Interview with Walter M. McClelland

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

CONSUL GENERAL WALTER M. McCLELLAND

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: November 20, 1995

Q: Today is November 20, 1995. This is an interview with Walter M. McClelland. This is being done for the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Mac McClelland and I are old friends.

Mac, could we start off with a bit about when and where you were born and a bit about your family?

MCCLELLAND: I was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Our branch of the McClelland family settled in Virginia in the early 1800's and my Grandfather and his brothers were educated there. In the 1880's my Grandfather and Great Uncle established a land business in Clarendon, Texas, where my father was born. When he grew up he became a lawyer and moved to Oklahoma, which was just becoming a State.

So I was born in Oklahoma City and my father was a well-known lawyer there. He was also the Senior Warden at the Episcopal Cathedral there for many years — and that had a part in my life too.

Q: When were you born?

MCCLELLAND: July 13, 1922. I lived in Oklahoma City through my first year of Senior High School. In 1938 I went to the Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia. After that I attended the University of Virginia, where I joined the Naval ROTC. I graduated with my B.A. and Ensign's Commission in the USNR in February, 1944. I served as Ensign and Lieut.(JG) on Destroyers until I was released in 1946. Then I attended Harvard Law School and Graduate School until 1950.

Q: We're going to go back a bit. You went from Oklahoma to the Episcopal High School here in Alexandria for most of your High School education. Did you learn much about international affairs — anything to pique your interest in this field — while you were at Episcopal High School?

MCCLELLAND: Not really. My whole life was focused on being a lawyer. My father was a lawyer, so was my Grandfather, and my brother was becoming one. I couldn't think of anything better to do, so that is where I was headed. My father had a fine law firm and he said he would always welcome me to come there. I had never even heard of the Foreign Service and, as a High School student, I did not have much interest in international affairs.

Q: Then you went into the Naval ROTC. When you got out in 1944 where did you go and what were you up to in the Navy?

MCCLELLAND: I went into Destroyer training at Norfolk, Virginia, for a few months and was then sent to a new Destroyer just being commissioned in Mobile, Alabama in July of that year.

Q: What was the name of the ship?

MCCLELLAND: The USS John Hood, DD 655.

Q: Was it named after the General?

MCCLELLAND: General Hood? I thought this John Hood was a US Naval Hero!

Q: There was a John Bell Hood from Texas, but a US Navy ship probably wouldn't have been named after a Confederate General.

MCCLELLAND: I wouldn't think so, but we thought John Hood was a naval hero somewhere.Anyway, after Commissioning, the ship went on shakedown to Bermuda and then through the Panama Canal up the West Coast to the Aleutian Islands, where we became a part of the North Pacific Force.

I had the great job of being the Navigator of the ship. The Executive Officer of a Destroyer is typically the Navigator, but during the war the Navy brought on younger officers to take over this responsibility. Our ship accompanied the Flagship most of the time, but we had to be able to navigate on our own when necessary.

After a couple of months as Assistant Navigator, I became Navigator. I navigated using the sun, stars and radio navigation aids. It was a responsible job, and wonderful experience for a young officer.

Q: What was the northern fleet doing at the time that we got closer and closer to Japan?

MCCLELLAND: The North Pacific Force was there to make the Japanese think we had a real force in the area. Actually, we had the three oldest Cruisers in the Pacific Fleet, accompanied by a few slightly out-of-date Destroyers. The Cruisers' Main Battery could only elevate to something like 30 degrees, so they were only useful for surface targets. The Force would make raids on shore installations in the Kuril Islands. Our primary job, as Destroyers, was to protect these Cruisers as they bombarded targets with their heavy weapons, and then get them back to base safely. That was what we did until Japan surrendered.

Q: Did you get involved in occupation duty in Japan or anything like that?

MCCLELLAND: No, I didn't. Our ship went briefly into Japan to take the surrender at Ominato. We were just present and did not get to attend the ceremonies. We were allowed some shore leave for a few days, but were then sent directly back to the US.

Q: And then what did you do the rest of the time you were in the Navy?

MCCLELLAND: Our Destroyer was sent to Charleston, SC and put in “Mothballs.” I was transferred to another Destroyer that was part of the Caribbean Fleet. We visited many islands in the Caribbean, including Jamaica and Cuba (Guantanamo Bay). My duties were in communications and navigation.

Q: Then you went back to law school?

MCCLELLAND: That's right. At the University of Virginia I had taken a “Combined Degree”, which is three years in college and one year in law school, leaving me only two more years of law school. However, I found that I had forgotten much of my law school training while I was in the Navy. I also wanted to try a different venue, so I went to Harvard Law School and started all over again.

Q: Again, was there much touch with international business of anything like that?

MCCLELLAND: Not really. I still planned on being a lawyer. I guess the war experience opened me up to that fact that there was a big world out there — and I wanted to see more of it. I was disappointed that I did not get to see any of Europe in my service, but that made me realize that I would like to see it. I thought, well, maybe I would like to do something else besides being a lawyer in Oklahoma, but that was only an idea in the back of my mind.

Q: You finished law school when?

MCCLELLAND: I finished law school in 1949, but my decision to try for the Foreign Service happened before I finished law school. One big factor in this decision was taking into account how and where my wife and I wanted to live our life together in the future. We were married in 1947.

Q: You are talking about Franna?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, Franna is a kind of nickname for Frances. She came from New Jersey and had traveled in Europe with her family. After we were married, we talked about our future. We both liked the idea of travel — but how to do it? I had to earn a living. We had a friend who went into the Foreign Service — that was a new idea for me.

We started thinking seriously about the Foreign Service after I went to hear a State Department recruiter who came to Harvard. I remember that he gave a very pessimistic view. He said that the Foreign Service exam was very difficult, with written, oral, and language exams. And if you do happen to pass, it is a hard life, serving in strange places, with many hardships, etc. So he advised us that only if one really wanted to do this kind of thing should one ever get involved. Franna and I started to think that the Foreign Service might be just the kind of life we were looking for — so I decided to give it a try. The Foreign Service Exam was coming up and, under my GI Bill, the VA allowed me three months away from law school to study for the exam. So I took the summer of 1948 off and came down to GW to study.

Q: That's George Washington University?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, George Washington University in Washington, DC. I took what was called the Foreign Service Cram Course. This gave me time for focused study, even though some of the school's guesses about what was going to be on the exam were wrong. In any case, I managed to pass the exam, but just barely.

Q: It was a three and a half day exam, wasn't it?

MCCLELLAND: Yes — in an old office building in South Boston. It included a foreign language exam on the last day. I had taken a one-year course in French in High School and supplemented this with self study and conversations with French students at Harvard while I was in law school. Thankfully, it was enough.

So, having passed the Foreign Service exam, I found I did not have a job because I was not appointed right away. Fortunately, I had another year on my GI Bill, so I went to Harvard Graduate School and got an MA in History, focusing primarily on American History. That was a wonderful year. I had made careful plans to come to Washington in 1950 after receiving my B.A. I had been promised a job in NEA until my Foreign Service Appointment came through.

Q: Had you taken the oral exam?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, I went to Washington to take the oral exam in the Spring of 1949.

Q: How did that go? Could you give me any feel for some of the questions — or how they went after you or not?

MCCLELLAND: It was a little difficult for the examiners because I was from Oklahoma. None of them knew much about Oklahoma and the closest thing they knew about was Texas. So they asked me a lot of questions about Texas. I did not know many of the answers, but I also did not see why I should — and tried to say so respectfully. The examiners managed to back me into a corner now and then, but the exchange seemed to go generally well. They kept me for a long time. When it was over they told me I had passed but that I needed more American history background. That is one reason why I took an MA in History after law school.

Q: So you came after getting your Master's in American History?

MCCLELLAND: Yes.

Q: Then you came down to Washington?

MCCLELLAND: I came down to Washington in the Spring of 1950. At that time a job freeze was in effect and there was no State Department hiring at all. Fortunately, I had taken and passed the DC Bar Exam in 1949 so I had some kind of credentials. I went around to law firms in Washington and tried to find a job. Eventually I did, in the Legal Department of the Southern Railroad.

But no sooner had I gotten a job (I mean the day after!) than a friend of mine called me from the State Department and said he thought he had a Foreign Service Staff job for me, but I had to promise to accept it if offered. I had to work this out with my new employer, and finally I agreed to quit my job after two weeks so another candidate could get it. Fortunately, the Staff job did come through — it was with the Displaced Persons Program in London.

Q: You were in London from when to when?

MCCLELLAND: Let me just say that because my assignment to the Displaced Persons Program was “urgent”, there was no time for any training. The Department gave me two weeks in the Consular Affairs Bureau — at which time I tried to find out what a Visa looked like (I had never seen one in my life!) Then, off I went. I had to go without Franna and my son because Franna was having our second child and the Department would not let her travel at that point. So off I went on the Queen Mary on August 15th.

Q: What year?

MCCLELLAND: 1950.

Q: 1950 you were there. I was trying to get the two dates. You were there until when?

MCCLELLAND: I was only there until the end of that year. My FSO appointment came through in November. And before Franna and the children could get to London (where, of course, I had rented a place to live), I was transferred to Liverpool.

Q: So, really you were only in London a few months in 1950. What was the Displaced Persons Act and what were you doing?

MCCLELLAND: The Displaced Persons Act, at least as far as the UK office was concerned, was primarily to provide immigration services for the “General Anders Poles” who were refugees in Britain. The program was very recent and I was not needed because no one else in the program was there. So, for the first month or so I was located in the Visa Section of Embassy London, learning visa work. Later, when the rest of the DP personnel arrived, they began working with the Poles. About that time, however, I left for Liverpool.

Q: Did you ever get involved with the Displaced Persons at all there?

MCCLELLAND: Not really. Eventually the office moved up to Liverpool and we would see some of the Displaced Persons personnel from time to time, but I was not a part of that office.

Q: I think, just for a historical note, could you explain who the General Anders Poles were?

MCCLELLAND: I really do not know much about them. I just know that General Anders was a Polish General with a contingent of soldiers, or countrymen, who fought with the allies.

Q: If I'm not mistaken, I think they were soldiers who had sort of drifted through the Soviet Union, had come down through Iran and came back to Britain. They were trained as a Polish contingent and became at least a Polish Division, I think, with the 8th Army in Italy and were responsible for capturing Casino. They fought extremely well. But then Poland

became a Communist Country and they were definitely not welcome there. We had a strong Polish lobby in the United States, so those who did not want to stay in Great Britain came to the United States. I think that is the genesis of this.

MCCLELLAND: That sounds about right.

Q: Were there any problems giving visas to the Brits?

MCCLELLAND: Being a Non-immigrant Visa Officer was an excruciating experience for me. Being a brand new officer I wanted to be conscientious and follow regulations closely. I had problems with elderly women, widows, who wanted to go visit their sons or daughters in the US, and I felt certain they were never coming back to England. I asked them why they would ever come back? They would say “Well, I just would. This is my home.” I felt they had a perfectly good reason for going but, on the other hand, I did not think they had “non-immigrant status.” So I would often end up refusing these poor, dear ladies and felt very unhappy about it.

Q: You did this until the end of 1950. Then what happened?

MCCLELLAND: Then I was commissioned as a Foreign Service Officer and unexpectedly transferred to Liverpool. (I had been assured by my senior officers in London that I would be allowed to stay in London.) When Franna called to the State Department about sending our household effects to London, she was informed by a friend: “Don't tell anyone that I told you this, but Walter is being transferred to Liverpool.” When she called the Administrative Section of EUR she was assured that the State Department worked in “well-oiled grooves” and she shouldn't worry about it. She was also told “on pain of dire consequences” not to tell me that I was being transferred. So, although I was painting and fixing up a house for her arrival, she couldn't say anything. Also, our effects could not be sent to Liverpool because the orders were not issued yet.

It turned out that when Franna and our two sons arrived at London in November, I had just been “officially” transferred. My orders were in effect, so after a week in London we drove on to Liverpool.

Q: You were in Liverpool from when to when?

MCCLELLAND: From the last part of 1950 to the end of 1952.

Q: What did we have there? Was it a Consulate General?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, it was a Consulate General. It had been a very important post in the old days and was still the only Consulate General in England outside London. The office was located in the Cunard Building, on the Pier Head, with a sweeping view of the Mersey Estuary. The Royal Liver (pronounced Ly-ver) Building was just across the street, where the Lord Mayor had his office. Liverpool was a very interesting post, and we found the British wonderfully hospitable.

Q: Who was the Consul General?

MCCLELLAND: John F. Huddleston, a very kind and considerate FSO who was just about to retire.

Q: How did the Consulate General operate? Was it strictly a visa place? What were they doing?

MCCLELLAND: Issuing immigrant and non-immigrant visas was important, but at that time we also had Consular Invoices to certify, shipping services, passports and US Citizen welfare — all the standard consular functions. The post also had some really knowledgeable British employees who were most helpful to me, as a young officer, learning the ropes. I did a bit of everything: Non-immigrant visas, some immigrant visas,

commercial work, protection of US seamen, some economic and political reporting, etc. I gained good experience in almost every consular field.

Q: Did you have any major seamen problems while you were there?

MCCLELLAND: I remember, one time, going up to Morcombe Bay, where some US flag ships put in, with my very experienced British shipping clerk. There was a great contention between the Captain and the seamen. I talked to the Captain and several of the men. In the end, several men agreed to leave the ship and an amicable agreement was reached with the others. It was an interesting situation and we were able to resolve it, but this sort of thing did not happen often.

Q: How about visas? Were you still having cases of elderly ladies going to join their sons and daughters?

MCCLELLAND: A few, but we had more cases of students and younger people going over and I still had to worry about whether or not they were bona fide visitors. Since the British could almost always get an immigrant visa if they wanted one, there was less concern in the UK than, say, in Egypt, where that was not the case.

Q: It was still a period of great austerity in England, wasn't it?

MCCLELLAND: Yes. When we first arrived in Liverpool, food, clothing, and coal were still rationed. We had to have ration books and live on British rations because we were Consular and not Diplomatic. Franna and I have often joked that in our entire Foreign Service career, our greatest “hardship post” was Liverpool rather than any Middle East post! Liverpool was damp and chilly most of the time, and electricity was cut off some time most days, usually late afternoon. We did not have any gas heat, but we managed with our one coal fire and woolen underwear.

Nevertheless, we enjoyed Liverpool. The Brits we knew were very hospitable and they invited us to be part of their clubs and social groups. We were invited to many dances and parties and came to feel very much a part of the community.

Q: You still hadn't had any formal training in the Foreign Service. You say you took home leave and came back around 1952?

MCCLELLAND: I was given home leave and transfer orders in late 1952, so we went home for Christmas and then went on to London in early 1953. I was assigned to London as Third Secretary and Assistant to the Minister and Political Counselor in the Political Section of the Embassy. This was a wonderful assignment and I remained there for the next three years.

Q: So you were in London from 1952 to 1955?

MCCLELLAND: I was there from the beginning of 1953 to late 1955.

Q: Starting off with our Embassy, who was our Ambassador at the time?

MCCLELLAND: Ambassador Aldrich arrived about the same time we did. W. Walton Butterworth was the Political Minister.

Q: He was a highly respected Foreign Service Officer of long standing.

MCCLELLAND: Absolutely. Andy Foster, also a great FSO, was the Political Counselor.

Q: What was your feeling about the Embassy during this period?

MCCLELLAND: I was really delighted to be a part of this very important diplomatic post and to be in a position to know what was going on in the political sphere. One of my most interesting jobs was to read all the incoming telegrams and tell the Minister and Counselor which ones I thought were most important and needed immediate action.

My impression of the whole Embassy was that it was very well run. Mr. Butterworth knew how things ought to go. He was really the one that did the managing of the day-to-day business. The Ambassador was primarily engaged at the Foreign Minister level and had many other high-level contacts, although we did see him at weekly staff meetings and at large social functions.The Political Section was a very talented group of officers and I learned a great deal from them.

Q: What were you doing most of the time that you were there?

MCCLELLAND: Most of the time I was there, I was working as Assistant to Mr. Butterworth and Mr. Penfield, reading telegrams, drafting replies, doing other follow-up as needed.In addition to this, as the most junior officer in the Political Section, all the odd jobs came my way. Shortly after my arrival in London the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was scheduled to take place and I was detailed to assist in making some of the arrangements and, during the actual festivities, to ensure that the Official US Representatives were properly cared for. This was a pleasure!

Shortly afterwards came a RIF (Reduction in Force) and the Embassy staff had to be reduced by about 30 percent. As a result, several officers were dismissed, but their duties remained, and I was given their former responsibilities. Among the abolished positions were Publications Procurement Officer, Geographic Attach#, Special Assistant for the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, and two or three others. I could not, of course, carry out all their duties, but I did have to answer the telegrams addressed to them and keep local British staff doing what they could.

I was also tasked with making arrangements for American official visitors who would be attending a conference or talking to British officials on topics related to my special assignments. I was deeply involved in Law of the Sea matters and a conference on fishing rights, among others. Some of my contacts in the Foreign Office continued to be my friends throughout my Foreign Service Career.

Q: It was in October, 1956, just before you left, when the Suez crisis boiled up. This was probably the depths of the Anglo-American cooperation, even to today. How did the Suez thing hit you? Were you seeing glimmers of this and how it developed?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, very much so. I remember when Secretary of State John Foster Dulles came over. I was introduced to him one morning while I was standing in the Ambassador's office but I was not directly involved in the subject — this was above my level of responsibility.There was a lot going on. Messrs. Cohn and Schine, of Senator McCarthy's staff, came to Embassy London about that time and caused a lot of trouble. Also this was around the time of the celebrated Rosenberg Spy Case and the Embassy was being besieged with protesters. I was selected to receive and talk to a delegation of the protesters. It was a real learning experience!

Q: How about Cohn and Schine? These were two people sent by Senator McCarthy, two young lads, who sort of made a spectacle out of themselves in most places by going around and trying to find subversive books in libraries. How did the Embassy treat them?

MCCLELLAND: What could the Embassy do? They came as “official” Congressional representatives, were received “properly”, and had long sessions with the Minister and the Ambassador.

I think the people who suffered most were the “Old China Hands” in our Political Section since they were involved in our old China policy. But, here again, I was too junior to be involved in such matters.

Q: Back to the Suez thing. Almost all cooperation between the British and the Americans stopped for a short period. I am told all doors were shut. Did you feel that at all?

MCCLELLAND: I didn't really. At my level, the only Third Secretary on the Diplomatic List, it didn't seem to make any difference — or perhaps this occurred after I left. Some British

colleagues would complain about Senator McCarthy and try to give us a hard time — but I never felt cut off.

Q: Did you get any feel towards the end of this time — I realize you were at the very bottom — about any reflections from the Embassy about the apparent antipathy between Anthony Eden and John Foster Dulles?

MCCLELLAND: No, I really didn't have any feel for the antipathy we read about in the papers. I was not personally involved in the Secretary's dealings with Anthony Eden. This was way above my level.

Q: You left there at the end of 1956. You'd really spent a lot of time in London, six years, which is a tremendous amount of time as a junior officer. What did you see yourself doing? Were you making any moves to build up your career in any particular areas?

MCCLELLAND: I was actually stationed at Embassy London only 3 years as a Foreign Service Officer in the Political Section, from 1953-56. In 1950 I was assigned to the Embassy Visa Section for only a few months before going on to Liverpool as part of the Displaced Persons Program.

I thought my assignment in London was wonderful for my career! I had had some Consular Experience in Liverpool and this assignment was giving me experience in political work under the very able tutelage of Jim Penfield and W. Walton Butterworth — not to mention experience in the various other jobs I had with a good deal of responsibility. I found political work very interesting and wanted to continue doing this as much as possible.

As it turned out, I must have made a good impression on Joe Palmer at Embassy London, because when he returned to the Department he arranged to have me transferred back there to his office, European Regional Affairs, (EUR/RA) instead of going on to another post as I had expected.

Q: You were in regional affairs from when to when?

MCCLELLAND: From early 1956 to the Fall of 1959. I had a few months of leave (I returned to the US just before my father died), and then I came to Washington, where the bank and I bought a house.

Q: What was the responsibility of the Office of European Regional Affairs?

MCCLELLAND: The Office of European Regional Affairs was primarily concerned with NATO military and European economic affairs. This was the office responsible for sending instructions to the US Delegations to NATO in Brussels and EEOC in Paris. I was in a small office concerned with military base rights, especially the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, and other military and logistics agreements among NATO and some non-NATO European countries. It was a new field for me and I was delighted to get this experience.

Q: Base rights things, it always seems, involve the Pentagon. It seems that one of the perennial battles is the one between the lawyers at the Pentagon and the political people in the Department of State. Lawyers at the Pentagon want to get, it seems like, everything they can out of it and even a little more. Whereas the political side of the State Department wants to turn it into an equitable agreement. Did you find yourself caught in between these two forces?

MCCLELLAND: As I recall, we worked very closely and cooperatively with the Pentagon. We were not so much in the position of trying to work out new agreements as we were trying to make the ones we had work well. I worked closely with the Judge Advocate General's Office and rarely had any real differences of view.

Q: I was wondering, with base rights, did it seem as though France was the major problem at that time?

MCCLELLAND: The French could be difficult. I remember, for example, that we were working on a NATO logistics agreement that had been agreed in English and had to be translated into French. The problem was that the French version did not say what the English version did. But the French were adamant that their version was correct. All we could do was point this out — but NATO had to resolve it.

Q: Going back, there were no great crises during this particular period, or were there, in NATO affairs?

MCCLELLAND: EUR/RA was responsible to sending instructions to the US Delegation at NATO, in Paris, for all their meetings. Lane Timmons was the Director of the Office and Joe Palmer was his deputy. There were always crises, but I do not recall any ones that came to public notice in my particular office — except that the New York Times printed a report about a Top Secret military agreement we had recently negotiated with Norway. I had my own personal crisis when Mr. Timmons, who is a very hard-driving person who knows exactly what he wants, violently disagreed with my releasing a telegram to USNATO without his personal OK after he had gone home on a Friday night. I'm not sure he ever forgave me — and I am not sure this incident did not affect my future career in the European area. I stayed in that office for about 3 years.

Q: You left there in '59. Where were you off to?

MCCLELLAND: After several false starts, I was finally posted to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. I had requested any French language speaking post (so I could at last get some practice in a Foreign language) and for a while it looked as if I would be sent to Leopoldville, Belgian Congo. That assignment fell through, however, because the person I would have replaced wanted to stay on. There was talk of a few other posts, but nothing seemed to work out and the next thing I knew I had orders for Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Although we had never even thought about going to the Middle East, the assignment was not unwelcome — although it was a disappointment because it was not a French language post. But at least we felt we were in the “real” Foreign Service, as compared with London and Washington. Also at this point we had three young children and another on the way, so we were glad to have a place where we thought the social pressures would be less.

Q: That's where we overlapped. You were there from '59 to '61?

MCCLELLAND: I was at the American Consulate General in Dhahran from September, 1959 to February, 1962.

Q: What was the political, if you want to call it political, situation in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the Eastern Province, at that time?

MCCLELLAND: King Saud was the Ruler of the country, and the Eastern Province was firmly under the control of his appointed Governor, Amir Saud bin Jiluwi. Dhahran, in the Eastern Province, was the location of the Arabian American Oil Co. (ARAMCO) and the vast Saudi oil fields, so that there were many Americans living in the area, most of them in the ARAMCO camps, but some in Saudi towns. The Dhahran Air Field was also there. Our relations with the Amir were excellent — to the extent that the Amir gave American women the privilege of driving automobiles on the roads between the Consulate General and the Air Field and ARAMCO, although Saudi women were not allowed to drive anywhere. However, the Saudis felt free to criticize Americans with respect to our policy toward Israel, especially concerning Jewish influence on the US Government, and USG support of Israel in the UN and elsewhere. The American Consulate General at Dhahran was the only foreign consular post the Saudis allowed outside Jeddah (before embassies were moved to Riyadh). This was so that the post could provide services for the large American community there. At the same time, however, the post had access to Americans at ARAMCO who knew a lot about what was going on in the country.

Q: How did we look upon the stability of the Saudi Government during that period?

MCCLELLAND: As far as I know, we looked upon it as very stable. The Royal Family was large, wealthy and dominant. Saudis were ruled with very strict discipline by Islamic law. Punishment was swift and hard. There were factions opposing the Royal Family, but I did not hear much about them, and the Saudis seemed to have good intelligence so that things would not get out of control.

The Saudi Government received the Sheikhs from the Buraimi Oasis whom the British had chased out, and we saw them whenever we went to the Emirate in Dammam for a special occasion, such as a Feast Day or during the King's visit. On the right of the host were the Arab guests in order of rank, and on the left were representatives of the Consulate General, US military, and ARAMCO. This was their way of solving the problem of relative rank between Arabs and Americans, but it kept the Americans from mixing easily with many of the Arab guests.

Q: ARAMCO and the military and the Consulate people were sort of every other person. How were relations with ARAMCO at that time?

MCCLELLAND: The Consulate General's relations with ARAMCO were very close at that time. The Chairman of the Board, President, and all the senior officers of the company were well-known to us and we often entertained each other informally. Dhahran was reputed to be the only US post in the world where representation funds could be used to entertain Americans. ARAMCO was in a position to know almost everything that was going on in Saudi Arabia and they would often share information that was useful to us. Of course, the oil production figures were important, but ARAMCO had other information about tribal movements, social and economic developments, etc. I used to go to ARAMCO about once a week to talk over what was going on in the Eastern Province with the Government Relations people there.

Q: We were in a way caught in the middle over the Buraimi Oasis Crisis. I wonder if you could explain what that was about.

MCCLELLAND: The Buraimi Oasis Crisis involved rival claims of Oman and Saudi Arabia concerning the ownership of several oases lying between Oman and Saudi Arabia in SE Arabia. What I remember of the story is that the British, working with the Sultan of Muscat & Oman, agreed to international arbitration to settle the matter. They thought they had the facts on their side, but the Saudis arrived at the arbitration with a large ARAMCO legal team armed with voluminous statements from bedouin tribesmen in the area attesting to Saudi ownership. I am not sure what happened next, but it seems that the arbitration was thereupon called off by the British and considerable enmity resulted between the British and “the Americans”, i.e. ARAMCO.

Q: I think that at that time there were no relations with the British in Saudi Arabia so we were taking care of their interests, weren't we, informally?

MCCLELLAND: That may be true, but it would have been done through our Embassy in Jeddah, and the Consulate General was not involved in the protection of British interests when I was there. But just as there were no British in Saudi Arabia, the British were very much present in the Gulf States. In fact, by treaty the British were responsible for the defense and foreign relations of the various Persian Gulf Sheikdoms: Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Umm al-Guwain, Ras al Khaymah and a few others. That meant that the US and other countries had no representation in these states. The British had a Political Resident (like an Ambassador) in Bahrain, with Political Agents (like Consuls) in all the Sheikdoms. A US Navy Office, Commander, Middle East Force, (COMIDEASTFOR) was also stationed on Bahrain. One of the interesting duties of Consulate General officers was to visit Bahrain and the other Sheikdoms periodically, as I am sure you remember.

Q: I believe we called them the Trucial Sheikdoms, didn't we?

MCCLELLAND: That is right. The Trucial Sheikdoms were all those on the so-called Trucial Coast of Arabia. I remember that we used to go visit the Political Resident in Bahrain and then go on to see Political Agents in Qatar and the other Sheikdoms on one visit. I often stayed at the Residency or Agency and the British were always very cordial and open. They would keep us generally up to date on the developments between the various tribes that were always feuding with each other. The Persian influence in the area was always something that was of concern to the British and to us. On some of my trips, I also visited the American medical missionaries in Sharjah. These missionaries were mostly, if not all, women who came to help the Arab women who were suffering very greatly in childbirth. Arab medical (?) practice made it almost impossible for Arab women to have a second child, so this mission was dedicated to overcoming this practice by having a place where women could come to have their babies safely. They also evangelized the women who came. Many believed, but they were secret believers because a Christian wife would never have been tolerated.

Q: The great oil wealth had not hit at that point.

MCCLELLAND: In 1960-61 Abu Dhabi was still pretty primitive. I remember the airport was a hut with a wind-sock on a sand plain and there was a big boiler water desalinization station on the beach where people brought their own buckets for fresh water. I believe oil had been found but no one knew how big the field was then — and the money hadn't yet started flowing. Later, in 1970-74, when I was in Kuwait, it was a different story.

Q: We had an air base during that time, they were beginning to shut it down, weren't they?

MCCLELLAND: Dhahran had been a US Strategic Air Command Base in the past. When I got there in 1959 the Dhahran Airfield was a joint Saudi-US Base that was the Headquarters for the US Military Training Mission (USMTM). At that time there were some dependents and a school there, in addition to the usual PX, Officers' Club, BOQ, etc. By

1962, however, this had changed and Dhahran became a Saudi Base that the US could use as needed, with the Training Mission still operating.

The Consulate General's relationship with the USMTM was generally close and cordial, and we were allowed to use the PX, schools, and APO. Later the schools closed and we were no longer permitted to shop at the PX — and this was a little hard to take, although no great hardship.

Q: What were you getting from the American Military? What was their impression of the Saudis as a fighting force and all that?

MCCLELLAND: I do not recall any discussions about the Saudis as a fighting force. We were aware that there were several promising young Saudi pilots who were in training and that the Saudis were looking for others with potential. We met some of these Saudi pilots and they were rather impressive. They all spoke English — that was an important part of their training. I remember we joked with one officer who was a language instructor from South Carolina, asking him if he was leaving his students with a Southern accent!

Dhahran Airfield was strategically located and often served as a refueling point for US military aircraft in that part of the world. While I was there Secretary of State Dean Rusk came through and we had quite a competition about entertaining him for an hour or so between the Consulate General, USMTM, ARAMCO, and the local Governor! Somehow it all worked out.The Airfield was also a reception place for foreign dignitaries visiting the Eastern Province, and Consulate General Officers were often invited (summoned) to be present on such occasions. A majlis (reception area) was set up in a hanger, Persian carpets put on the concrete, and coffee served all around, with the Amir presiding.

Sometimes US military personnel would get in trouble with the Saudi authorities, usually because they became intoxicated and ran over a pedestrian or did other damage. My job at the Consulate General was to do what I could to protect these unfortunate Americans. This included visiting them in jail, helping them get fed properly, and interceding for them

with the Saudi authorities. In almost all cases we were able to get them banished — otherwise they could easily have died in the prisons where they were held.

This sort of thing made me aware of the fact that the Consulate General did not have a well-trained person who was fluent in English and Arabic and knew his way around among the Saudi authorities. I then looked around for someone to do this work and found a young Palestinian named Fawzi Samhouri. ARAMCO was laying off some employees and Fawzi was very highly qualified and available, so we took him on as a local employee.

Some time after this the Consulate General was notified, through our post in Kuwait I believe, that an American woman, an employee of the Getty Oil Company in the Saudi-Kuwait Neutral Zone, was being held hostage and mistreated by Saudi authorities in the area. I asked permission to go see what the problem was, and Consul General Schwinn gave me his blessing.

So Fawzi and I, armed with a letter of safe passage from Amir Saud bin Jiluwi, took off for the Neutral Zone starting on a main road but ending up on a desert track. That evening we spotted the giant flares at the Getty Oil Camp and charged in to rescue this American citizen in distress!There didn't appear to be any real problem. The woman was safely with her family, had not been tortured, and was apparently hidden away in some remote spot. She was a nurse and had apparently told a pushy Arab official that he would have to wait his turn “even if you were Mohammed himself.” At this the official became very upset and accused her of insulting Islam and said she should be severely punished. Fawzi and I had tea with the Saudi Qadi (Judge) and he assured us there was no problem. After we checked this out with the Getty people we returned to Dhahran in good spirits.

Q: Was there a problem of prohibition (of alcohol) in the country? How did one deal with that?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, I'm sure you know very well there was.

Q: I'm asking a pointed question, but I'm trying to capture the flavor of the times.

MCCLELLAND: This was a moral dilemma for the staff at Dhahran because our Consul General felt very strongly on the subject.

Q: This is Walter Schwinn?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, Walter Schwinn was the Consul General and he considered that it was important for the Consulate General to be very friendly and hospitable to senior ARAMCO officials. The better relations we had with ARAMCO, the better job we could do keeping the State Department informed about what was going on in our part of Saudi Arabia — and not just in oil matters because ARAMCO people were all over the kingdom and knew the political and economic situation very well. So, to foster these relations we tried to offer our friends at ARAMCO something they would enjoy that they would not otherwise have, i.e. genuine Scotch whiskey, Gin, etc., when they came to our compound for dinner. This was not really necessary, but Mr. Schwinn felt it would help things along — and he was probably right. The problem was that the only way to import these spirits was in our personal baggage when we took our weekly trips to Bahrain — the British sold it to us there quite legally. We felt, however, that bringing spirits into Saudi Arabia, even though we were “protected” by diplomatic immunity, was not what we were supposed to be doing. On the other hand, we felt strong pressure from our Chief to bring it in. The Saudi officials probably knew well enough what we were doing, but we doubted that the State Department would defend us if an incident occurred. Of course, I guess we offended the laws of the Kingdom in lots of other ways too — like having phonograph records, dolls for our children, etc. That was one of the things that made life in Saudi Arabia so difficult — you always felt you were violating the law and that on that basis you might be thrown out of the country any day and your career might be ruined as well. But I felt supporting the Consul General in this was part of my job so I did what I had to do and hoped I wouldn't get caught. I did not hear that anyone ever did, although I remember old John Neese had

a bottle of Creme de Menthe break in his bag and it dripped all over the place. He was pretty upset but nothing seemed to happen about it.

Q: I think they must have known what was happening. It used to bother me because I knew perfectly well that if my suitcase broke or something, and all of a sudden there it was, a Customs Officer could do nothing but say "What have you got there?" Then I'd be kicked out of the country, and from then on everybody would say that Kennedy got kicked out of Saudi Arabia and it had something to do with liquor. Oh God! I did not feel very happy with that.

MCCLELLAND: That is exactly how I felt. But I have to admire at least one officer who felt that it was morally wrong to import alcohol, so he refused to do it — and the Consul General let it go. However, if all of us had refused, it might have been a very different matter.

Q: We had two officers, both of whom were members of the Christian Science Church. They did not serve liquor at home. One was our CIA Station Chief and the other was Bill Caseby, our Consular Officer. I remember Walter Schwinn sort of sighing in annoyance when he found out that they both had this religion because if cut down on his ability. Not that anybody was a boozer.

MCCLELLAND: You couldn't be, the real thing was too precious!

Q: It was too precious! One did not just casually have a drink before dinner.

MCCLELLAND: These "real spirits" were for the Chairman of the Board or other high Officials — we had to be careful not to waste them!

Q: How did you find Walter Schwinn, may he rest in peace? He died just a couple of months ago on his 94th Birthday. How did you find him as Consul General?

MCCLELLAND: I found him very straight forward. He said what he meant and meant what he said. He opposed my coming to the post in the first place. Eventually I understood that the problem was that we had three children — and he expected my wife to be his hostess (he was a bachelor) and very active socially in the American community. He protested to the Department, but in vain. And then, to cap it all off, my wife gave birth to twins after we had been at post only a few weeks. Mr. Schwinn's remark to her is classic: “Madam, have you no restraint?”

Nevertheless, we worked very hard to do what Mr. Schwinn wanted and entertained frequently. With five children, two baby twins, and only one Ethiopian houseboy/cook to help, this was not easy. But we survived, and Mr. Schwinn became reconciled and even came to like us. He never seemed reluctant to leave me in charge of the post (I was his deputy) when he went off on one of his frequent trips to surrounding countries to consult on emergency evacuation. He was head of the area group.

Q: That was the Dhahran Liaison Group, which was the evacuation set-up for the whole Persian Gulf. It was more than the Persian Gulf. It was for the whole area.

MCCLELLAND: Yes, the area included India, Pakistan and several other countries, I think. Mr. Schwinn would be gone for a month or two at a time. When I was in charge, some called it “The short and benevolent reign of Walter II” — that meant that I did not require officers to wear their jackets to the office in very hot weather. (We always took them off in the office anyway because the air conditioning was not very efficient.) In any event we were a little more relaxed when Mr. Schwinn was gone, but we functioned at least as well.

Mr. Schwinn was usually very fair and mostly gave me good efficiency reports. However, I remember one time when Mr. Schwinn was about to retire, he was a little tired but nevertheless seemed to want to hold a Conference of Persian Gulf Posts before he left. He asked me if I thought we could do it, and I said that we certainly could. It was not my idea of a good time, but if he wanted it, I would give it all I had. The Conference came

off well, but he felt it was a lot of strain. He told me that I should have talked him out of it because it was just too big an undertaking for our small post! In my efficiency report he wrote that McClelland sometimes has too many balls in the air and is liable to drop one or two. (What would he have said if I had actually succeeded in talking him out of the Conference? I doubted that he would give me much praise for that.)

Q: What was your impression of ARAMCO as regards its dealing with Saudis at that time?

MCCLELLAND: I thought ARAMCO was a very forward-looking company and it made every effort to do its job and at the same time benefit Saudi Arabia. It sought to educate and train any Saudis they found with potential for working in the company. They would send them away to college and then guarantee them a responsible job when they returned. The company also sought to bring better housing and health standards to the country, especially to its own employees and their families. In addition, ARAMCO had excellent Arabic scholars and they were in touch with what was going on almost everywhere in the Kingdom. The company never criticized the country or its institutions openly, but they did work out problems quietly and very effectively with the Saudi officials.

Q: Did you go and talk to the people at the Bahrain and Arabian Gulf oil companies, and some of the others that were essentially British?

MCCLELLAND: There was really no comparison because they were small operations and they didn't have their headquarters in the Gulf as ARAMCO did. As I remember the Bahrain Petroleum Co. facility, it was nice, calm, peaceful, but there was nothing going on. I don't know much about their Government relations, although I am sure they worked very closely with the Sheikh of Bahrain. I did not have the impression that the company was doing nearly as much in the community as ARAMCO was.

In general, Bahrain was a quiet place when I was in Dhahran, although there were some leftists in their parliament that caused the Sheikh a bit of trouble from time to time.

Q: I remember that a major concern in Bahrain was that there were too many Iranians on the island. Many of them were illegally there, but they were working on various projects. The Sheikhs and the British were concerned because the Shah was making noises about this being the Persian Gulf and Bahrain was theirs. (The Saudis called this same body of water the Arab Gulf.)

MCCLELLAND: Yes, the Iranians were a major worry all through the Gulf. I believe the Shah of Iran referred to Bahrain as “Our 13th Province.”

Q: You left there is '62?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, early in 1962. I had requested Arabic Language Training in Beirut, and the Department had acceded to this request.

Q: This time in Dhahran, although it was a quiet place and all that, had it inspired you? Or was this desperation to get into a language training thing? How would you put it?

MCCLELLAND: I asked for Arabic language training somewhat out of desperation. My language upon entering the Service was French and I kept asking the Department to send me to a French-speaking post. First I got London, then Washington (!), then in spite of renewed pleas, I got Saudi Arabia. Obviously the Department Personnel System was not concerned about my foreign languages, but then a new policy was announced that said all officers should have at least two world languages or one hard language in addition to English. The implication was that if you did not have these languages you would not get promoted. So, for the sake of my career, I volunteered for Arabic.

At Dhahran I studied Arabic after-hours and on weekends, and I realized that the language was much too difficult for me to learn in this way — I would need full-time immersion. I understood that if I was granted language training it would mean that my future career

would be centered in the Middle East, but I was willing to accept that. In the end, I am glad I took the training.

Q: So you were at Beirut at the Arabic language training school for how long?

MCCLELLAND: For about two years.

Q: This would be from '62 to '64?

MCCLELLAND: From January 1962 until February or March 1964.

Q: There has been a lot of controversy over who are the Arabists and all this. You were going to the heart of the training course. Could you describe how Arabic was taught during that period and what you felt about it?

MCCLELLAND: The course began with about six months of learning dialogues in phonetic Arabic, as a child would learn from hearing adults speak. After we had some familiarity with what the language sounded like and knew some vocabulary to help us in every day life, we started to work on Modern Written Arabic. This is primarily newspaper Arabic and vocabulary we could use in speaking about more complex subjects, such as politics and economics. We learned the alphabet and much more extensive vocabulary. The course used a set of really wonderful materials that incorporated new words along with previously-learned words to give the student a constant review of what had been studied before. We had both the written material and tapes of this material read in excellent Arabic so we could practice our pronunciation. We did little writing in Arabic — mostly reading and speaking — and the study of grammar was only incidental to the reading lessons.

The way we learned was in contrast to the system at the British Arabic School in Chemlin, a small, isolated town in the mountains outside Beirut. The British simply concentrated on the Classical Arabic, starting with alphabet, grammar, writing, reading and vocabulary;

speaking colloquial Arabic was left to after-hours recreation. The course was very demanding and intensive.

Some of us felt that our first months speaking colloquial were somewhat wasted — we should have gotten into the basics of the language sooner. On the other hand, the British system had its drawbacks. Personally, I found Arabic very challenging no matter how you studied it. The words just didn't “stick” in my brain easily and sentences seldom came easily. We finally concluded that one could learn Arabic in spite of any particular system if one really wanted to. That is what we were all dedicated to doing. We also later concluded that two years is too short a time to learn Arabic, but much too long a time to study it intensively!

All in all, I believe the course was a good one, and the Arabic I learned made it possible for me to function reasonably well in the various Arab countries to which I was assigned — although the Arabic in each one was clearly different from the others.

Q: Did you get any feel for our policy towards Israel while you were dealing with this? This has always been the great controversy, many saying that the Arabists are too pro-Arab and anti-Israel. On the other hand, they say that the people who deal with Israel get too caught up in that and that we have other interests. Was there any of this ferment among the people who were with you at that time studying?

MCCLELLAND: During language study in Beirut, I was so centered on studying that I did not really have time to get into a critique of our policy toward Israel. But I did get a definite feel about what the Arabs thought about US policy toward the Middle East when I was in Dhahran. Officers at the post were subject to almost daily criticism of US policy, saying that the US was strongly pro-Israel and that Jewish interests ran the US Government. I tried to deny this, saying that we were even-handed, but I did not convince many people. When I came into the area I certainly had no pre-conceived notions in favor of either the Arabs or Israel. I had not really been involved in this part of the world.

I went on to serve in several other Arab posts and guess I came to feel that the Arabs were their own worst enemy. Their refusal to be reasonable on the subject of Israel made them come out the loser time after time. On the other hand, I believe they had a legitimate case for many of their grievances, but no one was giving them a break — not us and surely not Israel. I believe they were treated badly by us and by Israel and that our policy was blatantly favorable to Israel — this is simply a political reality that they didn't want to accept. Arabists in the State Department tended to know the background about what really happened when Israel was established and how its terrorist gangs beat many Arabs out of their lands and scared off others. I think they were more sympathetic toward the injustices done to the Arabs and wanted to be more even-handed. No Arabist that I knew thought that the Arabs were paragons and deserved our full support — but being even-handed can seem pro-Arab in the context of the time.

Q: Was the time when you were in Lebanon, 1962-64, a fairly quiet period? There had been times when Lebanon was difficult.

MCCLELLAND: Yes, it was reasonably quiet when we were in Beirut. There had been an attempted coup just before we arrived so there were soldiers all around town who checked your ID at various places. But generally, things were about normal with all the restaurants, hotels, clubs, and schools open and lots of foreigners all over town.

Q: Did you get to take any trips?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, we took a couple of great trips. At this point in our lives we had five children: Three boys 14, 11, and 4; and twin girls two years old. One Christmas we took the two older boys and visited Arab Jerusalem for a week. We stayed at the Anglican Cathedral and visited all the places we could without passing over into Israeli Jerusalem (we didn't want to get our passports stamped since we were living in Beirut.) We had a wonderful time. One summer I and another Boy Scout leader took a group of 16 American Scouts (including my two older sons) to Greece to the World Boy Scout Jamboree on the

plains of Marathon. We took an old Greek transport ship that stopped at Alexandria, Egypt and the Island of Rhodes on the way. We stayed at a YMCA camp near Athens, visited the Jamboree for a day or so, toured Greece by bus, and returned to Beirut. We all survived and it was an unforgettable experience for all of us!

Q: Was it June of 1963 when you went to the Jamboree?

MCCLELLAND: I think that is right.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia, at the other end, and I remember Boy Scouts were coming through to the Jamboree just as we were having a horrible earthquake in Skopje. I was down there and we grabbed some British Boy Scouts to help us do some stuff. The British Council did this.

MCCLELLAND: I am sure that was the same time. Scouts came from some 75 countries. Our group was not representing Lebanon, we were just unofficial visitors — but I think we had a better time than some of the official visitors did!

Q: When it was time to leave Lebanon, did you have any preferences of where you wanted to go, or were you pretty much assigned.

MCCLELLAND: I do not remember what post I requested, but I assumed I would be sent to some Arabic-speaking country. Just as I was completing my Arabic training Embassy Baghdad requested the Department to send an officer for the Economic Section urgently. Accordingly, without asking me or Ambassador Meyer, about it, I was ordered to go to Baghdad on direct transfer without any home leave.

Q: Ambassador Armin Meyer?

MCCLELLAND: Yes. He was Ambassador in Beirut, and the FSI language school was under his overall direction. I explained to Ambassador Meyer that we had had two years in Saudi Arabia, direct transfer to Beirut, and two more grueling years at FSI, and we had five

children who needed to visit the US now and then to see our families. We really needed a break. He kindly put our case to the Department.

Q: Did you get your Home Leave before going to Iraq?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, we did get the leave — just what we needed! And we were looking forward to Baghdad. My wife studied ancient Mesopotamia and was delighted to be going there. For me the assignment was an interesting one. I had never dreamed of going to such a place in my earlier days in the Service, but Baghdad has such a fascinating history that I was intrigued also.

Q: The subject of Home Leave comes up. Did you find much interest when you came back on Home Leave — people wanting to know about the Middle East, what you did, etc.?

MCCLELLAND: Not too many people really wanted to know much about my Middle East experience. Early in my career I remember returning to Oklahoma City where I spent the first 16 years of my life. I felt that I had an obligation to tell people there about the Foreign Service and what my career was all about. One time I was invited to a talk show on the local radio station. The announcer began by saying “I don't know who this person McClelland really is. He says he is in the Diplomatic Service, but he doesn't have on striped pants and a cut-away jacket — but we'll talk for a while. Then we just chatted about the Foreign Service for a few minutes.

Another time my wife and I were invited to be on a Morning TV Talk Show where coffee was being advertised. It was a pleasant, chatty experience — we were viewed as being something a little out of the ordinary that might be interesting to viewers. Occasionally I would find someone who had been overseas, or wanted to go — and they would be more interested. My old friends were glad to see me back, but they were usually too wrapped up in what they were doing to be very interested in my experience after the first few minutes.

Q: Absolutely! I remember driving across the continent with Yugoslav plates on my car and thinking I would get a lot of questions — and I'm ready to talk about American relations with Yugoslavia and all. Well, I had a Peugeot and the talk was about the Peugeot as a car and not about Yugoslavia! — You served in Iraq from when to when?

MCCLELLAND: From mid-1964 until the 1967 War in June, 1967, when all Embassy personnel were evacuated.

Q: In 1964 Iraq had gone through its 1958 coup which left, and in a way continues to leave, a rather nasty regime. What was the political situation and just plain situation when you got there in 1964?

MCCLELLAND: The Dictator at the time was Abdul Rahman Muhammad Arif — and everywhere he went there was a long armed procession. A coup was always possible so soldiers were often in view. In fact there were one or two attempted coups while we were in Iraq. There was unrest between the ruling Shia Muslim minority and the Sunni Muslim minority. No sooner had we arrived in Baghdad than the Government nationalized almost all of the businesses and banks in the country. About a year or so after our arrival Abdul Rahman was killed in a helicopter crash (some said it was a plot!), and this brother Abdul Salaam took over — but nothing much changed. So things were a bit touchy.

On the other hand, day-to-day life went on fairly normally. A few American contractors were still working there, diplomats (and their families) were allowed to visit archeological sites and places of interest away from Baghdad from time to time. (My wife and other ladies were permitted to visit the Marshlands for a day or so.) Northern Iraq, home of the Kurds, was normally off limits, but on one occasion we were allowed to go there. Our local American School (Grades 1-8) was functioning, USIA showed films often, the Baghdad Symphony was still performing (thanks to the German Embassy), and we could call at government offices fairly freely and visit the British Alwiya Club and other restaurants

whenever we wished. The British Council provided a lot of our entertainment and the British Chaplain had a Church and conducted church services. So life was pretty good.

Q: I'm just wondering. I think it was during the '50s that Walter Rostow came up with his economic theory about the countries ready for takeoff. In the Middle East, Iraq was the country pointed to for its small population, good infrastructure, good farming country, high rate of literacy, etc. How did we view Iraq at this time?

MCCLELLAND: Iraq had been our real hope in the Middle East when King Faisal was Ruler. Many American companies had been working on large projects there and long-term development was being planned with financial and technical support from the US and many other countries. After the Revolution, these Americans were no longer wanted and most development stopped. One of my jobs in the Economic Section was to try to collect claims of these American companies who were forced out. We were not very successful in our collection efforts.When I was in Iraq there were still one or two American contractors. The one I remember most clearly is Hawaiian Agro-nomics. That company had a contract to desalinate a large tract of land along the Tigris River by grading the land and leaching the soil with water from the river. (The Iraqis had not irrigated the land properly so that the soil had become increasingly saline and would no longer grow the crops it had in the past.) This company carried on nobly, but it had tremendous problems trying to do its work.

Q: What was the problem?

MCCLELLAND: Doing business in Iraq was terribly frustrating. The Government was reluctant to pay in accordance with the contract; Government regulations were myriad; Iraqi Customs was very difficult when it came to importing equipment and personnel; the local market provided few items required; etc. The fact that the companies were American did not help them in their relations with the Iraqi Government.

Q: The basic problem, was it that this was a military government trying to build up arms and nothing else, or were they falling under the blandishments of the Soviets? What was happening?

MCCLELLAND: I do not know the Government's reasons for slowing down on development at this time, but there were several factors. The Soviets were indeed there and providing large amounts of equipment to the Iraqis for several kinds of factories, but I believe this equipment was generally regarded as obsolete and not very useful to the country. Then, too, some of the developments planned by King Faisal were not really appropriate for the new Revolutionary Government. For example, a spherical Opera House surrounded by water with 300 meter masts rising on either side of the entrance, a glass post office that would be almost impossible to cool in summer, an Island depicting the Garden of Eden in the Tigris River, etc. These were designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for the King, but never built. However, other projects, like a large dam in Northern Iraq, were more or less completed along with many other useful projects.

It seems to me that the regime was just trying to remain in power and did not give a high priority to long-term projects. It also wanted to show its independence of Western countries. And it did not seem to have the financing to continue many of these projects. Undoubtedly the Government was involved in strengthening its military forces, but I did not know much about that.

As a footnote, I should add that we came across many Iraqis who had studied in the US under our old Point IV Program. There was a very good butcher, a gardener who prepared frozen foods, and many other skilled people who were very grateful for the training they had had in the US and had a warm spot in their hearts for Americans. But they could not really put many of their skills to use because of Government restrictions — so they did what they could in a small way.

Q: Who was our Ambassador at the time?

MCCLELLAND: Ambassador Robert C. Strong

Q: How did he operate?

MCCLELLAND: Ambassador Strong surely tried hard to keep our relations with the Iraqis as close as circumstances would allow. He gave many dinners and receptions for the Government Officials, but often not very many people came. I was in the Economic Section at the time and do not really know about the contacts he had in the political realm — but I believe he did very well. I remember that he was enthusiastic about the Trade Fair that the Department of Commerce put on in Baghdad — I was very active in that. He appointed me as Commercial Attach# at one point and we set up an office in the center of town where merchants could reach us more easily without the risks of visiting the Embassy. We were really trying to normalize our relations with Iraq, build up trade, promote mutual understanding — that sort of thing — but we were not sure we were making much headway.

Q: During this time, was the Iraqi Government headed anywhere?

MCCLELLAND: The Iraqi Government was taking more and more an anti-Western position. It was really strange. The Iraqis we knew were wonderful people and they did not seem bitter or hostile to us when we entertained them or visited them — but the Government was something else. I remember being amazed that most people considered the Government their enemy, not their friend and protector. Later I understood why. We really realized how deep this went when Iraq broke diplomatic relations very shortly after the beginning of the 1967 War, being convinced, I suppose, that the Americans had really started it. That meant that we all had to leave in 48 hours. But at the time, the Government was just trying to keep the lid on.

Q: What about oil?

MCCLELLAND: Oil was Iraq's principal revenue earner. My duties did not include relations with the oil company or the Petroleum Ministry, so I really don't know much about it. My particular concern was with Iraqi export of dates to the US. US law was strict about insects in the dates. According to the going US-Iraqi Treaty on the subject, the US would accept dates with a 5 percent “infestation rate” one year, but this would be lowered 1 percent per year until it reached 1 percent, I believe. (Infestation rate refers to the percentage of dates that have evidence of insect presence.)

When I was in Iraq the Iraqis were having a hard time meeting the current rate (around 3 percent?) and were pressing us for relief. We were not very helpful to them — so this was another bone of contention.

Q: Oil, was that nationalized at this point?

MCCLELLAND: I certainly imagine so, but I really do not recall the details of what happened in the oil sector at that time.

Q: Did you deal with the Ministry of Finance or Trade?

MCCLELLAND: At my level, I had very good contacts at the Central Bank. I remember one or two of my counterparts there and we became close enough friends so that we saw each other socially from time to time. I cannot now remember just what we were discussing in terms of business, but I believe it had to do with some World Bank Projects, currency matters, and statistics from the Central Bank. Most of the officers there spoke very good English, so I didn't have too much opportunity to use my Arabic. One of my contacts was Jamil al-Hashimi. He apparently had very good credentials in the Bank because I remember an article he wrote in a local Arabic Newspaper that was critical of some Iraqi economic policies — and he seemed to survive well. I was well received at my level, but this was below the top policy officials.

Q: This is before the '67 War, but how did our Israeli policy sit there? Was this something you heard all the time?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, we heard criticism of US policy toward the Arabs very frequently — usually in a public context where the President or some official was making a political statement. But in my day-to-day contacts, especially since I was not directly involved in political matters, I was not often taken personally to task. The situation was a bit easier than in Saudi Arabia where almost all of my contacts continually brought up the subject.

Q: How about the Soviets?

MCCLELLAND: The Soviets had a sizable presence in Iraq and they were deeply involved in the Iraqi Development Plan. They extended a lot of credit to Iraq for the purchase of factories and equipment. As I recall, however, the Iraqis were not very happy about the equipment that had been sent. It seemed to be obsolete machinery that the Soviets did not want —and much of it sat around in boxes for years before it was uncrated and put to use. I remember in particular the Pharmaceutical Factory at Samarrah. The equipment was sitting out in the open all during my time there. Recent reports of a biological warfare plant in Samarrah may be what it was about after all — but progress was surely very slow.

Q: How about when the '67 War hit, what happened then?

MCCLELLAND: When I heard of the Israeli attack on Egypt, my first thought was that I was glad it was happening in the Mediterranean and not where we were. I hoped that the affair could remain localized and since the US had nothing to do with it, perhaps life could continue somewhat normally in Iraq. I was promptly disabused of this idea when, the very next day, we received a note from the Foreign Ministry, breaking diplomatic relations and giving us 48 hours to leave the country. (Actually the note gave most personnel a week, but certain officers, like the Charg# d'Affaires [the Ambassador was away] and Public

Affairs Officer, were ordered out in 2 days. The Charg# decided that we all should leave together.)

So we had to turn our Embassy over to a “Protecting Power” and get ourselves safely out of the country. At that time I had a very demanding and urgent job to do. I had to prepare the “Reprise”. Do you know what a reprise is?

Q: No.

MCCLELLAND: A Reprise is the document we had to turnover to the Belgians who agreed to act as our “Protecting Power”. It gives a complete inventory of all USG property in the Embassy, including all the funds in the safe. The document was inches thick and bound together with a long piece of red tape, sealed and certified by the Charge.

Just before the actual '67 war broke out, the Department decided to evacuate women and children from the post. Embassy Tehran sent two buses from Tehran, and they arrived, having driven straight through for two days, in the early evening of the day we received notice that all of us had to leave. Since it was urgent that the dependents leave at once, all of them jumped on the buses and headed back to Tehran, without any significant rest for the drivers. My wife says it was a real nightmare trying to keep the bus drivers awake and stop them from racing each other around curves and down narrow mountain roads! One child was having epileptic fits, others had chicken pox — so all the kids caught chicken pox! But they did arrive safely in Tehran a day or so before we did.

Q: Was there any concern about demonstration mobs, particularly after the '58 experience where Iraqi mobs were as nasty as they come. A couple of Americans were caught in this, people ripped apart.

MCCLELLAND: Yes, I heard that story more than once! The Americans apparently were dragged out of their hotel and were killed in mob violence.

Q: An Iraqi mob sounds like a pretty horrendous thing, any problems with that?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, Iraqi mobs are formidable! Fortunately the Embassy was located on the other side of the Tigris from the main downtown area of Baghdad. The mob had a longer way to come and we were surrounded by a high fence and protected, to some extent, by Iraqi police who made efforts to keep demonstrators away from the Embassy.

I remember one morning just before events came to a head, I called Franna and suggested that she come to the Embassy soon and do her shopping, so in case we had to stay home we would have some food in the house. She came all right, but just as she was leaving, a giant mob came down the street toward her. She quickly turned the car around, headed back to the Embassy, and stayed there safely until the mob dispersed. The mob managed to tear down our flag and burn it and break a few windows — but did no real damage.

Another time, the night before we all left Baghdad, we were in the Embassy cleaning things up when another torch-lit mob came up the street and demonstrated in front. We turned out all the lights and watched them from the second floor — we were mighty glad for our military protection! As far as I know, no Americans were hurt or killed in this process.

Q: Were there Iraqi troops around the Embassy?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, we had pretty good protection. One or two protesters got over the fence to tear down the flag or throw rocks, but they were chased out. The mob did not get into the Embassy building. I felt protected, although that may not have been completely warranted. Probably the Iraqis wanted to protect the building — it is now their Foreign Ministry, I understand.

Q: What happened then? You all drove to Tehran?

MCCLELLAND: The Iraqi authorities gave us safe passage out in our cars. We drove our cars in convoy, with all the pets and whatever valuable household items we could pack up. The drive to the Iran border was slow but met no hostility — we had police cars in front of the convoy and behind it. The danger came from the fact that most of us had slept little the preceding two nights, so we were very sleepy. One officer fell asleep while driving and nearly drove off the road — but thankfully he woke up in time to get back on the road safely. We spent a long time at the border with the formalities, but finally everyone got across — and each of us headed off after some rest to find our families again.

Q: Then where did you go?

MCCLELLAND: Embassy Tehran was the main transit point in our evacuation. I found my family in a hotel not far from the Embassy — and all the children had Chicken Pox! We stayed in Tehran for a few weeks. The Department was trying to get the Iraqis to agree to let one or two Americans return to Baghdad as a part of the US Interests Section of the Belgian Embassy, but the Iraqis declined.

Q: How about Egypt?

MCCLELLAND: The Egyptians let us keep many Americans in the US Interest Section there, but Iraq was different. I was kept a while in Tehran as one who might be sent back, but when this did not happen, I was ordered to visit various US posts in Iran in preparation for a job as Economic-Military Officer in the State Department on the Iran Desk. I had a busy and interesting time in Iran, and enjoyed my work on the Iran Desk very much over the next three years.

Q: You were on the Iranian Desk from when to when?

MCCLELLAND: That was from 1967 to 1970.

Q: What were relations like with Iran during this '67 to '70 period?

MCCLELLAND: The US and Iran had very close relations in this period. Our cooperation was extensive in economic development and military programs — Americans were everywhere in Tehran. I was especially concerned with these two fields.

Iran had very able Western-trained experts in the economic field and had prepared a very detailed 10 year plan. I would sit down with my USAID counterparts and carefully examine the plan to see if we really thought it was realistic. The problem we found was that the Shah was spending too much on his military program if he really wanted economic development to move ahead. We reported this to our superiors, but it was not something they could control, even though Ambassador Meyer once tried to urge moderation on the Shah. On one occasion President Johnson had a talk with the Shah and promised to sell him 23 new aircraft when State and AID (and the Pentagon, I believe) had been trying to get the Shah to cut these purchases. Later the Shah told us about what the President had said and we had to find out from the President if this was true. It was — and it didn't help economic planning.

As you may know, the Shah was a hard bargainer with the Consortium (of oil companies) and every year we had a crisis as to whether or not the Shah would agree to accept the payments the Consortium offered and extend the agreement another year. He did, but only at the last possible moment.

But the Shah was doing a lot on the economic development side. He brought in many American experts to help the Iranians learn how to set up efficient companies, his own Bureau of Standards, and many other things. He was also working on improving agriculture, bringing in foreign firms who used the latest techniques, etc. Iran was really going places in Western eyes — that is why it was such a heart-breaker when the Shah was overcome.

Q: What about Iran's military spending?

MCCLELLAND: The Shah was very concerned with building up a strong military force, especially the air force. Military aircraft maintenance was very important to him so a program was set up to channel high school students into aircraft maintenance. As I remember it, he planned for so many maintenance personnel that we figured it would take almost the entire high school output for years to meet the plan! I, as a part of the State/ Defense team, used to meet with the Iranian military negotiating team to work out just exactly what equipment Iran should purchase and how they would pay for it. The Iranian negotiators were very good, spoke perfect English, and we were able to get along well. And the Shah got what he wanted.

Q: I never served in Iran or really dealt with that area, but sort of by word of mouth, and also by the media in the United States and all, there seemed to be the general idea — maybe it was more later than then, but still at the same time — why all this military stuff going in there, do we know what we're doing. Did you have any feeling that our military was behind this pushing too, in order for savings in quantity or what have you?

MCCLELLAND: No, I did not have that feeling at all. In fact, it was the other way around. Defense was concerned about all these weapons and what too much military spending might do to Iran's economy. But the Shah thought, quite reasonably, that if he was going to hold his own in the volatile Middle East, he had better be strong enough to defend himself well. He was the one, as best I can tell, who pushed the military side very strongly. He may have overdone it a bit, but it was not our egging him on.

Q: During the time that you were there, you were dealing with mainly what, on the economic side, or was it on both?

MCCLELLAND: When I was on the Iran Desk I was responsible for Economic and Political-Military affairs. As you know, these two are very closely linked together.

Q: Was there any concern on anyone's part about what developed, probably somewhat later in the 70's, the vast infrastructure of Americans who were working on airplanes, working on the equipment and all this, and its effect on the society?

MCCLELLAND: I am sure that our political people knew that there was great resentment against the Shah for bringing so many Westerners in to develop the country, Western Style. The conservative Islamic leaders were not happy — and they had great influence on the ordinary people who were not used to Western ways. When I was involved in Iranian Affairs, this problem was not seen as very important. The idea that the people would rise against the Shah just seemed unlikely since things were really going so well. The Shah might have been able to do something at that point if he had allowed a viable opposition to vent its views. But he did not — and if anyone saw what was coming, I doubt that they would have been able to influence the Shah to change his tune.

Q: During the time that we're talking about, this is '67 to the '70s, you were there during the transition between the Johnson Administration and the Nixon Administration. The Nixon Administration, in its latter years, really went overboard with the Shah. Did you get any feel that there was a particular change from late Johnson to early Nixon?

MCCLELLAND: No, I didn't. I continued to be involved on economic and political-military affairs on the working level and our problems remained basically the same. We wanted to help Iran improve its overall economy and not overburden itself with military debt. In my work I was not really involved with internal Iranian political matters — although we thought that a strengthened economy would promote internal stability.

Q: Ambassador Douglas MacArthur II took over when Nixon came in. He had the reputation of being a very tough Ambassador. Did you note this on the desk? Was there a change?

MCCLELLAND: No. My impression was that Ambassador MacArthur was very much aware of the problems facing Iran and might well have tried to get the Shah to cut back his military program a bit — but I do not remember any specific case when he did.

Q: You left there in '70?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, I was transferred from the Iran Desk in the Department to the American Embassy in Kuwait in 1970.

Q: What did you do in Kuwait?

MCCLELLAND: I was Deputy Chief of Mission.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

MCCLELLAND: The Ambassador was James Patrick Walsh. When I went to Kuwait I had been informed that I would be replacing a very fine FSO, Bill Wolle, who was leaving because he somehow could not get along with the Ambassador. However, I thought that somehow, since I did not know Mr. Walsh at all, we would be able to get along — and I very much wanted to go to Kuwait.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about Ambassador Walsh?

MCCLELLAND: Before taking the assignment I talked to him, then had some correspondence. I told him I would like to come to Kuwait, that I had hoped to be assigned there some day, but I was not sure I could do the job he wanted. I said that if he thought I would be OK, I would do my best for him. He replied and invited me to come ahead.

However, he really didn't want me or anyone else competing with him. Ambassador had been the Executive Secretary of the State Department, and he was very able, knowledgeable, and competent; however, he also drank a lot. (From time to time, when he had been drinking and was up late, he would call me, or another officer, and ask us to

come over for a chat. The talk would go on for an hour or so without any particular point.) He told me he could run the whole State Department with one arm tied behind my back, so he didn't think he needed much of my help taking care of Embassy Kuwait.

He severely restricted my normal duties. He did not want me to go to the Foreign Ministry to discuss anything; he did not invite me to parties he gave for political purposes (except the ones where everyone was invited.) When I came though the receiving line, he looked the other way. He simply demeaned me and my wife in every way. It was a very uncomfortable time for Franna and me.

Q: Was he a professional Foreign Service Officer or more a Washington Operator who went out?

MCCLELLAND: He was a Foreign Service Officer who had served in several posts before he was Executive Secretary of the Department. As it turned out, he was recalled from Kuwait when he became involved in a political dispute with local dignitaries at the end of 1971.

Ambassador Stoltzfus arrived to take over the post in early 1972. It was wonderful! He is a real professional who knows the language, understands the culture, and makes friends readily. He also knows how to make the Embassy function well, and he let me play a normal, and much move involved, DCM role. I think I did my best work for Bill Stoltzfus. I tried to do my best for Ambassador Walsh also, but he didn't want it.

Q: Do you have any feel for how Ambassador Walsh dealt with the Kuwaitis, or not?

MCCLELLAND: He was very active in Kuwaiti social and diplomatic life and he had several close Kuwaiti friends. He did not speak Arabic, but he did entertain frequently, often with small dinner parties. He had one or two well-known Arab women friends who acted as his hostesses.

Q: Was Ambassador Walsh not married?

MCCLELLAND: He was a widower with a daughter about 11 years old. I believe, although I do not know because I never saw any guest list, that he had important Kuwaiti guests. After a while I think everyone began to know what his problem was. Some incident occurred, he may have criticized the Amir or something like that. This was blown up in the papers, word got to the Department and he was recalled.

I was very thankful that while Ambassador Walsh was still in Kuwait, we had an inspection that I think saved my career. I explained the situation to the inspectors and they could clearly see what was going on. Their reports got my side of the story on the record and they gave me a good rating that led to a promotion.

Q: Was this a regular inspection or were they coming out there to see what the problem was?

MCCLELLAND: Actually there were two inspections — and I think they were both regularly scheduled, although the interval between them was not the usual two years. The first inspection did not help me. I had just arrived at the post and the situation had not yet developed. It was the second inspection that really helped me.

Later, when I became a Foreign Service Inspector, I was very sensitive to the plight of Deputy Chiefs of Mission at difficult posts.

Q: Just when were you in Kuwait?

MCCLELLAND: I was in Kuwait from 1970 to 1974.

Q: What were the issues between Kuwait and the US at that time?

MCCLELLAND: Relations were very good between Kuwait and the US, except that the Kuwaitis always criticized us for our close relationship with Israel and our favoring

Israel over our Arab friends. There were also several situations of interest that were developing:The Kuwait Oil Company was being restructured. The Kuwaitis demanded and got control of the Company. As it worked out I believe Kuwaiti ownership was affirmed and a part of the old KOC organization remained as management, responsive to the “owner”. This involved, of course, many foreign oil companies.

There were also problems in the Neutral Zone between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait concerning oil. The two countries had agreed to split oil revenues equally and there were two companies extracting the oil: Getty, an American Company, for Saudi Arabia, and Aminoil for Kuwait. There were plenty of complications. But the more difficult problem was one of legal jurisdiction and which laws were being enforced. At one time it was legal under Kuwaiti law for Kuwaitis to buy and drink alcohol but all alcohol was illegal under Saudi law. Your problem was determined by which police were involved.

We were selling, or trying to sell, military hardware to the Kuwaitis — but he had very stiff competition from the French and British. We were also concerned with the Israeli Boycott of products produced in Israel. Coca Cola and General Motors were having a hard time in this regard.

In 1971 the British turned over to Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial Sheikdoms the handling of their own Foreign Relations. This meant that the US could establish new posts in those places. This we did, and Embassy Kuwait was the general overseer of these news posts until they were fully staffed.

In general, we had good relations with the Kuwaitis and Kuwait was an interesting post.

Q: With your economic officer background, what was your impression of how Kuwait was using its money during this period?

MCCLELLAND: The Kuwaitis spent quite a bit on their military establishment — perhaps they should have spent more! (They were always in danger from Iraq and Iran.) They also

undertook some large, important projects like their desalinization plant to provide adequate drinking water, and the Kuwait Towers for a Tourist attraction, as well as water storage. Also, they spent some assets on roads, a university, and other amenities.

But one of their most important expenditures was in foreign investment. Since Kuwait would probably run out of oil at some time in the future, they set up the Kuwait Investment Company to build up their assets in the future. They invested a great deal in US real estate, for example.Another major expense item was to provide all necessary social services for Kuwaitis. No one paid taxes. Schools (including a college education abroad), hospitals, etc. were free. Kuwaitis with no income received generous allowances.

Most Kuwaitis, especially the ruling family and relations, had plenty of money and many spent it lavishly — fancy cars, big houses, estates in Lebanon, Egypt, maybe the US — and invested it abroad. Kuwait really has nothing but oil so I can't blame them for investing elsewhere — and going abroad whenever they could.

Q: Were they concerned about the large group of Palestinians who both were working there for some time but weren't allowed to have a particular stake in the country?

MCCLELLAND: The Kuwaitis were very concerned about the Palestinians, because they constituted about a quarter of the population of Kuwait. When Kuwait was young and most of the Kuwaitis uneducated, the Palestinians provided the educated people who were competent to set up government, police, hospitals, social services, newspapers, etc. When I was there, Palestinians still held many important positions. But Kuwaiti law was clear — Palestinians could not become full Kuwaiti citizens, they could only have restricted rights (no voting rights), and it was very difficult for them to reach even this second-class status.

There was a very close control over the Palestinians. The head of the Palestinian Community was closely supervised by the Interior Minister, and if anything got out of control, he was held responsible for rectifying the matter. Kuwaiti Security knew all about

the Palestinian Community and it took swift and drastic action in case of any political movement or strike or other perceived threat to the Kuwaiti monopoly of power.

Q: Looking ahead up to around '90 -'91, how did we look upon Iraq and also Iran as threats to Kuwait?

MCCLELLAND: Iraq and Iran were always threats to Kuwait. As you may know, not many years ago Kuwait was just a walled city, a small sheikhdom, that the British carved out when they were trying to bring peace to the area. It just happened that Kuwait was located over an enormous oil field that no one knew about at the time. So Iraq has always considered Kuwait as one of its provinces — and the Iraqis would announce this from time to time. Then there would be heightened tension, borders would be closed, etc. It was only talk when I was there, but it kept the Kuwaitis — and us — a bit nervous. The “boundary” is only a disputed imaginary line in the desert. When Iraq finally did attack Kuwait, it had clearly been a possibility for a long time.Iran is also very close, just on the other side of the Shatt-al-Arab. The Persians always hated the Arabs, and vice versa, so we always felt that Iran would like to take over Kuwait; however, the threat was not quite as direct, and Iraq was somewhat in the way.

Q: How did Bill Stoltzfus run the Embassy?

MCCLELLAND: He ran it as a real professional. He delegated responsibility well, but kept everyone fully accountable for their own duties. He was open in his dealings with the staff and concerned about their welfare. He made you want to do your very best and gave serious consideration to your ideas and reports. In my case, he gave me the full responsibility of Deputy Chief of Mission, as well as political reporting officer.

On the social side, Ambassador Stoltzfus included Embassy personnel in his dinners and receptions. He fully supported us in the work we were trying to do. In short, the Embassy worked as a team to carry out its assignments, and I believe the Department was aware of a great difference. The fact that Ambassador Stoltzfus learned Arabic as the child of

a missionary in the Middle East and so spoke it very well, made a big difference also. It enabled him to have closer contacts with important Kuwaitis — and we all benefited from that. Needless to say, I thought he was a great Ambassador!

Q: Was the American or British connection stronger when you were in Kuwait?

MCCLELLAND: It would be hard to say because they were both very important. Politically, the British were there first, of course, but from very early on there was also an American Christian Medical Mission that provided medical care for the ruling family and many others. The British also had a military mission there, and many Kuwaitis went to school in the UK. But the US was very much in the picture, and I did not get any feeling of competition, except perhaps when it came to sales of military equipment, or other commercial ventures.

In fact, the British and Americans worked fairly closely together. Officers of both embassies knew each other and often compared notes. Socially we mixed well together and we had many of the same Kuwaiti contacts. I guess I would have to say that the British connection was probably more important to Kuwait at that time, but the United States was stronger and steadily growing in importance.

Q: Did we have much of a military presence in the Persian Gulf at that particular period of time?

MCCLELLAND: Not very much. We had COMIDEASTFOR, stationed at Bahrain, with a converted seaplane tender, Greenwich Bay, as his flagship. A couple of US Destroyers would visit from time to time. The Commander made a series of calls at ports in the Persian Gulf area to “show the flag”, but he didn't have any naval force to back him up. COMIDEASTFOR had a small liaison office on Bahrain and we would visit there from time to time. We were welcomed at the British Naval Officers Club nearby.

We also had a Navy Training Team in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, to train a budding Saudi naval force in seamanship, whale boat handling, etc. The Officer in Charge was stationed

at the Consulate General in Dhahran. This was a kind of coast guard effort directed, I imagine, to intercepting smugglers. It was not a significant presence.

Q: You left there in '74. Where did you go then?

MCCLELLAND: I was transferred to Washington as a Foreign Service Inspector in the Inspection Corps. I remained in this job for about three years.

Q: That would be about 1974 to 1977?

MCCLELLAND: That is correct. My work as a Foreign Service Inspector was a wonderful experience. I had a chance to meet and work with some very able Ambassadors and FSO's and a chance to see places I had not visited on regular assignment.

Q: The Inspection Corps keeps changing. How would you characterize the Inspection Corps and its importance within the Foreign Service during this '74 to '77 time period?

MCCLELLAND: I would characterize the Inspection Corps as a highly experienced group of Foreign Service Officers who were dedicated to the task of making sure that our Foreign Service posts functioned as they should. That is, that the posts were carrying out the policies of the Department, that they were functioning well, and that the personnel of the post were being fairly evaluated.

Teams were normally headed by an Ambassador, assisted by several high-level FSO's and administrative officers. They talked to everyone at the post and would soon learn what the main problems were, if any. If an officer was being treated unfairly by a rating officer, the Inspector would talk to them both and make his own unbiased report. If the Ambassador was acting inappropriately, the Chief Inspector would talk to the Ambassador and inform the Department. I thought the Inspection Corps was very important for the morale of FS personnel, for ensuring that each post was doing what it was supposed to be doing, and for alerting the Department to major problems or achievements at the post.

Q: When you say that officers and staff were having problems, how did the problems range?

MCCLELLAND: In my experience, we encountered problems about the Ambassador's behavior, or his wife's behavior, and the effect of this on post morale; one ambassador kept a slush fund for certain undefined purposes that was not allowed under regulations; in some cases the Ambassador and DCM do not have a good working relationship; rating officers may be accused of being biased against the officer being rated; a particular program, such as a commercial program, may not seem to be functioning well; the post may be suffering from vacancies that the Department has not been able to fill. Foreign Service Staff personnel have similar problems. Secretaries may find a given post too demanding, isolated, or unfair in some way. Many American personnel have supervision of local personnel with attendant problems, especially in fiscal matters.

For most officers and staff, the Inspector represented an authoritative departmental officer with whom one could discuss, or perhaps appeal, what that officer considered unfair — or his/her accomplishments. In my case, I often commended reporting officers whose work I found very good. Unfortunately in one case I commended an officer who seemed to be doing everything right, having great contacts, speaking the language easily, reporting cogently — only to find much later that he may have been a foreign operator!

Q: Sort of like Felix Bloch?

MCCLELLAND: It was, if fact, Felix Bloch. I still wonder how I might possibly have known there was a problem. I guess I just was not thinking in terms of such a possibility.

Q: During this time, the big issue that came up in personnel was discrimination with respect to what we would call minority officers, black or African-American, Hispanic and others, and with respect to women. Had this risen yet? Or was this something that you were particularly sensitive to at that time?

MCCLELLAND: At the various posts where I served, I was not aware of any discrimination with respect to blacks or women, or even any allegations. In fact, except for Alexandria, Egypt, and the Department, I rarely worked closely with black personnel or women officers. In the Department, my supervisor was a woman who became an Ambassador, Margaret Joy Tibbetts.

Q: I'm thinking more of the Inspection time. Were you sent out, I'm talking about you as inspectors, saying this is one of the things that we want to look at — or maybe there weren't enough women, not enough minorities, really to make it much of an issue?

MCCLELLAND: I cannot recall that as Inspectors we were specifically instructed to be alert to possibilities of discrimination against blacks or women, but it was certainly assumed that we would be. We knew all about the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and EEO Officers at some large posts. I personally do not recall having written a report on a woman or black officer, simply because they were not at the post, or in the section of the Embassy that I was inspecting. There were, of course, women staff personnel such as secretaries, communications clerks, etc. but I did not do reports on them, as I recall.

Q: You left there about 1977. Where did you go after that?

MCCLELLAND: I was assigned to be Executive Secretary of the Board of the Foreign Service. About a year later, however, the position of Consul General at Alexandria, Egypt, became open rather suddenly, and I applied for it, was accepted, and transferred there in fairly short order.

Q: Let's talk about the Executive Secretary of the Board of the Foreign Service.

MCCLELLAND: I might just mention that when I came back from Alexandria in 1981, I was again assigned as Executive Secretary of the Board of the Foreign Service.

Q: Why don't we just go into Alexandria first? You went to Alexandria when?

MCCLELLAND: I was posted to Alexandria in the fall of 1978. I went without Franna because she was in the midst of getting her MA in Early Childhood Education from Trinity College. (We had not anticipated the Alexandria assignment when she began her course work.) All five of our children were either in college or on their own by this time, so we did not have to worry about their schooling, etc. I thought Alexandria would be a wonderful post for me so I was willing to go immediately, even though this would pose some problems for me, such as taking over a post without my wife to manage all the home and social matters, and for her, such as fixing up and renting the house, etc.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MCCLELLAND: I was there from late 1978 until March, 1981.

Q: What was the situation in Egypt, and particularly in Alexandria, at the time you were there?

MCCLELLAND: In Egypt, President Sadat was very much in charge. He had already begun to talk of peace with Israel and this caused a lot of problems for him, especially in the conservative Muslim community. Muslim extremists threatened all kinds of trouble. Cairo was the center of discontent, but Alexandria is a very large city, Egypt's only large port, and there were plenty of Conservative Muslims there also. As a result, I had a personal body guard with me at all times. The United States had also begun a large AID program for Egypt, and in Alexandria this meant our sewer project, rebuilding all the city sewers that had never been properly maintained since the British were in charge! Everyone appreciated what we were doing, but they were angry about the resulting traffic problems. We had also sold some buses to Egypt, but they were not being properly maintained and were constant sources of annoyance. In spite of these matters, Americans were generally welcomed in Alexandria, especially by the Governor, Mayor, and the Egyptian Navy.

The US Navy was about to begin more visits of USN ships to Egypt to show our “even-handedness” with respect to Israel. This brought the Consulate General in closer contact with the Egyptian Navy as well.

Q: Had the Camp David process started?

MCCLELLAND: President Sadat had made his first speeches on the subject and had made his famous visit to Israel. During my time in Alexandria some of the actual peace talks were held there as well as the signing of the Treaty. Most of the negotiations took place in local hotels in Alexandria, but high-level meetings were held at Mamoura, President Sadat's Summer Home just outside Alexandria. That is where our visiting dignitaries met him. As Consul General I was involved in the process, but of course, the US Delegation and a high-level Team from the Department were in charge. On July 4th, 1979, my wife and I gave a large reception for the peace delegations and our local contacts. It was a wonderful occasion.

I was in Alexandria at a very interesting time. I have forgotten the exact sequence of events, but Vice President Mondale came a couple of times, the Secretary of State visited, President Carter came for the signing of the Peace Accords at Ras al-Jin Palace, and we were involved in all of these events. I might just mention that while I was in Alexandria I had two outstanding Ambassadors in Cairo as my overall supervisors: Hermann Eilts, followed by Roy Atherton. It was a real pleasure to work with such excellent and talented Ambassadors and their very cooperative staffs.

Q: I assume Alexandria was a cosmopolitan city, or was it?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, Alexandria is a very cosmopolitan city. Founded by Alexander the Great, it is the home of two of the Wonders of the Ancient World: The Pharos Lighthouse and the Great Library (both long-since destroyed). It is the second largest city in Africa (after Cairo), Egypt's major port, home of the Egyptian Navy, Alexandria University, the

Coptic Patriarchate, an ancient Jewish Community, and the remains of large British and Greek Communities.

Q: What was the attitude as these negotiations were going on with these Israelis? Egypt was sort of sticking its neck out in the Arab world.

MCCLELLAND: There is no doubt about that, but Sadat saw that peace was required to build a viable future for Egypt and the Middle East. The Egyptians are pretty adaptable, so although there was a very deep distrust of Israel and Jewish people in general, it was not fanatic except for extreme conservatives. Alexandria, with its history of foreign, and even Jewish, inhabitants and links with the outside world, was probably the best place for the talks in Egypt. Still, I think the man in the street was not happy about a treaty with Israel and the problems that might raise for Egypt among her sister Arab states. Only those with some realistic vision of peace in the Middle East agreed that Sadat's efforts were a good move — but most of them still had misgivings. Many of my Egyptian friends were hopeful, but they still didn't trust the Israelis.

Q: From the Alexandria point of view, what was the perspective on Sadat's rule in Egypt at this particular time?

MCCLELLAND: I would say that most people felt that he was doing a good job overall, but he had many problems. Earlier in his time in office, before I came to Egypt, I have the impression that he was more in tune with the people and their needs and aspirations than he later became. He was certainly a great statesman, and as time went along I believe he came to feel he knew best what Egypt's policies should be and he didn't need any help from representatives of the people. He really had no legitimate “loyal opposition” that he would listen to. He seemed to get out of touch with ordinary people and more interested in building great palaces in secure areas than becoming involved with people.

Of course, the Islamic fundamentalists were strongly opposed to any cooperation and they are a continuing threat to any moderate Egyptian Government. Sadat had tried to bring

the Islamic Establishment along with him, but what the Mullahs preached in the Mosque on Friday often was highly critical of what Sadat was doing. Not only did they oppose an opening to Israel, but they were very anti-western and anti-Christian. Their influence was everywhere, in the University, labor unions, clubs, etc. Sadat's government had to keep a very careful eye on them.So there was opposition and a lot of criticism. Sadat knew he was in constant danger, but you got the feeling that he thought he knew what needed to be done and went ahead regardless of the consequences.

As you know, I also served in Iran, and I must say that there are close parallels to what happened to the Shah and what happened to Sadat. Both men were convinced that they knew best what the country needed and went ahead without regard to what their people thought. Thankfully, Egypt did not suffer the tragic results that Iran did.

Q: Did you have much success in trying to make contact with the fundamentalists, the traditionalists, at all?

MCCLELLAND: No, I really didn't try very hard because I was not sure what I would be doing and what kind of a situation I might run into. However, I did contact political personalities in Alexandria, some of whom were definitely opposition types. In Egypt, most political activity was centered in Cairo, and this was the Embassy's sphere of expertise.

Q: You left before Sadat was assassinated?

MCCLELLAND: Yes, I left Egypt in March, 1981.

Q: What was the general impression of Mubarak at the time you were there?

MCCLELLAND: I believe most people thought that Mubarak was a very competent person, but not very colorful or innovative. They questioned whether or not he had the personality or statesmanship to be President of Egypt. I think it was more a case of not having seen

anything that he had done — everyone in the Egyptian government was overshadowed by Sadat.

Q: While you were there, were there any noticeable effects of the Egyptian signing of the Peace Agreement with Israel, in terms of economic activity, visits, or anything else?

MCCLELLAND: The most noticeable effect was a result of the US Navy's decision that it should be even-handed with respect to naval visits to Egypt and Israel, so Alexandria got as many visits as Israel — a large increase for us. I believe these visits were very helpful to us in our relations with Egyptian people in Alexandria. We were able to introduce our fine naval officers to an influential part of the populace that spoke English. This helped the Consulate General's contacts. In addition, a good rapport was established between the US Navy, the Consulate General, and the Egyptian Naval and Military Establishment.

As far as Israelis were concerned, I saw nothing of them and do not believe they established a Consulate, although they may have had some representatives in Alexandria. I did hear of some new business arrangements in which Alexandrians had become partners with Israelis for fruit imports, etc., but most people frowned on such deals because the Israelis had always been their enemies. Also, some Israeli tourist companies arranged tours to Alexandria from time to time. In general, except for the increased US Navy visits, life went on pretty much as usual with no great change of heart among the Egyptian people.

Q: You left there in '81 and went back to the State Department as . . .

MCCLELLAND: Executive Secretary of the Board of the Foreign Service.

Q: So we're really talking about two times doing it. How long did you do that?

MCCLELLAND: I was Executive Secretary for about a year in 1977-1978 and again from 1981 until I retired in 1984. Perhaps I should explain that the Board of the Foreign Service

was established in the Foreign Service Act to bring together the heads, or deputies, of US Government Agencies that had personnel in the Foreign Service. The Board was chaired by the Deputy Secretary when I was first involved, but this was later changed to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. The Director General of the Foreign Service was a member of the Board.In general, the Board discussed matters any of the agencies wanted to raise. For State this meant policies that would affect the FS personnel of other agencies. For other agencies, this was usually a problem of fairness in promotions, policies, housing at post, etc. for their personnel. In addition, the Board was required to hold a hearing before a Foreign Service Office could be discharged for cause. These hearings were rather complex because we would first hold a session with an Administrative Law Judge, and the judge's opinion and recommendation would then be sent to the Board for decision. This was a lengthy procedure but the person concerned had a good opportunity to state his side of the case.

With respect to coordinating policy among the agencies, I personally felt, as Executive Secretary, that the Board could have been very important in the life of the Foreign Service. My predecessor tried, I tried. The Board could have set up some kind of interagency arrangements (I forget now exactly what I proposed from time to time), but this never happened. The Board was a good place for agency heads to bring up matters they wanted to talk about, but definitive action was seldom taken by the Board as such. Members would go back to their agencies and do what they thought appropriate, and State would go ahead a issue regulations it was considering, bearing in mind what other Board members had said. The Board was useful, but I felt it could have been much more so. Perhaps I didn't push hard enough. My impression is that members did not want to make it more powerful.

Q: It sounds like closer to pro-forma.

MCCLELLAND: Perhaps somewhat pro-forma, but not entirely so. I understand that the reason a Board was provided for in the Foreign Service Act was to give the other agencies some sort of participation in the policies of the Foreign Service, since some of

their personnel were involved. On the other hand, most of their personnel were not, except perhaps for AID and USIA, and they had lots of other worries. OMB often tried to play a useful role and had some good ideas, but this input was generally only a part of the discussion. Maybe that is all anyone really wanted.In any case, even though the work was not onerous, it did concern the highest ranking people in several USG agencies and I did my best to carry out all the duties of Executive Secretary in the most conscientious way I could. I enjoyed good working relations with all the various members of the Board and their liaison officers. It was a good experience, but I did not feel that I was a vital part of the State Department mission in this job.

Q: Of the people who were appealing their being forced out of the Foreign Service, did you see any particular types of cases?

MCCLELLAND: It has been a long time, and I do not remember many cases. There was one case of a particularly bad security violation; “inappropriate behavior” might be the classification for some other cases where officers were drunk, lewd, etc. In fact, there were very few appeals heard by the Board and I believe this is mainly because Foreign Service personnel generally had a very high standard of conduct and were very conscientious as to how they carried out their duties as representatives of the USG.

Q: All right, why don't we stop at this point?

MCCLELLAND: I agree that this would be a good stopping place, but I would like to add a few words about how my family and I felt about the Foreign Service.

My wife, Franna, and I believe that the Foreign Service was a wonderful career for us both. We were both in college when we were married (Franna was at Radcliffe and I was at Harvard Law School) and we decided to go for the Foreign Service as a joint commitment. We both wanted to know more about people in other countries, how they lived, what their problems were, etc., and here was a way to do that. We also felt that in the Foreign Service we were serving our country — doing what we could to work for world

peace. While we were in the Service we had five children and they grew up with a broader education than they otherwise might have had. Their schooling was not ideal, but they had a reasonably good education and were able to get into good colleges without too much trouble. The colleges were Columbia, University of Virginia, George Washington, Wooster, and Tufts.

One reason why I liked the Foreign Service was the caliber of people I met and worked with, both in the US Foreign Service and in that of other countries. I was always challenged to do my best and go the extra mile. Since one of our reasons for joining the Foreign Service was to learn more about people in foreign countries and how they lived, we tried to become a part of the communities in which we lived insofar as that was possible.

Franna was especially good in this. In London she was a member of the Speakers Bureau; in Dhahran she taught health, homemaking and baby care to the families of Oil Co. employees; in Beirut she taught Kindergarten at the American Community School; in Baghdad she worked as a Red Cross Gray Lady in the local hospital, teaching health and baby care to new mothers; in Kuwait she worked with handicapped children in the local hospital; in Alexandria she planned and directed a Kindergarten in the American School and taught sewing to Arab girls in a local women's organization. All this, of course, was in addition to being hostess for all our entertaining and having and looking after our five children. Jay, William and Bruce were born in the US, Katherine and Elizabeth were born in the Air Force Hospital shortly after we arrived in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

A lot of my friends in these countries were people I met in the course of my duties. In addition to knowing members of the Consular and Diplomatic Corps of the various places we went, I was also active in local church groups. In Dhahran, I was active in the Canterbury Group — a Church Group at the ARAMCO Headquarters; in Baghdad I was a Lay Reader in the Anglican Church and on the Church Council; in Kuwait I was on the Protestant Church Council in town and a Lay Reader in the Anglican Church at Ahmadi,

the British Oil Co. town; in Alexandria I was also Lay Reader and Council Member of the local Anglican Churches and member of a Board that managed the assets of the Anglican Church in Alexandria. In Alexandria I was also the only Lay Reader available to keep the expatriate church functioning for about nine months while the new Vicar was chosen and actually took over.

My favorite post was Alexandria because it was an exciting place to be, a lot going on, lots of responsibility, and I was in charge. As a former Naval Officer, I especially enjoyed arranging the US Navy visits when they became more frequent several months after I arrived.

Franna's favorite post was Baghdad because of its ancient historical interest, especially the archeological excavations and the “Cradle of Civilization” in the land of the marsh Arabs. My most difficult time in the Foreign Service was my first few months in Alexandria when I had to set up a new residence, find servants, and give a number of dinners and receptions without the help of my wife (who was in the process of getting her MA degree in DC.)

Our most trying time, as a family, was our evacuation from Baghdad at the outbreak of the 1967 War. Franna and other Embassy wives distinguished themselves by keeping the children occupied and the very sleepy bus drivers awake and calm on the hazardous drive from Baghdad to Tehran. We lost many of our household effects because of this hasty evacuation, but when the insurance payment finally came in, about a year or so later, it was just in time to pay the tuition for our second son to go to college! My lasting memories from this evacuation are three: 1) Saying good-bye to my wife and three children as they were evacuated on a hazardous bus ride; 2) Drafting the “Reprise”, a complete inventory of Embassy property that was signed and turned over to the Belgians, our Protecting Power, and 3) My final breakfast in Baghdad, in Grant McClanahan's very pleasant garden overlooking the Tigris River, just before we drove out of Baghdad in a caravan on our way to Tehran.

All in all, the Foreign Service was interesting, exciting, and demanding at times. But in our 34 years of service we had the time of our lives!

End of interview