

ZAMBIA

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ROBERT C. FOULON
Consul/Principal Officer
Lusaka (1963-1965)

Robert Foulon entered the Foreign Service in 1947 after leaving University of Illinois Law School. He served in France, Germany, The Philippines, Zambia and Cameroon. He was interviewed by Arthur Tienken in 1988.

Q: Bob, you first arrived in Lusaka when?

FOULON: In mid 1963 as a Consul and a Principal Officer.

Q: I gather from what you said that you were in effect an independent post reporting directly to Washington. Is that correct?

FOULON: That's correct, except for administrative matters.

After that, I went to Harvard for a year in Economic studies, and then back to the African bureau in various jobs. Then at that time the affairs of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland were becoming very politically interesting and independence seemed to be in the offing, at least for several of the separate states of that Federation. I was asked by the then Deputy Assistant Secretary Wayne Fredericks to go out and beef up and really literally open up a post in Lusaka. This time I went out with the very able assistance of Larry Williamson, since then Ambassador in Gabon; and an administrative officer, secretary - communicator, and then eventually another political officer and a consular officer who also did some other matters that I can't easily recall right now. So it eventually built up to a post of about eight Americans excluding the USIA staff which had been there previously, and a very large AID staff as well which were located outside our particular suite of offices. After independence the consulate of course became an embassy and my title was then Chargé d'Affaires, I was there until Bob Good came to relieve me as the first Ambassador to Zambia.

Q: At that time before independence Bob, what was your connection if any with the American Consulate General in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia?

FOULON: Well, we depended on Salisbury for administrative backup and our administrative reports went through Salisbury and that was about it. The political situation in the two now countries was so different. There was very little byplay, we found it very nice to go down to Southern Rhodesia for vacations and that was about it.

Q: So you reported directly to Washington?

FOULON: Yes.

Q: And who in Washington besides Wayne was in effect was most interested in Northern Rhodesia at the time?

FOULON: Well of course the Assistant Secretary, Soapy Williams was very interested and the Office Director that I'll have to dredge up that name Art, I can't recall him off hand. I think the whole bureau was interested in Southern African affairs at this point, this was sort of toward the end of the -- I guess the wave of independence was rolling south and people expected it to roll on further and further. In effect Zambia became the last one for a long time in this wave that started in 1960. Well it really started in 1957 with Ghana, I guess it was.

Q: What did you consider your major mission to be while you were in charge of the Consulate General?

FOULON: Well one thing I remember in particular was that Deputy Assistant Secretary Fredericks had very warm connections with African leaders including Kenneth Kaunda and with many of the private organizations that were active out there, the American Friends and the copper companies and the many other private either non-profit or profit organizations. He gave me as one of my charges to try to help coordinate and support these people in their relations with the new African government at the time, and to improve American relations with the Africans at the official level. I remember that we got so busy doing all of that, that at one point we had an amusing incident where I wrote a letter to Wayne saying I thought that maybe we had pushed things as far as we should, and it crossed a letter from him saying that he thought maybe we had pushed things too far. So we quieted down then.

Q: Before independence of course Northern Rhodesia was the primary concern of the British which meant I assume that your contacts were essentially with the British hierarchy, and I suppose to an extent the Zambians who would become important after independence? Would you comment on that?

FOULON: Yes, our relations with the British were very cordial and friendly. I called on the Governor and then the new High Commissioner came from the colonial office. He proved to be a very friendly jolly type, but underneath all of this cordiality there was a certain amount of rivalry going on, and I remember one of the things that we struck upon that the Zambians seemed to want and that we could provide was some training for prospective diplomats for the new

Zambian Foreign Service that was expected to come into being. We cooked up a very good program and the Zambians wanted to buy it, but somebody in the British High Commission thought that this should be the role for the United Kingdom. I gather from what I subsequently heard that there was a considerable tussle within the British High Commission over how to handle this.

Q: Did we in fact ever do that?

FOULON: Yes we did, I think that we trained about half a dozen of them.

Q: I wondered because I remember since I was in Elisabethville at the time in Katanga in Zaire, that there was assigned to the British High Commission at the branch office there, a Zambian taking training.

FOULON: Yes, I think that they provided some too now that you remind me.

Q: Bob, in the days before independence there was a variety of different experiences on the part of some of our posts with regard to contact of the Africans who were to become leaders after independence.

What did you feel that Washington wanted you to do with regard to contact with the Zambians themselves, and how did the British react?

FOULON: The Department wanted us to establish as close relations as we possibly could with all the leaders and potential leaders among the Africans. We had very little trouble doing that, there was no prevention on the part of the Africans themselves; no limitations on getting around the country or meeting or calling on people. The British made nothing of it as far as I can recall. They accepted it as normal and I can't recall even a cocked eye on it.

Q: Good! So you were able to get around the country very easily?

FOULON: Oh yes, very easily. We traveled everywhere really, I even took a little nip into Angola once.

Q: How did you find the Zambians then?

FOULON: The Zambians varied quite a bit from region to region and tribe to tribe and so forth. Some were rather distant and reserved, others were far more open. By and large they were very friendly people and we had very little trouble getting along with them.

Q: Did they seem susceptible to American contacts?

FOULON: They were very susceptible at that time with one exception that I must tell you about and that was the Peace Corps. We had made no effort to talk about the Peace Corps whatsoever, but many of the Zambians - I can't remember who exactly but almost every important African leader told me that they weren't really interested in the Peace Corps. This led me to write a

dispatch just simply reporting this -- that with preparations for independence people had better be aware of the fact that there appeared to be a lack of interest or a disinterest in the Peace Corps. After I got back from the tour my friends in the Peace Corps told me that the then head of the Peace Corps Sargent Shriver took great umbrage at this dispatch, he thought I was trying to torpedo or sully the honor of the Peace Corps. They had to rise to my defense or otherwise I might have been removed from the post; that is what they told me, I'm not sure of the truth of the matter.

Q: In fact however, the Peace Corps did not go to Zambia. Is that correct because when I served there later there was no Peace Corps?

FOULON: As I recall that is correct. It is a good illustration of some of the problems of the Foreign Service, a minor one perhaps where an officer just automatically and honestly reports something not trying to make anything of it. Then it gets back into the political mill in Washington and a lot is made of it. It is politicized whereas it was not intended that way. Fortunately I had these old Foreign Service friends who were in the Peace Corps who were able to explain this to Mr. Shriver.

Q: One of your major contacts among the Zambians must have been Kenneth Kaunda later to become first President of Zambia, and in fact is still President to this day. Was that correct, and if so how did you find your relations with him?

FOULON: Well I think the easiest way to convey that is that they were warm, cordial and candid, but I can't say that we established any personal friendship the way I had with the President of Cameroon. I never had any trouble getting to him, I never felt any compunctions about telling him what I thought and he was quite candid with me too, always very friendly.

Q: At that time he was what, the leader of UNIP [United National Independence Party]?

FOULON: He was the leader of UNIP, but by that time self government had been established. It was still under the British tutelage in terms of foreign affairs, military affairs and a few other reserved powers, but Kaunda was the Prime Minister of the state. It was still called Northern Rhodesia then, it didn't change to Zambia until independence.

Q: There was another political leader and another party of some substance at that time, I believe it was the African National Congress lead by Harry Nkumbula, did you also have contact with Harry?

FOULON: I called on him only once. I had a nice friendly, funny conversation with him. He was more an object of derision than anything else, except among his own people, the Tonga people. He came from the west, southwest as I remember.

Q: Were there any other figures among the Zambians of substance and stature at the time that you were able to deal with?

FOULON: Well the number two man in the party, the treasurer, was Simon Kapepwe who I think subsequently was jailed for trying to take over or something like that. Simon was basically the leader of the very strong northern tribe, the Bemba, who were the hard-nosed bullying types. Actually he lived right next door and our kids played together. I had very good relations with Simon, but I can't say that they were on the same intellectual plane as was Kaunda or some of the others.

Q: Kaunda if I remember correctly was not a Bemba, is that correct?

FOULON: Well that's the interesting thing about Kaunda; he was not a member of any Zambian tribe and that is why he was able to be the leader. He did not stir up tribal rivalries within the Lozi and the Tonga and the Bemba and other minor groups. The best educated and I thought in many ways the most forward-looking tribal bunch were the Lozi of the Zambezi Valley. My good friends there were the Wina brothers, [Arthur and Sikota]. The Wina brothers were the leaders of the Lozi at the time, I think their father had been the Latunga who was sort of the Prime Minister to the Tribal Chief of the Lozi who were an offshoot of the Zulus. Arthur Wina I think ended up as the Minister of Finance and Sikota Wina -- who was quite a guy married to an American, a very beautiful American black -- who was Minister of Information at the time. I had very good close relations with both of them, we were very close friends with them.

Q: The Zambians before independence were very interested in the issues or the course that lead to their independence, but they must have also begun to be interested in the situation in Southern Rhodesia as well. Could you comment on that, or were they really pre-occupied with just independence?

FOULON: Art, while I was there they were so preoccupied with their own coming of statehood and independence and getting their government started. I guess that I left within six months of independence so the Rhodesian matter really hadn't come to the fore. I think that they knew it would and they were obviously expecting that it might follow the same pattern that it had in Northern Rhodesia, but obviously it didn't.

Q: You mentioned earlier Bob that you had USIA and AID in Lusaka at the time. What was our aid concerns, or what was AID primarily preoccupied with, do you recall?

FOULON: Mainly education. As I recall we established a College of Further education which was staffed by people from the University of California at San Luis Obispo and I think we had quite a lot to do with the setting up of the University of Zambia which is just outside of Lusaka. We were also involved with a few other incidental technical assistance type projects. I can't recall if any major amounts of money were involved in this because Zambia had so much copper wealth.

The major aid issue at the time of course was the creation or establishment of the Tanzam railroad from Dar es Salaam to Lusaka. A little historical background there helps understand this issue. The early development of Southern Africa and most of Africa I guess really was along lines of rail because that was the way that you set up transportation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. So in the African mind, rail meant development and development meant

rails, you couldn't separate the two. Before independence even and just after they realized how dependent Zambia as a landlocked country was on railroads to get out its copper. They realized that it had to either go through what was then The Congo controlled by the Belgians, or through Northern Rhodesia - Southern Rhodesia, sorry -- still under a white government. There was another exit, the Bequa railway through Angola. They felt that they would be much more assured of a line of rail to export the copper if it could go down to Dar es Salaam.

I guess that Julius Nyerere pretty well persuaded Kaunda that he had to have this railroad. At the time many of the analysts in the copper companies and in the AID agency in Washington and elsewhere arrived at the conclusion and tried to persuade the Zambians that it was uneconomic to build this railway and that in times of emergency that it would be much cheaper and easier to have an all weather -- I've forgotten now the technical term -- a road not of a normal paved type, but over which all terrain vehicles of large massive character could carry out the copper. In this situation the British and we and the others -- I guess the European Community E.C., was involved, dragged their feet on putting up the money to build the railroad. The Chinese came in and offered to build the railway and the Tanzanians and the Zambians took them up on this and they built what I gather was a pretty good railway. Even though you know more about the subsequent history of that railroad than I do I gather that it wasn't maintained very well and now can barely carry anything.

Q: That railway was built as you had stated a bit later by the Chinese. The road however was also built and that did involve American construction interests. Both of them became critical later as you remember during the oil crisis after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Southern Rhodesia. Had we begun anything on the road itself while you were still there?

FOULON: To my knowledge, no. One thing that I think I should report in this is that the only contretemps we had with Kaunda was over this Chinese project. At the time our relations with China were very bad indeed, as a matter of fact relations between Russia and China were very bad. I can remember going to cocktail parties where the Chinese and Russians would walk away from each other; the Russians would talk to me, but the Chinese would also walk away from me as well as the Russians. That is all by way of amusing background.

I was instructed by the Department to go in and warn Kaunda against dealing with the Chinese, and to almost insist that he not do so. I think at least twice or maybe three times I demurred and wired back to the Department that I thought this was a mistake, I sent copies of my cables all around the circuit in the area. I think some of my colleagues in the independent countries there -- Ambassadors -- agreed with me and may even have supported me with cables to Washington.

Finally I got a categorical instruction to do so - to remonstrate with Kaunda. I guess I was not as sophisticated as I might have been; I actually did remonstrate instead of sort of saying "Well Washington wants me to remonstrate," and Kaunda took it very much amiss and my relations cooled off for several months and they never really warmed up afterwards. I had to report this to Washington and I don't know what they made of it at the time, but they did not withdraw me at the time. My time was coming to an end anyhow, so there was no point in that; nevertheless, it was an unpleasant incident.

Q: You mentioned USIA, what were they up to while you were there? What could they do before independence?

FOULON: Well they were very good really at establishing contacts with what you might call the intellectual class among the Africans. There were quite a few well educated people in the country, a number of newspaper people, they had a very active library program and got around the country a fair amount. I thought that it was a very good program.

Q: This leads me to ask you, how did you find the caliber of your staff in general while you were there, including USIA and AID?

FOULON: Starting with USIA I thought that they were highly professional and very good; one could improve all the time, but I think given the nature of the post and so on I couldn't have asked for better. The AID staff was also quite professional, very good people. On operating under the usual restraints that AID people have to, I thought they did as good a job as could be expected.

The team from San Luis Obispo was particularly good in staffing the College of Further Education. My only complaint about staff really was my own administrative staff, which was very poor. It crippled us a good bit of times, I remember having to do the administration quite a bit myself on many important matters. My number two officer, Larry Williams, is a very distinguished officer who has had a very good career since then; and the others were quite competent.

Q: We weren't the only other representation in Lusaka at the time other than the British. Were there other major representations on the part of other governments and did they have special interests of their own as far as Zambia was concerned?

FOULON: I think the next people to come were the Russians and they set up an office before independence. I remember it was originally staffed by a bright looking guy named Sinyitsin; we used to call him "Double Sin." He spoke English very well, he called on me a number of times and I always regret that I was too busy toward the end of my tour to have more time with him and learn more about him. They really were trying to learn and I think they were coming around to my office to see what they could learn about Zambia from me. I recall that they sent in some more senior people and I encountered them on some occasions walking down the street or the road, or whatever it was and stopped and chatted with them. They said, "Oh well you know we're Ukrainians, were not Russians;" which was an interesting thing for them to observe.

Then of course the Chinese came in and they oddly set up their residence on Leopards Hill Road directly opposite my residence, which caused some interest in certain quarters and I never had anything to do with them. I can't recall any other Western countries sending anyone. The French weren't there at the time, but there was a German but that was very late in the day in terms of my tenure. I can't even remember it very well.

Q: So essentially what you had was the British who had primary responsibility in the area, ourselves, and the Russians and the Chinese were there for their own reasons and very little else as far as outside influences?

FOULON: Yes, I guess thinking about it now you say that at that early stage Southern Africa was a maelstrom for great power politics that was beginning to show itself and manifest itself with the representational pattern.

Q: How about living itself? Was life comfortable in Lusaka in those days, or were there logistical problems?

FOULON: I can't recall any logistic problems. I always thought that it was just about the best climate in the world, the only one that I have seen to rival it was my wife's home state in Western Australia where I also served. Getting around the country was a challenge at times as some of the roads were pretty bad, but that made it more adventurous. The game parks were very interesting, Williamson and I went hunting several times with some success. It was very hard work most of it, but also it was a pleasant place to be.

Q: Of course it was still part of the Federation of Rhodesia Nyasaland at the time up until the time of October 1964 so that contact at least with Southern Rhodesia was fairly normal and afterwards as well. If I remember correctly Zambia was landlocked much of what appeared in the stores; for example, came from outside of Zambia and primarily from the south. That was not a problem at that time I take it?

FOULON: No, not at all.

Q: You could go to Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia easily?

FOULON: Very easily indeed, I remember taking a couple of tours down there just to be a tourist.

Q: You mentioned at one point earlier the copper companies. One of the copper companies, not the one with the American name had a very strong American interest, was that correct?

FOULON: Yes, it was controlled by AMAX at the time which has since changed hands. They had British interests, about half of that was British interest as well and I can't remember the name of the British company. It was British and run by a very fine guy, but I can't remember his name right now.

Q: Were there any Americans there as directly representing American Metals, do you remember? If so or if not, how did you find your relations with them?

FOULON: Them being the AMAX company? Relations with AMAX were very, very good. They came out and visited from time to time and they would be entertained; they had a hospitality house in Lusaka not far from my house and I was usually invited to those parties. The relations between the two main companies Roan Selection and Anglo-American were very good

also and they would socialize together. I remember being served drinks by Harry Oppenheimer and other "big wheels" and listening in on the chats about the price of copper and all that sort of thing. It was pretty heady stuff.

Q: Anglo-American was the copper company that did not have an American interest and Harry Oppenheimer as you mentioned was in fact their; what do you call it, Chairman or Board Chairman or whatever?

FOULON: That's not entirely true. There are a lot of Anglo-American shares traded in New York and the Engelhard company owned a good bit of it and they were very close relations -- maybe they were joint venture relations -- but I think also Engelhard had a big block of Anglo-American shares and he appeared there to represent the President at the time of independence -- Charlie Engelhard. I had a fine time with him -- a very nice man. I remember that I had to go down to Salisbury to meet him there and accompany him up on the plane in order to warn him that he was going to get some hostility upon arrival. He hadn't been told this in the Department oddly enough and he got quite a little bit upset by this but he handled himself very well.

Q: Why the hostility?

FOULON: The hostility was because of his connections with South Africa and mine owners associated to some extent with apartheid and so forth.

Q: So in fact the Zambians were conscious of the Southern African problem even then?

FOULON: That's right, obviously. Well a lot -- you see I can't recall to what extent this is true -- but there were quite a large number of leading Zambians that had been educated in schools in South Africa; some of them were actually raised in South Africa and so they were quite aware of the situation and of the meaning of Anglo-American and so forth.

Q: Were there other American interests in Zambia at the time, I assume that some missionaries at least were there?

FOULON: Oh, there were a few missionaries, there weren't really all that many American missionaries; business interests - almost none.

Q: Moving to the Independence Day itself, you were certainly a member of our delegation and then immediately became our first Chargé in Lusaka. Who headed our delegation, do you remember?

FOULON: That was Charlie Engelhard, it was Charlie Engelhard.

Q: Were there other visitors during your time of stature? Did Soapy Williams for example come to Lusaka while you were there?

FOULON: I'm sorry to say that I don't recall that he did, but Wayne Fredericks came through several times and I recall -- I guess one should say now -- that he would insist on calling on

Kaunda personally without anybody else there. I guess there were times when this was appropriate and he usually would try to tell me a little bit about his conversations. There was always the aura that there was something private going on here and personally it didn't really affect my relations or operations; but I must say that it is disconcerting to a principal officer to have this sort of thing happen without any explanation.

Q: Are you suggesting that not much got reported back to Washington as a result of any of these Fredericks - Kaunda conversations.

FOULON: No, I think it was very selective and I must say I have the distinct impression that an effort was being made by Mr. Fredericks to distance himself from the official government policy.

Q: That is interesting, in any case Fredericks took a direct interest in what was going on while you were there?

FOULON: Oh, very deeply. He always was very supportive of what I was doing, I had no problem with my relations with him. I think that a question can be raised about his tactics at least in dealing with African leaders.

Q: Did you get the feeling that such instructions as you might have gotten were coming from him in Washington, or at a somewhat lower level?

FOULON: I think any serious instruction was directed by Wayne Fredericks, any routine instructions, no!

Let me go back a bit on the AID question. One of the programs that we had which was basically funded by the US government was helping refugees from South Africa who were coming up on sort of an underground railway through what is now Botswana and crossing the Zambezi River at Chobe I believe is the name, something like that.

Q: Chobe?

FOULON: Chobe, that is it. We worked in collaboration with the African - American Institute and to some extent with the UN in funneling these people and placing them in American universities. It was a melange or a mixture I think of funding involved but it was quite a flow of people. This permitted me at times to meet some of the leaders from South Africa and Southwest Africa.

Q: Zambia or Lusaka I should say did have representation of a number of what came to be called freedom-fighter groups from South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Southwest Africa, Mozambique later on. Were those groups there already when you were there as groups, or just individuals, or not at all.

FOULON: They weren't there as freedom fighters. I mean some of the leaders were there and they would obviously consult with the Zambians, but the main operation then was funneling the

students through. There were camps out I think southwest of Lusaka, not very far. I remember visiting one a couple of times where these students were housed and processed.

Q: Since there were refugees as you were just mentioning, there must have been a representative of the United Nations High Commission for refugees?

FOULON: Oh yes, run by a fascinating man by the name of George Ivan Smith, an Australian who had been involved with Dag Hammarskjold as his press secretary. I think he had been involved in an incident at your old post.

Q: That is correct, he was involved in an incident involving Lew Hoffacker and the secessionists to capture Smith and Brian Turquhart for reasons best known to themselves; and that Hoffacker was succeeded in rescue if that is correct. I take it that your relations with Smith were very close?

FOULON: Very cordial indeed, we got along very well. George was a real character, you couldn't help but like him. Sometimes a bit histrionic but that helped make him a good character. He headed the UNDP office; also there was Marjorie Weston, who eventually became my wife.

Q: How nice, so you met her in Lusaka did you?

FOULON: Actually I met her in Dar es Salaam where she was working for the African-American institute at the time.

Q: One last question before we wind up your Zambian experience. You were Chargé for a little while before Ambassador Good arrived. Independence as I recall was in late October of 1964 and when did Good arrive do you recall?

FOULON: He must have arrived in March of 1965 I think.

Q: So you were several months the Chargé?

FOULON: Oh yes, yes I was; three or four really.

Q: Was there anything specific or special that you remember during that period of being Chargé?

FOULON: I think that is when the Tanzam railroad affair arose if I am not mistaken. It came up very early in the independence period and not before.

Q: Looking back now on you experience in Lusaka, what are your most vivid memories and what are you most happy about having accomplished while you were there?

FOULON: I think the real accomplishment, aside from the usual satisfaction with professional performance in relations in rather unusual situations, was simply to be able to build up a post, an embassy that worked well and turn it over to the new and first Ambassador.

I always enjoyed sort of country team supervision and felt that we built that as a start then. What I enjoyed the most, I think that I enjoyed above everything; the country, traveling around the bush - I loved traveling around the bush - hunting and meeting people. It was just a marvelous experience, all of it.

LARRY C. WILLIAMSON
General Officer
Lusaka (1963-1966)

Mr. Williamson was born and raised in Arkansas. After graduating from the University of California and serving a tour of duty with the US Marine Corps, he entered the Foreign Service in 1958. His foreign assignments took him to a number of African posts, including Sierra Leone, Northern Rhodesia, Tanzania, Kenya and Gabon, where he served as Ambassador, and in England. He had a number of assignments in Washington, several dealing with African Affairs. He also served in the Department's Executive Secretariat and as Assistant to the Counselor

Q: Today is the second of November 2006. Larry, I guess we were in 1964 when you went to Lusaka.

WILLIAMSON: Actually, it was '61. No, '64. You're right.

Q: You were there how long, two years?

WILLIAMSON: Two and a half.

Q: Really, '66.

WILLIAMSON: Yes.

Q: Describe Lusaka in 1964 just prior to independence.

WILLIAMSON: Lusaka was what the South Africans would call a "one-horse dorp." A small town. It was because of its site on the railroad, it was mainly the administrative capitol of the... It was a protectorate, I think, in northern Rhodesia. It just stayed there. The other alternative was to go down to Livingston and the Victoria Falls down there, but that place was fever ridden during the '20s and '30s and to a great extent up to the present. That was never a serious contender. Plus, the balance of economic power was in the mines of the northern territories and the tribes up there—it was very tribal—insisted upon having their... You couldn't have their capitol on the copper belt itself which was a few mining towns along the Congolese border. They wanted us to keep it in Lusaka. It's flat. It's a high plain, very nice weather out of the mosquito belt. The temperature never goes below around 50, and it never gets above 95. It used to be a joke among

the old African types that came down there that September was called the “suicide month” in northern Rhodesia because it was time when civil servants usually blew their brains out over monotony and whatnot, and the heat. For anybody who’d lived anyplace outside the African belt, the heat in Lusaka was terrible. But it never went above 100 degrees. You slept under sheets at night, and you’d use mosquito nets. You didn’t take pills unless you were going to go on safari someplace. All and all, that was nice. When we got there the British protectorate was changing into a self-governing colony, so you had a whole new bunch of people coming in from the UK (United Kingdom), Commonwealth affairs people by and large to liaise with the government. You still had on hand a lot of old colonial office people, and there was some tension in the British ranks about who was in charge around here. The Africans were perfectly pleased to play all those two groups of people off as well as threaten the settlers who were as tough and as intense as the Rhodesians were in southern Rhodesia but much smaller in number and influence. When we started showing up... When I say we I mean western embassies because initially we were the only western embassies there, ourselves and the Germans. The Japanese had a lot of people. The African politicians began to play us off, too, against everybody else. It was a great place to be a junior officer. I was the admin (administrative) section, I was the consular section, I was the political section, the economic section, GSO (General Services Officer), and anything else that happened to be going. I was not the consular officer for which I sent up praises to the gods.

Q: Who was the ambassador? When you went out there, this was prior to independence.

WILLIAMSON: Very much so, and because of other factors the British were upset about what was going to happen in Southern Rhodesia. We didn’t staff it up as an embassy as such. It was mainly a consulate general, and a guy named Bob Foulon went out as consul general, and he was for all intents and purposes the leading American diplomat in the country, a very small embassy initially. We had a station chief. We had a couple of USIA guys and then a whole bunch of people who had been with the aid mission in Indonesia which was closed out about then. There were all kinds of people flocking in to do all kinds of jobs that weren’t described as yet, and a lot of people floating around. We had a lot of people come along. We had the Peace Corps guys showing up. I was also Peace Corps liaison. In fact, I was it: myself and Foulon and a consular officer. A guy came in later to become admin officer which I was much relieved about. There was a time that I rented or bought something like 30 houses in about a three month period. It was pretty easy to do because a lot of the Northern Rhodesian settlers were South African, and they were getting the hell out. They weren’t going to work under a black government. They were delighted to sell their bungalows and their houses for dollars, and give you a very good price on it, thank you. I think it was a very good job. I got involved in the embassy building.

Q: I’m a little unclear. When you got there, what was the situation? Was this becoming a colony, or was it accepted ever as being independent? What was...

WILLIAMSON: It went like this: The Rhodesias and Nyasaland had at one stage of the game been separate entities. Nyasaland was a colony. I’m not sure what the legal status was, but Rhodesia was considered part of the commonwealth and was semi-independent, and Northern Rhodesia was a protectorate. After the second war the three countries were jammed together by the British and turned into the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This caused a great deal of

pain because the bulk of the political power was in Southern Rhodesia which was settled largely by people from South Africa, and just after the war a lot of them moved into it, looking to better themselves. North of the Zambezi, which is where Northern Rhodesia was, was governed by the British Colonial Office originally and then... When you had these huge mining corporations—copper mining—up on the Zaire border, they were the sole money makers for the country and the real reason for the British to be interested in it. There were two American firms up there and the good old Anglo British DeBeers companies and all those people. They formed a distinct counter block. They were not as prejudiced and upset as the white settlers, some of whom had taken up farming. Quite a few had taken up farming, actually. The tobacco crops were very powerful and were very good in those days. The evolution was that the Africans in Rhodesia and Nyasaland had started agitating for self-rule. This was anathema to white Southern Rhodesians who fought it tooth and nail through the federation and in London. Eventually, however, things got out of hand first in Nyasaland which is when Hastings Banda came back from 25 years living in the United States formed a country power, the Nyasaland People's Conference, I think it's called, and they were straight for independence, leaving the queen. The whole thing. This scared the mining magnates in Northern Rhodesia, and they were trying to ease this situation by making a separate kind of thing of Northern Rhodesia, not give it independence but make it into a self-governing colony much like Kenya was in those days. The Africans were having none of this and put up a great deal of street fighting and demonstrations. The British finally caved and agreed to independence. About the time I got there the British had announced a timetable for granting independence to Northern Rhodesia and to Nyasaland a year before the Southern Rhodesians had formed their own self-governing operations. Now we're starting to talk about secession and getting out of the British Commonwealth all together. We were there at a very particular time with a fair amount of rioting in the city mostly against the colonial government. but there were two major African parties in Northern Rhodesia, and they had a big struggle going on for who was going to be in charge after the freedom date. The purpose of the United States embassy there was to show the flag and follow the effects of independence on the Roan Selection Trust which is a wholly American owned mining corporation. We had maybe three or four hundred people settle there, some on the mines, but most of them were missionaries. That was the sum total of our interests for a long, long time. Later on as we get involved with the Southern African problems and the Chinese were coming in through Dar es Salaam, our interests became a great deal more global. Initially I was literally consumed with cleaning the place up.

Q: Were you picking up at this point that we were there to show the flag and not to get involved in, or were you there to push for independence?

WILLIAMSON: It was opposition. This is back in Soapy Williams's day. Kennedy.

Q: Secretary for African Affairs.

WILLIAMSON: Yes, and again the administration. We made no bones about our support for independence, but the British had asked us to stand back a little bit because they hoped to bring Southern Rhodesia along to independence, too, and not have them fall to the South Africans. Because of their other wide interests in Africa, they really despaired having an all-white government set up along lines of South Africa and Rhodesia. We were pushing pretty hard for independence. We kept our heads down. The British were trying to get some traction from the

Southern Rhodesians. They lost all that eventually. We weren't there to replace the British under any circumstances, and we weren't there to work with the existing British Commonwealth office but to help where they needed it. We supported them in the UN, but our job was to sit around and watch and protect whatever American interests came along.

Q: Was there at that time a Soviet presence?

WILLIAMSON: No. Until independence, they were absolutely not a problem. On the copper belt up on the border with the Congo there were two Chinese restaurants. That, as far as I know now, was the extent of Communist infiltration. The Russians did come down. There were Russian diplomats and promises of largesse that they would set up. This was before the Russian/Chinese split.

Q: Talking about when you were setting the embassy, you knew it was going to be an embassy, is that right?

WILLIAMSON: Yes.

Q: Did you run across the problem of one standard for AID, another for sate?

WILLIAMSON: The AID people plead several causes: One, they are a temporary agency so they ought to treat their people better than the slaves at the Department of State were treated; Two, their people were by and large quite a bit older than us, were settled in the various professions. We had agricultural people, and they were more substantial in their needs. They were quite unhappy. Many of them didn't want to be there, and so the AID director who was a really decent guy constantly said he had to buy them out to have them stay. They kept these programs going. That was not a major problem. It got to be more of a problem later on when we in turn got a lot more people in of more senior rank. When I was doing the purchasing, I was under a great deal of pressure just simply to get some housing that was decent that they could put people in. Representation didn't come along too much till the agency guy appeared on the scene ,who proceeded to serve some of the other potentates working with the British intelligence service over in the state house. The CIA's other people were pretty damn good. They weren't very pushy at all. I guess the biggest problem was with AID, and the mission was terribly overstaffed. There wasn't enough for people to do. They had a small AID program and as it turns out that they didn't have too many resources to work with anyway. All the agricultural sector is at the top of the monsoon belt so that they can depend upon the rains maybe three years out of every five, but every third year or fourth year the drought would set in, and there you'd be. You weren't in an agricultural program, you were in a famine relief program. That wasn't too good of an idea, but we had a lot of people doing that.

Q: What was the tribal situation there?

WILLIAMSON: Two big tribes. One of them down along the Southern Rhodesian/Northern Rhodesian border on down to the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River. They had been the regional guys who had been agitating for freedom and had a record going back about ten years beating up on the British government about this. The other group, though, was the Bemba who

were up in the northeast of the country and provided most of the labor for the copper mines. They were two separate political organizations and by the time I got there were busily engaged in arguing and fighting each other. They were confusing for a guy who'd just gotten in from Sierra Leone. Let me tell you, the police had—the governor general, really—had banned political rallies on Sundays because they inevitably broke into fist fights and machetes fights between the two forces. He had, however, only the black police, the African police force, to use against these riots, so you'd go out and try to find out what's going on, and you'd have the usual, "Well, they started it." "No, they started it," plus you had the police who were completely confused about what the hell they were doing because these were their brothers. This is where they had come from. They weren't terribly enthusiastic about carrying out any instructions about breaking up meetings. The thing was—as you looked back on it—quite peaceful. The real trouble didn't start until the election after independence which is when you got into all kinds of problems about what are we going to do about Southern Rhodesia.

Q: What was the impression of Hastings Banda at the time you were there? When you got there, what were you picking up?

WILLIAMSON: Hastings Banda was kind of the good guy whom the State Department had adopted. He looked very American as you remember. He really kept calling us to respect our past and do things for him. He was a funny guy. He was very totalitarian and later dictatorial. He seems to have lived forever. He was an old man when independence came. He had a reputation which the white settlers built up dramatically as a man of great sexual appetite although to look at him, you couldn't see much going on there! He ran a pretty clean administration. Later on, he decided there were too many young bucks trying to get into positions of power in his organization, i.e., had intentions of replacing him. They were engaged in some pretty nasty coups and counter-coups. On the whole in those days he took a very difficult brief and ran it very well. Malawi or Nyasaland as it was has hardly anything in the way of economic resources. It made its great name in the world by constantly growing these enormous cocktail peanuts, and sisal, an entire small industry was built around hand sowing those peanuts which used to be very popular in bars all over Western Europe and the United States. That was about it. There was also fishing on Lake Malawi which was pretty good but suffered like fishing on Lake Banguela in Zambia. You get the fish on shore, and you're still half way across the African continent from a place to sell them. And no ice.

Q: Did Banda come around to what was at that time the Consul General's office?

WILLIAMSON: It wasn't Banda. Banda was in Nyasaland. I was in what was Zambia, and that was Kenneth Kaunda.

Q: Let me get this straight. Kenneth Kaunda was the mayor. What was he like?

WILLIAMSON: He was a great guy. I'm still a great admirer of his. He and Nyerere back in Dar es Salaam were blood brothers sort of thing. Both very reasonable guys, both very smart. Kaunda came from a family of African Christian missionaries. His father or his mother, I can't remember which, was from Nyasaland. By the way, Nyasaland is where David Livingston had his headquarters.

Q: Nyasaland turned into...

WILLIAMSON: Malawi, and Northern Rhodesia became Zambia. Part of it was to see what we were doing, but we were invited to his residence for parties. Whenever we had a visitor in town, that person would ask, "Why aren't you able to see him?" There were a lot of guys who wanted to see the big man. We had very good relations with himself, with his party, top people in his party and, indeed, with most of the senior people in the Zambian government. Half of them are British, or Afrikaner - they came to our houses and we went to their houses. It was all very even-stein. To the day I left we had, although not instant access, we could get in to see Kaunda within a 24-hour period, as soon as we had to.

Q: Did Kaunda come out of the same school as Nyerere which was sort of London School of Economics?

WILLIAMSON: No.

Q: This in a way destroyed Tanzania.

WILLIAMSON: It did, indeed.

Q: How about Kaunda?

WILLIAMSON: Kaunda was not well educated outside of Africa. I believe he did go down to Southern Rhodesia to a school down there for a while but didn't get this indoctrination that nearly got us a Tanzania with a British Labor Party program. He didn't have that much baggage. Almost all Africans in those days and many Europeans and Americans thought that probably planned societies were the way to go for newly independent countries. You've got to develop them, and development means you've got to have plans -- plans of government. It may turn out willy-nilly that you're not going to collectivize necessarily, but you're going to have a lot of input. Free markets is another idea that is very attractive down there. Still is, I gather. The other problem that Rhodesia did not have was that Zambia was completely dependent upon the wealth and the productivity of mines owned by the largest mining conglomerations in the whole damn world. Anglo-American was all over and still is. Rhodesian Selection Trust which is the American Firm had mines in South America and had mines in southern Africa and elsewhere, Botswana.

You can't do that. That's all there was to it. In order to give them their due, did they ever try? They did tax the hell out of them, much more harshly than the South Africans or the British ever had, but still not enough to drive them out of business. They were under considerable prodding to Zambianize—not Africanize, to Zambianize—because Zambia had a large population of resettled mulattos from South Africa, a lot of Greeks who had been shipping agents particularly who'd been there two or three generations. There were some Afrikaners who stayed there; some Brits had stayed there. The pressure was not on just to get blacks in there. The pressure was to get Zambians in there. That, in most cases, meant blacks. Zambia, like most African countries, had a real deficit of educated and trained Africans, so the first ten years were tough to get the

right people in the right jobs. Sometimes the wrong people get the right jobs and all hell breaks loose. But the Zambian government had pretty tight control all and all, and listened to the international AID programs, listened to the British, listened to ourselves, listened to the United Nations which is just as well because they really couldn't go anyplace. They're landlocked: totally surrounded. In the north, the Congo had fallen to pieces almost immediately after independence. To the south they had the South Africans and the Rhodesians who for the first eight years of the life of the new country –Zambia-- were pretty bad enemies. They had air raids and stuff like that over there, the Rhodesians kept bringing their army to the borders and raiding. To the west they had the Portuguese provinces which were going up in smoke. To the southeast they had Mozambique. Their choices were very limited. All of their exports, all their copper, went out through the South African Railway System and was exported eventually through the Port of Beira in Mozambique. They were among the first sufferers of globalization. We didn't know it then, but that is exactly what was happening to them.

Q: After you finished the settling in process, was there much in the way of political reporting?

WILLIAMSON: Lots, because very early on the British started to get very, very upset about the way the white Rhodesians were moving down there in terms of their other interests in Africa. The British Labor party to a certain extent, but mostly the right wing of the Tory party, was very loathe to put any pressure on the white South Africans or the white Rhodesians to do anything about any further mandates to their African population. On the other hand, the British were under tremendous pressure from the Nigerians and to a great extent from us and world opinion, the UN, and from their other African friends and neighbors: the Zambians, the Kenyans, the Ugandans. All of those people. Perhaps the British could be persuaded to "Make these guys give it up. It is a British colony. It's not like South Africa. They haven't seceded. You have real assets down there that you can use. Use them." It broke up the British Tory party initially to do anything about that. We got involved in all of that. In addition, a problem I have raised here, the United States government, God bless it, Soapy Williams and a couple of guys like that, decided that there's one thing we can do about South Africans and Southern Rhodesians even now at this distance: it is to start training up the next generation of African leaders. We established a scholarship program under the aegis of the African American Institute in Dar es Salaam at a high school, junior college sort of thing, to which invited kids from Southern Africa south of the Zambezi could get to, and get trained so they could pass the SAT tests and get into American colleges. There were plenty of scholarships for them. We didn't quite expect it to be as successful as it turned out to be. We in Lusaka became a major way-base on an underground railway that was taking people from Southern Africa and pushing them up to Dar es Salaam, over the protests of the governments involved. They were usually led through South Africa, all of Rhodesia, over to Botswana which was a British colony. They had a real group of cool guys, British guys for the most part, who were just terrific. They would drive these big 6-5 trucks down there, pick up these kids by the carload, and bring them up to Lusaka where they had gotten funds. I don't know from whom, but they got funds. They established great big dormitories. The Zambians cooperated but were very uneasy having all of these guys floating around. Later on a lot of Southern Rhodesian anti-white politicians drifted up, and they also got into our... This is where they stayed, so we had a big program of handling—we had a junior officer finally who did nothing but this—handling these guys, the ones that were going on to be students in the United States—and handing these guys who it turned out, a lot of them were the future leaders of

Southern Rhodesia! Myself, this young guy Clay and two or three of my guys went to parties and had parties. Here were these kids who were very nice people but who were just clueless. They came out of South African slums by and large and places like that. They'd show up, and here they were on our doorsteps. The Zambians were uneasy after a while. They had quite a few of them, may two or three hundred running around. They weren't a menace of anything, but they had the potential to get the white Rhodesians very cross and have the white Rhodesians take steps against the Zambian government which the Zambian government didn't want to face up to. We got them out of town as fast as we could. I ran a false visa mill for a very long time. The thing was that the guys had no traveling papers. They didn't even have identification papers many of them. They came with a piece of paper from our people in South Africa saying, "This is John Jones. He's going to over to Dar es Salaam and hopefully on to Penn State." That was it, a piece of paper! Not even on letterhead, but we honored them. We sent a bunch of them up, and they got turned back at the border. Across the street were customs people and immigration people, whatever country they represent, and the bloody Tanzanians turned them back. The Tanzanian government did not want to admit in the face of all the problems they were having with the Southern Africans that they were a menace. They ignored the fact that right in the middle of Dar es Salaam was this huge damn school full of kids speaking Shona and Indabeli, a lot of Ikudian. They said, "We can't let them in without some kind of papers." We had the problem then of onward transportation because no western airline would take these kids. Even after we said they have a scholarship, they wouldn't take them without some kind of identification paper or passport. I discovered this most wonderful thing, that if you've got a seal on anything, it looks good to the customs guys.

Q: As a consular officer, I used to make non-documents.

WILLIAMSON: That's exactly what we did. I got this long paper, take that grommet machine, put the holes in it, put the red tape through, and...

Q: The red tape is essential.

WILLIAMSON: Yes. Give it the old consular go.

Q: "This is to certify that we cannot certify this paper."

WILLIAMSON: This is certified, this is indeed James Johnson, and he's going to Dar es Salaam, and we understand that he may go on to the United States. I'd give a flourishing signature—and I could be really flourishing in those days—and I'd turn those things out by the carload. I got my comeuppance just about six months before I left when one of these little devils decided to flunk high school, flunked it flat, but he had somehow accumulated enough money to buy an airline ticket to the United States. He went down to Dar es Salaam Airport, and he flashed this thing to the guys down in Customs and Immigration who were quite prepared for that. They said, "Get on board." He got on board. He showed up in New York with not a round trip ticket to his name and this piece of paper signed "American Consul." Oh, yea. I got a rocket. Everybody in the AF bureau covered up for me beautifully. I got no repercussions whatsoever, but they were shocked! "I am shocked that you're doing this sort of thing! You mustn't do that again and get caught!" That was my one really big claim to fame in that sort of thing. My name was all over Southern

Africa for a while. We had been very active.

Q: How did you find the Zambians?

WILLIAMSON: Zambians were a disappointment to me, frankly. They had come from a different culture altogether than the West Africans. One of the great things about Sierra Leone was there was always a party someplace, lots of dancing and carrying on, lots of joking. Zambians are rather dour. Zambians tend to be very serious sort of people. I think it's because for one thing, the West Africans were not bothered by settlers. White men showed up there and they died. That's all there was to it. There were a lot of colonial service guys, but the West African chiefs were pretty much in charge of their areas. They did all this stuff themselves, so they had long history of West African missionaries and doctors. Zambians had nothing. They were kept pretty much in the South African style. Kaunda until a year before he became head of state, lived in this segregated suburb outside Lusaka and met the world press there. He got lots of pictures taken. The government figured that probably wasn't a good idea, so they gave him a house. It was just that way. They didn't quite know. There were some who were very sophisticated and knew their way around and were quite good. By and large what we found was unlike the Southern Rhodesians, for example, who were great guys for roaring around and drinking too much and having a grand, grand time, and dancing and carrying on, these guys were all much more subdued.

Q: How did you find both the British and the South African whites? Were they resenting you at all?

WILLIAMSON: There was a significant group of them that did. I think it was my third or fourth party, it was official. I can't even remember the function, but we were invited to the residence of somebody of importance, and we were told the chief minister was going to show up. Well, he did. He showed up, got out, he and his very nice wife. He walked up and somebody in the back of the crowd said, "Here comes the coconut!"

Q: Oh, God.

WILLIAMSON: There was a lot of animosity. These were really spoiled South Africans. We were later accused of all sorts of insidious things, and it got really intense at the time that the Rhodesians declared independence, the Unilateral Declaration, it was called.

Q: UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence).

WILLIAMSON: UDI, because we didn't recognize them. We fought against it. A lot of guys were really shocked about that because they had bought into this thing and thought that if we don't stop the communists here—and these black guys are all communists, obviously—then all of Southern Africa with all of its riches will go into the hands of the Soviets. You have to back us up. We weren't going to do that. I think the ambassador and I and the DCM were all on one line. "You guys had it all right for a long time. The British carried the can on all this, but you decided to come out from underneath the cover, and you've got to face the fact that nobody in the world is going to help you. South Africans certainly will help, but they're not going to run

great risks for you.” They really were upset about that because it never occurred to them they wouldn’t.

Q: You were there during the independence. How did that go?

WILLIAMSON: The British threw a hell of an independence ceremony, let me tell you. I’ll wrap up both of them: Sierra Leone, HMS (Her Majesty’s Ship) Lion shows up.

Q: It was a...

WILLIAMSON: A big freighter. It was a cruiser basically. The Marines come off, the Marine band plays, there are all kinds of troops stomping and drilling out there, all kinds of dignitaries. Four months later, when the first guy after the election is sworn in, who comes down but the queen and Prince Philip. Everybody’s invited to a garden party just like in London, and everybody went. My wife said she’d never wash her hand again! It went on like that. The Sierra Leoneans loved the whole thing. The Sierra Leone government army was not good for very much except mutinying every so often, but they could troop and stomp. They really could do the whole drill. They had a really good band. The Northern Rhodesian independence was much more of a triumph. It was quite clear what the election was going to produce. The Rhodesian Rifles who, like the Kings African Rifles, recruited from all three of the countries, had a very distinguished service record in the first and second wars, and the Malay and Korean operations. They had a big thing there. Somebody in the royal family came down. We had a great big stadium, big festivities, drumming, same as Sierra Leone. Dancers and drummers all over the place until hell wouldn’t have it. Day and night for three days. As usual, however, at the embassy the top guy—whether he was the chargé or ambassador or what—was wrapped up in all of that. The rest of the peons were all dealing with official delegations, getting people from the airport. The usual thing was onslaught of official and political guests. In Sierra Leone they had Thurgood Marshall and the sister of the senator from Oregon and several other people like that. Thurgood Marshall was the president’s personal representative.

Q: The Supreme Court justice.

WILLIAMSON: Yes. This is before then. He was not a Supreme Court justice yet. He knew a lot of people. The group who came to the Zambian thing was a little different. John Mosler, the guy who owned the Mosler safe business who we enriched no doubt, was our delegation head. They were very big in one of the mining operations. And his wife came down. I later discovered she was called the Dragon Lady by everybody who knew her: exceedingly demanding. The Oppenheimers were there. We didn’t see much of this stuff. We showed up at the trooping and stomping in the stadium, but I was busy worrying where the hell the embassy cars were, what’s our next step, and who’s going to be up in the morning to take these people to this or that. An official visit will just tear an embassy up worse than anything. A big official visit plus all the guys who think they’re important coming along, can really wipe you out. The CIA people imported three guys from, I guess, South Africa just to do GSO work. They were something less than pleased. I guess you might imagine I was something less than pleased. The thing was peaceful. The trouble or violence starts usually sometime long after independence, and these guys start realizing this is now a partisan government they are working with, for or against, and

the old thing of, “If we don’t like them, let’s go beat them.” They do that. In Sierra Leone the first time we ever had any trouble whatsoever was just before the big elections after independence. The head of the opposition party found himself in jail for no particular reason, and somebody threw a Molotov cocktail at the back of our embassy. It didn’t do much damage. It was very ineptly put together, but it spread oil and grease all over the place and burned for awhile, proving once again that our safety plan was not very well conceived. The fire wardens never showed up, and our two night watchmen ran off in the dark and didn’t come back until the next morning. In fact, we wouldn’t have known that the embassy was burning if somebody at the bar next door hadn’t picked up the phone and called the girlfriend of the consul general and said, “You know your place is on fire?” He said, “No.” So Tom got me out.

In Zambia they had a lot of problems before there came the question of, “When are you going to get independence and how is it going to come?” That led to a lot of government vs. politician violence. The first real election for Parliament was again run on very stringent lines. All these information people would have been very pleased with it except at the end someone started to realize if we don’t win this, we don’t get access to the treasury. All these good things that we used to get from the British... The colonial administration was pretty even handed about which dish to scrub. In Zambia where you have two major parties, definitely geographically distinct, it was quite clear that the ANC (African National Congress) which parroted itself on the South African National Congress which were the eyes down along the border, were clearly going to lose, so they didn’t like that one damn bit. There was a fair amount of vandalism and burning of cottages—kayas they were called—in the suburbs. That was the violent stuff that we saw. We didn’t have too many other troubles. Sierra Leone was always full of petty criminals. Breaking and entering was the national sport. In Zambia they didn’t have that type of problem, at least in Lusaka, until well after we left.

Q: As the political officer, how would you go about getting information?

WILLIAMSON: We had a reasonably good press corps. Sounds odd, but we did. You had several correspondents for both South African and British papers. You had the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) guy. You had a pretty decent local paper, Lusaka something or other run by an ex-Reuters guy. I started out in Sierra Leone with some of these guys. There was a whole band of British and French, Paris and London based guys who specialized in African reporting. They’d come down every three or four months and shake the trees, see what’s going on. They always used to come in and see me. I talked to a lot of politicians. In those days there was no stigma involved in being with the American diplomats. You had your diplomatic colleagues, and sometimes, by God, you could even go to the government and ask questions, and they’d answer. It was particularly true on the economic side of my bailiwick because there were not that many people doing that kind of stuff, and most of them were expatriates supplied by one or the other AID programs. Because neither Zambia nor Sierra Leone had much in the way of statistics that were at all reliable, we all got together and pooled our knowledge..

The first development plan from Sierra Leone went as follows: There was a Sierra Leonean who had lived for years in New York and who was down in Sierra Leone on detail from the UN. He and his wife were very nice and we got along with them very well. His job was to put together a development plan because you had to have a development plan in those days. He put this thing

together, and then he shopped it: shopped it to myself, the Brits and the Canadians who were there. Who else did he shop it to? A couple of international bank advisors!

The Sierra Leone development plan was finalized in my dining room over about a three day period at some little expense to my beer stock. This was all the economic brains in the whole country, and there were only two Sierra Leoneans with us. This guy went back and presented it to his minister and said, "That's very impressive!" There is was. It wasn't impressive at all. There were no statistics. The colonial government had not bothered, didn't have the wherewithal actually to bother. Almost the same thing happened in Zambia. Everybody got a shot at the economic information that was there. The big companies kept rather a closer watch on what was going on than we thought initially because they could see their future in this. They would come and feed us information and work it out with us. Nobody ever minded in those days because it wasn't considered sabotage. It was just trying to find out what the hell was going on in the economy. You knew what the Sierra Leoneans had imported last year. You knew what they exported, but it meant that you had about 70% of the reported statistics were something that was called "the balancing factor," and that's all there was. This was the difference between what was brought in and what was sent out, and we didn't know where it came from, we didn't know where it went, we didn't know how it was paid for. This was what the balance of payments looked like. It didn't make a difference what the hell it was because there wasn't anything you could do about it. A good portion of that in Sierra Leone was smuggled diamonds which went out through Monrovia. Information was not hard to get, but the question was the validity of it. By the time I got to Nairobi which was 15 years after this time, there was a whole industry devoted to, "How's Kenya doing?" The fact of the matter was hardly anyone knew what the hell was going on. You could go in and around. I spent the first six months of my time trying to figure out who did what to whom. After talking to some bankers and people like that, we got a group together that vetted what we'd get our hands on as far as statistics go. It was better than what anybody had before. It wasn't very good. The World Bank came in and asked if they could see it. We said, "Oh, sure!" They said, "Is that the best you could do?" We said, "Oh, sure!" They went away.

Q: You left Zambia in '66.

WILLIAMSON: I left there in '66.

Q: Would you say the state was up and running by the time you left?

WILLIAMSON: Oh, yes. In fact, we were already running into problems with the Rhodesians. You had this whole bunch of anti-black white settlers over the border who were moving heaven and earth to stay independent and to keep the Africans in bondage. They had a very good, effective, small army and air force, a nifty SAS (Special Air Services) bunch, Special Forces, who turned out to be really effective during the actual war in the later '60s, early '70s. This was already a major problem for Zambia. The Zambians were beginning to understand that not only were they at the mercy of the Rhodesians, but there was no way out because the exports of copper (their major export) could either go out in those days over the Benguela railroad from the copper belt up to the Angolan ports on the Atlantic Ocean or it could come down through the whole Rhodesian/South African system and go out through Beira. This meant that at any time

they wanted to, the Portuguese or the South African whites could completely stop the major export support of the Zambian government. You had to be very careful. Also, they were all very vulnerable militarily. What was left of the Rhodesian Rifles, and the Zambian military was not terribly impressive, almost all expatriate officers, the bulk of whom were from South Africa. They all turned in their papers and left, didn't want to work for a black government, didn't see much future for themselves in working for a black government. It was all the usual stuff. If I'd been in their boots, I'd have left, too. They were running, but you could always see the storm clouds. The price of copper was still up. When copper's up and it's good, they've got lots of revenue; When copper's down, they have nothing.

STUART P. LILLICO
Chief, USIS
Kitwei (1964)

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

Q: I do not think so. Now, Stu, what was your next post after Zanzibar?

LILLICO: Kitwe, on the Copperbelt in what was then Northern Rhodesia; it is now Zambia. We were two or three weeks at Dar es Salaam. I remember my wife and I stayed with Gene Rosenfeld for a week or so until we found a hotel where we could stay.

My son who was about fourteen years old had been with us in Zanzibar on vacation from his school in Nairobi. We were able to send him back up to Nairobi, so he was not with us in Dar. After three or four weeks with USIS Dar es Salaam, the agency decided to open a one-man post in Kitwe. We went by ship down to Lourenço Marques in Mozambique and drove from there up way of Lusaka about 500 miles to the Copperbelt.

Kitwe was chosen as a center for the USIS mainly because it was the biggest of the small communities on the Copperbelt. It was the site of a very large open pit coppermine and had a substantial British presence as well as representatives of many other nations.

We were able to find a combined residence and office on Edinburgh Road (which probably has a different name now), in the center of town. I set up a USIS office there, mostly with a few books and publications and business cards. The rest of my job mainly was just shaking hands around town and trying to impress on people that the U.S. was not going to eat them alive or anything like that.

As for successes, if in any of my tours I did a good job, it would have been in Kitwe. It was just at the time of the split between China and the Soviet Union. The local African labor leaders, who

had been enchanted with Marxism really did not have anywhere to go. All of a sudden they discovered that America was there and we were interested in them.

HERMAN J. COHEN
Economic/Commercial Officer
Lusaka (1965-1966)

Herman Cohen was born in New York, New York and graduated from City College of New York. He entered the Foreign Service in 1955. He served in numerous posts including Paris, Kampala, Salisbury, Lusaka and Kinshasa and was named ambassador to Senegal in 1977. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Q: Well you left there in 196...

COHEN: Well in the middle of '65, the whites declared their independence from Britain. It was called UDI, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence. It came a few weeks after Harold Wilson had spent a few days there. That was a lot of time for a Prime Minister. He came there and tried to talk them out of doing it, try to make a deal with them, the whites. The whites decided no; the government decided it was time. I think it was in November, 1965 when they declared independence. I was just completing my second year there, and of course the State Department went ape over that. This was moving backwards, a blow to democracy and all that. We refused to recognize them, and to show our displeasure, we were going to reduce the size of the mission of the consulate general. Of course I wanted to stay because it was a very pleasant place, and was interesting. But, the political officer got to stay and I got moved out. They said you are a regional labor attaché, go to one of your other countries, so they shipped me to Zambia. There instead of being the labor attaché, I filled the slot of the economic and commercial officer who was just leaving on transfer, but I also did labor work.

Q: You were in Zambia from when to when?

COHEN: From late '65 to late '66. I only stayed one year.

Q: The head of Zambia was Kenneth Kaunda. What was the embassy impression of Kaunda at that time?

COHEN: At that time he was one of the freedom fighters. He got his country independence. He was a great humanitarian. He was a very articulate spokesman for African freedom and independence, so he was very well-liked. He was one of those like Nyerere, Nkrumah, and others who were popular in the United States at the time.

Q: As the economic commercial officer what was the infrastructure of the Zambian government at that time? Were there many whites in it or was it pretty much an Africa for Africans type?

COHEN: It was being Africanized, but there were still a significant number of whites, particularly in the court system, the police, and what you might say second echelon advisors to the government. There were quite a few of them, mainly from the UK, United Nations.

Q: How about in your area of interest, economic and commercial, whom were you dealing with?

COHEN: Well, there were copper mines that were the big business, and some import export people. I felt that my job was to really promote U.S. exports even in those days. I did an inventory of all U.S. investments there, something that didn't exist because the embassy had only been open for a couple of years. I found that there were about 120 U.S. investments. Most of the companies that were there were based in South Africa, so I tried to track that and help. We went through a crisis there because of the UDI in Southern Rhodesia. The British blockaded the oil pipeline that came from the Indian Ocean coast. Now that had the major impact not on Southern Rhodesia but on Zambia, because the Southern Rhodesians were able to get oil from South Africa by land because they were buddies. Zambia was suddenly cut off and there was no gasoline. We were rationed. We had about four gallons a month for each car. We were going to the embassy on bicycles. We couldn't accept invitations for parties. We were heavily involved in helping the Zambians get supplies. We decided to get AID to build a road to Tanzania. There was an existing but very deteriorated road. We were helping them buy vehicles. We were spending a lot of time on this emergency. In fact, at one point we were even airlifting gasoline, a very expensive process. So, as an economic officer, I was spending most of my time on this crisis.

Q: What was the feeling toward Kaunda's economic policy? Was he of the Nyerere socialist thought or was he different?

COHEN: No, he was of the Nyerere socialist thought. He felt that everything should be nationalized. He hadn't done it yet by the time I left, but he was on the verge of doing it. One of the big copper companies there was American owned, so we were doing our best to protect their interest, make sure they were compensated if it was nationalized. We weren't giving them economic advice like don't do it. In those days, we were very tolerant of the one party state and the socialist systems. This was Africa; let them do what they want.

Q: Did you feel working in Africa at this early stage, did you feel there was a bloom on the rose, a feeling of these Africans are certainly going to do a wonderful job and all this I mean looking at it as being very tolerant all this is going to work out rather than being a practical nation as we often are.

COHEN: Well, for certain countries like Uganda and Zambia there was this very upbeat feeling. These people are serious. They have a certain amount of education. They have a lot of problems; they are way behind in a lot of things. With foreign aid, good intentions, and serious people, they should be able to make fast progress, but that was not true for every country. My next post after Zambia was Zaire that collapsed totally after de-colonization, and nobody was optimistic there; it was a mess. So early on, differentiation among the various countries was emerging.

WILLIAM B. EDMONDSON
Deputy Chief of Mission
Lusaka (1965-1969)

Born in Missouri, Mr. Edmondson was educated at the University of Nebraska and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He joined the Foreign Service in 1951 after service in the US Army in WWII. Mr. Edmondson served in a number of foreign posts, including, Dar-es-Salaam, Bern, Accra and Lusaka, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. In 1978 he was appointed US Ambassador to South Africa. His Washington assignments principally concerned African affairs. He was interviewed by Arthur Tienken in 1988.

Q: *All right, well, let me take you now to Zambia. You arrived in Zambia in--*

EDMONDSON: 1965. It was in April, 1965.

Q: *April 1965, in the capacity of Deputy Chief of Mission. Is that correct?*

EDMONDSON: That's correct, yes.

Q: *When you arrived there, what did the staff consist of?*

EDMONDSON: There was the Ambassador, myself as DCM replacing Bob Foulon (who had been DCM only a short time, as he was Principal Officer of the consulate that preceded the Embassy and then served as the first Chargé d'Affaires ad interim until the Ambassador arrived), an economic officer (Larry Williamson, who had been number two in the former consulate), a political officer (Eugene Jeffers), a political-consular officer (Temple Cole, who gave special attention to the political refugees from Southern Rhodesia and South Africa), and two administrative officers in what was called the Combined Administrative Management Office, or CAMO. There was an ambassadorial secretary, a DCM secretary who also helped the Economic Officer, and one communicator. I'm not sure that we had any other non-AID American staff at that time, although we later added another communicator whom we shared with the AID mission.

Q: *That staff must have been built up fairly rapidly given the fact that until independence Lusaka served as a kind of outpost of the Consul General in Salisbury. Is that a fair statement?*

EDMONDSON: Yes, generally speaking, that's true.

Q: *So that in the months before you arrived, all these other people were in the process of arriving as well?*

EDMONDSON: Yes. In addition, of course, there were AID officers and I don't recall when they had come, but there were already at least several AID officers on board.

Q: So you had AID officers, that is, staff from the Agency for International Development, and USIA, the information service. Were there other agencies as well?

EDMONDSON: No, that was it.

Q: Okay. The Ambassador was Robert Good, if I remember right, and he was a non-career ambassador.

EDMONDSON: That's correct. He was a non-career ambassador, but he had served for at least two or three, perhaps nearly four, years as the Director of the Office of Research and Analysis for Africa in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). With experience as an academic in political science and as a research specialist, as well as in managing an office of the Department of State, he was quite familiar with the reporting processes of the service; he was certainly not a complete outsider.

Q: He probably expected you, as his Deputy, to fill a particular role in the embassy. Can you tell me a little bit about what he expected of you?

EDMONDSON: Well, he did want me to act as an alter ego for him, which made the job far more interesting. He made it clear to everyone that on many matters they were to come first to me and that in such cases my decision would be his decision. Obviously we consulted very, very closely. But he gave me full discretion on signing off on some of the economic and political cables. I used my own judgment as to those which I knew he would want to see. We kept a reading file and, because he was extremely active and interested in substantive matters, himself, I showed quite a large proportion of cables to him. It was only the reporting cables that didn't have extensive interpretation or that sort of thing that I signed off myself.

Q: I take it from what you just said that relations between you and the Ambassador were very favorable.

EDMONDSON: Excellent, in fact. I was extremely fortunate. I was his choice as a Deputy Chief of Mission probably because of reporting that I had done in Ghana. When I returned from Ghana in 1964, he was still the Director of INR's Africa Office--known as INR/RAF then--and had just called a conference at Airlie House of his analysts plus a few selected outsiders, either Foreign Service people or academics. As a former INR analyst, I was one of the FSO's invited to participate. He said then that another reason I was invited was that he had liked the reporting I had done from Ghana. So I think that may also have been an influential factor in his choosing me as a Deputy Chief of Mission (to my surprise) some months later. I had been back in the Department for less than a year when I went to Zambia.

Q: How did you find the quality of the rest of the staff, and did they work together well as a team?

EDMONDSON: By and large, I think the quality was very good and the cooperation was good. We had difficulties with the CAMO, the Combined Administrative Management Office, simply

because of the nature of an organization having to serve both the embassy--the new embassy--and the AID staff. Of course, the AID director wanted certain things from the organization, as did the embassy, and there were difficulties from time to time. There were extremely difficult administrative problems that CAMO had to deal with, and it had a very small staff. It had a CAMO director and a deputy.

The first CAMO director was an AID officer who had served as an AID executive officer--in Addis Ababa, I believe it was--and was used to running a much larger organization. The deputy was an officer who I think had been a General Services Officer with some limited consular experience at another post. Anyway, both officers found it difficult to cope with an organization that had more demands than it had facilities to meet those demands.

Q: When you arrived there, what was your understanding of what the Department of State in Washington expected the Ambassador and by derivation you to consider to be your principal mission, or his principal mission?

EDMONDSON: Well, in those days, the instructions to ambassadors, to new ambassadors, were far less explicit than they are today. And we didn't have a Mission Statement or country-specific set of instructions to follow. But clearly one of the priority concerns that we had was to help prepare for the possibility of a unilateral declaration of independence in Southern Rhodesia, UDI, as it was called. Before I left for Zambia I was invited to participate in a number of meetings that were being held in the Eastern and Southern African Division of the Africa Bureau (AF) on the matter of preparations to help Zambia in the case of sanctions being applied against Southern Rhodesia. This was still a very academic problem at that time, but already there was a UN official, an economist named Gordon Goundry, who had been assigned to help Zambia lead its own preparations. Goundry had come to Washington to hold meetings with various officials in the Department of State and other agencies to consider what conceivably could be done. It was, as I said, very much still an academic exercise, but it was a very good introduction for me to the kinds of problems that we would be much occupied with when I arrived in Zambia. So I would give that the highest priority.

The embassy had already explored ideas as to how we could keep or strengthen the western connection of Zambia and other countries in a similar situation if indeed the Ian Smith government in Southern Rhodesia did decide illegally to declare independence.

Q: We'll come back in a bit to talk about your experiences with the UDI process. I think you mentioned an AID mission there, which suggests also that there were some what I might call more bilateral interests in Zambia on the part of the United States. Is that a fair statement?

EDMONDSON: Oh, indeed. There were strong bilateral interests, because of American participation in the copper mining industry in what was then called the Copperbelt, now referred to as the Western Province. There were two major copper companies, the Anglo American group and Roan Selection Trust, the latter of which had strong American participation through American Metals Climax.

Sir Ronald Prain was the Chairman of Roan Selection Trust, known generally as RST, and we kept fairly close contact with both RST and Anglo American concerning copper production, because at that time Zambia vied with Chile for first place in copper production in the world.

Q: How was the AID program focused? Can you recall?

EDMONDSON: Well, the AID program was a very small one, and a very significant part of it was in AID participant training. There was an AID training officer on the AID staff whose name was Bill Weems. The overall program was probably in the range of \$2 million (project funds) annually, and much of its initial emphasis, if I remember correctly, was in the fields of African agriculture and education, including curriculum development. There had been considerable thought given to ways of helping Zambia in the transport field. Even before I arrived, there was some discussion of Zambia's desire for assistance in building a Tanzam Railway. The Zambians, probably with some encouragement from the British, I believe, wanted very much to have a rail connection from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the northern part of the railway that ran through the central part of Zambia from what was then still Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, up to the Katanga area (now the Shaba province) of Zaire (formerly the Congo). The Zambians had no rail connection to any of the ports on East Africa except through Southern Rhodesia and either Mozambique or South Africa.

The US was not particularly eager to involve itself in such a large project and was uncertain as to the economic soundness of the idea, but eventually did agree to finance a study of different projects. This was taken on by the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) and in time produced a series of, I think, some eight volumes or more of separate studies: one concerning the railway, and one the possibility of a Tanzam road connection, which indeed was the one finally chosen for support by AID. Another suggested further study of an oil pipeline, which was undertaken and later done with other assistance. The remaining volumes covered various other aspects of the transport connection.

Q: That road, if I remember right, was eventually called Hell Run when it was built. Yes?

EDMONDSON: That was the one that was known as Hell Run during the period when truckers were bringing oil and petroleum products in from Dar es Salaam by road, yes.

Q: And if I remember right, because in my own time in Zambia it was often mentioned, we did turn down the building of the Tanzam Railway. It was eventually built by the Chinese. Does that go back to your time?

EDMONDSON: Yes. I think the US was inclined to discourage the project even before this study, but I believe it was President Johnson who was reluctant to become involved in such a major project, perhaps because of other distractions at the time, such as Vietnam. But the Stanford Research Institute study did question the economic viability of the railway, noting the need for a great deal of upgrading at the Port of Dar es Salaam and arguing that on strict economic terms it still seemed economically more viable to route exports and imports through Beira, Lourenco Marques (now Maputo), and other ports in the south. There were many of us who felt that this failed to take into account important political factors that later did come into

play. The SRI report did suggest that an improved road and an oil pipeline were likely to be viable.

Q: If I may ask one question on the Washington end of the line before I switch over to the political-economic situation, who was most concerned and from whom did the embassy more or less expect to get instructions in the Washington hierarchy at the time?

EDMONDSON: Basically, it was from the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. There had been some interest by the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, George Ball, though in fact it was the Bureau that was most important in terms of our instructions. And of course at the time I went out, the office director for the area, then known as AFE, was Jesse McKnight, and we had quite regular communication

Q: Okay, Mr. Ambassador, let's switch over to something more about the political-economic situation that you found when you arrived there. You have already mentioned copper. To what extent was Zambia dependent upon the south, namely Southern Rhodesia at the time, and South Africa, for its economy?

EDMONDSON: Well, one has to go back in history a bit and recognize that Northern Rhodesia had been in effect discovered and developed from the south. It was part of Cecil Rhodes' expansions. Essentially, the mineral discoveries, mines, and the mining industry, were all developed from the south. Also a considerable number of emigrants came up from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Many of the South Africans were in fact Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. Zambia's major economic ties, therefore, were with the south, both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. The Anglo American Corporation, despite its name (which came from a major loan raised in the US many years ago, was and still is a South African company with no American connection. Roan Selection Trust or RST, which does have an American connection, was known originally as the Rhodesian Selection Trust and was essentially concerned with Southern Rhodesia as well as Northern Rhodesia. Also, the railroad in Zambia had been built as an extension up from Southern Rhodesia across the river at Livingstone near the Victoria Falls. This gave Zambia connections from Southern Rhodesia to Beira, which was important as the port of entry for petroleum products and other imports, as well as south to Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) in Mozambique, and both directly and through Botswana to South Africa. The latter connection crosses the Zimbabwe-Botswana border at Plumtree and enters South Africa from southern Botswana.

Thus, Zambia's main connection was almost exclusively southward in the beginning, although there was a fair amount of communication across from the Copperbelt to Elisabethville in the Katanga (now Shaba) province of Zaire, so there was a relationship there as well. But basically, it was oriented to the south.

Q: That included banking, if I recall.

EDMONDSON: Oh, yes, very much so.

Q: And it also included importation of some of the better things of life like food, at least for the expatriates, and other goodies?

EDMONDSON: Well, at least in part. Zambia produced a good deal of its own local produce. It had, in fact, a pretty good marketing system of local producers of vegetables. But it did import meat from Botswana and other food products from the south. Things like breakfast foods were those that were produced in South Africa. Industrial goods, especially mining equipment, came in from the south and probably still do.

You mentioned banking. I think increasingly a number of the banks were establishing direct branches from Europe, though there were both South African and British banks in Zambia.

Q: Okay, on the political side of the house, Zambia then had a President, Kenneth Kaunda. It had more than one political party if my memory serves me right, and I wonder if you might like to comment a little bit about that please.

EDMONDSON: Well, the leading party, the government party, was the United National Independence Party, UNIP, which had earlier broken away from the Northern Rhodesia African National Congress, or ANC, which was headed by Harry Nkumbula. The ANC had as its main supporters a large number of the Tongas in the southern province of then Northern Rhodesia, eventually Zambia. UNIP, however, had started largely as a youth movement, and had recruited members from throughout the country, though many accused UNIP of being dominated by Bembas. President Kaunda was himself not a member of any major tribe, since his parents had come originally from a small tribe in Malawi. Nonetheless, there were tribal as well as political divisions. The old line nationalists, such as Harry Nkumbula and others, had been with the ANC, but many of those split away and helped form the first cabinet that President Kaunda led.

Q: To pursue President Kaunda himself. He is, of course, one of Africa's longest standing political figures today. What were the relations between him and Ambassador Good, and by derivation, yourself? And what was your judgment of him?

EDMONDSON: Well, the relationships were good. They were not as frequent as certainly Ambassador Good would have liked to have had. He constantly wished he could have a feet-up-on-the-table conversation with President Kaunda, which never seemed to take place. People who had known Kaunda before would come to town and go out to State House and have dinner and talk about these nice long political conversations. But the calls that Bob Good had were essentially business calls. Kaunda was friendly, outgoing, receptive to ideas and discussion, but didn't seem to let his hair down in quite the way that Bob Good thought would have led to better understanding of deeper problems in the future. I think he saw--it would be hard to say now--but probably he saw Kaunda every month or two as well as, of course, seeing him at frequent ceremonies either at State House or elsewhere.

I had a reasonably good relationship as well, though only when I was Chargé or at other times when I saw Kaunda perhaps at the airport or various ceremonies. He was friendly the times that I went to see him. Again, he was businesslike, but receptive to ideas. I remember once taking up a human rights problem at my own initiative--it was a case some tourists had seen in which a

young Zambian woman acting as their official guide was beaten up by a group of young men in the market because her dress was too short (or something of that sort)--and I simply raised this with Kaunda as a situation where the lack of police action to protect the woman or arrest her attackers would not be understood by people from the outside. (The attackers were allegedly UNIP party supporters.) He seemed quite concerned and indicated that he would try to do something about it.

Q: Who else in the government besides the President was a power? The Foreign Minister?

EDMONDSON: Well, certainly the Foreign Minister. The first Foreign Minister that I dealt with was Simon Kapwepwe, who was extremely important and later became Vice President. Well after I left the scene, however, Kapwepwe ran into some difficulty with Kaunda and the party. But at the time I was there, he was particularly important. The Vice President also seemed of some importance, though it was difficult to know just how much at the time.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, to what extent did Kaunda share foreign policy considerations with Kapwepwe? Or, put another way, which of the two did you and the Ambassador see more often on foreign policy matters?

EDMONDSON: Well, I think we saw Kapwepwe certainly more often than the President, but I would say the President exercised the strongest influence or direction, and one had the feeling that within the cabinet or within party circles Kapwepwe and the President worked very closely. There were often rumors of some kind of rivalry between the two. We certainly discounted these at the time and didn't particularly feel that there was a pull away from the basic thrust that Kaunda wanted, although we did feel then that Kapwepwe was probably more inclined than Kaunda was to be sympathetic to the Soviet Union, China, and other bloc countries, despite the importance of nonalignment to Zambia's foreign policy.

Q: To go back to Kaunda himself a little bit, he adopted, if I recall correctly, a philosophy called humanism. He was also a rather emotional man. Could you comment on both of those?

EDMONDSON: Well, there was a series of books that came out about humanism. Some of them while I was there. The first, I think, was called A Humanist in Africa, written by Kaunda with assistance from a Methodist minister. The Methodists had joined with a few other churches to form the United Church of Zambia. This particular minister was Colin Morris who was from the Copperbelt and had known Kaunda for some time. They had become good friends and were both interested in a liberal philosophy.

The title "humanism"--I'm not sure where it came from--was unfortunate to the extent that it used the same name (and may have given the impression of being the same) as a much earlier body of philosophical thought that is generally referred to (and much argued about in our educational system today) as secularism. In Kaunda's mind, however, I think humanism probably meant little more than placing a first and primary emphasis on the dignity of individual human beings, although there is certainly an African content to his writing that emphasizes the importance of the human sense of community in a very African way. While one gets this from reading his books, one also senses that, as with many philosophies, there are frequent problems of

inconsistencies and conflict between the theory and practice of humanism. But I think that as far as President Kaunda was concerned, then and now, his ideas of humanism are a very genuine and serious part of his outlook on life, which is probably what has made Kaunda so attractive to such a wide variety of people. It is a kind of sincerity of interest he appears to have in doing what he feels is best for the largest number of people, especially for the people of Zambia and, in a broader sense, Africa. The fact that these feelings may be highly subjective makes them no less sincere.

I believe that Kaunda's philosophy has made him see other sides of questions, and though he has very firm ideas on certain basic human problems, he has always had a willingness, I think, to sit down and talk to the other side. This is a very useful and healthy attribute to have for diplomacy, and it evidenced itself a number of times later in connection with negotiations on Southern Rhodesia and relationships with South Africa on the Namibia problem and similar issues.

As nearly everybody knows, Kaunda cries often during his public speeches and some other ceremonies, but I have no reason to believe that these expressions of emotion are not genuine, even when they seem in conflict or inconsistent with his failure to criticize acts by some of his supporters. He seems a genuinely emotional man.

Q: How did you and the Ambassador find access in general to Zambians, beginning with the President and throughout the government?

EDMONDSON: Well, in the first place we found--and I should put it more in terms of my own experience, but we discussed it very, very often--that the Zambians tended to be somewhat introverted and reserved with regard to foreigners of all kinds. It wasn't a particularly racial or cultural thing, and I later found during my time there that some Africans, African diplomats from other states, often had the same kind of experience with Zambians.

My last post had been in West Africa where there is a very outgoing society, a very extroverted society, and I found it interesting to make some cultural and political comparisons between that and Zambia. In Ghana, for instance, nonalignment had been a kind of extroverted nonalignment with everybody coming in. You could imagine somebody with their arms outstretched saying "come in, come in." One can always argue as to what treatment was accorded to those who were being invited to come, but that's a different issue. In the case of Zambia one had the feeling that those arms were outstretched with the palms facing outward. Everybody stay out, stay out. Perhaps that's too extreme, but the parallel that I drew was one between extroverted nonalignment and introverted nonalignment. In other words, in West Africa, I had found that they wanted the Americans in, they wanted the Soviets, they wanted the Chinese. In Zambia, on the other hand, while some of the typically good African hospitality existed as elsewhere in the continent, the Zambians seemed in many respects equally suspicious of the Soviets, the Chinese, the Americans, or the British. They still looked on the British with feelings of anti-colonialism, of course, yet in many respects they knew and admired the British and would refer to them as "the devil you know." So there was a great deal of respect for the British, but there was also a considerable amount of distrust going back to the colonial period.

If you go back even earlier in history, what I think you find is that the Zambians always seemed to be in the middle of crisscrossing migrations of people even before European colonists ever came. People were always coming into Zambia from somewhere else, and if you were already there, you got pushed and shoved around, all of which led to the development of a fairly healthy concern for not giving way to outsiders.

I may be putting too much into this, but I do believe that the Zambians had developed this kind of reserve toward outsiders, and that it was possibly reinforced, as they took over the reins of a new, independent government, with a concern that they find out how to do things themselves. They obviously looked particularly to the British for assistance and advice, but I think that you frequently ran into situations where they didn't want to be told how to do something. They wanted to find it out for themselves, and various anecdotes come to mind where normal presentations that a diplomat might make to get Zambian officials to understand and perhaps adopt a particular position on an international issue would be regarded with suspicion because they felt it was up to them to determine their own position without necessarily listening to somebody else.

Access was difficult at times because of this reserve or suspicion. I don't want to overemphasize the suspicion nor underemphasize the friendliness that you got from individual Zambians, particularly I think, from those who had traveled or gone to school abroad, of which there were very few in the early years, of course. [I believe much of this changed as Zambians became more experienced and confident in self-government.]

Q: Given what you have just said, did you and the Ambassador find that dialogue with the Zambians flowed rather freely, that there was a good understanding of the positions of the two countries when you discussed matters with them?

EDMONDSON: Well, I think there was a reasonable understanding. There was this reserve when it came to matters of direct interest internationally as well as bilaterally. But I think that the Zambians appreciated the US position of support for Zambia both before and, of course, after UDI. This included support for helping Zambia find ways to maintain itself in spite of sanctions against Southern Rhodesia. I think they saw this as genuine, as necessary to them, and helpful. This made access much easier on certain occasions. On the whole, I believe we had little difficulty in discussing international political issues with them, although they were at times very reserved about taking positions (especially ones of agreement with us) on any faraway matter that they thought could affect their nonalignment.

I can recall one instance of really good access. I happened to be Chargé at the time our former Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, G. Mennen (Soapy) Williams, came on a visit to Zambia. This made it possible to invite people who normally didn't go out very often to foreigners' homes to come see Governor Williams again. He had visited earlier--I believe it was about 1961--and became very well known in Zambia because it was in Lusaka, just as he was getting off the plane, that some white settler rushed up on the steps and socked him on the jaw. The reason for the attack was a speech Williams had made earlier in the trip expounding for the first time his policy slogan of "Africa for the Africans!" That certainly made him very popular with the Zambians, and the incident stuck in their minds. It established a relationship that helped

Americans in many ways by illustrating the sincerity of our anticolonialism and our support for African aspirations for self government and for economic development.

Q: There were other countries represented in Lusaka at the time, most particularly the British. How large was the diplomatic corps then and were there interests on the part of other countries besides the British?

EDMONDSON: Yes, the British had by far the largest mission, but all of the other diplomatic missions were limited to 25 people on the staff. I can recall that there were Germans, French, Chinese. The Israelis were prominent in assisting Zambia at the time. And the Russians, of course, had a fairly good sized diplomatic mission. I'd have to go back and check our diplomatic list at the time, but the diplomatic corps was much larger, for instance, than you would find in South Africa today.

Q: How did you find our relations with the British?

EDMONDSON: Our relationships with the British were extremely good and close. We had regular consultations with them. We worked cooperatively on trying to find ways to assist Zambia in overcoming the problems of sanctions against Southern Rhodesia. There were times when each party probably felt the other could do more. I think the British did provide a lot of assistance to Zambia in terms of rolling stock on the railway originally, for trucks, for road maintenance and repairs, and a number of other things for preparing for UDI.

There was a period immediately before UDI--when it looked like it would in fact take place--that we began surveying almost every day of the week how many tons could be brought in by one of the various road routes--the Great East Road, the Great North Road, and so on--because it would affect very much what kinds of assistance would be needed. The British clearly led this effort by providing people to the Zambian government to work on their emergency preparations and by providing the financing. Other countries, of course, were interested, but particularly the United States and Canada.

When UDI in fact came and the consequent oil embargo resulted in the Southern Rhodesians cutting off any transit of oil up to Zambia, we had a real emergency. This was in the Fall--November and December--of 1965. And just after Christmas they began rationing petrol. I can remember vividly that for the first five week rationing period we had four imperial gallons of gasoline for each vehicle. That was very difficult. I happened to have had hepatitis right after Christmas and was home on my back for nearly a month, so I didn't suffer as much from the transport problem as others did. But in preparation for this I can remember buying bicycles for myself and my wife. Our two children already had bikes. And during the period that I was home, my wife had to do her shopping by bicycle to the nearest shopping center, which was about a mile or so away.

In the second period I think the ration went up to six imperial gallons for a month. Eventually it went to eight and then ten, and then we thought we were in very good straits when we finally got 14 imperial gallons a month. The reason the ration increased was that we, along with the British

and the Canadians, had instituted an airlift of gasoline and other petroleum products from different ports around.

Prior to that, I should say, we worked very hard in anticipation of the need for such an airlift. It had been discussed, but no one had made any commitments. AID had sent a man out (Ed Hogan, I think his name was). I think this was in early December, 1965 and I can remember working late nights figuring what would be necessary and working with the AID representative to get agreement on what the US would contribute. Eventually the decision was to use a Boeing 707 to bring products down from Kinshasa to Elisabethville and then have them brought over by rail from there to the Copperbelt and onward via the Zambian rail system. That was the American contribution, and with the 707's we could carry very large amounts of petroleum compared to the L100 or the C-130 military version of the Lockheed Hercules aircraft that was being used by the Canadians. Their air force C-130's were flying all the way to Lusaka from Kinshasa. And the British were using smaller civilian aircraft, the equivalent of a DC6B (the Britannia, I believe it was called), from Dar-es-Salaam to Lusaka. The increasing amount of oil supplies brought that way permitted an increase in rations throughout. During this same period, also, work had begun on a pipeline which eventually relieved the pressure on Zambia in the petroleum field.

Q: Is it fair to assume that from the time that you arrived in early 1965, much of Kaunda's preoccupations were with Southern African matters, particularly with Southern Rhodesia and the impending UDI?

EDMONDSON: Especially UDI, yes. He believed very strongly that the British should take firm military action in the event that UDI should occur, and the British more or less telegraphed their lack of punch by saying that they would not use military force. Prime Minister Wilson made that very clear, and I think removed any element of doubt that might have been entertained in Southern Rhodesia. It's my opinion, and certainly I think it was the opinion of the Zambians, that this simply encouraged the Southern Rhodesians to proceed with the UDI. There had been some question as to whether the loyalty of the Rhodesian military would have been to the crown or to the Southern Rhodesian government, but as it turned out, there wasn't any question and there wasn't any threat to the Smith regime.

The British did send in a squadron of jet fighters which were stationed in Lusaka for a while and would occasionally zoom over the city, but after--I've forgotten now--6 or 8 weeks perhaps, maybe less, the Zambians felt that the aircraft were doing no good, that they weren't a threat to the Rhodesians, and that they weren't particularly necessary for protection of Zambia. In fact, they may have suspected ulterior motives on the part of the British--of what sort are unclear, but in any event they asked the British to remove their jets and take them back to the UK, which they did.

I think it was during this period that one of the Zambian politicians who had served as the Zambian High Commissioner in London used the phrase "The Toothless Bulldog" to refer to the British for their lack of any action against the Southern Rhodesians.

We did get into a period where the British, some of the British officers at the High Commission at least, seemed to be critical of the Zambians for not participating more thoroughly in sanctions

themselves. This was because the Zambians continued to allow certain supplies to come in from Southern Rhodesia even after UDI and during the period of sanctions on petroleum and other products. The British argued that Zambia should apply sanctions more completely even though the Zambians felt this would only destroy their own economy. There was a continuing argument between them on this, and I must say I think we felt some sympathy for the Zambians. There was a certain feeling among people in Zambia that the British criticism of Zambia's failure to apply sanctions completely was designed in part to temper Zambian criticism of the lack of British action. In other words, there was some sort of an impasse, though cooperation did continue on bringing things into Zambia. Nonetheless, I think this period of charges and counter charges represented a low point in the Zambian-British relationship.

Q: The whole issue of UDI was primarily played out between the British and not only Zambia but, of course, the Southern Rhodesians, and to some extent the South Africans. You mentioned the US role in helping to supply or helping break the oil embargo. Did we have other roles to play during that period?

EDMONDSON: Basically, no. I think we did try to encourage a sensible attitude on the part of the Zambians in preserving their industry, the copper industry. We looked at different possibilities for assistance with the importation of coal--for instance, whether they could have used the coal fields in the southern province of Zambia, but the quality of coal there proved insufficient to substitute for the coal that had been received from the Wankie coal fields of Southern Rhodesia. Also, efforts were made to convert from the use of coal to the use of oil in the smelter furnaces up on the Copperbelt, so we were concerned with that sort of thing as well.

Also, we certainly continued our economic assistance in agriculture, education, things like government cost minimization, and participant training in various fields not necessarily related to the political situation or to UDI. We found that the Zambians were interested in what went on in South Africa, but at that time it still was fairly remote from their basic concern with what was going on in Southern Rhodesia.

Q: If my memory serves me right, there was at least one instance of a rather serious demonstration against the embassy. Do you recall that and could you tell us a little bit about it?

EDMONDSON: Yes, this goes back though to the domestic situation in the United States. You have to remember that we're now observing the two decades that have passed since the disturbances here in Washington in 1968. The assassination of Robert Kennedy was what triggered this particular demonstration. Beyond that, we were never quite sure just who stimulated the demonstration or why, except perhaps that it was just high emotion or the feeling that there were groups in the United States that were anti-black, and anti-African, and must somehow have been behind the assassination of Robert Kennedy. We were never able to establish how it began. The demonstration was small and rather short lived. There was a picture in the paper the next day of Ambassador Good and me standing out in front of the embassy, looking rather angry, confronting this group. But essentially it was peaceful; nothing was thrown. There were some shouts and placards, but it was simply a demonstration of concern at a situation that was clearly difficult in the United States at that time.

Q: Looking back now, Mr. Ambassador, what would you feel were your most satisfying accomplishments when you were in Zambia and conversely your greatest disappointment?

EDMONDSON: I think the accomplishments were mainly those of making a contribution to getting Zambia through this difficult period. Many, many people contributed to that, and it took a lot of work, a lot of coordination, consultations, and discussions with Zambians and British and other allies who were concerned. We spent a lot of late nights trying to get information back to Washington on what Zambian needs were, and while much of this would appear quite minute now--that is, the minutiae and details that we reported back--they were essential parts of a general effort to give the support that Zambia so much needed. The fact that this was of considerable help gave us a feeling of accomplishment.

Another accomplishment was the gradual improvement in our own situation as far as the embassy was concerned. We started out in a commercial building downtown--on the second floor of Chester House on Cairo Road--with the AID officers in another building and the CAMO office in a storefront location nearby, and a tiny garage-sized warehouse further away. These were not very good circumstances. I think my office was perhaps 8 feet by 10 feet at the most. During this period, we constructed a new building, a very pleasant building which, with subsequent additions, looks very nice today and seems to serve the embassy well. How great it was to move into that new building and have better offices! We persuaded President Kaunda to come and officially open the chancery, which pleased us very much. That too was an accomplishment. It was an accomplishment of many, many people. I think our administrative services also gradually improved, and we were able to institute useful internal guidelines and regulations.

I do recall when I first arrived going over to the little garage size warehouse and being taken aback by a great pile of supplies on the floor, completely mixed up and not properly accounted for. Although we had a great deal of difficulty establishing controls, we were able in time to improve them greatly. We improved our communications tremendously over this period. Obviously, rapid communications were important to the kind of work that we were doing, but when we started out, we had one communicator working in a miserable situation like a "black hole of Calcutta." When he had to use his incinerator, the smoke went around his whole communications center. In our new chancery, we had a fairly modern communication center that permitted us not only to transmit messages for ourselves, but occasionally to help the Zambians in emergencies--and I think maybe even the British a time or two. To me, that kind of improvement in our staff, our facilities, and our procedures represented a considerable accomplishment.

The last 7 months of my time there, I was Chargé because Ambassador Good decided to resign right after the November 1968 election. He wanted to go back to academic life and he didn't want to wait until a replacement came, so he left sometime in early December 1968, I believe it was, and his replacement, Oliver Troxel, was not named for several months. Troxel finally arrived either in late May or early June of 1969. There was quite a long period during which I was Chargé and had to deal with a number of matters that were routine, but important to our operations continuing--mostly little problems of aid, questions of post management and administrative operations, handling visitors, doing reporting, and of course, maintaining good

relations with the Zambian government. Doing so and doing so successfully was a rewarding personal accomplishment.

The period toward the end was at times tedious. We went through an election, I recall, and I had to do a fair amount of reporting. We did have a very small staff, and it required a lot of late evenings and hard work. But I can't, as I look back now, remember any major disappointments. It was a time of pretty steady achievement, I believe.

Q: One last question has to do with general every day living. Did you find living fairly pleasant? Were you able to get around the countryside and see much of Zambia?

EDMONDSON: I got to see a lot in some respects, but not nearly as much as I would have liked, because of the constant preoccupation we had with operational matters--certainly during the airlift--and we couldn't travel during that period. But I did get over to the eastern province and into Malawi, down as far as Blantyre, on one trip. On one occasion that is memorable to me still, Ambassador Good and I traveled with our families to see the Kuomboka, the annual ceremony at which the paramount chief, or Litunga, of the Barotse tribal group (in which the Lozi are the main tribe), goes by barge from his winter capital on the inundated flood plain of the upper Zambezi to his summer village headquarters on higher ground, some miles away. A very interesting ceremony.

I got up to the Copperbelt a couple of times, and down to Livingstone to see the falls, as well as to see people in the Livingstone area and Kariba--that sort of thing. But there just wasn't time to get to many of the areas, or to do a lot of the business traveling one would normally do.

Q: Was living in Lusaka reasonably comfortable?

EDMONDSON: Yes, living was comfortable. Zambia has a delightful climate really. Perhaps only one month of the year, October, is terribly hot. People often called it the suicide month, but if you come from the Washington area or from Nebraska as I did, you didn't find it too bad. It's a dry heat and while indeed it was hot, it was still very pleasant and fairly cool in the evenings. And the cold season very rarely would get down to freezing, perhaps a frost occasionally. But most of the year is the kind of weather where people can play golf or tennis, and it's a good climate for family life. We had a good school situation at that time. I was in Zambia just earlier this year and found that it's still a very pleasant place to live, as far as climate and geography go. If one can get supplies, especially food and other necessities, it can be very pleasant.

We had two different houses while I was there. One was a house designed and built by a South African who used a voortrekker theme of wagon wheels shapes, cathedral type windows, and a round central lounge. It looked rather interesting from the outside. It was very, very nice for large scale entertaining. The bedrooms were comfortable, but the living room was a little bit large to enjoy yourself in just as a family. Then we moved after two years to the former Ghanaian High Commissioner's house which we rented from the Ghanaians after they broke relations with Zambia. That was only about a block and a half from our new chancery. That was extremely pleasant, very comfortable.

EDWARD MARKS
Economic/Commercial Officer
Lusaka (1966-1969)

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

Q: 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. As the Federation had broken up, with the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the white settlers in Southern Rhodesia, the job was being changed into a one country - Zambia - economic officer.

That occurred in August, 1966, when, in fact, I was acting as the ConGen's communications officer, that is, code clerk. The ConGen had communicators, one male State Department communicator and one female CIA communicator. They were both young and unattached and were soon shacking up together. One day in July the CG called me into his office. He was jumping up and laughing himself silly. Between roars of laughter, he said, "Our two communicators have to get married and they can't wait to get married here in Luanda because there is a six-month waiting list and they cannot wait six months as she is pregnant. So they are going to go to South Africa and get married there."

This had been cleared with both headquarters but it would leave us without our classified telegraphic capability. At that time in history, we were using the five letter group system. That is, the cables went through the commercial telegraph system after we had run them through our code machines to put them into code, then into a second five letter group system. We did the same process in reverse for incoming classified messages. As our two communicators would be gone for several weeks I was given a quick course in how to run the code machine. For three days I filled the floor of the code room with telegraphic tape as I couldn't decode a message to save my life, until I discovered that the major problem was the irregular electrical system in town. I discovered that if I waited until lunchtime, when everybody in town went off to lunch, the electrical current stabilized and the code machines worked.

The second message I broke, after I figured that out how to do it, was a cable from the Department to the CG stating that Hank Cohen was going to have to leave his job in Lusaka as the Federation had broken up, and they needed a quick replacement. Hank had recommended me and the Bureau wanted to know what the CG thought about it. Since I was doing the coding and decoding I became part of the decision process and I thought it was a good idea as Luanda,

though lovely, was a little boring. So the CG said okay to the proposition and I left Luanda about a month later.

Q: Without the labor title.

MARKS: Yes, I did labor work as well, of course, but the job description no longer included regional reporting responsibilities or concerned only labor questions. I was directly replacing Hank, but the job was somewhat different.

Q: You were there from 1966-69. You said the Federation was breaking up, what was that?

MARKS: The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was a British colonial creation, very similar to the East African Community in East Africa. After setting up the East Africa Community (Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda) the British created the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, composed of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This had been done, I think, in the late thirties. There were three very different countries or colonies. Northern Rhodesia, later to become Zambia, was an administrative colony, with few settlers. It was rich because of the copper mines. Nyasaland, now Malawi, was the smallest country, heavily populated around the lake, and with good agriculture. Rhodesia was the richest with a large European settler community of about 600,000 at the time they struck for white-controlled independence. Rhodesia had been given internal self-government back in the twenties and actually had its own governmental structure, including military and police.

So, there was a very large group of white settlers which was long accustomed to internal self-government. With the movement towards independence and majority, that is African rule in the sixties, the African leaders in Nyasaland and Zambia were not interested in retaining the Federation, as it was evident that the Rhodesian whites had not intention of permitting majority rule. Also, although most of the wealth the wealth was created in Northern Rhodesia (the cooper mines), Southern Rhodesia lived off of it, or so the Africans thought. As the Zambians use to put it, the Federation was like a cow where the mouth was in Northern Rhodesia with the copper mines, but the stomach was in Southern Rhodesia. The African leaders in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were pushing for independence and a break up of the Federation. By 1964 or so, that had occurred and Southern Rhodesia's white dominated government under Ian Smith went for what they called a unilateral declaration of independence, claiming to base it on the United States model. The British government did not accept that, which produced the UDI crisis which went on for some years. It was in the middle of that development that I was transferred from Angola to Zambia, a year or so after Zambian independence.

Q: What was the situation at that time?

MARKS: I was directly transferred as second secretary, economic/commercial officer. Our embassy in Lusaka was a smallish new post having been in business only a couple of years. Nevertheless there was a lovely new chancery. Ambassador Robert Good was a political appointee, a youngish professor of political science in his early forties and very much a Kennedy man. He was an enthusiast for African independence and human rights. Our DCM [deputy chief of mission], Bill Edmondson, was a career FSO, who later became ambassador to South Africa

among other jobs. He became a close friend and was the epitome of the solid professional. He and Bob Good made a good team.

I was the only economic/commercial officer and, in fact, the only full time State Department reporting officer. In addition, there was a consular officer, good sized AID and USIA missions - for that size embassy - and the Agency, of course.

Zambia was an interesting place at that time. It was a large country geographically but not very heavily populated. It was not quite a settler colony, although there were European farmers and a fairly important commercial farming sector, and yet not quite a purely administrative colony. The major element in the economy were the two copper companies, British-owned although both had important South African involvement in finance and management.

At that time, Zambia was one of the three most important copper producing and exporting countries in the world, together with Zaire and Peru.

Geographically and because of its copper production, Zambia was an important component the Southern African railway net which covered most of central and all of southern Africa, and which extended from the east African ports of Mozambique and South Africa to the west African ports of Angola and Zaire. The breakup of the Federation and the reaction of many countries to the white settler declaration of independence by Southern Rhodesia created a serious problem for Zambia by isolating it in return, as its major rail and road links to the outside world ran through Rhodesia. At the same time, things became very bad in Zaire, still called Congo-Kinshasa at that time, so Zambia found its secondary links to the west were essentially cut off as well.

When I arrived in Lusaka, the country was in the midst of that problem. One of the ways in which it manifested itself was gas rationing; as a member of the diplomatic corps I got 10 gallons a month. The Zambia Government was pursuing two goals: (1) opposition to Rhodesian UDI and (2) attempting to open up transportation links to the north through Tanzania. That situation engendered all sorts of projects and programs, some of which we got involved in. Most notable of those was the Tanzam Highway (the hard surfacing of the road to Dar Es Salaam) which the U.S., the UK and a few others were sponsoring as an alternative to the Chinese Tanzam railway project - which the West viewed as the Chinese Communists attempt to take over Africa. Remember, this was High Cold War Period.

Q: What were you getting about Kaunda and how do we view him at that time?

MARKS: Kaunda was one of Africa's new leaders and therefore almost by definition an admirable person and in those days deserving of our help, for political if not ideological reasons. He modeled himself on Nyerere; not a military figure but rather a leader espousing social democratic views. He was not an extreme African nationalist, but was obviously focused on fostering a modern life for his people. He had one interesting political characteristic, different from most African leaders. Zambia did not have a single dominant tribe; and its people had mostly had migrated to the Zambian plateau only in the last two or three hundred years. Somebody once commented that the losers of the regional tribal wars all ended up in Zambia. One of Kaunda's political cards was that he was not a member of any of these local tribes but

came from people who lived in neighboring countries. As such, he had no tribal affiliation, and he certainly tried very hard to avoid tribal or ethnic politics.

Kaunda was one of the generation of African leaders later referred to as Africa's Big Men. In 1967 or so he followed Nyerere and Sekou Toure and some of the others by enunciating a formal philosophy. Kaunda called his Humanism which purported to be based on the needs of human beings. It was not a very rigorous doctrine, but it did include the sine qua non of all Third World political theory - the need for a command economic system for remedy the injustices of the colonial era and to produce economic development.

Actually, as I mentioned earlier, colonial economic systems were, by and large, command economies and the newly independent African governments were essentially just taking them over. They called themselves socialists and intended to keep the profits in the hands of the government and distribute them locally.

The major economic activity in Zambia was the copper industry, which was privately owned. However that ownership was not widely spread, and was closely allied with the colonial government. The European owned farms were private, but the agricultural sector was closely managed by government marketing boards. There was a country economic policy, although not formally called that, which was determined and managed by the colonial authorities in very close cooperation with large companies.

So Kaunda introduced his "Humanism" and proceeded to implement it by nationalizing the whole economy, including the copper mines.

Interestingly he tried to extend his influence internationally by sponsoring the creation of an international copper producers organization, to replicate what the what the oil producers had done. Soon after I arrived, Kaunda hosted a conference in Lusaka which included the world's major copper producing countries: Chile, Zaire, Peru but no Americans. Claiming that copper prices, along with other primary products, were being held down by monopolistic policies of the developed, rich West, they were there to create an international copper producer organization which would manage the production, marketing and pricing of copper for the benefit of the third world producers - just as the oil producers were doing. In the long run, this effort never worked out. Copper just did not appear to lend itself to this sort of approach, and then - too soon - Zambian and Zairian copper production began to decline due to management and investment problems. Copper prices went up and down, of course, over the course of years but not because of any influence of the copper producers cooperative.

Kaunda was generally viewed as a humanitarian African leader, certainly an African nationalist but not as ideologically militant as, for instance, a Sekou Toure. Americans were particularly taken by him. Kwame Nkrumah had started out well but had finally alienated even some of his most fervent admirers with his extravagance (political and financial). Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta turned out to be too "old fashioned" in a sense, refusing to go along with the conventional political and economic wisdom of the Third World, to earn the admiration of the Western political "groupies." Nyerere was everyone's favorite but his persistent and cheerful espousal of socialism (albeit "African socialism") caused heartburn in some circles. Kaunda appeared to have

all of Nyerere's good traits without the socialistic label; "humanism" sounded pretty good even if no-one could figure out exactly what it meant. Also, he was the guy out in front, opposed to the racist Rhodesian regime. All in all, he appeared to be the most promising African social democratic leaders on the scene.

Also a new political dividing line was appearing. Rhodesia, going independent as a white ruled country, was backed by South Africa and the Portuguese "overseas provinces of Angola and Mozambique, creating the southern racist redoubt. Facing it were the so-called "Front Line States": Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania, with Zambia as the spearpoint. Although this was a very prominent position for Kaunda and Zambia, it was also a difficult one, especially in economic terms. With the cutting of the traditional transportation and communication links south, Kaunda had to find new access to the outside world in order to export his copper, and bring in necessary imports such as fuel and spare parts.

Much of this "conflict" took place in public discourse; there was a sort of war of words. and it was interesting to watch Kaunda perform. He had an interesting little trick which caused some of us to be slightly cynical. Often at an emotional point in a speech Kaunda would bring to get moist eyes, and he would pull a handkerchief out of the sleeve of his safari type jacket. Some Westerners cried with him while some just got a little cynical. But, this was a long time ago. He has since been kicked out of office in an election, and he was very far from being a bad man although his performance in office was mixed. His centralized command economic system was pretty much a failure, but he never became a serious tyrant. As I said, he was eventually removed from office by election - which is not that common a development in Africa.

Zambia, as I noted, was a newly independent ex-British colony. There was white (or as they said European) farmer and business community but the largest number of Europeans were in the copper companies. This meant that there was a large European technical and skilled worker class, unusual in Africa except for South Africa. Because of this group, the society had a little more openly racist tone than Kenya, which was bad enough.

Q: How did you deal with that type of society?

MARKS: Oh, it wasn't too difficult. The colonial social structure was still somewhat in evidence up north in the mining towns. But in the capital, in Lusaka, after all, independence had occurred, Africans were holding the ministerial positions, and era of racial distinctions and the local version of apartheid were over. Of course, in some back rooms and at some dinner parties racist remarks were passed but, basically the colonial social structure was dead, and the society was integrated. Much social life was among expatriates, mostly European despite persistent efforts to invite Africans. Essentially, racist attitudes were not a major problem. As I said, as an embassy we were reaching out actively to Africans, but it was not easy for a number of reasons. The Africans themselves had problems in mixing in the manner we were used to ...lack of attitudes, lack of common background, etc. A lot of the intercourse was a bit forced, artificial and formal. I had less official contact with Africans than those on the political side as the economic/commercial officer. There just were not yet many black people in the commercial sector or even in the economic departments of the government. I did hire and was training an African commercial assistant and that was a bit of a breakthrough. He eventually went into

private business, in fact, but I was still largely dealing with expatriates.

Actually, Africans probably had as much of a problem as we did. They were only in their third or fourth year of taking over a society and government which had been completely in the hands of white expatriates (and some Indian middlemen). There was only a comparatively small group of Africans with education and experience commensurate with the responsibilities they were now assuming - and that is without including the problems associated with the Rhodesian situation.

Q: Today is September 13, 1996. Ed, do you want to start off?

MARKS: When I arrived in Lusaka in the fall of 1966, it was the decade of the independent movement in Africa, but the first thrust of independence was over. The winds of change had passed, except in Southern Africa. Most of the continent was now composed of independent African states, including Zambia. So we were in the second stage of the decolonization experience where there were two basic challenges to be faced by the new governments. Being new, there were all the problems of now setting up African governments to run independent states. These governments now had to face the apartheid system in Southern Africa which affronted them morally and politically. This especially true for the so-called frontline states: Tanzania, Zaire, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana. Zambia and Tanzania were the key players, as Malawi and Botswana were in difficult geographic situations vis-a-vis the white-ruled states, and Zaire was its usual self-serving self.

And, all of this was taking place in the wider context of the Cold War. While we were terribly enamored of the emancipation of African countries from colonial rule for its own sake, we could never forget that Africa was also one of the regions in which the Cold War competition was taking place. The Soviets were at that time aggressively involved in expanding their presence and influence in Africa, as were the Chinese. How to separate our concern for Africa from our concern for the so-called Communist threat is an interesting question; one we did not spend a great deal of time on at the time. Most of us knew, of course, that the two were very intimately connected - although the civil rights movement in the U.S. and the resulting growth of interest in Africa by African Americans was becoming an increasingly important motivating factor in U.S. foreign policy in Africa.

This was also a period when the Non-Aligned Movement was becoming very prominent. So there was a three-sided political competition going on in Africa: The West, including the former colonial powers; the Communist Bloc; and the Non-Aligned. The situation became even more complicated as it became clear even to the most passionate Cold Warriors that the Chinese and Russians really were in competition with each other and that therefore the Communist Bloc was not really unified. The Chinese were at their height of their puritanical period the Chinese mission people in Lusaka ran around in their little Mao hats, waving their little red Mao books - a copy of which I still have. Lusaka, like many capital cities in the third World, was abuzz with these developments and we in the embassy had a sense of being in the front lines of American foreign policy amid great events of history.

Q: In a way it sounds like a great place for an Evelyn Waugh to write a comic novel about diplomatic life.

MARKS: He had already written those comic novels in the thirties Black Mischief and Scoop. With some adjustment for the passage of time, these books are still very pertinent. Nevertheless, there was that sense of being on the front line of the Cold War and of history in the making. I am not sure nowadays that we were not fooling ourselves; it is true that the '60s was an eventful historic period, but Africa may have been a marginal part of that story, but it was still invigorating at the time.

Q: Almost any Foreign Service officer interested in the area would go out with a certain sense of idealism. Did you find yourself coming up with a solid dose of reality?

MARKS: The short answer is yes, very much so. But I have to try to separate that reaction, which I acknowledge, from the fact that I never was a romantic or unrestrained idealist. I remember debates in Lusaka with those of a more idealist bent. They would argue that Nairobi and even smaller Lusaka were terrible places, corrupt big cities and that it was only in the country, in the villages, that you would find the real African. I thought that was a bunch of bull, that from what I could gather everyone the villages was trying to get into town. In retrospect, of course, the idealists were right from one perspective - that the traditional African could only be found in the village. However that observation was true of all peoples, and in a sense it was a trivial observation. People change with events and developments, and of course the inhabitants of cities were different than the country folk. However I felt it was patronizing for outsiders to bemoan the loss of someone else's "traditional values."

Q: In a way you were running against a certain wave. I remember I was in INR covering Africa at the time. I never served in Africa. I remember there were real true believers and I was kind of looking and thought I would go to the Balkans instead. Could you talk about this in an attempt to capture the feelings of the time?

MARKS: I think you are quite right, there were a lot of what some of us called "true believers." By that was meant that, essentially, the type of Westerner, especially American, interested in Africa were pretty much on the liberal, or in European terms left, side of the political spectrum. Conservative folk were not, by and large, terribly interested in Africa. A baseline was the question of decolonization with conservatives more interested in the European metropolitan countries and their role in Europe and the Cold War than in their African colonies. Therefore such conservatives were sympathetic to the arguments about the benefits of the colonial experience, the time necessary to be able to handle independence, etc. While not overtly racist position they were, of course, just that. Liberals, on the other hand, assumed the right of Africans to become independent. Arguments were made about the threat of growing Communist influence if we in the West did not support the independence movement, but African sympathizers were really committed without the Cold War argument. Certainly I agreed with that position, thought it was self-evidently true.

But there was another position which went beyond the question of African independence. It was a version of Rousseauian utopianism about the concept of the "Noble Savage" - uncorrupted by

modern civilization. Because Africans were uncorrupted they were better. Urbanization corrupted civilization. (No one ever put it quite so baldly of course). However since independence required government and an economy, the better choice was that of the Left, of some form of socialism. The Westerners who were interested in Africa, being of the Left themselves, therefore supported the command economy instincts of the new African leadership. There was a lot of back scratching going on; Western intellectuals supported African independence and in turn received African commitment to Leftist (or Liberal) policies. In some respects, Africa became the laboratory for European economic and social policies. Because of this relationship, new African governments were excused for all sorts of behavior which would never have been tolerated in Europe or the U.S. It was a patronizing attitude stemming from the view of Africans as "Noble Savages" maltreated by evil Europeans. There was a good deal of that attitude in the African Bureau and even more so among journalists and academics.

Q: I have the feeling that one, at least during Soapy Williams' time and somewhat there after, would almost have to pull one's punches when they were reporting from some of these places.

MARKS: Yes, to some degree although the reality of colonial policy and of the southern European states plus the Civil Rights developments in the U.S. posed such clear-cut choices that it was not difficult. The shortfalls of African governance did not begin to become obvious until later. Certainly our ambassador in Lusaka was very much one of the true believers. Nevertheless, debate in the embassy was constant. While he was certainly a very big Kaunda fan, I do not remember any sense of being censored in any way. We had differences of view and interpretation, but there is nothing new about that, and the Ambassador was open to discussion and difference of opinion. Also, I have always prided myself on being a disciplined professional, not a free spirit. Ultimately the ambassador's signature at the bottom of the message and he has a right, within pretty broad limits, to determine what is said. I do not find that offensive. It was his post and as long as there was free and open debate within the mission, I had no complaint. In any case, I don't remember any significant differences of opinion, only nuanced differences of tone.

Q: Let us turn to the economic developments that were going on there. First, the competition of the Soviets and the Chinese and the Chinese railway there, but also the Soviet reaction and how this was played out from our point of view.

MARKS: The political context was fairly clear at that point; the Central African Federation had broken up, its constituent parts were now independent countries although one was still white-ruled, and Zambia took on the so-called Front Line against apartheid southern Africa. From an economic perspective, Zambia sat in the center of what was that Southern African economic structure which was based on copper production and an elaborate railway system which crossed Zambia as it linked the east and west coasts of central and southern Africa. Together Zambia and Zaire probably produced about 40 percent of the world's copper. Actually they share the same copper deposit with the border of the two countries running right through the middle of the deposit. The transportation structure east and south was now cut because of Rhodesia and UDI, while the outlets east through Zaire and Angola were not reliable. Of course, Zambia's imports as well as its exports dependent on these route, so the cutting of these links created a form of de facto blockade for Zambia. The Zambians were faced with serious problems; how do they get their copper out now that their traditional transport links to the south were broken and the

alternative links to the east were not very reliable, and how do they get necessary imports - especially fuel to run the modern economy including the cooper mines - in. (This was the period of the Simba rebellion in the Congo, and the attempted break-away of Katanga).

Meanwhile the Soviets were busy trying to cultivate the Africans by playing on the inevitable anti-colonial reactions of the new governments. The Chinese as well were present, trumpeting Mao's Great Leap Forward. At first we thought of them as part of the Russian-led Communist bloc but it became increasingly obvious that they were playing their own game in competition with the Soviets for influence. Whether or not the Chinese were allied with the Soviets, their activities in East and Central Africa really shook up the head offices of the Western powers. All of a sudden Chinese diplomats and technicians were all over Africa; they were going to build a railway from Dar Es Salaam to Zambia by the use of thousands of thousands of coolies (half of whom the more extreme observers said would be intelligence agents.)

Q: I remember seeing a cartoon about that time in the New Yorker showing two very obvious cannibals talking to each other. One was saying, "I like Chinese technicians, but the trouble is a half an hour later I am still hungry."

MARKS: Yes, there was a lot of those sorts of jokes at that time. In fact, an agreement was signed and work began. Nyerere of Tanzania loved this because it was so very Third World; the Chinese were playing a very big role in the Non-Aligned Movement. No one else was willing to build the railway, certainly no one in the West, and the next thing you knew hundreds and even thousands Chinese showed up in Dar-Es Salaam and started building a railway - the Tanzam Railway.

Well, the West got very excited. In addition to the ideological interest in supporting African independence, as I discussed earlier, which include the felt need to demonstrate one's bona fides in the anti-apartheid fight by supporting the front line states and especially Zambia, there was now the competition with the Communists - both varieties. Obviously different people on our side had different mixes of motivations, but these different concerns came together in a bundle which we could all accept. Africanists could concentrate on supporting Kaunda and his new government, anti-racists and idealists could fight against apartheid Rhodesia and South Africa, and Cold Warriors in the CIA and the Department of Defense could focus on stopping the Communist tide.

Before I arrived in Lusaka in 1966, the idea for a Western counter to the Chinese railway offer had been developed, the Tanzam Highway, that is Western financing and technical assistance to provide a hard tarmac surface for the excising by limited and undependable dirt road which ran from Da Es Salaam across Tanzania to Zambia. The West floated a lot of economic arguments that the Chinese railway was a bad idea, and argued that tarmacking the highway would be quicker and more cost efficient. When fully tarmacked, it could be used in all weather conditions to support a fleet of heavy trucks to bring in fuel and carry out copper. We pushed ahead with this idea.

Q: On the face of it, it seems to me a railroad is designed to do that, and bringing out ore in trucks strikes me not being a very efficient way of doing it.

MARKS: Possibly, but first you have to build the railway from scratch which is very expensive. Secondly, it would take a lot longer to do and the country was in serious difficulties at the moment. Therefore the argument we used was that the road could be significantly improved faster and cheaper. From our point of view, of course, the key point was that the road would be ours and could pre-empt the Chinese invasion." Clearly the politics of the Cold War was driving our interest.

Meanwhile, the country was being cut off from its supplies of fuel and unable to export its copper and was suffering. To help, the U.S. and the UK set up an airlift, cargo planes - mostly C-130s I believe - flying from the Zambian copperbelt to Dar Es Salaam and I believe, some to Kinshasa. They brought in rubber containers of fuel and flew out copper on pallets. Talk about expensive! There was also some stuff dribbling in and out through the Congo and Tanzania on the dirt road. None of this was very economical, but it demonstrated political support for this brave and beleaguered African country facing up to the apartheid regime to the south. It was also very dramatic and I think we all got a charge out of it. The airlift went on for about a year, ending sometime in 1967.

Q: Were there any efforts made at this time to work with the Ian Smith regime? Sometimes you can have countries that are absolutely at loggerheads but deals are made.

MARKS: No, this was pretty much a black and white situation: good versus evil. Remember, the British government, our closest allies, had declared that the white Rhodesians were traitors and all the Black Africans were emotionally engaged. However, the British themselves were in touch with the rebel regime, in a series of tortuous and complicated constitutional conferences and diplomatic maneuverings in an effort to bring about a resolution of the problem by a negotiated return to legality. An interesting sidelight to this was the reaction of some American conservatives who likened the Rhodesian situation to the American Declaration of Independence. George Kennan, for instance, wrote a number of articles doing this.

Q: George Kennan has always been an elitist. I used to work for him at one time in Belgrade and when I started this oral history program I asked him to endorse it and he said essentially, the only good oral history program is one where you interview the right people. In other words, a very carefully selected group of people.

MARKS: Yes, he was actually a defender of Ian Smith and the White Rhodesian move. As I said, the British were attempting to work out a negotiated independence for Rhodesia which would return them to British authority and to legality and then on to an independence agreement which would protect the African majority and give them a share of the government. Those meetings went on and on and never really came to anything.

Q: So, there was no contact.

MARKS: Western diplomats and officials were even prohibited by their governments from going to or through Rhodesia at all, even for mere transport or tourism. None of us at the embassy ever went into Rhodesia - we would go to the border and go as far as half-way across the bridge to

look at the Livingstone Falls. There was no longer any significant trade across the border. The idea of building a hard surface road continued to be discussed among potential Western donors, focusing on how many kilometers each participant would build. The U.S. for quite a while did not actually commit itself to participating in this project, although the African Bureau was very enthusiastic. The problems were funds and a general lack of interest at home. We hadn't yet committed ourselves when Vice President Hubert Humphrey announced he was making a trip to Africa.

Q: When was this?

MARKS: I think in 1967. He announced a big trip to tour Africa and there was the usual fight over where he would go, which capitals he would visit. Certainly our ambassador, Robert Good, argued he must visit Zambia to show the U.S. flag in support of African nationalism, show moral support for a front line state and opposition to apartheid, and demonstrate moral and political support for a moderate African leader. The decision was eventually made that he would stop in Lusaka, although it turned out to be only a four and a half hour airport stop. It wasn't much more than a touch and go, but it enabled the Vice President to drive into town, lunch with Kenneth Kaunda, and make a speech.

The next big question for Embassy Lusaka was what would the VP say and do while he was in Lusaka? Presidents and Vice Presidents do not like to make public appearances in foreign countries and not say something of news notice. I don't remember where the idea came from but someone came up with the brilliant bureaucratic suggestion that the VP could announce a U.S. government decision to finance a significant section of the Tanzam highway - three hundred kilometers I believe. All of a sudden the bureaucratic objections to the funding were overcome and the financing was approved. The Vice President duly arrived, made a press statement supporting African nationalism and independence and announcing our contribution to the Tanzam Highway as evidence of our commitment. From then we started referring to the highway - informally and in-house - as the Hubert Humphrey highway. I believe the Economist picked up that term (possibly from me as I was quite close to the Economist stringer in Lusaka) and used it.

Q: What was your impression of the highway at that time? Do you think it made sense?

MARKS: It made sense given the context we were in: competition with the Soviet Bloc and/or the Chinese for influence; supporting independence for majority-rule African governments; opposing apartheid principals of South Africa. If we were opposed to Rhodesian racist independence and Southern African apartheid as elements of U.S. foreign policy, then yes, it was justified. But these are political arguments, not economic development, and that brings us to the long-standing argument of whether economic aid funds are primarily political or developmental. The economic support of Zambia can be easily justified as the use of development money in support of American foreign policy and objectives as identified by the administration.

Most of the rest of our economic assistance programs in Zambia at the time, as in most other African countries, had a more obvious development character - education, agriculture, etc. The Tanzam Highway was more overtly political, but certainly one could raise the very pertinent short term question of how was this country going to survive if it couldn't import or export, and

if it couldn't survive then long-term development concerns were irrelevant.

In retrospect, I would describe much of our economic assistance at that time and in that place, as a form of trauma medicine - the economic equivalent to what goes in a hospital emergency center. Yes, it was very political but its purpose was to assist newly independent governments to take hold, to make the transition to independence. Long-term economic development concerns were and are important, but had to take second place for the moment. This sort of assistance could also be justified as short term humanitarian assistance for a friendly country in extremis for reasons not its own fault. As the years went by our economic assistance continued to be largely politically motivated and we never did figure out an effective economic development policy in Africa - USAID experts notwithstanding.

Q: What were the Soviets doing at this time?

MARKS: Basically they were stomping around with small check books and soft words. They presented themselves as the alternative to the old colonial powers, expressed sympathy for the new regimes, offered an alternative development model, and some military training and academic scholarships. And, of course, lots of intelligence activities and subversion - or so our CIA colleagues kept telling us. Essentially the Soviets encouraged the Zambian instinct to participate in the Non-Aligned movement, which was pretty much anti-Western in orientation. It was difficult for some of us to figure out why the Soviets should, after all what were the connections to any Soviet national interest? But we put it down to the exhilaration of the global competition - even more than we were. As I said, their assistance in Zambia at least was little more than a small amount of economic assistance plus political support and hand holding.

Of course, our general policy towards them was very similar - a lot of tea and sympathy: for their independence, their aspirations, and for their opposition to the Rhodesians and South Africans. General political and rhetorical support plus and a certain amount of tea in the form economic assistance, scholarships and help with the Tanzania highway. Of course, our opposition to Rhodesian UDI was very important. I would characterize the Soviet policy as pretty much the same in approach, but the amount of tea they could provide was limited and the political assistance with the southern African situation much less - although their rhetoric more outspoken. On the other hand, their direct support to the South African independence movement - the ANC [African National Congress] - was greatly appreciated all over Africa.

Apart from their inability to be very generous in economic terms, their main problem was their inability to [provide] much concrete assistance in dealing with the Rhodesians and the South Africans - apart from covert assistance on a low level. It was felt by the Africans, I think rightfully, that it was only the West which could eventually help them the most. The British still had a relationship in Rhodesia, still claimed responsibility for Rhodesia, and had the levers and the entree that could help resolve the problems, and eventually did. The Soviets could not offer any of that and they were not in a position to offer serious financial or military assistance. We probably overplayed the Communist threat. However with the Chinese bustling up to the table with some chips - that is, the railway - we became doubly excited.

Q: How had this whole development worked by the time you left?

MARKS: I left Zambia at the end of 1969. By then, the airlift had been over for some time. Traffic was moving regularly in both directions over the Tanzam road - now hard-surfaced although it wasn't completely finished. The Tanzam railway was still under construction and had not yet reached Zambia. There were lots of stories about the Chinese work gangs operating in the African bush. The political situation in and with Rhodesia had not been resolved. Kaunda had begun extensive reform programs in both the political and economic sectors in an effort to restructure his country into an independent, African majority ruled country.

Kaunda had also formulated and enunciated a philosophy called Humanism which, as you might imagine, was long on general statements and very short on specifics, but it contained a lot about the right of the individual human being. At the same time he was moving more slowly towards a one party system, but in a gentle way. On the economic side he had moved much faster, nationalizing much of the economy. The copper companies, of course, but also much of the private sector. There is an interesting aspect to this development, which was not uncommon in Africa. However there was a very special role played by a local Greek businessman. To some degree the local Greek community played "outcast elite" role of the small merchant; the role played by Indians in East Africa and the Lebanese in West Africa. (I later discovered that the Greeks and a even more important a community Sephardic Jews from Rhodes had performed the same economic function in the Congo.) One member of this community had been a supporter of Kaunda in the early days of the freedom struggle in the 1950s; lending Kaunda money, sympathy, and presumably advice. After independence this man became prominent as Kaunda's economic advisor although he did not hold a government position. It was under his guidance that Kaunda implemented a bureaucratization of the whole monetary economy: everything down to the Lusaka supermarkets was organized into a collection of bureaucratic bodies which were in turn integrated into a single national commercial company, government owned. This Greek merchant became the head of it. He appeared to be doing very well out of this arrangement personally, although we had not proof of it. Needless to say, the British expatriates were scathing about this man; his motivations, his honesty, and his alleged profits.

It was difficult to tell how well - or badly - things were going as the country was still operation on the momentum and investment of the colonial period. We could begin to see the beginning of disinvestment in the copper industry, and some nervousness among the commercial farmers (largely British or Boer) although their property had not yet been touched. Kaunda had high hopes for his international copper producers organization, hopes which later turned out to be illusory, but he was essentially focused on the struggle with white-ruled Rhodesia.

Q: What were we reporting?

MARKS: Our economic reporting, done largely by me, was quite neutral. Our political reporting was sympathetic to Kaunda and his government but not, I believe, uncritical despite my characterization of our ambassador as a very liberal supporter. After all, the policy of the United States government was to look with a favorable eye on these developments in Africa. I personally felt that there was an underlining stratum of patronization in that attitude; especially in the willingness to accept command or centralized economic theory and practice for these new countries although we would not do so for ourselves. But, to be fair, many of the development

theorists were in support of the command economic approach to development as well; arguing that you needed to force-feed development under government planning and control. This was, after all, the period when the French were touting their program and centralized planning.

In a sense we were caught between two paradigms. One was the Cold War, and the consequent policy priority to the competition with the Soviets which led to currying favor with the newly independent countries. The other was the concern for economic development of the Third World (The South or The Poor Countries) and the conventional wisdom of most economists and development experts at the time that some form of centralized economic management was necessary.

With regard to the first consideration, some of us were more fervent Cold Warriors than others but by and large the USG was out there competing - President Kennedy's "do not ask what your country can do for you..." was in everyone's mind. Some of us, I will say, were less than fully enthusiastic about the virtue of centralized planning and nationalization that was all the rage and being undertaken by most newly independent governments. But the problem with opposing that view was that there no acceptable, reputable theory that would argue the contrary - that centralized planning and nationalization was poor development theory and practice. Since all of these new governments were fervently touting centralized planning opposition to that approach tended to place you in the pro-exploitative capitalist camp, i.e. the white settlers.

So, we tended to go along with African political attitudes a bit more than we probably should have done. But, I have a distinct memory that we did raise some of these concerns in our reporting. We were concerned, certainly, and discussed extensively the complex transition problems of a complicated industry like copper which is heavily dependent on Western technology and investment. The obvious key question was how to manage the transition so that it produced wealth for the new independent African country and its African population without killing the golden goose. Unfortunately, this is which is exactly what happened.

Nevertheless from our foreign policy perspective, at least in the short run, we as an Embassy and a government did not do too badly - if one accepts the legitimacy of the Cold War as a foreign policy priority and the tactical needs which arise from that assumption. We resisted Bloc expansionism reasonably successfully. You asked earlier whether the Tanzam highway was a good development program or good project and I still believe that it served both U.S. and Zambian needs of the time. Whether in the long run, and more particularly in terms of African development, we were successful I would have to note that the history of Africa in the past thirty years had been pretty depressing. On the other hand, I don't want to make the assumption what we did or did not do may have been the crucial determinant in that recent history. Africa may have followed the path it has followed regardless of what we did.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover in Lusaka?

MARKS: Well, there was the charming story about the visit to Zambia of Senator Brook, our black senator, from Massachusetts. A delightful gentleman, interested, of course, in Africa. In 1967 or 1968, an elaborate trip around Africa was arranged for him, heavily promoted by the Administration for obvious reasons. When he came to Zambia the Ambassador a big reception in

the Senator's honor as part of his program. During that party, a senior African minister commented to one of the Embassy staff that while the party was quite nice, he was interested in meeting our Negro senator. "Where is he, I don't see him." Despite repeated efforts to point out the Senator, who after all was not very dark, the Minister kept repeating "Where, where?" Looking right at a small group surrounding the Senator, the Minister said "Which one in the group? I don't see him." All in all, Senator Brook's success was modest, but it was a good PR effort. Again, this was the sort of thing being done at that time.

Finally you asked about my professional development in my Zambian tour. Lusaka was my first full time reporting job and, in fact, I was the only full time State Department reporting officer at post. I had excellent supervisors in the DCM and the Ambassador. Both were intelligent and open-minded but different in style and approach. The Ambassador a liberal arts academic while the DCM was a pure professional - balanced, solid, and a sympathetic supervisor. I was still having trouble with my drafting, not having been well trained in writing, and he did a lot of work with me. Being the only reporting officer and the head of a section I was involved in setting section priorities, developing contacts and getting information out of people. It was also my first exposure to a real country team, albeit a small one, as the Mission included the CIA, AID, and USIS. Professionally it was good solid professional work and good experience.

ARTHUR T. TIENKEN
Deputy Chief of Mission
Lusaka (1969-1972)

Ambassador Arthur T. Tienken entered the Foreign Service in 1949 after serving in the U.S. Army and graduating from Princeton University. His career included assignments in Zaire, Washington, DC, Zambia, Addis Ababa, and an ambassadorship to Gabon. Ambassador Tienken was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: Well, then you served as deputy chief of mission in Lusaka from 1969 to 1972. Could you explain where Lusaka is, and what was the situation there?

TIENKEN: Lusaka is the capital of Zambia, former Northern Rhodesia, which as it happened was only 375 miles south of Elisabethville. It is in Central Africa.

Zambia's chief economic interest was also copper. Northern Zambia was the Copper Belt. We were very much interested in that as well. But we were more interested, or at least as much interested, in developments south of Zambia which had to do with what was then Southern Rhodesia; Ian Smith's efforts to establish an independent Rhodesia and our relationships as far as that was concerned; and our relations further south than that in South Africa. So a good deal of the time of my then boss, Oliver Troxel...

Q: Was he career?

TIENKEN: He was career, and I guess maybe one of the smartest officers I ever knew.

A good deal of the time was spent evaluating our position with regard to the developments in Rhodesia and Zambian opposition to it because they were very much opposed to it. We were not quite as much in line with Zambian thinking in regard to the Southern African problem as we later became. And so while Troxel had a number of opportunities to discuss the Southern African problem with Kenneth Kaunda, who then and now is president of Zambia, we were perceived as being not as sympathetic as we should be to black African perceptions of developments in Rhodesia.

Q: How did you feel about relations with South Africa at that time? I mean, this is something you dealt with. You had private feelings as well as the official policy. Did you feel we were doing it right, wrong?

TIENKEN: That was hard to say because we were concentrating more on the Rhodesian problem rather than the South African problem. Apartheid, of course, was already a long-established problem, and there we had no difference with the Zambians, although I suspect now and then the Zambians didn't think we were as strongly opposed to it as we should have been. But on that score, we were more or less on the same wavelength as the Zambians.

Lusaka harbored, and I guess still does, a whole series of what were called freedom fighters in those days including the ANC, the African National Congress. And we maintained sort of discreet relations with those people, although to be officially associated was not then American policy. But we didn't provide the kind of support for any of those organizations that the Zambians thought we ought to be doing. We rather limited it to just talking with them.

And there were a whole bunch of them. There were two Rhodesian freedom fighter groups. There were Mozambican. There was SWAPO--SWAPO being the Southwest African Political Organization that you still here about today. And the South African, the ANC, the African National Congress. That took up a fair amount of time of one of our officers. And when we got certain visitors from Washington who invariably wanted to talk to these people, we could manage to arrange that. But we didn't go beyond that in those days.

Q: You say we are involved. What was our attitude, and what were you doing as regarding the Southern Rhodesian problem? This is during the time of--what was it called?

TIENKEN: UDI.

Q: UDI, yes.

TIENKEN: Unilateral Declaration Independence.

Q: On the part of the white minority in that area.

TIENKEN: The last thing we wanted to see was what amounted to white dominance of Southern Rhodesia by a minority of something like one to twenty with the Africans having very little say

in how their future would be disposed of. And we were very much supportive of efforts to prevent Ian Smith from doing that.

We, however, looked to the British whose area of former colonialism Southern Rhodesia was, to take the lead. So to the extent we could, we supported whatever the British were trying to do, which was basically to keep some kind of balance, if you like, between the whites and the blacks in an effort to give the blacks much more responsibility and independence than they had. Again, it was a question of stability. This was a fairly volatile area. There was the South African problem itself, and we did not particularly want to see another white-dominated country growing up in Africa. So we tried to support, efforts to work out a multi-racial solution and then to curb Ian Smith and his efforts to establish basically a white-dominated Southern Rhodesia, Zimbabwe as it became.

Q: Did you have much contact with our people in Salisbury? We had a consulate general there.

TIENKEN: We still had a consulate general there. Not really. Physically, the Department did not wish to see official Americans going back and forth between Salisbury and Zambia, so you didn't get down to talk to our people in Salisbury. Of course, we exchanged telegrams and that sort of thing. But in terms of contacts, the answer was probably no.

Q: I was just wondering whether in your dealing with the African problem--we had a policy and it was perfectly justifiable in the moral terms with having the white minority leave this in a way it is comparable to how one can look at the South African situation even today. But at the same time, in realistic terms, you have seen places kind of fall apart. When the black majority, which would not have the training or the contacts or the experience to take over, were we sort of saying, "Okay, we should support this, but in our hearts we know that the place will essentially collapse"? I mean, was that the feeling, or did you have--

TIENKEN: No, we really didn't believe that. Yes, there had been difficulties with some of the new governments in Africa. The Congo was certainly one of them. Only a part, for example, of the black population actually took power. There were rebellions of all sorts in other parts of the same country. My recollection is that we thought perhaps that would be happen also in Rhodesia, but we still didn't think that the Rhodesian problem properly handled would lead to another Congo, if you like. As it turned out, as you know--it was after my time in Zambia--while there have been difficulties in Rhodesia and still to this day I guess there are some, you didn't have a copy of what happened in the Congo in Rhodesia. When it became Zimbabwe, Mugabe took over and managed the country reasonably well and still does as far as that goes. So I guess the answer to your question is no, we didn't really think the country would fall apart.

ARTHUR W. LEWIS
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Lusaka (1972-1974)

Ambassador Arthur W. Lewis was born in New York in 1926. After earning his bachelors degree from Dartmouth College in 1966 and his masters in 1968 he served in the United States Navy from 1943-1946. His career has included positions in Bucharest, Lusaka, and Addis Ababa. Ambassador Lewis was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in September 1989.

Q: Your next assignment was as Public Affairs Officer--the chief USIA person--at the U.S. Embassy in Lusaka, Zambia. How did this assignment come about?

LEWIS: During my graduate academic programs in sociology and government affairs, I became interested in economic development, particularly in Africa. That became my academic area of concentration. I wanted to serve in Africa. When the discussion began about my post-Bucharest assignment, I was informed that I would not be sent to Africa, but probably to Mexico City or London. There had been mounting complaints that blacks were being shunted off to Africa. Frankly, as I said, I wanted to go to Africa. It took a lot of pushing and strong urgings.

Q: Where were the complaints coming from? The African countries or the American black community?

LEWIS: I have never had an African tell me he would prefer to have a white diplomat, but on the other hand, I have heard from non-Africans that Africans have expressed a preference for more white American diplomats because black American were second-class citizens. I am not sure I believe that story. A lot of complaints were coming from the American black community who believed that black diplomats were being stereo-typed by being sent to Africa and not to Western Europe or the Far East. Although blacks did serve in Western Europe, in Eastern Europe, the Far East and Latin America, the bulks of blacks could be found serving in Africa.

I think that Personnel just had to find bodies for these new Embassies in Africa wherever they could. Many of the new bodies that were coming into the Foreign Service at that time were black Americans.

Q: Also of course there was the other side of the coin. Many Foreign Service officers, black and white, saw opportunities for advancement by being assigned to these new embassies in Africa. They could be "somebody" in a small Embassy whereas in a large Embassy, they might end up as "nobodies". Professionally, you could probably climb the ladder faster sticking to the African or Near East circuits than elsewhere. Of course, the outside doesn't always understand these Service features. Was Zambia itself your target or were just interested in Africa in general?

LEWIS: Actually, there was position in Tanzania that greatly interested me. Unfortunately, that did not work out and Zambia became the next possibility.

Q: You served in Lusaka from 1972-74. What was the situation in Zambia at that time?

LEWIS: Economically, the situation was that the government of Kenneth Kaunda had just nationalized fifty-one percent of the Anglo-American copper mines in the northern province. The government was beginning to flex its muscles in a number of ways with respect to central

planning and control of the economy. It was kind of socialism, even if it wasn't called that. It was not an ideological socialism in any sense of the term. It was that the Government felt more capable of managing large economic entities centrally. The benefits would be more wide-spread to the people through the government if the Government owned the controlling interests. At the time, the price of copper was fairly high; at the time, Zambia was--and still is--one of the major enemies of South Africa and its apartheid system. Zambia was still a multi-racial society. All in all, during the early 1970s, things were going quite well.

Q: Was there a tribalism problem?

LEWIS: At that time, not really. Certainly one understood that there were different ethnic groups and that some of them were more represented in government than others. But it was not really a problem.

Q: What were American interests in Zambia?

LEWIS: American interests were in the success of an independent Anglophobe State, the continued American access to the copper mines, the opportunity to show to the rest of black Africa that we were ready to sit down with any independent black African state to assist in its development.

Q: What was the Embassy saying internally about Kaunda?

LEWIS: We were observing how foolish he was to have nationalized the mines. He didn't have the skills to operate the mines. Certainly, we felt some sympathy for Zambia because in 1973, Southern Rhodesia declared its Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and closed its borders with Zambia. Zambia is a land-locked state and this action made it increasingly difficult for Zambia to ship its copper, forcing it to use Tanzania. The railroad that the Chinese Communists were building was not yet finished. So its was a very crucial and delicate time for Zambia. We certainly wanted to be of assistance. We were trying to help rebuild the railroad from Dar-es-Salaam that went through to Kitwe because that was the way fuel and other supplies came in. We had to fly fuel from Zaire and from Dar-es-Salaam for a while. Our relations with Zambia have always been somewhat tenuous because we always had the feeling that Kaunda didn't know what he was really doing or that exercised his authority well in centralizing the economy of the country. While it never showed in a large and clear way, there was always a feeling in the background that we shouldn't put too many of our eggs in that basket. I think that Kaunda and the Zambians knew this.

Q: Who was our Ambassador at that time?

LEWIS: When I first got there, Oliver Troxel was the Ambassador. When I came from Romania, Troxel wanted to interview me before agreeing to the appointment. I had to come from Bucharest to Lusaka for an interview. He left shortly after I arrived and was followed by Jean Wilkowski.

Q: How did Ambassador Wilkowski run her Embassy?

LEWIS: With an iron hand. It was clear who was the Ambassador--there was never any doubt about that. Jean was also clear with me that my contacts should not include ministerial level persons, which were hers. Unfortunately, I played tennis with the Foreign Minister and a number of other ministers and drank beer with them. That didn't endear me with her.

Q: How did this impact on your work?

LEWIS: I didn't let it impact on my work. I did not seek out Vernon Mwangi who was the Foreign Minister. Or Lubia, who succeeded him as Foreign Minister. We played tennis together; they would drop by the house; they would invite me to go places with them. It really didn't effect my work; it was just an irritant to her and to me.

Q: What type of work were you doing? What were your concerns?

LEWIS: My major concern was to move the USIS out of the terrible dump where it was located. We were then in the central arcade of Lusaka, right on Cairo Road, which is the Cape-to-Cairo road. While it was a wonderful location because there was a lot of human traffic in the area, it was still very bad because the building in which we were was in dire need of repairs--in fact, it really needed to be torn down and rebuilt. Then we had a couple of beatings and murders right on our door-steps and those activities are not conducive to cultural and educational programs we were trying to conduct. So one of my major concerns was to find some way to relocate USIS, but in an area where it could continue to be in the main-stream. That took a lot of doing because it meant you had to find out who was building, where, who really owned the building and then to find that person to negotiate a lease.

A lot of my time was also spent in working at the University of Zambia--the Lusaka campus. We were helping them to build the faculty and I developed a faculty-enrichment program in which we would take some of their young faculty members and assist them in acquiring advanced degrees through the Fulbright program.

Q: Did find yourself in competition with the English who must have had a proprietary view of Zambia? Or did they cooperate?

LEWIS: There was very little competition because the Vice-Chancellor of the University was American-educated. He set the tone at the University. Over the years, as a USIA officer and then as an Ambassador, I always made it a point to become involved in the national university of the country to which I had been assigned. My wife, who is an African historian and had been the deputy director of African studies program at Northwestern, has taught in countries to which we were assigned. It has been a very difficult time for her because she has done it without recompense and without being in a career ladder. I have always attempted to become involved one way or another in the national university.

What has become very clear to me is that the philosophy of education in America and the philosophy of education in the U.K. are very different. Our education prepared the individual to be a practical member of society--a person who was willing to wear a white shirt to the office, but who would roll up his or her sleeve to do the work necessary to accomplish the task

embarked upon. European education, particularly the British, on the other hand, to a large degree provided people with very sound foundation with less of a desire to become practically involved in the life that they were going to have to face in a Third World country.

Q: Was this seen by those the decision-makers in Zambia?

LEWIS: I don't think so. At that time, the National University was one of the government's expenditures that had to be made. There were only a tiny number of university graduates in Zambia at that time. There was a push to get people through university and particularly Zambian University. Certainly, there was an interest on the part of the government in the University and in creating an institution and an environment which would train people to do the kind of things that needed to be done in Zambia. For example, the Vice-Chancellor of the University knew very well that an American-oriented education was going to make people who would be willing to go down in the trenches to work and who would not feel, despite the fact that they had a degree and not only a certificate, that they had to sit in an office and could not become involved or engaged.

Q: Surely, the guarantee of a secure, high income, not-much-work position in an office must have had some attractions. Did you see much of that?

LEWIS: Certainly the students knew that the completion of higher education was a passport into a much better life for them, much more comfortable, access to things that they never had before. I don't think it was as bad then as it is now because now students really don't have jobs waiting for them.

Q: Was America popular at that time with the Zambian educated class?

LEWIS: Yes, America was and is popular in Africa. We have as a nation a residue of good will in Africa that can only be exhausted by thing that the U.S. I don't think is capable of doing. The whole idea of having been the first colony to have engaged in a revolution for its liberty and independence is a powerful asset. That idea for African states, all of which except Liberia and Ethiopia are new states, is an objective. The growth of a state which came into being through revolution against its colonial oppressor or power, is a most powerful model in Africa.

I would presume that it might so also in other Third World areas. But I know that in Africa, that carries with it an immense amount of emotional, ideological baggage. Also America is known in Africa as a country in which the mistakes of the nation are debated, surface and come out. There is a dialogue between the public and the private that doesn't exist in other societies. Also, America is perceived as a multi-racial society in which the most significant minority is black--comes from Africa and has African roots. All of these things are very powerful elements in creating in the African minds a very positive image of America.

Q: Did you have any problems with Zambian bureaucrats who had grown up in the British system and saw the Americans as upstarts and a threat?

LEWIS: Yes, among the older Zambians who were in the system and in positions of importance certainly could view the way we did things as the ways of an upstart nation. I have served in a

number of Anglophonic countries and have observed that even though there is a general dissatisfaction with a society which is developing out of the British model, there are some aspects of it which remain in the mind and hearts of the citizens of the Anglophone countries. For example, no trip begins or ends except through London. For a long, long time, many of the civil services of the newly independent Anglophone African countries, provided for an annual trip or for a long leave every two or three years to Britain. I remember being a member of a dining club--that peculiar hoary institution that the British have foisted on many unsuspecting Third World countries--men only, tuxedo required for dinner on Saturday night, usually once a month--in which the evening was devoted to a formalism in which the events were known beforehand. Among the events, for example, was a period during which all who had been away and therefore may have missed a meeting, had to rise and report where and what he had done. I will forever remember this wonderful African doctor talking about having spent a wonderful summer "at home" in green, lush Ireland. For him, in a sense, that was home. We don't have anything like that with respect to how people feel about America, except in Liberia perhaps. Indeed while I consider it a hoary kind of institution, certainly it binds people to a way of thinking and a way of doing things.

Q: Where there any problems while you were there over the Vietnam war?

LEWIS: Yes and no. We were disengaging and it certainly was a period in which the relations with the U.S. were dotted with little hiccups here and there with respect to Vietnam. More importantly, it was period in which Watergate came to head.

Q: Did they understand what was going on?

LEWIS: No one that I could speak with felt that they ever wanted to be in a position of authority in the U.S. if that was the way Americans treated their leadership. They thought that something was really wrong. How could a society treat its leader that way? It was expected that leaders would have foibles and that they would be entitled to do things that ordinary citizens could and should not. I was really struck by the shallowness of people's understanding of democracy. This was a world-wide phenomenon. There appears to be no universality of ethics.

Q: I think all of in the Foreign Service had a difficult time explaining Watergate. We considered the developments as a positive step for democracy, many of our foreign contacts thought we were destroying leadership. They were willing to accept conduct that the U.S. was not.

LEWIS: Looking back on it, ironically that ability of Americans for self-examination has always been perceived as the great strength of the American society. But the attack on our leadership made a lot of people in the African countries, where I served, uncomfortable. It was very difficult for them to comprehend, even though they saw it as a major strength of our society.

JOHN D. STEMPEL
Political/Economic Officer
Lusaka (1972-1974)

Dr. John D. Stempel served in Guinea, Burundi, Zambia, Tehran, and Madras as well as at AF (Ghana), Operations Center, DOD, and NEA. This interview was conducted in 1993.

Q: Well, your third and final African posting was to Zambia as political and economic officer from 1972-74. What exactly were our interests in Zambia?

STEMPEL: Well, our interest in Zambia really revolved at that point around the American economic interest in the Zambian copper mining, and also the fact that it was a democratic state. It was one of those front line states. It bordered on then Northern Rhodesia. and what is now Zimbabwe. When I went out to Zambia in the fall of 1972, Rhodesia had been independent for seven years and the Prime Minister, Ian Smith, was still thundering defiance of the world community on the quarter deck and there was a blockade of Rhodesia which had been imposed. The Rhodesians that fall tried to impose a counter blockade on Zambia because the whole southern African transportation system was linked through railways. This blockade was a sort of phony blockade, but we were very interested in keeping the pressure on the Rhodesians to negotiate a way away from white supremacist government. And that pressure kept up. It didn't work as fast as some people wanted, but by the end of the decade, seven years later, Ian Smith, who swore he would never give up power in Rhodesia, was in London negotiating black government in Rhodesia. And that is when it became Zimbabwe, in 1980.

Anyway, I was there for the first couple of years of that. Particularly when they put the blockade on the Zambians and the Zambians were upset about this. This led to the building of the Tanzam railway by the Chinese Communists from Dar es-Salaam to the north on into Zambia to give them an alternate transportation route. One of the byproducts of that was when our car and household effects got stuck in the blockade and had to come up through Zambia and be trucked overland. We got a free trip to Mali to pick up our car and the household effects were shipped on later.

And that was an interesting job because at that time we had relatively low level official contact with the south African groups. The ANC, SWAPO from Namibia, and all the black revolutionary groups had offices in Zambia. As the political officer, when it was appropriate, I would talk with them and deal with them. We had another officer, a consular officer, who dealt with them on a regular basis. I was hauled out as the "big gun" which shows we weren't using very big guns at that point. But I was a middle level officer and the first political officer that had ever been assigned to Zambia.

And there, of course, our second child was born. I did a lot of different things. I helped coach the police academy basketball team. I played on one of the national league tennis teams and my doubles partner was a Nigerian judge who had come to Zambia. We won one of our key matches. It was one of the nice things I remember about living there. We were trailing one to five in the second set having lost the first set against the Zambian number two Davis Cup team. We decided to try a very unconventional strategy, lobbing the ball. They were both very tall and nobody ever thought to lob over them before and they weren't used to dealing with such returns. By the time things had settled down we had won that set seven to five. They were dispirited

enough and we went in and started strong and beat them six to three, third set, thus wrapping up the national championship at Kabulanga Tennis Club.

I don't know that I had any professional achievements that were more exciting than that, but there was a lot going on in Zambia at the time. For one thing, by 1974, before I left, the Portuguese had just had their revolution over Salazar and were getting ready to let the African colonies go, Angola and Mozambique. It turned out that my biggest professional achievement at that point was getting from a good Zambian contact the fact that the Portuguese were going to let them go and had set a date for independence. And that was sort of a very atypical professional contact, because the ambassador, at that time, who was very, very status conscious, had in effect forbidden the junior officers to talk to this particular individual. Well, this was difficult. He had been a friend of mine long before he became important in Zambia. And he was the one who told me. So I had to find a way to get this information back and out to people without letting the ambassador know that I had been talking to him or she would have been quite outraged about it. We succeeded in doing that.

And I had prepared a paper with a long analysis and this was one of the first places where I used some of that doctoral training to prepare a 20 page analysis on Zambia and where it was going. I worked very closely with the deputy chief of mission, who was a super human being. It was the first major policy paper on Zambia since independence had been declared ten years earlier. I was back in the State Department in 1979 and it was still being used as a sort of historical foundation of where we were and where we were going.

So those were the kinds of things that I really enjoyed doing. Plus the other things, getting to know some of the Zambians and working with them on other issues.

When SWAPO began to negotiate a Namibia independence, I met several times with their shadow foreign minister. The Americans were much more in tune with what was happening there than I think was realized at the time. This was largely because of the political work that we had done in Zambia.

HARVEY F. NELSON, JR.
Deputy Chief of Mission
Lusaka (1972-1975)

Ambassador Nelson was born and raised in California. He was educated at Occidental College, The University of Stockholm, Sweden and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. After serving in the US Navy and teaching at Bowdoin College, Ambassador Nelson joined the Foreign Service and served in Washington and abroad, primarily as a political officer dealing in Scandinavian and African affairs. In 1985 he was appointed Ambassador to Swaziland.

Q: What was Zambia like in 1972?

NELSON: At that point, Zambia was pretty much in the grip of President Kenneth Kaunda. He had been president since independence in 1964. He was in a pretty secure position. Zambia was doing fairly well. It had a pretty good size welfare budget based on copper income. The copper mines were essentially run by South African firms, but that was seldom mentioned. Zambia had a farming sector dominated by whites. They were good farmers; their biggest crops were tobacco and corn.

The country was relatively stable although there was some political turmoil. Kaunda had been in power for many years, and some were beginning to chafe at that. The country was trying to be in a leadership role in fighting South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. It was beginning to be involved in the collapse of the Smith regime. So it was engaged - sometimes positively and sometimes not helpfully.

Our ambassador was Jean Mary Wilkowski. A very dynamic woman. She had been in Latin America, and this was her first and I think her only ambassadorship. She had a very strong personality. She was quite blunt with the staff. She upset the staff on several occasions because of her bluntness. In fact, she loved them all, but she didn't project that. I learned this over a period of time.

I first met her in a hall in the Department. She was as tall if not taller than I am. I think that in college she had been a basketball player. She was striding along when I stopped her to introduce myself as her new deputy. The first thing she said to me was that "they didn't even give me chance to choose my own DCM." I am sure she didn't mean how it sounded. She was just bluntly stating a fact. She probably felt pushed around a little bit, and she didn't like it.

Q: It sounds like that as DCM you spent some time smoothing over ruffled feathers.

NELSON: I did a certain amount of that. My wife was enormously helpful in helping me. For all her faults, I had a great attachment to Jean Mary. I haven't been in touch for years, but I suddenly thought of her this morning. She had some physical problems even as ambassador, and I don't know her condition now.

We made it work, and I gained an enormous respect for her despite all the gripes about her. She stood on her rights as an ambassador, which got her into trouble with Kissinger just about the time I was leaving Lusaka. She was a damn good representative of the U.S. She had the staff in the palm of her hands. They appreciated her. They may have joked about her behind her back, but they respected her. And that was what she was being paid for - as I told the staff periodically. I told them they had to live with her personality. We were accomplishing our tasks, and she was doing what she was paid to do. She was in Lusaka not to coddle us but to represent the U.S.

Q: What was our Zambian policy at the time?

NELSON: We had an AID program. We were trying to strengthen Zambia's economy. During my three years there, I noted the usual African reaction which was to blame foreign colonialism for their problems. To certain extent, of course, they were right. When the copper price plummeted, it meant a serious budgetary short-fall. Zambia had no money! Copper prices did not

recover. Kaunda's solution was to nationalize the mines without any compensation. And then he rehired the same mining companies which had been in charge before nationalization. That was obviously more expensive. Now they have sold the mines back to the companies.

The government's relationships with the white farmers were tense. Those farmers were doing very well; they lived well as Rhodesian land owners. They brought in foreign exchange, much of which they pocketed. But there was still plenty for the country. The farmers were very good, and the land was quite fruitful. The Zambians might have known about subsistence farming but knew little about managing large and productive farms. Interestingly enough, the same criticism might have been made about a number of the white land-owners. They had been in the British military and had decided to stay in Zambia after its independence. They started farming without much background. Labor was cheap and plentiful, and they managed somehow. I was just visiting in England about three weeks ago with one of those land-owners, who was chased out. The government had put so many financial restrictions on farming that he just left. Of course, the farmers were breaking many of the financial laws while we were there. But the country was still profiting from their labors. But the whites worried about their kids and whether they would be able to pay for their education. So many left, although there were also many who remained.

Q: What kind of commercial farming did Zambia have?

NELSON: Maize and tobacco. Those were the major products. Maize was the stable crop. If there weren't huge mounts of maize at the end of the harvest season, then the country was in trouble, not only to feed Zambia's population but also to maintain some exports. Sugar was another major cash crop. All the farms depended on British and South African farmers.

I have already mention copper which was the largest foreign exchange earner. But as I said, the price really took a dive and is still in the doldrums today. The Chinese built a railroad through Tanzania to Dar es Salaam. The Zambians had smelters, so that not all of the raw ore had to be exported. Much of the product and the ore was probably shipped out by train and truck. When the embargo was put on Southern Rhodesia, that blocked exports going through there. That was the genesis of the road construction to Tanzania so that the ore could be shipped to Dar es Salaam. This was even before the railroad was built. We were asked whether we would be interested in building the railroad. We declined.

Q: Were we very nervous about the Chinese?

NELSON: I really wasn't. The legacy of McCarthy taught me that we were over-reacting to the communist threat. They built a railroad. The construction workers were confined and studied their little red books; they rarely mixed with the Zambians. The railroad was pretty neat. I remember one day while my wife and I were driving in the bush probably heading for Tanzania, we passed a truck load of Chinese workers, who were singing and have a great time. We waved to them. One almost waved back but didn't. The fact that a westerner would wave to them undoubtedly made them suspicious. I don't think the Chinese made much of an impact on the Zambians. Of course, the country expressed gratitude for the construction of the railroad, but I don't think the Chinese left a communist legacy.

Q: What impression did you have of Kaunda?

NELSON: We dealt with him very directly. If we needed to talk to him, we would just call him. We knew his principal advisor who was a very able young man. Zambia is a small country so that personal relationships are developed. Of course, we didn't always reach him when we phoned, but then we could talk to his advisor who could be relied on to pass a message on to the president. When we went to the president's house for dinner, Kaunda served. When we washed up before the meal, the president brought the bowl and towels; everybody washed up in the same water. Then he would stand behind a buffet table and ladle out the food. It was very informal and Kaunda was very personal. He had a nice sense of humor; very steady. The atmosphere was very informal; Wilkowski had access to him any time she needed it. I also could get word to him, usually through his advisor.

That does not mean that things got done. Kaunda did not have people who were very good at getting things done. The system didn't work well. We once were ready to make an \$8 million grant. We had a terrible time getting a Zambian to sign off on it. All they had to do is sign the agreement, and we would hand over the check. Time was beginning to run out. I remember the ambassador finally getting the minister of finance out of bed to tell him that unless Zambia signed the agreement, the funds would not longer be available after midnight. He reluctantly agreed. But we had to force the grant down their throats. It was put to good use, but this was an illustration of the problems the Zambians had in making government work.

Q: Were we concerned about Kaunda's human rights record?

NELSON: We had some discussions, but it wasn't a big thing. He didn't have much opposition so that the issue of human rights didn't really come up. Kaunda was unusual in that he really was a Malawian and therefore did not belong to any Zambian tribe. Of course there were people then and even more so now that he is trying to make a political comeback that held his antecedents against him. In fact, because he didn't belong to any tribe, he was not a threat to any of them and therefore quite acceptable to all. At the time, the fact that he was a Malawian was not mentioned; it is now much more of a factor. Although his small tribe also spilled over into Zambia, it was no threat to the other tribes. If he had any political enemies, they were not many, and Kaunda did not feel the need to take any actions against them. So he did not run a repressive regime, although he did behave undemocratically when he felt the need for some direct action.

Q: Did you spend a lot of time convincing the Zambians to vote with us in the UN?

NELSON: Yes, but not very successfully during this period, particularly on southern Africa issues. It was an absolutely impossible task. Wilkowski would often spend time with the president or other high officials trying to garner votes and I would too. But all we can say is that we tried, but usually not very successfully.

Q: How much of a factor was South Africa in U.S.-Zambia relations?

NELSON: They believed that we should be on the same side with them and other African countries to change South African behavior, including if necessary the use of our forces. They

wanted the white regime driven out. We had a lot of unrealism in Zambia. Kaunda tried to be in the forefront of this anti-white regime movement, along with Julius Nyerere of Tanzania - a colleague and sometime competitor for the international spotlight. They were aggressive about South Africa and Southern Rhodesia first and Mozambique and Angola secondly. Kaunda had two or three meetings with South African and Southern Rhodesian leadership in a railroad car on a bridge spanning the Zambezi river. These were publicly announced meetings the content of which was kept secret. The Zambian press was pretty much controlled, so we knew little about these meetings. He tried to influence the leadership of these other countries to provide greater rights to the black population. Being a reasonable man, it is quite possible that Kaunda had some impact. He did have a certain amount of courage because his negotiations were sometime viewed skeptically by his African colleagues. They would never have even looked at a South African or Southern Rhodesian white. On one occasion, he really got quite angry with the South Africans, which was quite risky since the Zambians depended on South Africa for some agricultural products, which they could probably have produced themselves. These goods came by train which would have to change engines at the bridge so that a Zambian could drive the train to Lusaka. Kaunda put an embargo on these imports which meant that the Zambians would have a very limited diet. That became a very tough situation because there really wasn't an alternative source for the agricultural products. Eventually, without any announcement, the embargo was lifted although the imports were disguised. For example, we suddenly found Botswana apples in the market. Now Botswana did not grow apples; these were South African imports in disguise. This might well have been the bright idea of some South African who suggested covert ways to restart the import program. We did lose South African wines and that was unfortunate. They never came back in any bottles.

So there were some tough moments due to Kaunda's stance against South Africa. He truly believed that he was in the right. His actions were not for effect. I think he truly found the South African regime odious. Since he was asking other countries, like the U.S., to take a tough line against South Africa, he undoubtedly felt that his country had to make a showing. I don't think that his pressure had much effect in South Africa.

Q: Did the actions that Nyerere was taking in Tanzania have any effect in Zambia? I gather that Nyerere was taking a different course.

NELSON: I didn't know much about what Nyerere was doing. I believe that he was taking a lot of private property and giving it to communities. He had to move people around the country to do that. That was pretty harsh and difficult. We had friends in Mombasa with whom we exchanged visits. They had a Tanzanian working for them. He finally had to go home because his family which lived in Tanzania had been moved off their farm. They had refused to join the communes which left them entirely stranded. I understood that this happen quite often. We did find him in Dar once when we visited there. He was trying to run a little shop, but he no longer had a family farm to fall back on. The communal farms did not do well.

Q: Nyerere was the darling of the socialist world, particularly Scandinavia. He was getting tons of money, but in the process essentially killed a country that had some economic growth potential.

NELSON: Unfortunately, you can find examples of that process all over the world, not just in Africa. Radical change all at once seems to be a recipe for catastrophe. It is just destructive.

Q: Was Zambia a listening post for what was happening in South Africa?

NELSON: Yes. We had a large number of “freedom” fighters from Southern Rhodesia. There were some of Savimbi’s people in Zambia from Angola. We had Namibians - the SWAPO (South West Africa People’s Organization) people. There may have been some from Mozambique as well, but I didn’t have any contact with them. I saw the other people, particularly the Zimbabweans. They were also “freedom” fighters. I went to Harare last spring and saw some of them for a couple of days. My closest contact works for LANRO, a British international corporation. He was pulled out of Zambia on a couple of occasions.

The Southern Rhodesian “liberation” movement was split. The divide was so bad that they were killing each other, for reasons that were never quite clear to me. It was murderous stuff. There was one black leader, who had been an attorney in Southern Rhodesia. He finally had to leave because he was just too successful. He used the available white courts and ran rings around the white legal profession in the protection of many accused, including some whites. He then became involved in the “liberation” movement and moved to Zambia. He was a very interesting guy, who became a very good friend of my wife. They had a nice intellectual relationship with many exchanges. One morning, down the street, he got into his car which had been booby trapped. It blew up and killed him. That is what the Southern Rhodesians did to each other. My wife was broken hearted and I also found it hard to accept.

We knew a leader of the Namibian resistance group, but that was also split. He later became at odds with Nujoma, who was the leader of the resistance. He ended up in prison, sentenced to death, but fortunately that was never carried out. So the Namibians also killed each other.

These splits were bad news. It was tough enough to mount a resistance movement. They didn’t need internal feuding. But wherever you go, there are people who become power hungry regardless of cause.

Q: Did you have primarily a watching brief?

NELSON: Yes; we did not get involved in their operations. We had a small CIA office, which might well have done more which I may not have known about. I knew much of what CIA was doing, but I can’t guarantee that I knew all.

Q: Did you have any major issues with the Zambians during your tour?

NELSON: One of the big events was the nationalization of the mines. There wasn’t much we could do about it except wring our hands. We were in touch with the government and the South Africans-who had been running the mines on behalf of the Anglo-American Corporation. But as I indicated earlier, the managers returned to work for the government-owned corporation. We made an effort to counsel Kaunda that perhaps he should not pursue nationalization or find a way not to expropriate the mines. I think in the final analysis, some compromise was worked out with

the Anglo-American Corporation being compensated for their property. So the issue was not quite as acute as it appeared originally.

Zambia became the venue for the talks between Portuguese, the Mozambicans and the Angolans. They all came together in Lusaka. The embassy did not play a role in these negotiations. It was an interesting process. The meetings were held at the State House, under the chairmanship of Kaunda or his representative. They began to work on how these two colonies would achieve their independence. That was a big event. The leader of the Mozambican delegation was by Samora Machel. I took my daughter once to a social event where we met and talked to Neto, Dispasse and Machel. That was interesting because they were powerful people. My daughter and Machel got along quite famously.

When anybody significant would come to Lusaka or leave Lusaka, the diplomatic corps would show up the airport, line up and shake hands. We spent a lot of time doing that. I used to take my daughter with me; she stood behind me. Once when Machel returned, he came to me and pushed me aside so he could embrace my daughter, who was sixteen at the time. She was a very pretty blond with long hair.

Q: What were your instructions regarding these independence talks?

NELSON: We had a watching brief. There may well have been some instructions to which I was not privy. I think we probably talked to the government in Portugal. It would have been stupid not to. We certainly wanted the Portuguese to know that we supported the independence process, and I am sure that we offered any assistance that might have been helpful. I am sure the CIA was active among the Mozambicans and the Angolans. But the embassy had no instructions beyond watching and reporting. We knew that we could encourage the participants to reach a satisfactory resolution.

Q: Did the Hickenlooper amendment play any role in the expropriation process?

NELSON: No, because the American interest was minuscule. Our share of the Anglo-American Corporation was very small. We were more concerned with the policy of nationalization because as an aid donor intending to beef up Zambia's economy we found the government following policies which we felt certain would retard economic growth.

Q: Did Kaunda expropriate out of pique or was it part of carefully considered policy?

NELSON: I really don't know. My speculation is that in part it may have been out of pique. Kaunda had a tendency to act that way. I don't know where he got his advice, but he did act emotionally when he was angry with somebody. I doubt that in this case that was the sole reason. After all, it was a major decision. It probably stemmed more from his belief that foreign ownership of the mines was not working; and, therefore, they should be taken over by Zambia.

Q: One of the most pernicious influences in the former British colonies - and some French ones as well - were the doctrines perpetuated by such institutions as the London School of Economics - labor influenced policies and Fabian socialism. They preached nationalization as a solution to

many economic problems. It was given full vent in Tanzania. Were there economists in Zambia that were talking this way?

NELSON: This school of thought might have found some receptive ears in Zambia. Kaunda's close friends were people like Nyerere. It is quite possible that he got advice from him. Or Nyerere might have suggested that he talk to someone who spouted that economic philosophy. I don't know for sure that that is what happened, but it certainly could have. Kaunda certainly had a socialist bias, but I don't know really how he came to make the nationalization decision.

CONSTANCE J. FREEMAN
Economics Lecturer, University of Zambia
Lusaka (1973-1975)

Constance Freeman was born in Washington, DC in 1945 and graduated from American University and the University of Denver. She served with the Peace Corps in Brazzaville and Yaounde and with the Foreign Service in New Delhi and Nairobi. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

FREEMAN: I went back to Colorado and wrote for a while. My ex-husband joined me in India. He'd been in Africa doing his thesis, and we traveled around the world. Then we went back to the States, and we knew we had to finally get a job. We lived on scholarships and savings, very poorly, but we'd managed to survive traveling around the world. I went back to Denver because they offered me a fellowship to write my thesis and to write off the final year of tuition. I worked for the dean of the school, at that time, then I worked as registrar, etc. And so I wrote a third of my thesis. But in the meantime, my ex-husband got a job in Zambia, and so off we went to Zambia. So, in fact, I wrote most of my thesis on India while I lectured on economics in Zambia.

Q: You were lecturing where?

FREEMAN: At the University of Zambia. I went as a UNDP wife. There were lots of them around, but most were not feminists. So here I was again. I did eventually get a job at the university, where I taught almost everything you can teach in economics, because the student-faculty ratio was so poor that there was no choice. And they had almost no Zambians to teach, because there were only a handful of educated Zambians at independence. This was now '73 to '75, and Zambia had been independent for 10 years only. And so I taught comparative economic development of India and China in my Lusaka classroom, and wrote my thesis on India on the weekends and on holidays.

Q: What was your impression of the Zambian government during this period?

FREEMAN: When we first came to Zambia, it was quite prosperous. Copper prices were high and the stores were full of imports. I think the thing that struck us the most was the number of imports from South Africa. We had long boycotted any goods from South Africa whatsoever. Lobster was the key thing, but South African wine or whatever. And we found the Zambians all

drinking it and using South African canned goods. During the time we were there, the bottom fell out of copper prices, the oil embargo went into effect.

This was a subject for great debate at the university. The university faculty was dominated by expatriate Socialists from Michigan, Wisconsin, the London School of Economics, and South African refugees. So it was a very Socialist-oriented institution. My natural bent was in the direction of Socialist solutions, certainly African socialism. And that's where I started to lose it, because when I would lecture on comparative systems, comparative capitalism, socialism, my fellow faculty members would beat me up for saying anything positive about capitalism. I felt that this was being very paternalistic, and that our job was to give the Zambians the maximum amount of information possible so they could make up their own minds. This was particularly acute because our students were going directly into high levels in a government in the process of Zambianizing, and they needed to have choices, not to have us tell them how they should be operating in their environment. I don't know if that answers your question.

Q: Well, it does, in many ways. Again, I was not an African specialist, but I have often thought that probably the most pernicious thing that happened to much of Africa was the damned Fabian Socialists out of England. The name escapes me, but the brother and sister who were the great Socialists at the turn of the century. But, anyway, was Tanzania and Nyerere held up as a great example of how great this was?

FREEMAN: Yes, the University of Tanzania, the head of my department, the economics department, for a while, Ann Seidman, had as her base the University of Dar es Salaam, and that was the center of this African socialism. But I think that Tanzania was a very important case study. Nyerere did some extremely important work for the whole continent, because he took the model, and he applied it, and it did not work. But I'm not sure you could have known that unless you tried. And Nyerere was not corrupt, and he was genuine, and he was sincere, and he is still, in my eyes, an extremely great statesman. Now the model was a disaster, so there were a number of people who suffered. But, at least, as it collapsed, he backed off of it. Because we didn't know in those days, we really did not. If you read just the Socialist theory, particularly African socialism, this all makes a lot of sense, especially for countries that feel they've been exploited, first by the slave trade and then by colonialism. The problem is that state ownership simply doesn't work; other kinds of motivations are needed. And it is so easily corrupted. And so the two and two are three market system now is the appropriate turn. It's come sooner in some countries than in others. And in places like Kenya that supposedly stayed capitalist throughout all this period, they didn't really. Two hundred and forty parastatals, or state-owned companies, is not a capitalist system. But a lot of this was being debated during that time in Zambia. And I think that was a very important part of my personal formation.

Also, we were right on the border of Rhodesia and the Rhodesian War, and the Mozambique border, with all of the violence and fighters coming over the borders all the time, and from Namibia as well. So we lived right in the middle of all of that.

Q: Did you get involved in the political activity that was going on, anti-South African, anti-white Rhodesian, that type of thing?

FREEMAN: My ex-husband was the liberation-fighter officer for UNDP [United Nations Development Program] when he was there for a time. And so, yes, we did. I certainly was involved, in the sense that some of my fellow professors were ferrying people across borders at night and teaching during the day. Some of my very best students came from Rhodesia and were Rhodesian and South African refugees. There was no way you didn't get involved in that at that time. Notably, we were at odds with the U.S. Embassy at that time. We were not very polite, upon occasion, and they didn't like that. I don't think they liked us very much. But when my father came to visit, they did, which created a whole lot of ironies. Once again, one was not moderate in that time. People were very opinionated and very passionate about what they felt, and sometimes not polite.

Q: What about the government of Zambia? Kenneth Kaunda had been president for about 10 years at that time. How was he viewed?

FREEMAN: I think he was viewed as not sufficiently Socialist, but mostly not very involved with his own country, and not very enlightened in terms of the economy of his own country. He was revered as the father of the country. He was revered as one of the great holdouts against South Africa. You remember the frontline states, and he was one of the great frontline-states leaders. But I think if there was a general view, certainly at the university, it was that Kaunda spent a great deal of his time working on anti-apartheid and South African and Rhodesian issues, and not very much time on his own country.

As people tried to figure out what his philosophy of humanism meant, they became somewhat confused. He told a story about what humanism meant, that he was on his way to the airport to get a plane to an important meeting, and he saw somebody whose car had broken down, and he stopped to help them, and he missed his plane, and he missed his meeting, and that's an example of humanism. Putting people before your meeting, in essence. That didn't strike people at the university as very sensible or a very good allocation of resources.

It was a time of great ferment. The Socialists were taking over the commanding heights, and were cheering the oil embargo, and were not dealing with the fact that it was going to hurt Zambia more than others.

Q: On this thing, obviously you were coming out of what we would, I suppose, call the left spectrum in one part of this. How did you find your fellow professors and, maybe, students were looking at the example of the Soviet Union at that time?

FREEMAN: It's so interesting, particularly with Africans, my experience has been that those who went to the United States for an education, particularly if they went to some of the Middle Western, more radical universities, came out rather Socialist, and those who went to the Soviet Union came out capitalists. And we had examples to prove it, of people who had been on both sides. The debate of the time was which Socialist model, Soviet or Chinese?

Q: Good God, what a choice. How about the Swedish or something like that?

FREEMAN: It didn't count. Remember, this is over 20 years ago, and this was a part of the left

intellectual.

Q: I find the left intellectual thing very interesting because it's a thought process that always escaped me, and I think many others, because it seemed to try to hold up the Soviet or the Chinese as the model, and they were really horrible regimes. I think this is important. I want to catch the thought process. How did you feel? In later years, anyway, but it also was quite apparent at the time, the Soviet Union was a horrible place to be a Soviet citizen, as was China.

FREEMAN: I think there was a great debate going on at the time about whether it was really horrible or whether that was just the Western propaganda. Remember, we felt very deeply that our own country was not living up to its own obligations. It was a time of tremendous cultural ferment.

If you looked at it from Africa, most African thinkers, or those who purported to think for them, all these Western expatriate types like me wandering around, were looking for another model (in other words, African socialism) that would be built upon the communal history and philosophy that was somehow a part of the traditional village that was Africa. This, too, was visionary. Most countries were only about 10 years old, and nobody quite knew where they were going.

The Africans were going into positions of power by and large believing that they finally had access to the resources. And so it was essentially a distributive mentality, not a productive mentality. It was forgotten that you've got to produce it before you can distribute it.

And that's what's happening now, today. Everybody's dealing with the fact that you distribute and distribute and distribute, and you don't produce, and finally there's nothing left, and you've destroyed your infrastructure.

Q: One of the things I've picked up is that so much of Labour Socialism coming out of England is to change the cutting of the pie, rather than to increase the pie. If you have a pretty small pie, nobody gets much at all.

FREEMAN: That's what you've seen in country after country in Africa, that the pie has shrunk. So, therefore, the people in power have to take a larger portion of it to keep up with the Joneses of the regime before them. And finally there isn't anything to divide. The acknowledgment that that won't work any longer is a very salient part of second-generation leadership in Africa now. That recognition and the willingness to acknowledge that while the world might owe us a living for the horrors that were perpetuated against us, the world is not going to pay, so it's time to get on with it.

Q: When you left Zambia, what do you think your teaching did for the future generation? What sort of legacy did you leave?

FREEMAN: When I went back 10 years later, they were rabid Socialists. I actually taught a much more neutral view. I edged into, there are good things about capitalism. And many of my students believed that. Their goals were to go into government and make money, make money, not just because they were selfish, but because they had vast extended families depending upon

them as the first ones who were educated. As so, when I got to know some of them well enough for them to be candid with me, and I would ask them rude and direct questions, like what are you really going to do after graduation, and they would answer, it was apparent that they had their heads on their shoulders about where they going and what they were doing. But they were indoctrinated, and they knew that they had to parrot back what was expected in order to pass the exam. They had been educated in a British system, and that is a memorization process, and that is you give the professor what he wants to hear. And so, while I tried very hard to have discussions and individual thinking, and had some successes in it, by and large the institution was permeated by expatriate Socialists, and that's what the kids learned.

Q: What about Kaunda, did you have to have a right-thought type of organization?

FREEMAN: No.

Q: He did not try to make everybody come out of a cookie cutter?

FREEMAN: No, Kaunda's was much more humanism, and Kaunda's was a much gentler process. And already there was mumbling underground. Now the year after I left, there were protests against the government. I've forgotten the issue now, but I do know that they closed the university, and they arrested some of the professors, some of whom were my colleagues, and I knew them. It was quite a terrible period for them. After I left and finished my thesis, I went to work on the Hill. And I went back a year later as a Hill staffer, as a congressional staffer, and I'd been very fortunate that that hadn't happened when I was there, because I probably would have been right in the middle of it. Nothing in my background would lead you to believe I would have stayed out of the middle of it.

Q: As a practical measure, when you later on had to, as you still are, dealing with Africa, you understand some of the molding and thought. You were part of the process, for better or for worse.

FREEMAN: For better or for worse. And learned from it. In fact, those roots are very, very deep, and they keep coming up over and over again. The man who was my head of department for Zambia, Jacob Wanza, is now the governor of the Central Bank in Lusaka, and he'll be coming to speak to a program here at CSIS, at my invitation, next month, when he comes for the Bank and Fund meetings. Jacob and I have known each other for a very long time, through a lot of reincarnations, and when we talk to each other, we talk to each other as people who know where we've come from. I have been in and out of Africa now for 30 years, and it is in my blood. It had a profound influence on some of my most formative years and most formative thinking. And a lot of it happened right there, as well as hitchhiking through West Africa.

JEAN MARY WILKOWSKI
Ambassador
Zambia (1973-1977)

Ambassador Jean Wilkowski entered the Foreign Service in 1944. Her career included assignments in Trinidad, Colombia, Italy, France, Chile, Switzerland, Honduras, and an ambassadorship to Zambia. Ambassador Wilkowski was interviewed by Willis Armstrong in 1989.

Q: *Yes. That was very helpful. They were good people. [Chuckle]*

Now, on your appointment as Ambassador to Zambia, what was your state of mind on hearing of it?

WILKOWSKI: As I told you, Graham Martin had called me down and said, "I want to know how you feel. Do you want to be an Ambassador?" I gulped a bit as someone in Washington had said, "You know you're going to be an Ambassador, so why not wait it out in Rome as Commercial Counselor, which is better than in Washington." So when Martin called me, I countered with, "What do you think?" I almost said, "I have to go home and ask my mother," which was about what I would have done ten years previous. [Laughter]

Q: *A man would say, "I've got to talk to my wife." [Laughter]*

WILKOWSKI: I persisted, "What do you think, Mr. Ambassador?" He just leaned back in his chair and shook his head in disbelief. "How could this woman be so dumb," was written all over his face. Finally, he leaned forward in the chair and eyed me very keenly and said, "I think you can do anything you set your mind to."

Q: *Well, that's a good comment.*

WILKOWSKI: I said, "Well, thank you, Mr. Ambassador. Then I would welcome your recommendation when you go back to Washington." So the next thing I knew, dear Cleo Noel was on the telephone, calling me from Washington. He was in Personnel then before his fateful Somalia ambassadorship. He said, "Well, Jean, how would you like to go to Zambia?"

And I inquired, "As what?"

He said, "Knock it off. As chief of mission, of course." [Laughter]

I was pretty excited, of course. Some people say, "Endsville, Africa. Why do they send all the career people and women to Africa?" But I thought, "Gee, you know, it's fine. I'll go." And so I went back to Washington for the usual swearing-in, briefings, and consultations with the academics. Then I went back to Rome to buy a lot of clothes which were totally inappropriate for Zambia. [Laughter]

And you think you're God Almighty with that title Ambassador--a strange thing that comes over one. I tried to do it right, blessed myself and flew Zambia Airlines. But before taking off from Rome a funny thing happened. Graham Martin called me down to his office. He said, "I shouldn't be telling you this, but I have to tell you confidentially."

There had been a Russian defector in Zambia who had been moved out with a stopover in Rome for some reason. At any rate, the Zambians had given him a passport calling him something like Aaron Freeman, or John Freeman. Graham told me this, reaffirming his keen interest in clandestine things. I got a fright that he might want to introduce me. Then I thought, how very humane for President Kaunda to handle it as he had, why the stop of the defector in Rome. I do not know unless the Zambians were turning him over to the Americans at the Embassy. It was a curious thing that happened just before I went down to Zambia.

There was strong competition in economic development in Zambia between the Eastern Bloc and the West. Yet, the U.S. had no AID mission. What were the key issues and my duties down there? We were bystanders in this contest being pulled back from assistance in the sixties. What were the key issues and my duties? Primarily to get the Embassy up and really running. I was the third American Ambassador there since 1964. I went down there in '73 and remained for 3-1/2 years on assignment. And I was there for the tenth anniversary of independence in '74.

Zambia was in good economic shape then. Copper prices were up and the oil crisis had yet to arrive. We were a primary target of all those London bankers, City Bank and the rest that were in Africa looking for placement of funds. So we had a steady parade of people wanting to loan money, and sell major equipment (aircraft and transportation) to the government. The major activity in Zambia, I soon learned, was not bilateral economic relations. We had but one American businessman in the whole country and 2,000 American missionaries. Political relations were limited mainly to gaining Zambian support for our positions at the UN.

Our biggest brief and area of interest, of course, was regional politics in southern Africa. Lusaka was the preeminent political listening post for that entire area: Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, Namibia, and the newly independent states of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, the BLS countries.

We had the freedom fighters and liberation movement leaders from all of those countries. They were exciting times because the South Africans were constantly infiltrating into Rhodesia and Zambia to harass and undermine these political refugees. There were many refugee camps in Zambia. It was important, I felt, that U.S. representatives get to know the leaders of these liberation movements--to have some communication with them so as to be in a position of easy transition once these colonies were free. Mr. Kissinger felt differently, but together with Ambassador Bev Carter in Tanzania we kept up a steady drumbeat, recommending to the Department that early contacts were important. He came to accept our view. He finally authorized communication, but he did it in his own ambiguous style. I believed (with my DCM questioning) that we were given all the authority we needed highly conditional as it was.

President Kaunda had been offended because he had been invited to the White House by President Nixon, and then brushed off at the last minute, so I thought it important that we...

Q: Why was he rejected?

WILKOWSKI: President Nixon changed his mind because he reportedly had other things on his mind in higher priority areas. But you know how sensitive Africans are. The President just

canceled the meeting without offering an alternative date. He never reinstated it. It was my hope we could patch this situation up and make amends.

One of the biggest problems the U.S. had in Zambia was Africa's antagonistic feeling about U.S. intervention in Vietnam. We didn't get a thaw on that until Kissinger negotiated the peace treaty in Paris and until Lyndon Johnson died. Those two events took place within a period of about four days, if I recall. I remember getting a telephone call from President Kaunda. He asked, "Do you have a condolence book for signature at the embassy?"

I said, "Yes, we will have one." I didn't have one.

The President said, "I would like to come over to express my regrets and condolences."

So I said, "And when would that be, Mr. President?" Well, he said he would come over with some of his cabinet members, and that would be at 5:00 that evening and this was something like 11:00 in the morning. So, zip, out with the administrative officer to get a book at a local store, drape President Johnson's picture in black and ready the Embassy lobby and staff.

President Kaunda came with 14 members of his entourage. There were party members and cabinet members, and the entire lobby was filled with people. He came dressed in black, walked over to the book and signed it, then came to me and shook my hand. The Prime Minister pushed me in the back and said, "You have to say something." So I remember walking slowly to the stairs and saying something about Lyndon Johnson and his...

Q: I assume that was done with a lack of enthusiasm?

WILKOWSKI: No, I was just collecting my thoughts to speak, and I did, on President Johnson's ideals of racial equality, the significance of the peace treaty on Vietnam and our relief to disengage. Anyhow, it went over very well, and the Prime Minister grabbed me and said into my ear in his stage whisper, "That's just what we wanted to hear." I was comforted. [Laughter] So that was that. But that occasion was a turning point in our bilateral relations. Things became much warmer. It was an entirely different situation from my arrival at post. The Zambians kept me waiting 21 days to present my credentials. The Chinese Ambassador had arrived within a day of my own arrival in Zambia, and he presented credentials within three days. I was kept waiting 21 days to show Zambian displeasure with U.S. engagement in Vietnam. Once at the opening of Parliament, when the President spoke, he broke into tears as he had done on other occasions when talking about the need for peace in the world and his displeasure with U.S. foreign policy in Asia. He was famous for his fluttering a white handkerchief. After the Paris treaty, the President became openly friendly and kind to me as the U.S. representative.

Turning to U.S. foreign policy objectives in southern Africa. The context was important. You had two Portuguese colonies, Angola and Mozambique, which had been colonies for 500 years. They were on the verge of becoming independent in the mid-seventies when I was posted to Zambia, Angola and Mozambique still have their troubles in new-found independence. Then there was Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, a runaway colony with its unilateral declaration of independence. And you had all of these freedom fighters making a sanctuary and a haven out of

Zambia. It was a messy political situation which absorbed almost as much of my time as an observer than did strictly bilateral issues with Zambia. Indeed the evolving regional situation was often the subject of our bilateral discussions.

Zambia was in the middle of all this, and the idea was to understand what was going on and to tell the United States about developments and our on site assessment; also what role we might play. It wasn't that we had big economic or trade relations, but politically the United States was looked to as a potential intermediary, a moderator. Indeed, as you know, we did play that role with the Kissinger initiative and the Lancaster House agreements. Sure, the British were much more directly concerned, but we played a catalytic role. It started with our early contacts with the liberation movement leaders and culminated in a turn in U.S. policy (more engaged) enunciated by Kissinger in Lusaka on his first visit to Africa following a UN meeting in Nairobi. So it was the need for the U.S. to understand the southern African situation, the position of the Zambian Government on it, and Kaunda's position as a leader in southern Africa and a leader in Africa. As you know, he's been head of the OAS, and even now he plays a significant catalytic role in South Africa.

Q: How old a man is he by now?

WILKOWSKI: Right now he is, I think, 67. I always looked at President Julius Nyerere as the brains of southern Africa, and Kaunda as the heart of southern Africa. He's a more emotional, sensitive person, less an intellectual than Nyerere.

So we had to deal with that regional political problem and report on it. I also felt that we might be missing a bet on the economic side. The Chinese were building their railroad from the Indian Ocean into the heart of Zambia. The Russians were busy at their little work trying to get mining concessions and help with a lot of economic assistance, and we were doing nothing in these areas. We were just sort of sitting there observing, getting Zambia to side with our UN positions, etc., but doing precious little to endear ourselves other than carry our responsibilities as world leader. We needed to relate practically.

So I started something small--even minor--to get the Agricultural Attaché out of Kenya to come and visit Zambia and to work with the private farmers there, to try to work with some of the government people on a very informal practical basis on raising enough food to feed themselves, rather than import. Eventually, I negotiated the first PL 480 loan. After I left, an AID mission was established and more practical assistance given.

I also felt that security was deteriorating. We had bombings all the time--allegedly due to South African undercover attachés, or rivalry between liberation factions--one never knew for sure. Indeed, there was one bomb that went off just around the corner from me, across the street. I was always attending funerals of one or another liberation movement member. And so I felt...

Q: Who was really knocking them off? Was it indeed the South Africans?

WILKOWSKI: You never knew whether it was or it wasn't. Our intelligence was never that good or consistent, but it seemed the South Africans and Rhodesian collaborators were more

clever and better equipped; every faction seemed to be doing a little harm to the other, if in opposition.

Then we had a terrible situation develop with a random shooting by Zambian soldiers of some American tourists near Livingston on the Zambezi River. There were two Canadians and two Americans in a tourist group. They were down at Victoria Falls on the Rhodesian side by the river's edge. All of a sudden, a Zambian soldier patrolling on a cliff on the other side went berserk and just shot them up. He killed the two Canadians. They fell into the Zambezi River and crocodiles got them. The two Americans hid behind boulders and rocks on the Rhodesian side. Later they were rescued in the night by Rhodesians and taken to the Wankie coal mine properties. They sent me a note telling me exactly what had happened.

The truth of their statement, I mean, their eyewitness account, was totally different from what the Zambians were claiming in the local press. So I had this problem of conscience, how do you deal with that sort of thing, or should you? I took an African colleague into confidence. He advised silence. But contrary to his advice I sought out the President's private secretary, gave him a copy of the victim's letter and said I thought the President should hear it from the other side. Naturally I had no reason to go public. Nothing further was said by the government.

The occasion resulted in close collaboration with the Canadians who had just established a mission. They hadn't even secure communications so I invited them to use ours. They were pouring a lot of aid in to Zambia and so the Canadian parliament seized upon this attack on their citizens. They wanted to cut off all aid to Zambia. "They're killing our people," was the angry position of the Canadian public.

Q: This was what year?

WILKOWSKI: Oh, 1974, I believe. So I told Ambassador Broadbridge, my Canadian colleague, that I thought that, since they had suffered loss of life, they should go first in seeking indemnification from the Zambians and that we would follow depending on results of their efforts. It was messy, because the Zambians didn't want to pay for the damage that they had done, but we finally did get a monetary settlement. It was important, I thought, that they recognize this violation of international law. Whether they could afford it or not, I felt they just had to pay something and learn how to be a responsible world community. [Laughter] The two Americans lost time off from their jobs, income as well as the cost of their incomplete round-the-world travel and medical expenses.

Q: If there's a price on it, it impresses a little more. It's like the two by four on the mule.

WILKOWSKI: The Zambians screamed in objection. "How can we do this? Our own citizens--Zambians--are being shot up all the time on the border." That was true. There were all sorts of booby traps down there, planted either by Rhodesians, South Africans or both. But the Zambians feared a deluge of monetary claims from Zambian relatives.

Q: Well, that's just normal African social life.

WILKOWSKI: Right, I told the Zambians, "Well, that's your problem, you know." The Zambians countered that it would set a precedent. "We'll have debate."

"That's your problem. In all justice there were two Americans who saved for an around-the-world tour. They lost their tour, their savings, and six months out of work because of injuries." Anyhow, the Zambians paid up.

To improve security we got the U.S. Marines in. After that I set about getting the Zambian Foreign Minister to visit the U.S. in preparation--I hoped--for a visit from President Kaunda--long postponed since Nixon days.

Q: *You hadn't had Marines in your Embassy before?*

WILKOWSKI: No, absolutely not. The Zambians were against it; had even--some years earlier--ruled against an Air Attaché shuttling between Mauritius and Zambia.

Q: *Oh, my.*

WILKOWSKI: Eventually, I got the Zambian Foreign Minister to the U.S. and a visit with Kissinger. Finally, we got Kaunda to the White House where he promptly said all the wrong things as regards U.S. disregard for the injustices of southern Africa--"here is the America of Washington and Lincoln, the champion of democracy of yesteryear, etc." That made Kissinger furious and--believe it or not--I was held responsible. To this day when Kissinger sees me, he calls me, "My nemesis." [Laughter] From him I consider this an accolade.

Q: *He fired me, too [Laughter] He didn't fire you, but he fired me.*

WILKOWSKI: He tried to by telephone but Africa is a long way from Washington. Those were pretty exciting, heady times. Well, okay, Zambia ends, I came back to the United States under a few clouds, which we could discuss privately. I don't know who saved my skin and protected me from the Secretary but someone did and I'm grateful. As usual, there were no assignments ready for me--a bad sign. If your transfer happens to coincide with an opening at some post, fine. That's the Foreign Service. I became a diplomat-in-residence at Occidental College, which was hardly Siberia, but it was not an immediate second ambassadorship. But that's how the Foreign Service works more often than not, unless there's been a lot of buttering-up with the in-group.

Q: *A rather comfortable Siberia.*

WILKOWSKI: Yes, I did a lot of lecturing. I did over a hundred lectures out there, as well as being available to consult with students, faculty or alumni.

Q: *Primarily on Africa, or...*

WILKOWSKI: Yes, southern Africa.

Q: *Southern Africa.*

WILKOWSKI: I also recruited for the State Department. That was very interesting because I lectured up and down California and around the United States, too. I made some very interesting trips.

Q: *That was from '74, '75?*

WILKOWSKI: Later. I was in Zambia from 1973-77. Oh, I forgot to tell you another "accomplishment," referred to earlier in passing. After getting Kaunda to the States, I got Kissinger to Zambia to make the important policy statement, shifting U.S. "negligence" to "concern and involvement" in the regional problems of southern Africa. I also got Duke Ellington to Zambia. [Laughter] Similarity.

Q: *That would be easier.*

WILKOWSKI: Yes, Kissinger made a momentous speech in Lusaka on U.S. foreign policy in southern Africa. To me it was the answer to all of those urgent cables I had been sending. If you read Helen Kitchen's monograph--she considers that speech a turning point in our policy in southern Africa, too. She's with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The U.S. had been utterly rhetorical before, just words, words, words on justice, majority rule, and so forth. But eventually Kissinger put his shoulder to the Lancaster House agreements and got down to work on them and eventually there was movement on Rhodesia becoming independent Zimbabwe. It's true that my successors did far more in participating in negotiations in London than I ever thought of doing, but I felt satisfied that in my mission we laid the groundwork toward a significant change in policy on southern Africa.

Q: *And you got the Secretary of State to speak up on the African question.*

WILKOWSKI: Exactly, that's right.

Q: *When he was Secretary of State.*

WILKOWSKI: Yes. His visit to Zambia was a big success, even though he didn't see hippopotamus down at the Zambezi River and Victoria Falls. Of course, he held me personally responsible for that, blaming me for "too many FSOs" in the boat we provided, even though my niece (visiting) and I were the only others on board plus his phalanx of Secret Service (the real overload).

Q: *He does have occasional touches of humor. You should have said we didn't have hippopotamus on our payroll.*

WILKOWSKI: Bill, he might have gotten personal at that point. I ran that risk.

Q: *You could ask the CIA. They got all kinds of people on the payroll.*

WILKOWSKI: Yes.

Q: I understood, way back when--and I guess it's declassifiable now--but way back when I had the British desk in the '60s, after I came back from Canada, I had British, Canadian, Scandinavian, Irish, Maltese and West Indies. I understood then that we had been providing various forms of subvention for quite a number of African leaders, including Kaunda. I wouldn't ask you to confirm or deny that.

WILKOWSKI: No, I simply couldn't comment on that.

Q: But it was widely said, should we say, around town that this was the case.

WILKOWSKI: I know. We also had some very, very touchy...

Q: I'm sure the British were doing it, too.

WILKOWSKI: ...problems with Angola and arms to Angola, if you recall, and I had a terrible dustup with Dick Clark. It's funny. When I have problems with people like that, I immediately forget their names. Our Assistant Secretary of State--Dick Moose. I could tell you a horror story about that.

Q: Is that the older or the younger Moose?

WILKOWSKI: Oh, younger Moose, I think. He was Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. He had been Under Secretary for Administration.

Q: His father had the African division, and I had a hell of a fight with him back in 1946 or '47 over the French controls on currency in Morocco, because the Moroccans claimed that by our treaty with the sultan, going back to, I don't know, the Monroe Administration or Adams or somebody, that we did not have to comply with French currency regulations. And, of course, the French were responsible for currency because it was part of the franc zone under the European community under the Marshall Plan. And this eventually ended up with a real dustup in court and all over the place by Americans who had gone into business in Morocco and could see this loophole.

What they were doing was bringing quantities of things that the French were not importing for currency reasons. They'd bring them into Morocco and then sell them in France for francs, and then turn around and buy more dollars and go ahead, you know. That was a real loophole in the French system. Mr. Moose ran the African division, and Doug MacArthur and Elim O'Shaughnessy were running WE in Europe and I was in commercial policy, and we had periodic meetings with Mr. Moose. We never could dislodge him from this position.

WILKOWSKI: Well, I never knew the father, but I had quite enough of the...

Q: He was so dedicated to Africa, you know.

WILKOWSKI: Yes, I had quite enough of the son. However, I saw Dick Moose at a meeting a couple of years ago and he'd aged tremendously. His hair was snow white, and he was reasonably civil. But I felt this was another situation of unfairness where people are in position of authority and use too much of it. I, myself, may have been guilty of this at times. You begin to use your authority carelessly and at times can be excessively harsh on other people. It's just the wrong way to go. You only become less harsh, I think, the older you get. It's just too bad they don't use us now in our stage of grand wisdom now that we're senior citizens. [Laughter]

Q: *The argument with Moose was about Angola?*

WILKOWSKI: It was about meeting Kaunda. Do you want to hear this story?

Q: *Yes. I think it's relevant, important.*

WILKOWSKI: Well, it's simply a problem that every Ambassador runs into. Along comes a Senator, Dick Clark from Iowa, and Dick Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and Clark wanted to see Kaunda alone. I said, "Goodness, Senator, this is going to be very awkward. This is the eve of President Kaunda's historic meeting with Prime Minister Botha from South Africa at Victoria Falls. It's very important for the State Department to know what he's thinking about at this time and what he intends to do. I'm sorry, but I made the appointment for both of us and Kaunda expects both of us. If you want to meet with him privately, you can raise the question."

"No," said Clark, "you have to call him first and tell him that I want to meet with him alone."

And I said, "Well, we're just about a half-hour before the meeting. It would be rude to call. I think we should just go through with it, and you can play it by ear." So then Moose and Clark buzzed their heads together in the corner, and came back and allowed we should all go. So we set forth in the car, flags flying, over to State House, and got in and went to the meeting. By the way, Moose, without even asking, brought his wife along!

Q: *To this meeting?*

WILKOWSKI: To this meeting. So there was Moose and his wife; Dick Clark; Mark Chona, the President's Executive Assistant, and myself. Everything was chummy, and we were into the meeting about 10, 15 minutes when Moose stood. He just got up on his feet and said, "Well, Mr. President, I know you'll want to meet with the Senator alone. You have important things to discuss because you'll be meeting with Prime Minister Botha tomorrow." By the way, it was scheduled in a railway car perched perilously over Victoria Falls, halfway in Rhodesia, half in Zambia--the Zambians laughingly called it the "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," which I thought was hysterical. [Laughter] Chattanooga Choo-Choo.

Q: *That's great.*

WILKOWSKI: So, Moose stood up, and Mark Chona, who was taking notes, looked puzzled at me. He raised his two open hands to me with an expression of, "What does this mean?" I shrugged my shoulders, "Beats me."

"And so we will leave you," said Moose dramatically as he and his wife left. I sat there glued to the chair. Dick Clark glowered at me, and Kaunda said, "Mr. Senator, I want you to know we never have any secrets from the American Ambassador, so let us continue with this meeting."

Q: *Saved by the other side. [Laughter]*

WILKOWSKI: So we continued with the meeting.

Q: *He could have always found out from the Zambians afterwards what happened that day.*

WILKOWSKI: Yes, of course.

Q: *Well, you were dead right. That's what Jim Akins did with Kissinger in Saudi Arabia.*

WILKOWSKI: Exactly. It happens all the time in the Foreign Service.

Q: *But you had a better point than Akins. The Secretary of State can say, "I'm going to see this guy alone." He's got every right to do that, because you're working for the Secretary of State. And you were working for Moose--sort of--but the Senator had no business to instruct you.*

WILKOWSKI: That's right. I recall what happened after the meeting, there was a brief private session as they walked down the hall. I must say, Kaunda was gallant; he always was. He had that way.

Q: *He was a decent guy.*

WILKOWSKI: Yes, very decent. Even when I returned last year en route back from a business trip to South Africa I had to visit Zambia to evaluate a VITA development project and Kaunda had a working breakfast for me. It was very cordial, very nice. He's a very decent man. He gave me his picture, signed it, and I have it.

BROOKS WRAMPELMEIER
Political Officer/Deputy Chief of Mission
Lusaka (1974-1976)

Brooks Wrampelmeier was born in Ohio in 1934. He received his bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1956. His career has included positions in Beirut, Amman, Jeddah, Lusaka, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, and Dhahran. Mr. Wrampelmeier was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 2000.

WRAMPELMEIER: I left the Arabian Peninsula Office and the Arab world and went to Africa. The reason I went to Zambia was that I was scheduled to go to Abu Dhabi as DCM but Henry Kissinger had come up with his Global Personnel Policy, or GLOP. Suddenly I was told I could go anywhere in the world except the Arab part. I started desperately looking around for a job, but this was May and I was supposed to be transferred in the summer, so most of the jobs were already filled. I eventually came up with Zambia which didn't involve any language training as the main language is English and they had schooling for my sons. So, we went to Zambia for two years.

Q: So you were in Zambia from 1974 to 1976.

WRAMPELMEIER: Right. Jean Wilkowski was the ambassador and Harvey Nelson was the DCM when I arrived. I was the sole political officer. It was not a very large embassy. I think there were 15 Americans total. One of my principal duties there was to maintain liaison with the so-called freedom fighter movements from other southern African countries. In the spring of 1976 the then DCM, Peter Lord, had to return to Washington and I became acting DCM for the remainder of my tour.

Q: It was called a front line state.

WRAMPELMEIER: It was called a front line state because you had all of these exiles from Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique and Angola in Zambia and they all had offices there. Increasingly we became involved in efforts to find some sort of agreement between the African nationalist movement in Rhodesia and Ian Smith's minority rule. The climax, of course, was Henry Kissinger's safari to Zambia and other African countries in the spring of 1976 during which he made a statement indicating that the United States was going to take a much greater interest in Africa than it had before. The Secretary's speech certainly delighted Kenneth Kaunda, the President of Zambia. I think it did lead to a more activist U.S. role on the Rhodesian question. After I left Jean Wilkowski was replaced by Steve Low (who also grew up in Wyoming, Ohio). Steve spent a good part of his tour as Ambassador to Zambia on airplanes traveling between Washington, London, Lusaka, Harare, Cape Town and Pretoria trying to negotiate, along with the British, some way in which the white minority leadership in what is now Zimbabwe would give way to a government based on majority rule.

Other than that there wasn't much going on. Zambian internal politics were dominated by the Zambian United National Independent Party (UNIP) and Kaunda dominated the UNIP.

Q: This was 1974-76. What was our reading on Kaunda then?

WRAMPELMEIER: Kaunda was a very charismatic figure. I think he was a man who had a genuinely humane character. His political philosophy was what he called humanism in which he was looking for the betterment of his people. The problem was that just about the time I arrived, the price of copper, Zambia's principal export, plummeted. This was virtually the end of the Vietnam war and as we didn't need as much copper anymore; this caused the price to fall. In addition, the 1974 Portuguese revolution had led to the independence of Mozambique and Angola followed by further civil strife in both countries. This complicated Zambia's ability to

ship out its copper. The normal transit lines east and west were interrupted. Furthermore, the Zambians for political reasons had decided in 1973 to close their border with Rhodesia and they could no longer ship their copper by rail through Rhodesia to ports in South Africa. So along with falling copper prices they were having trouble getting their copper to market. The Chinese were building the TanZam railroad and we had helped to build a road up to Dar es Salaam, about 900 miles away, but still they couldn't get much copper out that way, and the railroad wasn't finished until about the time I left in 1976.

So Zambia just didn't have any money. One indication of their economic problem: when I arrived, the principal Lusaka book store was full of books, mostly British, but when I left it had only local newspapers and the complete works of Lenin in English that had been donated by the Soviets. Almost everything had to be imported. You couldn't get soap, you couldn't get tea, and if you could get tea you couldn't get coffee. As my children would say, the only thing that there was no shortage of in Zambia was shortages. I think Kaunda had a very, very difficult time trying to provide some sort of economic satisfaction to a growing number of people and there were occasional food riots.

Q: Did Kaunda brook opposition?

WRAMPELMEIER: No. Not really. The people who were serious threats to him were put in jail for one reason or another. It was not a cruel regime. People weren't hanged or disappeared, but if individuals were deemed political threats he found some way to push them off to the side and the most serious threats to him ended up in jail.

Q: So there was no real political activity. What was your impression of the representation of the freedom fighters?

WRAMPELMEIER: Some were fairly good. I got to know Sam Nujoma, head the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and first President of independent Namibia. He was impressive, I think. SWAPO people were a bit unsure of their relationship with us. Shortly before Secretary Kissinger was due to visit Zambia, Ambassador Wilkowski suggested to the Department that when he came he might want to talk to Nujoma. I got a 4:30 am phone call from Bill Schaufele, then Assistant Secretary for Africa, who had been unable to arouse the Ambassador. Schaufele said that the Secretary did not wish to consider that suggestion and to tell the ambassador not to press it. I think that Kissinger was hoping to enlist the South Africans' cooperation on the Rhodesian problem. South Africa at that time controlled Namibia and Kissinger did not want to do something at which they would take offense. Shortly thereafter, Senator Charles Percy, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, came through Lusaka with his wife. I had arranged for them to meet some SWAPO people at my residence one evening. In the course of this meeting Senator Percy said, "Well, are you going to be meeting with Kissinger when he comes?" The SWAPO men obviously had not been briefed on this and sort of hemmed and hawed. Percy said, "Well, if the only problem is that you have not yet received an invitation, I'm giving you an invitation." I was sitting there sweating and wondering what I should say when Mrs. Percy broke in and said, "Chuck you can't do that." Well, I think SWAPO as well was uneasy about the idea of such a meeting, so none occurred.

The Secretary did want to meet with the Rhodesian African nationalist leaders. At that time, Joshua Nkomo led one group, the Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union (ZANU), composed primarily of Ndebele tribesmen, while Ndabini Sithole led the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) dominated by members of the Shona tribe. A third leader, Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa, had attempted to form a compromise leadership and ended by creating still a third faction. The three were invited to meet with Kissinger but Sithole backed out and so did Muzorewa, so only Nkomo met with the Secretary in Lusaka.

I called a few times on an elderly couple in the ANC's Lusaka office but I didn't meet any of the South African nationalist leaders and I had no contact with the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC). And, who else? Oh, the Angolans. I did see some of the UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) people and in fact UNITA's leader, the late Jonas Savimbi, came to lunch with the ambassador a few times. At that point we saw Savimbi as a counterweight to what we perceived as a pro-Soviet Marxist regime in Angola. We were therefore interested in talking to Savimbi. I found him a charismatic individual but clearly no democrat.

Q: We talk about democracy, but did you see much commitment to democracy and did it really make much sense during the early emergence period of African states?

WRAMPPELMEIER: Well, one saw a great deal of lip service given to democracy, but I didn't see much evidence of it. In Zambia, the party (UNIP) dominated political life and I don't think elections within the party were all that free. And certainly the same was true in the freedom movements. Their object was to achieve independence and/or majority rule and they did not expect this was going to be done by free and open elections. Such elections were not going to be held by the colonial or white minority regimes and therefore their objective was to develop enough of a military threat plus political power to try to get the U.S. and Brits to put the pressure on the Rhodesians and South Africans.

One of the odd little things that I was responsible for became apparent shortly after my arrival in Lusaka. I opened a desk drawer and found a full box of what I first thought were brightly colored balloons. I then learned that I was the post's family planning programs officer and these colorful balloon-like things were condoms to take around to organizations involved in family planning. At one point I even ran a small police training program which came at the tail end of the AID public security program. Another task, and one that helped gain me entrée into the various African nationalist movement offices, was to coordinate the granting of scholarships to southern African refugees to study in the U.S.

We had a number of official and Congressional visitors because of the growing interest in Rhodesia and Angola. They all tended to arrive on Friday night and leave on Monday morning and they wanted to see the president over the weekend, which after a while was a bit of a strain. We started dropping hints, couldn't somebody come during the week? It primarily had to do with the plane schedules, however.

In the spring of 1976 we had a visit from Senator Frank Church, accompanied by Dick Moose, Mrs. Moose, and another Senate staffer. Ambassador Wilkowski clashed with Church and

Moose when they tried to exclude her from their meeting with President Kaunda. She attended anyway and the visit ended with bruised feelings on both sides. Church was concerned that the Administration was secretly supporting Savimbi in the Angola civil war and later succeeded in getting legislation passed to curtail such activities.

Other than that I found it a very interesting time and certainly enjoyed the experience of seeing a Kissinger visit which was second only to a presidential one in terms of the amount of logistics involved. There were three aircraft, one for his armored car. He had Secret Service protection and a crowd of correspondents came with him.

Q: He was Secretary of State.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, he was Secretary of State at this time. It was really quite an enterprise. We had so few people at post that we had to draft officers in from posts all over Africa to help out. One officer did nothing but stand in the courtyard of the embassy and direct the taxis we had shuttling between the embassy and the hotels.

Q: Did Kissinger stick with his staff or was he working on a different level?

WRAMPELMEIER: He was working on his own level. We dealt with his staff, who could be difficult enough on occasions. The visit however went fairly well. The Zambians wanted Kissinger to fly down to Livingstone to see the Victoria Falls and be photographed looking across the Zambezi River into Rhodesia. Kissinger agreed to go down. However, his plane, a 707, was too big for Livingstone's small airport and he had to fly down in a Zambian plane. When the party got down there the local governor had arranged all kinds of dancing, dinner and a boat ride. So they boarded a boat and went out on the river above the falls. Someone said, "Oh, look over there," and everybody went to one side of the boat which was in danger of tipping over until Ambassador Wilkowski yelled, "Oh, everybody get back," and got everyone back to the center of the boat. We learned later that neither the Secretary nor Mrs. Kissinger liked small boats, but nobody had told the Zambians. It was, I think, a highly successful visit. It somehow or other brought Africa up on the sights of Washington where it had not been very high to that point.

In July 1976 I left Lusaka, came back to Washington, and spent a year of university training in Middle East studies at SAIS (School of Advanced International Studies). It was very worthwhile and I had a good time.

Q: To go back to Lusaka, I take it AIDS was not a problem.

WRAMPELMEIER: Sexual diseases were common because of the promiscuity in the population but AIDS had not yet appeared.

Q: And the trucking patterns, too, I understand.

WRAMPELMEIER: I think so. But largely it was a society where a great deal of promiscuity was accepted although it was also a very strong church-going society. There was some concern

about sexual disease. Ultimately, one of Kaunda's sons died of AIDS, but that was years later.

We didn't get around much in Zambia. I never got to a game park, for example, except for a little one outside of Livingstone.

Q: Were the copper mines run by Zambians by this time?

WRAMPPELMEIER: They were parastatals run by Zambian Government-owned companies and many of the officials were Zambians. But most of the senior miners, the more experienced miners, tended to be South Africans, Rhodesian, or British. There was always a bit of racial tension there. These were people who were key because there were not enough Zambians, blue collar types, who had training or experience to replace them. Many of these people were not friendly to Africans. The Zambians were always concerned that there not be any parties on the night of the anniversary of the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) by the white minority regime in Rhodesia. If any of the white miners had a party that night it was suspected that they were celebrating UDI. Once, as part of this humanistic program, Kaunda announced that he was going to nationalize the two private medical clinics – the one in Lusaka and the other in the Copper Belt, which were used primarily by the expatriates – because they charged money. He had to reverse that decision because so many of the foreign white workers were going to quit if they could not have access to the clinics. They would have been required instead to go to the government hospitals which they didn't trust and consequently were not going to stay. Kaunda had to pull back from that decision and, while the clinics were nominally nationalized, they were allowed to operate as before so that the same standards could be maintained. The government hospitals, unfortunately, were not all that good. There were always long lines of people waiting to get in and be seen. I think Kaunda had his heart in the right place but he just didn't have the resources to maintain the sort of welfare state that he wanted to run.

Q: Were we making any effort to promote either democracy or a capitalist economy?

WRAMPPELMEIER: I wouldn't say that. We made some effort to try to help them with their transportation system so that they could get their copper to market. That was one of our principal USAID programs. We didn't have a USAID mission which is why I became family planning officer and public safety officer and a couple of other odd jobs. We didn't have a big AID program at all. It was these relatively small things. I think the program to try to get some trucks in to take things from the Copper Belt up to Dar es Salaam was probably our biggest USAID program and that ran into all sorts of trouble. Eventually most of the trucks were sidelined due to a contract which didn't work out. I can't remember what money we actually put into it, but in general it was an area where we were not spending very much money.

Q: Did we have concerns about the Soviet Union, Communist China and North Korea in messing around there?

WRAMPPELMEIER: Yes, they were certainly there. The Soviets, the Chinese, the North Koreans and most of the Eastern Bloc were represented in Zambia. There was some reason why the Zambians felt they might be a little more compatible politically because they were much more outspoken about their support for southern African national movements. The Chinese, of course,

were building the railway to Dar es Salaam. I don't remember the Soviets doing much or recall whether any of the Eastern European countries had big programs. Some of the Western Europeans, especially the UK and the Scandinavians, had programs mostly for providing technical assistance.

Q: When you left there in 1976, what was your view of Africa?

WRAMPELMEIER: My feeling was that I wanted to get back where I could have sand between my toes. Zambia was interesting and I'm glad I served there because I really should have seen something of the world besides the Middle East. I thought things looked like they might be moving in Africa, but I really didn't have that much of a sense of Africa as a whole. Certainly things that were going on in West Africa were not all that encouraging, Ethiopia had a revolution in 1974 and Angola was falling apart. In general I had the feeling that socialist regimes in Africa were not working very well at all, which was not encouraging for their prosperity and development.

Q: In my interviews I have heard people express this and probably next to AIDS, the greatest blight on much of Africa was the London School of Economics. That includes India, too. They cranked out these people trying to put statism into these countries.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, Kaunda's model was President Nyerere in Tanzania, a product I believe of the University of Edinburgh. Obviously Nyerere wasn't doing all that well in Tanzania and Zambian humanism wasn't doing well either. But certainly Tanzania was a better model than some. However, it was not the sort of model that the IMF (International Monetary Fund) would have approved of in terms of making an effective national economy. The Zambians always felt a little self-conscious that they didn't have a distinctive national dress like the West Africans' very colorful robes and head dresses. Most Zambians dressed in Western clothing because I think the native dress up until the British arrived in the late 19th Century was lion skins, which were no longer chic, much less available. Tourism was an important factor for the Zambian economy, but not as many tourists came to Zambia as visited Kenya or South Africa. There were two major game parks which people did visit but they had limited facilities. Other than the game parks and Victoria Falls, there wasn't much reason to come to Zambia for tourism. So much of the Zambian economy was run by people on contract. The airline was run by Alitalia and later by Aer Lingus. There were a few other Western companies that were involved in some way or other in helping them.

PETER P. LORD
Deputy Chief of Mission
Lusaka (1975-1976)

Peter P. Lord was born in Italy in 1929. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1952 he served in the US Navy from 1952-1955. Later on, he earned his master's degree from Columbia University in 1965. His career has included positions in Khorramshahr, Caracas, Arequipa, Lima, Bridgetown,

Lusaka, and Yaoundé. Mr. Lord was interviewed by Lambert Heyniger, in April 1998.

Q: You said you had learned while you were at the War College that you were going to be assigned to Lusaka in Zambia. How did that come about?

LORD: I liked being DCM in Barbados so I looked to see what else would be available. The job in Lusaka was the one that fell my way.

Q: The assignment to Barbados in a certain sense represented a moving away for you from Latin America. You never went back. Most FSOs who get into Latin American affairs never escape.

LORD: Well, there are certain advantages to that. Once you become well known in a bureau and all your experience is there you are likely to find a home and jobs there. Some say that a bureau after a while has an obligation to use you, take care of you. If you don't have a parent bureau in that sense, you are an outsider. There probably is some truth to that. But, at the time there were no jobs coming up at my grade level in Latin America...

Q: You were by this time?

LORD: I was a class 3 I believe.

Q: I would think that most DCM jobs in Latin America would be really senior officer, FSO-2 and up.

LORD: That's right. The Bridgetown job was classified at a level 3 and I as a 4 was put in there because of the need at the time.

Q: So, you were offered Lusaka, said, "Fine" and off you went arriving in Lusaka in 1975.

LORD: We got there in August, 1975.

Q: Who was there?

LORD: The ambassador was Jean Wilkowski. That assignment was made fairly early in the year. When I was still at the War College, she came to Washington on consultation with an agenda that she felt I could help her with. The War College is pretty much a full-time job and you don't have a telephone in easy reach. You are at Fort McNair.

Q: What did she want?

LORD: I can't remember the project now but it was something that would be normal for the desk officer to do, but the desk officer was busy, too.

Q: How was Ambassador Wilkowski different from Ambassador Donovan?

LORD: She was much more dynamic, much higher key in terms of operating style. She had a lot

of good ideas, all of them requiring a certain amount of staff time to work out. The embassy in Lusaka was a small embassy: one political officer, one economic officer, one consular officer, DCM, a one-man USIS operation, and no Peace Corps. Her ideas and projects really stretched that embassy to its limit. A person with as much momentum as she had really deserved a larger embassy and staff.

Q: I'm getting the impression that people felt they were working pretty hard.

LORD: Yes, she kept everybody very busy. I came in in the middle of this as DCM and became the liaison between her and the staff. She was really pretty much a hands on ambassador and used to get involved in everything. At times one felt she really didn't need a DCM because she liked to deal directly with the operative officers themselves. Anyway, I found it a difficult situation and found her difficult to work with. She would change her mind, which everybody has a right to do, but wouldn't always keep you informed.

Q: The job of a DCM is often to be the alter ego for the ambassador with the assumption that the ambassador is out of the embassy a great deal attending diplomatic functions or meeting with host country people and that the DCM runs the embassy somewhat like the head of chancery in the British service. But, if your ambassador is a very hands on person who wants to know in some detail what is going on in the consular section, that gets in the way of you or any other DCM who is trying to be the supervisor of the various embassy sections.

LORD: Unlike in Bridgetown where I had been the ambassador's alter ego and could step into her role vis-a-vis the host government, etc., that was not the case in Lusaka because she handled herself all of the relationship with the president of the country, Kenneth Kaunda, who ran pretty much a one-man show himself and was the key government person. My period in Zambia coincided with the proxy cold war going on in Angola where we were supporting one side in the civil war there and the Russians were supporting the other side. Part of our support involved Zambia as a transient country. I was never brought into any of that.

Q: This is the United States government on a semi-covert basis supporting Jonas Sivimbi and UNITA?

LORD: Yes, I would say so, but it wasn't part of my job description or the embassy's really. Understandably, if it was going to be of a covert nature it would be held closely. But, this was true in general of relations with the people at the ministerial level, etc.

Q: Was Ambassador Wilkowski dealing with that as well as the normal diplomatic considerations? Was she also the one who supervised the assistance to the Angolans?

LORD: I think much of it was coordinated between her and Kaunda. I can't get into that because it was not an area that I was privy to.

Q: It could be that Zambia was an unusual situation but I thought that in most embassies whatever clearances and activities the ambassador was privy to, the DCM was privy to as well.

LORD: That frequently is the case but that was not the case there.

Q: Some of the main things that concern the United States in Zambia are copper mining, the railway that had been built by the Chinese from Tanzania to Lusaka, the whole question of Zambia's isolation from the rest of the world because so many of the supply routes went through South Africa and on the other hand Zambia's involvement in the liberation of Southern Rhodesia.

LORD: Southern Rhodesia was another big issue at the time. Kaunda was leading the African effort to bring majority rule to Southern Rhodesia. At that time the border was closed and we had no relations with Southern Rhodesia. Most of these issues were Zambian issues rather than bilateral issues. We had a position and would make that known from time to time and consult, but Kaunda was his own man, and very much a leader of the third world and kept the U.S. at arms length.

Q: Was Mugabe in Lusaka?

LORD: I don't recall. He might have been in and out but he was not a player at the time.

Q: Who handled embassy relations with the liberation forces?

LORD: I think that Mugabe and the other nationalists were located in Tanzania.

Q: Along with the South Africans.

LORD: Yes. Zambia was for one reason or another not a location where the nationalists were active.

Q: It also might be somewhat dangerous because the South African security and secret police could reach out to some extent through Southern Rhodesia and cause trouble for the insurgents if in Zambia much more easily than they could in Dar es Salaam.

LORD: Zambia was feeling very much its geographic landlocked situation which affected its ability to export its copper.

Q: Was the Benguela railroad open at that time?

LORD: It was not open; it had been sabotaged. That was very serious and Zambia was trying to develop alternative railroad transport through Mozambique and through Tanzania.

Q: How was that working?

LORD: After a point it was working all right but they were having trouble getting the same volume of exports out as they had before the sabotage.

Q: I had been in Dar es Salaam a bit earlier and it is one thing to build a railroad from the coast to Zambia, but you also need to improve the port if you are really going to accelerate imports

and exports. When I left Tanzania not much had been done to really transform the port in Dar es Salaam.

LORD: I think the port of Dar and the port of Beira in Mozambique were both bottlenecks for Zambian exports and imports. Zambia at this time was just beginning a long downturn in its copper earnings. Not only were they having trouble with transportation but the copper prices were also on a continual decline. So, Zambia has been in serious economic trouble ever since I was there.

Q: Could you tell us a little more about President Kaunda's dissatisfaction with American policy towards Southern Africa?

LORD: He was a great advocate of majority rule in Southern Rhodesia and in South Africa. He was always dissatisfied with the perceived lack of support. But, he and Ambassador Wilkowski seemed to have a good relationship. She spent a lot of time in his office. Bilateral relations between the two countries were really carried on between her and him. Everything else was secondary. Otherwise, it was not a particularly interesting time to be in Zambia because Zambia took a neutralist position. The Chinese and Russian embassies there were big. The government was not receptive to us really. It was a very formal relationship and the atmosphere was not one where you could easily develop Zambian contacts of a political nature or even of the cultural nature. The Zambians took their lead from Kaunda. While Zambia had been subject to British influence in the past, it didn't seem to have sunk in very much in terms of friendly pro-Western attitudes.

Q: This is very much the case when I was in Dar. We had a great deal of difficulty persuading Tanzanian officials to come for dinner or to a reception. When USIS brought people and attractions to Tanzania, people didn't really turn out very much for them. Did you, yourself, have the chance to travel around the country much?

LORD: It was an appealing place to be in terms of the wildlife and the climate. We did get down to Victoria Falls on the Zambezi river, and to the game park at Kafue in the West. We did not get to the game park in eastern Zambia or the game park just across the border in Botswana. So, there was plenty we didn't get to because our tour was curtailed.

Q: Any interesting American visitors that you had a chance to take to some of the tourist areas?

LORD: Not really. Zambia was pretty much off the beaten path.

Q: Were your kids by this time going to grade school? Was there an international school in Lusaka?

LORD: There was an international school and our two oldest daughters were there. This was their first time in school, so they were feeling their way. I think they enjoyed it. Our tour was curtailed and we left in March. My wife's mother was dying of cancer and she left to go back to take care of her. The ambassador kindly consented to arranging a compassionate transfer for us. We would have been separated and the children would have been affected at that age.

Furthermore, it gave her the chance to find another DCM.

Q: Who replaced you?

LORD: I can't remember who came in as DCM, but Goody Cooke was sent out to fill in and to help prepare for the upcoming visit of Secretary Kissinger some time later that spring.

Q: Did you ever compare notes with him and battle scars?

LORD: He said he was left alone pretty much to work on the Kissinger visit and there didn't seem to be any problems.

STEPHEN LOW
Ambassador
Zambia (1976-1979)

Ambassador Stephen Low was born in Ohio in 1927. He received his bachelor's degree from Yale, and his master's and doctorate from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. In addition to Nigeria, Ambassador Low served in Uganda, Senegal, and Zambia. He was interviewed by Professor I.W. Zartman in 1988.

Q: Let's turn to Zambia.

LOW: I was in Zambia from 1976-1979.

Q: Let's talk first about the process. Zambia was pretty much a province of the professional Foreign Service with regard to the ambassador.

LOW: There was not a long line of political candidates for the position. I don't think it ever had a non-career ambassador, before or since. Southern Rhodesia and now Zimbabwe had on some occasions, but nobody really knew much about Zambia or wanted to go there. Actually, it's a more pleasant and interesting post than might be thought. But, it was clearly a career appointment.

Q: So, once the decision was made, there was no particular problem.

LOW: Not as far as I'm aware.

Q: In Zambia in 1976 when you went out there, what was the situation?

LOW: It was a very interesting moment. Kenneth Kaunda had been President since independence in 1963. The war for social and political justice and independence in Southern Rhodesia had been going on for five or six years with increasing violence. The British had been making a number of efforts to resolve the matter, but they were torn, on the one hand, between

not wanting to get involved and, on the other, wanting to honor their obligation to the indigenous population to leave it in a position to defend itself. It was the time following what's known as UDI, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence of 1965, in which the white government headed by Ian Smith, was in complete control with no African representation. In 1965 the British had declared that they would not resist UDI with armed forces, which emboldened Smith to go ahead with it. Their announcement was a mistake. That was Harold Wilson, I believe. On the one hand, they said they wouldn't resist it with armed force. On the other hand, they would not relinquish their legal claim that Southern Rhodesia was British territory and they would not negotiate or turn it over to any government without the agreement of the majority of Africans. There was an impasse which was increasingly opposed by two separate, organized African resistance armies.

A number of negotiations had taken place at various places, on warships and trains over Victoria Falls, between Smith, the British and the African leaders to find a satisfactory constitutional framework to which the Africans would agree. They had not made much progress by that time. But two other completely extraneous events had occurred which changed things radically. A coup d'état in 1974 had resulted in replacement of the dictatorship in Portugal by a democratically elected government which quickly withdrew from both Mozambique and Angola on Rhodesia's borders. Both countries soon became dominated by left-wing, independent African forces. That meant a source of arms and easy asylum on the Rhodesian border became available to the African independence forces. Prior to that only Zambia served that function, and it was constrained by being a landlocked state with supply routes running through apartheid controlled South Africa or Portuguese possessions. It suddenly became much more problematic that white rule could long survive in Rhodesia and perhaps even in South Africa. It was becoming increasingly evident that the U.S. would have to change its previous position that southern Africa was a British responsibility which we may not have liked, but which we would not interfere in.

The other important external factor was the end of the Vietnam War. That meant two things. First, freed of his Vietnam preoccupation, Kissinger now had time to give his attention to other parts of the world, areas where we might improve our international image. He immediately saw that a new more active role for the U.S. was needed in Southern Africa and he decided to take a trip through Africa in the spring of 1976. Before I got there he declared, in Lusaka, Zambia, that the United States was in favor of self-government in Rhodesia. I arrived two weeks before Kissinger was due to visit Zambia and meet with Smith in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe). I hadn't yet had a chance to present my credentials formally, which meant I had no formal representative role. Kaunda got around that by always referring to me in third person. He couldn't have been nicer. I was fully involved and included in everything two weeks after I had arrived. Meanwhile Smith had accepted the principle of majority rule in Southern Rhodesia. Until 1977 I traveled and focused on getting to know Zambia.

Since his first trip, Kissinger had completely changed U.S. policy, taken over the negotiations between the independent but illegal white Southern Rhodesian government and the Africans, introduced the principle of majority rule as the basis for world recognition of the independence of Southern Rhodesia and gotten it accepted by the Smith white ruled government of the country. The next step was to return the British to the negotiations. It was agreed that they would

chair a meeting with the Rhodesians and Africans in Geneva. But, then came the election of 1976 in the United States. Ford was defeated and Kissinger became a lame duck Secretary of State. His influence was badly weakened and the conference ended in complete failure. Carter became President and Vance took over as Secretary of State. In the meantime the British had also undergone a change of leadership. Harold Wilson had resigned and the foreign minister, Jim Callahan, had taken his place with Tony Crosland named foreign minister. But before significant negotiations could be resumed, Crosland died and Dr. David Owen was appointed. Owen, who was a brilliant, somewhat impulsive, but caring individual, really wanted to achieve a settlement in southern Africa. Rhodesia was even more of a thorn in the British side than Panama or later South Africa was for us. The world just wouldn't let them evade their responsibility for finding a just settlement in Rhodesia. Owen plunged in to try to resolve the situation with a trip around Africa. His broad conclusions were shared with our embassy in London and sent around to us. I don't recall the details, but the solution he proposed seemed wildly unrealistic to me. Both my colleague in Dar-es-Salaam, Jim Spain and I registered strong disagreement with Owen's conclusions. Whatever our differences with him, I know they were shared with the British and apparently they were persuasive enough that Owen and Vance consulted and decided to try a joint negotiating effort.

An African chiefs of mission conference had been organized in Abidjan at just about that time (May, 1977), even though a new Assistant Secretary for African affairs had not yet been appointed. Dick Moose was there as Under Secretary for Management along with Andy Young, ambassador to the UN. Moose and Young called me in to tell me of Vance and Owen's decision to form an Anglo-American Consultative Committee to explore a final solution for the Rhodesian problem and I was to be the American representative.. Whether it was then or a few weeks later I was informed that former ambassador John Graham was to be the British representative on the committee. After a few months I was to come back to Washington as senior deputy assistant secretary for African Affairs to Wayne Fredericks who would be assistant secretary.

But things don't always work out as planned. Wayne was hit by a taxi in London crossing the street as he was on his way to the airport to return to the States and suffered a concussion. It took some time before he recovered completely. The Department decided not to wait and Dick Moose was appointed assistant secretary. By that time I had become completely immersed in the Rhodesian negotiations. Dick recognized that they would continue for a long time and that it would be a mistake to take me away. Bill Harrop became senior deputy in AF and I continued what became virtually my sole occupation during the remaining almost two years in Zambia.

Q: I'd like to stop here and talk a little bit about how in Zambia. We did not have diplomatic relations with what was then called Southern Rhodesia. Were you the principal observer? What was the role of the American embassy as regards Southern Rhodesia?

LOW: Zambia had absolutely no relations with Southern Rhodesia. It was in my capacity as a member of the Anglo-American Consultative Committee that I traveled to Southern Rhodesia. But I was exclusively engaged in negotiation of a settlement. I had no function as representative to Southern Rhodesia or later Zimbabwe.

Q: I'm really talking about the practical thing. Were you getting information about what was going on?

LOW: No except in so far as it affected the negotiations. For instance, I later became very interested in whether Smith's attempt at an "Internal Settlement" would work, and eventually concluded that it would fail as I informed Washington. We had nobody in Salisbury. The British kept us informed to a certain degree, but we really didn't have much information. The African forces were split between Zanu and Zapu. Zapu was the Ndebele group; Zanu the Shona. The Shona constituted perhaps 3/4 of the population; the other 1/4 was Ndebele. Zapu which was predominantly, but not entirely, Ndebele was headed by Joshua Nkomo. He had very close relations with Kaunda and his headquarters were in Lusaka. The Shonas, headed by Robert Mugabe were based in Maputo and had very close relations with the Mozambicans. We had contact with these leaders through our embassies in Lusaka and Maputo, and I had extensive contact with them in Salisbury (later Harare). I also had contact with the African movement in Namibia, then Southwest Africa, which also had its headquarters in Lusaka. The head of that organization was Hage Geingob, an American Ph.D, who subsequently became prime minister of Namibia at its independence. He was a rabid New York Knicks fan.

During the course of my three years in southern Africa I got to know the Africans pretty well, but Nkomo best of all. He often came to the residence to discuss procedures and substance, and I saw him at all the formal negotiating sessions. I never visited Zapu headquarters. He usually had others with him; sometimes only one person, but often a whole committee. Nkomo was a very big man weighing well over 200 pounds. We had a two person settee in our study which fitted him perfectly. We occasionally traveled on the same (commercial) airplane and would sometimes talk.

There was one episode in particular I will always remember. Johnny Graham and I, with his support staff of three or four traveled around southern Africa in the U.S. attaché aircraft from our embassy in Pretoria. The crew would use the occasion to take routine photographs of the terrain we passed over with a camera mounted in the belly of the plane. They were pretty relaxed and when we were in Salisbury would leave the camera with film in it in the plane. On one occasion they noticed the film was gone, but didn't take any notice. It happened a couple of times. During this period the war was spreading and becoming more violent. Smith's planes even bombed Lusaka hitting Nkomo's house which was only a few blocks from President Kaunda's (and about the same distance from ours). Other Zapu targets in Lusaka were hit. How large the Zapu military presence in Lusaka was, I don't know, but it was not insignificant. The Rhodesian air force regularly attacked Patriotic Front, particularly Zanu, camps in Mozambique and Zambia. At one point I had invited Nkomo to breakfast. I got the newspaper early. To my horror, it carried a front page story quoting a South African source who described the picture-taking activities of the U.S. embassy attaché plane and claimed that the pictures were being turned over to the Rhodesian air force. Nkomo arrived and we started breakfast. When I asked him he said he hadn't seen the paper that morning. I showed it to him, looked him in the eye and said that it was absolutely untrue that we had given any pictures to the Rhodesians. He was quiet for a minute then nodded. I never heard another word about it. Had he wanted to, he could have raised a fuss and my safety in Zambia, as full as it was of Zapu forces, wouldn't have been worth much. I appreciated his role in this. We discovered that the Rhodesians had taken the film out of

the plane's camera. I doubt that they got anything significant. We certainly weren't flying over Patriotic Front camps and wouldn't have recognized them if we had. But we lost our airplane which was invited out of the country and there was hell to pay in the attaché and intelligence sections of the Pretoria embassy.

One other small incident I remember about my relations with Nkomo. I sometimes got annoyed that both the Rhodesians and Patriotic Front considered they were doing us a great favor to agree to negotiate. On one occasion Nkomo and I were talking, I think it was in a Zambian guest house, and he made what I thought was a rather outrageous demand. I decided to try a new tactic and show a bit of anger myself. I asked him if he really wanted me to report his remarks to Washington. I can only say that it is my recollection that he backed off and started roaring - all 200 plus pounds of him. I never tried that again.

Q: Basically, your information about what was going on - it wasn't as though you were sitting there with all sorts of intelligence people streaming in, letting you know day to day.

LOW: Not at all. But I had a lot of contacts in various fields. Everyone wanted to talk about the situation. I made a point of talking to anyone who knew something about what was going on. That included some very active and knowledgeable journalists, religious leaders like the Quakers, business men like the Union Carbide people.

Q: Did this make any difference as a practical measure?

LOW: There was a lot we didn't know about the internal dynamics within the two African groups or, for that matter, inside the Rhodesian government and military. We got a certain amount from the British. We talked to everyone we could. Nkomo and Mugabe were forced by President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kaunda of Zambia acting for what they called the frontline states (Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana, and Mozambique), into a very loose joint organization called the Patriotic Front, made up of Zanu and Zapu.

When John Graham came to Lusaka we talked at length. We put at the disposition of the Anglo-American group the attaché plane from Pretoria. He had a well organized staff of eight or nine including a lawyer and secretarial help, but I was alone. I did all my reporting by using a hand recorder and leaving tapes at each embassy I visited. Our embassy in Pretoria would send someone up to collect my reports when we stayed for any length of time in Salisbury. It wasn't until near the end of our travels that Washington was able to provide a secretary to accompany me to help with organizing the trips and preparing the reports. The British made all the physical arrangements for our board and lodging in Salisbury where they stayed in the former Governors house and I at the Meikles Hotel. During the course of those two years I spent at least six months in that hotel. In other cities we each depended on our own embassies. Our negotiating instructions included the crucial requirement that any settlement had to be based on one-man-one-vote elections because it had to be acceptable to the African population. The Rhodesians agreed to our arrival in Salisbury and we started in mid 1977. I think during the next two years I made seven or eight swings through Southern Africa traveling, I once figured out, over a half million miles. Remembering the exact sequence of the trips and meetings is not easy, so I may not be entirely accurate in my account.

Q: Did the British ever say "What the hell are you Americans doing?"

LOW: No. Johnny and I had a wonderful relationship. We kept nothing from each other. There were times when I could help him with London by getting Cy Vance involved and others when he could help me with Washington by bringing in David Owen. He was a brilliant draftsman. He could dash off a lengthy report with an ink-pen and change only a word or two while we were flying from one city to another – sometimes we would have as many as three meetings in three capitals in a day. He was bright and sound, and a delightful companion. We didn't always agree exactly, but we worked together very closely. In general, he had better relations with the Rhodesians than I, and we Americans had much better contacts with the Patriotic Front than the British. David Owen understood well that the British needed us to increase their credibility.

Q: Why was this?

LOW: They carried a pretty heavy burden not only from years of colonial rule, but the Africans didn't trust them very far in terms of a settlement. British relations had been close with the settlers and not very close with the African nationalists. On the other hand, Andy Young and Jimmy Carter were revered figures in that part of the world. The Africans were much more willing to talk to us and believe us.

Together, we hammered out what we called the Anglo-American Proposal. This continually changed, but it was a proposal for transition to be followed by an independence government based on a one-man-one-vote election. Smith was interesting. The first time we told him that we would not accept anything less than one man, one vote, he nearly exploded. His initial proposal was for an African electorate of about 10 percent of the population. I argued that he might find the mass of Africans, including the rural voters, more sound and stable than the intellectualized and more radical African urban electorate which would qualify under his proposal. It took a little while but he came around to our point of view sooner than we had expected. Most of the time we met with Smith's Chief of Cabinet, Jack Gaylord, and a group of technical ministers. We discussed and negotiated for a couple of weeks until we had the basis for a broad agreement. Gaylord was a measured, reasonable man who carried out Smith's instructions carefully. But he also understood that he was pursuing only one of Smith's paths towards an ultimate solution, and probably his least preferred one. At least in the beginning Smith still thought he could win a military victory over the Patriotic Front. I don't think he finally realized he couldn't win this war until after I had left Rhodesia in 1979 and then only after his military commander General Peter Walls and intelligence chief, Ken Flower, forced him to face the facts. He had a third alternative solution which he developed in 78. Unbeknownst to us, while we were negotiating with him and Gaylord, he was in discussion with three moderate African leaders residing inside Southern Rhodesia, not members of either Zapu or Zanu, who were willing to make an accommodation with Smith and accept a partnership with his government. His announcement of the agreement was made in March, 1978. He set up an Executive Council of which he was the chairman and three Africans were included: the most prominent was Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who had acted for Nkomo and Mugabe while they were in prison in successfully leading African rejection of an earlier solution negotiated between Britain and the Rhodesians; he had achieved a certain popularity among the African population. Another was Ndabningi Sitoli, a political activist and

former head of Zanu who had decided to abandon the armed struggle. Thirdly, Smith included one of the senior chiefs of the Shona tribe, Chief Jeremiah Chirau. Majority rule was promised by the end of the 1978. Later Smith postponed the elections until April, 1979. The arrangement was called the an "Internal Agreement." Smith's method of operation was to pursue each of these possible three solutions simultaneously, hoping he would not have to settle for the track we were following.

Q: You're talking about Ian Smith.

LOW: Right. The negotiations for the ultimate form which an independent Zimbabwe government would take were carried on with the white Rhodesian government. We were unsuccessful in engaging the Patriotic Front in a discussion of this subject. We would spend days and days and weeks going over one provision after another with Gaylord and his group. Their concern clearly was with the ultimate arrangement that would be made, the ultimate constitution of an independent state. Then we would take what we had hammered out with the Rhodesians to the Africans. Their concerns were quite different. We didn't really understand this for a while. They weren't concerned with the constitution of the independent state. Their preoccupation was with the transition government which would be in control prior to the first elections and until independence, because during that period it would be decided who would take power. I believe they thought that whoever won could change the independence constitution as they wished.

Q: You're really talking about the rivalry between the two African groups, who among them would have power.

LOW: The negotiating process worked, in the final analysis, because each of the African parties was absolutely convinced that it would win a democratic election. No one was trying to avoid an election. Since each believed it would win the election, their principal concern was not so much to create election conditions favorable to themselves as it was to prevent the white establishment (bureaucracy, police force, armed forces, and politicians) from controlling the transition period in which the new leadership would be selected so as to tilt the election towards the internal settlement leaders. They wanted to control that period themselves. In a sense, it was a non-negotiation. The Patriotic Front wouldn't discuss land distribution or constitutional amendment procedures or other matters in the independence constitution which we had discussed in detail with the Rhodesian government. And the white Rhodesians weren't interested in talking about the transition period.

The situation was complicated by the number of parties involved. Not only were we talking to the Africans and white Rhodesians, but periodically we went to South Africa to tell them what we were doing, then to Mozambique to brief Machel; to Tanzania to bring Nyerere up to date; and back to Zambia to do the same with Kaunda. Sometimes we would include Seretse Khama or his successor, Masire, in Botswana. Even though they wanted to be kept informed they would all say "Don't talk to us. Go back to the parties and get their agreement. We're all for you." The Frontline states, all wanted a solution, and supported our efforts. The war was hurting them too. However, their leverage with the Patriotic Front was limited. PF forces resident in Zambia and Angola were strong compared to the local armies. The South African position was not entirely

different. Though there were no Rhodesian forces inside its boarder, popular sentiment was such that its leverage over Smith was also limited. The South Africans were frank. They told us they would not participate in imposing a settlement on the Rhodesians, but that if we could get an agreement between the parties, they would help see that it stuck.

At first, Mugabe and Zanu did not accept American participation. He insisted on the fiction that the only party with whom he could negotiate was the British, whom he held legally responsible for Rhodesia. He believed he had more leverage over them. I don't think he thought he could bring the same degree of pressure on us. So, for a while, he would either refuse to meet with Johnny if I was there, or pretend that I wasn't there. Though the fiction was always maintained, his objections to U.S. participation was dropped after a few months. I believe Mugabe recognized the advantages which the U.S. could bring to the negotiations.

We had a number of meetings and thought we were making progress. In fact we were able to set out a fairly detailed ultimate structure of the independent state. We showed the complex arrangement, largely drafted by the British lawyer, to each party. During this period it was always on the table and subject to negotiation although it was eventually published. When we thought we had gotten far enough, David Owen, Cy Vance and Andy Young decided to meet with each of the parties - Smith and the Rhodesians on the one side and the Patriotic Front on the other. The meeting with the PF in Dar Es Salaam was difficult. The large PF delegation, which included a number of military figures, was often hostile and emotional, though the proposal was not rejected.

In an initially unrelated development, President Nyerere of Tanzania visited Washington. He was convinced that the key to the negotiations was the makeup of the armed forces of an independent Zimbabwe. As our ambassador to Tanzania, Jim Spain was present rather than I at the meeting with President Carter in the Cabinet room. Nyerere, who could be very persuasive, as every American ambassador who has served in Tanzania knows, asked Carter to meet alone with him. They went into the Oval Office and after some time came back, I am told, all smiles. Later, the President informed Dick Moose of the understanding which had been reached. Carter and Vance were strongly of the view that a settlement depended on Frontline cooperation. They believed the Frontline states led by Nyerere and Kaunda could deliver Patriotic Front cooperation in the agreement we had worked out with the Rhodesians which promised majority rule. However Nyerere and Kaunda were refusing to take responsibility for delivering the Frontline, and would not agree to participate in a meeting with the parties. So Carter and Nyerere agreed that if the U.S. (and Britain) would accept that the army of the newly independent country would be based on the Patriotic Front forces, the Frontline would participate in a meeting between the parties and cooperate in trying to reach a settlement.

We were surprised, to say the least, when we heard from Dick Moose of this agreement. The British were appalled when we told them. It seemed to those involved in the negotiations that this would appear to the Rhodesians to be almost tantamount to surrender to the Patriotic Front armed forces.

The Washington meeting between Nyerere and Carter took place just before Vance, Owen, Young and a whole plane load of others were due to go to Salisbury to present the published

proposal to Smith and his government. We flew from London to Nairobi where it was decided it would be more appropriate to spend the night than Salisbury. In Nairobi we and the British were arguing over a detail in the proposal (I don't remember what it was). We only came to a final agreement at about three in the morning. Then we got up at four to go out to the airplane to fly to Salisbury. The Rhodesians in the meantime had held their federal, white only, elections the night before and they had been up all night awaiting the returns. The meeting which was held the next morning was extraordinary. People would periodically nod off to sleep on both sides of the table while we droned through the provisions of the proposal one after another. But we didn't inform the Rhodesians at that meeting of our agreement that the independence forces would be based on the liberation armies. That was left to Johnny and me at a smaller meeting with Gaylord and the technical officials that afternoon. To neither of our surprise, they went through the roof, saying they didn't think there was much chance of an agreement on that basis. However no one had yet rejected the proposals.

A few months later the British named Field Marshal Lord Carver to be British resident commissioner during the transition period and asked him, together with the newly appointed UN Special Representative, General Prem Chand, to go to Rhodesia to talk about implementing the proposal. The British thought that this most senior of British army officer would reassure the Rhodesians that the British military would see to it that the transition would be fair and orderly. I was asked to accompany him on the trip. I was the only American involved in a plane load (C-130) of UK officials. Johnny Graham in the meantime had been temporarily replaced by another fine senior British diplomat, Robin Ware who had not been directly involved in the previous negotiations. I was the only senior member of the group who had been. But I was very much an outsider. I didn't know the Field Marshal at all and had hardly spoken to him prior to our arrival in Salisbury. There, he decided to get off the plane in full uniform. Had he asked me, I doubt that I would have advised him against it. His intention, and that of the British, was to demonstrate from the beginning that he was a military officer, not a politician, who would behave in a tough, fair and non-partisan manner. However, the Rhodesians interpreted his arrival in uniform, or perhaps more accurately, chose to take it, as the reason for breaking off the whole negotiation. They said his action indicated that the British were really trying to undo their unilateral independence and reassert sovereignty over the country. This, they said, was entirely unacceptable and they refused to engage him in substantive discussions. I think they refused to talk to him largely because of our agreement to base the independence army on the liberation armies, which they couldn't accept. They simply chose his action as a convenient excuse. However, again, they did not reject the proposals.

Owen and Vance had met with all the negotiators in London on the way back from Salisbury and decided to press on with an attempt to get all the parties together to resolve outstanding areas in dispute. The Patriotic Front, concerned to undermine the internal agreement in Salisbury, agreed to attend, but Smith refused. A meeting was held with the PF in Malta where my old car-pool friend, Bruce Laingen, was ambassador. As it turned out Cy Vance couldn't attend but Owen and Andy Young, backed by Dick Moose, Carver and Chand met and made considerable progress in outlining an interim regime which included PF participation in a Governing Council and a UN role.

The solution which was being worked out was second or third best to both sides. At that point,

each thought it could do better either through continuation of the armed struggle or, in Smith's case, either war or the Internal Agreement. And so the negotiations were put in abeyance for a while.

Smith thought he saw a way to strengthen his hand. With the prospect of a British election the next year which might result in a Thatcher Conservative government already sympathetic to lifting sanctions, Smith thought that if he could get the U.S. Congress to drop sanctions, Thatcher would be unable to keep the conservative majority from doing the same thing. The lift that would have given Smith's internal settlement would at least have postponed a loss of power by white Rhodesians for a number of years. Had that happened, Mugabe and perhaps Nkomo might well not have survived. Their armed forces were already becoming impatient with their efforts to negotiate a settlement based on civilian political rule. Leadership of Zanu and perhaps, but less likely, Zapu, would have passed to military figures and the ultimate outcome would have been considerably different. Smith was encouraged to think he could get Senate support for lifting sanctions. A visit was arranged to the U.S. by Smith and his African colleagues in the Executive Council in October, 1978. He had public relations assistance arguing that sanctions should be lifted to give the internal settlement a chance. A resolution to lift sanctions, dependent on an all parties meeting and majority rule, was successfully passed in the Senate. But Smith and his supporters had not bargained with Congressman Steve Solarz, chairman of the Africa subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and a strong supporter of African independence movements. Solarz got the House committee to vote unanimously to reject lifting sanctions. The vote had been very close in the Senate. As a result the conference committee struck lifting sanctions from the bill and Smith's effort failed. I think that was a turning point in the process of finding a settlement in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

In January 1979, the British wanted to resurrect the discussions. The prime minister sent the Speaker of the House of Parliament, Cledwyn Hughes, to determine whether an all parties meeting could be held and whether it would be successful. I was appointed to accompany him. We went all through the whole routine again and really made no progress at all. Both we and the British agreed that until the parties were willing to commit themselves to a serious effort to negotiate a settlement, an all parties conference would be fruitless. I made one further trip to Rhodesia in early 1979 together with a foreign and commonwealth officer, Robin Renwick, who later became British ambassador to the United States. We found no change in the situation.

Smith still hoped that the British elections scheduled for the spring of 1979 might help if the Conservatives won. In fact, the elections did result in a defeat for the Labour government. Margaret Thatcher came to power with a statement on record that she would lift Rhodesian sanctions and adopt a more understanding attitude towards the Rhodesian government. However, Peter Harrington was made foreign minister. He had visited Lusaka regularly during the time I was there and came to see me a number of times. At that point he was the Conservative's shadow foreign minister. I found him one of the most astute observers I knew and was under no illusions about the importance of continuing the negotiations, so I did not give up hope.

At that point we left Zambia for an assignment to Nigeria. But the process continued. A Commonwealth Conference was held in Lusaka. Margaret Thatcher came there with a changed assessment of the situation from the views she expressed before the election. Peter Harrington

and her Commonwealth partners had done their work. It was quickly agreed to return to the negotiations but without formal U.S. participation, though we and the British understood that we would work closely to support the effort. Their negotiations were based on our modified Anglo-American Settlement Proposal. It was somewhat modified during the course of tense negotiations led by Lord Carrington at a Lancaster House conference attended by all parties and by December agreement was achieved. A British governor went to Salisbury in early 1980 and elections were held the middle of the year, resulting in a Mugabe victory and independence.

Q: Going back to this Nyerere-Carter meeting, what was the rationale for Nyerere pushing for the Liberation Front forces?

LOW: He was absolutely convinced that this was a *sine qua non* for the Africans. I don't believe it was Nkomo or Kaunda's view. I think he was reflecting Mugabe, but and I am not sure that even he felt as strongly as Nyerere. At this point, Nyerere and Kaunda were at odds. No African had expressed this view to me. On the contrary, it is not beyond imagination that the PF might have accepted was my impression that the Patriotic Front would have gladly accepted the existing Rhodesian armed forces which were very good and overwhelmingly black, replacing the white officers with their own as well as some of the troops. Whether they wanted to "base" the independence army on their forces is something else. This was Nyerere's conviction, and his way of taking over leadership of the negotiations. He was an extraordinarily bright, analytical person with a tendency to attach himself to a point of view which was often peripheral in order to assert leadership of a process. He had done this before.

Q: I had the impression that Nyerere was a very bright, very persuasive person who practically destroyed his country.

LOW: He was certainly a very bright, persuasive person and there is no question that he always insisted that his own initiatives become the principal concern of the moment. He was sympathetic to Kaunda, but he could usually talk Kaunda into following his lead.

Q: In a way, he was almost a meddler.

LOW: Mischievous. In many ways, I think that's the case. I don't know what would have happened if we hadn't agreed to his point of view on the independence army. Things weren't ripe for a solution yet. Smith wasn't ready to negotiate a settlement. He hadn't played out the war effort, his internal settlement or his appeal to the British and American conservatives yet. So it may not have made much difference, but it did provide the Rhodesians with support to end the negotiations for the time being.

Q: You mentioned that Ian Smith was following the usual two track policy: negotiate or fight.

LOW: There were actually three tracks. The internal settlement was the third. Smith's preference would have been to defeat the armed rebellion and retain power for the white population with a few minor concessions to the Africans in the governmental structure. As a fallback he would have been willing to live with the internal settlement where he retained power behind the scenes. I think he considered our negotiations only a little better than complete defeat. The internal

settlement might have worked, at least for a little while. But the question was, would it have resolved the war? I did not think it would. There was a lot of pressure in the United States to accept Smith's internal agreement. Not only did more conservatives in Congress take this position, but also those who did not think we should be involved in a problem in which we had so little security interest. Even President Carter wavered a bit, but Andy Young would have nothing to do with the internal agreement. We were trying to assess the chances of short term success. We knew it wouldn't work over the long term, but there was a chance it might for a few years. As expected, the Patriotic Front did not accept it, and announced that the armed struggle would continue. At first one couldn't tell which way it was going to go. Anybody who was at all honest at this point had to accept that it could have gone either way. I remember talking to a lot of people in Salisbury before and during the Vance/Owen visit there. My mother was ill, so I returned to the States with Vance for a few days. I had been going night and day for some time without help and was pretty tired. The Department agreed to send me back to South Africa first class. It was the first time I could take time to think things through, to consider and analyze my impressions. I remember sitting there outlining, essentially writing, a message in which I concluded that it had now become clear that the internal settlement was not going to succeed. It was a declining force, while the Patriotic Front was getting stronger. We could not, at this point, weaken our insistence on a negotiated solution acceptable to the Africans. Had Smith made a real attempt to make it work, I think it could have developed considerable support and lasted a few more years. But he couldn't resist attacking and tearing down the people he had put in power. Muzorewa was a weak leader and Smith regularly undercut him. The Bishop lost the initial support he had received. Chief Chirau was completely out of his element. Sitoli was a spent force. Smith finally began to recognize the generally deteriorating situation in Rhodesia. The impact of sanctions was not determining, but it was important. The Rhodesians could sell their tobacco, but they got a little less for it than if there been no sanctions. And their imports cost a little more. They could still get embargoed oil through South Africa, but it cost more. Over the course of 10 years that margin began to add up and the economy was suffering badly. On top of that the internal security situation was getting much worse.

To give you an idea, on one occasion, Johnny and I in Salisbury were invited out to Mr. Norman's farm. He later became the only white minister in Mugabe's first government, so he was not unsympathetic to the Africans. He was a farmer and head of the Organization of Farmers in Rhodesia. I remember driving out to his farm one Saturday afternoon to have dinner and stay for the night. We changed and went down to the living room for a drink before dinner. In the corner was an arsenal of at least one automatic weapon for every one of the seven or eight guests. Each one of us took one and kept it within reach all evening. When we went from the living room to the dining room we carried it with us to the table, and we kept it with us when we went to bed. It was a very, very tense situation. In those circumstances, even though the Ndebele and the Shona were constantly at each other's throats, it was becoming an impossible situation for Smith.

In Lagos the Nigerians were absolutely convinced that the British were going to fix the elections and impose a solution. I spent a lot of time talking to Foreign Minister Audu trying to explain that the British wanted a settlement that was acceptable to the population so that they could get out of Rhodesia honorably. The Nigerian leadership was very skeptical. My long involvement with the situation helped convince them that the election would be fair and that they should back

it, and accept the results. In the event, they were surprised that it was, indeed, a fair election, that the British accepted Mugabe's overwhelming victory and proceeded with the agreed transition which would result in turning the country over to him.

Q: What was your impression of Ian Smith as a person?

LOW: Our relations were always very civil, even pleasant. He was willing to listen, even though he didn't like what we were saying. Every time Johnny and I went to Salisbury, we met with him. Usually, there would be 10 or 12 people in the room. Occasionally, there would be a social event where we could have a private word with him. He was polite. He was clearly exploring all possibilities. There was not a lot of ego there. He was trying to find a way out and wanted to keep all his options open. Clearly, at his instructions, we had very serious discussions with Gaylord. So, my relations with him were relatively straightforward.

Q: What was your impression during this period both as ambassador and also on the Rhodesian side of Kenneth Kaunda?

LOW: My communications with him were fairly formal. I saw him frequently, and spent a week escorting him to Washington to meet with President Carter and then around the country visiting Texas and California. Still there was kind of a ritual to our meetings in Lusaka. Either he wanted to tell me something, or I had something I needed to pass on to him. There was rarely a great deal of discussion or give and take. From time to time he would invite me to a meal, always with others present. Usually the occasion was a visiting American official. He didn't like to discuss substance at a meal and when one of the visitors, I believe it was Congressman Solarz got into substance, he was not happy. The dinners were occasions of high hilarity, though the jokes were usually the same. I don't think he was that comfortable. He was even less comfortable with others who came to visit him. Usually I would accompany the Americans who came to see him, but some would insist on seeing him alone. I think that made him even less comfortable and was generally to the visitor's detriment. My predecessor had a run-in when Senator Clark of Iowa wanted to see Kaunda alone. This was during the Nixon administration and he was a Democrat. Ambassador Wilkowski was not happy with the idea and negotiated with his staff that she would come along only to introduce him. In the event, she stayed through the entire meeting. But I think that was one of the reasons she didn't get another embassy.

Kaunda had a great regard for President Carter whom he had met in Washington. He told me more than once, "Carter is too good for you Americans. You're going to reject him. I believe him but I don't think you support him." When Carter was defeated for the reelection, he told me "I told you so." Andy Young was the other American he had great respect for. Because of the two of them Kaunda trusted the U.S. more than most other non-African countries during that period.

But my real discussions, where there was a lot of give and take, were with his personal assistant, Mark Chona and later on with his replacement, the author and economist, Dominic Mulayisho. They were young, bright, talented and likeable Africans with whom I could be quite frank. They were a channel to Kaunda which I used instead of the Foreign Office at their request! During those three years I did not visit the Foreign Office often. Rhodesia/Zimbabwe issues were handled in the presidency by Kaunda and his staff. When Secretary Kissinger or the Department

sent a message that was supposed to be given personally to the chief of state, as happened more often than it should have, I could often get to Kaunda, but sometimes I would have to deliver it through Chona or Mulayisho. At this later stage in his career, Kaunda was most comfortable with the people who had been with him from the beginning. Still he was often quite friendly and warm. On one occasion when David Owen, British foreign minister was visiting Lusaka. We were having dinner at the British high commissioner's home. In the middle of it, I got a call from Government House. President Kaunda wanted to see me. So, I excused myself and went over. Kaunda gave me a message for the British foreign minister. I was a little embarrassed vis-a-vis my colleague and friend, the British high commissioner who was sitting right there. Kaunda felt more comfortable dealing with us, and he wanted to be sure we got the message too. Like many Africans he had a love-hate relationship with the British. He was not fond of them, but when Queen Elizabeth visited Lusaka, nothing was good enough for her. He turned everything inside out for the visit.

Q: Speaking of having bright young Africans on the staff, this was not that racist a regime. It was different than one might think.

LOW: There were no Africans in Smith's government or in any way involved in speaking for him until the internal settlement came into effect, and then Africans were appointed as Executive Council members or ministers but there were none at working levels.

Q: Did you find that there were (one always thinks about the person who realizes they're in a losing cause), rabid whites who would come at you?

LOW: No, I don't ever recall an unpleasant encounter. Not like the Soapy Williams affair when a white Rhodesian punched or slapped him when he arrived at the Lusaka airport. We would arrive, there would be a large crowd including both public and press to greet us and ask a few questions. Pictures would appear in the papers and occasionally they would publish a cartoon commenting on our efforts. Smith made it very clear that we were to be treated as serious people, seriously negotiating, so that virtually everybody we saw was respectful. We made few if any public speeches and no effort to appeal to public opinion. We obviously couldn't have done that. I did a lot of background press interviews. After each round of talks Johnny would do it for British journalists and I would do it for the American press. It seemed to me much preferable that the press have an accurate general impression of the direction things were going than to have them go off with some wild rumor that had no foundation. During much of the first half of 1978 there was talk of an all parties conference. We even had picked out a date and place at a meeting in London. The press was desperate to find out the details. We were all flying back to the United States on Vance's airplane with a press section in the rear. By the time we got to Washington, they had found out where and when it was to be held. In fact it never took place, but the ability of the United States government to keep a secret of this kind is not very high. The press is very skillful. They know how to weasel something out of a group of people. They will start out with a wrong statement trying to get you to contradict them and then build on small facts till they get what they want. It is kind of a game, and they are very good at it. It is particularly difficult dealing with the press when there is a specific fact like this that they are trying to get. We wanted that meeting to take place outside of the glare of publicity so that the Africans could concentrate on the substance of the negotiations instead of continuing their rival

campaigns for public support.

Q: How were they able to get a majority of the Senate to vote lift sanctions?

LOW: There was strong support for lifting from the mining interests. Chrome was an important import and most of it is in Zimbabwe. Also, there was a lot of support from Senator Helms and many of the others for his point of view to lift sanctions to support the internal agreement. The others didn't feel strongly enough about it. The House did.

Q: In 1979, you went to Nigeria. You were in Nigeria from 1979 to July 4, 1981. How did this appointment come about?

LOW: I had been a little over three years in Zambia. That was the normal length of an ambassadorial appointment. But there were other factors, too. My role in the negotiations was over. The close cooperation which had existed between David Owen and Cy Vance during the joint Rhodesia effort was gone. Carrington knew the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe situation intimately. The British didn't feel they needed us and made it clear they wanted to carry on the negotiations themselves. We certainly had no objection to their taking the lead. And we continued to back the effort fully.

I got a call one day asking if I wanted to go to Argentina. Frankly, that wouldn't have been my first choice, but one doesn't turn down an offer of that kind - at least, I didn't feel I could. I said that if that was where they wanted to send me, I would go. But I wasn't disappointed when the non-career officer who was there decided he wanted to stay another year. Then I got a call from Dick Moose asking if I would like to go to Nigeria. Well, Lagos wasn't considered the garden spot of the world, but it seemed to me to make sense. I felt more qualified to take it than Argentina. I knew something about the context. I had spent 10 years in African affairs either in Washington or in Africa. It was an important post and an interesting and challenging one. I said, "Sure."

Q: How did you feel about the whole accords when you left Zambia?

LOW: On my mission with Cledwyn Hughes we had both concluded that there was no possibility at that point of proceeding with the negotiations. The sides simply weren't prepared to make the accommodations that would have been necessary for a settlement. My feeling was that we didn't have much of a chance at that point, but I remember when I went to say good bye to President Kaunda he gave me a pretty copper tray and made a little speech. He kidded me about not spending a lot of time in Zambia. Then he turned serious and said that it had never bothered him because "You were working on the most important problem Zambia had, the search for a settlement in Zimbabwe." Then he thanked me, I believe quite sincerely, for my efforts and said he felt that we had done our best and that it had been worthwhile. I had always believed that it was essential for the U.S. position in Africa and more broadly in the world that we be seen to be making a serious and good faith effort to find settlements to the Southern African problems in Zimbabwe, Namibia and ultimately in South Africa. Because the Africans themselves could not force change, they would use all the leverage they had to get us to resolve these problems for them. Unless we were actually trying to do something about it, they would take it out on us in

every international forum in the world. I further felt that you never knew when you were going to have a lucky breakthrough; when things were going to change as they inevitably would, hopefully for the better. Eventually, the people involved would recognize that neither side was benefitting from further violence, and that negotiation and compromise were the best way out. You have to have a framework set up and a basis for agreement worked out so that you are ready when the moment comes. I had no idea at the time that that is exactly what was going to happen before the year was out. Yes, it was discouraging at the moment we left, but I had no doubt that we had been moving in the right direction, or that we should continue. Eventually I knew a settlement would be reached, probably along the lines we had set out. I didn't expect it to be so soon.

FRANK D. CORREL
Program Officer, USAID
Lusaka (1979)

Frank D. Correl was born in Germany in 1929. He received his BS from Rider College in 1950, and his MA from Columbia University in 1955. He served in the US Army from 1953 to 1955. His postings include South Korea, Vietnam, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Lesotho, and Zambia. W. Haven North interviewed him on September 29, 1990.

CORREL: Well, the ultimate job offer was to go as Director of the USAID Mission to Maseru, Lesotho, but before I went there, I did one more short term consultancy and this one was to Zambia in connection with a manpower development effort AID had going there and was interested in expanding. So, I spent much of the month of March of 1979 in Lusaka working with people who had come down from the REDSO Office in Nairobi to develop an expanded project. I would say it was a pretty standard project involving academic and some non-academic training.

Q: Participant Training?

CORREL: Some of it, but as I remember it, most of it was actually training in country. I just don't remember very much about the assignment. I guess that going to Maseru on a full time assignment as Director of the Mission there has stuck in my mind more than this short time assignment, which, however, exposed me to Zambia for the first time and which had a some relevance in my later work with.

Q: Do you have any particular observations about Zambia at that time?

CORREL: Yes. It was a classic case of a country that had put all its eggs in the natural resources production and export basket and had grievously neglected its potential in agriculture and other means of creating sustained widespread employment for the people. Zambia had had some very fat years when copper prices were high, but as the price of copper declined significantly, the Zambians found themselves in very serious budgetary trouble with a great deal of unemployment and economic instability. Certainly, I would think that Zambia is a textbook case for showing the

fallacy of the kind of development that counts too much on exploiting a particular natural resource instead of trying to achieve broad-based employment and an economy that at least has the capability of significantly feeding its people, rather than hoping for something like gold or copper or oil to provide the main income.

TIBOR PETER NAGY, JR.
General Services Officer
Lusaka (1979-1981)

Ambassador Nagy was born in Hungary and came to the United States as Political Refugee in 1957, settling in the Washington, D.C. area. After graduating from Texas Tech University, he entered the Foreign Service in 1978. During his career he served in Lusaka, Victoria (Seychelles), Addis Ababa, Lomé, Yaoundé and Lagos, as well as in the State Department in Washington.. From 1996 to 1999 he served as US Ambassador to Guinea-Conakry and to Ethiopia from 1999 to 2002. Ambassador Nagy was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2010.

Q: Did you have any feel for where you wanted to go or what you wanted to do?

NAGY: Well, I had thought that I would end up in Eastern Europe, and then I realized quickly that there was no way. So we were attending a Methodist church at the time and my wife taught Sunday school and among the Sunday school kids she had the children of the Zambian ambassador. And we had of course never heard of Zambia before. And when the list came out for us to, you know, to go to, low and behold they were mostly African countries. So you know, I, I started at that time thinking well, you know, maybe Africa's the way to go and I was recruited out of that class -- I was given a job that was not on the list because the DG at the time, Barnes, and his deputy, Gershinson, they were desperately wanting to computerize the State Department. So they knew that I'd had computer experience before so they wanted me to take a job in the State Department basically doing what I had been doing across the river at the General Services Administration, except for \$8,000 less in pay. So basically I told them, you know, I said, "Listen guys, if that's what you want me to do I'm going to go back to my old job at GSA because I was being offered a promotion there and I could get more money. I joined the State Department for the Foreign Service, not to do computers again in the basement."

So they basically, you know, they, they said well, junior officer doing this and so basically they came back to the deal. They said, "Well, you do this project for six months and after that we'll send you to the best post available." I thought ha ha ha. So I did the computer bit for six months and then after that they said we have a vacancy in Lusaka, Zambia.

I said, "Great." GSO (general service officer) Lusaka sounded wonderful because we knew the Zambian ambassador.

Q: OK, so you went to Zambia.

NAGY: Yeah.

Q: You were there from when to when?

NAGY: I was there from '79 to '81.

Q OK, could you talk a little bit about Zambia, 1980 -- '79?

NAGY: Zambia was an extremely tough post. It was the front line in the liberation struggle going on next door in Rhodesia. There were Rhodesian or Zimbabwean, whatever you want to call them, rebels, guerillas, freedom fighters -- again, you know, pick your term -- coming out of Zambia and Lusaka. And we were frequently visited by the Rhodesian security forces who came in on, you know, swoop attacks. There was a very strong anti-American feeling in Lusaka. There was a very strong anti-white feeling in Lusaka. Crime was off the charts. I was the general service officer and the assistant security officer. I -- I actually slept with a submachine gun under my bed because house break-ins were so frequent. Bought the biggest dog we could buy and we ended up having our triplets while we were in Zambia.

Q: Had your what?

NAGY: Our triplets.

Q: Oh your -- good God.

NAGY: Yeah.

Q: If you're going to do it you might as well go whole hog.

NAGY: Well, they were born next door in Zimbabwe right after the transition, because that was the closest -- closest adequate hospital we could find because my wife was having a terrible case of toxemia. Her blood pressure was through the roof. We had to charter a plane to get her out of Zambia and into -- into Rhodesia. It was a miracle that the kids were, were born and that they stayed alive, given the circumstances.

Q: Well, then let's talk a bit about who, who was the head of Zambia at the time?

NAGY: Kenneth Kaunda was the President of Zambia, and Frank Wisner was ambassador, and Wes Egan was DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission).

Q: Well, you had one of our top ambassadors.

NAGY: Well, that was his first time to be ambassador I think, and it was Wes' first time to be DCM so we were all kind of there doing it -- I think all of us were in our jobs for the first time.

Q: Well, was there a political situation in Zambia, or was it -- Kaunda was just the number one and that was it?

NAGY: Kaunda was number one. The economy was going to hell in a hand basket. Political situation was extremely dicey because Kaunda had become very unpopular. The miners were against him and the guy who eventually succeeded Kaunda - Chiluba, was the head of the Miner's Union at the time. So there was, you know, like I said, crime was off the scales, the Zimbabwean freedom fighters were better armed than the Zambian security forces. It was just a really, really dicey situation.

Q: Well, what were the Zambian freedom fighters doing there?

NAGY: Zimbabwean? Well, because they were stationed in Zambia because they'd been chased out of Zimbabwe. So they would go in for -- raids into Zimbabwe and then come back to their -- to their camps in Zambia.

Q: I take it they weren't overly disciplined.

NAGY: No. No, no, no. They were totally undisciplined. And they had a huge chip on their shoulders against -- against whites.

Q: Well, what were we doing there?

NAGY: Where, in Zambia?

Q: Yeah.

NAGY: Well, we were -- we were actually engaged with the transition, trying to get a transition from the white minority government next door in Rhodesia and also the embassy was heavily involved in the negotiations on Namibia. That's where the UN institute was, was in Lusaka, which was training the future -- the Namibian civil servants.

Q: Well, did you get involved in any of this or were you --

NAGY: I was strictly General Services Offices.

Q: Well, what was the general -- what were you doing as --

NAGY: Well, I was taking care of, of residences. I was doing the leasing, I was doing the contracting, I was doing -- in charge of the maintenance. I was in charge of shipping and receiving. I was in charge of the budgets. Like I said, security. It was probably the most challenging job because you could not buy anything locally, I mean nothing. Once we walked into the best stocked local supermarket and the only thing on the shelves was Korean strawberry jam -- North Korean strawberry jam.

Q: Oh God. Well, where did you get your stuff?

NAGY: We got it out of South Africa, very surreptitious, you know, everyone kind of blinked. I

got just about everything out in South Africa and had some shipments come out of Europe.

Q: Did you find that the State Department was giving you, as a general service officer, enough money, enough wherewithal to deal with the situation?

NAGY: Yeah, actually the State Department -- Africa Bureau was extremely supportive, extremely supportive. One of the things I unfortunately had then was my very first State Department inspection. And as a total neophyte I think it was a total disaster. You know, because I was kind of inventing it as I went along. But that taught me very well that in the future I had to prepare for inspections better and from that point on -- I think I was inspected at every single post -- and from that point all my inspections were terrific. But that first one was a disaster.

Q: Well, where did you -- I mean just as a guide for the neophyte who ends up in a place like this, where'd you get the information on how to do what you had to do?

NAGY: (laughs) Like I said, I should have been reading the FAMs (Foreign Affairs Manuals), but I didn't have time to read them. My administrative officer, my second one, who will not -- was not the best guide in the world, so I just, I just kind of did what I thought, you know, should be done. Because we all know with the State Department and government in general it's not always the best course of action.

Q: Did the government of Zambia, the people you had to deal with, were they basically hostile?

NAGY: Very hostile. Very, very hostile. Up and down the line, no matter who from our embassy, whatever they were trying to do the Zambians were not cooperative in any way whatsoever.

Q: Well, were we --

NAGY: They were either actively uncooperative or actively inefficient, or actively incompetent.

Q: Well, were there things -- were we trying to raise our profile as a friend of Zambia or not, or was this ineffective?

NAGY: It was pretty ineffective. They were going to be hostile to the west immaterial. So you know, things -- the simplest things, I mean -- our telephone would work 20 minutes a week. The electricity would always be going off. The water was undrinkable. The roads were totally unpaved. You couldn't buy gas -- it was just -- it was just an absolute, absolute mess.

Q: What about the other embassies there? How were the Brits being treated?

NAGY: The Brits were being treated even worse than we were. I think our embassy compound bordered the Brits on one side and the Germans on the other side. The Zambians regularly had demonstrations against the Brits because they blamed the Brits for having allowed the Rhodesians to declare, you know, Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

Q: Yeah, the UDI.

NAGY: Yeah.

Q: Ian Smith and all that.

NAGY: Exactly.

Q: How was that the -- the situation there reflected where you were? I mean you had in Zimbabwe or Southern Rhodesia, I mean you had the troops coming over. Were there ups and downs of how --

NAGY: Well, during the two years I was there the first year was very difficult, but that was kind of the end of the Rhodesian War. Then the Rhodesians negotiated a deal with the Brits and then they went ahead and had elections and Mugabe was elected and the transition happened. So all of a sudden the border opened up and we could drive down to Salisbury, down to Harare, and buy embassy supplies and you know, come back up as -- remarkable Harare -- the, the Zimbab -- the Rhodesian regime was well stocked, the roads were maintained, you know, they had a functioning country, as opposed to the Zambians.

Q: Well, was this what Kaunda did or had this been a legacy of colonialism?

NAGY: No, this was basically Kaunda. He ran it into the ground, along with of course the collapse in copper prices, because when Zambia became independent copper was selling at a premium and then there was a collapse in the prices -- remember in the early '70s, I believe -- so then their budget went into the hole and -- but Kaunda's own incompetence helped.

Q: Mm-hmm. Were there any -- the North Koreans or Chinese or mucking around there?

NAGY: The East Germans were there in a big way to help with security. The Soviets of course were there. The Chinese were there. This was during a period of time when the Soviets and the Chinese were not getting along and the Chinese were the ones who supported Mugabe in Zimbabwe, whereas the Soviets were supporting Joshua Nkomo. So it took the Soviets a long time to open an embassy when all the embassies opened in Zimbabwe. But all of these guys were very heavily present in Lusaka, Zambia.

Q: Well, did you find that particularly the East Germans and Soviets were viewing you -- I mean people with concern, particularly with your Hungarian name and all or?

NAGY: No, I didn't have contact with them. But we did have for the first time contact with the Chinese, because that was when China opened up and the Chinese embassy invited us to a delightful dinner. It was like embassy to embassy. And then they organized a ping-pong tournament between them, us, and the Japanese and they wiped us clean. Then we organized the basketball tournament with them and we wiped them clean.

Q: (laughs).

NAGY: It was kind of mutual respect. And the Chinese found me fascinating because of my background, and I know they were convinced I was an intel officer.

Q: Oh yes (laughs), when in doubt. I found myself one time listed in the East German publication called Who's Who in the CIA?

NAGY: Oh yeah, it's amazing.

Q: I had worked at INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) at one point.

NAGY: Oh, well that did it.

Q: And that put me right in it.

NAGY: That did it.

Q: Did you get any sense of being an African hand? I mean did this sort of wet your whistle or, you know, get you sort of interested in Africa, or not?

NAGY: I was interested in Africa even before I went out there, and this tour just absolutely -- even though it was a really, really, really tough place. We just further fell in love with Africa and, you know, from that point on all of my -- all of my postings were in Africa. I always looked for African postings.

Q: Well, how did your wife think about this? I would think twins --

NAGY: Triplets.

Q: -- would have --

NAGY: Triplets.

Q: I mean triplets, my God, yes. I can't even conceive of triplets, but.

NAGY: Well, she was, you know, I mean she was very heavily -- heavy duty focused on raising the kids. And until the kids were born she was doing all sorts of part time employment. She worked in the consular section and worked in the admin officer's section. But after that, you know, her -- her ability to work for pay really declined, although she did have some jobs later on like in Ethiopia.

Q: Well, I would have thought. I mean the mere thought of living in Africa. But where did you go when you left Zama --

NAGY: I left Zambia in 1981 and did a direct transfer to the Seychelles.

Q: Well --

NAGY: The Seychelles Islands where the chargé was my previous A100 course leader.

Q: Well, before leaving Zambia, how long did Kaunda last?

NAGY: After I left?

Q: Yeah.

NAGY: Oh, I think he lasted probably until about '89 or '90.

Q: So I take it, I mean just things kept going downhill.

NAGY: Oh yeah, things just kept going downhill. Well, then copper prices I think recovered somewhat. They got a little bit better. But I know that things initially for a number of years just kept getting worse and worse and worse.

Q: Well, what was our reading on Kaunda? Was it his incompetence? Corruption? Deliberate -- was it deliberate? I mean what was --

NAGY: That he was a well-intentioned guy who was just hopelessly incompetent.

Q: He was a doctor, wasn't he?

NAGY: Yes, he was an academician.

Q: Uh-huh.

NAGY: No, absolutely. And he was a well-meaning guy, but you know he had an entourage totally corrupt and their whole idea was just to keep him in power.

Q: Did you ever meet him?

NAGY: I went -- I represented the embassy at one particular event and I got to see him there. But you know, that was the only time. Like I -- my focus in Zambia was totally on the administrative management side. I didn't get involved at all on the substantive side.

Q: Well, I assume that the management -- the GSO particularly having a rather non -- not terribly competent administrative officer, you must have gotten a background on, on doing that work that --

NAGY: I did.

Q: -- put you in good stead for the rest of your career.

NAGY: It did, absolutely. Absolutely. And I -- and I -- that's why I always believed that everybody should be a GSO once.

FRANK G. WISNER
Ambassador
Zambia (1979-1982)

Ambassador Frank G. Wisner was born in New York in 1938. He graduated from Princeton University in 1961. He was stationed in Saigon, Dinh Tuong Province, Tuyen Duc Province, Tunis, Algiers, and Dacca. He later served as Ambassador to Zambia, Egypt, the Philippines, and India. Ambassador Wisner was interviewed by Richard L. Jackson on March 22, 1998.

Q: Well, you did that for a couple of years, Frank, and then went to Zambia?

WISNER: That is correct.

Q: Before we go on to Zambia, do you want to comment on anything else?

WISNER: I was asked by the Secretary to represent the United States in Zambia. It was to be my first embassy. Hal Saunders came up and said, "how would you like to be DCM in Riyadh?", and I said, "I've already plighted my troth." I didn't regret it; I loved Zambia. But I missed Peter and the Seventh Floor. There is no experience like service there. Without it you do not see the Department as a whole; nor government in its entirety; nor the connection between policy and politics.

Q: What was it like to be the ambassador in those years?

WISNER: Fascinating. I arrived in Lusaka with my wife and three children, with a fourth child to be born while we were in Zambia. Lancaster House was underway, and it was, in fact, going to bring an end to the Rhodesian crisis. The day I arrived in, very shortly after I arrived in Zambia, the Rhodesian Canberra bombers came over and bombed Lusaka. This was '79, summer of '79. Zambia was a front line state. It was truly on the front line, with Rhodesia being just over the border. We were home to Joshua N'Komo's Zambian African People's Union (ZAPU); ZANU, Mugabe's group which was more strongly based in Mozambique and had the support of the Tanzanians. The Zambians had their own reality. In Kaunda you had one of the independence African presidents who'd been around for a long time. He had managed to make his way, in a country with very few human resources. There were only about a dozen university graduates when Zambia became independent. Thanks to the high price of copper, a lot of money flooded in. Roads were built, schools, factories, all sorts of things. But it was a shell, more than a reality: huge socialization of the economy, nationalization of productive enterprise, government factories and, by the time I got there, I could tell by looking at it, this was all coming to an end. The price of copper had come way down. The Zambian bureaucracy had offices filled with people and empty of work; with copper prices way down and production falling, the roads were beginning to

fall apart, the infrastructure beginning to deteriorate, there was no new foreign investment, no new domestic savings generation. At this point, I learned the realities of deep structural reform; how you put together the Bank and the Fund and the donors and how to design policies which provide growth. And I argued for substantial changes in our policy approach to provide for a stronger private sector role in the economic management of the country. We were putting 25-30 million dollars of aid every year. It was a terrific experience, not only that experience, but also the experience of seeing Rhodesian peace carried through, my association with Namibia. The Namibia Institute was in Lusaka. The present prime minister of Namibia was the head of that institute, Hage Geingob. Terrific individual. So it was a real crossroads of policies and politics, not that any of them were going anywhere because we didn't have a line of approach. It took the arrival of Crocker in the Reagan years to give some new direction to our diplomacy and, not terribly long after that happened, Chet Crocker called me out and I went back to Washington. I had a fine embassy in Lusaka. Wes Egan who went on to become an Ambassador several times over, most recently in Jordan, served as my DCM. Suzanne McGannan Ben Aida, a wonderful secretary, who worked with me earlier in Washington, carried a huge burden at this embassy. Jon Blaney, John Finney, Mike O'Brien of USIS.

Q: But the Zambians themselves were easy to relate to? I remember there were problems with drunkenness in the mines and I've heard that about Zambia.

WISNER: Well, the Zambians are a tribal society, nomadic, tribal society until the early part of this century when the British came. So it's all raw and recent and, no, I wouldn't say the most disciplined, but people of great charm and fun. And, on a personal basis -- though there was a lot of criticism of so-called American sympathy for the South Africans, things of that sort -- I got on very well with a lot of the leading people of the country and remain close to them to this day. The Ambassador here, Dunstan Kamana, is one among many. And as we struggled to keep our diplomacy pointed in clear directions, I had many engagements, including with Zambian businessmen. My greatest single crisis, my most difficult moment, came as the result of a spy scandal with a CIA officer, charged with recruiting people in Zambia, while he was there. One of the Zambians turned himself into his government and this caused a huge amount of trouble, ending in the expulsion of a number of Americans and my having to go head-to-head with Kenneth Kaunda. Kaunda's sense of caution, his need to maintain a relationship with the United States, meant that he didn't bring an end to my stay in Zambia and allowed rather that I was able to go back and get support in Washington and bring the wonderfully nice and able and effective -- particularly in this kind of environment -- General Vernon Walters, Dick Walters, forward to smooth things over and put them back together. But there were hairy moments.

Q: You must have gotten to know Joshua N'Komo fairly well.

WISNER: I had more to do with him in the Kissinger day's, in my Geneva incarnation. I also spent a lot of time there with Sithole, Muzorewa, and with Robert Mugabe, as well as Ian Smith who I dealt with personally, and at some length, Ken Flowers, his intelligence chief. I knew General Walls, the armed forces commander.

WESLEY EGAN
Deputy Chief of Mission
Lusaka (1979-1982)

Ambassador Wesley Egan was born in Wisconsin in 1948 and educated at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He entered the Foreign Service in 1971. His career included posts in Durban, Lisbon, Lusaka and Cairo and he was ambassador to Guinea-Bissau and Jordan. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

EGAN: Bloomfield, Carlucci's replacement. I talked with the ambassador and I talked with the DCM. I wasn't going to, it wasn't proper to accept such an offer without telling the people you worked for that you were thinking about it, that you had been asked and what did they think. I think they, as I recall, they were very understanding and encouraged me to go ahead. I think I left Lisbon with their blessing and got to Lusaka in June or July of '79 to be DCM. Of course I didn't have the slightest idea of how to be a DCM. I'm not even sure the DCM course existed in those days and it was a direct transfer. I just went from Lisbon to Lusaka and moved into the DCM's office and tried to do that job for three years.

Q: You did that for how long, three years?

EGAN: From '79 to '82.

Q: Zambia in 1979. What was it like?

EGAN: It was an idyllic place to live. It's high. It has a spectacular climate. It's dry. During the rainy season it rains at 11:00 in the morning and 3:00 in the afternoon for 45 minutes, you can set your watch by it. Beautiful blue sky. A luxuriant country with almost unlimited agricultural potential, part of the high veldt of southern Africa, very much like Zimbabwe. For Frank Wisner it was his first ambassadorial posting. Frank had enormous energy, intellect, and imagination, so you can imagine the excitement that he brought to that embassy. Lancaster House was in its final stages.

Q: You should explain what Lancaster House meant.

EGAN: Lancaster House is in London where the agreement between the British and the White Rhodesian government on elections and the transition to a black government was struck.

Q: Under Ian Smith.

EGAN: Under Ian Smith.

Q: We were part of the Lancaster House.

EGAN: I think we had an observer at Lancaster House. I think it was Gib Lanpher actually. When we opened the embassy in what was then Salisbury, Gib was the first DCM.

Q: Yes, I've interviewed Gib, but I can't remember. Anyway.

EGAN: I think he was the first DCM and opened it before Bob Keeley arrived as the first ambassador. We in Lusaka were not overly involved in the Lancaster House negotiations but ZANU [the Zimbabwean African National Union] was based in Lusaka. The Zimbabwean African People's Union [ZAPU], led by Robert Mugabe, was based in Mozambique. We were more substantively involved in the Contact Group work on Angola and Namibia. Lusaka was also the headquarters of the United Nations Institute for Namibia whose director was Hage Geingob. Hage went onto be the first prime minister of independent Namibia. He was a refugee from Namibia and had been on the international staff of the UN in New York for many years where he married an American. But most of our attention was focused on Zambia itself. Kenneth Kaunda was then still the first president of Zambia. It was a one party state. They had major development issues. We were a principal bilateral donor of balance of payment support and PL-480 food assistance. Frank was an enormously dynamic and energetic ambassador. He roamed all over Zambia, had a superb relationship with Kaunda and his cabinet, and had a pretty close relationship with the Zambian intelligence service.

Zambia was also the world's leading producer of copper. A lot of money was invested in the copper industry and in those days I think the price of copper was quite high. The price of copper has since then gone through the floor so what had been one of the principal foreign exchange earners collapsed at the very time when stability in Zambia was important to stability in the region. Kaunda himself was one of the grand old men of independent Africa. His stature was another reason for us to have a good bilateral relationship with him and his government.

Kaunda was best known in those days as the father of Zambian humanism. Humanism was the sort of guiding political philosophy of UNIP, the United National Independence Party which he led. It is the party that was created when Zambia became an independent state in 1964. Kaunda emerged as the leader of a tribally diverse state. One of the problems was that there is no majority tribe in Zambia. Kaunda himself isn't even a native Zambian. He was born in Malawi, the son of a Presbyterian minister. In some respects he was an outsider. There are those who think one of the reasons he was able to maintain political power in Zambia for so long was that he was not overly identified with any single tribal group. His philosophy of humanism is hard to explain. A British historian once told me he thought Kaunda's humanism was an empty suitcase into which you could drop anything you needed. This was as useful a definition of Kaunda's political philosophy as I ever understood.

Q: How did you find dealing with him?

EGAN: Very civilized and very polite. He had several off-putting, they may have been purposefully off-putting, techniques. He lived in what had been the residence of the former British Colonial Governor in considerable comfort. It wasn't luxurious, but it was a very comfortable place. It was nestled in a field of beautiful Jacaranda trees approached by a scratchy gravel driveway. There were nice lawns and birds and flamingos in the backyard and a nine hole golf course. Kaunda used to love to have you to dinner when you had a visiting delegation or for any reason that struck him. He loved to host dinners at a long table in the state dining room that

easily sat 25 people. He was a very gracious, comfortable, relaxed host. At the end of the meal, President Kaunda got behind a teacart in the foyer, put a linen napkin over his arm and asked each guest if they would like coffee or tea, with sugar or milk?" The first time this happened to me, my impulse was to say, "Oh, Mr. President, let me do that." It was just he'd always done it. It was one of those things people remembered about him. He enjoyed doing it, perhaps because it put everybody slightly off balance.

I was chargé occasionally and if the need arose for me to see the President, his door was always open. I didn't always get what I wanted, but access was never a problem.

Q: I take it that he was the person to see if there was anything to be done is that it or could you go to say the foreign ministry?

EGAN: Well, you dealt with the Foreign Ministry on routine issues. You didn't deal with the Ministry on political issues or on the most important policy issues. If you dropped a difficult issue in the Foreign Minister's lap, he would take it to the President so why not take it there yourself and at least get it presented by yourself in your own words rather than leave it to a foreign minister to act as your interlocutor. In most of my assignments, if the issue was important you worked it with the president's office or the prime minister's office or the monarch's office. You might keep the foreign minister or his senior staff informed, but you were never satisfied to take an issue to the foreign ministry and think that you had accomplished your mission.

Q: I can imagine a topic that would have gotten and obviously the ambassador very much involved right at the beginning would be a crisis in Iran and getting sort of Zambia and the United Nations and all that.

EGAN: I don't remember the hostage crisis in Tehran being an issue when I was in Lusaka, but obviously we all got instructions on it.

Q: I'm sure you got their vote or something like that.

EGAN: Yes, but it made no particular impression on me. I couldn't, I cannot recall a demarche or an instruction or a request for support in the UN. It's very odd because it was certainly the international issue that most preoccupied the United States at that time. I do not remember ever having a conversation with anybody about the hostage situation in Tehran or it being much of an issue within the country team. Now, that's perhaps just my own memory.

Q: But it's indicative.

EGAN: But it just wasn't, in a professional, that's not to suggest that I didn't know what was going on in Tehran, but in a professional context I don't remember it as an issue that we dealt with in any particular way with the Zambian authorities. It seems odd.

Q: Well, then what were the issues that I mean in the first place, how about the running of the embassy?

EGAN: I think that for a first time DCM the management challenge tends to overshadow a lot of the Embassy's more substantive work. That's not to say that you're not an important part of the substantive work, but you've also got other preoccupations. I got to Lusaka as DCM in the summer of 1979. I knew the ambassador very well, but I had never seen an embassy budget. Like most young political officers, I doubt that I had ever supervised more than one quarter of an American secretary or perhaps half of a Foreign Service National secretary. I had no management or supervisory experience or training. There were aspects of the embassy operation, particularly on the administrative side, particularly with respect to budgets and procurement, that I learned by the seat of my pants. Fortunately it was not a particularly large embassy and fortunately I had an indulgent ambassador who didn't particularly want to be preoccupied with the dollars of keeping the lights on in that mission himself. That occupied a lot of my time.

We had a fairly large AID presence in Zambia: an American staff of perhaps 10. Their offices were not in the embassy. There were several AID directors who thought they were independent, autonomous Washington representatives and had difficulty understanding that they weren't. There were some contentious housing board decisions, health issues, food supply issues, all of the care and feeding of an embassy staff at a hardship post. We and most other embassies were in an area of 25 or 30 acres set aside by the host government. We had the British high commission on one side and the German embassy on the other with a door through the walls to each of those compounds. There were periodically some rather large demonstrations in Lusaka related mostly to what was going on in Rhodesia. A couple of the British high commissioners were the focus of public protests. There was more than one occasion in which either the high commissioner himself or his head of the chancery, who would have been my counterpart, would call to ask if they could bring the Daimler over and park it on our lot so that the crowds wouldn't see it and throw stones at it. Those missions actually worked very closely together. I made some good friends during that posting and people that stayed friends for a long time. It was also the assignment in which I had the worst experience of a badly managed station.

Q: I was wondering, you know, this might be a good place to stop.

EGAN: I've got a board meeting in 10 minutes.

Q: Yes. We'll stop here where, and I'll put here where we are or you might put what you want to talk about.

EGAN: When we resume this I want to pick up on the CIA case officer problem in 1981.

Q: Yes and if there are any other issues, you're talking about the management.

EGAN: We can come back to it.

Q: Come back to the management and maybe some of the personalities there and all that. Good.

EGAN: Be glad to.

Q: Today is the 27th of April, 2004. Wes, first, what was the case officer situation?

EGAN: We had a very active station in Lusaka and there were a couple of superb officers on the staff, most of them fairly young case officers. Southern Africa was a good place to be a case officer in those days. It was a good place to work for bright, ambitious, and aggressive case officers and we had several of them. Most of them were superb. One of them was not.

Q: You might explain for somebody reading this what you mean by case officer.

EGAN: Well, a case officer is a CIA officer who recruits and handles agents in the field. First and foremost case officers recruit agents who can be of use to us either with respect to what they know or what they can do. As I said, Southern Africa was a very active field for that sort of work in those days. In any case, the issue here was a station chief who had probably passed his prime and was not supervising some of these young case officers as closely as he should. This case involved the recruitment of an agent who was then provided with equipment for clandestine collection and communication. The agent was not particularly skilled or was not particularly well run by the case officer. The Zambian intelligence service stumbled across the agent's work. I think it broke open accidentally as was so often the case, while the ambassador was away. My telephone rang about 3:00 in the morning and it was Peter Kasanda, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He summoned me to his office at 3:00 AM and laid out the details of what they had found and the case officer's identity. Kasanda demanded that that officer leave the country immediately and threatened that depending on how we responded to this incident there were others on the embassy staff who might also be expelled. The case officer involved was out of the country within 12 hours. The station chief was recalled to Washington and did not return. The case officer's wife refused to leave Zambia. For reasons that I never understood, the Agency was very reluctant to force her to pack up and collect the kids and take them out of school and leave. She remained in Lusaka another several months. The Zambians were so angry that they hinted they might expel the Ambassador, me, and two other embassy officers. In the end they declared the public affairs officer, Mike O'Brien, persona non grata. One of the things that surprised me in the aftermath of this case was that we made a very strong recommendation to the Agency that the officer concerned was not competent to be reassigned in the field. Nevertheless, within a few years he was back in the field in a fairly sensitive position. The station chief who had been recalled was given a training assignment and retired from the service some years later. We went through a very rocky period in the bilateral relationship. We had some good help from Washington in smoothing it out, but it was tough.

Q: Can you explain what was sort of precarious about this? I mean people doing things all the time. Why were the Zambians responding in this way?

EGAN: Because the action involved state house, the president's official residence and his working offices. It was pretty high level. It was not only badly done, but it was not a good idea to begin with. It was ill-conceived. We didn't need it and we didn't get anything useful out of it. All we got was a lot of trouble.

Q: Yes, well, this so often is the case in this type of thing.

EGAN: One of the things that it taught me early on is I didn't like sitting in a foreign ministry being briefed on an aspect of a clandestine activity that I didn't know anything about. I spent a lot of time overseas after that and made it my business to be sure that I was well informed on those aspects of our intelligence activities overseas. I didn't want to be surprised again. I wanted the opportunity to consider and if necessary object to intelligence activities I considered high risk and low return. It was an important object lesson for me.

I learned a couple of other important lessons in Zambia. I had absolutely no experience with budgeting and supply of an embassy much less one in a country where the borders were closed and you couldn't get things in overland and by normal routes. I learned a lot on the job about the budget cycle and how to try to manipulate Washington to get funds we thought we needed. I was also exposed for the first time to some of the tensions that are not uncommon between AID directors and ambassadors.

We had a very talented and moderately senior AID director who was very sensitive to what he perceived to be his entitlements with respect to housing, vehicles, office space, etc. I learned a lot by watching how a strong and professional ambassador who didn't broke any silliness, dealt with a difficult AID director and the difficult director's stormy relationship with the economic counselor. Watching over and staying informed about and when necessary waving some red flags about intelligence activities in country, dealing with disputes between AID and colleagues on the State side, and of course supervising the mechanics of running an embassy with an American staff of about 60 in a country in the midst of a regional conflict with horrific balance of payments problems, no overland importation or travel because of the war in Rhodesia were useful lessons for me at an early stage of my career.

Q: Did you get any feel for the tribal situation in Southern Africa? You know, I mean, I don't know if Zambia would be the place to pick this up where there was sort of unitribal or was tribalism an issue?

EGAN: Tribalism was such a profound issue. I mean it was such, it was such a broad issue in Zambia that in an interesting way it almost became irrelevant because there were probably 25 or 30 tribal identities in Zambia. None of them were dominant. There was nothing similar to what you had in Rhodesia between Shona and Matabele for example. There was nothing even close to what you had in South Africa with the Zulu, the Xhosa, and others, where you had either the dramatic dominance of a single tribal group or several major tribal groups, ethnic groups that were rivals for influence, patronage, land title, etc. Zambia was a much more fragmented tribal environment. It was a very different ethnic environment than South Africa, or Zimbabwe Rhodesia or even Angola. In a way, tribal diversity made tribal differences less important.

Kaunda's eventual successor, Freddie Chiluba, we met when he was still a young man. He was a leader of the mineworkers union up in the copper belt. Embassy political officers spent a lot of time in the copper belt because it was the most industrialized part of the country. The price of copper, the condition of the mines, the efficiency of the mines, the product of the mines and the trade union issues were all major political issues when we were there. Chiluba was one of our early international visitor program grantees. Kaunda was not particularly vulnerable in those

days. He became more vulnerable politically as he got older and as Zambia's problems increased with HIV/AIDs, unemployment, poverty, famine, disaster in the agricultural sector, etc.

Q: You mentioned the mines. I think it was around this time or even a little before that the big mines in Katanga were going downhill rapidly, both the market and also the upkeep of the mines. They weren't being kept up. Was it the same problem?

EGAN: The Zambian mines were run essentially by a British, South African, Zambian consortium and they had been extremely productive for many years. The efficiency of the mines deteriorated for lack of modern improvements, but I think what really killed them, well, it didn't kill them, but what caused such disruption at the time was simply that the world price for the commodity, you could hardly sustain production. It was those economic factors with respect to the world market I think more unbalanced than any aspect of the way in which that consortium was managed that had become such a problem by the early '80s

Q: Did the British and South African interests, were they looking to get out?

EGAN: By 1981 1982 they were trying to get out. In fact they were at one point trying to interest several American companies in taking over a principle share of that industry. The string kind of ran out on it, but the mines had been not unlike situations in South Africa for many years, being one of the real engines of Zambia's economic health. The tragedy was that Zambia is a beautiful part of the high plateau of the interior of Southern Africa. It is a spectacular climate. It's like living in Southern California. You can stick a broom handle in the ground and it will grow. You can grow anything. If one needed any proof of that, many of the farmers who had been displaced from Zimbabwe have moved themselves and their families across the Zambezi River into Zambia where they have been welcomed by the government and have started their farming life over again; often with the same set of crops and the same mix of lifestyle as they began with in Zimbabwe generations ago. The Zambian government today, I wouldn't say they were encouraging those farmers to make the move, but they are certainly welcoming them and making it easy and attractive for them to buy land and raise the funds to make the initial investments to get seed in the ground and hopefully feed Zambia to an extent that Zambia has not been able to feed itself for years. The agricultural potential of Zambia, like Zimbabwe, is just phenomenal. There's no reason why either of those countries should be importers of any agricultural products.

Q: Then you left there in '80?

EGAN: I left Zambia in 1982. I had a call from Lannon Walker, who was the senior deputy assistant secretary in AF, saying the bureau wanted to send my name forward as the bureau's candidate to be the next ambassador to Guinea-Bissau. Well, I was, this was what 1982? I'd been in the Service 11 years. I was I think an FSO-1 in the old system. I was surprised and delighted by that phone call. I remember only the briefest hesitation when I said to myself, but not to Lannon Walker or to Frank Wisner, where is Guinea-Bissau? Why would anybody want to go there? Of course sometimes when you are told that you're being considered at a job at that level, it is very flattering, and it can go to your head very easily. Sometimes there's also a second thought that follows that very quickly, assuming that you're not being asked to be the ambassador to the Court of St. James, or Paris or Delhi, or Ottawa or someplace like that. You

may think to yourself that if you are good enough for them to ask you to serve in a tiny, far away, barely known place in old Portuguese West Africa, maybe you could angle for something a little bigger. But I quickly figured out that the first time you're asked whether you would be available to serve as an ambassador, it doesn't matter where it is. The first time is always really special and it doesn't matter how big or how small it is, how important or unimportant it is, how far away or how close it is, it is one of those great professional thrills. Some people get a little pickier later in their career, but I think the first time, anybody with any commonsense at all says, "I'm your guy, send me." That's what I said.

Q: I always wanted to go to.

EGAN: I've always wanted to go. I came back to the States. I had a very brief overlap with my successor in Lusaka. I think Frank also came back to Washington in 1982. He was replaced by Nick Platt. Nick had his own DCM coming and so I served as Nick Platt's DCM for three or four weeks and tried to help him settle in before his chosen DCM arrived. Nick asked me if I would stay on for a week with the new DCM which I agreed to do, but it was a mistake. I don't think the overlap was helpful. For the same reason no embassy needs two ambassadors at post at the same time, no embassy needs two DCMs at post at the same time. So, I moved on as quickly as I could.

JOHN A. BUCHE
Deputy Chief of Mission
Lusaka (1982-1984)

John Buche was born in 1935 in Indiana and educated at St. Meinrad Seminary, Purdue and the University of Tübingen. He served in the US Army and entered the Foreign Service in 1959. His career included posts in Toronto, Addis Ababa, Blantyre, Niamey, Bonn, Geneva, Lusaka and Vienna. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: In 1982 you went where?

BUCHE: I came to an end of my tour in Geneva in July 1982. I had received an assignment several months earlier to be the DCM in Mogadishu. As Anike and I were beginning to focus on Mogadishu, I got a call from a friend of mine, Nick Platt, who said that he had been nominated as Ambassador to Zambia and would like me to be his DCM. He was a Chinese specialist and had not served in Africa before. I said I would be delighted to go to Lusaka as his DCM, but I had already been assigned to Mogadishu. Nick knew about that and said he would work it out with Ambassador Oakley for me to come to Lusaka and for Ambassador Oakley to choose another DCM. Nick later reported that Bob Oakley had wanted another officer for his DCM, but at the strong recommendation of the Executive Director of the African Bureau, Len Shurtleff, he accepted me after checking out my background and references. When Nick offered Oakley a chance to obtain his preferred choice for DCM, he was delighted. So were Nick, Anike, and I. Looking back, I am so pleased that I did not go to Mogadishu. From a professional point of view,

it probably would have been great assignment, but daily living was awful.

Q: *It was very, very difficult.*

BUCHE: Absolutely terrible, from every thing I heard or read. Mogadishu in the early 1980s was dreadful, but I was a Foreign Service Officer and was prepared to go wherever I was assigned. Besides, my professional “home” was the African Bureau, and I had been out of my home area for seven years in Bonn and Geneva.

We were leaving Geneva after four demanding, but rewarding and enjoyable years. Our children, John and Christina, were happy in their school, Le College du Lemman, and had made good progress in their studies. They had many friends and enjoyed the diverse activities offered by the school, particularly the “obligatory” three weeks of skiing at the resort of Crans-Montana. In fact, John and Christina liked the College so much that they wanted to stay as boarders in the Internat, while we were in Africa. We agreed. We knew the owners of the school and also had the assurance from the presence in the area of our dear friends, Art and Doni Stillman, from our Ethiopian days. Their daughter, Alexandra, was one year ahead of John in the same school. In addition, we knew that the school in Lusaka was mediocre at best. Anike also liked living in Geneva. For the first time since Ethiopia, she was able to work in a paying job. She worked in the Mission Security Office with Arthur Hanrahan, mostly in a liaison capacity with the Swiss Police. When I found some free time outside of my long hours at work, I enjoyed singing with a well-respected Geneva group, *le Cercle Bach*. One of the basic realities of the Foreign Service is that no assignment is permanent. Anike and I were delighted with Geneva, but we knew we would have to move on. Focusing our attention on Lusaka, we were relieved not to be going to Mogadishu. We knew Zambia from our previous assignment to neighboring Malawi. I knew that from a professional point of view, being in Lusaka in 1982, was the place to be. Big changes were taking place in Southern Africa - Namibia, South Africa itself, Angola, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique.

Q: *You were a “front-line” country.*

BUCHE: Zambia was a front-line country. What this meant in 1982, was not so much a threat of a direct attack against Zambia, but rather that Zambia was in an area where there was so much insecurity and fighting that the country was the victim of cross-border fighting between outside parties. Also the insecurity had negative results for Zambia’s economy. President Kaunda sought to bring an end to the fighting and offered Zambia as a venue for discussions between or among the warring parties.

Q: *You were there from 1982 to 1984. How did Nick Platt work as ambassador? What was his way of operating?*

BUCHE: Nick was an excellent manager, and he had wide experience in Asia and in the Department. He came to Lusaka, having read voraciously everything he could about the history of the country as well as the post’s reporting over the past several years. He spent considerable time with his predecessor, Frank Wisner. Frank was then serving as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (PDAS) in the Bureau of African Affairs. They were close personal friends,

and I think that Frank had something to do with Nick's being nominated to Lusaka. I think Nick was probably looking forward to an ambassadorship in Asia, but there was nothing open at the time. Zambia was an important country for our overall interests and Nick accepted the position.

Nick's style was to let the professionals who knew the area keep him informed or make recommendations to him. If he was satisfied with what they were doing, he let them carry out their tasks without trying to micromanage. Frank Wisner had pulled together a competent group of professionals. As is often the case in the Foreign Service, the new Ambassador comes into a situation where his or her staff had been chosen by the predecessor. I was the only person chosen by Nick. He knew me from past experiences. We had served in Canada together, at different posts, but at the same time. I saw him several times in Geneva. He was the PDAS or the Acting Assistant Secretary with IO (Bureau of International Organizations).

We worked well together. Both of us had multilateral diplomatic experience. I had African experience and contacts in AF; Nick had Asian experience and contacts throughout the Department, as well as in the DOD and CIA. What was happening in Zambia from a bilateral point was not that important strategically to the U.S. Things politically were on an even keel, while economically, the country drifted downward. We had an economic assistance program with an AID Mission. What made Zambia important was its "front-line" status, and Kaunda's policy of seeking solutions to the regional conflicts. There were numerous attempts by Kaunda through emissaries and conferences to bring about peace.

Q: *This was during the time of "Constructive Engagement"?*

BUCHE: "Constructive Engagement" was the name applied to the policy of Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Chester Crocker toward South Africa. He contended that the USG and others were not getting very far with South Africa by castigating and isolating the leaders or by publicly criticizing the cruelty and inhumanity of *apartheid*. He maintained that we would be more successful if we made our opposition to *apartheid* quite clear, but that we also try to find ways of working with the South African Government to improve the domestic situation for the blacks. The policy of speaking constructively with the South African Government also applied to its conduct with its neighbors, particularly in Namibia and Angola where there was active fighting. The Reagan Administration came under very heavy criticism for this policy. *Apartheid* was so repugnant to the American people that the idea of our Government's trying to work constructively with the South African Government, the enforcer of the policy, appeared wrong. As we know, when President Reagan vetoed legislation to embargo U.S. trade with South Africa, the Congress over-rode his refusal (with heavy Republican Party support). I have not served in South Africa, so my judgment about the effect of Constructive Engagement in advancing or retarding the eventual overthrow of *apartheid* is based on second-hand sources. I concluded that *apartheid* was becoming so costly and difficult to maintain in the face of embargos and the increasingly effective internal opposition from armed resistance groups, that it was only a matter of time before the system collapsed. I thought that CE would probably prolong the time before the collapse, since the South African Government could count on the U.S.G. (if not the American people) not to help its opponents. We had so many discussions within the Embassy and with outsiders about the pro's and con's of CE. Within, we could openly debate the subject; with others, we stuck to the official line.

From an external point of view, Constructive Engagement was a positive. We and others could talk to South Africans about Southwest Africa (Namibia), Angola, and Mozambique. It was helpful that we could bring the South Africans to the table to try to find some solutions for the conflicts in the region.

Q: Well, let's talk about the states in the region. What role were you playing?

BUCHE: We were playing a facilitative role so that when the Angolan Government or the SWAPO (Southwest African People's Organization, the nationalist group seeking independence) and the South Africans wanted to meet or were strongly encouraged to meet, the U.S. Embassy and the Zambian Government were the hosts for the occasion. This fitted in with President Kaunda's peacemaking vision, and also with our ideas and policy. We jointly hosted about six or seven meetings with various participants. The invitations went out from the United States Government and from the Zambian Government for the Angolans and the South Africans to meet, for the Malawians and the Mozambicans to meet, or for South Africa to meet with SWAPO.

SWAPO had its political headquarters outside of Lusaka. The actual military headquarters and the training camps were distant. Some were within Zambia, but more were inside of Angola. The fighting took place mostly along the border between Southwest Africa and Angola. The fighting was mostly SWAPO against South Africa, but occasionally, UNITA fighters under Jonas Savimbi would team up with their supporters, the South Africans to attack SWAPO. The SWAPO officials near Lusaka were the political leaders. They made up the delegations for the talks with the South Africans.

The situation in Angola was much more complex. In that mixture were the Angolan Government forces and their Cuban allies against the UNITA forces and their supporters the South Africans. The Soviets supplied arms and advice to the Angolan Government and the Cubans. It was an on-going war involving many parties, with clashes occurring throughout the country. Almost as a sideshow, there was the aftermath of the Zimbabwe or the Southern Rhodesian struggle for independence. That had already been settled, but there were still hard feelings and scores to be settled between the two armed independence movements (basically divided on tribal lines). Zambia had supported the losing faction (Joshua Nkomo) in the struggle for independence. Nkomo lost heavily during the fighting for independence and afterwards in the clashes with the victorious forces under Robert Mugabe. Zambia in 1982 was still engaged in a campaign of "let's make up and be friends" with Mugabe.

While the U.S.G. participation in the conferences was coordinated by Washington, the Embassy had the task of working with the Zambian Government on substance and logistics. If U.S.G. and Zambian positions or goals in respect to the other parties were too far apart, we had the task of negotiating a closer convergence of views. Several days before the start of the conference, a contingent would arrive from Washington to participate in the meetings. Chet Crocker led the U.S. Delegation several times; Frank Wisner on one occasion; and Ambassador Platt on several occasions. Embassy staff often served as note-takers for the meetings.

Q: How did we see the Zambian Government and Kenneth Kaunda at that time. We're talking about 1982 to 1984.

BUCHE: We saw the Zambian Government as entrenched and determined to maintain its one-party monopoly. The Party of Kaunda (the United National Independence Party, UNIP) controlled the levers of power and thus could do practically whatever it wanted. This meant jobs, housing, cars, access to “loans”, international travel, and numerous other means for UNIP officials and UNIP-supporters in Government to enrich themselves, family, and friends. There was previously an opposition party, but it was gradually suppressed. Some of the leaders spent time in prison, but they survived. (Unlike the fate of many of the political prisoners in adjacent Malawi under Banda!) There was an uneasy peace in the country, but there was very little political violence. (There was an increasing level of break-ins, thefts, and robberies in the major cities during our posting there. The deteriorating economic conditions were blamed for the rise in crime.) Kaunda was more interested in Zambia’s external affairs than in the nitty-gritty of domestic politics. We had the feeling that domestically things were drifting. Copper prices had collapsed after a decade of high demand. Much of the gains from the high copper prices were squandered or stolen. Food production was not keeping up with population growth. There was a recession. Corruption was commonplace. Zambian officials were often absent from their office or duty station. They were engaged in family ceremonies (marriages, baptisms, funerals, commemorations, etc.) or moonlighting in a second job. Public services were often not being performed effectively or at all, whether in the fields of health, education, telecommunications, public works, public security, or agriculture. The infrastructure was slowly crumbling. The leaders of the country seemed to make no effort to rein in the absenteeism, neglect, and theft of supplies. If you wanted medicine, you paid for medicine, although it was supposed to be free. This was something that Kaunda had promised in his first election campaign. It was an extravagantly expensive proposition to promise free medical care for the entire country. You could imagine what that would cost if it were truly carried out. Actually, it was a statement that did not have any meaning, because there were not enough doctors, nurses, or technicians, clinics, medicines, or beds to serve a small fraction of the population. Many countries would donate medical equipment to the Ministry of Health, but once they were in need of repair or recalibration, they had to be abandoned, since there were few technicians in the country. There was a large general hospital in Lusaka that was understaffed or overstaffed, depending on what the department was. People would come from all over the country trying to get medical treatment there. It was a financial and medical albatross, an enormously costly set of buildings that failed in most instances to deliver adequate treatment. We were told by the regional medical officer: Do not use that hospital for any serious illness or accident. If the Embassy nurse or contract doctor cannot treat you, we will evacuate you to Europe, to South Africa, or to Zimbabwe. There were several missionary hospitals in the vicinity of Lusaka, where we could go for minor things. For something serious, we would fly out of the country.

Kaunda had decided that Zambia would maintain an economic embargo against South Africa in protest against apartheid. While such a policy was morally uplifting, it had a terrible effect on Zambia’s economy. In so many areas, South Africa had been Zambia’s leading trading partner. South Africa manufactured most of the machinery for the mining industry and for much of the other industries in Zambia. Spare parts had to be obtained by circuitous routes to avoid “breaking” the embargo. For example, the mines would buy spare parts from Zaire or Gabon that

had been manufactured in South Africa, shipped to those countries, re-labeled, and then shipped to Zambia. The extra shipping and handling costs doubled the price. It was both a ridiculous and dishonest policy. President Kaunda would say, "It hurts us, but we are not going to trade with South Africa. No trade whatsoever with South Africa until they change their policy of apartheid." But there was trade. It was all done in a convoluted and hypocritical manner. I pointed this out many times to my Zambian friends. They knew the score and would only shrug their shoulders and roll their eyes. Vice President Bush visited Zambia in 1982. When we were invited to State House for the official dinner, it was an elegant affair. Starched white linen with candlelight and beautiful silverware! And the wines? All South African wines, but the servers took the labels off. The menu stated "cabernet sauvignon" or "merlot" with the vintage. I asked one of the waiters whether the wines were from South Africa. He smiled and nodded affirmatively. He then brought me the cork. It read Stellenbosch; it was South African. It was similar to what I would find in a local grocery store. The wines would be labeled "Democratic Republic of Zaire" or "Republic of Gabon." The corks told the truth - South Africa!

Kaunda was determined to ship Zambian copper to its worldwide buyers using the Tan-Zam Railroad instead of using the rail links through Zimbabwe and South Africa. He did this because of his determination to maintain a boycott against South Africa (although he was also denying another "Front-Line State and ally, Zimbabwe, potential revenue from the transshipments. The Tan-Zam Railroad was built by the Chinese as a spectacular gesture to gain a political/economic foothold in East and Southern Africa. The RR turned out to be a high-cost operation, although the Chinese paid for most of the construction and the original rolling stock. What caused the original estimates for operations to go up was the unanticipated high costs of maintenance for the line, as well as the locomotives and railcars. The project was put together too quickly, and there were numerous instances of faulty engineering. The Chinese did not have experience in working with African soils, and so there were problems in drainage and soil expansion and contraction. There were also faulty assumptions on the ability of the locals to maintain the right of way and the rolling stock. Additionally, the Chinese greatly underestimated the number of accidents, which would occur because of negligence, drunkenness, or sheer ignorance. The net result was that shipping rates had to be increased. Also there were so many breakdowns of rolling stock, derailments, and delays for track repairs that shipments were inevitably late in arriving at the port of Dar Es Salaam. The port itself was often blocked because the freighter ships would have to await the arrival of the delayed trains. Similar problems existed in shipping heavy machinery to the Zambian mines. Much of the machinery was manufactured in South Africa, but was shipped to third countries before being off-loaded at Dar Es Salaam.

It was clear to any impartial observer that Zambia's economy was slowly falling apart. The domestic political situation was also deteriorating. We were reporting to Washington that an economic collapse was not imminent, but was only a few years away unless fundamental changes were made. We also did not believe Kaunda would be capable of instituting the changes or of maintaining the discipline needed to implement them, if they were imposed from outside by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund.

Washington's chief interest in Kaunda was his external role in South African geopolitics. He was very active on several fronts and had enough clout and respect to influence policies and events. Washington had reservations about some of his actions in the Southern African context, but on

the whole, regarded him positively. Kaunda often rankled Washington with his sharp criticism of the Reagan Administration's policy toward South Africa. Nevertheless, even on South Africa, Kaunda was regarded as a potentially helpful interlocutor. On Angola and Namibia he was a crucial partner for us. Washington was keenly interested in knowing about the internal threats to Kaunda, namely what were the chances of a successful coup d'état against him. This was a constant worry in Africa. The local CIA station focused on the coup possibilities, both from its own sources, as well as from an official liaison with the Zambian intelligence agencies. The unwavering evaluation submitted to Washington was that Kaunda was in little danger of being deposed in a coup. The Embassy reported on the broader domestic political scene. Our judgment was that internal political instability would worsen, in large part because of the failing economy, but that for the next several years, Kaunda would most probably remain in power. Washington was basically of the same opinion about Kaunda's staying power and potential helpfulness, and included him as an important player in the calculus about our policy designs in Southern Africa. In the 1980s, Zambia was quite important to the United States for its geopolitical position.

Q: Although it wasn't a front-line state - or maybe it was called one -

BUCHE: It was called one.

Q: I know, but I was thinking about Tanzania. This was still during the Nyerere period. What were your observations of Tanzania?

BUCHE: Well, my observations of Tanzania were a continuation of the way I looked at the Tanzanian Government when I was in Malawi from 1970-1972. I saw that it was the recipient of an enormous amount of foreign aid that was not doing very much to develop the country. When I saw Tanzania from the optic of Zambia, which had close relations with Tanzania, I did not change my opinion. Tanzania was a favored country of the Scandinavians, the Dutch, and to some extent, the US. The President, Julius Nyerere, was a reasonable leader. He had been freely elected and ran the country with some regard for human rights. Nyerere was clever at contrasting his government with the surrounding dictatorships. He was a disaster as a manager and administrator, but his charm and earnestness strengthened the belief by the big donors that he was personally honest and did not benefit personally from the corruption around him. He did live relatively modestly as a President. His weakness was that he tolerated dishonesty in his officials. Some donors rationalized or made excuses when they should have taken a firm line when audits showed missing cash and assets from foreign aid projects. The donors usually were willing to continue the projects while awaiting to see what the President would do about his cabinet ministers and other high-ranking officials suspected of stealing funds. Nyerere pleaded for patience and magnanimity towards his officials, promising that they would be disciplined. Some did lose their government jobs, but they had stolen enough to set themselves up in private business. Theft and malfeasance were probably not the main cause for the high level of failure of most of the assistance projects. Many were badly designed and others were carried out poorly. It took years before the supporters and champions of Nyerere and socialist Tanzania finally recognized what was so apparent to objective observers on the ground. I had a macro view from Malawi and Zambia what was happening in Tanzania through Embassy reporting from Dar Es Salaam, UN and World Bank reports, plus discussions with Europeans and Americans who were involved in the field in Tanzania.

What Ambassador Platt and I learned from the Chinese Ambassador in Zambia about the Chinese assistance program in Tanzania was astounding. For political purposes, the Chinese were willing to tolerate much higher levels of theft, mismanagement, and incompetence than the Europeans and Americans. How Nick and I developed close relations with the Chinese to be told such confidential information is a fascinating vignette. We had good and friendly relations with the Chinese Embassy in Zambia, but we were not particularly close and did not discuss sensitive subjects. The Chinese had by far the largest embassy in Lusaka. They also had an enormous aid program. They were very interested in what the Soviets were doing in country as well as in the entire region. The Chinese thought that the CIA had some penetrating insights on what the Soviets were doing. This was a period of increased Soviet-Chinese tensions and suspicions. The Soviets were not that very active in Zambia, as far as we could determine. They were active, however in Tanzania, Angola, and Zimbabwe. The Chinese had a fixation on the Soviets. They were eager to learn as much as they could about their rival Communist power. There were discussions in Beijing and Washington about the proposal for an informal exchange of information on matters of mutual interest to our two governments. Washington agreed to allow Ambassador Platt to conduct an exchange of intelligence information on the Soviets with the Chinese.

The Chinese Ambassador was a very senior African hand. He had come to Lusaka after serving four or five years as Ambassador in Tanzania. Given Ambassador Platt's Chinese connections, it was clear that Lusaka was an ideal place for such an exchange to be tried. The ground-rules were simple. Each side would consist of Ambassador, DCM, and their spouses. We would meet for dinner on a monthly basis, alternating between the residences of the American and the Chinese Ambassadors. We received our instructions from Washington a day before the dinner. We were told what we could pass on to the Chinese and were given some questions to ask the Chinese. We tried to maintain an air of informality in the exchange by mixing social chitchat with confidential information. The meals at our residence were typically "American" at the request of the Chinese. We had fried chicken, hamburgers, barbequed spareribs, hot dogs, potato salad, and other American classics. The Chinese really seemed to appreciate what Sheila Platt served.

When we ate at the Chinese residence, it was quite a treat. I believe each time we must have had thirteen courses of fabulous food, plus many rounds of a potent Chinese drink. It was quite open and informal. By the end of the meal, we had mentioned to them everything that was in our briefing paper about what Washington wanted the Chinese to know about the Soviets in Southern Africa. The Chinese DCM wrote it all down on little cards as he was eating or drinking. When the Chinese Ambassador spoke about the Soviets, I would jot down key words. The Chinese told us very little that we did not already know about the Soviets. His comments, however, about the trials and tribulations of running a large economic assistance program for Tanzania and Zambia were detailed and fascinating. He confirmed with his stories and examples what we had picked up from various other diplomatic and expatriate observers.

Although we were interested in what he had to say, at times we were almost overwhelmed by the number of stories chronicling the wrong-doing and incompetence of some of the local officials and employees of the railroad. I came to the realization that Nick and I provided a therapeutic occasion for the Ambassador to get rid of some of his accumulated frustrations by sharing his

problems with us. What did it all mean that such and such a district official was stealing money or that he was going out with someone else's wife, or that he drank excessively? I would jot down the information. What did we do with the information? The following day, we would go over it with our local CIA station chief, as well as with the political counselor, in case they were interested. They seldom were, so we filed it in the safe that held our Embassy biographic files.

Q: This often happens. Zaire - did that raise any particular interest?

BUCHE: There were bad feelings in Zambia against Zaire. What really irked the Zambians was that the conduct of Zaireans in Zambia. Bands of soldiers or armed civilians would cross the border and do all sorts of nasty things in Zambia. This would involve stealing cars, burglarizing homes and shops, getting drunk, or going on a shooting rampage. The bands would return to Zaire with impunity. Seldom were the individuals arrested or disciplined. If a stolen car were identified, seldom would the rightful owner get it back. It was often like the era of the Wild West along the border. Kaunda and other Zambian official believed that Mobutu was uninterested in taking steps to prevent such cross-border thuggery. It was widely known that Kaunda did not like or trust Mobutu.

NICHOLAS PLATT
Ambassador
Zambia (1982-1985)

Ambassador Nicholas Platt was born in New York, New York in 1936. He attended Harvard University and Johns Hopkins University, and entered the Foreign Service in 1959. His career included positions in Hong Kong, Japan, China, Washington, DC, and ambassadorships to Zambia, the Philippines, and Pakistan. Ambassador Platt was interviewed by Paul McCusker in 1994.

Q: Who was that?

PLATT: I will think of his name in a second. He was a young Mormon, a very nice guy who had worked in the White House scheduling office. He was very competent, very friendly, very nice. He was brand new and knew nothing about international organizations. But I got him through the process and then went on to Zambia as ambassador. I had done exactly what I told Elliott to do. Elliott had gotten himself firmly entrenched in all of the negotiations with the South Africans, the Europeans, the Angolans, the Namibians..

Q: Well, Lusaka was the headquarters for the front line states, wasn't it?

PLATT: That's right, at that time. So Chet asked me, "Would you like to go to Lusaka as ambassador? You and I know each others moves and I would have a person who has regional clout and who knows these issues so I won't have to go there every time there is something to say. Obviously I will come for the important things, but I would like you to go there and be that as well as the bilateral ambassador." I said, "Fine." I was delighted to do that. So it was one of

those Foreign Service things that happen. You trade on your experience, you find a new niche and you take it where it will lead you. Well, it led me to Zambia.

Q: It led you to Africa and the Namibia.

PLATT: I was very pleased to have that opportunity. I was around for the negotiation of withdrawal of South African from Angola, which lasted for about a year and was a precursor to other agreements that came later. I loved working with Chet Crocker, who I think is one of the really tough, resilient people who has worked on foreign policy.

Q: I am sure you got to meet Ahti Saari?

PLATT: I knew Ahti Saari but haven't seen him since he became President of Finland. I would love to go call on him at some point.

Q: He is quite a guy. I worked with him on certain aspects of the Namibia at the UN Mission, UNTAG as we called it for years. It was all laid out in 1978 but it wasn't until several years later that it came to pass.

PLATT: I think there was almost a Namibian agreement at the time of...when was it, 1978?

Q: No, 1978 was when the Security Council resolution was adopted that set up the whole thing on the expectation that it would be implemented.

PLATT: I remember going in my capacity as Japan Desk officer going up and sitting in on conversations between Cy Vance and the Japanese leaders and talking about UNTAG. And, of course, I had UNTAG in huge quantities later on when they tried to figure out what it should be and how many people, etc. We never got to use it while I was around.

But that is why I went to Africa. I went to Africa because I went into International Organizations Affairs and I went into International Organizations Affairs because a young, raw, political appointee in that field wanted an experienced hand who was close enough to his age so there was some connection.

STEVENSON MCILVAINE
Zambia-Malawi Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1989-1991)

Born in Pennsylvania of Foreign Service Parents, Mr. McIlvaine was raised in Washington D.C. and abroad. He graduated from Harvard University and served in the US Army before joining the Foreign Service in 1947. His assignments abroad took him to a number of posts in Africa, including Kinshasa, Bissau, Dar es Salaam, and Lusaka, where he served as Chargé d'Affaires. At the State Department in Washington, Mr. McIlvaine dealt primarily with African issues. He

was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: In '89, where did you go?

MCILVAINE: I came back to Washington to be a desk officer, the Zambia-Malawi desk officer, in Southern African Affairs.

Q: You did that for how long?

MCILVAINE: Also, I came back in part also because my mother was sick and dying.

Q: Zambia at that time...

MCILVAINE: Zambia at that time, President Kaunda was being challenged, the founding father. Unlike Nyerere, he was not willing to admit that socialism had failed and that he had failed and instead was maintaining everything was fine. That was being challenged by a unique alliance that was really promising – labor unions led by Fred Chiluba. The lawyers were fed up with corrupt judges and a failed legal system. Businessmen were tired of this half-assed socialism. And just good government people who were tired of bad government. There was a wonderful coalition, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy, the MMD. They ended up with Chiluba as their candidate and Chiluba won. That happened after I left the desk. Pretty quickly he began getting rid of these guys, the reformers, so he could run things almost the way Kaunda had. Since then he has now been beaten in an election and indicted by his successor for corruption. That's another country, even more so than Tanzania, with plenty of arable land, low population, no major tribal fights or bitterness to deal with, resources, that can't get it together. The only excuse is bad government for Zambia not succeeding.

Q: Malawi?

MCILVAINE: Malawi differed. It was tiny, overpopulated, no resources, and one of those countries that, like Switzerland, exist only if they find some extraneous way to be of service to the rest of the world. Ruled for 30 years by the old Scottish headmaster, Hastings Banda, and the place was like an old fashioned puritanical boarding school. Hastings Banda was a stern, fire breathing Presbyterian who happened to be African. Everybody, no matter how threadbare, wore their jacket and tie and white shirt. The flowerbeds on the roadside were neatly trimmed and the roads were always perfectly maintained. There weren't very many of them. Everybody was precise and orderly and neat and tidy and nobody spoke out of turn or they got their knuckles rapped or worse. I spent those 2 years as desk officer. The Zambia part that was fun was the development of the MMD and the challenge to Kaunda, the real democratic challenge, genuine grassroots democracy emerging in Africa, in Zambia. On the Malawi side, nobody knew when it was going to end, but I was busy protecting a couple of dissidents from Banda's wrath. I spent a lot of time on that and got some nice "thank yous" from the one family. Aleke Banda had been Hastings Banda's finance minister and then had gone and disagreed and made his disagreements public. President Banda went after him and he fled into exile for a while. Then he had the courage to go back and was promptly thrown in jail. The question was keeping enough pressure on the regime so that they didn't kill him. Another was a labor union guy that I also had to keep

pressure on the regime to make sure they didn't kill him.

Q: How do you put pressure on?

MCILVAINE: Well, demarches and you make it very clear that the US embassy is watching and paying attention. That makes it a little less easy to have this guy just disappear, which is what had been happening in Malawi. If they really wanted to disappear him, they still will, but we tried to make clear there would be a bit of a price.

Q: Did Kaunda make a trip to the US while you were there?

MCILVAINE: No. Chiluba did. That was after I was desk officer. In Malawi, there was a woman and there was a wonderful title for her – I can't remember what it was – who had been Hastings Banda's nurse and was his attendant, consort, whatever. She came and she didn't fit any of the protocol formats. She wasn't his wife. She wasn't the first lady. But she was essentially the first lady and a political power of considerable force. We had to figure out how to deal with her. Joseph Reed was the chief of protocol. I went to him and got him to put on the dog, all the dog he could put on without violating any of the rules. He loved doing that. A good chief of protocol has to love that stuff and he did. The visit was a success. She wasn't called the "presidential companion" but it was something like that, odd. "The official hostess?" But it was very important that she be happy with the visit or we would hear about it from Hastings. When I went out and visited Malawi and went with the ambassador on a call, one of the most senior ministers was with him when we went in. We watched the ministers were getting down on their knees and bowing to this little man – he was then in his 90s – before they left. We didn't get down on our knees. Fortunately, a few years later, Banda did finally die. There was much thought that maybe he really was immortal. Fortunately, that proved not to be the case. Malawi is struggling with its version of democracy.

Q: By this time you had become an African hand.

MCILVAINE: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of the Africa Bureau?

MCILVAINE: I liked it. It was a camaraderie. This was when Hank Cohen was Assistant Secretary and Jeff Davidow was the PDAS. Davidow was always funny and always irreverent. He went on to be a real superstar. He was ambassador in Zambia, so I worked with him, and then he came back to be PDAS. Then he went on and was ambassador in Venezuela. Then he was ambassador in Mexico. Then he just made career ambassador and I think he's now been pensioned off. But a great guy, very funny. I was working in AF/S, which at that point had 60-70% of the bureau's business with South Africa still not settled, we had just gotten Namibia settled, and we were still wrestling with Angola. The whole time I was there, we had this Angolan peace process that I would back up occasionally, trying to get some kind of cease-fire going and some sort of agreement. This was the first Bush administration. The Reagan liberation struggle had been given up and they decided maybe it was time Savimbi just quit if we could find a graceful way for him to do it.

Q: What was the feeling about South Africa at that time, by '86 to '89?

MCILVAINE: Well, when I was in Tanzania, one of the most difficult parts of my job was defending constructive engagement. I was someone who didn't much believe in it, but you're a Foreign Service officer; you have to say what your government's policy is... I took to saying, "My government believes... My government thinks... My government maintains that..." not "I think... I maintain that..."

One of the fun things about Dar es Salaam was dealing with the ANC and with the PAC, the Pan African Congress, mostly with the PAC because this was their headquarters. The ANC was based in Lusaka but they had a suboffice in Dar. That was a lot of fun and insight into what was going on in South Africa, which was something I didn't know much about and I had never been there. I went to a big ANC blowout – I forget what over... There was another one I went to in Arusha that was the 25th anniversary of Nelson Mandela's conviction and jailing where I met Thabo Mbeki. This one was in Dar. Chris Hani, the firebrand Marxist leader of the ANC, was the speaker. In the course of the speech he blasted US policy. I was the American embassy representative. "Is this where I get up and walk out?" I wondered. Is this strong enough for me to walk out? what's the magic trigger? I of course hadn't had any advice from the ambassador.

Q: You were saying after a series of insulting statements, it's time to leave?

MCILVAINE: I'm trying to decide as a U.S. diplomat how much is too much, where do I draw the line, and where do I walk out? I finally decide he has gone too far too much. Of course, I am in the middle of the row, in the big auditorium. I had to clamber over several ambassadors and other diplomats to get to the aisle. Very conspicuous, all by myself, walking up this empty aisle in the middle of the speech. I leave and get back and write the cable. Of course, in the cable, my mindset being "I've got to make sure this is justified," and being totally naive about the politics of Washington, I write the cable what he said and what I put up with and then when I walked out. Back comes a bullet immediately after the cable goes out saying, "Why didn't you walk out sooner?" Oh. I went back shortly thereafter to the States and Chas Freeman, who was then one of the DASes, called me in, or I asked to see him. I said, "What did I miss here? Please explain the political background." He said, "Oh, that's perfectly easy. Read all the cables from Zambia." I think it was Nick Platt who was the ambassador there. Of course, he was dealing with the ANC every day. This was still late Reagan administration and everything was being leaked to the Hill by conservatives to the Jessie Helms crowd, which was keeping watch on those State Department commies. So, what Nick Platt would do was list what the ANC said and then he would add a this paragraph, "Of course, I told those sons of bitches what a load of crap that was and I pounded the table," or something like that. Once he got that done, then he would do whatever reporting he had to do, what he thought we could do, how we should respond. But he had to have that paragraph. Freeman explained that that was essential because then if it was leaked, it didn't make us sound like a bunch of Marxist lap dogs. We stood up for the U.S. and we made it clear. Even if he didn't say it, he put it in there. In your case, Hani said those these things and the immediate response was, "You should have walked out after the first one."

Q: Of course, Washington politics and overseas politics are so different.

MCILVAINE: Exactly. I learned from that. It became very useful later on when I was dealing with some politically charged things.

STEDMAN HOWARD
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Lusaka (1992-1996)

Mr. Howard was born in New York and raised in New York and Massachusetts. He was educated at Wake Forest College (Illinois); Worcester Junior College; University of Massachusetts; and the University of Maine. He joined the United States Information Agency in 1971 in Washington and served there, dealing with management matters, including the Voice of America (VOA). Mr. Howard also served abroad as Public Affairs Officer in Abidjan, Lilongwe (Malawi) and Kampala. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

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

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

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

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

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

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

HOWARD: Four years.

Q: What was your job?

HOWARD: I was the PAO.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

popular enough that television set aside an hour for us every week on Sunday evening, it was the WorldNet hour.

Q: Now were these hand tailored programs?

HOWARD: They were done exclusively for us. I had to go back to Washington and sit with three different groups of people: the television people, the radio people and the print people to get them to develop what I wanted. What I wanted was three different programs for three different levels of audience, those who read, those who listened to the radio at the bottom, those who read in the middle and those who watched television at the top on the same topic every week. We would put print articles in the newspapers and it would be backed up by our radio interviews and occasionally we were able to tie this in with direct VOA programming, and then the third element was the television interview. We would run this for two weeks. We would release four articles every two weeks to the newspaper and they'd reprint them all. We'd release two radio interviews, one a week and then one television interview every two weeks.

Washington was just fantastic. We did this for 16 weeks, so we had eight different programs that covered voting, it covered small party organizations. It covered municipal governance, municipal elections and municipal constituent relations. It covered federal and national parliamentary relations. It covered the role of the press. It covered the rule of law. Most of the basic solid topics that we covered. It became a fairly popular thing to the point where the electronic media replayed this stuff probably two or three iterations, both the television and the radio, and they were getting fan mail from outside Zambia.

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

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

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

HOWARD: No, basically the absence of leadership, when the cat's away the mice play, and there are no small number of very sharp mice. So, we did a lot of good things. The overall charge is not true. I think it develops a contention that we were a Cold War agency and out of step with our time which was a Jesse Helms hypothesis that was just simply flat wrong. We had evolved technically to meet the times. We had evolved in our programming, and we recognized what the nature of the threat was and what we were supposed to do with it. The other half of the problem was that we had been doing a democratization program since 1953, but until USAID came at it we don't do it with very much money. We do it in small incremental amounts. We don't expect

all of the return to come tomorrow. We're investing for five and 10 years from now. When AID comes into it and does their democratization program, they come in with big bucks. They're going to build an edifice they're going to walk over and hand over tomorrow. We're not in that business. It's easy to say, well, USIA is not doing anything. It's not very effective. It's not true.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HOWARD: Long gone.

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

HOWARD: The structure was there.

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

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

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

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

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

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

judge's group. All of a sudden, they went from three judges working, with the grand total of seven hours a week in 10 courtrooms, up to about eight judges working pretty damn close to 100 hours a week in all the courtrooms. Little things. I don't think we spent more than \$400,000 on the whole damn thing, maybe \$500,000 in three years, but a lot of little incremental progress was made in the justice system. It started from the discussion of how do we get one person freed who ought to be. It worked very well.

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

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

Q: What did the center do?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q: During that time Mozambique was not a problem?

HOWARD: It was becoming not a problem because during the '80s in the Reagan administration our policy was something called constructive engagement. It was a much debated, much maligned policy that really left Chet Crocker very much a stand alone person in the political spectrum in Washington. He basically said the only way we're going to deal with South Africa is if we untie the Angolan knots so that South Africa will have no more excuse to sit on Namibia.

Once we do that, Mozambique will change, and the war in Mozambique will not have the one in Angola to feed off of, nor will Angola have the Mozambique conflict to feed off, and the two of them will separate.

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

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

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

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

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

HOWARD: Kaunda had kept things under very firm control. "One Zambia" was his whole philosophical basis, and it was his motto. Under one Zambia there were no independent tribal governments. There were tribal chiefs and there was a co-opted tribal chiefs council that could meet and could advise the president, but the president was under no obligation to listen to them or do what they asked. He managed to do one or two things a year that gave them a fig leaf to hide behind, but he really didn't pay much attention. This rankled them, but there wasn't much they could do. He owned the central government and that was the way that it worked. Under MMD, the tribal chiefs thought that they were going to get a better deal and indeed they did not, but Chiluba was not as good as Kaunda at keeping them under control. It began to emerge, but not tribalism in the destructive sense as you find it in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire. Not tribalism as it carries in Nigeria, not tribalism as it functions in Sierra Leone and Liberia, not ethnic

warfare, not the kind of little nuisance war that's going on in Uganda between the north and the south. This was not what's going on in Zambia. It's a very civilized political jockeying if you will, 20th and 21st Century political jockeying. The tribal chiefs want a voice in affairs. They want a vote in parliament which they're probably not going to get, but they're going to have enough nominees on the list that they'll co-opt parliamentarians along the way and make it work that way.

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

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

Q: How about AIDS at that point?

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

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

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

fairly successful program as far as I could determine at least to the extent of distributing condoms and getting them used. Whether it has some kind of impact it had on the Aids infection rate, I don't know. It's been 10 years and I don't know what's happened.

Q: What was the media like?

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

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

Q: How about exchange programs?

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

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

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

HOWARD: No. At least not up to their potential, neither positive or negative. They had been a

factor in control that Kaunda exerted as a potential deployable force, but it really was a paper tiger. They hadn't maintained any of their equipment and they didn't have anything that moved. Zambia had been a repository for every junk pile, Soviet disposal heap that came along, and so a lot of the stuff was not only not operable, it was not repairable because parts weren't available. They had a lot of junk that didn't work and so they were not a particularly well-trained or mobile force.

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

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

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

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

Q: What was Zambia doing with it?

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

Q: How did Zambia get to the outside world?

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

what limited Afrikaans my kids know came off the cereal packages.

Q: How was life there for you all?

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

Q: So, whither, in '96?

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

JOSEPH F. STEPANEK
Mission Director, USAID
Lusaka (1994-1996)

Mr. Stepanek was born in Houston, Texas and was raised primarily abroad. After earning degrees from the Universities of Colorado and Minnesota, he joined USAID and was sent to Bangladesh as economist. Subsequent assignments took him to Washington DC in USAID's policy bureau and as Chief of the Development Planning Office for Latin America. His foreign assignments were to Indonesia as Mission Economist, to Tanzania and to Zambia, where he was USAID Mission Director. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1997.

Q: Well, then, after that you went off to Zambia, was it?

STEPANEK: For the first time in my life I found that my next step in USAID was one that I sought for myself. All of the other assignments had started with phone calls to me.

I started at that late date in my career to realize that my "career clock" was ticking and that I'd better think about it.

Q: You mean, you were about to be affected by the "time in grade" rule?

STEPANEK: Yes. And I recall talking to McDonald, the chief executive officer in the Personnel Office, on several occasions about what was going to be available for me. I guess that, according

to policy, he was very open and very helpful. I had a very good idea of what was coming and had a chance to think about it.

I wanted to be USAID Mission Director in Jordan, but that was not in the cards. Then I turned my attention to Africa because I knew Africa and felt comfortable there. I had the choice between Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. It didn't take any time at all to realize that I much preferred Zambia.

Q: Why was that?

STEPANEK: Well, first of all, I didn't know that country at all, and I knew the other two countries. I also knew that there were the beginnings of a political and economic reform program in Zambia. I found that exciting. So, with no "campaigning" on my part, the SMG [Senior Management Group] approved my name for this appointment. My appointment as USAID Mission Director to Zambia went forward, and that worked well. It was a very exciting two years.

Q: When did you arrive in Zambia?

STEPANEK: I arrived on September 3, 1994. On September 6, 1994, McDonald called me and said that I'd been "fired." You know the technicality as well as I do. You're not literally "fired," but I had not been approved for a second LCE [Limited Career Extension]. So I then knew that I was only good for a one year assignment in Zambia. At this point the African Bureau nominated me for what I think was called a "607 extension."

Q: Something like that.

STEPANEK: Boy, these numbers disappear fast from memory. In any event, I "won" that, thanks to the Africa Bureau, so I knew that my remaining USAID career was then set: two years in Zambia and then retirement. That's what happened, and it worked well. The Zambian Government was so busy betraying democracy that, when I left, it was clearly time to go.

Q: What was the situation when you arrived in Zambia?

STEPANEK: It was one of great hope that the new government, which had won a free and fair election from Kenneth Kaunda, was sustaining its economic policy and implementing broader, democratic reforms. The Zambian Government sustained the economic reform program, but not the political pledge.

Q: This was under Frederick Chiluba?

STEPANEK: Yes. So, as in Tanzania, I inherited a program that I liked very much. I worked with it and shaped it. One part of that puzzle was a \$15 million democracy portfolio. This gave us entree to all of the political "actors" in the country.

Q: What were you trying to do under that program?

STEPANEK: In a nutshell, to provide funding to make it possible for "alternative voices" to be heard. Not so much opposition parties, of course, but to provide training to opposition parties to "level the playing field" and provide technical assistance on how to run a political party and so on. Also, to provide resources for NGO [Non Governmental Organization] monitoring groups and civics education. This covered basic civics education, involving women's groups and so forth.

We monitored the course of political reforms which the government had pledged itself to carry out, like the privatization of the press, for instance, and streamlining cabinet processes.

Q: You were doing this in cooperation with the government or separately.

STEPANEK: Some of it was in cooperation with the government and some of it was not. When the government manipulated the constitution to prevent Kenneth Kaunda from running, which happened in the middle of 1996, we and other aid donors decided to send "signals" that we disapproved of this "backtracking" on democratic processes. I helped to draft a statement which was approved by the NSC [National Security Council] and which announced that we were cutting off some of the project support to the Zambian Government. So that was an education.

Q: Did it have an effect?

STEPANEK: I suppose not. However, I was instrumental in convincing the aid donors not to provide budget support to the Zambian Government. Budget support was all cut off, and I take some credit for that achievement. In that sense all of our taxpayers were better off. Project aid continues, and the aid donors, as a group, watched the political situation very carefully. As you know, Kenneth Kaunda was jailed on Christmas Eve of 1996.

Q: Meantime, were the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund proceeding with the economic side of it?

STEPANEK: Yes, and Chapter 7 of my book covers more than you want to know about that. It's all spelled out. It was an "ugly story." The Bank and the Fund are concerned about maintaining stability and maintaining the flows of aid donor funds to maintain the debt repayments on schedule. It's not a pretty picture.

Q: Meanwhile, did we reinstate our balance of payments support to Zambia?

STEPANEK: No, and, to the best of my knowledge, there is no balance of payments support from any aid donor. I think that all of the aid donors agree that it's a pretty messy situation, created by President Chiluba. Meanwhile, project aid continues.

Q: What kind of projects were we continuing to support?

STEPANEK: In addition to support for democracy, we had an agricultural project to reform the agricultural program. We started a very major health, HIV/AIDS, and family planning program. That's an exciting story. It was done carefully and collegially.

Q: Well, what is the story?

STEPANEK: In the case of Zambia the story is a little like the story in Tanzania. We were "late to arrive" on the block. My predecessor had been caught up in the drought and the reform program and didn't have time and apparently not too much interest in the health program. I am an economist by training and not a Health Officer but I have always been sympathetic to that side of USAID's contribution.

Other people and I recruited Paul Hartenberger from the Latin American Bureau, who was one of USAID's best Health Officers. With Paul in the driver's seat we signed up major programs for AIDS, for family planning, and for health more generally. The Zambian Government had already mounted a reform program affecting all aspects of health care in Zambia. It had recruited aid donors for this effort, and we were "late to the table."

So while I was in Tanzania, there were sensitivities of a somewhat different kind, but, nonetheless, there was great concern that USAID, with all of its "bucks," was barging into this area of activity late, grabbing all of its favorite pieces, and upsetting the apple cart with respect to all of the pre-existing agreements with the Tanzanian Government and with the other aid donors. In the case of Zambia, Paul and I made sure that that did not happen.

In fact, the other aid donors were "speechless" that we would be so genuinely "collegial" and so genuinely prepared to pick up programs where there was mutual agreement, without upsetting anybody.

Haven, I have to tell you one of my favorite little stories in this connection. I was struck by the fact that even USAID, which talks about ownership, sustainability, and collegiality, often pushes projects through the Global Bureau without ever asking a government official. So this particular, unsolicited proposal passed through the Global Bureau, was parallel with the major Zambian Government health reform program, which we were negotiating separately. It was a small request, but the principle mattered. So I went to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and said: "We're working with you on this health reform program. We have this tangential effort. I am very interested in knowing what you think of it and whether we should change or modify it. What do you think?" The conversation came to an end, and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health just sat there, stony-faced. I thought to myself: "Oh, boy, I really misspoke this time." The Permanent Secretary then said: "Joe, you have to give me a minute to collect my thoughts. Nobody's ever asked me before for my views."

Q: You asked him what he thought?

STEPANEK: Yes. The sad truth is that the aid donors must be awfully "pushy," all of us. It's no wonder that government officials in Africa have a hard time getting on their feet and standing on their feet. This is an index of development.

In Indonesia you would not dream of "pushing" an Indonesian Government official. Today the first line and second line officials in the ministries in Indonesia have some depth to them. They are clearly in charge, and that kind of donor attitude never comes up. You wouldn't dream of "cooking up" a project without clearing it with the Indonesian Government. Sadly, it is a different situation in Africa.

Q: What were the pieces that we picked up in the population area? Was there anything very specific or special?

STEPANEK: I think that we handled a lot of training. We picked up decentralized health systems management and monitoring. I believe that it is true that the other aid donors welcomed us in those areas. They had seen USAID's strength in other countries and knew that that was what we were good at.

In any event, the only thing that I know for sure and that I think counts is that everybody was smiling. In the case of the Ministry of Health the Deputy Minister eventually became the Minister. His name was Katele Kalumba. A medical doctor led the health reform process in the Zambian Government after the elections of 1991.

Q: This was truly a multi-donor approach?

STEPANEK: Yes, and it was led by the Zambian Government. So it was everything that theory tells us it should be.

Q: I see. And did they have the capacity to carry out this health reform program?

STEPANEK: Not initially, but, step by step, they built it. I'm sure that, behind the scenes, there is still heavy dependence on the aid donors.

Q: Does that include an HIV/AIDS component?

STEPANEK: Yes. That, in turn, includes a very large, private sector component. The private sector handles condom sales, advertising, and that sort of thing. It also includes the Zambian private sector in health, as well as Zambian traditional "healers." I thought that this was a very nice step. Not that we embrace traditional healing practices. However, these folks have rapport with the local communities and obviously have to be partners in this exercise.

Q: Were you also thinking of making reforms in the field of agriculture? Did I interrupt your thought?

STEPANEK: Yes, let me finish this comment on health reform. As I was leaving Zambia in October, 1996, there was some evidence from doctors and nurses that the rate of Sexually Transmitted Diseases was showing some signs of coming down, that the rate of HIV/AIDS increase was tapering off, and that family planning was starting to be accepted. So I think that we are seeing...

Q: Was HIV/AIDS as devastating as people predicted that it would be, in terms of "wiping out" a lot of middle management types?

STEPANEK: Yes. It's a "horror story" that one tends not to see. It's only now that the evidence of funeral processions clogging the streets makes an impact. In an office setting you see death notices which tell you that this or that person will no longer be there. Any business that has any sort of personnel plan today now has "back up" personnel in train. They just know that they have to have them.

Q: Did you also feel this in the USAID Mission?

STEPANEK: You recognize the names of FSN's [Foreign Service National employees] who have died. You occasionally visit them in a hospital and occasionally attend their funerals. We always passed the hat to raise money for their families.

Q: How about employing people? Did you have to have blood tests? Or didn't you ask?

STEPANEK: We had an USAID "test policy" for participants in our programs. I think that we had one for FSN's as well.

Q: You talked about reforms in agriculture.

STEPANEK: That's an example of possibly "getting in" too early. Within the Ministry of Agriculture the whole parastatal system of state control was being dismantled. However, the bureaucrats within the Ministry, the aid donors, and particularly the World Bank, had no "vision" or equivalent "concept" as existed for health reform. There was no Zambian official in this area, such as a Deputy Minister or Minister in charge of an agricultural reform program. The agricultural reform program suffered mightily for not having a "vision" of what was wanted.

The Ministry had the policies, because the reform program was "on track." However, that sector did not have a concept of what the new Ministry of Agriculture should look like, in a market economy. As a result, most of the bilateral aid donors were forever "kicking the hell" out of the World Bank, and for good reason. The World Bank was primarily interested in moving money. For once, the aid donors were primarily interested in "doing the right thing" to sustain the liberalization program. There was controversy over this situation when I was in Zambia, and there is controversy to this day. It will probably take a while to sort out.

Q: What particular issues were involved?

STEPANEK: Well, the core issue was whether the agricultural bureaucracy would be retrained and reestablished as it was, as the controlling influence on seed, extension, on "marginal lands," and so forth. The alternative was a "vision" that encompassed the Zambian Government working with private investors as partners or working with seed companies, for example. The government could work with foreign companies which were already there, growing roses, for example, or

allowing farmers to be free to switch away from cultivating maize [corn] and into better, dry land crops. In short, all of the marketing reforms which have to do with an "agreement in principle."

Q: Did you bring up agricultural reform, or did you think that there wasn't much chance that anything could be done?

STEPANEK: To be honest with you, this issue was very troubling for several reasons. One was the lack of "vision." Another was the fact that our officer responsible for project work was a very bright but "difficult" individual. I found myself supporting the "brightness" but not the "difficulty." This was very hard to do. Ultimately, I kept the officer on, though many people hated me for it and still do, to this day. The new policies just warranted "toughness," and so we were at an impasse, quite frankly. We were funding a very small project in which CLUSA, a well-known USAID supported firm, was trying to arrange "business extension" of commercial farming, on a "pilot" basis. That was about all that we were doing in this field.

We had a lot of money for this purpose, but it wasn't being spent. It is probably a good thing that it wasn't being spent. The avenues just weren't open and clear enough to warrant all of the "front end" costs involved.

I think that the other aid donors were "schizoid" on this subject. They were coming to support this kind of program but were not at all comfortable with the lack of leadership and the lack of "vision." Private investors, Zambian and foreign, were working to develop Zambian agriculture, and that much was very exciting. But it wasn't the kind of partnership that we wanted.

I'm writing about this in my book, Chapter 6 on African agriculture. Briefly, there has to be a ministerial willingness to embrace all actors. The idea that the Ministry of Agriculture can do it all, know it all, and control it all is just nonsense. Those days are long gone, and aid donors should not spend a dime supporting any such concept. Anyway, agricultural reform is a sad story and a great disappointment. If I had it to do over again, I think that I'd get a different officer to handle it.

The other penalty in all of this was that USAID was helping to fund "wildlife management." I was new to this field but had been active in wildlife management in Tanzania. This is a story that I didn't emphasize or mention in the section on Tanzania. In Zambia I inherited a program that I grew to like very much. It had to do with community management of wildlife, on a sustainable basis, so that resources obtained from hunting would be shared with the community. It's a long and involved story, filled with contention. The idea is sound, and it is now working out.

It turned out that my Project Officer didn't like this program, for reasons that I never understood. I was there in Zambia only two years. The question of this Project Officer's extension for a second tour was out of my hands, so I didn't get a chance to withhold my approval for his second tour. The concept was important, and I felt that it was worth sustaining. Africa has to learn to use its wildlife to best advantage.

Q: What was this project "shaped like"? What were we trying to do?

STEPANEK: It was a "regional project" funded out of Harare [Zimbabwe] and then Gaborone, with implementation and monitoring by the USAID Mission. The national parks of Zambia are surrounded by Game Management Areas [GMA's]. No hunting is permitted in the parks, but hunting is permitted in the Game Management Areas. Within these GMA's it is in the community's interest to regard wild life within them as a resource, so that they are used as a tourist attraction, both for cameras and for guns. The resources obtained from "hunting licenses" are "plowed back" into the country and into the communities, so that there is a personal "payoff" to village chiefs, to scouts, and to the citizens. This money is used for salaries, as well as for schools, bridges, clinics, and so forth.

Africa needs a game management system, wherein the "off-take of game" is scientifically determined. And they're on the verge of doing that. Any particular Game Management Area will know that there are, say, two lions and three bucks of whatever species that can be "culled" per season, whatever the number is. The information available on this subject is very impressive. Translating this information into a working program is a challenge, all tied into satellite "imagery," game counts, and so forth.

Q: This process was just getting started while you were there in Zambia?

STEPANEK: It was started about a decade or more ago. The process is slow, in the face of corruption and poaching permitted by some government officials. It's been a real, tough slog.

Q: How was it working in Zambia, compared to Tanzania?

STEPANEK: It was working better in Zambia than it had worked in Tanzania. I grew very fond of the Zambian people. I could easily live there again. I worked on behalf of the FSN's to raise their salaries through promised State procedures. I also hired Zambians and moved them into senior positions. I enjoyed that part of my job in Zambia a lot.

Q: Zambia has been characterized as a country that's been dominated by its urban areas, to a large extent. In a sense, it's the most urban, African country because of the copper mines and all that. It required a form of social transformation to balance urban/rural relationships. Did you think that that was called for? Did Zambia begin to shift to more of an agricultural base and a broader, production base, rather than being dependent on the urbanized centers?

STEPANEK: That's interesting. I've never heard it phrased that way. It is clear that Kenneth Kaunda had decided that Zambia was going to grow maize [corn], or else. So the cultivation of maize was funded, lock, stock, and barrel by the national budget. Maize was grown, as THE crop to feed the cities, and farmers were really "civil servants." They were protected by input prices, marketing, procurement, and all the rest of it. That system is now being "liberalized" but also compromised. It is being privatized. Now you put the two together, and 50 years from now I would guess that there would be large scale employment in modern agriculture, as well as in value added from copper mining. If you're willing to give me 50 years, I would be willing to bet that both sectors will be dynamic.

It is true that Zambia is the most urbanized of all of the African countries. The "line of rail," which is the "code word" used to describe the urban zone between the copper mines and the capital, Lusaka, is where 50 percent of the population lives. However, I have to tell you again that when you are in Java [Indonesia], Dhaka [Bangladesh], or Calcutta [India], you have a vision of humanity that leaves no doubt in your mind as to what it is to live "cheek by jowl" with other people. You get to Zambia, and people say: "Well, it's 50 percent urbanized, and everybody lives along the 'line of rail.'" So you go to the "line of rail," and there is nobody to be seen. That visual comparison is pretty powerful stuff!

But I have to balance that story with another one, though. Just to change the subject for a minute, there is evidence that the increasing tensions in Africa are all rooted in poverty and pressure on the land, particularly in Burundi and Rwanda. Behind the "genocide" that has taken place in Rwanda, there is intense pressure on land. My wife, Caroline, and I saw that for ourselves. Again, the comparison goes back to Java.

If you travel the length of the island of Java, you can see the pressure of that immense population on that relatively small island, which is forcing the cultivation of food crops higher and higher on the volcanoes. On almost all of those mountains the bases are planted, and the people are moving their way up the sides of these volcanoes. They may now be a third of the way up.

Well, in Burundi and Rwanda, as you may know, they cultivate the tops of every hill as far as the eye can see. That is the visual index of what the population pressure is like. So as much as Africa may seem to be "empty," there are parts of Africa where there is very great population pressure.

Q: So, is there anything else about Zambia that you want to say at this point? You finished up your USAID career in Zambia?

STEPANEK: I did. I left Zambia at the very beginning of October, 1996, just about a year ago. We took a long-planned trip through West Africa. We spent time in Abidjan [Ivory Coast] with Bill Pearson; in Bamako [Mali] with Joel and Abhaya Schlesinger; in Senegal, with Anne Williams and Gary Merritt. Gary had been the Family Planning Officer in Kenya who got that program going. Then we went to Cape Verde and spent time with Larry and Gloria Benedict. Larry was the Ambassador. He had been the Deputy Economic Officer in Dhaka [Bangladesh], at the very beginning of my career.

Q: How do you compare East and West Africa, from your observations?

STEPANEK: It was much too short a visit to say. Abidjan is clearly a bustling, metropolitan center, filled with foreign ethnic groups. In that sense it is more sophisticated and more dynamic than, say, Nairobi [Kenya]. I would imagine that it was equal to Johannesburg [South Africa] in some ways. We went to Timbuktu [Mali] and got a small sample of Sahelian problems. Dakar, Senegal, is culturally very rich and cosmopolitan, as well as very interesting to see. I came away from this visit with a strong sense that the agricultural systems are essentially "dormant." Nobody is really touching the potential of these countries. There is very little regional cooperation of any kind. The French have been quite a "curse" on these countries. Some day

these countries will all break free. I spent entirely too much of my time seeing friends. We spent most of the time, sitting in the kitchen, talking about old times, rather than being out and about.

Q: You retired from Zambia?

STEPANEK: I had written ahead and had applied for grants in order to write. I didn't win any grants. However, I had written to IFPRI [International Food Policy Research Institute], and "out of the blue" they said: "By all means, you are welcome to the use of an office." So I've had two academic years at IFPRI, writing furiously. I've taken on far more time than I ever imagined.

Q: What have you been writing about?

STEPANEK: I have a draft book composed of 10 chapters. The chapters are ordered by subject matter and not chronologically or in terms of my autobiographical experience in AID. I find that I can use an awful lot of the stories that have developmental impact to fill in the narrative and make it more credible. I'm trying to write as a "generalist" for a broad, American audience.

Q: About what?

STEPANEK: I will be happy to tell you. The first chapter is all introduction, setting out my purpose. The second chapter is about USAID in Washington and what that means both for our flexibility and the constraints under which we operate. The third chapter is a review of developmental theory and practice since the Marshall Plan [1948-1958 in Europe]. The fourth chapter is about the Bangladeshi agricultural story of the 1970's, written with the advantage of hindsight. The fifth chapter is about life "in the field," our presence, so to speak, and what it means to live and work overseas, instead of in Washington. The sixth chapter is about African agriculture and why it is so profoundly important for the future of Africa. Chapters seven and eight are about structural adjustment and democracy, mainly on the basis of what I had observed in Zambia. However, I believe that both chapters provide a generic story about the problems facing African structural adjustment and democracy. I find that, in most cases, the problems lie more with the aid donors than with the Africans. I have some pretty hard things to say about what donors do and don't do. The ninth chapter is about American training and advisory services for many parts of the world. They were a heroic success for Asia but a tragedy for Africa. Chapter 10 is about everything that I left out in previous chapters.

Q: Good. That's quite an undertaking. It's a very interesting concept. Obviously, we'll have to wait for the book. Let's take a few minutes, if you have the time, to talk about your more general views on aid, development, and so on. Is there any way of characterizing, from all of your experience, what you think works and what doesn't work in the "development business"? That's a big question, but could you talk about your approach to it?

STEPANEK: I felt, as I left Tanzania and Zambia, that USAID as an institution knows a great deal about development practice and administration. In the best of all possible worlds, in which USAID as an institution might have a greater degree of freedom than we have had, we could have done more but we still have a lot to offer to the poorer world. It's very sad that that capacity seems to be in the course of being dismantled, to some degree, if not totally. Even some close

friends of mine say: "Joe, wake up to the fact that AID is dead, and that era is over." I think that the American people, even those who live outside the Beltway [i.e., outside of Washington, DC] don't know the AID story because we were necessarily caught up in the Cold War, in micromanagement, in "earmarking" funds, and in serving other, foreign policy priorities. This is all understandable. It's just unfortunate.

I feel that my own career in AID was a great privilege. I would do it again in a minute. I have very few regrets. I'm very proud of the fact that our country has this kind of agency.

Q: How would you characterize USAID as an institution in the world development business, compared to other donors or sources of assistance? Is there anything particularly distinctive about USAID? You've hinted at some aspects.

STEPANEK: I think that U.S. foreign aid, since the days of the Lend-Lease program [during World War II], the Marshall Plan, and the "Point Four" program [technical assistance to the underdeveloped world] has stood out as an innovator, and we still stand out. We are still respected and looked to. When we are not able to measure up to our own standards, our absence is noted, and this is being noted by other aid donors today.

Q: What are some of the areas where USAID is particularly distinguished for the innovations which it has introduced?

STEPANEK: First off is the fact that AID people overseas are respected for their "open door" attitude, for candor, and for friendliness and constructiveness. We represent American culture overseas, in the largest sense. We have had a degree of authority that other, bilateral programs don't have. We don't always have the best officers in a given place and at the right time. However, more often than not, we handle our "portfolio" very well, not only in the project sense but in the sectoral and macro sense.

Notwithstanding problems back here in Washington with certain personalities, AID's health record overseas is a fine one. I learned early on in my career that if I invited in a team of health people, I didn't have to worry about its quality at all. By that I mean that the health team would probably have visited the country previously, would have been students and teachers of local counterparts, would have known the "story," and would have known how to work in a collegial sense.

I could not say that about AID agricultural projects. In my personal experience and for whatever reasons, AID's ability to build a constituency behind our agricultural portfolio never worked very well. In retrospect, I know just by observation that something was working very well during the days of the "Green Revolution" when we cooperated with the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and with American universities and agricultural schools. However, for whatever reason this record didn't continue in later years. Not in Africa, anyway. Also, the work that I did in Bangladesh came from me. It did not come from the American agricultural tradition. It could have, perhaps, and should have, but it didn't. The pressures which I faced originated with the USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture]. At the time I had few, if any, allies in this connection. Or maybe I just met the wrong people. I don't know.

Q: Were there other sectors, other areas in which you were involved?

STEPANEK: I think that, despite all of the biases in AID legislation, my impression is that our PDO's [Project Development Officers] do a good job of developing tangible programs. The locomotive procurement and road construction situation in Tanzania were handled, not only with great skill, but with wisdom. We did some very fine things.

Program aid in general, though, is a mixed story. There were too many motives and too many undefined objectives.

Q: In your experience did you find that U.S. political and security interests supported or conflicted with the development objectives that you were trying to pursue?

STEPANEK: As I say in my book, I had the good fortune to serve in countries that were not strategically important to the United States. This was only accidentally the case, but I think that it let my predecessors, and then, later, me, focus on development more than we might have been able to do in other countries.

Q: Then why were we in these countries, if they weren't particularly important to the U.S.?

STEPANEK: They were important because of the AID legislative commitment. First and foremost, this commitment is to poor people in a poor environment. So when we are able to focus our energies, in the way that we have been directed to do, we focus on poor countries.

Q: So you consider that in U.S. foreign policy interests there is a genuine priority for development?

STEPANEK: Yes. I would say that it is "genuine." I would not say that it is always a "high priority." Again, Haven, I've been lucky in the very few instances when I have had differences with an Ambassador about a U.S. foreign policy interest, versus a developmental interest. I think that in almost all such cases the Ambassador decided in favor of the developmental interest. That was very gratifying to me.

STEVENSON MCILVAINE
Deputy Chief of Mission
Lusaka (1995-1998)

Born in Pennsylvania of Foreign Service Parents, Mr. McIlvaine was raised in Washington D.C. and abroad. He graduated from Harvard University and served in the US Army before joining the Foreign Service in 1947. His assignments abroad took him to a number of posts in Africa, including Kinshasa, Bissau, Dar es Salaam, and Lusaka, where he served as Chargé d'Affaires. At the State Department in Washington, Mr. McIlvaine dealt primarily with African issues. He

was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: Then where did you go? This was '94.

MCILVAINE: For the '95 summer cycle... I could go to the War College for a year, which sounded like great fun, write a paper, travel around, and all that. Then I got a shot at being DCM in Lusaka, Zambia, and I thought I'd better take that because it might not be around a year later, so I took that.

Q: So you were in Lusaka from when to when?

MCILVAINE: Summer of '95 to summer of '98.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MCILVAINE: When I arrived, the ambassador was Roland Kuchel, who had done some African service but also a lot of European service and had been DCM in Stockholm. He got this post and then he retired from that while I was there. Very nice guy.

Q: Where is he now?

MCILVAINE: He retired in Vermont. He worked hard... The job in Zambia was to try and keep one of Africa's first elected democracies democratic. The guy who was elected as president, Fred Chiluba, two things: one, he was absolutely paranoid about his predecessor, Kenneth Kaunda, and convinced that Kaunda was somehow going to, even though he had defeated Kaunda rather handily in the election, contrive to come back.

Q: How old was Kaunda by this point?

MCILVAINE: Kaunda was in his late 60s. He had been president for 29 years. By the time I left - I used to see him every now and then - his attention span would wander after about 20 minutes. Maybe that's normal.

Chiluba was not rational... If Kaunda said anything, Chiluba could be guaranteed to overreact and Kaunda knew it, so of course he'd go out of his way to talk about "that little man." Chiluba was very small, very short. Chiluba hated that. At one point it became illegal to have any short jokes. Kaunda just knew how to needle him and Chiluba would overreact. In the first elections after Chiluba was elected - he was elected in '91 - it was '96, and the big issue for our embassy and for Ambassador Kuchel and for me was to keep Chiluba from somehow ruling Kaunda out of the election. If it was a free and fair election and Kaunda ran and was defeated free and fair, democracy was established. If the opposite happened, if Kaunda was somehow ruled out of the election instead of defeated squarely at the ballot box, as we firmly believed he would have been, then democracy had been subverted, it's not moving forward, and Zambia is backtracking from what had been something of a landmark step in '91. Unfortunately we were not able to persuade Chiluba to allow Kaunda to run. He couldn't bring himself to believe that Kaunda was a spent force, although later results indicated that. So they maneuvered... They declared the former

president of the country, who had been president for 21 years, not a Zambian. He was a “foreigner.” Not he but one or both of his parents had been born outside the country. Of course, nobody had birth papers and yes, they might very well have been born outside the country in pre-colonial Africa. But it was unprovable. On those grounds, Kaunda was pushed out of the race. He was declared an illegal candidate.

Q: Other than trying to make this a cradle of democracy, what were our interests in Zambia during this '95-'98 period?

MCILVAINE: Much the same as they are in most sub-Saharan countries, to see the country get on a solid footing and move forward, be reasonably self-sustaining economically and have a reasonably democratic political process. That's our goal in most of Africa where we're not actively worried about either a natural disaster or a human made disaster or stability and security. Zambia is a country with lots of room, lots of arable land, some resources - major copper deposits in the copper mines in the north - some hydropower potential and resources and a relatively small population without major tribal animosities. It has no good excuse for not succeeding except that it never has. The reason it never has has always been human frailty, a failure of government. You can blame the colonial powers, the West, the debt, all that, but ultimately Zambians have failed to effectively govern themselves. Sadly, that continues to be the case. I spent 3 years where we were trying to establish democracy. The other major goal of the mission during that time was to get the country to privatize the copper mines before they crashed. The government couldn't sustain them, couldn't keep them operating as a government industry. They were rapidly losing value. We got very close, within an inch, and at the last minute somebody whispered in Chiluba's ear and he decided he could get a better deal and he canceled the deal we had that was available. He ended up 2 years later selling to the lowest bidder at a knocked-down price because they were crashing. So, we failed on both those fronts. In terms of the work, it was a frustrating 3 years that we didn't accomplish either goal. In terms of the living, it's a wonderful part of the world.

Q: How did you find dealing with Zambian officials?

MCILVAINE: Like many Africans, very welcoming, easy to get to know, and that's always been to me the charm of working in Africa, that it contrasted with Asia, where I spoke Vietnamese and spent a very intense year and a half in Vietnam and never felt I got much beyond the second level of about 10 levels of understanding and getting to know the Vietnamese even though basically I worked with Vietnamese all the time. In Africa, there isn't that layer after layer of cultural defenses. They're much more welcoming, much more open and tolerant and forgiving on a personal level. Africans put up with astonishing things from their own governments and everything else and just soldier on. But tolerance on a political level almost doesn't make sense. That's the problem in country after country where the government cannot accept opposition of any sort and feels it has to be crushed and crushes it until it is overthrown. That's the cycle that we're seeing now in Zimbabwe.

Q: What about events in the Congo? Were they intruding?

MCILVAINE: Yes. It's the whole northern border. It was the fall of Mobutu and the rebels were

sweeping down along the Zambian border. The rebel movement that came originally from the east swept down along the border towards us and across the country and heading to Kinshasa. So, we followed that very closely, did a lot of refugee work, a fair bit of reporting on how the Zambians were responding, and a certain amount of... Part of our concern was, we were going to be the base for evacuation of those Americans who were in the southern half of the country and setting all that up, being in touch with the missionaries and all that, but in fact, in the Congo, it didn't amount to much for us. The missionaries that were still there knew how to get out, knew how to take care of themselves, and they had been through a lot of trouble before. They did a pretty good job of taking care of themselves.

But one small anecdote from that time. We had a young Belgian officer up from Harare. The Belgians had closed their embassy in Lusaka and made it a regional embassy in Harare, but of course the Belgians still had a large number of nationals in Zaire and he was up trying to organize, get permission from the Zambian government to bring in a Belgian plane to Zambia and bring maybe some paratroopers in to guard it and to help the Belgians evacuate any of their nationals. He basically operated out of our embassy for a couple of weeks trying to get this through the Zambian government. I remember him coming to my office one day and sitting down with a heavy sigh and saying, "Just once I'd like to know what it's like to be an American diplomat." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because then people return your phone calls. They make decisions. They talk to you." He had been going 2 weeks with the Zambian bureaucracy and gotten nothing. Nobody would make a decision or even talk to him. It was an insight... With the fall of the Soviet Union when we became preeminent, we were the big player. In every country, no matter how obscure... I remember back even in '85 in Guinea Bissau, which had to be the most obscure country and I had to be the least important embassy there - I wasn't giving them any aid and I wasn't doing anything for them - they still would listen to me. The foreign minister would hear me, would give me an appointment whenever I asked for it. Being an American diplomat was indeed different. No matter how trivial the issue or how little we had to do with it, we were a player. Many other embassies were always scrambling to get into those meetings.

Q: Was it Burundi or Rwanda that was going on at the time?

MCILVAINE: First it was Rwanda in '94. Then the Tutsi-led military took over Rwanda and still rule it today. Then when they decided Kabila, the new president of Zaire/Congo had been getting a little too friendly with the Hutus, the "Hutu Genocidaires" as they called them, they organized with Uganda and others the effort to overthrow Kabila. That military effort succeeded.

Q: But Zambia was off to one side?

MCILVAINE: That was the one that produced the refugees and all the rest of it. Meanwhile, Burundi was simmering along in semi-civil war with a beleaguered Tutsi-led government that just this past year has through a peace agreement kind of stumbled on. Now there's a Hutu prime minister as part of the peace agreement. But it's still teetering on the balance as to whether Burundi's going to succeed. I follow that closely because my sister is the CARE director in Bujumbura in Burundi.

Q: Did events in South Africa play any role?

MCILVAINE: That was interesting. When I had worked in AF/S in the early '90s before Mandela was released, before the end of apartheid, South Africa dominated not only that office but the bureau. As much as 60% of the bureau's, including the Assistant Secretary's, time was spent on South Africa and what I considered related, which was Angola and Namibia. South Africa was a major player in both of those. In the back of my mind, I remembered that. I got to Zambia and now it's the new millennia. Mandela's released. He's president of the post-apartheid government. South Africa really isn't a player. First of all, the ANC had been very closely tied to Kaunda, so Chiluba saw them as the enemy. He didn't like them. So, Zambian-South African relations under Chiluba were very frosty. That made a difference.

Economically, South Africa was important. South African businessmen were showing up. A brewery came in and bought up a Zambian brewery. I was chairman of the school board and increasingly at the international school we would be getting more and more South African kids from representatives of South African companies coming in. There was a growing economic presence, but the political presence for a while there was stymied. That may have changed now with Mbeki in South Africa and Manawasa as president of Zambia.

Q: How about with Tanzania? There was a road that was built by the Chinese.

MCILVAINE: There was a railroad. We built the road but refused to build the railroad, said it couldn't be done. So the Chinese came in and did it.

Q: How was that working?

MCILVAINE: That was another place where I thought one thing and found it really wasn't the case. I had assumed those two ex-British Southern Africa socialist legends of the first wave of independence Nyerere and Kaunda and the countries actually touched each other that there would be a lot of kinship and a lot of similarities and to-ing and fro-ing. There wasn't. Tanzania is basically politically Dar es Salaam on the coast and that's a long way from the western border and the western border is an even longer way from Lusaka, where the Zambian political life is. Politically, Zambia is very much in southern Africa. It deals with Zimbabwe hugely. What happens in Zimbabwe is very important to Zambia both economically and politically and to some degree with Botswana and Namibia and Angola, always worried about Angola and Malawi. That's the world Zambia lives in. It doesn't pay much attention to Tanzania, although its oil comes through Tanzania on the pipeline, the train, and similarly in Tanzania you never hear much about Zambia.

Q: How about Mugabe and Zimbabwe? Was this an influence or not?

MCILVAINE: This was a tragedy. I talked about how Zambia had no excuse for failing yet had. Zimbabwe on the other hand had plenty of excuses for failing - no real natural resources except arable land, no deposits of much of anything, and a bitter civil war for independence. Yet when I was there, Zimbabwe was a shining success. The infrastructure was in great shape and maintained by the African government. The roads, the rail, everything all worked. Harare was an attractive city. The economy was solid. People had work, had jobs. And people had a feistiness

that came out of fighting for their independence. They would object when they thought they were being taken advantage of. We were very impressed by Zimbabwe. Then Mugabe was challenged and his response was oppression rather than “I’m in my mid-70s. It’s time to step down.” He has basically almost single-handedly destroyed the country in the 5 years since I left. It’s a tragedy.

Q: Anyway, let’s go back to the breakfast coup.

MCILVAINE: The breakfast coup... We’re in Lusaka, Zambia. The morning routine is, you get up at 6:00. We had 3 children all going to school on the school bus to the American International School. The bus wanders around the Kabalonga area of Lusaka, picking up American kids and taking them out to the school out on the outer fringes of town by Leopard’s Hill. You go past the giant graveyard where five funerals are going on every minute of every day because of AIDS. The kids get a little introduction to that on their way to school every day.

Anyhow, we wake up and I’m just getting up and I hear a burst of machinegun fire outside somewhere, not immediately close but outside. That was followed by more. It’s pretty clear that something bad is going on. I get into my shorts and go into the kitchen, where I’ve got 2 phones, an embassy phone and an outside line. I turn on the radio and sure enough, some disgruntled army officers have taken over the radio station and declared a coup. The military establishment from the state house not very far from my house is beginning to respond. In quick order, I alert the ambassador, talk to the security officer and the Marines at the embassy to make sure the embassy’s fine. Nothing’s happened there. They are intact. Nobody’s leaving or coming in. I then talk to the security officer. We decide to close the school, turn off the school bus so the school bus will not be running around town picking up kids while this is going on. We then talk to the consular officer to make sure that he in his house in touch through the warden net with all the American citizens to make sure they’re safe and stay home and stay low while we wait to find out what this is. Keep the ambassador informed, who is about a mile from my house at her residence, talking to Washington.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MCILVAINE: Arlene Render. Then get with the political officer on the phone again. Nobody’s leaving their house. That’s my rules. I try and figure out what’s going on. Meanwhile, I get some visitors from an old friend who had been one of Kaunda’s stalwarts but was now somewhat on the outs with Kaunda but also on the outs with the government because he was of the old UNIP elite from Kaunda’s party. His son and several children arrive at my door figuring that somebody might go after them and they’d be much safer at my house. We let them in.

By this point, my kids are up and everybody’s having breakfast. My kids are really excited because this is like a snow day in Washington. School’s canceled. This is great. So it became forever after “having a coup day” when the busses were canceled and school was canceled. This is terrific. They play with the Zambian kids. That’s fine. I spend the next 3 hours in the kitchen on those phones keeping the ambassador informed, who’s talking to Washington and managing the embassy community until we determine that the danger is over when around lunchtime the coup is suppressed, the coup plotters are captured by the government, and the gunfire has stopped. Business goes back to normal. But it was a pretty exciting morning, particularly for the

kids.

Christmas morning, my wife and I are stalling as long as possible because all the presents are by the tree in the living room and that's our family tradition to delay it and build up the anticipation. The kids are knocking on the door and saying, "It's time to get up." Finally we start to get up and the phone rings. It's the political officer informing me that the government has surrounded Kaunda's house and is about to arrest him. This is not a big surprise. We knew Chiluba was obsessed with Kaunda and had been threatening to arrest him on various dubious treason plots and that sort of thing. He just couldn't stand the idea of Kaunda out there making critical and snide remarks about Chiluba, which Kaunda was quite given to doing. So indeed he was arrested, but Chiluba had to pick Christmas morning to do it, to arrest the former president of the country and an internationally known figure. Nothing could have served Kaunda's political purposes better. This gets him back into the headlines. It makes him a player again when he had basically been forgotten. A gross miscalculation on Chiluba's part.

Two days before, I sought out a meeting with a contact of mine who lived a couple of doors away who was Chiluba's Mr. Inside, his lawyer and minor cabinet minister with an office at State House and definitely Chiluba's confidant. I had said to him, "Don't do this." Rumors were flying. "This will hurt you in all sorts of ways. It can't possibly do you any good." He was very uncomfortable answering. It was clear that he understood what I was saying, probably agreed, but that something was going on. So, we had thought this might happen. We hadn't thought he'd be so clumsy as to do it Christmas morning, but indeed he was. So, instead of going under the tree and opening up the presents, I spent the next hour or so with the political officer talking to a few people and then reporting back to Washington and talking to some poor deputy assistant secretary of State for African affairs who's been called by the Operations Center to tell them all what's going on and what has happened and whether we think this will be a threat to the embassy. The answer to that was, "No." Indeed there wasn't any. But it did make an unusual Christmas morning. I called the Ambassador who was on vacation in Botswana.

Q: Oh, yes. Let's talk about communications. The world is changing. How did you report back when you had these quick breaking things?

MCILVAINE: We didn't have classified e-mail, which I think now many embassies do have - maybe all. So, we didn't do any of this in e-mail. That's the plague of embassy life now. It gets into e-mail and therefore it's not really documented. You don't have files of e-mail. It was already then a major problem with AID. So much of the decision making was being done... They operate unclassified, so much of their decision making was being done in e-mails. There was no record of it. We were constantly forcing the reluctant AID to actually write a cable about that so that we had a record. Everything that required a decision, everything that was a major policy, had to be a cable.

Q: But e-mail is technically the same as a cable.

MCILVAINE: Well, the cables were encrypted and everything else. E-mail wasn't then. It was accessible.

Q: But be that as it may-

MCILVAINE: Hackers can get into your e-mail.

Q: But if a coup was going on...

MCILVAINE: You're not talking about classified things. You're talking about a security threat to the mission and the people in the mission. That you deal straight with the Operations Center over the telephone and you issue warnings to American citizens. It's part of every one of these things. Whenever something like this happens, you have to do one of these warnings that go out to the whole world.

Q: But with e-mail, you can keep records.

MCILVAINE: You can. Maybe now they do, but in my time nobody did except when there was an investigation like Oliver North and they'd go back and they'd dig out all his e-mails out of the computer. You can find them if you know what you're doing.

Q: And you can also print out e-mail.

MCILVAINE: But people don't usually do that. I'm sure this is all changing. It's going to have to change because, yes, more and more business, it's much easier to do it by e-mail than the cumbersome machinery of you put a cable together, you take it, you have a couple of people whose whole job is to run all that fancy coded machinery in a windowless room in the embassy and send all these cables out and get in Washington's traffic, most of which we could have done without, as any embassy will tell you.

Q: Yes. But the problem with e-mail is that it often brings things down to the unvetted area where people are working at a lower level but it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ambassador.

MCILVAINE: Right. It raises control issues that makes any ambassador nervous, particularly when you're talking about the management of U.S. policy, which is his or her job. You don't want everybody in the embassy just chiming in. You want something of a coherent... That's understandable. And the cable process allows that. E-mail does not. So, I would think, yes, classified e-mail presents a number of management challenges that I did not have to face because we didn't have it. We still basically communicated by cable. In a crisis, yes, it's by telephone to the Operations Center or if the telephones aren't working you would set up radio links. Many a time in the Operations Center we would set up an open line to the embassy in countries with bad telephone communications and you'd have over in the corner on the table an open telephone so that whenever we wanted to ask the embassy a question, there would be somebody there monitoring it. We'd go over and ask them.

End of reader