the Angolan leadership, "We do have options," wink, wink. But, anyway, our hands were tied.

The Clark Amendment is repealed and within weeks Bill Casey comes over to the State Department and says, "All right, time to go to war!", literally and of course we faced a lot of pressure from like-minded people inside the administration to basically scrap the negotiations, or at least put them on ice and begin developing a program of direct military support, clandestine support, to Jonas Savimbi and UNITA, to bring pressure to bear against the government of Angola, since they weren't moving as rapidly as we wanted towards a deal on Cuban troop withdrawal.

So we had a policy review. It was actually led by Bob Gates, who was Casey's deputy, sitting in an NSC office, with NSC people, Defense people and State people and we had that discussion and basically the outcome of that was that we would indeed use the authorities that Congress had now granted us to develop a modest program of covert support for UNITA.

I'm not supposed to go into detail about this on the record, so I will not do so, but I will just say that it was indeed a modest program. We tried to keep it carefully focused on support of our diplomacy.

What Casey and company wanted and by "and company" I mean like-minded officials in Defense, in the White House, what they wanted was not to support our diplomacy with power, but to replace our diplomacy with force.

Some of these people never understood that diplomacy and power can be integrated. They said, "It's either diplomacy or it's force and since diplomacy failed, let's try force!"

We'd ask them the question, "Do you really think that Jonas Savimbi's going to ride into Luanda on tank columns, with South African support and American clandestine support? I don't think so! Not as long as the Soviets are around."

But they would argue back, "We'll bleed them!"

And we would say back, "Why don't we try bleeding a few pilots, a few Cuban pilots and Angolan pilots, rather than trying to bleed the Soviet Union, which is a rather large target?"

Anyway, eventually this rather modest program took shape and I think it probably did make a difference at the margins, in sending signals. But we tried to keep it under our own control

throughout this period, sending signals to Luanda, to Havana and to Moscow that, as Reagan liked to put it, America is back and if you don't cooperate, we have alternatives. I believe it probably did play a role.

Q: What happened in 1986?

So that debate was not an easy one to prevail in. We prevailed the first time around, in '85. We lost the debate in '86.

And of course this was the time when we resumed our relationship of providing support to UNITA and to Jonas Savimbi in Angola.

In many ways if you look at all the so-called Reagan Doctrine conflicts or Reagan Doctrine wars, I'm referring to Nicaragua, of course and Afghanistan and some would add to that list, even though it's inaccurate, the Horn of Africa or Cambodia, even, it was

Angola that had a rebel with a major personality and major identity as a historical figure. Why? Because he had been in the anti-Portuguese struggle from the very beginning. He was one of the founding fathers of Angolan nationalism.

They got their story of struggle started in the 1960's. The MPLA, of course, operated primarily out of Brazzaville and to some extent was seen as a communist-oriented movement during the years before independence.

Savimbi had gotten support in the early years from both Zaire and Zambia, to some extent South Africa. His popular base was the Ovimbundu people, who represented 35, 40 per cent of the country, largely rural, largely uneducated, or less educated, whereas the MPLA ruling elite liked to think of themselves as representing the more advanced urban dwellers, the mestizo or mixed race community and those who were near to the coast.

Savimbi had all kind of credentials. He was very well spoken. He was a good public speaker. He was a good rabble rouser.

There's excellent footage in the archives of him addressing audiences of think tanks in Washington, in Germany and London, as well as addressing his own troops in the field in southern and central Angola.

He was not bashful in front of microphones. He liked to hold the stage. He was charismatic, in the real sense of the word.

He was capable of holding an audience, in at least four languages, probably more, although I don't think I ever learned all of them: several African languages, as well as French and Portuguese, English and some German, did his studies in German-speaking Switzerland.

So this is a fellow who had been around the world and in that sense was quite worldly. He cultivated relationships with all kinds of leaders around the world, including all over Africa. He

had quite an active diplomacy and he received support from places that wouldn't surprise you: more conservatively oriented or anti-communist oriented like Morocco and Togo and Côte d'Ivoire and at various times Kenya and Zambia and so forth, the list went on.

And of course Zaire, today's DRC. I say "of course" because without the DRC I don't think that Savimbi would have been geopolitically able to sustain his effort over those many years.

What was he like as a person? I'm not sure I ever got that close to him. I wouldn't presume to think I got that close to him.

We did take a number of walks in the woods, so to speak, outside of conference sites and meeting facilities, because wherever we met, except in Washington, we were subject to electronic surveillance, we knew it. If we were being hosted by the South Africans, we knew we were being bugged and intercepted or wired.

If we were meeting in Zaire, we knew that Mobutu was wiring us and of course that had its own complications, because Mobutu's wiring services were connected to his intelligence apparatus, which in turn was connected to our intelligence apparatus. Therefore if I was talking to Savimbi I was talking to Langley and I was aware of that.

But we occasionally met each other in other places, like Washington, where we presumably were not being wired.

In any event, we had these man-to-man chats about things from time to time. I had the sense of somebody who would have liked to be able to return to normal politics and to have his family be able to live in normal conditions and he had children. But normal life would have to come on his terms and his terms were pretty severe.

He saw himself, as I've indicated, as one of the George Washingtons of Angola and by the time we're talking about, the mid-Eighties, the other George Washingtons were either dead or marginalized.

And he found it very difficult to imagine sharing power with the kind of people who were then in power in Luanda, because he saw them as lesser personalities or as fronts for somebody else. He didn't take them very seriously and he didn't trust them.

He assumed that if he came back home to Luanda and tried to live a normal life there that he'd be killed and he was quite possibly right. And he assumed that, I think, because that's what he would do if he were in the MPLA's shoes.

This man was a charismatic figure, a rebel, an insurgent. He came out of a pro-Chinese background in the Cold War years. The Chinese had given him support when he was fighting the Portuguese, whereas the Soviets had supported the MPLA.

But by the time we're talking about he was a self-declared pro-Western freedom fighter and he understood the art form of being a chameleon about as well as anybody I've every met. He felt

very at home in Ronald Reagan's White House, which he visited on several occasions. He presented wooden mockups of captured AK-47's to various senior officials. So he was a man for all seasons, you'd say.

But he was also a warlord and a quite effective battlefield commander and strategist, in the conventional sense of a military commander.

Beyond that, he was also a worried man and sometimes I think a very paranoid man, who tended to surround himself with yes men and he listened to those who were around him. That's what people tend to do.

When he was surrounded by good people, he often made good decisions. When he was surrounded by bad people, or no outside voices at all, he tended to make very bad decisions.

And of course I think the record will show that he was, among his many other attributes, a killer. He was responsible personally for the deaths of a number of his own senior colleagues who did something at one stage or another that led him to be distrustful and he wiped them out.

So this is a man with many aspects to his history. I would not have wanted to live under Jonas Savimbi. And whenever my people were in his company, on his territory, I didn't sleep well.

But I would quickly add I wouldn't want to have lived under any of the Angolan leadership I was dealing with.

Q: What about the MPLA leadership at this point?

CROCKER: It was more collegial, whereas Savimbi was very much of a "big man". José Eduardo dos Santos came into power in 1979 as a somewhat unproven and young consensus candidate that I think other factions in the MPLA party thought could control him.

But over the course of years, including right up to today, he has outlasted and outsmarted and outmaneuvered quite a number of people. He's very bright, very quick, well spoken, smooth.

If you had to define him as a Marxist, you would say he was a Yves Saint Laurent Marxist. He liked good things and his family has come to enjoy good things in life and there's terrific amounts of wealth in the hands of the dos Santos family today. We're talking about the aristocracy of an oil producing country that has done very well for itself.

But an engaging conversation partner and somebody with a sense of humor. You could have low key conversation and I often did with José Eduardo dos Santos. He was personable. He had some charm and he spoke in a conversational tone.

When you spoke with Savimbi, you thought you were speaking to a warlord, as indeed you were, quite a different atmosphere.

Surrounding dos Santos there were elements that were close to him from the military. There were

various people who were his close military advisors who had been with him in the struggle at one stage or another, or had been commanders of certain parts of the armed forces. This was a military-based regime and whether the person was the defense minister, Kito Rodriques, as we called him, or the chief of the defense staff, General Ndalú, these were people who were among his closest advisors.

But there were many other advisors, including people more on the party, political side and the intelligence side and people in the foreign ministry. But I never thought, after the first year or so, the foreign ministry was an important place of power in the Angolan spectrum.

I think I should add here that as you get to know a regime or a country you begin to start differentiating all of the people you meet there and you begin to realize that you're not dealing with an abstraction or a stereotype or a cliché, you're dealing with individuals and you begin to assert that what matters is not that you met with a title, but that you met with a person and that personality made all the difference.

If we had good meetings, they were with the right people and if we had unsuccessful meetings, they were usually with the wrong people.

As you know, we had no relations with Angola, so setting up meetings with the Angolans was complicated. On the UNITA side, we had to set them up through Zaire or through South Africa, unless they were traveling to some third country like Côte d'Ivoire or occasionally to Washington.

In the case of the MPLA, we would meet them often in Angola, or equally often in Cape Verde or sometimes in Mozambique. The fellow Portuguese-speaking countries were very close sister countries, if you like, to Angola, so we would often meet the Angolans under the hospitality of the Cape Verdeans, who were wonderful hosts and did everything they could to facilitate this process.

But I just would make the point that individuals make a difference. I wouldn't attribute our eventual success with the Angolans to any one of them, because I don't think any one of them was in a position to assert himself to become completely the counterpart of the South Africans in this three-cornered decision-making process. They were at that time very, very dependent on their socialist brothers, especially their Cuban socialist brothers, but also their Russian partners.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Cuban attitude towards these negotiations? Were they trying to screw things up, or what was happening?

CROCKER: There was no question that the Cubans were listening in on all of our conversations with the Angolans. They were in the next room, so to speak and they had the ability to do that and one of our key negotiating partners in the Angolan government, I have no doubt, was working for the Cubans, and I think he saw that in fact as a genuine alliance.

So the Cubans, we didn't talk to directly during the years that we're talking about. We didn't have direct contact with them over these negotiations, really, until 1987.

But there had been some other contacts. General Vernon Walters had been to Havana in the early Eighties to put down some markers and to make a few points about worldwide issues and he did touch upon Southern Africa during those contacts.

We would sometimes hear the argument that we really should be talking to the Cubans or that we should be allowing them to join the talks, if they wanted to. We were given to believe that might make a difference from some of our Angolan interlocutors and from third parties, the French or Mozambicans or whatever.

In the years we're talking about, which is the mid-Eighties, our position, for good or not, was "What kind of an African country are you if you can't negotiate for yourself? Would you really want us to sit down, we the United States and negotiate over your head with your Cuban allies, or with your Soviet allies?"

And we would say to them, in order to see if we couldn't trigger a nationalist reflex, we would say to them very bluntly, "Do you really want us to take this to Moscow and Havana and you'll read about the results in the newspaper, or do you want to behave like an independent African country, which some people think you are?"

On occasion we would find a diplomatic way to say pretty blunt stuff like that, to see if we couldn't get them to move forward.

Q: It also makes sense, looking at it long range, for our dealing with a situation. Who knows what the third parties will do and all that?

CROCKER: Right, they bring their own agenda in, of course.

Q: What sort of reaction would you get?

CROCKER: Well, we got the right reaction, but it didn't necessarily mean that it was real. They said what they felt they had to say.

This process did not get into high gear until the Cubans did join the talks, which has often led people to ask the question, "Well, would it have made a difference if you'd been able to have a Cuban dialogue alongside, in parallel, or something?"

Q: And the people at whom we were firing the missiles were quite aware this was not something developed out in the bush of Angola. They realized technology was a little more sophisticated.

In Afghanistan the Stingers did appear to have made considerable difference. How about in Angola?

CROCKER: It's sort of asymmetric warfare, if you like. Our program of assistance to UNITA was tiny. It never became anything bigger than tiny.

It was miniscule compared to what South Africa was providing for UNITA and what UNITA was providing for itself by capturing MPLA equipment by the shipload, unbelievable amounts of Soviet-supplied hardware fell into UNITA's hands, because UNITA was a very effective insurgency movement at that time and ran circles around the MPLA, or FAPLA, the army of Angola.

And of course the Soviet supplies directly to Angola were between one and two billion dollars a year and our own effort was minor.

But I think it sent a signal, in the asymmetric sense that as Ronald Reagan himself would have liked to have put it and did, "America is back." It sent a signal that this conflict is not going to be settled on terms that we don't agree with and it raised the price at the margins.

Q: What was happening politically during this time?

CROCKER: Politically, in the negotiations?

Q: And in Congress.

CROCKER: Well, some of the key dates: Congress lifted the Clark Amendment in the summer of '85 and by February of '86 the internal administration discussions had concluded and we had begun providing covert support of a modest type to UNITA.

This whole debate, of course, was not very quiet. When the president was doing one of his walk-bys to his helicopter and the press was staked out, one journalist yelled to him, I think it may have been November or December of '85, probably Sam Donaldson, "Mr. President, I thought you supported UNITA. What are you going to do to support UNITA against the communist regime in Angola?"

And the president said, "Oh, yes, but we're going to do it covertly!"

So this was pretty well known. The Angolan leadership, the MPLA leadership, assumed that we were doing so even before we were and criticized and attacked us for doing it even before we were, and they had a lot of support from other African governments and there were UN resolutions and a lot of hoopla.

The Soviets mobilized their global propaganda apparatus, attacking the Reagan Administration for pretending to negotiate peace in Southern Africa while fueling the war, which of course anyone who knew their facts knew that that was a bit of a joke, since this was a Soviet militarized region by this point.

The Angolan leadership, by the middle of '86, was saying that it probably could no longer negotiate with us, it would have to suspend the talks, it needed to know what America's intentions were and so forth. So this had a chilling effect on the diplomatic track with the Angolans at that immediate time.

And I should mention that in 1985 the South Africans had put forward a conditional proposal on Cuban troop withdrawal which they wanted us to convey to the Angolan side, which we did and we did it in late '85.

By the middle of '86 the Angolans had still refused to answer that mail. They simply were not prepared to dignify the South African bid, as we called it. So we were not in a position to push very hard on the Angolans at this point.

Q: Did we have relations with Brazzaville at that time?

CROCKER: We did have relations and they were steadily improving at this point and in fact a lot of the final end game of negotiations took place in Brazzaville, meeting after meeting after meeting took place in Brazzaville after that, but April of '87 was the beginning of that phase, if you like.

And we made clear to the Angolans that in a sense they really had some decisions to take. The South Africans had partially accepted (very partially) a 1985 proposal. The ball was still in the Angolan court, that kind of a conversation.

I wouldn't say we made a lot of progress. We reopened direct talks, is the basic point. So one could no longer say and at my nadir what people were saying was the State Department's process has collapsed. They could no longer say that, as the process was back in motion, we were having substantive meetings with the parties and we were also briefing third parties and the South African side about what was taking place. So there was a beginning of reenergizing of the process.

Q: What happened in 1987?

So, again, this was April of 1987. We had another meeting with the Angolans in July of that year, which was led by a rather unimpressive senior official on the Angolan side and I was frankly fed up with that exchange; and, at the end of it we put out press guidance which actually was rather interesting and said that the talks had been a waste of time.

Since we didn't say that all the time, the fact that we said it got the attention of everybody. Our phones were ringing off the hook. "What do they mean? What is State saying? This is their process. They're saying the talks are a waste of time?"

And within 24 hours the Angolans put out a statement saying, "No they weren't. They were very useful and productive and constructive talks." So what that began to show is that the Angolans were under some pressure to keep this process on the tracks and to support the impression that progress was happening.

Q: Newborn Marxists often learn that communist cant and all but really, one, didn't understand it and, two, didn't use it well.

CROCKER: There's something to that. And we would try to cut through it, of course, because it

was so obviously an acquired garment that they were wearing.

But by July of '87, we now know, we didn't know at the time, but we now know there were important things taking place, there were plans for another major FAPLA dry season offensive against UNITA within Angola.

We knew that there were conversations taking place with the Cubans and in fact the Angolans said to us that they could imagine dealing with a partial Cuban withdrawal calendar, but the way they would frame it was that troops would redeploy out of the south of Angola to the north, within Angola.

Well, Angola's a big place and the terminology was so vague and the notion of withdrawal was so unspecific that to grasp Angolan thinking was like trying to nail jello to a tree, you're thinking of this redeployment of X,000, or whatever number of Cubans it was to some unspecified place also in Angola, when we were trying to get them out of the country.

They said, "Well, we'll redeploy them to the north, progressively, as conditions improve during the implementation of the Namibia plan." In a sense, what I'm telling you is that they were half pregnant. They were accepting the notion of Cuban withdrawal, but they wanted it all their way.

And we said, "Look, let's get serious here. We need a plan that has finality to it, has dates, has benchmarks, milestones and so forth. Why? Because the South Africans have finality on their commitments on Resolution 435 and they're not going to buy what you're trying to sell me. They're just not going to buy it." So that's when the waste of time phrase was used.

Q: You didn't have the kabuki players and all?

CROCKER: No, we didn't have the ministers. We began asking questions of the parties about when they thought it would be the right time to begin work on a possible common document of some sort, because a peace process needs eventually to get to the stage where you can agree on something.

And it was at that point that one of the sides suggested to us that, well, maybe we could get some principles of agreement that we could talk about, some general principles and what principles might we hold in common?

And the Angolans came forward and said, "Well, we clearly have to be based on UN Security Council Resolution 435 on the independence of Namibia. That's got to be one of our principles. That's sacred writ for everybody in the room, we assume. And that's the basis for the transition of Namibia, so surely that's one of the principles we could agree on."

The South Africans listened and nodded. They weren't going to make an issue of that, because in fact everyone knew if we're going to have a settlement it would be based on Resolution 435.

The South African would come back with a point such as, "Well, another sacred principle in terms of the United Nations and the world community is non-intervention in internal affairs. And

you and you,” pointing to the Angolans, “You have ANC bases which are focused on creating terrorist incidents inside South Africa. So an important principle is non-intervention.”

Of course that opened the door for the Angolans, “Yeah, and look what you’re doing with UNITA and Savimbi, in our internal affairs. You’re inside our country.”

So it was that sort of a discussion, but the idea that was beginning to gel was that there might be some principles that people could agree on.

Q: Well now, all during this process, how did Savimbi, our basic support of him, fit in?

CROCKER: It fit in every side conversation, but very rarely at the formal plenary table. Why? Because it would have forced everyone to say things that would be unhelpful in front of other people.

The Angolan-Cuban team knew that South Africa still had troops inside Angola and was still helping Savimbi. They knew that we were still helping Savimbi. So we talked about it off line.

I mentioned Aldana, we talked with him at length about this issue and the importance for them to understand that as the South Africans left Namibia the possibility of logistical support for Savimbi would decline, just as Cubans were leaving Angola and their logistical support for the MPLA would decline and there would be roughly symmetrical reduction of outside support for the two Angolan factions, which would lead to them having to come together.

And they listened and they understood what we were saying. There was no agreement, but we talked about it; we got it out on the table in these side meetings quite regularly.

Q: Did Savimbi have a representative across the street?

CROCKER: No and this was of course a problem, because there were people who were not in the room who wanted to be informed. SWAPO, the leading Namibian liberation movement, didn’t, either. And so the various sides would brief these two organizations off line, but they weren’t at the table.

Q: As the Americans, we didn’t feel we needed to brief these people?

CROCKER: Oh, yes, and we did.

Q: You did, too?

CROCKER: Yes, we did, too. But I’m sure the Russians did, the South Africans did, the Angolans did, everybody did, with their own spin. One reason for the misbehavior sometimes of parties who were not at the table is that they’d been subjected to conflicting spin, they didn’t know fully what was going on.

But they couldn’t be at the table. This was a negotiation between governments. If we’d said,

“Savimbi has to be here,” the Angolans would have said, “The ANC needs to be here.” It would have blown up before it started.

Q: Then you start getting into the shape of the table, as we had with the Vietnam talks.

CROCKER: Right, and you start negotiating the future of *apartheid*; it was just not going to happen. You can't have too many people and too much on the agenda. It just doesn't work. You've got to have a focus. So that was the focus.

But we did keep Savimbi informed and he was distrustful, to the end of his days, 'til the time he was killed, he was distrustful. He was a distrustful man, paranoid sometimes, with a lot to be paranoid about, frankly.

But we tried to persuade him that the best possible outcome for him was an outcome in which there were no Cubans in Angola and he would nod, say, “Yes, I agree with you, but I don't trust them. And I don't trust you.” It was never an easy conversation.

Anyway, the outcome at Governors Island, New York, was very important. It led to something called the New York Principles, which were signed on July 20, 1988. TO the uninitiated they sound a lot like the Ten Commandments, but it included and this is very carefully worded language I'll quote from: “Agreement that there should be redeployment towards the north and the staged and total withdrawal of Cuban troops from the territory of the Peoples Republic of Angola, on the basis of an agreement between Angola and Cuba and the decision of both states to solicit on site verification of that withdrawal by the UN.”

So what do we have here? We have an agreement that there will be total Cuban withdrawal, redeployment and then withdrawal and that it will be on a timetable determined by Angola and Cuba, it doesn't mention South Africa or the United States.

So that's an art form in which we said, “Look, we don't have to be the signatory of the withdrawal treaty, but the South Africans have to agree to and accept the terms that are in it. It's your agreement, an agreement between two allies, but the South Africans will have to agree to it.”

Then Principle Four, “Respect for the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all states, non-interference with the internal affairs of all states, abstention from the threat and use of force against the territory of all states” and so forth. Sounds like standard UN prose but it had particular salience and significance in the content of these interacting and intermixed wars in which everyone was mixed up in neighbors' affairs – the ANC based in Angola, SWAPO based in Angola, UNITA supported by South African forces from Namibia, and so on..

Principle N: “Recognition of the mediating role of the United States of America.” It's just a page, but it's a page of solid gold, and it made all the difference. Once we had that, we had our first joint agreement.

Q: How'd you draft this thing? Did we have this in our pocket, or somebody would suggest

wording? How did this come out?

CROCKER: At the plenary there'd be suggestions for what principles needed to be in the agreement and then we'd break and we'd prepare text and then the text would get massaged, most often in side talks, not hammered out in plenary.

That third principle that I mentioned was extremely delicate, took a lot of time, because we had to persuade obviously ourselves and the South Africans that we could accept the fact that the withdrawal schedule would be as a result of a bilateral treaty between the two communist allies, but there would also need to be a tripartite agreement that would serve as a chapeau over the whole thing. And at the very end of the day – when the negotiation concluded six months later – we had a tripartite and a bipartite treaties, mutually reinforcing and interdependent..

But there were a lot of issues like that. The wording of things, you can imagine some of the language that might get people into trouble. Here's one where you can image there was debate: "Reaffirmation of the right of the peoples of the southwestern region of Africa to self-determination, independence and equality of rights."

You can drive a Mack truck through that. Who the hell are "the peoples of the southwestern region of Africa?" Does this mean that the Herero people of Namibia have their own state? Does it mean that the Ovimbundu people of Angola have their own state?

No, it doesn't mean that. But it means the peoples, as defined in UN Charter terms, who live within colonially-defined territorial states.

Q: Were there tribal difficulties in Angola?

CROCKER: Yes.

Q: Angola, it's not a monolithic state. This was just their problem, the Angolan government's problem?

CROCKER: UNITA, the rebel movement, its social base was the Ovimbundu people, who were the largest ethnic group in Angola, but they were also among the least developed, in economic terms. They don't live around the capital city, they're in the center and the south.

There were clearly tribal issues. There were also ideological and power issues.

HERMAN W. NICKEL
Ambassador
Pretoria, South Africa (1982-1986)

Herman W. Nickel was a foreign correspondent for Time Magazine in 1958. He was interviewed by Willis Armstrong on August 31, 1989.

NICKEL: Unfortunately the better relationship was delayed by continued South African violation of the Nkomati Agreement in letter and in spirit, but they're now beginning to see the fruits of that kind of development.

The other effort that we were spending a great deal of time on, obviously, was the Namibian-Angola settlement. While I was not there when things finally came to fruition, it was clear to us, even then, that it was only a matter of time when all the parties to this dispute and I mean the MPLA government in Luanda, UNITA, the Cubans, and, very importantly, the Soviet Union and South Africa, were going to realize that a political settlement was preferable to an indefinite continuation of that costly conflict. We had many ups and downs and it took a long time to get all these unlikely parties to this negotiation with the right constellation.

Q: A real congeries of characters, isn't it?

NICKEL: It was an extraordinary negotiation which cast, in the broker role, the United States which had no diplomatic relations at all with Cuba, no diplomatic relations with the MPLA, very difficult relations with the Soviet Union, although that changed towards the end. The Soviet Union became very cooperative in bringing about the settlement. And then, of course, we had to move along the South African government, with which we had always had very difficult relations.

Q: Plus, then you throw in Mr. Savimbi and the SWAPO and you've got other factors in the situation.

NICKEL: Yes, although they were not directly part of the negotiations.

Q: They were indirectly there.

NICKEL: But they were indirectly there. SWAPO, frankly, was not much of a player in the diplomacy. But we could not ignore the concerns of Savimbi.

Q: Who supports Savimbi?

NICKEL: Well, I think, first of all, you have to start. . .

Q: We were in and out, weren't we?

NICKEL: Yes. But the first thing one must say is that Savimbi has a genuine support base within Angola.

Q: Oh, yes. Sure.

NICKEL: And I think that that is the real key to his longevity, rather than the foreign support he received -- though it obviously was important.

Q: No, they're not mercenaries.

NICKEL: They're not mercenaries. I think they are in quite a different category from Renamo, since Renamo was very much a creation at first of the Rhodesian Intelligence Service, whereas UNITA was a genuine liberation movement. The South Africans, of course, were very much concerned about the projection of Soviet surrogates into the continent, because they were the only people who could constitute a genuine military challenge to South Africa's military and strategic preeminence of the continent. They saw support in Savimbi a way of fighting the spread of Soviet influence into the region, and they spent a good deal of effort and money in keeping Savimbi supplied. Savimbi accepted that because, for him, it was, of course, a critical strategic link.

Q: Sure. Sure. And he couldn't be too fussy about it.

NICKEL: No.

Q: Is there some European support for Savimbi also, isn't there? French Intelligence?

NICKEL: Yes. I think that they were certain sympathies on the part of the French and perhaps on the part of the Belgians, too. I think that there was always some support from within Africa, too. I mean there was a close relationship with the Moroccans, between Savimbi and King Hassan. There were other Francophone countries which did provide some support for Savimbi, including the Ivory Coast and Gabon, which at least tacitly, were very helpful and, of course, very critically, Mobutu.

Q: Yes. And, of course, that gave access to supply routes and all that sort of thing.

NICKEL: That's right.

Q: Getting the things into Savimbi that he needed.

NICKEL: Right.

Q: That was a fascinating process and it started really back in '81-'82 as an objective of the US Government to somehow get an end to this ambivalent situation.

NICKEL: Yes.

Q: And do you feel that it's reasonably well on the way to solution now, or that what's going on are a few hitches, but not. . .

NICKEL: Well, I think it was clear that an Angolan-Namibian settlement would not go off without hitches. And, indeed, we had a big hitch right on the first day when SWAPO, in an extraordinarily ill-considered move, violated the agreement by the massive infiltration of SWAPO guerrillas. This left the United Nations with little choice but to call on the South Africans to contain this incursion.

I think that we are in for continued hiccups on this matter, but I have no doubt that the overwhelming interest of all the parties in a peaceful resolution or -- let's put it less ambitiously - the prevention of a revival of this warfare are going to prevail. I mean, all the parties have an interest in the settlement at this stage and I think that when that strong motivation exists, it does become possible to work out these hitches.

Q: *Even with such an extraordinary array of contestants.*

NICKEL: Yes. Perhaps I'm being too optimistic, but I think that the interest of the parties, in the end, will see to it that these hitches can be worked out.

Q: *Governments pursue their interests.*

NICKEL: Yes.

CLAUDIA ANYASO
Desk Officer, Anglophone West Africa; USIA
Washington, DC (1997-1999)

Ms. Anyaso was born and raised in North Carolina and was educated at Morgan State University and American University. She joined the State Department in 1968, where she specialized in Education and Cultural Affairs, with particular regard to African countries. She had several tours in Washington as well as abroad. Her foreign assignments include Lagos, Abuja, Port-au-Prince and Niamey, where she served primarily as Cultural and Public Affairs Officer. Ms. Anyaso was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

ANYASO: I was a desk officer; Marilyn Hulbert was our director at the time. I was responsible for Anglophone West Africa and nobody wanted to handle Mozambique and Angola so I also became the desk officer responsible for the post management for our staffs in Angola and Mozambique, which was wonderful because I had never visited those countries and this gave me an opportunity to get to southern Africa.

Q: *What was your impression of these ex-Portuguese countries, which had had very substantial wars going on in them?*

ANYASO: Well I tell you if I had thought Abuja was a new city and I thought difficult times but when I went to Luanda, Angola, the roads were not good and this was in the city. You could still see bullet holes in certain buildings and I said, "Oh they haven't done much since the war." Well they told me that the war had never reached Luanda but it still looked like a war zone. Then they had a museum, which I visited, and they have the car that one of the leaders had been riding in it and it was riddled with bullets; it was sort of depressing. Our embassy at the time was housed on a compound in trailers and I believe there was a swimming pool which gave them some

recreation but they were housed in these little trailers and the plan was to get some property on the Corniche, which was very lovely; it ran along the river, along the ocean I guess and that's where all of the oil company executives were building homes.

I did visit the Catholic University in Luanda, it was a university that Michael Kennedy I believe he is Robert Kennedy's son who was killed in a skiing accident but anyway he was beloved in Angola and had contributed a lot of money and resources to helping this Catholic University get established, so that was going very well. I chatted about the different faculties and things like that and certainly we were giving book donations and assisting to the extent that we could this new university. One of the things we did in non-English speaking African countries was English language teaching so we also offered that particular service. I understood from the head of the university that it was very expensive to build this university because materials had to be brought in and it meant that everything cost two or three times what it would cost anywhere else; but they managed to do this. I went to the press center to talk about how journalism was going on in the country. They did have the press. They had one TV station I believe, there was no independent media there but I must say the press center was a very slick operation; it was worthy of being a press center anywhere.

Q: Was there still vestiges of a war going on?

ANYASO: One of the unfortunate things about that war in Angola were the land mines. Outside of Luanda it was really dangerous because the whole country was just full of these land mines and so one of the United Nations teams was working on removing them. But at that time many people were sequestered almost like on reservations in these camps but that was no way to live.

Q: Sort of USIA wise what were we doing there?

ANYASO: As I said, we were doing the usual education programs, the media programs, the educational advising. There are students coming to the United States from Angola and we would be advising them and their parents on how that process worked. We had speakers who would go out. There was collaboration between the staff in Angola and also in Mozambique with Brazil because of the Portuguese language so there were materials we could get from Brazil to use there. They did not like the materials we would get from Portugal I guess because of the colonial history there.

Q: Was the government in Angola at this time basically antagonistic toward the United States?

ANYASO: Yes. They felt that we had supported the wrong people, Jonas Savimbi. We had supported the wrong side in their war and so the people in charge were the people we had not supported. They weren't very what's the word the relationship was...

Q: Inhospitable?

ANYASO: ...it was a strained relationship between our embassy and the government.

Q: I think the interesting thing is that...

ANYASO: Which was Marxist.

Q: ...USIA activities could continue in a country that was ruled from the top, which was Marxist but you still could do something.

ANYASO: We still could do something. We had always maintained that our programs were citizen programs, teachers, professors, students, professionals; it was not a government kind of program, which was the beauty in what we could do. We could have relations with their institutions and actually from time to time they might make noises about approving Fulbright participants from their country but there wasn't too much of that; they more or less left us alone. AID also worked there in development and I discovered a private U.S. NGO that was working there the MCID, Mississippi Consortium of Universities for Development and it was run out of Jackson, Mississippi, by an African-American woman, Dr. Allie Mack. I said, "Wow, what are you doing?" Of course they were working on different programs, conducting capacity building programs and that was wonderful. So those kinds of things...

Q: Were any other countries active there, doing the same thing that we were doing or were we kind of a major contributor at least to outside assistance?

ANYASO: You know I can't really say I just don't know what their other donors were doing. I do know that all of those oil companies and several of them from the United States were training people and giving scholarships. There is a point of friction between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola because on the northern border there is oil and it's being claimed by the Angolans, Cabinda. The oil companies were talking to us about setting up English language training so that we could teach their employees to speak English so that was going on and I believe when Madeleine Albright was secretary of State she actually visited Cabinda to see what was going on; it was one of those in and out trips. So I don't know what the other donors were doing but they were making an awful lot of money out of the oil. So it's not one of those countries we were giving any great amounts of aid because they had all that oil; in fact, they had as much probably as Nigeria and I think they were probably as corrupt as Nigeria.

There was a contrast for me in what I was seeing in the country. There was this sort of Corniche or island out there where they were building restaurants and big hotels; maybe it was like Hilton Head. All that was going on and as I say they had the oil executives who were building these mansions in one part of the place so there was a very big gap between the rich and the poor in the country. In Mozambique you didn't have that kind of gap it was more...

Q: They didn't have oil did they or did they?

ANYASO: They didn't have oil so you didn't have that gap. Our PAO, Harriet Maguire, at the time and our ambassador were working very hard on various programs in the country but as I said we did a lot of English teaching so that is what she was concentrating on there. Our ambassador at the time loved opera so during my visit there was a program at his residence; there was an American working for UNICEF or one of the UN organizations whose name was Michael Jackson and I told him afterwards that I didn't think that was an appropriate name for an

opera singer. Come up with an Italian name or something but not Michael Jackson. But there was a lady from Mozambique who had been trained in Europe and she sang beautifully so they did a program at the ambassador's residence and that was quite nice.

There is a magnificent hotel in Mozambique called the Polana, it's one of those grand old hotels right on the Indian Ocean and there were a lot of conferences at that particular hotel. But it is a very poor country. They have wonderful handicrafts and they grow cashews in the country and they were making peli-peli I think very well, their industry was doing well I think until the World Bank came in with a plan to send their cashews to India and it became a big brouhaha because it was taking away what they felt was a big industry in Mozambique; I think they finally won and kept their cashews and processed them at home. But just looking at the people and the country they have a long way to go. Economically we had come up with this HYPIC program, which was a technical assistance program for the poorest of the poor countries and they definitely qualified for that. So they were working their way through that system to get some more aid into the country and I think they are doing quite well.

JOSEPH G. SULLIVAN
Ambassador
Angola (1998-2001)

Ambassador Sullivan was born and raised in Massachusetts and educated at Tufts, Georgetown and Yale Universities. Entering the Foreign Service in 1970, he served in the Department of State in Washington, DC as well as in posts abroad. His foreign posts include Mexico City, Lisbon, Tel Aviv and Havana. Mr. Sullivan served as US Ambassador to Angola from 1998 to 2001 and as Ambassador to Zimbabwe from 2001 to 2004. Ambassador Sullivan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: Today is the second of February, Groundhog Day, 2011. When did you go to Angola and how long were you there?

SULLIVAN: Okay, I went in November of 1998 and let's see left in the summer of 2001. Let me ask if you recall whether I covered sort of the confirmation process which was...

Q: No you didn't.

SULLIVAN: Okay, so I should start there and then move on to getting there.

Q: Yes.

SULLIVAN: I had been doing the job based in Cyprus on Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group. I got called back from that because I had been nominated and needed to prepare for the confirmation process.

Q: Were you concerned about the Cuban connection?

SULLIVAN: Well ironically it wound up being the Haiti connection. The Cuban connection wasn't a problem but the Haiti connection proved to be. The hearings, which I recall, were held in July of 1998. There were about 11-12 nominees up for African posts, three of us had a Haiti connection. Ambassador Bill Swing, who had been ambassador to Haiti; Bob Felder who had been the DCM and myself who had been a year previously the Haiti special coordinator. Then Senator John Ashcroft was the chairman of the Africa subcommittee and had shown no particular interest in Africa but that is where he wound up as committee chair. We had no real notion that it would be heavy going other than we knew there were staff members in that committee, particularly Republican staff members, who were very hot on the issue of Haiti even though by then, of course, the fervor that I had described earlier prior to the '96 presidential election passed. Still there were staff members who still had Haiti on their mind.

Q: Why we're doing these things I think people who read this should understand that staff members particularly when they get a handle on ambassadorial confirmations and all often can throw their weight around. It happens again and again and again.

SULLIVAN: Sure and that is their opportunity to both make a policy point against the Administration, pose a problem for the Administration, probably in most cases even more than the nominee. In any case, the three of us were singled out, as all the other Senators and nominees went through rather quickly. We got questioned by committee members, no problem, but then Ashcroft, the committee chair, asked to have us testify as a group separately. I would say we had about an hour and twenty minutes of questions, as I recall, directed at the three of us. Probably Bill Swing took the heaviest load but I took my share as well. I think the factual questions we could all handle well enough, but the questions of why didn't you prevent Aristide from exercising influence? Why did political killings continue? These were complicated questions and there was no answer that would satisfy. So we finished that hearing and then Ashcroft, in effect, declined to move the process forward and declined to send it to the full committee. In any case, none of the Africa nominees were confirmed in the set of Senate confirmations processed before the August recess and so we were left hanging.

Bill Swing had been nominated as ambassador to Congo Kinshasa and just about that point Congo Kinshasa erupted into pretty much a full scale civil war with Rwandan and other forces entering into the country as well. The administration chose to send him out on a recess appointment; so he went out. Separate from the hearing process, I had to go up and meet with the staff of Senator Dodd on the old Nicaragua questions that I had mentioned earlier but that meeting went reasonably well. Senator Dodd did not pose an objection. I know the administration was in constant contact with Ashcroft's staff and I think eventually they didn't pose an objection and we went through, as I recall, probably in October of 1998; so I could only really make concrete plans to leave in late October, early November.

Q: How did you handle this personally?

SULLIVAN: Well it's never easy and I was good friends with Bill Swing and I just felt bad for him that he had after a 35-year diplomatic career, about 20 years of it as Ambassador, this very

distinguished and able gentleman had been subject to public ridicule. He was asked questions for which there was no answer deliberately. It wasn't pleasant but what I had come to expect on Haiti after having done that job a year before.

Q: I don't want to over dwell on this but I'm trying to capture the political set at the time. Was Aristide somebody's darling or somebody's villain? Was he a...

SULLIVAN: He was a many Republicans' villain because he was populist, was viewed as a Marxist, and because he clearly did engage in political chicanery and in violence to serve his political ends and probably corruption as well. The Clinton administration had exerted itself to assure that he did not change the constitution to be able to run for reelection even though he was toying with the idea of changing the constitution since he had been forced out of the country for several years in a military coup. But he did not. That notwithstanding, the candidate who eventually became president, Preval who later served again as president of Haiti at that point was very much in Aristide's shadow. I think it is too far to say that he took orders from Aristide but he certainly was reluctant to act decisively if Aristide opposed a particular move. It is the traditional battle of Congress against an administration, the Congress wants decisive action particularly the opposition political party, which had at that point held the majority in the Senate and the House, wants the administration to bring the villains to account and put all other concerns aside. The administration is always playing a balance and in the case of Haiti it was a balance that involves trying to nurture some sort of democratic institutions, it was a balance of trying to avoid mass migration from Haiti to the United States, if chaos prevails. So it was all of those things, and particularly left over from the past, was the Republican disagreement with the Clinton administration decision to invade Haiti and topple the military coup leaders and restore Aristide to power back in about 1994.

Q: Was Aristide still popular with the Black Caucus or other elements within the Democratic Party?

SULLIVAN: Sure he was. He was close to many members within the Black Caucus and they were generally quite supportive of him. He also had friends who were, at that point, no longer in the administration but close to the administration. Tony Lake, the former NSC advisor had a good personal relationship with Aristide and in the days when I had responsibility for Haiti, I had made one trip with Tony Lake who met to counsel prudence from Aristide to which he said the right thing and he nodded it in the right places, but at the end of the day did his own thing.

Q: All right then we are talking about October of what '98?

SULLIVAN: Correct.

Q: You got your approval.

SULLIVAN: I got my approval but we never really dealt with the key question on Angola, in the hearing process or anywhere else in the process frankly.

Q: But at the time you went out there what was the situation there?

SULLIVAN: The situation was that there had been a peace agreement negotiated and agreed to by the two principal parties, the government and UNITA, the armed opposition, from 1994. The guarantors of that peace agreement were the United Nations, the United States, Russia and Portugal. That agreement was proving increasingly fragile and problematic. It was widely suspected, although not documented, that UNITA, which had agreed to confine itself to limited areas of the country and not to arm itself, was rearming and retraining for another round of war. The UN peacekeeping forces could not document it, but there was significant suspicion that UNITA was rearming.

Q: Where would they get their arms?

SULLIVAN: Well there was the recently arrested and extradited merchant of death, Victor Boot, the former Russian businessman, who was shipping the arms and obtaining from many places, particularly the former Soviet Union, the Ukraine, Bulgaria and other countries that had lots of tanks and other heavy artillery to spare. So arms had been coming in and this was later documented quite fully that UNITA was very prepared and had trained extensively. So the peace process was breaking down.

Q: What were you getting from the CIA for example?

SULLIVAN: They had some information, but not a lot. I think the policy, at that point, of the United States was to just hope against hope that nobody would take the initial action of returning to the terrible war situation, which had been prevailing in the country for at least 30 years.

Q: Yeah.

SULLIVAN: But I would say that the problem of denying unpleasant reality became increasingly problematic at the time I went out there. I recall my first meeting with the Angolan President in mid-November to present my credentials. As always in those sessions you listen a lot, but then sought to convey our message that the Angolan Government should not initiate military action. While he was a restrained man, President dos Santos was angry at the United Nations, angry at the guarantors of the peace agreement, including the US. In his view, based on evidence that he thought he had, UNITA had already rearmed and was preparing to go back to war and the guarantors had not provided effective prevention to prevent UNITA from doing this. Now I should say that the United States and others did support an increasing range of UN sanctions on UNITA over the previous year because of well-founded suspicion that UNITA was not complying with the peace agreement. But these sanctions were not effective because the arms dealers UNITA was dealing with were prepared to act outside international law and deliver arms behind the lines, and UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi was very careful and clever about how he rearmed.

Q: Now who was the president and what type of government and what was your evaluation of its control and effectiveness?

SULLIVAN: Well the government has been since independence a government of the MPLA, a

once Marxist Party, initially supported by the Soviet Union. As I recall, that was the origin of the conflict at the time when the United States supported the opposition to the MPLA after the Portuguese walked away from Angola in 1974. There were several phases of the war, including several in which we actually supported UNITA several years, covertly. So it was a complex situation and one in which our own historical baggage was considerable. I'm sure that within the Angolan government there were many who, if anything went bad, suspected that the United States was returning to prior policies of seeking their overthrow by supporting Savimbi again, even though the US had renounced that option way back in the Bush I administration in '90 or '91. But the Angolan government was ineffective and corruption was rampant. That notwithstanding, the government had a reasonably effective armed force; kept the coastal areas largely free of conflict and kept the considerable oil production flowing, of which Chevron had a very large share and other American oil companies, particularly EXXON also had a piece as well as French and British oil companies. So Angola was a large and growing oil producer at that point. The Angolan government as well had shown on several occasions that, notwithstanding military challenges, it was always able to arm and train its forces and defeat the periodic challenges that the UNITA rebel forces posed.

Q: Well now did UNITA and other rebel forces was there any other sort of lurking power behind them or was this a self-generated opposition?

SULLIVAN: Well certainly in the past there had been others forces, initially including China under Mao and later the United States and also apartheid South Africa behind UNITA. By the late '90s, the Angolans suspected that now post-apartheid South Africa was taking a benevolent, if not supportive, posture toward UNITA. Post-apartheid South Africa had a not very positive relationship with the Angolan government particularly once Mbeki assumed the South African presidency in 1999. So there was at least some complicity on the part of other African governments. I think most of the East European involvement was at that point for reasons of profit rather than choosing sides. Whether it was the government that actually made the money or the armed forces that controlled the weapons that made the money probably varied. There did not appear to be any particular preference for UNITA in Europe, but individuals and governments certainly benefited financially from arms sold to UNITA, and in the case of several countries later to the Angolan government as well.

Q: The president of Angola is who now?

SULLIVAN: Jose Eduardo dos Santos and he actually has been president since 1979. He did have one election in 1992 as the outcome of a peace agreement reached. In that election, in a reasonably fair, internationally monitored election, he beat Savimbi in the presidential contest. At that point Savimbi rejected the results and basically went back to a war that took another two years to reach another peace agreement, the last peace agreement, the Lusaka Peace Agreement, of 1994 that was breaking down, as I arrived.

Q: What were you after? Did you feel that you, being the United States representative, weren't going to be a passive by-stander were you?

SULLIVAN: Well the initial hope going in, and certainly one which I had been encouraged to

pursue, was to try to hang on to the Lusaka peace agreement. We had a new assistant secretary for Africa at the time, Susan Rice and Tom Pickering was the undersecretary for political affairs. I think we were late in abandoning a no longer viable U.S. policy. We tried to maintain the peace accord, but that was not possible as UNITA had already rearmed and the Angolan government was not going to listen to us anymore.

The Angolan Government was going to seek to preempt UNITA's ability to prevail in a military conflict. That's what they did. They, in effect, initiated conflict preemptively, but UNITA was indeed prepared for war and reacted massively. So there were very heavy artillery exchanges, even in some provincial capitals, tremendous destruction and tremendous human suffering, with the population from most of the inland provinces having to flee to the provincial capitals or to capital city of Luanda to live in tent camps to get out of the way of the conflict. So the Government had demonstrated that UNITA had rearmed and was prepared to go to war. UNITA at one stage captured one provincial capital, and that only for a couple of weeks, but they certainly dominated many outlying areas in a number of the inland provinces. So the conflict was very heavy, and most Angolans view that last period as the bloodiest stage of the long civil war. From the point where the conflict restarted, arms were mostly not as available to UNITA, since the monitoring of what came into Angola stepped up and the potential consequences for the suppliers of those weapons became more problematic. But the Angolan government built up very substantially and used lots of their petroleum proceeds to buy weapons to ensure that they could outgun UNITA.

So within a month from when I arrived in Angola, the war had restarted. Our communications with the Angolan government were very bad at that point; they really were not interested in hearing from us or from the UN or anybody who would urge restraint. At one point in late December 1998, two UN planes evacuating UN materiel from the conflict zones were shot down; one of them having an American pilot. I remember getting involved in that issue and at one point managing to reach the Angolan chief of staff of the armed forces but the Angolans were not going to be cooperative with the UN or the US to permit searches for the downed planes in a combat zone.. At the same time, the US had its last communication with UNITA Commander Jonas Savimbi over that incident. My predecessor had been going for most of the previous three years to periodic UN meetings with Savimbi out in the interior provinces. Savimbi's usual refrain was how his commanders were pushing him to be more and more aggressive, but that he was being patient. From about August '98, neither the UN nor the U.S. had direct communication with Savimbi. Then in December of '1998, Pickering did reach Savimbi on a satellite phone to urge his cooperation in searching for the plane and the lost Americans. Well Savimbi was someone who had charmed both Mao Zedong and Ronald Reagan and he would always say the right things, but generally not do them.

That was when I began to provide my own analyses as I had been on the ground longer, as I talked to people, heard my own staff directly, some of them very good and persuasive, notably our political officer Alex Laskaris. I reached the conclusion that this was no longer a peace that could be reestablished, it was really not possible to restore the Lusaka Peace Agreement. Savimbi had broken virtually every piece agreement that he had ever entered. We could not expect the government of Angola to listen to us and follow our counsel of restraint because they would always fear, based on their history, that Savimbi would enter a temporary agreement to

build his forces back up only to make war again. So I reached the conclusion that we really needed to change our approach. We ought not to be looking to, nor expect to restore the Lusaka Peace Agreement, but instead decide what we needed to do to bring the civil war to a definitive conclusion.

My conclusion was that Savimbi was an unreliable partner, that he was not interested in peace, but in power. We had no reason to try to restore a place for him in a peace agreement that he had broken. On the other hand, the Angolan government was not a bargain, nothing great, nothing we would think was the greatest in the world but certainly the better of the two alternatives. In addition, that is frankly where our economic interests lay as well, since the Angolan government controlled the area that at that point was producing as much as seven percent of U.S. petroleum imports, much of that extracted by US petroleum companies. I began to put that advice into telegrams and conveying it whenever I met with US policymakers. I must say that for quite a while, that advice was not welcomed and, for the most part, the U.S. essentially took a hands-off posture in the hope that the peace agreement could be restored.

There was no question of our providing either military assistance or military sales to the Angolan government. Nobody expected that was either possible or desirable, and the Angolan government had enough cash to find others who would sell them weapons in any case. I concluded that we should stop seeking to play a neutral role between the two sides and that this would also have benefits in greater ability to influence the Angolan government. About a year and a half later, by the beginning of the year 2000, we had begun to move in a direction where we clearly regarded UNITA as the greater transgressor and stopped seeking to take an even-handed stand between the two parties. At one point Susan Rice, who had visited Angola shortly before I got to post in the fall of '98 and had not been given a meeting with President dos Santos, reflecting his exasperation with the United States at that point, by the summer of 2000, visited again and got a very nice reception. By then, the Angolan government was confident that they would eventually prevail in the civil war. They also had an interest in a good relationship with us and the two governments began to have a more meaningful exchange on a whole range of issues.

Q: Was there any point when you went to dos Santos and said we are with you or what we were doing or was this all sort of done indirectly?

SULLIVAN: Well certainly at the early stage of my tour, all contact was indirect because after presenting my credentials, it was probably a good six months before I got to see the President again. Even our relationships with regular contacts with trusted individuals suffered, it was probably a good six months or so before we began to be able to see those people regularly again. The Angolan armed forces, for instance, had been instructed not to have contact with the Americans even though previously they had a very good working relationship with us. They had been instructed not to have contact with us because they were going to do what they had always done and rely on their own resources, their own people, their own army to eventually prevail. So it was only as they began to regain confidence that they were more open to working with us and others on non-strategic issues. On strategic issues, they found support in various places including Israel, France and Russia to achieve their objectives. The other issues that we had interest in were the humanitarian aspects of the conflict, providing humanitarian assistance to the internally displaced, and our economic/commercial interests in petroleum. Eventually with the conflict

deepening in the Congo, Angola came to the assistance of then President Laurent Kabila and so became a party to that conflict. As a result, we had a new set of issues to discuss with respect to the Congo. By then, the US-Angolan relationship had improved sufficiently that we were able to have quite a good and regular communication with a key actor on that issue, the armed forces chief of staff.

Q: What about say the French, the British, Portuguese, the German, the Russians they all have embassies there I assume?

SULLIVAN: Yes.

Q: What were they doing and what were you doing with them?

SULLIVAN: Well we diplomats always meet and talk with each other and the Russians, the Portuguese and us, as guarantors of the Lusaka peace agreement, together with the UN had a regular set of meetings and periodic meetings with the Angolan government. Essentially, the Angolan government didn't want anything serious to do with the Lusaka Peace Process remnants, this troika of three plus the UN. They really just wanted any constraints from that process out of the way. To the degree that they agreed to hold any meetings, they weren't listening; they just wanted UN forces out of the way and the UN not to intervene. Their view was that the conflict would proceed and the Angolan government would eventually prevail and then we could talk again. Everybody had their own means of entrée. The Russians had a greater, longstanding, military-to-military relationship historically. (President dos Santos had actually studied in the Soviet Union.) The French had a certain relationship with the Angolan intelligence service and helped in certain Angolan arms purchases. The Israelis also provided some important equipment and technical advice. But in terms of strategic influence, the Angolans were doing their own thing and were not going to take counsel from anybody. The more relevant question for them that would occasionally be debated openly by senior Angolans with foreigners was what they should do with Savimbi, if they should capture him.

Q: Were there any sort of loose Cubans wandering around at that point or...?

SULLIVAN: No, not really. No they were pretty much out of it by then. It was a historic relationship and at earlier phases of that war in the '70's and '80s, the Cubans had played a decisive role against South African forces. But by the 2000's, the Cubans were not involved in any important way.

Q: What about Israel what were they up to?

SULLIVAN: Israel was providing important assistance. I don't know if it's ever become public but it was sort of talked about at the time that they were helping them fight more effectively. Israel always has lots of former military and former Mossad and former military officials, who are retired into the military sales business and they were very much around. But, they could not have operated as extensively as they did without the agreement of the Israeli government. I was quite close friends with the Israeli ambassador at the time, who was a former journalist with a lot of African experience, but also with a lot of connections in key military and intelligence

positions in Israel. She believed that Israel should assist the Angolan government to prevail as quickly as possible in the internal conflict. So I think that Israel provided some decisive assistance during 2000 and 2001 that helped them prevail.

By the time I left Angola in the summer of 2001, I had been told that the Angolan government had isolated Savimbi to two areas in the deep, deep countryside and at one point had a Special Forces unit that had to choose between two targets to go after him. They did not choose the right target on that occasion and he escaped, but that only lasted another six months and eventually in February 2002, six months after I left Angola, Savimbi was killed in combat in that same remote area of the Angolan countryside.

Q: To get an idea because this obviously was a very complicated area and the role of the Americans was sort of problematic for a good bit of time. How did your embassy operate? I mean political officers, economic officers? How were they getting around?

SULLIVAN: Well we had lots of constraints upon us. We were still working out of an embassy made out of prefab buildings that had been put there in 1992 to last just five years. So we worked in pretty cramped and precarious circumstances. Our housing was also quite poor with problematic electricity and water supply. We were right in the heart of the city so we didn't feel under direct threat there but once you left the city of Luanda it became more complicated, and as a result, most of our staff were confined to the city.

Our ability to travel was quite limited. I did travel a fair bit and our AID personnel in particular traveled quite a bit as we monitored humanitarian assistance, usually coordinated by the World Food Program going out to provincial capitals around the country, where the internally displaced civilian population had fled and were living in tent camps. To do that, the U.S. actually paid for the World Food Program to have a small fleet of Beechcraft ten-seaters to take their staff as well as our people out to the field. These planes would have to perform corkscrew landings in and out of the provincial capital to stay within the small perimeter of the city that was secure from surface-to-surface missiles. In late 2000 or early 2001, a UN cargo plane flew too low and took a missile, but somehow managed to survive the hit and land. But after that, the UN reinforced the message to the pilots that they needed to adhere rigorously to the corkscrew landing and takeoff policies. One of those planes with a couple of AID personnel on board, as well as the deputy minister of health, did follow the corkscrew landing policy, but the pilot wasn't used to it, got vertigo and barely managed to land short of the runway, while losing his landing gear and sliding across the runway on the plane's belly. Everybody was shaken up, but nobody was badly injured.

There were risks as well as problems in our getting out there, getting around and getting personal information for ourselves. For the most part we were reliant on what we heard either through intelligence channels, which was helpful, but not terrific. We were able to eventually establish a fairly good working relationship once again with the Angolan government and the Angolan armed forces. We had a terrific defense attaché who basically kept seeing his old buddies even though they were told not to talk to him, but they did find a way to talk to him. But most of our information was second hand. We didn't get out to the field very much, so we knew what other people told us. We knew what the intelligence channels provided, which was only occasionally good.

Q: In a way you were blessed by the fact that the world media just wasn't paying any attention to this.

SULLIVAN: Yes, there were only occasional bursts of attention and more of them probably in Europe than in the United States. The one other big issue that emerged in that time or one of the big issues that emerged was blood diamonds.

Q: Yeah.

SULLIVAN: The focus on blood diamonds originated because of the conflicts fueled by these diamonds in Sierra Leone and in Angola. The NGO and media focus on the issue coincided with an interest in the Clinton administration of cracking down on this trade. Savimbi had financed many of his arms purchases through diamond mines that he ran himself in territory which the Angolan armed forces didn't control. The major effort to shut down these and other dirty diamonds throughout Africa, eventually, produced some success through the Kimberley process. There is never going to be total success but it was reasonable success, particularly when one thinks that "De Beers" and Maurice Tempelman judged at the beginning that there is no way an effort to shut off blood diamond can succeed. De Beers always had taken the position that it needed to buy up any loose diamonds from anywhere and hold them off the market in order to keep diamond prices up. Well the result of that De Beers practice, of course, was that anybody like Savimbi who had the diamonds could get a substantial price for them and then use those proceeds for arms. De Beers actually ended its policy of buying up loose diamonds of unknown provenance which helped the campaign against blood diamonds..

The US was also engaged deeply in and continued to be engaged throughout the war in the effort to remove land mines which endangered the civilian population. Because there were always areas that were more secure than others we were able to continue some landmine removal in selected areas throughout the last phase of the war.

Q: Did the South African government now under, this would have been...

SULLIVAN: President Mbeki most of that period.

Q: Did they play any role or were they out of it?

SULLIVAN: Their role was limited because neither the Angolan government nor the South African government trusted each other. Mbeki had a brother who died in Angola during the period of apartheid government in which he was affiliated with the external fighters of the South African current ruling party. That is assumed to be one of the reasons for Mbeki's suspicions of the Angolan government for having permitted this to happen. In any case, the Angolans have ample paranoia of their own and many Angolans feared that South Africa was seeking to insure that Angola, relatively rich and large country, would stay divided and never challenge South Africa for supremacy in southern Africa. Looking at the relative GDP's of the two countries makes that thesis appear ludicrous, but Angolan government ministers would voice it to me. That probably limited South Africa's potential role, as well as their belief, likely correct, that Mbeki

was maintaining contact with Savimbi.

Q. What about the Congo? It was falling apart wasn't it?

SULLIVAN: Sure, that was when the phrase the first African World War was coined. There were something like eleven different countries in Africa involved in that war. The Angolan government was one and the principal instigators from outside were Rwanda and Uganda, which had helped install Congolese President Laurent Kabila in 1997, turned against him in 1998 and sent troops and elements in to try to topple Laurent Desire Kabila, the father of the current president. At that point a number of countries in the region chose sides and the Angolans chose the side of Kabila. Why? I guess even though they had been involved originally with Rwanda in the original overthrow of Mobutu and the installation of Laurent Kabila, they decided that this latest effort could jeopardize their interests. Most importantly, the Angolans had a reasonable relationship with Kabila and feared that Savimbi might be able to establish a relationship with whomever succeed him of the sort he had had with Mobutu. So the Angolans sent in forces to defend the Kabila government and to provide security for him together with Zimbabwean forces. I engaged most closely with the Angolans on Congo from January, 2001, after the assassination of Congolese President Laurent Kabila by his bodyguard and the assumption of the presidency by his son Joseph Kabila. The Angolans were advising Joseph Kabila in restoring stability to some effect, although they always felt the Congolese armed forces were very ineffective compared to their own and basically incapable of being trained well.

One other thing that was interesting in the light of Ambassador Holbrook's recent passing is that Holbrook as the US permanent representative to the United Nations began to take a great interest in Africa. He decided that while the United States was the president of the Security Council, if I recall correctly, it would have been about February 2000, the United States would organize a UN conference to deal with the conflict in the Congo and invite all the key presidents from Africa to come. I must say that initially this sounded to me and many others like an idea that couldn't succeed, particularly because the Angolan president hated to travel and found excuses not to travel all the time. Yet, Holbrook was determined and he pursued his objectively relentlessly and eventually succeeded in pulling it off. He got dos Santos to travel to New York as well as Laurent Kabila and about four other presidents most involved in the Congolese conflict. The purpose, even if it was not articulated as such, was to give Laurent Kabila an opportunity to recover his image, reestablish his authority and utilize the standing of the United Nations to resist those forces seeking his overthrow. Laurent Kabila frankly was incapable of taking advantage of the opportunity presented. He was very erratic, a very poor leader, and missed his opportunity and was eventually assassinated and succeeded by his son Joseph who has done a somewhat better job than his father.

Q: Well, because in earlier years there were all these attempts to separate Katanga. Was there anything the Shaba invasions, was there anything going on there or did that movement sort of die out?

SULLIVAN: I think the Katanga thing was over but what the Rwandans did was take advantage to exploit mineral resources in the eastern Congo. This would have been areas near Goma, much closer to Rwanda than to the Congolese capital of Kinshasa.

Q: Oh yeah.

SULLIVAN: So Rwanda was clearly exploiting those resources during the period where they had troops in Congo and the Rwandans also were pursuing their security interests due to the presence of Hutu forces, which had fled to the Congo after the 1994 Rwandan conflict. Now sixteen years, later the Hutu forces in eastern Congo are more likely to be the children of the original fighters than they are the 1994 fighters themselves.

Q: What about the other former Portugal territory Mozambique? At that point was there any connection or play any role?

SULLIVAN: Not really other than that Mozambique from Angola's point of view could always be counted on as a solid ally within the SADC, the South African Development Community, because the ruling party of Mozambique, FRELIMO, and the MPLA had been sister parties within the Socialist camp during the liberation struggle and the Cold War and had both resisted both South African and other Western interference in their takeover from the Portuguese. Mozambique was more democratic and more peaceful than Angola. But the historical connection made Mozambique a reliable ally for Angola.

Q: Speaking of relations how would you describe your relations with Washington? I mean you had Susan Rice was a person who had rather, from what I gather, strong opinions about this. How did you find working with her and with the rest of the State Department?

SULLIVAN: Yeah, well with Susan, as you say, had very strong opinions and she had strong reservations towards the Angolan government. I don't think she had any particular nostalgia for UNITA, as some people with a CIA background had. But she did not have good feelings towards the Angolan government, which had plenty of negatives in its tolerance of corruption and failure to improve the lot of its own people. So when I began to formulate my independent views and send them in, my views and recommendations were not very welcome. Susan and I didn't argue and we dealt with each other respectfully, but my recommendations went into a void and didn't succeed in affecting U.S. policy other than at the margins. It was possible to get a few things going but most of what I was able to do was done on our own hook. The embassy gradually cultivated improved relations with the Angolan government so we began to have some influence on some matters of interest to us and also to gain some insight into what the Angolans were doing. I think Susan only became more open to working toward improving relations with the Angolan government a year or more later. In late 2000 or early 2001, Susan led an interagency team that was ready to establish the relationship on a much more cooperative basis on a whole range of fronts, on humanitarian assistance, on economic and trade issues. This led to various working groups and we worked well together during that visit. Susan is somebody who has an inner circle and I was never part of Susan's inner circle, but we found ways to work together.

Q: From what I gather dos Santos was again every individual. I mean here he was a leader but he had pretty much a tight group around him and he didn't really accept outside influences say from an embassy in Washington and all would have very little sway with him anyway.

SULLIVAN: I guess so, yes, particularly when it came to strategic issues where he was going to decide what needed to be done and do it. From his point of view he had probably allowed himself to be overly influenced by international concerns during the four years of the Lusaka Peace Process to the extent that he didn't "take care of the problem himself" by going in there and disarming UNITA. He listened to the outside counsel that he should be restrained and then wound up with a situation that was quite precarious. The Angolan forces captured a famous tape of Savimbi telling his UNITA sub commanders in 1998 to leave their women and children behind because the women in Luanda are bathing in preparation for your arrival. So there was no question that in the period before the war began again in late 1998 that Savimbi intended to capture the capital of power.

Q: Yeah. I just finished a couple months ago an interview with Chester Crocker.

SULLIVAN: Yeah.

Q: He was describing his essentially having to have covert operations to find out what the CIA was up to because you had the head of the CIA at the time...Reagan's man.

SULLIVAN: Oh way back then.

Q: Yeah. But it was sort of surreal.

SULLIVAN: Yeah, I didn't have that degree of problem but I must say we had a minimal presence and almost no relationships and I would have been interested in encouraging a better bilateral relationship on that side. It was bad historically because we had been supporters of their enemy, and particularly the agency was perceived as the great supporters of their enemy. It was very tough sledding and I got along mostly with the agency, but I think there were occasional reappearances of nostalgia for the past in which the agency had a more important role in Angola. So to the degree that I engaged with the agency in a conflictive way, it was mostly to make sure that nostalgia for the past not prevail.

Q: How Marxist was the Angolan government by the time you got there?

SULLIVAN: Barely, mostly in name only, and only to the degree that there were certain economic policies of state interventionism that were remnants of the past. I think the government at that point was more interested in controlling large economic sectors, such as petroleum and mining, not for ideological reasons, but because that was where the money and control of power rested. President dos Santos had over the years gathered more power into his own inner circle at the expense of the traditional Marxist party, the MPLA. To a certain degree, this was to make sure that he controlled the resources, but also because control of economic resources means control of power.

Q: Were there any sort of roving Americans who were coming over to either look for roots or trying to see a real Marxist country? Did you run across oddballs like this I'm speaking as a former consular officer?

SULLIVAN: I don't mean to be totally facetious but I think that a side benefits of a civil war is that it tends to keep out that brand of traveler. It was a dangerous place and you could get shot out there pretty easily. One of the major functions that we had was both consulting with the oil companies over their own security; particularly the American companies but also with the humanitarian groups. Our security people worked with the oil companies and the UN and the NGO's all the time and exchanged information on where the greatest threats might be. There were a lot of risks out there, so people with their own agenda, were probably limited to the humanitarian organizations, the World Vision, the Doctors Without Borders and the other NGOs whose laudable humanitarian agendas would occasionally drift over into a more political area where they would push for new negotiations or for humanitarian corridors to deliver assistance.

Q: What about the oil companies because in some places I think it is in Nigeria where you have the local people who are trying to get a piece of the action. What was happening with the oil companies?

SULLIVAN: Ironically, Angola was never and is not today anything as tumultuous as Nigeria is. I had a friend who was with Halliburton at the time who had gone up and taken a posting in Nigeria and after a year they was asked, "Would you like to come back to Angola?" He said, "Please, please, please. Let me come." By contrast for one thing the overwhelmingly large percentage of Angolan production was offshore and some of it was in ultra-deep waters way offshore. So I think only way back in the 1992 phase of the conflict did someone on those platforms have shells going by them and have to evacuate by boat. But for the most part UNITA never got close to the ocean; local people were not organized enough to cause problems and government security was good enough. You may recall that at an earlier phase of that war in the 1970's, the Cubans had actually helped provide security for what was then Gulf Oil production offshore. Now, without the Cubans the Angolans were able to provide protection themselves and the fact that the conflict was overwhelmingly inland was also a great help. So no, they didn't have those security problems.

That said there were a lot of interesting issues with the oil companies. Chevron, at that stage had Condoleezza Rice on its board of directors, back before she came back into government. Certainly Chevron was anxious to influence the U.S. government as well as influence the Angolan government. Chevron was very interested in renewing their lease on the petroleum exploration blocs off the coast of Cabinda as well as their operating base on land in Cabinda. The Angolans never threatened Chevron with not renewing, but moved slowly to formalize the renewal, probably to get as much out of the renewal as possible and probably as well, to make sure that Chevron got nervous and worked to improve US-Angolan government relations. Exxon also got into the bidding while I was there; bid on and won several promising blocs of ultra-deep offshore production so that Exxon-Mobil became a significant player alongside Chevron-Texaco, BP and Total.

Q: African governments have the reputation of taking the money from natural resources Nigeria certainly has that and it disappears into Swiss banks. How about Angola, what was happening there?

SULLIVAN: I think there has always been a good deal of corruption in Angola. But I am

convinced that the most destructive effects are caused by civil wars and Angola's civil war had lasted for at least 27 years with a few interruptions with a tremendously destructive effect on the civilian population, on national production and everything else. In the years since the war ended in 2002, Angola has been growing at the 10-14 percent rate. I'm sure a fair bit of that money has gone missing, but growth of 10-14 percent means that many people are benefiting a great deal. So Angola is in a lot better shape and while I haven't been back since 2001, everybody tells me that it is much better. The questions I have are if the government is investing the money in the poorest people? Are they improving what was always a terrible, abominable education system, one that was bequeathed to them by their Portuguese colonialists who didn't educate the Portuguese who were there well, much less the Africans. So Angola had never developed a decent education system. The health system was always chaotic and then had been through thirty years of war. So Angola has a tremendous way to go in education and health and in providing basic benefits of their population. I hope but don't know that they have used a substantial portion of that 10-14 percent of growth to do that.

Q: This might be a good place to stop do you think? Where did you go after that Joe in 2001 was it?

SULLIVAN: 2001 I went to Zimbabwe.

Q: Okay so shall we pick it up then?

SULLIVAN: Great.

Q: All right, well I'll make my announcement here. Today is the 7th of February 2011 with Joe Sullivan. Joe, we are off to Zimbabwe.

SULLIVAN: Yeah, as often happens on these things I did a little bit of reflection and thought I would start off with perhaps five minutes of things that I should cover on Angola before we move on.

Q: Oh good, oh sure.

SULLIVAN: Okay, with respect to Angola, one thing you asked that I didn't adequately answer was how was the situation for our people in the embassy? I did note that there were only a few explicit security risks that we faced but the precautions we took were great and, in effect, inhibited us from in most instances leaving the capital city. Beyond that because of our late start in Angola, only establishing an embassy in 1992, the tremendous cost of property there because of the presence of oil companies meant that we were living in a very poor set of houses and apartments throughout the city. So as I mentioned before, the embassy was operating out of a set of temporary buildings that had been put in in '92 and had long outlived their five-year expected shelf life and provided minimal standards for what had grown to an embassy presence of around 30 people. Our staff had a bad office to work in and bad homes to live in. Even the Ambassador's residence, while I don't really have a personal complaint, was about the smallest of ambassador's houses one could ever see. I had basically one bedroom and a maid's room that

was it. So when Tom Pickering came and stayed, I wound up staying in the living room and Tom stayed in my bedroom; that was it.

We had a situation that was for our people difficult at best. Most people soldiered on. There were a few people who were unhappy people and were very vocal about it so morale was a constant concern. I tried to be very sensitive to the fact that people were living and working in bad conditions. There wasn't much to do in Angola and even in Luanda because things were highly priced; it was difficult to get around; there weren't very many good restaurants to go to, you could go to the beach on the weekends but that was really about it. I felt that Washington, at times, was not very sensitive to us on this subject. We did seek to upgrade our temporary office building, while we waited on decisions on construction of a new embassy chancery. In addition to the main embassy structure, which was a pre-fabricated temporary building, we had a small set of rented offices with the consular and USIS functions down the hill closer to the water and those were also very inadequate. When we sought to move our consular functions into a newly built office building downtown, we faced the usual dilemma that if you change from one currently unsecure structure to another that is more secure, the decision from diplomatic security is no, you can't move to this new structure because it's not as secure as we insist any newly occupied structure to be.

Q: So you stayed in the one that is less secure.

SULLIVAN: That's right.

Q: God.

SULLIVAN: Then, we had special problems in Luanda recruiting staff. Over the course of a career, one builds up a set of contacts; people we think are very good, who would fit in very well, but then you go give them a call and you say, "You know why don't you consider coming out here, we have a nice challenging job for you." At the end of the day, the people one contacts would have heard enough bad things about Angola and they have good reasons, school-age kids or a spouse not interested in coming. We had a restriction on school-age children at post and that was one of the factors that posed great difficulties in recruiting staff. Those things only began to improved after the war ended. I should add as well that in the Clinton administration, there was an undersecretary for management, who believed that maybe we should just shut down in Angola because it faced security problems and rather than building a new chancery, which was being discussed at the time, maybe we should just pull the plug and close the mission. I think that was not a very considered judgment, because the US had and continues to have major interests there, notably petroleum and other natural resources. I could not imagine that we really would decide to close the US mission, but I do think that the Under Secretary's own doubts about the wisdom of maintaining a presence contributed to slowing down US decision-making on new embassy construction for several years. It was only after General Williams became Office of Overseas Building Director in 2001 that decisions were made, funding found and construction of a new embassy building completed in about 2004.

Q: How about the local employees, the Angolans who work for the embassy?

SULLIVAN: Well you know they faced their own challenges daily. For the most part they felt like they had a good job working for the embassy. They were more content there than they would be elsewhere. They tended to come from better educated elements in the population. We did struggle at times to make sure we paid them adequately given the chaotic nature of the war economy. In fact, we were authorized to pay them in dollars and we used to have to fly them into the country. We also had several key third-country national employees, mostly Portuguese, whom I knew from my time in Lisbon 20 years before.

I was going to move to a slightly different theme also on Angola and that refers to your earlier question regarding the quality of the information we had on Angola. I said, "We managed to get some decent information from the government and from the armed forces, notwithstanding the obstacles put in our way." But one of the inevitable effects of the fact that we could gather information on the Angolan government, but had little good information on UNITA was that we received information about Angolan military and government inefficiencies and corruption in purchasing, about phantom military units in which senior officers collected the pay of some of the supposed members of that unit, dysfunctionalities in getting people out to the field and other problems. All of those things were true, but the fact is we had very little information on the other side meant that we did not learn of the problems that UNITA was facing. Most of the information we got on UNITA was what UNITA was telling their allies or their potential supporters on the outside and they never talked about their problems. They talked about how well they were doing, how good the unit cohesion was, etc. It was a distorted picture, I think, and sometimes resulted in distorted analysis. I recall in particular INR having a view that UNITA's victory would be inevitable due to their advantages, a strong leader in Savimbi, and lots of problems on the government side. I think there was mixed into that was some degree of positive past experience with Savimbi and UNITA which colored judgments and the Embassy wound up having a cable dispute with the INR analysis to try and correct the record and make sure that consumers in Washington were not affected by this faulty analysis. So these were some of the issues we faced that I neglected to cover last time.

Q: What about your relationship with the oil companies? Were they welcoming you or were they...?

SULLIVAN: Yes, they were good and particularly the American ones looked to us for help. Chevron in the case had had a long-term lease on their principal holdings off-shore in Cabinda and were looking to extend it so they consulted us regularly on that and asked us to weigh in which we did both at the embassy and when there would be visits in Washington. We would encourage the Angolan government as well to look favorably on that application. Exxon as well sought our assistance for periodic bids for offshore oil blocks. Now on those I think our ability to actually influence these bids was very limited. The blocs were offered in return for very high cash bonuses and the high bidder tended to get it and American companies really did pretty well. Exxon got a couple of major blocs in the period that I was there; but there were other issues. Exxon had issues of extraction and how it should be done and so on that would come up and we would be asked to weigh in on those issues. For the others, BP because it was BP- Amoco, having absorbed a former American company and as they used to say, with an American majority of share holders, consulted us fairly frequently; less so the French companies ELF and later TOTAL; but we had what information we needed from them. I'm sure they looked more

closely to the French embassy for support. And we shared our security perspectives with all the oil companies.

Q: Could you and your embassy go down to the oil bar or club or anything like that?

SULLIVAN: Sure and occasionally we did. Our economic officer had had prior training before coming to post as petroleum officer and she kept particularly close contact with the “Oilies,” as they called themselves, in order to get a pulse on what they were up to and the problems they faced. So I think we were in pretty good touch. I want to reflect as well on the marked change between the Clinton and the Bush administrations with respect to petroleum policy. The Clinton administration had apparently concluded that because oil prices were at the time relatively low, the U.S. should not concern itself overly about opening new sources for oil imports to the U.S. At least, that was the policy direction we felt in the embassy. The Bush administration, on the other hand, with its Texas oil connections transmitted sharply different conclusions. That said, I think the embassy took a fairly consistent line throughout.

I’ll give you one example of how this played out in the Clinton administration. One of the things that was important for me and some other people in the embassy to do was to visit Cabinda, which was an enclave actually surrounded by the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo and separated from the Angolan mainland. That was where Chevron had its main onshore operating base so it was important for us to go up periodically, show the flag, talk to the people up there as well as to local officials in Cabinda province. Yet the only way to get there was by taking a Chevron plane. We had to obtain approval to take a private commercial plane and this would require a message back to the legal adviser’s office and approval was often very, very slow in coming. At times I even had to delay the trip in order to get that approval. I guess there was fear of criticism that we were accepting benefits from a private company, but there was no other way to go. It wasn’t a luxury trip or anything. I may have spent one or two overnights up there in the total of three years and those were essentially lodging in company barracks on the Chevron base. It was just doing our job but it was difficult sometimes doing our job because it wasn’t given a high priority in the Clinton State Department.

End of reader