Interview with Edward W. Mulcahy

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

AMBASSADOR EDWARD W. MULCAHY

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Q: Mr. Ambassador, how did you become interested in foreign affairs?

MULCAHY: Strangely enough, through my father, who was a high school dropout. He was in the Navy in the First World War as a radioman, then known as a “wireless operator,” with the armed guard on merchant ships, trained at Harvard, incidentally. He traveled to many places and usually for pay they had to go to various embassies and consulates and draw the salary owed to them. When I thought I'd like the life of a sailor, he said, “Oh, you don't want to be a sailor. You want to go to college and be something more professional.”

“How about these consulates and embassies that you talk about visiting? How do you get to work there?” I said. I was about 16 at this time.

“Well, I suppose you take a Civil Service examination or something like that. I don't really know,” he said, “but we'll write to the Government Printing Office in Washington and find out what it's all about.”

Lo and behold, a few weeks later came a brochure, which I have to this day, describing the terms of service in the American Foreign Service.

Q: This is about when?

MULCAHY: This would have been 1936-1937 when I was about halfway through high school. I chose to go to Tufts, for example, largely because I thought it would be a front door and give me entree to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy which had been established there in 1932, the first class graduated in 1933. I knew all about this at the time. I lived in Malden, Massachusetts, which is next to Medford, where most of the campus of Tufts is located, Medford and Somerville.

I discovered even in high school that I was very good at languages and I thought that was a good head start for life in the Foreign Service. I also always had a keen interest in world affairs and geography was one of my favorite subjects, as was history. I knew a great deal about the world outside of greater Boston. I even had an Italian shopkeeper on a corner where my gang used to hang out teach me Italian from books I sent away for. This was while I was in college, not while I was in high school.

I had good French, and going to a Catholic high school, naturally had Latin and even two years of classical Greek before I entered college. I never wavered seriously in my desire to go into the Foreign Service from that time forward.

Q: Did you feel that there was a problem since you hadn't come from a fancy family? This was the reputation the Foreign Service had.

MULCAHY: I think I knew, certainly by the time I was part-way through college, that the Foreign Service was less and less inclined to draw heavily on upper-crusty people. I felt that, if they offered an examination, I stood as good a chance at the written examination at least as anybody else of passing it. I was always pretty articulate. That comes from being Irish, I guess, and also having talents as a debater. I was captain of the high school debating team which won the Cardinal's Cup in the Boston archdiocese two years running,

and won oratorical prizes and that sort of thing both in high school and college. I would take my chances at an oral examination.

Q: Did the war catch you up before this got going?

MULCAHY: Yes, indeed. Within eight or ten weeks after Pearl Harbor, I enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve and they had first call on me. I felt very fortunate that they allowed me to stay three semesters and finish up my degree. I felt very frustrated that after getting my degree in January of 1943 instead of June on the accelerated program that we used to have during the war, they kept me waiting three long, weary months before I was called to go through boot camp at Parris Island to then the process at Quantico both before and after commissioning. The Marine Corps was very good. They never turned officers loose on the troops until at least three months after they had their commissions.

Q: How did you get into the Foreign Service?

MULCAHY: During the war I was wounded twice, the second time was at Iwo Jima, and that summer, I was at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in the guard detachment when a circular was posted on the bulletin board in the officer's wardroom indicating that the first Foreign Service examination after the war was to be given in September. I noted, also, that if you passed the examination, you would be released from the Marine Corps.

It was a two-day examination, a special examination for veterans. I took the examination at Columbia and waited until Christmas of 1945, the war having ended in the meantime, for news of whether I had passed or not. I found I failed it. I got a 67 instead of the required 70 on the examination, but I'd been away from the books for close to three years at that time. It was not too great a surprise. So I had to kill time and, by that time, I had been given my own Marine detachment at a Naval Disciplinary Barracks, on Hart's Island a former New York City prison for 2,500 general court-martial prisoners, and a large command for a first lieutenant, a 350-man detachment. They let me stay in the Marines until the following June

and on the payroll until the middle of July. I had a very nice summer to recuperate from the war years.

While I waited, the opening of the Fletcher School, where I'd been accepted, was postponed that year because at least half of the American students at Fletcher, some 20 of us or thereabouts, took the Foreign Service examination at the Harvard Business School. That was the one I passed.

Q: What sort of training did you get? As a new officer you say that the Marines didn't turn second lieutenants loose on their troops until they had three months of training. How about the Foreign Service officers?

MULCAHY: We had approximately ten weeks of training at the Foreign Service Institute at that time, which was located in an old apartment house on C Street. To report there in the middle of July, work in an non-air conditioned building and live in an non-air conditioned boarding house, I got a rather poor impression of the Potomac Valley.

Q: It didn't change when I came in in 1955, same building, same non-air conditioned and all that.

MULCAHY: It was a good foundation that they gave us. I really thought it was quite good. We knew by the middle of September where we were going to go and I had asked for an Arabic-speaking post with the view to becoming an Arabist.

Q: Any particular reason for this?

MULCAHY: No, just a fascination with that part of the world and a desire to learn a language that I thought would be a very useful one in the years ahead. I received an assignment to Mombasa on the coast of Kenya.

They said, “Well, we're sorry. There just isn't a vacancy. They don't need a new third secretary or vice consul at any of the fairly few posts we had in the Arab world at that time.

But we'll send you to Mombasa because we've heard that in Swahili down there, there's a great deal of Arabic and you might start to become familiar with Arabic through Swahili.”

Anyway, I went to Mombasa by way of the Cape of Good Hope. I spent 62 days on a Victory ship which belonged to the American South African Lines, now called Farrell Lines, and went all around the Cape of Good Hope stopping at everything from Walvis Bay clear around to Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar and then finally Mombasa. There was great congestion in the ports of Africa in those days and, even for small amount of cargo, you'd have to spend a great deal of time—three or four days—before you could get alongside, or, in case of a very crowded port like Durban, five days before you could come alongside.

In those days that was a bit extraordinary to spend two months getting to your post, but, on the other hand, the Division of African Affairs had encouraged me to take this trip and go by sea, not to fly. Personnel wanted me to fly.

Q: Because you'd be dealing with shipping affairs anyway, wouldn't you? Were you the sole Foreign Service officer in Mombasa?

MULCAHY: It was a one-man post. It was supposed to have been a two-man post. During the war we had representatives from the War Shipping Administration, from various other civilian agencies, plus the Navy, all with people attached to the consulate. It was supposed to be a two-man consulate. The poor officer in charge, Bill (J. William) Henry, had been left there, four years, two years all by himself, so tied down that he hadn't even seen Nairobi, 300 miles away. He was so conscientious he never got off the coast in all that time. One after the other the people assigned to replace him politicked their way out of the assignment when they read the horrendous post report about living conditions there. I think in those days a lot of the post reports were written to justify keeping the unhealthful-post status, which meant an 18-months tour.

Q: As long as we're doing this for researchers, they should read post reports with a certain amount of skepticism because it's not just a plea, saying this is the way it is in such and such a place, but it was also to make sure that you got special allowances, etc.

MULCAHY: I think that hasn't been quite so true in recent years because you . . .

Q: Recently they've changed it, but this is up through the 1960s and 1970s, until they finally came down and sent other people out to write them or something like that.

MULCAHY: That's true. But Mombasa was nowhere near as bad as I thought it was going to be.

Q: What were our concerns there? What type of work were you doing?

MULCAHY: It was a terminal port for Robin Lines, American South African Lines, Moore-McCormick Lines—and Lykes Brothers. These were all separate shipping companies. Some of them have since been amalgamated with other lines. We had in those days—you won't believe it—a lot of tramp steamers under the American flag. We had a very large merchant marine and an enormous surplus of shipping, Liberty and Victory ships built in World War II, that were plying the waters of the world going after cargo wherever it was available, often with non-American crews, but still flying the U. S. flag. We had important shipping interests then and extensive exports. In those days we also had consular invoices, which you may not remember.

Q: It stopped the year I came into the Foreign Service.

MULCAHY: That's just about right. But during 1947, 1948 and 1949 we issued consular invoices. It became a two-man post while I was there. They sent out a staff vice-consul and left me in charge less than two months after I reached the post and I stayed in charge for the next 14 months until my tour was up. We would write consular invoices on zoo animals, on minerals, on coffee, on papain extracted from papaya in Kenya that was used

to tenderize meat products, the extract of the African daisy which went for insecticides such as the popular DDT in those days. There were millions of dollars worth of exports from East Africa including coffee and tea and there were large quantities of that. There were also American expeditions arriving frequently and I was able to be helpful to at least three that arrived in my day there.

Q: These were exploring expeditions?

MULCAHY: They weren't explorers; the era for that had passed. We did have Commander Attilio Gatti, whose books I had read as a boy, books on Africa, who posed as an explorer in the eyes of the world. But he was really a commercial type and was sponsored by various manufacturers, including Hallicrafter Radios. He was to make the first radio broadcast from the top of Kilimanjaro. I had never had the time to climb Kilimanjaro but, in those days, being in good health I could have climbed it without any problem at all. You can drive up to within 5,000 feet of the summit and in two easy days or one overnight stop on the way, you can get up to the top of Kilimanjaro. It's nothing more than about a 45-degree slope. It's not in the Everest category. But his enemies and creditors, who were legion, sent a Sikh with a ham radio on his back up there the day before to make the first broadcast from the top of Kilimanjaro.

Q: Looking at this at the time, how did we see Kenya? Was it always going to be the way it was or did we see it changing or did we care?

MULCAHY: Well, before leaving the Department I talked to Joseph Palmer II, who had spent four years in Nairobi during the war and was delighted with anybody going to Kenya, about that. He told me over coffee in the little snack bar in the basement of the then new State Department building when I said, “Well, now, what about policy in East Africa?” My district included Tanganyika, Zanzibar Protectorate, Mauritius and the Seychelles Islands besides the Kenya Protectorate—the coast of Kenya up to ten miles from high-water mark—and the Coast Province of Kenya beyond that. Joe said, “Basically, we come down on

the anti-colonial side. We think that some day—maybe not in our lifetime but eventually—those people should be prepared for independence. The Africans should run that whole continent by themselves.” That was about the extent of my briefing on policy matters.

Q: That was 1947 to 1949.

MULCAHY: 1947, yes.

Q: You were in Munich from 1949 to 1950. I want to concentrate more on your African period.

MULCAHY: Right. That was on the Displaced Persons Program.

Q: You were assigned, then, back to Africa. I guess you had already, even with only 18 months, been stamped as an Africanist, had you?

MULCAHY: By choice. While I was in Mombasa, they offered me a transfer, about a year after I arrived there, to the consulate at Haifa, giving me a chance to get into the Middle East and that part of the world. Then, before I even had a chance to respond to it, they switched it to Jerusalem. There was an opening in the Consulate General in Jerusalem. I wired them and said, “Frankly, I think you must have forgotten. I've been left in charge of this post. You've made no arrangements for my replacement and, if it's all right with you, I'd just as soon put off my Middle East post for another while. I'd just as soon stay in Africa now, if it's all the same to you.” It was all one division in those days, all one bureau. There was the Division of African Affairs within the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs. So I was dealing with the same people and I asked for another African assignment. I had, frankly, fallen in love with Africa and the more I saw of Europe after being king of all I surveyed at Mombasa as far as interests of the United States were concerned, a very gentle supervision from the consulate (raised to consulate general status) at Nairobi while I was there. I was bored stiff with 5-l/2 days of the week—we

worked 5-l/2-day weeks in those days—issuing visas. I was somewhat out of sympathy with the ambience in which I lived, which was entirely the life of the U. S. military.

Q: This was in Munich.

MULCAHY: In Munich. Most of my time, actually, I spent at Amberg in the Oberpfalz (Lower Bavaria) with a team of three other vice consuls. We were all German-speaking vice consuls and, just as I was due for home leave, I was dragooned into a tour in Munich. I stayed two months at the consulate general at Munich but mostly at Amberg. After six months of visa work I wrote to friends back in African Affairs saying, “Put my name in for anything that's going. This program in coming to an end within the next few months and I'd just as soon go back to Africa.” I got a private telegram from two friends of mine in African Affairs who asked if I'd like to open a consulate at Asmara. I wrote back, “Ready, willing and able; sooner the better.”

While I was in Kenya I learned a great deal about Asmara, about Eritrea and the ex-Italian colonies from some of my British friends who had been in the military service up there in the campaign against the Italians in East Africa. I knew what a delightful city Asmara was. On the map it looks dreadful, only this far away on the map from Massawa which is one of the hell-holes of the world climatically at least. But, Asmara is up at 7,600 feet and that's perpetual springtime there, about the same altitude as Mexico City. So I jumped at the chance of going there. This was in December of 1949. By the middle of January, I had my orders transferring me to Addis Ababa. We'd closed up our post at Amberg on January 10 and I was back in Munich.

Q: Why were we opening a post there? Why did we want one in Asmara?

MULCAHY: We had had an Army group there, Signal Corps, and Army Security Agency, since just after Pearl Harbor. The first Army group going out to establish a small communications station there were on board ship in Cape Town at the time of Pearl Harbor. The British, who had taken Eritrea from the Italians, were occupying it by then with

a civil administration—a corporal's guard of colonial service and Indian civil service types who'd left India and were out of jobs—two British regiments of battalion strength, very small numbers of British. They kept Italian law and Italian customs but, with minor changes in force and something like 80 civilians and two regiments and few policemen, they ran this country of about a million and a half people.

Q: Was that part of Ethiopia at that time?

MULCAHY: No, it was not, and what it was to become was the subject of great dispute at the Big-Five Foreign Ministers' level, the whole question of the ex-Italian colonies. The reason for the rush in getting me out there, canceling the home leave that I was well over-due for, was the fact that the United Nations Commission of Inquiry, on which we were not represented, was going out to recommend to the General Assembly what the future of Eritrea should be. They wanted me to get out there and keep Washington informed on a daily basis if possible what the tilt of the report or recommendations of this U. N. Commission of Inquiry would be. It consisted of South Africa, Burma, Guatemala, Norway, and a number of people from the secretariat, including two Americans. I lived in the hotel, the principal hotel, where they lived and saw them at practically all meal times and entertained them over at the small military base, then called Radio Marina. There were about 75 Americans, counting dependents, at the base then. In the three years I was there it grew to 400 people. It ultimately grew to 5,000.

Q: That was Kagnew Station.

MULCAHY: At that time it was called Radio Marina because it was located in a compound occupied before the liberation by the Italian navy. It was an Italian naval radio station that they took over. But the married people lived out in the town wherever they could rent houses. Life was very nice there. We had an APO, a commissary, officers' club, sergeants' club, enlisted men's club. It was a very nice post. If anyone fouled up, they got sent home as punishment!

Politically, the thing was difficult, because everybody, including the major powers, had their own view of what should happen. We and the British favored the partition of Eritrea when the Moslem northern part of the country where the people were largely nomadic in any case going to the Sudan. Most of the tribes spent part of their year in the Sudan and then moved back into Eritrea during the wet season. The Italians favored receiving it back as a trust territory. In the case of Somalia they received their old colony back in the form of a trust territory. They favored that for Eritrea. The Soviets favored a trust territory directly administered by the United Nations, by the Secretary General. Such a thing never happened. We gave up the idea. Ethiopia wanted to annex the whole thing as a province, as its new province.

The population was divided about evenly, maybe slightly more, maybe 52% or 53% were Coptic Christians, who spoke Tigrinya, the language of the people in the nearby providence of Tigre in Ethiopia. The northern Moslems spoke a language called Tigre, but they also spoke five other languages, mutually unintelligible one to the other, for the most part. They were Semitic languages in the northern half of the territory. Along the coast there were islands of barely related Hamitic languages. But they spoke Arabic among themselves, fairly good quality of Arabic, as a lingua franca.

While I was there I learned Italian, which I needed every day. Everybody needed Italian. That was the real lingua franca of the country. After I had a good grip on that, I went on to Arabic. It was the colloquial Arabic of the Red Sea area and a very useful form of Arabic, close to the classical. Those two languages would get you just about all over the country and nearby parts of Ethiopia. There was a great deal of Italian still spoken in Ethiopia in those days.

My record shows an assignment at Addis Ababa. Quite true. I had to be assigned someplace until I had a consulate open in Asmara, so I was attached to the embassy at Addis Ababa, where I spent a couple of weeks in early February of 1950 and where I called on the Emperor in top hat and morning clothes, borrowed; I didn't own those myself.

Ambassador George Merrill (and later Rives Childs) at Addis Ababa and their staff were very generous in their support most of the time that I was in Asmara running it as a two-man post with one Foreign Service female clerk in carrying the administrative load for me.

Q: How did it work? Were you under our embassy in Addis Ababa?

MULCAHY: Until Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia on the 15th of September, 1952, Asmara was an entirely independent consulate and I reported directly to the Department of State.

Q: How did the embassy in Addis Ababa feel about Eritrea?

MULCAHY: They were quite loyal. They used to have people over there from time to time and they had been doing what reporting there was on Eritrea available in the Department's files. But I think they were probably sympathetic to the Emperor's view that there ought to be a connection with Ethiopia. I think also they thought it would be a leavening and possibly a good example for Ethiopia to deal with a democratically elected, autonomous, internally autonomous, Eritrea. I, frankly, thought that, too. I firmly believed that that would have been exactly the best thing for Ethiopia and that the empire, which it indeed is, could thrive if run as a series of autonomous regions under a federal constitution, for example.

Q: Did you feel that you had any role in developing any policy towards this? The federation came. Did it come without our pushing or pulling or objections?

MULCAHY: I had regular consultations with the United Nations High Commissioner who eventually was sent out there, Don Eduardo Anze Matienzo, a distinguished former foreign minister of Bolivia, a very fine, erudite, cultured gentleman. Anze Matienzo was a good friend. We had a good personal relationship. I also had a close relationship with his Principal Secretary who was an Austrian, an old employee of the League of Nations, Ranshoven-Wertheimer, and with all the key members of his staff whom I saw frequently. Asmara was a city of only all told 50,000 or 60,000 people, about 15,000

Italians and 1,200 British, I suppose, counting dependents, and not counting a 2,000- man British battalions and a very, very small American community. We had a few American missionaries there besides that, three missionary establishments. We had a very close knit community and good relations among the different communities both internationally and ethnically. I was always being approached by the leaders of 16 different political factions when I went there. Some of them amalgamated with others after December 1950 when the General Assembly decreed in favor of federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia. They went down to about eight. To round up a good cross-section of Eritrean opinion on any subject, I would take my time over a three-day period to seek out the eight leaders of these factions. Sometimes I wouldn't need to go to all eight of them, but maybe five or six of them and have a chat with them. You could do that by sitting at a certain coffee shop near the cathedral on the main street in Asmara. If you were there, many people would see you and they'd want to get their word in with you or they'd come around to the Consulate to deliver their points of view.

Q: You did find yourself sort of captured by the American military community or by the British military community or by the Italian community.

MULCAHY: No, definitely not.

Q: How were relations with what we would call—I don't want to use the pejorative sense—the natives, the actual Eritreans?

MULCAHY: Very, very good. The Coptic Eritreans who were in the majority in the highlands around Asmara had favored outright annexation by Ethiopia. They were supporting what was called a shifta army, several guerrilla bands, always much less numerous than you'd ever believe. They were indistinguishable from the Tegrinya-speaking Ethiopian citizens who came in from across the border. But most of the Eritrean nobility—and they continued even under the Italians to have their stratification of society into azmatches, dejazmatches, caghazmatches, ect. similar to counts, earls, barons,

dukes and what have you, old Ethiopian titles. A lot of them fielded little guerrilla bands of their own in order to show their loyalty to the Emperor. In the northern Moslem areas there were also guerrilla bands, who tended to favor a partition of Eritrea. They wanted to go with the Sudan with which they identified ethnically and religiously. That was their outlook. Now, the Moslems were divided in the country as a whole. Most of them in the cities and coastal areas favored the status of republic. But after the General Assembly voted in favor of federation and we and the British supported it when we saw that partition was a non-starter. After India, after Cyprus, after Palestine you couldn't talk partitions.

Q: After seeing the fighting that took place and the animosity, we just were not inclined to support partitions.

MULCAHY: That's right. Everybody came around, to believe that, if this federation concept could be well and fairly hammered out, it would be a good thing. In my office staff, I had an Italian who had been an active member of a party that favored an Eritrean republic. He had been a former member of the Italian Colonial Service but had resigned in 1938, resigned from the Fascist party, resigned his reserve commission in the army. I wouldn't call him a great democrat, but philosophically he was rooted there. He'd been there for almost 30 years and spoke flawless Arabic, was often consulted by the Mufti and the Qadi of Asmara on fine points in Koranic law, and used to lecture to the Moslem law students. I got him a job teaching Arabic at the little University of Maryland extension program we had at Asmara, which is where I also learned Arabic. I learned my Italian from him, largely on the job. I had him, a Christian Eritrean, a Moslem Eritrean, and an Armenian female. The Armenian Community were quite influential in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Social relations among the communities were really quite good in Eritrea. I divided my time pretty equally between the British, the United Nations and the Italian communities. The Moslem and Christian communities were not very much engaged in social affairs by our standards—cocktail parties and dinner parties—but they were continually inviting you to their weddings, to the mosque for feast days, to the Coptic cathedral for all their

feast days. You were very often in touch with them. I also visited the political leaders when I went traveling, which I did a great deal of. A lot of visiting I tied in with hunting trips. Hunting was fabulous there because the British had taken guns away from all the Italians and didn't even let them have shotguns. There had been something like nine years of uninhibited growth of the wildlife population there. For birds and for four-legged animals it was a paradise for hunters.

Q: Was the continuation of our communications base in Asmara a major imperative as far as how we wanted to see Eritrea go?

MULCAHY: Whatever way Eritrea went, we wanted to be able to maintain the communications base there. At that time that little base was handling all of our military and diplomatic correspondence from the Middle East and nearby parts of Africa and boosting it to Washington—to a base near Washington, shall we say. I don't know whether that's still classified, so we'll just say near Washington—by high-speed telex so that it sounded like just a screech and was almost un-monitorable. I gather it was monitorable at the receiving end but it would be considered fairly primitive by today's methods. All diplomatic and military communications went there from a large part of the world. The beauty of Asmara at the edge of the Ethiopian plateau with sheer cliffs all around was that it had almost trouble-free radio communications except in times of sun spots. No black-outs or two days of black-outs, say, in the normal year where Frankfurt and Manila, the other comparable bases in the world, and Panama, were blacked out for as long as a month during the whole year. Often Asmara would get all of the traffic of Europe to relay to Washington.

Q: Did this have any effect on how we voted for federation?

MULCAHY: Yes, but I think we had no agreement. I wasn't aware of any even secret understanding that the Ethiopians would allow the base to stay there. The agreement on our remaining there and on the whole subject of military relations with Eritrea—the final agreement and the initialing of the papers—took place in my living room in Asmara

in September 1952 between Akilu Habte Wold, the Foreign Minister, and our then-ambassador to Ethiopia, J. Rives Childs. To make a long story short, 25 years later, when it expired I was Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in Washington and drafted the notification to the Ethiopians that we didn't intend to renew it.

Q: To move on, you returned to Washington at last, having spent quite a bit of time abroad. From 1952 until 1956 you were with Personnel first and then with the Bureau of International Organizations. Just something quickly on the personnel from '52 to '54. You were with Near East, South Asian and African Operations. To concentrate on the African side, did you find you or the system were getting the people you wanted? Was it easy to get people to go to Africa in that period? That was before the great discovery of Africa in '59, '60 and all when there was quite a rush.

MULCAHY: I'd love to talk to this point. I took over Near East, South Asian and African operations. That represented approximately 75 of the hardest-to-fill posts in the Foreign Service. I found that as far as my beloved Africa was concerned, we got some of the dregs of the Foreign Service at our posts then. It was considered absolutely fair game to send officers who weren't measuring up to standards off to Africa to punish them. I sat on the assignments panel that moved everybody, including career ambassadors, from post to post. We even used to prepare the long lists, say five names, for career officers nominated as ambassadors.

Q: These would be lists that the Department would send to the White House for them to select an ambassador from the career side.

MULCAHY: That's correct. When we were told such and such post would be going to a career officer, we would do that. We had very poor quality of people and, to get a little ahead, I think in late 1955 we sat down—three of us—Red Duggan, Nick Feld, and myself, all of whom had had considerable African experience by that time to go through the Foreign Service List and picked out officers whom we personally knew would be willing

to take African assignments, post after post, and that we could really consider African specialists or desirous of becoming specialists in African affairs which was not then a recognized field for specialization.

We came up with 13 names of people we figured were really enthusiastic about further service in Africa—13 names out of the Foreign Service. These would have been officers, FSOs and some non-career officers, before the Wriston Program was completed.

I might say that, when my tour in personnel was ending in November of '54 and I went to the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, I put a memo out asking for a one-year assignment to the Embassy in London to be divided between one year at Cambridge and one year at Oxford where I would study under the best known British African experts and have access to the Colonial Office, for example, with a view of specializing in African affairs.

I was told, “Well, it's not a recognized field. Maybe it should be, there's still no money for it. You can't do it.”

Well, the following year, after I went to IO as officer in charge of trusteeship affairs, which was mostly African affairs, my very good friend and colleague and still friend, Lewis Hoffacker, was allowed to go to Oxford and Cambridge and be attached to the embassy in London—my idea. I didn't, for family reasons, want to leave anyway. I abandoned the idea of such a training program. I didn't particularly want to have a British stamp or a French stamp on me or anything. I thought we ought to plow our own furrows in Africa.

By that time, of course, 1954, we knew the British were preparing Nigeria, Ghana, and the Sudan for early self-government. It wasn't being called independence at that time. We began to see that things were going to happen in Africa. They happened twice as fast as any of us would have dreamt and three times as fast as anybody thought should have happened. I think even most of us in the field figured, if the whole process of freedom for Africa or independence for Africa could have been done over an extra decade, it would

have probably turned out for the better. However, we never at any time controlled how things were going. I think we kept pressure on the British. In British parts of Africa we were always blamed by the settlers or the colonial service officers for being the cause of the end of their happy little worlds.

Q: Was this pressure more by knee-jerk reaction as Americans for independence rather than for policy considerations?

MULCAHY: That's right. From a policy point of view, we played it very, very conservatively, too conservatively as it turns out in retrospect. My job as Officer-in-Charge of trusteeship affairs meant that I was Advisor to the U.S. delegation on the U.N. Trusteeship Council which, in those days, had two long meetings a year in New York. They had a winter meeting from mid-January to mid-April and again in the summer with a shorter session from mid-July to the end of August.

Q: We're talking about the period 1954 to 1956.

MULCAHY: That's right; it was a period when we had 15 territories under the United Nations Trusteeship System, plus what came to be called Namibia, southwest Africa, which I had visited on my way out of Mombasa. Our policy was really quite conservative. We had our position papers which had to be cleared all over the Department and we were limited to making rather tame positions. But we could occasionally, when key issues came up, differ with the other administering authorities. You see, we were an administering power. We had the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, all those islands that mostly we Marines captured for the United States. We were inhibited by our standing instructions from going into open splits with the French and the British, for example. The Australians were more conservative than we were and the New Zealanders were also conservative about their little trust territories in the Pacific islands.

But when we left the other administering authorities, when we voted with the non-administering authorities, we could move things forward. We would look for opportunities

when we could do that by our vote on a matter of principle [and] we could move the whole thing forward. A group of us, Mason Sears, myself, Curt Strong, Ben Gerig, conceived the idea of “target dates.” The non-administering powers in the Trusteeship Council wanted timetables for independence. This was a no-no to anybody who knew the real conditions of most of the people in most of the territories under the trusteeship system or the colonial system. To set a timetable, a short timetable, of course, is what they wanted. It was playing with fire.

Q: What were the countries under this thing in Africa? You mentioned Namibia, but what other places? Any others in Africa?

MULCAHY: Well, in those days, you had the British who had Tanganyika as a trust territory, that was old German East Africa. Then you had Ruanda and Burundi—Ruanda-Urundi as it was called in those days—was a Belgian trust territory, little pieces of old German East Africa. On the other side of Africa you had German Togoland which had been divided between the French and the British. The Cameroons were also divided between the French and the British. That was it in Africa.

Q: Because the other places in Africa were straightforward colonies.

MULCAHY: Colonial territories, right.

Q: Were there any battles that later raged on this trustee thing within the State Department between the European Bureau and, at that point, Near East, South Asian and African? The European Bureau, for its own reasons because of policies in Europe, didn't want to mess around with pushing for independence.

MULCAHY: That's very true.

Q: Did you have these battles, and how did they come out?

MULCAHY: We certainly did. Let me tell you of the greatest of the battles. My boss in the five months of the year that I spent in New York was Mason Sears, the Permanent Representative, and Ben Gerig, who directed the Office of Dependent Area Affairs, used to say to us before we'd go up, “Now, remember, just pretend that you're in Geneva and don't stay on the telephone to us. You have your position papers.”

We had to send them a daily report of what happened. A telegram went in to the Department that they could read the next morning, and that was sufficient. There were practically no emergencies to be anticipated. “If there is an emergency, stall for time and have it come up the next day and then send it to us in writing. Don't telephone. We'll telephone you.”

Mason Sears was one of the administering authorities' representatives on a Visiting Mission. Each trust territory was visited every third year by a Visiting Mission consisting of four representatives of four members, two from among powers administering trust territories, and two from among the non-administering powers. Mason Sears was a member of the Visiting Mission to the East African Trust Territories: Tanganyika, and Ruanda-Urundi. He came back and signed a report saying that Tanganyika should be prepared for independence within five to ten years. Ruanda and Urundi should be allowed plebiscites to see if they wanted to become independent separately or together and should be prepared for independence within 10 to 12 years—I've forgotten the exact dates, but it recommended a very, very short fuse on preparing for independence. The British, the Belgians and the French knew before the report was released in New York, probably through their people on the secretariat, that this recommendation was coming out. The morning before the report came out the British and the French ambassadors were in to see Secretary Dulles to denounce the fact that Mason Sears, Dulles' representative, had joined the non-administering authorities to make this a majority report on some atrociously short time period to get independence for these backward, horribly backward colonies and insisting that it was going to take 25 years, at least, to get these people ready.

Q: British and French.

MULCAHY: British and French. Mason Sears, with myself sitting behind him, was obliged to stand up (I could see the red color of his ears) and, as the United States representative, vote against the report that he, in his private capacity, had signed as a member of the Visiting Mission in each of these cases. It was life's lowest moment for Mason Sears. I stayed in touch with him for all the rest of his life and he never forgot that dreadful moment.

Q: This was because he had other fish to fry, other problems with the French and British, and it wasn't worth our trying to take issue.

MULCAHY: That's right. The Belgians protested in due course. They were NATO allies and we needed facilities on their soil. The African tail was always wagged by the NATO dog, always, right up until it became too late to be obvious. It was prophetic because Tanzania was independent in the early 1960s and Rwanda and Burundi even earlier. Chaos reigned and Tanzania is still worse off economically, probably, than it was at the time of its independence.

Q: I've heard in another interview I had, the point was made that it was really Nyerere. You could put your finger on him and say that he took over a pretty strong structure with lots of economic potential and, because of his ideology and his personal rule, that he ran it down.

MULCAHY: That's correct. African socialism, is badly adapted to the realities of life there. That's where I first met Julius Nyerere, at the Trusteeship Council. The British had trotted him out as one of their prize specimens and made him a member of their delegation.In 1955 I was named as United States member of the Visiting Mission to the French and British Cameroons, the first FSO to be so named. The other three members were Haitian, Chinese and Belgian.

Q: I want to move on to your time back to Africa. You served in Athens from 1956 to 1959 and, rather than look at that, if you don't mind, shall we move. . .

MULCAHY: Yes, I'll tell you why I went to Athens. I went to Athens because, at that time, I was a Class 4 officer. I was one of a very few who stayed in Class 4 when the Wriston Program came in with eight classes and most people were dropped back to the one below. I apparently had been on the list for promotion to Class 3.

Q: I might add for the record that the Foreign Service had six classes until 1956 and then it moved to eight classes. The cut was at Class 4, where the majority moved to Class 5 and some stayed at Class 4.

MULCAHY: Only 12 of us.

Q: I came in the Foreign Service as an FSO-6, and a year later I found myself as an FSO-7 but I was one grade higher, in a way, than I had been before. It was a confusing time.

MULCAHY: It was confusing, but well worth the discombobulation that we suffered at the time. It really did.

Q: It made sense, too. Anyway, you were in Athens.

MULCAHY: They offered me a chance of going to Port Elizabeth in South Africa, where I'd spent a few days on my long trip, large Ford plant, large General Motors plant, big American interests there and shipping interests. It was a very important port and railhead. I had been there. It was a two-man consulate and I had already two two-man consulates and I thought that, at my advanced rank, Class 4, it didn't represent any progress. I was also offered the job of opening a consulate at Kampala which I had visited while I was at Mombasa. I knew the town. That would have interested me, too, but again opening a post which I had just done at Asmara, I think that's a job that someone ought to get once in

a career. I considered that was no advancement. Athens was, as I say, still in the same Bureau, the NEA Bureau.

Athens intrigued me. I'd visited Athens on my way back from leave in Asmara and had friends at the embassy there, especially close friends and colleagues, so I spent a day or two in Athens. The prospect of serving there, particularly with a pregnant wife—my wife was pregnant with our third child—that would be a good move for us instead of going off to some unknown post in Africa. I spent three happy years in Athens. I enjoyed it. I was in the political section and, at one time or another, I served under three different chiefs of the political section, three different ambassadors in those three years. I wound up running the political section for close to a third of the time I was there and I shuffled around so I that I worked in almost all phases of Greek politics—church politics, the Cyprus question, labor, political, military, etc.—an embassy man.

Q: It also gave you a sense of how an embassy and a democracy with a multi-party system and all was working and also at a period where it was still recovering from the civil war. We considered it an important post.

MULCAHY: Very true. Well, I'd been nine years in the Foreign Service at that time and I really hadn't, except for a couple of weeks at Addis Ababa, ever served at an embassy. I thought this was a good opportunity. And it was. I enjoyed the post there. It was just the right place to be at that time. I learned modern Greek, which did me no harm later in Africa. You'd be amazed at the number of Greeks there were, especially in the Congo and the area around the lake.

Q: We're at the point where you were assigned to Salisbury. Was it called Southern Rhodesia then?

MULCAHY: Salisbury was a double capital. It was the capital of Southern Rhodesia, which was a self-governing colony and had been since 1924. It was also the capital of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. That meant the two Rhodesias, Northern and

Southern, and Nyasaland which, of course, is now Malawi. Northern Rhodesia was under the control of the Colonial Office and was a straight crown colony.

Q: This is 1959 to 1962 that you were there.

MULCAHY: I was there 1959-1962. The Federation had been created in 1952. It was based on the idea of racial partnership. The whites and the blacks were going to come together and form this great territory into one nation within the British Commonwealth of Nations, although there were about a quarter of a million whites in the territory and there were, at that time, something like 11 to 12 million blacks, as far as they knew. Even before I got there Doctor (Hastings Kamuzu) Banda, the nationalist leader of Nyasaland, had returned and was already in the Federal prison at Gwelo in Southern Rhodesia. He was accused of being in a plot intended to carry out a general massacre of the whites in Nyasaland which, of course, was a trumped-up charge. He wouldn't have been able to command that many people at the time he was thrown in jail. But it was just a lesson to him. Kenneth Kaunda was also in jail, as all Commonwealth prime ministers have to be at one time or another if they come from the third world. Sir Roy Welensky was the Federal prime minister and Sir Edgar Whitehead was the prime minister in a relatively liberal administration in Southern Rhodesia. They had blacks voting. They had two voting rolls, an upper and a lower roll, and there were blacks on the upper because they had the income and property ownership and literacy. There were some whites, poor pensioners, for example, military pensioners who wouldn't have enough money to qualify for the upper role and voted with mostly blacks on the lower rolls. They had blacks in the Southern Rhodesian parliament. There were blacks in the Federal parliament. It was quite a model to begin with.

Q: How did we view it at the time?

MULCAHY: We were very much in favor of it. We were skeptical, however. We thought that they weren't moving toward integration of the Africans into the political process

fast enough and we used to laugh with everybody else when Lord Malvern, Sir Godfrey Huggins, the first prime minister of the Federation, and long time prime minister of Southern Rhodesia as well, an M.D., had characterized the racial partnership as similar to the partnership between a horse and a rider. Of course, they do everything just in unison until they become one. Of course, the white man was the rider and the black man was the horse. They simply didn't move fast enough.

To jump far ahead, when Sir Roy Walensky was winding up the Federation and came to Washington, I sat with him for . . .

Q: This was when?

MULCAHY: This would have been in late 1963. He admitted that they had moved far too slowly. He said that he should have had half his Cabinet black by that time where he had two blacks in his Cabinet. The university should have been 2/3 black instead of l/3 black. The civil service should have been at least 50% black and was 20% black. He admitted that he had moved too cautiously, that he let the controlling voices of the white community gauge his pace rather than . . .

Q: At that time, how did you operate? You were the deputy principal officer. How many people were in our consulate general?

MULCAHY: We had a large consulate general because we had an AID program there and a very active USIA program. We had about 65 Americans and about the standard twice that many local employees when I first got there. We grew somewhat in the time I was there, largely by opening posts in Lusaka, the capital of Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, and in Blantyre, the administrative capital of Nyasaland, now Malawi. Those were both two-man consulates but we also had AID officials attached to the consulates in each of the countries as well as USIA officers. We'd have a cultural affairs officer and a reading

room/library station there with exchange professors at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. . .

Q: Actually this was, at that time, certainly British turf. Were we positioning ourselves to take their place, do you think?

MULCAHY: No, no, we were not, definitely not. It was run really as a Commonwealth country. Sir Roy Welensky was not only prime minister, but he was foreign minister, and the Federation conducted its own foreign affairs, always subject to the veto of Whitehall, which it never exercised except for the ultimate veto of putting them out of business at a certain time when the two northern constituencies of the Federation opted for getting out. We hoped the Federation would develop faster and better than it did. We always wished them well. We also hoped that they would set an example for South Africa, that they would make racial partnership work because there was nothing resembling the racial system in South Africa in the Federation. There were restrictions still put on the blacks at the time I got there, but they were ended in one fell swoop when Sir Francis Ibiam whom I subsequently met in Nigeria, the chief justice of Nigeria, was denied a cup of tea in a white restaurant in the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia when he was coming on an official visit. The Governor of Northern Rhodesia, within a week, had proscribed every taint of racialism. There were no restaurants, no hotels reserved for whites only any longer. The same thing happened next under the colonial governor of Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia could only follow suit. Then the Federal government made it illegal to discriminate against anybody because of race. That was done quite successfully in a very short period of time.

The whole thing began to fall apart, though, because of the lack of sense of humor on the part of the Southern Rhodesian whites. They thought that the whole process of racial integration and integration of the Coloreds of whom there were a few dozen thousand and the blacks—should have taken a lifetime or a generation, at least.

Q: Past their time.

MULCAHY: Yes, past their time, that it wouldn't happen in their time where the governments of the component parts would be under black majorities. They thought, oh, maybe by 1990 or something.

Q: I've heard the story that some of the British spoke rather disparagingly of Southern Rhodesia. Kenya was known as officers' country and Southern Rhodesia was for other ranks. But maybe there's a truth, implying that a more lower-class type of settler went there who, maybe, was with less of a sense of humor or flexibility because they were really concerned about their status, where somebody who is from a well established upper class in the white society wouldn't really have to worry about it.

MULCAHY: I've heard that same description of the difference between Kenya and Rhodesia in the old days. It was fairly true, but I'd say the only justification for it really would be that in Rhodesia you got the entire gamut of the British social scale. You had titled people. My good friend Angus Graham, the Duke of Montrose, was Minister of Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, and there were other peers of the realm who owned great ranches and tobacco farms in Rhodesia. They tended not to be very rich people, families who had lost all their great wealth if they ever had any and were literally subsisting on their farms, their mealies, their corn crops and their tobacco crops or their cattle. They went the whole gamut and it was a great place for people to come to from India when they left after 1947.

Q: Speaking about British civil service. . .

MULCAHY: The British civil service. Then, of course, you had a large influx there of white Afrikaner farmers from South Africa. The accent of the second and third generation Rhodesians of whom there were numerous ones, people born there of grandparents who had immigrated there, was not much different from the English spoken in South Africa and

a lot of them used to be sent there for education as did the blacks. But the Rhodesians had good educational facilities for the blacks by comparison to any other place in Africa except South Africa. A lot of the black leaders were sent as youngsters to Fort Hare, for example, near Port Elizabeth, to Fort Hare College, I think it was called, but it was a post-secondary college in the American sense. They got really quite decent educations.

I think Joshua Nkomo had never been educated down there. Robert Mugabe had been educated in the Jesuit institutions in South Africa, Catholic institutions down there.

I used to get chastised by some of these white diehards down there: “Now what do you Americans know? The State Department will send you here for two years, three years, maybe four years at the most and, boom you're off to someplace else. How can you possibly understand the problems here or understand our Africans?”

I'd say, “Much better than you can. I've already lived in three other places in Africa, and I've traveled over a great deal of Africa, and I know a great deal more about Africans than you do. And one of the things you don't know (this was one of my favorite speeches) is that you have produced here some of the finest, the best, the most understanding Africans, the hardest working Africans on this continent. You've done it and still you don't give them their chances. You don't give them their chances to move above a certain level. You're holding them back. Join them instead of trying to keep them in their place.”

Well, I meant it because they had a higher rate of literacy—again except for the blacks in South Africa, ironically enough—a higher rate of literacy than any place on the continent, more university graduates than any other place, except South Africa, on the whole continent. They were an excellent quality of African there.

Q: Did you have much of a chance—again, we're talking about the 1959 to 1962 period—to make contact with the black African, the emerging leadership, or not? Could you identify it?

MULCAHY: Very definitely. The two biggest men on the Salisbury scene today are Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. They were often at my house, drinking my beer. Robert preferred my Scotch. The labor leaders, the teachers, and the journalists, the people who are still the leaders today, the first generation of Rhodesian political leadership, were at our houses. It was a matter of principle that we never gave a representational affair without having blacks there. We always had blacks at our cocktail parties and dinner parties. Some people turned down our invitations because they knew they'd run into blacks but it was de rigueur with us. You say this is a mixed racial society, we will treat you as a mixed racial society.When I got there in 1959, Joe Palmer was consulate general with the personal rank of minister. That title always went with the job at Salisbury because you operated the consulate general more or less as a diplomatic mission. You had a foreign ministry to deal with and you exchanged notes as they do at proper diplomatic posts.

Q: How did you evaluate at the time the potential leaders of blacks. What were you reporting and how did you see, particularly the two men you mentioned?

MULCAHY: They were the top two people, Mugabe being the most visible spokesman, a bright young man, the most visible spokesman for the Shona, the majority representing four-fifths of the indigenous population there—between two-thirds and four-fifths of the population. Joshua Nkomo who, for 15 years before I got there, was the recognized leader of what was then known as the African National Congress, the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress. Kenneth Kaunda had only recently emerged in Zambia as the leader of the Zambia African National Congress. The African National Congress had been outlawed while I was there when strikes were fomented, general strikes, and the police had to use force to put them down. They outlawed the African National Congress and threw people of the leadership in jail for short periods, then let them out again. They reformed as the Zambia African National Union. Then people thought of Joshua Nkomo as something of a great big genial teddy bear and he wasn't half as heavy weight wise as he is today. He was always smiling, a big chubby, harmless-appearing man whereas Robert Mugabe

was much younger, much more fiery—if anything, with a much better command of the language than Joshua had—a superior education. Mugabe and his closest followers, who were the principal intellectuals in the party, seceded from Zano and became Zapu, Zimbabwe African People's Union. This we all regretted and we said our regrets to them as it was happening. You know, “Don't do it. Stick together.”

We could do this. We had real good relations with them, between the consulate general and these people. We had scholarship programs and were sending a lot of the younger people to the States on our leadership programs. . .

Q: Were you getting any reprimands—not official reprimands, obviously—from the white people, Ian Smith and his crew, saying, “What are you all doing and you're trying to queer the deal?”

MULCAHY: Yes, but in a real sense you couldn't. Ian Smith I met only once and that was at a cocktail party at the Consul General's residence when I first got there. He was leaving political life. He had been the whip in the Federal parliament for the majority party but he had become disaffected. He and another group had become disenchanted with Whitehead at the Southern Rhodesian level, and with Welensky at the Federal level, as being too soft on the Africans and not sticking up enough for the white rights. They, of course, were the people who eventually formed the Rhodesian Front and ultimately took over the Southern Rhodesian government at the time I was leaving there—the right wingers of the white community.

The liberals were beaten all along the way and we got criticism from that ilk. You got protests about how soft you were and about all the blacks you had at your houses, about these blacks you were sending to the States. You got used to that and you just discounted it because you knew where it was coming from.

Q: Tell me, you were there in a very interesting place at the time of the administration's change from the Eisenhower Administration to the Kennedy Administration. One of the

major threats of the Kennedy Administration was, “Things are picking up in Africa and new winds are blowing and let's get ahead of this.” Did you feel that, from the directions, instructions, how you operated? Was there an appreciable difference, once the Kennedy Administration got into power, between that and what it had been under the Eisenhower Administration?

MULCAHY: Yes. It didn't come overnight. We were delighted from the outset with the Kennedy Administration's approach to African affairs, dignifying it by sending someone as distinguished as Governor Mennen Williams to be the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, a man who himself was presidential timbre at one time. Of course, he came to Africa soon after he took office. We had Teddy Kennedy, along with Senators Frank Moss of Utah and Frank Church of Idaho and a large party of their assistants and their wives, at Salisbury for about three days a month after the election, during the transition period. Even before Teddy had taken office as senator, he was in Salisbury. We were there when Soapy Williams made his speech in Nairobi calling for “Africa for the Africans”. . .

Q: Would you describe that a little bit.

MULCAHY: This was a particularly memorable day in my life because, in the Rhodesia Herald on that Washington's Birthday in 1961, a holiday for us, I was having a late breakfast in my bathrobe and reading the front page of the Herald. I read the line: “'Africa for the Africans,' Says Williams. New Assistant Secretary of State Arrives at Nairobi.”

I said, “Uh, oh. This is not going to go over well here.”I had barely read that when my steward came and said there was a telephone call for me. Sir Roy Welensky wanted to talk to me, the Federal prime minister and foreign minister.

So I said to Kathie, “I bet this is about the Williams thing there, sounding off.”

Sir Roy said, “I'm sorry. I called your office and I had forgotten this is Washington's Birthday. You're on a holiday but are you going to be able to come into town some time this morning?”

I said, “Yes, Sir Roy, I can come in just as early as it would be convenient for you. Would you like to talk to me personally?”

He said, “Yes, I would.”

I said, “Well, I'll be in there within an hour.”

He said, “You'll be ushered right in as soon as you come.”I said, “I think I know the agenda.”

He said, “Well, did you read the paper this morning?”

I said, “Yes, I did.”

So I went in and I received his oral impression that this was real stuff and nonsense for this man, who probably never set foot on the continent, to say “Africa for the Africans.” And so forth and so forth.

“This is a delicate situation and things have to be handled very carefully. You know that, Ed. You've been in Africa a long time and I know you people at the consulate general don't agree with all that sort of thing.”

I said, “Well, I think that's what we're all aiming for ultimately, Sir Roy, isn't it?”

“This is going to set you back a long way with the people who have power here in Africa.”

I said, “Well, we don't have but a little paragraph of something he said off the top of his head at the airport on his arrival at Nairobi.”

“Could you get me the whole text of it?”

I said, “I'll try.” And I did. I spent the whole day in the office putting calls through London—they had to go through London to get to Nairobi—and John Emmerson who was Consul General at the time was in Nairobi. They were calling the principal officers at all the various posts in eastern and southern Africa to Nairobi to meet Governor Williams who was on a relatively brief tour of Africa at that time. I got a promise from John Emmerson that he would send the text before the end of the day. It was terribly hard getting people to the telephone because they were all locked into meetings. But I had the text of it the next day. I brought it into Sir Roy. He happened not to be there, so I left it with his Permanent Secretary for Foreign Relations.

Of course, it was loudly condemned on the talk shows on the local television and radio and in irate letters to the editor. Of course, poor Governor Williams, on his second visit to the Federation, was socked in the jaw in the Lusaka airport by a recruiter of African labor for the Johannesburg mines. It was difficult.

With the Kennedys, we were into African affairs feet first and, of course, the black Africans everywhere were delighted that their affairs were going to get such huge attention. It really began—the consciousness of Africa—even toward the end of the Eisenhower Administration. The year 1960, was the single year, I guess, in which most African countries, the largest number of African countries obtained their independence. Q: In the State Department we used to talk about it being the “discovery of Africa.”

MULCAHY: That's right. Of course, the Bureau of African Affairs had been created. It was in two stages. In 1956 there had been a Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs created in the NEA Bureau, the Near East, Asian, South African Bureau. Then a year later, a separate Bureau of African Affairs.

Q: I'd like to talk to you now about your assignment in the Bureau of African Affairs. You were there for five years, from 1962 to 1967.

MULCAHY: It was really four years plus the best part of a year at the Senior Seminar.

Q: You were there during the Kennedy-Johnson years. Let's talk a little about the leadership. You had two leaders while you were there. The first was Mennen Williams and then Joseph Palmer. Can you compare, contrast, describe their operating styles and approach, particularly towards Africa?

MULCAHY: Soapy Williams, of course, learned a great deal about Africa. He was enthusiastic about Africa. He saw to it that African leaders got attention at the White House. Heads of state were coming to Washington by droves at that time. Those who couldn't be seen by the President—if you couldn't get somebody into the Oval Office to meet the President, you could always get them in to see Bobby Kennedy, the Attorney General. He was the second most desirable person to see people.

I went to the Oval Office with Welensky and Dr. Banda on the same day, several hours apart—people who never would be caught dead speaking to each other. I had to juggle my time between the two of them. Then Dr. Banda, when he was Minister in Charge of Local Government, I think, in the days before independence, came over on a leader grant and we took him to Bobby's office. Kenneth Kaunda, before he became prime minister, was also taken to Bobby's office.

They were just delighted because Bobby sometimes had his shoes off and he'd pad around the office in his stocking feet and he had always on his walls art work done by his numerous children in their various schools, drawings and so forth. They would be absolutely captivated by Bobby.

Jack was a little more formal, of course, and he had to be as the President, but they both read their briefing papers. They always said exactly what you wanted them to say. They

had no policy different from ours and they would always read the notes that you'd helped draft which they read while the distinguished guest was coming up in the elevators.

We had people like Tom Mboya who was quite lionized by the Kennedys. He'd been over before on a leader grant. He was the promising labor leader from Kenya who was the expected successor of Jomo Kenyatta and was assassinated before he could come to power. But he was a brilliant, charismatic young African.

You had Soapy Williams in there well into the Johnson Administration. I've forgotten exactly the month that Soapy left, but he was there until early 1965, I believe.

Then Joe Palmer came in. With Joe, he had to bring things back to normal in a way. You had already had, by the time Joe Palmer came on the scene, a series of military coups in Africa, particularly west Africa, which had poisoned a lot of the good will that Africa had built up here over the previous five years. I'll just say a word on that very briefly.

Q: I forgot something. You did get into the Congo. You might mention that.

MULCAHY: I had done a month's temporary duty at Elisabethville (Lubumbashi). It was supposed to be two weeks and it stretched to a month in that bad summer of 1960, in July and part of August of 1960. Then in 196l I had gone up in September for what was to have been two weeks and I stayed for 6 weeks in Rwanda and Burundi in the then trust territory of Ruanda-Urundi, during pre-independence plebiscites, run under the aegis of the United Nations. I was trying to predict what was going to happen. I wasn't familiar in detail with what was going on up there at the time, but I knew a lot of the Belgian and United Nations officials from previous assignments and also from a short visit there some years earlier.

I found that the Belgians were very much out of touch with what was going on there. Their predictions on the outcome of the plebiscites were almost exactly the opposite of what resulted. The parties in both Ruanda and Burundi, who triumphed at the polls—which were also elections for constituent assemblies to set up the independent governments

of the two territories as independent states—were just the reverse of what the Belgians were expecting. The Belgians had no contacts, no really solid contacts among the leaders of the people, either the majority parties which they were really supporting or what they considered the minority parties which turned out to be the majority parties.

Q: Why was this?

MULCAHY: We speak the language.

Q: You look at the French and the French just seem to have been really very open as far as their contacts in the culture. Was there something different between the French and the Belgian culture that just. . .

MULCAHY: The Belgians were trying but they didn't give their African people enough education. They had no university graduates. They had people in secondary schools, which were a fairly recent invention, who spoke a poor grade of French. None of them, Belgians or native, could speak a decent Swahili, the lingua-franca of the territory, much less the local languages—the two languages which were almost the same, a form of Bantu language. The Swahili they spoke was a pathetically debased variety; it was a pigeon type language. Swahili is a language that you can write technical journals in. It's a very well developed language. But, it was badly spoken in the eastern parts of the Congo and in the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi. They simply couldn't sit the people down and have a man to man conversation on any subject of any seriousness using the limited language they had. I don't know. I think they brought too many new officers into Ruanda-Urundi from the old colonial service that had been in the Congo and thought that they could transfer all that expertise there but they couldn't. It was a terrible botched job on the part of the Belgians. They would have liked a great deal longer to get ready for independence of both Zaire and the Ruanda-Urundi territory.

Q: I got you off the track. We were talking about Mennen Williams and how things are beginning to fall apart in Africa, coups and military problems.

MULCAHY: Yes. You had these military coups which took the bloom off the rose to a certain extent and I think Africa came back to being something less in importance than it was, but still receiving a very fair share of the attention due it. These military coups were not all that to be regretted in many cases. It sounds almost blasphemous to say so but in many cases, perhaps most cases, you had more democracy after the military coups than you had before it. The people who tended to be left with power after the colonial authorities departed were those of often biggest tribe—in black Africa, the most christianized tribes, the ones who had gone first to the white man's schools, and who were, themselves, very tribally oriented. As has been said, I think quite truly, the colonial era was of fairly short duration—two men's lifetimes took in practically the whole history of colonialism in Africa with the exception of the Portuguese territories. They had papered over a lot of the inter-tribal conflict, that had always gone on in Africa. Wherever two tribes came together, there was a history of friction. These were papered over.

The school teaching profession, the trade unions to a large extent, and the military profession—the military and/or police were the only professions in which people of various tribal backgrounds learned to work together. You found that, in the military the man lying on the cot here and the man next to him on his cot to his left and to his right were probably from different tribes whom their forebears had hated for generations unto generations. They were told terrible stories by their parents of each others tribes and their practices and how wicked they were. These people found that they were humans and they bled just the same way they did and they obviously had had their heads filled with nonsense. These military governments often rose above the tribal ties.

Joe Palmer knew that. We didn't preach to them. We also stopped giving and withholding recognition which was a very important feature in . . .

Q: This is getting out of that pattern that sometimes we get into of. . .

MULCAHY: Over Latin-Americanizing.

Q: If we don't approve of a government when it lost power through a coup, we wouldn't recognize it. That gets to be very—almost puts us on a step.

MULCAHY: That's right. I think that the frequency of military coups in Africa in the mid-1960s just brought us to the realization that we'd have relations with only half the countries in Africa if we kept to that stern stepmother approve or disapprove business as the basis of our diplomatic recognition.

Q: Did you feel with Joseph Palmer replacing Williams that we were taking a more, you might say, practical but somewhat—distancing isn't the right word, but we no longer are a player but more an observer on the scene?

MULCAHY: To a certain extent, yes. I think we proceeded with a more realistic view of the limitations on our own position in Africa. I think during Soapy Williams' day—Soapy Williams was the Kennedy's man in Africa and he spent a lot of time in Africa and he was loved and welcomed by most people in Africa except white Rhodesians and South Africans. We couldn't stop him from going there again because he got a sock on the jaw, but he was, as a professional politician, a consummate publicist. He knew how to blow his own horn as well as blowing his country's horn. Joe Palmer was the consummate career diplomat. He was no less enthusiastic about Africa and the Africans than Soapy Williams was and had spent lots and lots of time in Africa, had lots of friends in Africa whom he'd known long before they had come to power. He had very solid credentials in Africa and was a very effective assistant secretary.

Q: Within this period from 1962 to 1967, what was the main problem or development that you had to deal with?

MULCAHY: I suppose for us it was always our feeling that we weren't getting our fair share of the AID pie. We thought that Africa required really a bigger slice than it was getting. It was at a time when AID budgets were being cut back. They were talking in those days of not giving more aid to a country than it can absorb. The absorptive capacity of each country was studied. If you had $15 million in AID economic assistance, could you actually expend it in the course of a year? Could you gear up to forming the projects? Could you get the local government—there always had to be input from the local government whether it was the provision of persons or the provision of buildings or sometimes small amounts of cash as counterpart funds to the American AID funds. I think that was a very defensible mechanism in giving aid, to require the donor country to put up some capital or some meaningful counterpart funds or a contribution of its own.

We could have done more. I think we did a lot of things that proved not to be of too much value, things that were expensive projects that, when finished, could not be continued by the local government. There were mistakes. On the whole I think we did quite well. Overall we did things in education and in agriculture which were really the principal fields to be invested in. We gave almost nothing in the way of military assistance to the Continent with the exception of Ethiopia and the north African states—Morocco, and to a small extent to Tunisia.

Q: I want to move again on to Tunisia. You were assigned there as the deputy chief of mission from 1967 to 1970 and we'll be returning to Tunisia. So maybe we'll just look at it, how it was then briefly and then we'll come back in some more detail. The ambassador in Tunisia was Francis Russell?

MULCAHY: Yes.

Q: Could you describe a little about how he operated an embassy and used you as a DCM?

MULCAHY: Yes. Francis Russell had been five years in Tunisia by the time I got there and I served my first two years under him as DCM. So he had spent seven years in Tunisia by the time he left there in 1969. He retired because he'd reached the magic age of 65 and was a career minister. This was the ultimate age that he was able to stay on, too, and only because he was a career minister. Otherwise, we retired at age 60 according to the Foreign Service Act at that time.

Francis was very much loved in Tunisia. He had very little French. He had not spoken French before he came there and had studied it but never felt secure in using it as he always wanted an interpreter handy. He didn't care whether the Tunisians provided the interpreter or whether he brought along one of his officers or brought me along to do the interpreting in French. Fortunately, the person with whom he had the most frequent relationship in the Tunisian government was Habib Bourguiba, Junior, the son the president who was foreign minister all during that period. He spoke excellent English with an American accent so that his effectiveness was not at issue there. He could read short speeches for presentations and that sort of thing that had been prepared in advance for him. But he was a gentleman. He was a warmhearted man, a great liberal in every sense of the word, an ambassador of whom I think we had reason to be very, very proud. He had instant access to the President who was approximately the same age as himself. He succeeded in building up a very important AID organization in Tunisia. I think at the time I was there our annual AID package, including a small military mission—we'd never called it a MAAG but it was a MAAG. . .

Q: A military assistance group.

MULCAHY: That's right. I negotiated that agreement as DCM and as charg# with the then minister of defense who was absolutely opposed to having anything called a MAAG. It was not popular among the Arabs. If you took a MAAG, you were in the American pocket which Tunisia did not want to be, didn't have to be or anything like that. So we invented a euphemism for MAAG, in any case, U.S. Liaison Office/Tunisia. That pleased

everybody.Our combined assistance programs came to about $75 million a year which was pretty generous for a country of 8 million people. I said then, and I say now, even in retrospect it was true, that you got $8 million worth of performance for what you gave them. They utilized American aid more honestly, more thoroughly, more sensibly than just about any other country I know of. I'm very partial to Tunisians, but that statement is the absolute verity. They are a sophisticated people. They are probably—this is not patronizing, I don't mean it in a patronizing way—about as “Westernized” an Arab state as any except perhaps Lebanon at one time.

Q: We'll return to Tunisia where you returned six years later as ambassador. Why don't we go now to Lagos. You were in Lagos as DCM for two years. Who was the ambassador there?

MULCAHY: I served my first year under William C. Trueheart. My second year was under John Reinhardt.

Q: Were you there at the end of the Biafran war, or had it wound down?

MULCAHY: The Biafran war was over in January of 1972, and I arrived in August, so the war was over. But the wartime austerity was very, very much in force at the time. There was hardly a vehicle in the country—unless it was a military vehicle—younger than four years old. Everything was wearing out There were no foreign imports. Sometimes, just to get simple things, we'd make an overnight trip to Cotonou over in Dahomey—more recently it's called Benin—to bring back a bottle of wine or a bunch of grapes or some fresh fruit.

Q: How was it to operate there? Was the bitterness still hanging on about America's role which was at least a tremendous public relations push to support Biafra as opposed to Nigerians although our policy was to support the central government?

MULCAHY: Very true. We supported the central government but we remained neutral in the Nigerian civil war. To a large extent our national leadership swallowed the story of virtual genocide that was being alleged by professional preachers on behalf of the Biafrans.

Q: This seemed to be a rather interesting group of supporters of Israel, of Christian Fundamentalists and Catholics.

MULCAHY: Yes, exactly. We had the Pope preaching against genocide the week before the war ended whereas I found that this delightful young major general, Jacob Gowon, was a true Lincolnesque figure. He'd been educated by American missionaries. He came from a little tribe in central Nigeria. He was a compromise between the Moslems in the north and the Yoruba and other tribes in the south. He was a Protestant Christian. In fact, I think his father was a preacher of a small denomination from the central part of the country. He was a soft spoken man and he quoted Lincoln to me on several occasions when I would go to see him either with the ambassador or in long periods when I was charg# d'affaires between ambassadors. He was in every sense a Lincolnesque man. He told me, for example, when the Biafrans had moved into Yoruba country of which Lagos was at the southern end, and the front lines were not much more than 100 miles from Lagos at the time, he had better get out because they were going to cut the north-south road pretty soon.

He said, “Well, as Lincoln said when told the Jubal Early's cavalry was at the north side of Washington, 'If they're going to hang me, I would just as soon be hung from one of these trees here on the White House grounds and I'll stay here until they come.'”

He was a wonderful man and never decorated. There was no decoration issued under Gowon or any subsequent head of state for any act of heroism, bravery, for simply being wounded or anything during this civil war, however great, because it was against the brother Nigerian, no medal would ever be granted.

Q: The war was over now. The genocide had not happened.

MULCAHY: That's right. It never happened.

Q: You had people such as Senator Kennedy who had been vehement in his support of the Biafran cause.

MULCAHY: So was Jesse Jackson and much of the black leadership in the Congress.

Q: How did this play as far as you in your mission trying to work in this?

MULCAHY: Very difficult. You would be reminded of it at the drop of a hat when I first got there. You would be reminded of it. You would be told that it was like the civil war where you needed help from everybody who favored democracy. For the United States, of all nations, to have let them down in their hour of need had been hard to bear.

Q: Was it pointed out that it was almost analogous to that of Great Britain, which is opposed to slavery who remained neutral, that used the same quotes that we were using during our Civil War?

MULCAHY: Yes, you'd have that quoted back to you because a lot of them were American-educated.

Q: All right. You are faced with this problem. How did you or could you rebuild bridges? This is a case example. How does one go about this? You get into a lousy situation. What do you do?

MULCAHY: We had it, if I may say so, even worse than that because it didn't come out until afterwards that, when Bill Trueheart was sent there as ambassador, it was told to them by, I suppose, their embassy in Washington, that he had been charg# d'affaires in Saigon when Diem was assassinated. Some important people believed that he was really

a CIA spy master incarnate and others believed that he had been sent to stage a coup against the Federal Military Government there.

Q: I also interviewed Ambassador Trueheart last week and he said that another problem was that the Nigerian ambassador in Washington was a very bitter person. He felt he had spread the word that Trueheart was a racist, he was from Richmond, Virginia, and this helped poison the well, too.

MULCAHY: Because it was completely untrue about his being a racist or having anything to do with the demise of Diem . . .

Q: In fact he was on the other side, you might say. How did you work under. . .

MULCAHY: Well, there was nothing sudden or no quick turning point. It was a matter of just slow concentration upon our mutual interests. The permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs turned out to be a friend of mine. We just agreed not to discuss civil war matters or things that were past, and to build on what we could do together. We began rebuilding our AID program. We even got a few Peace Corps volunteers there, not under an ordinary Peace Corps type agreement but to let them do special work without signing a new Peace Corps agreement which they had denounced at one stage of the civil war.

We had a very personable young colonel who was our defense attach# who made wonderful friends among the Nigerian military who were running the country in a not undemocratic manner. There was another case where, granted, they had closed the parliament down and all the rest of it and there were strong strictures against public criticism of the Federal Military Government. Outside of that, Nigerians are a rather uninhibited people anyway and they kept being uninhibited. The country runs itself, regardless of the government that's in power. It's like Italy in that respect.

Q: I was going to say, Italy has got this down to an art. The Biafran war was over. We had had a very, very strong political wing opposed to the government in power. We're

talking about in the United States. With the war over, was this group, as far as you were concerned—I'm talking about this group in the United States—trying to play dog in the manger or were they willing to start working with the situation as it was?

MULCAHY: They were willing to let bygones be bygones. We had problems, though. The African-American Institute has a grand gathering of African leaders in Africa most years and I've been lucky enough to be at posts where it was being held a few times and had been always invited to attend. I remember Jesse Jackson couldn't come. They withheld his visa, but issued it to allow him to attend a few days of the meeting. Whitney Young drowned there, the leader of the Urban League. I had gotten to know him quite well over the years. I just missed being on the swimming party when he died. He wouldn't have died if I'd been there.

Bill Trueheart wanted me to go along but I said, “Look, you asked me to get this particular report done and get it in this week's pouch to Washington.”

Q: Whitney Young was drowned. He got carried away by a current.

MULCAHY: That's correct, yes. It's moot whether he had a stroke and died of a stroke or whether he died of drowning. That has always been a moot point. In effect, he did drown, he did drown. They were swimming on a beach on an island where we had our American community club, and flags were flying warning of an undertow. I don't know whether there was no one with him who knew that when those green flags were flying, they weren't supposed to be swimming on the beach. If I'd been there, I would have known that and I would have said, “Look, it's illegal to swim on the beach when those green flags are flying.”

Q: In the rebuilding of bridges, you said that they refused Jesse Jackson . . .

MULCAHY: Well, they held him up until our pleas at the American Embassy and at the Nigerian embassy were just overwhelming, so many big named people and the ambassador himself had to go to the foreign minister and plead the case of Jesse

Jackson. I think Bayard Rustin was another one of the leading blacks whose visas were held up. Pro-Biafran sympathies had put their names on a blacklist.

Q: The upshot of this—you left there in August 1972. Had relations come back to normal or were there still some festering wounds?

MULCAHY: I think by the time I left there, the festering wounds had been healed over. That would have been two and a half years roughly after the end of the civil war. You would have to be a professional anti-American to keep turning the knife that long afterwards. A lot of new things had come in . We had started a very generous leader grant program which ran extremely well. We had something like 50. . .a country like Nigeria with a quarter of the black population of Africa. We had a very generous leader grant program.

Q: So we were making a conscious effort to get relations back on an even keel.

MULCAHY: Exactly. We were taking all levels of Nigerian military officers to the States for long-term and short-term training programs. We had American experts being invited into this, that and the other problems as consultants.

The American oil companies had acquitted themselves well during the civil war by shutting down their oil operations. Armand Hammer, the head of Occidental Oil—Gulf was the other big American outfits there—came in one time when I was charg# d'affaires and he announced to me—that he'd just made an historic agreement with Nigerians. That he had taken a 49% interest and given them a 51% interest in a new concession. This was quite a surprise because he kept his cards close to his chest. They would jointly work together which meant almost all his work and the Nigerians would get 5l% of the profits. It was the first time any oil company had broken that 50-50 line.

Unfortunately, to touch again on leader grants, about six months before I left there while John Reinhardt was ambassador, the Nigerians had decided that it was not up to us to pick and choose who would go to the United States under our leader grant programs. We

would tell them how many Nigerians we were going to be able to take in a given fiscal year and they would tell us what Nigerians. . .

Q: This is something we've adamantly refused to do and this comes up in every country and for very sound reasons we've refused to let this happen.

MULCAHY: That's correct. We always said, “We will always submit the list to you after we've chosen the candidates. You can object if you want because they are your citizens. If you have reasons for objecting, we'd appreciate knowing the reasons. But if you just object, we'll just scrap that. It doesn't mean we'll send somebody else—your nominee or anybody else—just let us know if you object to any people we've picked. We will pick them all across the whole spectrum of Nigerian society and as widely distributed as possible—the Ibos, the Yoruba, the Hausa and all the little people in between.” At the time I left it was a complete stalemate and, in effect, we had to close down our leader grant program again.

The Nigerians are good about things like this. They're absolutely straight forward. They have their own ideas. They were such a big monstrous territory during the colonial days that very few of them got cowed by the British colonial experience. The British gave them their heads. In fact, it was there that the British developed the business of leaving the local potentates in place and ruling through them and leaving the local court systems and communal justice systems in place and just changing whatever was heinous to international standards of civilized conduct and leaving everything in place. Property ownership and things of that sort were all just run according to customary law.

I used to have conversations with the chief justice of Nigeria. This was an interest of mine all over Africa about how you melded customary African law with common standards of Western jurisprudence. It was being done quite well in most of Africa, quite well.

We were no longer suffering because of what we did or didn't do during the civil war by the time I left there. It was just a matter of establishing and emphasizing common interests and we convinced the people we talked to [that] we had no subversive aims in Nigeria. We

wished them well and we never preached to them about the kind of government they had. We gave up fighting with them and they got tired of fighting with us, too.

Q: You were appointed as ambassador to Chad in 1972 and you served two years until 1974. How did this appointment come about?

MULCAHY: It came about, on the part of the Department, somewhat apologetically. It was more or less my turn to be an ambassador.

As David Newsom, the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the time, said, “I'm sorry that we don't have a bigger and better country for you to go to at this time.”

But I said, “David, don't apologize. It's an ambassadorship.”

Q: It was still in the era when, if you were an African affairs specialist, if you did well you could hope for almost a series of embassies, something which today is no longer true. There are political appointees and non-specialists come there because it's the only place we have embassies to go around.

MULCAHY: That's right.

Q: We're talking about 1972-1974. What were the principal interests of the United States in Chad?

MULCAHY: We had very little interest there. We had a small AID program which was administered from Cameroon, from next door, because we didn't have enough of an AID program there to warrant full-time AID people. It was being taken care of by specialists who came up from Yaound# up to do a project and then go back or who could handle projects that were in operation with one hand on occasional visits. We built up a better AID program in the course of my time there.

Q: You were there during some rather difficult climatic problems.

MULCAHY: We had the great famines of Africa. They were later hitting Chad. They were much more severe west of Chad from Senegal across to Mali, Upper Volta, as it was called then, and Niger. So Chad really was running almost a year later than the other countries that were being hit by the famine.

As soon as the famine hit, the local authorities at Fort Lamy were quite conscious of the need to act fast. We were in a position to respond quickly.

Q: We'd already had an apparatus in being . . .

MULCAHY: That's right. I had been over with all the ambassadors in West Africa to a conference in Abidjan in March of 1974, about the time the affairs was hitting us. We had a meeting with the then new Assistant Secretary, Donald Easum. It was really in my last year in Chad that the famine became a problem. I had at that time been up to the areas north of Lake Chad and seen these human skeletons flocking into the administrative center of Mao. They had people who walked for days and who had eaten their last cattle and their last kernel of corn. This was because of drought. I had seen that.

Ambassadors were in a position to commit something like a $125,000 immediately and I did. You just notified Washington that you were obligating $125,000 for blankets, foods and medicines. We found we could buy powdered milk in Nigeria. To make immediate impact with American aid while you got people out, like the Air Force people from North Carolina who came out to look at the quality of your runways and how you could run an air drop or whether you could land in some of these God-forsaken places and get sacks of grain unloaded. It took advance study and then you began getting almost immediately representatives of CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Federation, the gamut of the voluntary assistance organizations.

Q: By this time you're really talking about people who really knew what they were about.

MULCAHY: That's right. We never found any statistics on people who actually starved to death. But I'm not sure that anybody starved to death in Chad. I think we'd had enough experience farther over in West Africa for the year before and, thanks to Senator Humphrey, of course, we could operate these relief programs with AID funds with almost no detailed accountability. We didn't have to go through the horrible red tape and feasibility studies. No funds were wasted.

Q: And also the huge staff that comes with handing out the food.

MULCAHY: Exactly.

Q: Let's go back a bit. How did you find the embassy staff when you arrived? You'd been around. Was it a good staff?

MULCAHY: It was a good staff of people in key positions who mostly had previous experience in African affairs. It was a very small staff. I think I had something like 11 State Department people, two from USIA and I had literally more military people on my small staff there than I had civilians. This does not take into account the three dozen Peace Corps Volunteers we had scattered all over Chad. They outnumbered us all.

Q: What were the military doing?

MULCAHY: We had stationed in various parts of Africa five old DC-3s, C-47 aircraft, and I had participated in the decision to use them, back in 1963 or 64.

Q: Transport planes. It goes back to the 1930s, I might add.

MULCAHY: Yes. Well, this one was one of the last ones that came off the assembly line in 1942. I think they stopped making them in 1943. They're still flying—an excellent two-engine aircraft.

We decided that, with the turbulence in Africa, as it developed in the 1960s, with coups and what-have-you and the bad experiences in the Congo, now Zaire, we needed to have aircraft that could evacuate American citizens in a hurry. We also needed planes for medical evacuation of our people in Foreign Service posts. So we'd picked five posts where these C-47s would be kept and where we would establish an air attach# office. So you had a relatively small staff but, when you're talking about the military, you'd have a lieutenant colonel or major as the air attach#. You had to have a captain as an assistant and he had to have a chief warrant officer. Then you had to have an office chief who would be a high-ranking sergeant with maybe a corporal and then you had the plane crew. So you wound up, counting dependents, with something like 16 on the military side.

When they offered me a Marine Security Guard, I said, “I'd love it. As an old Marine, I'd just love to have a Marine detachment.” Well, the minimum detachment you could have was 11 Marines or thereabouts. So I said, “We don't have that big a security problem!”

We eventually got three or four permanent AID people in there on various new programs. We slightly expanded our USIS operations there. Under Fran#ois Tombalbaye, the president, they were very receptive to our help with education there. He went into an “authenticity” chapter toward the end of his life, my second year there, and he used his family name first as the Chinese do and as the Africans do and his given name afterwards. Well, his given name was Ngarta, so he gave up his Fran#ois, a French name which was given to him by the American Baptist missionaries who trained him. He thought that Chadians at this stage should have an option of talking to the rest of the world in English or French. He thought that, since they had a very primitive educational system in the country, it wasn't too late to change. Large numbers of our Peace Corps Volunteers were teaching English.

Q: How did this play out with the French? Was this before or after the French military had been kicked out?

MULCAHY: The French military had been kicked out but were back in by the time I got there. They were expelled again while I was there and they came back in before I left. Each of those French territories signed a treaty at the time of independence with France, mutual defense treaties. France had the right to station troops in any one of the former French territories. They kept a sizable parachute battalion at Sarh which used to be called Fort Archambault in the southern part of the country and an Air Force unit at Fort Lamy, whose name was changed in late 1973 to N'Djam#na.

Q: Was Libya a problem when you were there?

MULCAHY: Libya was already supporting an insurrection up in the Tibesti Massif among the Toubou tribe. They later double-crossed the young leader of the Toubou and supported a patriarchal type. Eventually the young man eventually became president of Chad and kicked out the Libyans. That was going on in the Tibesti Mountains which are 14,000 feet high out in the Sahara, up in the northern part of Chad.

There was also an insurrection going on over in the southeastern part of the country along the border with Sudan where the people had been up in arms and refusing to pay taxes for quite a number of years before I got there and where the Tombalbaye government simply didn't have enough troops or police or muscle to require them to pay taxes. They'd just fade off into the hills when the tax collectors were coming.

Q: Was this of interest to us or were we willing to say, “If there's a problem here, it's a French problem.”

MULCAHY: Tombalbaye called me at least three times in my short tour in Chad, usually in the middle of siesta hour in the afternoon to come over and talk with him. He did that many other times on other subjects, but three times he called me over and would say to me, “Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, ce pay est absoluement ingovernable.” (Mr. Ambassador, this country is absolutely ungovernable).

He would beg me to send American advisors, in effect to take over his government. “Please, this I put to you as the representative of President Nixon. Convey to the President who has my great admiration, the fact that I beg of him to come take this country over. Make it a model of development. Make it an American colony for a while. Make it something that America can be proud of in Africa.” Three times he begged me to do this.

Q: How did you deal with this?

MULCAHY: I sent it home and I said, “It goes without saying that I am not sending this in with a recommendation that it be accepted.”

We quite honestly felt that this was a country in the French sphere. It was the French who left it with only 100 kilometers of paved road, with not one kilometer of railroad in the 60 years that they had governed the country—70 years almost, in parts. The Foreign Legion had administered everything north of Lake Chad until 1936 when they said, “Well, it's pacified enough for you to send civil administrators in now.” That was just three years before World War II broke out. It had been turned over to civil administration and it had been unpacified.

Q: Was the President just using you as sort of a shoulder to cry on from time to time?

MULCAHY: Yes. He liked Americans. I had the good luck to follow Terry Todman as ambassador there. Terry had been my assistant desk officer when I had trusteeship affairs almost 20 years before but had become ambassador long before I did. Terry was a native of the Virgin Islands and born under a colonial regime himself, in a manner of speaking, but a very, very personable, sweet guy with an excellent command of French. He and the president had really become very, very close. I told the president, when I presented my letters of credence, that I hoped I'd become just as good a friend as my old buddy, Terry Todman. He took me up on it. He'd have me over without any protocol on ten minutes notice.

When I'd want a formal talk with him about something, he'd always give it to me and say, “Well, do you want to come with your flags flying at 10:00 tomorrow morning or do you want to come this afternoon without flags flying?”

I'd always go without flags flying and just drive my personal car. He didn't live in the presidential palace. It was really not safe. It was in a bad location downtown. He lived in a camp surrounded by military that had been built as a village for a Pan African Conference, where there was a small villa for each head of state and that sort of thing. He used one villa for his office and another one for his living quarters—he lived very austerely. He was very nice, very congenial and you could talk to him and you could explain matters to him when the “no” would come back from Washington to almost everything he asked for except drought aid—we were very generous on that—that we absolutely couldn't see our way to doing that. We had limited funds . . .

Q: And we had, in effect, drawn up spheres of influence where we would do more than in some other areas, hadn't we? In a way, there was a concentration—some were felt to be—this is a French responsibility and others were British responsibility, Portuguese, so let's—I would like to go on. Is there anything else we should cover, do you think?

MULCAHY: No. I think that's about the most significant things about a country like Chad. I enjoyed my time there. I really wish I could have stayed longer. I'd love to have stayed another year there.

Q: You were called back to be the senior Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs and often acted as the Acting Deputy Secretary for Africa. This is from 1974 to 1976. Who was the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at that period of time?

MULCAHY: When I first got back there, it was Donald Easum who was Assistant Secretary. Don had had a few African posts and he'd had a few Latin American posts. He tended to straddle those two large areas. We'd known each other since my days in

Personnel. He had a minor job in personnel at that time, I think one of his very early jobs in the Foreign Service. I'd known his wife even before I knew him. She had been the ambassador's secretary in Addis Ababa in my days out there. Don came in in March 1974. I arrived on the first of July and took over from him ten days later. He was off on a long trip to Africa so I became Acting Assistant Secretary within ten days of arriving.

He and Kissinger didn't get along. It was a personality conflict. Don was out of the office too much to suit Henry Kissinger, among other things, and I think in Kissinger's view, Don was almost more pro-African than he was pro-American and that he was too narrowly experienced in the third world, words to the effect. Don resigned his job as of the 31st of December and went to Lagos as ambassador. So I had about six months with Don.

Then I was a long time, until April of 1975, acting until Nathaniel Davis came in. Nat had no experience in Africa except one short visit during the time he had as Deputy Director of the Peace Corps under Sargent Shriver. Nat and I were classmates at the Fletcher School among other things, very good friends. Nat stayed on duty only about six months until about Labor Day when he went on extended leave at his own request to consider his course of action. He differed very strongly with the Secretary over our policy of assisting the non-Marxist political movements in Angola. Nat went on leave for at least a month, maybe 5 weeks, in September and October, came back for about a month, and then was appointed ambassador to Switzerland. (He later explained his resignation in a 1978 issue of Foreign Affairs). I was acting again from about the middle of October until January when Bill Schaufele came in as Assistant Secretary. The obvious thing would have been to make me Assistant Secretary at some one of those stages because I, frankly, got along very well with Henry Kissinger.

Q: I wanted to ask you about Henry Kissinger and Africa. Would you talk a bit about it?

MULCAHY: He was very diffident about Africa. He told me his only experience in Africa was giving some lectures in South Africa while he was still at Harvard. On the way back

he had spent a couple of days in Nairobi on his return to Cambridge. So many things were happening in his life at various times that he wasn't able to follow all the developments in Africa.

As an example, one time when the Ethiopian business was falling apart, he asked me about Eritrea. He said, “I see from your record you were at the consulate there.”

I said, “Yes, I opened it back in 1950.”

He said, “Well, let's sit down. You give me some time real soon and tell me about Eritrea and how it became part of Ethiopia and about all the civil war that's been happening down there in recent years.”

I said, “Okay. Do you want a 15-minute briefing, do you want an hour's briefing, or do we have a whole evening?”

He said, “Well, let's try for a half-hour.”

So we set 6:00 the next night. By the time I got in to see him it was 8:00 and I talked to him until 8:30 and educated him to Eritrea. But he was very good about it.

Now I found very early, in July of 1972 after I got to go back to the Department and Don Easum went on a trip to Africa for five or six weeks, I'd have to go to his staff meetings. I'd bring up something about Africa and intend it to inform him about Africa, to tell him about something interesting that happened. Then he'd finish with me and almost as if, “All right, next.” And he'd go around the table.

I said to old friends, Phil Habib and Joe Sisco one time when the three of us were left sitting at the table there and everybody else had gone, “What do you do with this guy? I sit here and I'm supposed to talk about Africa.”

Between the two of them they gave me good advice. They said, “Don't bring up anything just for his information. He has a terrific stable of sharp young officers who put yellow pencils through everything of any importance in any telegram of a political nature that's come in in the past 24 hours. Assume he's read everything about Africa. Don't just re-hash something he might have read or should have read. Use your short time at staff meetings every day for things that are going to require our action or a decision or simply pass. Don't' tax him with anything if you don't have anything that you want a decision on. It's terribly important. If you bring up a matter and you present it correctly, he will react to it or he might want to discuss it with you, like well, 'how do you think it ought to be handled?' You say such and such, and he'd say, 'That sounds good.' Well, you've got your position paper already written and cleared.” You'd send a memo of conversation around based on that exchange along with a policy paper you have to get cleared.

It was terrific advice. So I never wasted his time ever afterwards and, when I'd be driving up Rock Creek Park in my little VW at 8:00 or 9:00 at night, I'd be already thinking about what I was going to bring up tomorrow that's the most worthwhile thing. Kissinger was very good about things like that. He'd give you all kinds of time.

Q: So you didn't find him really indifferent but, obviously, a busy man who didn't feel he was an expert in it. What were the major matters that you had to deal with when you were in African Affairs for that period of time?

MULCAHY: I suppose by all odds the question of the Portuguese territories was the biggest thing that came up and the Horn of Africa, our loss, so to speak of Ethiopia. We could see the young, radical officers—relatively radical by Portuguese terms, probably not Communists—practically turning Mozambique and Angola, to say nothing of Portuguese Guinea and all the other little bits and pieces of the colonial empire, over to the Marxists.

In the case of Angola, we had been supporting for a long time—with very small support —with little retainers—Holden Roberto of the FNLA who had numerically the largest

following. We leaned in favor also of the UNITA leader who is still in the field, Jonas Savimbi of UNITA. The Angolan Marxists (FRELIMO) played almost no role in the struggle for independence. They had been kicked out, exiled, or took themselves into exile from Angola during the Portuguese regime and were not in there in the fighting against the Portuguese. They were located mostly in Congo, Brazzaville. They built up great arsenals there against the day when they could go back to Angola. They were schooled in Moscow and Czechoslovakia and such places. They came back in 1974 after the young officers overthrew the old regime. They tended to be mulattoes. Most of the leaders were mulattoes, spoke good Portuguese and had much better educations than the leaders of the other nationalist movements. They were also the group that the Portuguese settlers knew best. They came from the area of Luanda in central Angola and the hinterland behind there. They were just as the Ibos of Nigeria and the Kikuyus in Kenya were under the British. They were the ones who were advanced to positions of preferment under the colonial regime and who made out best under them. They were ones who got college educations even if they got them in Moscow. If they didn't get them in Moscow, they got them in Switzerland and the United States or some other place.

Anyway, we could see this thing, the horror, the classical Marxist takeover. A minority of them were Marxists representing not more than 20% of the population at the outside of the politically conscious segment of the population.

Kissinger was really annoyed at this. This represented a departure from the division of power in the world and the Soviets were not supposed take over places in Africa. This was contrary to all his beliefs and understandings. We worked from probably April of 1975 until July on a National Security decision, NSSMs we called them in those days, a National Security Council policy paper on Angola particularly. The Marxists had solved the problem in Mozambique long before by assassinating Eduardo Mondlane, who was the American-trained and CIA-supported leader of the Nationalist movement there. They had assassinated him several years before. The Marxists had taken over and Mozambique was a lost cause. But in Angola we thought there was a fighting chance for the non-

Marxists. We were also conscious of what had happened in Vietnam. Nat Davis as Assistant Secretary was terribly conscious of the dangers of CIA hanky-panky from his days in Chile. He strongly disagreed with the position paper that emerged which supported covert assistance to the non-Marxists. Kissinger kept sending it back for updating and revision. We worked weekends. I hardly was home with my family a Saturday or a Sunday from April until late July.

Q: Were you working as technicians on this paper or were you working on saying that this is the policy we want and pushing a policy or trying to come up. Did you know what you wanted to do?

MULCAHY: You know what you did under Kissinger and, God love him, this is the way we will do policy papers forever and a day. He didn't want you, particularly, to propound a policy at all. He wanted you to consider all the options, the six or the ten or the twelve options for action that we had and the pros and cons regarding the feasibility of each of these options. The paper could be as long as you liked, it could be 80-90 pages, but you had to be able to defend the pros and the cons of each option. On this policy paper you had to get your colleagues from Defense to come over and the CIA and AID and all corners in the government, sometimes Treasury would have to send a representative over. Most of us favored covert action against FRELIMO.

You'd work and refine, refine, and meanwhile the situation on the ground was changing all the time. Between the January conference in 1975 in Portugal which produced a plan for the three movements to get together and form a regime that would run Angola until the Portuguese pulled out in November, the situation was constantly changing. But we saw that by July they had forced Savimbi's UNITA and Holden Roberto's FNLA forces out of Luanda and therefore out of the government. But the two were still holding areas representing 80% of the territory of Angola. The Cubans began coming in in the summer sometime in July or August of 1975. This event sparked a decision by President Ford to allow the Central Intelligence Agency to assist Holden Roberto and to offer a small amount

of assistance to Jonas Savimbi whom we didn't know so well but of whom we'd heard good things. We had him down at one time as a Marxist but he apparently was never a very serious Marxist.

Originally we tried to give them enough money to establish newspapers, run a little radio station and rent office space in Luanda. That was about all we hoped to do for them. When the fighting came and the Cubans arrived on the scene and the South Africans came into the picture without telling us about it, as far as I know they didn't tell us about it, at least it never came to my ears and I was Acting Assistant Secretary much of those times. You had a full blown knock-down, drag-out war going on. Roberto appealed to us for a better quality of weapons and we decided we would not give them anything. We would not have any presence—advisors or anything—inside Angola. We gave Roberto's brother-in-law, Joseph Mobutu Sese Seko, weapons that he needed to modernize his arsenal and he gave his old weapons to the Angolans.

Q: On the Angolan thing, was the CIA or the military at that point playing more hawkish than the State Department? Were there any hawks or doves in the particular situation?

MULCAHY: We were all cautious. We all knew the lessons of Vietnam. We knew that neither the Congress nor the public would stand for large, extensive involvement in any sort of military ventures. Therefore, we were determined to stay out of Angola as such. We also recognized—and this was the thing that stuck in Nat Davis' craw—that it would be impossible in the leaking sieve of Washington to keep the matter secret very long. We all recognized that. I certainly recognized that it would be impossible to keep it a secret. I was surprised that we could keep it a secret from about the third week of July when the President saw this as a significant enough danger to United States security to authorize covert aid in advancing the forces of democracy or the non-Marxist forces in Angola.

We finally turned out a paper that pleased Henry Kissinger enough to take to the National Security Council and to sell to President Ford. We had covert action officially authorized

from about the 2lst of July, roughly, until about Labor Day when it began leaking out. Then we were able to deny it for another couple of weeks beyond that. Really by October, the fact that we were helping the non-Marxist movements in Angola had come out. But, of course, the fact that the French were doing it, the British were doing it, various other western nations were assisting the non-Marxist movements never came out. We were the only ones who got our blood scattered all over the landscape because of it.

The thing that hurt us all the way through, of course, was the South Africans. We were in the same boat as the South Africans. That's what really hurt us especially in Africa.

I was sent in November, after the big defeat of Holden Roberto's forces about 25 miles southeast of Luanda where they'd camped all summer. The Cubans were in there with their katushas, the big Russian rockets. If the FNLA had only dug shallow fox holes, they could have escaped. But they were lying on the ground and, while these noisy rockets didn't kill many of them, they scared the bejabbers out of them and sent them running back into Zaire where their bases were anyway. We were sending in equipment and, for each rifle or each machine gun or each pair of boots or bandoleer or crate of ammunition, Mobutu was to transfer an equivalent amount to Holden Roberto and to Jonas Savimbi, minor amounts to Savimbi.

Savimbi, we knew at the time, was being helped by the South Africans, not to any large extent or to the extent that he was later. We didn't help him to a great extent. Nat Davis resigned over our Angolan policy. He wrote his story up in The Foreign Affairs Quarterly, at a relatively early time after that, about 1978, and presented his reasons for resigning the Assistant Secretaryship after only a little over six months.

The whole policy came to grief and I went out to Kinshasa in November, just before Thanksgiving, to meet with as many African heads of state as possible gathered there on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Mobutu's accession to power. I went out also, in response to a request from Idi Amin, with whom we had no relations. We'd

broken relations with him as president of Uganda a year or two before. He was then, however, Chairman of the Organization of African Unity. He asked that we send someone whom Henry Kissinger trusted to Kinshasa where he was going to go to Mobutu's tenth anniversary because he'd like to have a chat with us and see if we couldn't reach some understanding over our bilateral differences and to discuss Angola. So Kissinger asked me at a staff meeting one morning, “Did you see the message from Idi?”

I said, “Yes, just before I went home last night.”

He said, “Well, I didn't see it until this morning. What do you think about it?”

I said, “I think we should accept his invitation.”

He said, “So do I. Who should go?”

I said, “Me.”

He said, “I agree. When?”

“Tomorrow.”

Just like that. Nobody else at the table knew what we were talking about, maybe some of his staff did, some note-takers. Anyway, I went out and I talked to six African heads of state there besides Mobutu. I had three talks with Idi Amin in the course of about six days in Kinshasa. He was a lot easier to deal with than I thought. He was a big giant of a man, very soft spoken, had quite good English, and he saw things in Angola the same way we did and agreed with the principal message I had to deliver which was that we did not want the Marxist movement, which had proclaimed itself the sole government of Angola, admitted to the Organization of African Unity the following January of 1976. Our motive was to stop this. I talked with Houphouet-Boigny President of the Ivory Coast, Leopold Senghor, President of Senegal, and with several other heads of state. We agreed that the Africans ought to prevent the Marxist regime from becoming members of the OAU. That

would keep them out, in effect, for another year of the Organization of African Unity heads of state to meet in January. That was done successfully and, anyway, Kissinger, when I went back said that he thought that I had done a good job and he had read all 35 pages of my reports.

I said, “Thirty-five. I didn't write 35 pages.”

He said to Jerry Bremer, Ambassador Bremer, “Well, when they came out of the machine here it was 35 pages. Isn't that right, Jerry?”

Jerry Bremer says, “That's right, Mr. Secretary.”

He said, “Good. Very good. Very good.”

Then he got around to saying, “Well, now I shall tell you your reward, I am going to tell you what I am going to do. Tomorrow I am going to the White House before I go to China. I am going to tell the President that I want you to be the ambassador to Tunisia.”

I said, “Oh. I'm overwhelmed. You know I've already been stationed in Tunisia.”

He said, “Yes, I know.”

I said, “As a matter of fact, I was looking at the CIA unclassified printout of who's who in what Cabinet in the world. I looked at it just the other day. I still know 15 of the 18 Cabinet ministers, including the Prime Minister, in Tunisia. They're all personal friends of mine.”

He said, “Do you see. I am never wrong.”

Q: So you went to Tunisia again as ambassador from 1976 to 1979. Could you describe the situation in that period in Tunisia and maybe a little about the president of the country, Bourguiba?

MULCAHY: Yes. Even in my first tour, President Bourguiba was losing his grip on the situation. I was surprised when I went back there that he hadn't deteriorated really more than he had health-wise. As of the time I left there in 1970, he was spending only two or three hours a day at his work. He was really getting too feeble and his attention wandering, to stick more than two or three hours a day. He made lots of public appearances in those days. But when I came back, he made very few public appearances. The photos you saw of him were still photos. They were protecting him as he was growing more and more feeble and senile. He would be quite lucid for a couple of hours in the morning.

The country was being run well, always by the same crowd who were a young crowd. I used to tell people during my first tour there that the average age of the cabinet then was young, it was like 40 years old. Of course, by the time I got back there they were ten years older. They tended to be the same ones. They were getting more impatient and intolerant of opposition which began to rear its ugly head more all the time.

The labor unions were troublesome despite the fact that a leader of the General Confederation of Tunisian Workers was one of the oldest of Bourguiba's comrades-in-arms in the days of the struggle against the French and had gone to jail with him and all that sort of thing. They had a general strike during my second tour there. That was the saddest thing in their history to that point, since Tunisians fired upon Tunisians for the first time in their history. There were a couple of dozen people killed in rioting and looting that went on with this general strike. The labor leaders claimed that it was police bullyboys who did the looting and the smashing of windows and that their people were strictly forbidden to do that sort of thing.

The government claimed with a certain amount of persuasion and proof that the labor leaders were taking money from Qadhafi. Qadhafi hated Bourguiba because, in the interim while I was away, Qadhafi had offered and Bourguiba had accepted the concept of amalgamating the two countries. There would be autonomy in each region but there would be one central government. Bourguiba was to be the head of the government. Then

Bourguiba was persuaded by his son and his Cabinet to renege and to back down from that. Qadhafi has never really forgiven him.

Q: You look around at that particular part of the world—Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, the UAR, Syria, Yemen—and they have all gone into these unions and have gone out again with no desirable effect. At least there was a period where they were doing this.

MULCAHY: Well, the Tunisian constitution says that it is the supreme purpose of the people to unite themselves with the other peoples of the Maghreb. This is a national cause—that one day Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya should all become one happy nation. There are counterpart clauses in the constitutions of most of the others—I don't know that Libya has a constitution anymore, but has whatever is in Qadhafi's green book. But he's a madman.

Q: Did you consider him a madman at that time?

MULCAHY: I met him in Chad. He came on a five-day state visit while I was there. Because he spoke English and most of the other chiefs of mission didn't, I found myself talking to him over five days at least three times. I had short little conversations amounting up maybe to 15 to 20 minutes. We were having our troubles with him. We still had a post there but he just didn't believe that the United States understood him. He really hoped that we would. He said I understood north Africa and had visited Tripoli a couple of times. He spoke good enough English—better than he comes across on television, really. I duly reported everything he told me but I just said, “Well, we certainly have come to a sad situation, haven't we, Mr. President? We must continue the dialogue and I certainly will inform my government the way you feel.”

Q: When you were ambassador in Tunisia, was Qadhafi trying to take over or put his own people in?

MULCAHY: Once every summer he would rattle his sabers and we would react. We and the French, the Italians, and whoever else in NATO had a ship in the Mediterranean would all send them in to Tunisia for a visit. We'd sidetrack them from any other place, make them leave the Riviera, and sail overnight across the Mediterranean and come to Tunisia. Then we'd have fly- pasts—usually the president was down at Monastir, at his summer palace half-way down the country. Ships from the nearest U. S. carrier would go over and stream red, white and blue smoke and the French would send a squadron of mirages down. We'd announce some new military assistance that was already agreed upon and I'd issue a press release. We had all kinds of things we'd do just to show solidarity. Qadhafi would kick out the Tunisians, such as the Tunisian schoolteachers and the waiters in the hotels. His people were unable to replace, such skilled people.

Q: Qadhafi would kick out the Tunisians who were working in Libya.

MULCAHY: That's right. Then a few months later they'd allow them to go back in again. He tried while I was away the business of starting an uprising in Gafsa, down on the edge of the Sahara in central west Tripoli. He got groups of dissident Tunisians who came across and started blowing up the rail line. They were going to establish a rebel government inside the country in the mining town of Gafsa not far from the Algerian border.

They could cross this great salt pan, the Chott Jerid, at certain seasons of the year and come up there. Nobody would even see them. Nobody was out patrolling that wasteland and they could walk across or come across in four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Currently there seems to be a little better understanding. Qadhafi hasn't engaged in so many ventures.

I said to Prime Minister Nouira one time during the general strike, “I'm sorry to see that Qadhafi's meddling again in your internal affairs.”

He gave me pretty good proof that Qadhafi's money had gone to a lot of the labor leaders and to one of the newspapers.

I said, “One of the things is that, if you reflect back over what's happened since 1969 when he came to power, no foreign venture that he's ever attempted has ever been successful. Every one has failed.”

He said, “I never thought of it that way. Perhaps we live too close to him. Thank you for that happy thought.”

I said, “He fails every time he goes abroad. In Chad he's failing.” He didn't for a while, but he ultimately did.

They drove him out of Chad with the exception of the Aozou strip that he's occupied since I was there. We knew that when it happened, like the next day.

Tunisia's done well for itself on the whole. At the moment, they're spending an awful lot of money on weapons, mostly with us. They're completely over on American weaponry in the country. Their terms aren't as soft as they used to be. They have oil. They export 2/3 of their oil, not much, but it became their biggest money-maker until the price of oil went down a couple of years ago. Tourism, which was at one time the biggest money-earner, has fallen off to second place and has fallen steadily because, among other things, the PLO, at our request, are now hosted by the Tunisians.

Q: When you were there, did our policy vis # vis Israel and the PLO play much of a role or was this important?

MULCAHY: To this extent, I would often be sent in to try to persuade the Tunisians to come out and applaud the Camp David Accords which took place while I was there. I dutifully did all that, but no Arab country. . .

Q: It was just that you did your duty?

MULCAHY: That's right. They said to me exactly what I could have predicted they would say, “yes.”

Q: Is there anything else we should talk about concerning that?

MULCAHY: I don't know. I think that's pretty much the way we go. I stay in touch with the Tunisians, needless to say, through the embassy here and have correspondents there. I get filled in on things that are going on. I regretted to see the end of the Bourguiba era, but I think the Tunisians did it extremely well. They do most things well.

Q: They essentially just had a very quiet—coup isn't even really the right term—but a displacement.

MULCAHY: That's right. They had a half-dozen doctors talk to the president for an hour or so and had him go out into an anteroom while they concluded that the man was no longer capable of exercising his office. Young General Ben Ali became the president. He's been a civilian, actually, for a long time. When I knew him last he was deputy minister for internal affairs. They've got a new era now. They've managed their patrimony very well considering the fact that they got left out on a lot of natural resources. They have the best population control programs in the Arab or the African world. They have about the smallest growth rate in population of any African or Arab state. They have a magnificent university with about 30,000 in various branches, of whom something like one-third are women.

Q: Was fundamentalism a problem when you were there?

MULCAHY: Never at all. You were beginning to see, when I left there, women wearing these tight veils. They wouldn't cover up entirely, but they'd wear longish dresses and they'd have a veil, like a snood, that went around their faces. Prime Minister Nouira called them, “Les Saintes Moniques.” They looked like St. Monica in the Christian paintings

and mosaics found in Tunisia. The young males would be hard to identify because a lot of the Tunisians, however Westernized, wear the jebba, the very Tunisian robe and the little low-crowned sheshia, a soft red hat with a black tassel. It's very cool. They wear the big white pantaloons underneath the jebba. They wear a burnoose in the winter time as an overcoat. I wore a burnoose for an overcoat out there, too. When Kathie and I would go out to a dinner party or something, I'd put the burnoose on me as I ran to the door —winters got cold there—and you'd just slip it off your shoulders. I started a fad in the diplomatic community.

Q: You left there in 1979. That was a normal tour. . .

MULCAHY: I was really was there only about two and a half years, not long enough, and I really would liked to have stayed longer. I went to Atlanta University as diplomat-in-residence or, as they called me down there, ambassador-in-residence.

Q: Just one brief question on that before we close. Did you find much interest or knowledge of Africa at Atlanta University in Africa?

MULCAHY: Yes to both parts of that question. Very great interest in Africa and good collections of Africana in their library. They had a central library for them. You see, Atlanta University is purely a graduate school. It offers only masters and doctorates and it's located in physical proximity to Morehouse, Spelman, Clark College, the Inter-denominational Theological Seminary and Morris Brown College. There are five undergraduate institutions, run like a European university. You get your masters and doctorates from the university and you get your bachelors from the various colleges.

Q: This is basically a black institution?

MULCAHY: Yes, predominantly black.

Q: It goes back to Reconstruction time.

MULCAHY: To 1865, in the case of Atlanta University which, at one time, was a four-year college. But they took a page from the Claremont Colleges in California and combined in 1926, I think it was, and then Atlanta University stopped having undergraduate classes and concentrated on being a graduate school.

My job there was a little different from other diplomats-in-residence in that I didn't have a regular lecture load to carry. I was sent there as a compromise by Cyrus Vance. I was on a list of people sent to President Cleveland Denard of Atlanta University who wanted a team from the State Department to construct the graduate program in international affairs, something like a Fletcher School or a Foreign Service school at graduate level. Vance had to tell Denard that there was no way the State Department could do that sort of thing. It would be precedent-setting, all the rest of it. But it could send him a good senior officer with a lot of experience in African Affairs or third world affairs which they wanted. He sent a list of five. I had known Cleveland Denard, not well but in depth over a period of several days in Lagos when he was on an AID educational advisory group going out to several African countries. Our biographies went along with it and he picked me out of the five. So I spent most of my time working, in effect, as secretary to a committee of deans and department heads, not only from Atlanta University but from the other colleges, except the theological school. the idea was to create a new graduate school of international affairs.

They wanted me to be chairman of it, but I figured that we should be laying the groundwork for a new institution and that I'd rather be the secretary of the group and be the one who would keep the work of planning going. I had my own ideas and I was going to give this panel my professional input. So we did that and it worked out fine.

We designed a new set-up that would gradually, over a period of four years, get up to where it was going to cost $9 million. This included the construction of a new building to house the Institute of International Relations, which is what they called it.

Dr. Denard wanted to call it the North-South Institute. The whole north-south thing captivated him and I think I persuaded him that that was too narrow of an issue. This would not be a lasting issue. In fact, it was one that was not going to fly. North-south relations were very important and the concept was important and it should definitely be included—the dealings of the former colonial white world up here with the impoverished third world.

We put together an elaborate plan but it became clear, even under the Carter Administration in its latter days, that federal grants were going to fall, fall, fall. They were not going to be generous any longer. President Denard did me the honor of allowing me to sit in with the board of trustees at their meetings every quarter. I knew how that whole poor institution was run. Unless I was in visiting the president, I never sat on an upholstered chair. It was such a poor, poor institution. I visited it while I was in the Senior Seminar in 1966, that and Morehouse College, so that I was familiar, generally, with the layout there and I knew Denard.

I had good cooperation. I had no cooperation, however, from some of the political science people on the staff of Atlanta University because they read a book called In Search of Enemies by John Stockwell, a CIA defector, who told about the secret meetings we used to have on Wednesday afternoons to run our Angolan covert operations that I used to represent the State Department at. They had read that and, of course, figured that I was with the CIA—naively.

Q: They didn't understand that territory.

MULCAHY: Yes. But I didn't discover that until really quite late, that I wasn't being utilized as a lecturer or a resource person in their seminars as I expected I would be. It finally came out, anyway, toward the end. Everything did work out nicely in the end when I had a chance to explain my own involvement. But to them I was a Kissinger man and I was backing the wrong people. The FRELIMO Angolans were honest patriots and were right.

Those brothers down there had seized power and they weren't really Marxists. Like heck they weren't! It was a very rewarding year.

I stayed on an extra month. I decided to go with Project HOPE and take early retirement. I retired 16 months or so before reaching the then mandatory age of 60. I went with Project HOPE as vice president after that. I stayed on at Atlanta University for three semesters. In my last few weeks I drew up personally without clearing it with anybody a plan for establishing this school on the cheap, utilizing existing buildings particularly two faculty residences that had been allowed to deteriorate but which could have been refurbished for peanuts. Also, I recommended taking specific courses that were already being taught in the various institutions and upgrading them to graduate level. They were being taught by Ph.D's who had done their own graduate studies in the subjects they were professing. I took 100 subjects, 100 courses, being taught at those six institutions that could be taught at graduate level, at a school of international affairs, international cultural affairs, international social affairs, international political, economic affairs, etc. It would take in all the faculty of all the existing schools in the Atlanta University plus some outstanding black professors in Morehouse and Spelman and the other colleges there which were first-rate under-graduate schools by anybody's standards. I gave Denard this plan that he could do on the cheap and even in its fourth year of operation it would not cost more than $l million a year. They proceeded, not even as fast, though, as in my fallback plan. In fact, my correspondents down there have retired in recent years. I don't have anybody to tell me what's going on. Denard has left. I don't know where he's gone to but he's no longer there. They were about to file for bankruptcy and got rescued. I heard this on the radio and I've never seen an item in the paper about it. I don't know what the story is.

Q: To close, there are two questions we ask all the people we interview. Looking back, what gave you the greatest personal satisfaction in your career?

MULCAHY: I suppose it came in the field of AID. As a Foreign Service officer, as a member of a country team, as an ambassador, you had an influence on the way our AID

programs, development programs, were operated in the country you were in. You were in a position to influence the direction they took. You could help cut out bad programs. By the time you got to be a DCM or an ambassador you had real influence on the shape of our AID programs. You saw things done. It was the AID technicians who could really stand up and take a bow but you were in a position to back and to push and to foster programs.

Q: And you were dealing in an area where this was a major effort on the part of the United States.

MULCAHY: That's right. Such as the beginnings of our AID program in Eritrea before I left there. I said, “The very first thing we're going to do is start well drilling, water wells.” Something more than these surface wells. Get down to artesian depths and give people clean water for the first time in their lives and cover them over. I got jaundice one time from drinking from a well at the same time which the animals were using it. Animals and people using the same wells. It was rewarding to read in some publication ten years later the fact that in the first ten years of the AID program in Eritrea l,000 wells had been drilled. The first money we would spend on well-drilling equipment and technicians to teach the Eritreans to do it and ten years later to find l,000 wells had been drilled.

When I came into the office one morning in the early 1960s, there was a message from Assistant Secretary (G. Mennen) Soapy Williams to come up as soon as I got in the office. I did. I busted into his office and I said, “Well, Governor, what's up?”

He said, “Where were you last night when you should have been at the reception for Haile Selassie?”

I said, “Well, I'm sorry to have missed it, but the Chief Justice of Southern Rhodesia was coming. . .

Q: You were saying Governor Williams had called you in and asked you why you weren't at a reception given by Haile Selassie.

MULCAHY: A reception given by Haile Selassie, which I had accepted an invitation to at the Mayflower Hotel. He was here on a state visit. I had planned to be there at least for the last half of the reception but I had to be at the airport to greet the chief justice of Southern Rhodesia who happened to be an old friend of mine anyway. His plane was an hour late and, by the time I got him installed at his hotel, it was really too late for me. I wouldn't have been able to get downtown to the Mayflower and to the reception. So I told the Governor this and he said, “Well, the vice minister for foreign affairs was running all over the place looking for you because he saw your name on the guest list. He claimed he owes everything to you.”

I said, “Now, what's his name?” And he gave it to me. He's an Eritrean man and he was among the first three scholarships I was able to offer in Asmara. There was one to the United States or three to American University at Beirut and I chose three to the American University of Beirut, less cultural shock, a shorter distance from home, English was available. They all spoke English. And this was the son of a nobleman in Eritrea and his clan. He parlayed an AUB bachelor's degree into a Harvard law degree and a career in diplomacy and was number two the foreign ministry a dozen years later.

Q: My final question is this. A young person comes to you today and says, “Should I join the Foreign Service?” How would you reply?

MULCAHY: I would say unhesitatingly, “Yes, go ahead. Inform yourself thoroughly of the nature of the career. You're not always overseas. You spend these days increasing amounts of time in the Washington bureaucracy which you might not have bargained for, as I didn't. You have to learn a new feature of Foreign Service life because the percentage of officers in pre-World War II, when I first began examining the Service who came back to Washington was minuscule. Today it's part of the life and it should be. It's excellent. I spent almost one-third of my career in Washington or in the States. It's as it should be.

“Examine fully the ups and the downs and the pros and the cons. Realize that the Service you will enter will not be the Service you will leave at the end of 30, 35 or 40 years. It will be constantly changing as the country changes, as the world changes. In my case, the conditions of service at the end of my career were far, far better than the ones I faced at Mombasa where I had no running water or inside plumbing in my “residence.” You will find it a stimulating career. You will never be bored. If you receive assignments that you don't like, cheer up. They won't last very long. If you get put under chiefs whose style grates on you, your nature or your preferences, cheer up. Next year, perhaps, you'll have a new chief. You'll go or he'll go. It's a very, very good career. There were many, many satisfactions. Have a good try at it. You can always quit.”

Q: Well, I thank you very much, Ambassador Mulcahy.

End of interview