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

CHARLES E. RUSHING

Interviewed by: Thomas Dunnigan
Initial interview date: July 2, 1996

TABLE OF CONTENTS

U.S. officials jailed
Anti-U.S. harassment
AID mission
Communist Bloc embassies

State Department - African Affairs - Desk Officer 1965-1968
Hutus massacred
Chinese defector
Ambassador Dean Brown
Burundian ambassador expelled

State Department - Personnel - Junior Officers 1968-1969
War colleges and training
Scott McLeod
Career planning

Laos, Vientiane - Political Counselor 1969-1971
Ambassador Godley
Staffing
Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma
Souphanouvong
Laos bombing results
Ho Chi Minh death
CIA
Chinese
Vietnam War
Congressional visits
U.S. move into Cambodia
Laos bombing targets

Monrovia, Liberia - Economic/Commercial Officer 1971-1973
Tubman death
USAID
Peace Corps
President Tolbert
Sergeant Doe
Anarchy
Americo-Liberians

NATO Defense College - Rome 1973-1974

Copenhagen, Denmark - Political Counselor 1974-1978
Denmark and NATO
Leftists
NATO fighter plane competition
F-16s

INTERVIEW

Q: I am interviewing Charles E. Rushing, who had a lengthy career in the Foreign Service, including service in a number of what we would call "hot spots" around the world. The date is July 2, 1996, and I am Thomas Dunnigan. To begin with, Charlie, tell me something about your background and how you became interested in the Foreign Service.

RUSHING: I went to college at a small Lutheran-affiliated liberal arts school called Augustana in Rock Island, Illinois. I graduated in '51, went on to law school at Duke and graduated in 1954. After passing the Bar exam in the District of Columbia, I was drafted into the Army.

I became interested in the Foreign Service when I was in college, but, at that time, one had to pass the foreign language exam at the same time that you passed the rest. I knew that I couldn't pass the language exam.

When I was in law school, the regulations were changed. If one passed all parts of the exam except the language, one could join the Service and stay without promotion until you passed the language part within a limited time. In 1952, I passed all of the exam except the language part. At that time--that was the McCarthy era--practically no one was brought into the Foreign Service from '52 to '54. Had that not occurred, I would not have finished law school. I would have gone from the first year of law school into the Foreign Service. But, since practically no one was appointed, I was able to finish law school.

Q: When you came into the Service, which was, I gather, in 1954, were you given a session at the Foreign Service training school at the time?

RUSHING: No. I was drafted in 1954. I finally came into the Foreign Service in March of 1956.

Q: After your military service?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: When you came into the Foreign Service, did you receive any training?

RUSHING: Yes, like everyone, I went through the A-100 course, which was the basic entry-level course at FSI [Foreign Service Institute]. FSI at that time was in a brick building at C and 21st Street, next to what had been the War Department and would become "New State." Our particular class, for some reason, was split. Those of us who stayed in the Department for our first assignment took half of the A-100 course when we first came in and then, before going abroad, took the other half. I was one of those who stayed.

Q: Did you have a particular reason for requesting a departmental assignment for your first one?

RUSHING: Oh, I didn't want it.

Q: Oh, you did not want it?

RUSHING: I did not want it. In those days, everyone wanted to go into the Foreign Service to serve abroad.

Q: And where were you assigned on that first tour?

RUSHING: I was assigned to the Public Correspondence Branch, which had just been Wristonized. Curiously, it appeared that the Department didn't know how to best utilize someone with my background. The Army had had the same problem.

Q: That would be in the Bureau of Public Affairs.

RUSHING: The Bureau of Public Affairs. I worked in the Public Correspondence Branch for my first two years in the Foreign Service.

Q: Drafting letters of response to inquiring citizens?

RUSHING: Exactly.

Q: Were there any issues or problems that were major that you could recall from those days that excited the public or were there a variety of issues?

RUSHING: There was a lot of expression of anti-Communism. Many wrote that the Department was penetrated by Communist agents. There was a lot of mail in opposition to foreign aid. Those were the two things that, offhand, I can remember.

Q: Were there many Foreign Service officers in the Bureau of Public Affairs?

RUSHING: No. I can only remember, say, six in the entire Bureau who were either new slots or replacements to civil servants.

Q: Mostly, there were civil servants. Presumably, your superior was a civil servant?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: Did you have any work with USIA [United States Information Agency]? They weren't independent at that time already.

RUSHING: No, I didn't. I had a couple of stints as staff aide to State's Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. One thing I remember is that on a week-end I couldn't get his safe open. I had the combinations, but no one had ever told me how to manipulate the lock. You know, you have to skip a number, and then go back and skip a number, etc. So, on a

Sunday afternoon, alone in the office, I was not getting anywhere

Q: An exercise in frustration. Did you do any speeches or do any public appearances of your own?

RUSHING: Not that I remember, but I did so later, particularly a long recruiting trip I made in the ‘60s in the South and Southwest.

Q: After two years in the Department, in 1958 you were transferred overseas to your first post, to Naples. Did you get Italian language training before you went?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: You were two years in Naples. What did you do there?

RUSHING: I first started out as the officer who put together the extensive documentation required for immigrant visas. The consulate general was large in terms of numbers, at that time. There must have been 18 Foreign Service officers. Then, I was made the chief of the Protection and Welfare and Shipping and Seamen Section. One even more junior officer than I was in the office. I think we also had four nationals.

Q: That would have been a busy office, I assume, with all the American interests in Southern Italy. Did you get an opportunity to do any substantive reporting work while you were in Naples?

RUSHING: If I did, I don't remember. The job itself demanded a lot of after-hours work and was perhaps the busiest in the consulate.

Q: Were the Communists strong in that district?

RUSHING: No. Southern Italy was relatively conservative. But throughout Italy there was a large Communist presence. It was the second largest party in Italy. But the Christian Democrats were the ones who counted the most.

Q: Did the ambassador from Rome visit the consulate or did you have a chance to get up to see the embassy in action?

RUSHING: I went to Rome quite frequently. I had both friends and business there. But I don't remember that the ambassador ever came to Naples during my time there.

Q: You were there for what was a rather crucial election in 1958 or...

RUSHING: It was in 1948, wasn't it?

Q: Well, there was another one in '58 where the Christian Democrats increased their majority.

RUSHING: I don't remember.

Q: Was there much anti-American sentiment in the district that you came across?

RUSHING: No, on the contrary. I think there was a general pro-American attitude. Americans were liked. There was a relatively large group of Italo-Americans, that is, people who had gone to the States, made a bit of money, and then they went back to Italy. As you know, by far the largest element in emigration from Italy to the United States was from Southern Italy and Sicily. People in the North were better-off and, as was almost always the case, those who are better-off don't leave.

Q: How about neo-fascism? Was that evident at all? It was only ten or twelve years after the destruction of fascism.

RUSHING: Yes, it was. The neo-fascist party, the MSI [Movimento Socialista Italiana], was quite strong, particularly in the South. I'm trying to think of who ran the municipal government in Naples at that time. I can't remember. I think it was the Christian Democrats. But, as in the case of politics in Italy, almost all governments, including local governments, were coalition governments. So, there might well have been MSI people on the city council.

Q: Anything else stand out in your mind from that tour in Naples? It must have increased your competence in Italian.

RUSHING: Yes, it did. One of the things that I concerned myself with a good deal of the time was visiting American seamen who were in jail for one reason or another.
Also at the time, an American woman, a longtime resident of Capri, died there. Her daughter in the U.S. did not want to have anything to do with executing her estate, administrating her estate, or anything. I went through her effects, taking inventory and eventually arranging for shipment of her effects to her daughter in the States, who never came to Italy. We had a great deal of correspondence including designing a headstone and her burial in Italy. That went on intermittently, month after month, and involved several trips to Capri and stays there.

Q: Yes, well, it's presumably better that you had to go to Capri for it than the Siberia. In 1960, after two years in Naples, you were transferred to East Africa, to Asmara. Why did this happen? Had you asked for a transfer? Was your time up?

RUSHING: My time was up. Naples was a two-year tour. I thought that Africa was interesting and perhaps would enhance promotion.

Q: In 1960 it looked that way.

RUSHING: I was first assigned to Benghazi, I think. Did we have a consulate in Benghazi?

Q: We had an embassy in Tripoli and, for a while, we had a consular office in Benghazi.

RUSHING: I think I was assigned to Benghazi first.

Q: Of course, either one of these assignments, with your Italian, would have made sense.

RUSHING: Yes. But Benghazi washed out for some reason that I don't remember. Then, I was reassigned to Asmara.

Q: Why did we have a post in Asmara?

RUSHING: For a couple of reasons. Asmara was the capital of Eritrea, which was at that time, ruled by Ethiopia. The Italians bought Eritrea from the Ethiopians at the end of the last century. Then, Mussolini used Eritrea as a jumping-off place in his invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. It was also one of the first pieces of Axis territory to be liberated. The Brits entered Asmara from Sudan in '41 or '42. Then, it was under UN trusteeship. Eventually, the Ethiopians, through the United Nations, assumed sovereignty and it was treated as a province. The U.S. military had a large communications base there called Kagnew Station. One interesting thing was that practically all of the message traffic during the Korean War, went from Washington to Asmara and then from Asmara to Korea. Eritrea was a very good place to have for this purpose. The installation and the city were high, at 8,000 feet, and not too far from the equator, where propagation was particularly favorable.

Q: Tell me a little bit about Asmara as a city. Had it been destroyed or not?

RUSHING: No. A beautiful city. It looked like something out of the movies. It had sidewalk cafes and a beautiful cathedral, excellent restaurants, there was a golf course, there were outdoor swimming pools. But it got so cold at night that the pool at the consulate would only get up to about 65 during the day and that was cold.

The consulate itself was in a compound. The office building, the principal officer's house, my house as the deputy principal officer, and the consular officer's house were all together. The compound included stables, swimming pool, and a tennis court. I've undoubtedly romanticized this, forgetting the high altitude fatigue (8,000 feet), the relative isolation, difficulty of having meaningful exchanges with local officials, etc.

Q: Yes, I presume that that made living more pleasant. What did you do? What was your job?

RUSHING: I was the deputy principal officer, although I'm not sure that that description existed in those days. I was number two, and there was also a consular/administrative officer, a CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] guy and his secretary, a USIA, and an AID [Agency for International Development] officer. There was also a State secretary.

Q: You covered most fronts that way.

RUSHING: My activities and reporting that I did tended to be on economic and commercial matters.

Q: And then the principal officer did most of the political reporting?

RUSHING: That's right.

Q: What was your relationship with the embassy in Addis Ababa? Did they supervise you or did you report directly to Washington?

RUSHING: As I recall, we reported directly to Washington with info to Addis. Because of the sensitivities of our position, we had to deal with Kagnew and the Ethiopians on a daily basis. At the time, Ed Streator was sort of my counterpart in Addis. I happened to be there when he got news of his next assignment. The communicator came in and said, "Mr. Streator, your next assignment is Rome!" Ed replied, "Gee, that's interesting. I had asked for another African assignment." The communicator said, "Well, it's a garble. They spelled it L-O-M-E." Of course, Ed was being assigned to Lome!

Q: During this period, there was an uprising against the Emperor although it was beaten back. Did that have any effect in Eritrea?

RUSHING: I'm not sure. I think, in the time I was there (only from January through September of 1960), there were two attempted coups. One of them held up my/our departure from Frankfurt via Ethiopian Airlines to Asmara. I remember a second one, but I don't remember whether that occurred after I had left, or while I was there.

Q: After these months in Asmara, you were suddenly transferred to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. Tell me about that. How did that come about?

RUSHING: I met and married an Italian young woman who had been born in Asmara, as had her parents. Her grandparents were among those who came to Eritrea in the early 1900s from Sicily and Puglia. She was working for Aden Airways, which folded a long time ago. It was a part of the overseas operation of BOAC [British Overseas Airways Corporation].

She and I met at the airport when I was meeting the courier. I was duty officer which meant I had to be available 24 hours a day each week-end, every third week. One of the great things about Asmara was that you could hear the airplanes coming in to land from anywhere in town and you could beat them to the airport. So, it was never a question of having to call up and say, "Is it on time?" I was playing tennis and I heard the airplane, so I got into the car in grimy, smelly tennis clothes and drove out to the airport to meet the courier. Asmara was a big courier station. From Asmara, couriers would go to Aden and Khartoum before stopping at Addis and farther south and ending up in South Africa. Besides the courier, there was this lovely woman there.

Q: Who is now Mrs. Rushing and she is indeed lovely.

RUSHING: In those days, as you remember, if you married someone from the country to which you were assigned, you were transferred almost immediately. Of course, also in those days, you had to submit a request to marry a foreign national to the Secretary of State together with your letter of resignation. One or the other would be accepted.

Q: Happily, it all turned out well.

RUSHING: Yes, it did. So, therefore, after marrying, we were transferred to Southern Rhodesia, which was quite a change, although still Africa. Another beautiful city. Five thousand feet high, jacaranda trees, sophisticated infrastructure.

Q: Who was the consul general there at the time?

RUSHING: John Emmerson. Delightful and effective. An FSO Japanese expert who was one of the four "Johns" crucified during the McCarthy era. He had been our consul general in Lagos before Salisbury. He was succeeded by a political appointee named Goren, whose first name I've forgotten. He had been the chancellor or vice chancellor of Baylor University and then deputy director of the Peace Corps. After Salisbury, he was assigned to Libya, and I believe was killed there in an automobile accident.

Q: At that time, Southern Rhodesia was still a colony, I believe, but there was a thrust for independence.

RUSHING: Southern Rhodesia at the time was a Crown Colony, and one of the three elements of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the other two Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In the 1950s, the Federation had the highest growth rate in the world for a few years. But the winds of change were blowing. Southern Rhodesia held out longer than Nyasaland, which became Malawi, or Northern Rhodesia. The Prime Minister of the Federation at the time was Roy Walensky. He had been a railroad man. There was a story in connection with that. One of the leading Southern Rhodesian nationalists, was driving from Salisbury to the second largest city in Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo, and lost in a race with a train at a railroad crossing and was killed. The story that circulated among the Africans was that the engine driver was Walensky.

Q: That did little to help matters, I'm sure. Was there segregation at the time in Southern Rhodesia?

RUSHING: Yes. The "best" hotel in Salisbury at the time did not admit black Africans. But the consulate general used a hotel by the name of The Jamison, which was also a first-class hotel, very nice, and it did admit blacks.

Q: So, when black Americans came through, they could stay there?

RUSHING: Right.

Q: Was there much violence at the time? Was the embassy at all concerned?

RUSHING: No, there really wasn't.

Q: So you and the other Americans there were not in danger?

RUSHING: No.

Q: What were the links between the rights of Southern Rhodesia and those of South Africa? Were they strong?

RUSHING: Yes, They were relatively strong. Of course, the whites in South Africa had been there since the 17th Century, when the original Dutch settlers came there. The Southern Rhodesian whites liked to think of themselves as more liberal and more open-minded, more accommodating to African aspirations, and I think that was generally true.

Q: You mentioned the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Was our consulate general in Salisbury accredited to the Federation or to the Southern Rhodesian government? How did that work?

RUSHING: Accreditation came from the Queen as did my exequatur as consul. It was a complicated constitutional arrangement. Southern Rhodesia was a Crown Colony but also a component of the Federation which also included Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland which were British Protectorates, I think. The capital of the Federation was Salisbury which also was the capital of the Crown Colony of Southern Rhodesia.

Q: Did we see the Federation as a viable instrument or did we think it was just contrived?

RUSHING: I think we were ambivalent about this. I remember when Governor [Soapy] Williams, as State's Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, came through with Sam Lewis, who was his aide. Governor Williams was something of a romantic. He believed that the Africans, if given full power, would be able to achieve a great deal by themselves. This did not prove the case in most instances. The African regimes were often wrecked by tribalism and corruption. So, on the one hand, I know the U.S. espoused freedom and self-government for the Africans, who mostly opposed the Federation. On the other hand, I think there was also a feeling that may not have been articulated, that there was hope for the Federation and it made sense for the three territories to be together, and that it would be stronger and perhaps would be ultimately of greater benefit to the Africans.

Q: What destroyed the Federation? Was it the black-white problem?

RUSHING: The black-white problem. The political and economic power was in the

hands of the whites who were unwilling to share enough of it, fast enough, with the blacks.

Q: Southern Rhodesia being white and the other two had a stronger black influence.

RUSHING: But still in Southern Rhodesia, whites were maybe only a quarter of the population or even less. Maybe there were 500,000 whites in Southern Rhodesia at the time. I don't remember what the total population was, perhaps seven or eight million. With the later advent of a black government, the white population dropped to maybe 250,000.

Q: But they were the controlling level.

RUSHING: Oh, yes, indeed. The most insistent African nationalists were under Banda in what became Malawi. They were pushing harder, I think, than anyone else. It's curious that when Banda did come to power, he turned out to be the most conservative of the three leaders. It was the only black country in Africa that recognized the white government in South Africa and Malawi had an embassy down there.

Q: You mentioned Governor Williams' visit. Did you get many American visitors?

RUSHING: A fair amount, yes. One year we hosted a visit by the National War College. There were also various Congressmen and American businessmen, many of whom were in the tobacco business.

Q: And were black organizations in the States concerned about conditions there or was that ever evident?

RUSHING: I'm sure they were, but I don't remember that. It was not manifested much at the time. We, of course, in the consulate general, maintained close contact with the African national leaders. I knew Robert Mugabe (the present President) personally.

Q: I wanted to ask, were the whites annoyed?

RUSHING: They undoubtedly were. There may have been some private expressions of concern made directly to the consul general, but I was not aware of them.

Q: Were the contending parties, that is, the Europeans and the blacks, seeking out the consulate general to give their views?

RUSHING: Yes. They were. There were two mainly white parties, one led by Sir Edgar Whitehead, who was then the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, and the other was led by Winston Field, who was a conservative farmer less willing to accede to African aspirations. The critical elections were held in 1962, I think. Yours truly, together with the press and most everyone predicted a victory for Sir Edgar Whitehead, and we were wrong. The party led by Winston Field came to power. It was called the Rhodesian Front.

Q: Only whites could vote in this election? Were there any black candidates?

RUSHING: There was a small party that was mixed. (This is not to say that the two mainly white parties did not include a few blacks.) Some blacks could vote and a few served in parliament. At a distance of 35 years, there's a considerable amount I don't remember well. When Field came to power, the chances of an accommodation between the whites and the blacks, leading to some sort of multiracial government and society with full African participation, went out the window. A kind of civil war broke out with the blacks using Mozambique and Zambia (Northern Rhodesia) as bases.

Q: Until finally independence was obtained. Were you receiving clear instructions from Washington? Those were very difficult times presumably.

RUSHING: As I recall, we were told to go to Field and his people and say that we wanted them to be understanding and advance some of the things that the Africans wanted, leading eventually to full franchise. Instead, Field declared unilateral independence from Britain in 1965. The Federation had dissolved in 1963 when Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland became independent.

Q: After those years in Salisbury, you were transferred again into Africa. You went in 1963 to Brazzaville, the Congo, as economic officer this time, having been political officer in Southern Rhodesia. Was this a move you had requested?

RUSHING: I had requested a French-speaking post in Africa. What I had in mind was Algiers or Rabat or Tunis, not Brazzaville. But, in those days, you went where you were told to go and that was it. There was never any thought of saying, "Well, I want something else."

Q: Who was the chief of mission in Brazzaville?

RUSHING: Wendell Blancke.

Q: Wendell is an old friend from my Berlin days.

RUSHING: Yes, he had been consul general in Frankfurt before coming to Brazzaville.

Q: I was at his swearing in, in fact, in the Department when he was going off to be ambassador in Brazzaville.

RUSHING: He was succeeded by Barney Koren.

Q: What were the principal problems you had to deal with in Brazzaville?

RUSHING: The complete answer to that would be too long to relate. The pro-French, conservative president at the time of independence was overthrown almost accidentally

by a group headed mostly by a group of "intellectuals" who had been resident and studied in France for a number of years. In the process, they had become radical Marxists whose enemy number one was the U.S.

After taking power, they imagined that the U.S. embassy was concocting schemes to overturn the "revolution." In that atmosphere, it was difficult for us at the embassy to carry on with even routine business. The wife of the Foreign Minister was an American black who nervously avoided any contact with us, even socially at receptions and declined any invitations from the ambassador's wife.

But, specifically, the principal problem was the successive visiting U.S. officials who were jailed. They shared a cell with common criminals. The only sanitary facility was a hole in the floor. In the two cases that occurred before my successor's arrival, I think they were jailed for at least a couple of days before we could get them out. Those two cases involved a USIS [United States Information Service] technician and a USAID guy who were on TDY [temporary duty].

Q: On what charges were they jailed?

RUSHING: That they were spies.
To give you an idea of what prevailed, the Chief Justice of the Congolese Supreme Court was hacked in little pieces by youths who had been armed. You'd see these little kids walking around town with submachine guns. The remains of the Chief Justice were thrown into the Congo River. The kids would stop cars and take the doors and everything off. They would strip the car, looking for arms.

When my successor arrived and, before we could meet him at the airport, he was picked up by the police and taken away. We didn't know where he was. We later discovered that he was under arrest in a hotel. All of us at the embassy tried to make representations to our Congolese government contacts, but they wouldn't see us.

Q: On what charge had they picked him up?

RUSHING: The formal charge was that there was something wrong with his visa. It either had expired or wasn't yet valid. In other words, he either came too early or too late. Then, unknown to any of us, a day or two later, the Congolese authorities took him back out to the airport and put him on a plane to Paris.

The episode of my successor caused Washington to decide that although we would not break off diplomatic relations, we would close the embassy. We left U.S. interests in the hands of the British. I think the Germans took it up from there. The French were also helpful in briefing us on events there.

Q: So you were there when our mission actually was closed?

RUSHING: No. We had actually left.

Q: You were the economic officer there. Didn't we have an AID mission?

RUSHING: We had an AID mission when I arrived there, yes. I was the economic and commercial officer. A junior officer, who was also the consular officer, worked for me on the economic/commercial side as well. We had an AID office in Brazzaville and a few technicians in the field, but the program shut down sometime after my arrival and U.S. personnel were sent home. It was felt they felt they couldn't operate anymore with safety. They were under considerable scrutiny and pressure. I inherited what was left of AID operation, mostly files.

Q: Any Peace Corps?

RUSHING: No, but we did have two USIS Americans.

Q: Throughout your comments about Brazzaville, its become quite evident that this was a very Left-leaning government you were dealing with. Who were their friends, the Chinese, the Russians?

RUSHING: The Chinese, the Russians, the Cubans, all of whom established relatively large embassies there, and countries like Guinea, radical African countries. The Cubans were training the Congolese military.

Q: Did we have any investments in the country that could be affected by their behavior?

RUSHING: They were insignificant at the time. Later on, I believe American oil companies participated in the discovery and exploration of off-shore oil.

Q: You left then in 1964 and came back to the Department of State.

RUSHING: Actually, it must have been '65.

Q: '65, that's right, you served in the Department in the Bureau of African Affairs.

RUSHING: Yes, I was the desk officer for Congo-Brazzaville, Rwanda, and Burundi.

Q: And somebody else had Leopoldville?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: But you had three countries to yourself. How much did State have to say in what went on in those countries, say, in contrast with AID and CIA? Was State really the leading player? I guess that's my question.

RUSHING: I think in Brazzaville, State was the leading player. AID had stopped, and the CIA station chief was probably as interested in what was going on across the river in

Kinshasa, the relationship between the two countries. He was also concerned about the Congo's increasing radicalization and anti-Americanism. But major decisions and action were in State's hands.

Q: Yes, well, they had overthrown two governments and killings and so forth.

RUSHING: We had few economic interests in Rwanda and Burundi, no historical association with them.

Q: The killings were going on at that time, weren't they?

RUSHING: Oh, yes, thousands of Hutus were massacred in the 1960s by the ruling Tutsi minority. A couple of years ago, it was the other way around. The Tutsis were on the receiving end, suffering perhaps hundreds of thousands killed by the Hutus. The West/UN did little or nothing to stop it.

Q: Governor Williams now is dead. Did you get a chance to visit out in that part of the world while you were desk officer?

RUSHING: Before going back to the States on transfer, I made a trip to Zaire, Bukavu (Dick Matherson was the consul general there at the time.) and spent several days in both Rwanda and Burundi.

Q: That's good. So, you'd been on the spot. There was a scandal, I remember, in Burundi when the President was assassinated. There was an accusation that a local of the U.S. embassy had done this.

RUSHING: That's right.

Q: Must have caused you some sleepless hours.

RUSHING: Yes, it did. I don't remember very much about that though, for some reason. We had a Chinese defector from the Chinese embassy in Burundi. The defector came to our embassy and stayed there, lived there, for weeks, and finally got out. The rumor was that he was put in a big box, a big packing crate, and shipped off to Brussels or someplace like that.

Q: How long did we keep our embassy in Brazzaville closed? Did we open it during your time?

RUSHING: Oh, no, it was closed for several years. I don't remember when it was reopened. We closed it shortly after I left in 1965.

Q: Also, in Burundi in that period, our ambassador, Don Dumont, was expelled from the country. Could you tell us a little bit about that? And several others of his staff were thrown out. The King was overthrown.

RUSHING: I don't remember why he was expelled specifically, but it was probably a manifestation of the overall pro-communist stance of the Burundi government. It could have had something to do with the Chinese defector. Maybe it was also due to the general paranoia on the part of Burundi. In retaliation, we expelled the Burundi ambassador in Washington. I sat in when Secretary Rusk told him to go. We gave him more time than the 24 or 48 hours given to Dumont.

Q: Yes. Well, from what I've read, there was a heavy Chinese Communist influence.

RUSHING: Yes, there was.

Q: That all came off without any trouble, I guess. Did we leave our post in Bujumbura with a chargé for some time after Dumont was expelled or did we close it?

RUSHING: We didn't close it. I think Mike Rives was chargé for an extended period.

Q: Any other comments about your service on the Desk? Did you find it interesting, worthwhile?

RUSHING: Yes indeed. Dean Brown was the office director. He was a joy to work for, a very fast study.

Q: After two years on the Desk, you were transferred in the Department to Personnel. Was this something you'd asked for?

RUSHING: Yes. Harry Symmes was the head of that office at the time.

Q: That's right. They were dealing with mid-career officers. When I was doing the junior officers' program, Harry had the mid-career, and I believe Bill Boswell did senior officers.

RUSHING: Could be. I spent most of my two years in Personnel as head of the Office of Training. We would select officers for long-term training. That meant e.g., university training in management, in economics or in geographical/political science. We also assigned people to the War Colleges. We also worked with FSI in developing what kinds of training courses should be instituted.

Q: I remember because we worked together in those days. That's how we got to know each other. Did you find that Foreign Service officers willingly took assignments in the Department, or was there still the old drive to get out to the field?

RUSHING: As you know, in today's world, it's sometimes difficult to get people to go out to the field. One of the reasons is a working spouse. Another was the perception that promotional chances were enhanced by service in the Department. When did the working spouse idea really become an important factor?

Q: The late '70s, I believe. It wasn't as strong in our time, in the '60s, as I recall.

RUSHING: I certainly wanted to get out again. I had joined the Foreign Service, not what the Wriston report led to.

Q: We had a major election in 1968, with the Republicans taking over the Democrats. Did you notice any changes in personnel at that time because of the elections? Any change in morale?

RUSHING: No, not that I remember.

Q: I had the same reaction. I didn't notice any major changes.

RUSHING: About the A-100 course, Scott McLeod, who was a protégé of Senator McCarthy's, was appointed as head of security in the Department. This was in 1956. The McCarthy Army hearings in 1954 pretty well sunk him as I remember. But in '56 there was still a feeling that the Department still had its share of commies and misfits.

Q: That's right, Security and Consular Affairs.

RUSHING: McLeod came and addressed my junior officer course, the A-100 course. Despite everything in his background, I thought he came across very well and I liked him.

Q: I had a similar experience when I was transferred from Manila to Hong Kong, a direct transfer. They brought me back to Washington and I was interviewed by McLeod. We got along fine. I didn't have any problems with him, but other people did. Do you have any other comments about your time in the personnel business?

RUSHING: I think we tried unrealistically to plot out a person's career so that, at a certain point, you have this and, at a certain point you have that. I found that, if the person did all of the things that he was supposed to do, he would have to have a career of more than 40 years. I think we were being unrealistic in trying to plan so exactly.

I was impressed by the quality of people in Personnel. I was also encouraged by the fact that everything was pretty much straight. I was the Chairman of the committee that chose the officers for the War Colleges, which were, of course, very desirable assignments. I had to disqualify myself from being chosen. Then, as the exercise was finishing up, my boss said, "Charlie, you've done a great job with this. I know you've disqualified yourself from consideration, but think about it very seriously. I think you should go and make the National War College your assignment." I said, "Thanks a lot. Let me think about it." My wife and I decided against it on relatively mundane considerations. We would have had to buy a second car, which we couldn't afford, and I would be driving it all over across town every day and back, going to the National War College. In addition, we were not looking happily on another--the fifth--year in Washington.

Q: Instead of that, you went out again and you went far out, to Laos, Vientiane, where Ambassador Godley was in charge. Had you known him when he was in Kinshasa?

RUSHING: I had met him, but I didn't know him very well.

Q: How did this assignment come about? You were an African specialist by this time and now we find you in Southeast Asia.

RUSHING: I don't know. The head of Personnel came to me and said, "Charlie, the job of political counselor in Vientiane is coming open. It's a big operation [for the State Department]. We've got about four or five political officers. I think you'll find it interesting." It sounded good.

Q: And it would be a chance to use your French again.

RUSHING: A chance to use the French, and going to a part of the world that I'd never been to before and was interested in.

Q: How large was the embassy?

RUSHING: I've lost track of the numbers. In the embassy itself, there may have been five political officers. Of course, the Agency had a large contingent there, some in the embassy and some elsewhere. It wasn't nearly the size of operation going on in Saigon, but it was substantial.

Q: How about the military? Advisors, Attachés, what did we have?

RUSHING: We had Attachés. We had an Air Attaché with an airplane. We had an Army Attaché with an airplane. Both of their offices were in Vientiane with their support staff. Agency personnel were numerous all over the parts of Laos not under the control of the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese.

Q: What was the situation in Laos when you arrived, politically and governmentally?

RUSHING: The Prime Minister was Souvanna Phouma, who was a so-called neutral. We were on good terms with him. At first, he was suspected because he wasn't perceived as an out and out anti-Communist. Then, the far Right guy was Prince Boun Oum, whose territorial fiefdom was in southern Laos around Pak Se. Finally, there was Souphanouvong, who was the head of the Pathet Lao - allies of the North Vietnamese.

Q: The latter two were half-brothers, weren't they?

RUSHING: Yes. The King, with no real power, was in Luang Prabang.

The Agency had a big hand in this. Its activities were supposedly clandestine but were

widely known and widely reported.

Q: You were there from 1969 to 1971 when the Vietnam War was raging. So, it had a great effect on you. What about the question of U.S. bombing in Laos?

RUSHING: The bombing was basically ineffectual in terms of contributing to the end of the fighting on terms favorable to us. Basically, what the bombing did was produce Lao refugees from the areas of the bombing.

Q: Did the embassy report this?

RUSHING: We tried to, but it wasn't a very popular view. In fact, USIA took a poll of the Lao refugees, asking, "Why did you come here" and they said they'd come to get away from the bombing, not to flee from the Communists. That was published and the USIA guy almost lost his job.

Q: We apparently dropped a lot of them along the trail there.

RUSHING: Yes, and it had little effect on the guerrillas. This is not to say that the Communist forces in both North and South Vietnam did not suffer stunning casualties. They did but it didn't stop them.

Q: How would you describe your relations with Laotian officials? Were you able to talk to them and would they talk to you?

RUSHING: They were quite accessible. The members of the government understood that, if it weren't for the American presence, probably their so-called neutral government would topple and be taken over by the Pathet Lao. They were urbane. All of them spoke French. Some of them spoke very good English.

Here's an anecdote. Ho Chi Minh died when we were in Laos. We got a circular cable from the Department saying, "Send back an immediate message giving the official reaction of your host government to the death of Ho Chi Minh." I tried to call the Foreign Minister or some one in his office and got no answer. (You never knew whether they didn't answer because they weren't there or they didn't answer because the phones weren't working.) So, I went down there and I couldn't find anyone. I went back to the embassy and sent a telegram, something to the effect that the death of Ho Chi Minh was greeted with restraint by the host government officials!

Q: Were you able to travel around the country at all?

RUSHING: Yes. You couldn't go very far by road, only about 20 kilometers by road safely, outside of Vientiane. I flew to Luang Prabang and other places quite a few times, including Pakse in the south, which was Boun Oum's territory. I also went to South Vietnam and Thailand a number of times.

Q: Was Mary with you?

RUSHING: In Laos, yes.

Q: Dependents were allowed to come?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: The ambassador's relations with Souvanna Phouma were cordial?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: And I gather that we had to keep denying that we had any combat forces in Laos?

RUSHING: Yes, but "combat forces" may be a little misleading. The CIA had personnel who were training and supporting anti-communist elements such as the Meo.

Q: What role did the Chinese Communists play at this time in Laos? Was there a Chinese embassy?

RUSHING: Oh, yes. We saw them when we went to receptions and so forth, but had little direct to do with them.

Q: It would have been an interesting time because it was just before the Nixon visit to China in 1972.

RUSHING: Preparations for the visit were extremely closely held. I left Laos in 1971, I doubt whether anyone in Laos knew anything about it in advance.

Q: What about the North Vietnamese? Were they represented at all?

RUSHING: Oh, yes. They were very active. There was both a South Vietnam mission and a North Vietnam mission. The latter was only a couple of blocks from our house. We would see each other every day.

Q: Rather crowded for a small town, wasn't it?

RUSHING: It was like a Hollywood movie of intrigue: there were the two Vietnamese embassies, the Russians, the Indians, the Poles and on and on. I can't remember all the missions but the number of diplomatic personnel in Vientiane may have exceeded the Lao themselves.

Q: What was our relationship with these Meo tribesmen?

RUSHING: They were guerillas in the pay and under the tutelage of the CIA. They were valiant. I understand that we took many to the States when we got out of there.

Q: Did you get any Congressional delegations during this time?

RUSHING: Yes, we had quite a few Congressional delegations. Ambassador Godley's predecessor discouraged visitors based on the secret nature of what was going on. Godley changed that. He welcomed visitors and got a lot, including high ranking military. Among them was Governor Wallace, Bill Buckley, the journalist, and Dick Moose, then working for Senator Fulbright.

Q: Oh, yes, Moose had been out with Lowenstein.

RUSHING: He'd been out with Lowenstein.

Q: I remember that famous mission and the report they sent out on Southeast Asia. They were very critical of what was going on. I think the word was that deeper U.S. involvement in Laos was being admitted. There were speeches made.

What was the effect in Laos of our sudden move in May of '70 into Cambodia?

RUSHING: They were distraught.

Q: Did the embassy have any control at all over U.S. bombing in Laos or was that all done out of Saigon?

RUSHING: We had to approve the targets in Laos. In fact, there was a young officer who was called the bombing officer who advised the ambassador on what was okay or not.

Among the files was a famous telegram that Godley's predecessor, Bill Sullivan, had sent. The Navy and Air Force were both bombing targets in Laos. Their accuracy was somewhat questionable. In one case the Navy came in and leveled a town that was off-limits. Deploring that incident, Sullivan sent back a cable which ended, "Tecumseh weeps," referring to the famous statue at the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

Q: You left Laos in 1971 and went back to Africa, this time to Monrovia, where you were chief of the Economic/Commercial Section. Tell us how that assignment came about.

RUSHING: The chemistry between the ambassador and DCM and me wasn't good. I wasn't able to get the ambassador to define what he wanted the Political Section to do. I also wanted to go back to Africa. The U.S. had a large stake in Liberia, by African standards, with significant U.S. investments. So the idea to assume the head of the Economic/Commercial Section there was an appealing one.

Q: Were you there when President Tubman died?

RUSHING: We had arrived in Liberia only a short time before Tubman’s death. We were on leave in the Canaries when I got a call from the ambassador saying, "Come back at once." So, we went back, but it turned out that there was little to do in relation to

Tubman's funeral.

Q: Of course, this was the end of a whole era in Liberia.

RUSHING: The end of a whole era. When we left Laos on a direct transfer to Liberia, Mary and the kids went to Italy to see her parents, and I went the other way to Hong Kong to have morning clothes and tails made. Liberia was famous for this kind of formality. Then, after Tubman died and was succeeded by Tolbert, everything was more informal. I think I wore the striped pants once and maybe the tails twice. Now, I don't know where they are or even if I still have them. That represented a considerable investment that proved unnecessary, although I think I wore the morning clothes once later in Dublin.

Q: I hope you had some good meals in Hong Kong while you were there. How large was your Economic Section in Monrovia?

RUSHING: Two officers, an American secretary, and two national employees.

Q: Was there an AID mission?

RUSHING: Yes, a large one.

Q: Presumably, you were in touch with them on many occasions?

RUSHING: Indeed.

Q: What were the problems that you had to focus on?

RUSHING: One of the problems was that the considerable American aid was of limited effectiveness. For example, we had paid the Taiwanese to send a team of rice growers to teach the Liberians how to grow rice. That was kind of funny because rice was the Liberians' staple diet, and they'd been growing rice for years. But the yields did not provide enough for self-sufficiency. As long as the Taiwanese were there, the project went along just fine. But when the Taiwanese pulled out, the Liberians were back doing the "wrong" things again. Another example: you'd see AID-financed schools in the countryside that had been abandoned because there wasn't money in the education budget to maintain them.

Q: Certainly, this must have been known to the AID people, too?

RUSHING: The AID personnel there included some very talented people, but the unspoken emphasis seemed to be on an _____ program. In addition to the USAID people, there were representatives from the IBRD, IMF, the UN aid organization. There were substantial numbers of U.S. businessmen and, of course, Liberian businessmen and civil servants. There was a lot to do. I spent a good deal of time with the Liberian Ministry of Finance and with the American businesses that were

there. There were a lot of them.

Q: Was there a Peace Corps presence there?

RUSHING: Yes, a large Peace Corps presence.

Q: I gather there was a heavy American overhang in Liberia.

RUSHING: Very heavy. I think the Peace Corps probably did a pretty good job. But, again, I don't know how much was transferable, or what was transferred. By the way, a successful novel, The Zin Zin Road, was based on Peace Corps activities in Liberia.

Q: Did you have a Commercial Attaché or did you do that work yourself?

RUSHING: The number two officer was the Commercial Attaché but both of us were involved in commercial activities.

Q: Talk a little bit about the transition period from Tubman to Tolbert, whether it meant anything to the people, whether it was a revolutionary change, or whether things just went on as they had.

RUSHING: Tubman, of course, was a very popular, charismatic, almost mythical figure and had been President practically since God created the Earth. Tolbert did not have the charisma that Tubman had. But, he probably was more substantively effective. Tubman had built this huge presidential palace for himself, a $15 million palace on the water which Tolbert then occupied. The Tubmans of this world and the Americo-Liberians, of whom Tolbert was one, pretty much had things in their pocket. The Americo-Liberians, as opposed to the tribals, profited from almost all economic-commercial activity in the country. During my time there, there were signs of the beginnings of serious clashes between the Americo-Liberians and tribal leaders.

Q: Which today have overwhelmed the country.

RUSHING: Yes. Tolbert was overthrown by an Army sergeant and the former's coterie, government and private, were killed, as was [Sergeant] Doe some years later and Liberia descended into anarchy and years of civil warfare.

Q: Do you think our embassy had contact with these emerging tribal elements or not?

RUSHING: We did with some of them. One was a professor of economics at the University of Liberia whom I knew quite well. He was a "radical" and would wear tribal dress, which was frowned on by the elite. But I would say that the embassy's contacts were, by and large, limited to the Americo-Liberians.

Q: Mrs. Nixon came out, I believe, for Tolbert's inauguration. Can you tell us a little bit about that? Did it go well?

RUSHING: It went well, yes. I was one of the people who took her around. She was gracious and her visit went off without any problems. Tolbert was delighted that she was able to come.

Q: When you left Liberia, did you leave with a feeling that the country was going to come into some of the terrible things that have happened since or did you consider it to be on a fairly even keel?

RUSHING: I thought it would carry on much as before, with the caveat that something had to be done to accommodate the tribes and reduce corruption. The names of the tribes were generally not commonly referred to in Monrovia during my time. Certainly, we didn't expect the viciousness and duration of what happened.

Q: I guess that was the point I was trying to make. You ended your tour in 1973 in Monrovia and were assigned to the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] Defense College in Rome. That must have been an interesting year. Did you find it of value?

RUSHING: I was delighted and it came out of nowhere. Was it useful? It was useful in this sense, that it taught me a lot about NATO that I didn't know. It put me in contact with people in other NATO countries that I could pick up the phone and talk to when I was in Denmark.

Q: Are the classes conducted in French, English or both?

RUSHING: The common language was English. We were split up in working groups which met every day; one was conducted in French. The rest were in English. Italian was largely ignored.

Q: Following your completion of the Defense College, you went to Copenhagen as political counselor and worked for Ambassadors Crowe and Dean. You were four years in Copenhagen, from '74 to '78. What were your principal concerns there as political counselor?

RUSHING: Two areas. One was the NATO connection, of course. I went down to Brussels frequently for meetings.

Q: The NATO connection, of which Denmark does not pull heavy weight.

RUSHING: It does not pull heavy weight and a proportion of the population there was not too happy with the Danish membership in NATO. The other main area was the EEC [European Economic Commission], the U.S. relationship with it. I did the reporting and instructions. Had you gone when Denmark had the presidency?

Q: No, I was there, and we had a meeting in December of '74 in Copenhagen. A big meeting.

RUSHING: That was something that was of interest. We did some local political reporting, too. We were concerned about the steadfastness of Danish membership in NATO. We were also concerned with the Left wing of the Social Democratic Party.

Q: There were several governments during that time, weren't there? There was Poul Hartling and Anke Jorgensen. Say a few words about this rather odd character, Morens Glistful, and his Anti-Tax Party.

RUSHING: He was the "Le Pen" of Denmark, wanted Denmark out of the EC and NATO. I remember one night at dinner at the ambassador's, he was one of the guests and the wife of a fairly leftist member of the Social Democratic Party was there and they got into a terrible verbal fight. It started out in English and then quickly shifted to Danish. My Danish wasn't good enough to follow it. Talk about an embarrassing moment.

Q: It was during your time there that we were anxious to upgrade the Danish and other NATO country air forces. We were trying to sell them our new F-16. Can you say a little bit about that situation and how it worked out in Denmark?

RUSHING: We had a very wise DCM [deputy chief of mission] in Denmark at that time who saw that the basic element that was going to swing the deal one way or the other, at least in Denmark, was going to be a political question. So, he designated the political counselor (me) to be the control officer for this project. In the other countries in the European Consortium (Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands) control responsibility in the U.S. embassy was in the hands of either the MAAG [military assistance advisory group] or the Air Attaché.

There was a two stage process. The first stage was an elimination contest among two or three American airplanes that would be competing for the place of being the official U.S. candidate. The American choice would then compete with non-U.S. fighters such as the British Jaguar, the French Mirage, and the Swedish Viggen. General Dynamics won the fly-off, so to speak, with the F-16. Interestingly enough, at the time, the so-called fly-away cost was $9 million a copy. The fly-away cost today is many times that amount.

As you know, this was a major U.S. Government effort. I spent a good deal of time going back and forth to Brussels, the center of the project, and lobbying members of the Danish Parliament. It was the Parliament, in particular, the Defense Committee of the Parliament, that would make the recommendation to the Danish Government which plane the Consortium should buy. Fortunately, the ranking member of the Defense Committee was a friend of mine. That helped.

In the last days of the competition, the Swedes came in with a particularly attractive offer. My Parliamentary friend said that had they made it a month earlier, the Danes would have been forced to go with the Viggen. But it was just too late in the process and support for the F-16 was solidifying in all of the other countries.

Q: So it all worked out well and we sold the F-16, which has proved to be an excellent airplane. You had a labor officer there with you in Denmark as part of the Political Section. Tell me something about his work and why we had one there.

RUSHING: Labor and the labor unions were politically extremely important. That was true even under a right-wing government. Because of their proportional electoral system, coalition governments were almost always the result. The Social Democrats were usually the strongest political party. Denmark remains a welfare state. The resulting system was very expensive. Many of the benefits taken for granted in the 1970s may have been reduced.

Q: It was important for us to keep in close touch with the movement in the Danish Labor Confederation. Why was it so difficult to form governments in a country like Denmark? It's a homogeneous country, basically, and yet it seems splintered when it comes to politics.

RUSHING: As mentioned earlier, Denmark has a proportional electoral system which is common on the continent. This is unlike the system in the United States and Great Britain where "the first past the pole" wins. One of the effects of the proportional system, is that a single party rarely if ever emerges with 51% of the vote. So, there's always a need to negotiate and to bring other parties in to form a government. In Denmark, this problem was compounded because a relatively low threshold was demanded for parliamentary representation. For example, if a party receives only, say, five percent of the overall vote, it would win at least one seat in Parliament. I think that during my time, there were seven parties in the Parliament.

Q: So, as a result, you have a number of small parties and they all have to be taken into account when forming a government. Did you find the Leftist influence, the Communist influence, very strong during this period in Denmark? Anti-American feeling?

RUSHING: There was a considerable amount of anti-American feeling from the Left wing of the Social Democrats, intensifying with the Socialist People's Party and the Communists. Much of it focused on our role in Vietnam. There were frequent demonstrations in front of the embassy.

Q: You mean in front of our embassy?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: Where did you go after Copenhagen?

RUSHING: When it was time (after four years) to look for another job, I noticed that the DCM job in Dublin was opening. I bid for it as did approximately 75 others and ended up on the “short list.” This personnel process corresponded with the Danish six-month term of the EC presidency. I served as the primary interlocutor between Washington and the Community during that period. In that capacity, I went to several of the EC capitals

including Dublin. I met the ambassador, we talked, and he chose me for the job.

Q: Very good. What was the ambassador like? Bill Shannon was it?

RUSHING: Yes. Ambassador Shannon had been a journalist with the New York Times. He and his lovely wife were very successful with the Irish. They had contacts with all elements of Irish society. He had a phenomenal memory and was himself a historian of Irish affairs, having written at least one book on the subject.

Q: How did the ambassador divide the work with you? Sometimes ambassadors want the DCM to run the embassy, sometimes they want to do it themselves, sometimes they want to only be involved in high-level representation.

RUSHING: Basically, I ran the daily affairs of the embassy. That's the way the ambassador wanted it. This is not to say that he was uninterested, particularly in personnel matters. He, of course, was very apt socially and did reporting himself on some occasions. However, most of the reporting came out of the political and economic sections. Occasionally, I would turn something in, but not normally. I think it generally went quite well. In fact, the embassy received a sterling report from a team of Foreign Service Inspectors.

Q: What was the size of the embassy staff?

RUSHING: Very small. The American personnel, the ambassador, DCM, a political officer, and economic/commercial officer, three consular officers, two in administration, a USIS officer, a Defense Attaché, two communicators and three secretaries.

Q: What were the problems you found at the embassy?

RUSHING: Aside from relatively mundane ones, including internal administration and visas, there were only one or two. One involved the ambassador's, in effect, campaigning with the leader of the opposition in an election period. Another was the ambassador's firing of the USIS officer because of his "Christmas letter" which leaked to The Irish Times and which contained both unflattering and flattering remarks about the Irish. The Times only published the former.

Finally, the subject that permeated every aspect of the relationship among the British, the United States, and the Irish was the Northern Ireland problem.
Q: Did the embassy have any contacts, official or otherwise, with the IRA?

RUSHING: No, the embassy had no contacts with the IRA.

Q: Were you personally able to travel to the North?

RUSHING: I was, but only got there once. Our consul general in Belfast would come to Dublin frequently because he didn't have any classified secretarial or cable facilities. So,

in order to get his encrypted stuff out, he had to come down to us.

Q: You were there for the Papal visit in '79?

RUSHING: Yes. It was a spectacular success, of course. Our ambassador's residence overlooked the vast plain where the Pope and thousands of people were celebrating Mass.

Q: You got an eagle eye view.

RUSHING: Actually, I wasn't there. I stayed in the embassy with a communicator in case there was an emergency. Via television, I think I saw more than the people in the Park did. In any case, other important classified matters were transpiring at the same time.

Q: What was the effect of Irish membership in the European Community? Did that tend to galvanize Ireland or not?

RUSHING: I think its been a terrific plus for the Irish. Ireland is probably the major beneficiary of the EC's Common Agricultural Policy, one of the keystones of the Community, and of the first part of the glorious schemes of the European Union that has really been put together and codified. The Irish were getting back a lot more from the Community than they contributed to it.

Q: Were there any threats against the embassy or against Americans while you were there?

RUSHING: The embassy frequently received telephone threats. Then the question was, "Do we evacuate or not?" I was the one that had to make that decision in most cases. We never evacuated. Sometimes one could hear "pub noises" in the background of the caller. Once such threats resulted in an evacuation, they would only increase.

Q: One of the awful decisions a DCM is called on to make.

RUSHING: We had demonstrations as well.

Q: What were they demonstrating against?

RUSHING: Against what they regarded as American opposition to unifying Ireland.

Q: Were you swamped with American visitors a lot at the embassy?

RUSHING: We had a lot, mainly Irish Americans. I remember one time when the ambassador was out of the country, and I was chargé. There was a call from the receptionist saying that there was a gentleman there who would like to see me. I asked, "Who is he and what does he want?" She said, "He's from America, an Irish American. He's never been in an American embassy and he's never seen an ambassador." I received him, took him around the embassy and, I think, made him a friend for the Foreign

Service. Senator Moynihan came by fairly frequently, as did other Irish-American politicians, including Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill.

Q: Is there anything else we should say about your time in Ireland?

RUSHING: The job was very interesting. I was chargé d'affaires for almost a year because of delays in identifying and clearing appropriate ambassadorial candidates in Washington.

Q: In 1982, at the completion of your tour in Dublin, you came back to the Department and joined the Management Policy staff, where you spent three years. Who was the Director of the staff at that time?

RUSHING: When I got back from Ireland, I didn't have an immediate assignment, but what I was doing with others was solidified, and I became the Director of the new Management Planning Staff. It was chartered to look into the future and try to make predictions and plans for the role of the State Department in a new, high-tech age, which would cover both foreign affairs and defense planning as well as internal management.

Q: How many people did you have working with you?

RUSHING: We had a budget of about $55 million and about 25 people.

Q: That is a very sizable organization for the State Department.

RUSHING: It was really a breakthrough, something that Under Secretary for Management Ron Spiers insisted on and was able to get money and people to do it. The central office in the White House awarded State a special commendation for excellence. One of the reasons why we were perhaps farther ahead than others was because we started behind other agencies and were able to profit from their experience.

Q: Did Secretary Shultz take any interest in what was going on or was he even aware of it?

RUSHING: Yes, he definitely was. As you know, one of his greatest interests was to get what is now the National Foreign Affairs Training Center [NFATC] established. But another, outside the main stream of daily foreign affairs, was what we were doing.

Q: Can you give any examples that your staff came up with, ideas that have been put into use or not?

RUSHING: One of the things we were working on was what State should do if Washington were threatened with destruction or actually destroyed.

Q: And you were able to work out some satisfactory...

RUSHING: We were able to work out something. Happily, although we carried out periodic exercises, we never had to actually implement our plans.

Q: Let's hope we never do. What did the other bureaus and offices of the Department think of your proposals and suggestions, or were they even exposed to them at that time?

RUSHING: Most of the bureaus and offices, at the top management level, were briefed on our mission and activities, not on all of our activities, but those that would affect them directly. Some of the people were very supportive and encouraging and, in fact, contributed ideas to what we were doing. Others were highly-critical.

Q: I'm not surprised. After your three years on the Management Planning Staff, you were transferred to our mission in Geneva in 1985. Tell me about that position. What were you and to whom were you to report?

RUSHING: After the exciting and challenging years as Director of the Management Planning Staff, I learned of a new position that was being established in Geneva. That was as Executive Assistant to our ambassador to the UN's offices in Geneva. One of the reasons for establishing this new position was that the Department wanted to be sure the U.S. was taking consistent positions in the many different fora in Geneva.

As you know, Geneva not only is the European headquarters of the United Nations, but it hosts a multitude of different international agencies and activities: GATT [General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs], WHO [World Health Organization], ILO [International Labor Organization], Multilateral Commission on Disarmament, bilateral arms reduction talks with the Soviets, etc. We could at any one time have as many as eight different U.S. ambassadors in Geneva.

Another thing that was wanted was for someone to maintain close contact with our discussions with the Russians, with the Soviets, on disarmament. In doing this, I initially spent considerable time with the head of that activity there, at the time, Max Kampelman. My job was not to put myself ahead of the mission's ambassadors or DCM, but to make sure that the management activities of the mission and that of the other elements of the United States Government represented in Geneva were fully compatible.

I expected to be transferred after the initial four-year assignment but two successive ambassadors asked the Department to extend me. In fact, as we were preparing to leave in 1991, the ambassador (my third) would have wanted me to stay even longer, but I thought that six years were enough.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you arrived?

RUSHING: When we arrived there, the mission ambassador was Jerry Carmen. He had been the head of the General Services Administration in Washington and was a Republican activist in New England.

Q: You say he was effective in his role there?

RUSHING: He was very concerned with promoting American business interests and put together a seminar on capitalism and private industry that was quite successful.

Q: How long was he there?

RUSHING: He was only there for about a year after I arrived. I don't remember when he came. He was succeeded by Joseph Petrone, who had retired from the Army some years earlier as a colonel. He and his wife were very active in Republican Party affairs. She was very able and engaging. They entertained graciously. He was liked by everyone who knew him. Finally, there was Morris Abram, a New York lawyer who came in '89. He had a remarkable ability to get along with people while at the same time, he was very tough-minded, effective, and intelligent. Perhaps he was one of our best ambassadors ever sent to Geneva.

Q: What was our relation, the mission in Geneva, with our embassy in Bern?

RUSHING: Well, there wasn't all that much, aside from protocol and social events. The mission had little to do with the U.S. bilateral relationship with the Swiss, which was handled by the embassy in Bern. There were some complications concerning the operation of the Geneva office of Embassy Bern's Consular Section.

Q: Did we have relations with other missions in Geneva, too?

RUSHING: Yes. I forget how many missions were there but there were a lot, maybe 50 or 60. We saw their diplomatic personnel on a continuing basis, particularly when we were trying to make some point, get something done that we wanted.

Q: Did our various groupings there, or entities, get their instructions through the Department of State or through their own agencies?

RUSHING: It was complex and difficult to explain briefly. Most UN activities came under the aegis of the U.S. ambassador in Geneva. I should say the "U.S. chief of mission." For, although there could be any number of U.S. ambassadors in Geneva at one time, depending on what was going on (meetings, conferences), there was only one U.S. chief of mission.

This was not always well-understood and misunderstandings resulted. The U.S.-Soviet bilateral disarmament negotiations were basically in a separate capsule. The U.S. team had its own communicators, procedures, etc. Most of the people in the mission saw little of their work. In the view of what happened later with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Petrone deserves praise for being able to halt planning for the construction of a new, separate, high-tech building solely dedicated to the bilateral arms negotiations at a price of somewhere between $50 and $100 million.

There were two (maybe I'm forgetting some others), U.S. Government residential delegations which carried on their affairs--although UN-connected - separately from the mission: the UN Conference on Disarmament and the GATT.

Q: Did USUN [U.S. Mission to the United Nations] play any role in this? Were they interested in what you were doing?

RUSHING: Yes. USUN was the mission's sister post back in New York and there were some joint interests and activities. In many cases, however, the mission was separate from what was going on in New York and visa versa. Our parent bureau in the Department for most matters was IO [International Organizations].

Q: How about instructions concerning labor or the health matters? Would they be sent to Geneva directly from these bureaus in State?

RUSHING: Theoretically, everything should have come out with IO's concurrence.

Q: Were you inundated with visitors, VIPs [very important persons], Congressmen?

RUSHING: We had a lot. There was a branch of Geneva's Administrative Section that did nothing except handle visitors and set up conferences. It had one officer and, I think, three national employees.

Q: So your role was more than just housekeeping.

RUSHING: The role was more than just housekeeping.

Q: So, six years of that and you were transferred back to this side of the Atlantic to Norfolk, where you became Political Advisor. Was this to CINCLANT [Commander in Chief, Atlantic] or SACLANT [Senior Allied Commander, Atlantic] or both?

RUSHING: To both. The U.S. admiral in Norfolk wears two hats. SACLANT is the NATO command. CINCLANT is the American command. Both are focused on the Atlantic although the CINCLANT territory is larger than the jurisdiction of SACLANT.

Q: When you got to Norfolk, what did you find your duties to be?

RUSHING: The Norfolk experience was not totally satisfactory. I was treated well, both socially and professionally. But I was never clear what I should be doing.

Q: By the Department or by the Navy?

RUSHING: Neither.

Q: Fairly broad.

RUSHING: I picked up and embroidered on what my predecessors had been doing. I was told, "Everything's just fine." Certainly the POLADs [political advisors] coming out of World War II were stellar FSOs. Think of Bob Murphy. I think that reflected that the military may not have known how to deal with the State Department; they had limited experience in the areas of diplomacy and foreign affairs. I have reflected on this and contrasted the year's training military officers receive before taking up an Attaché job at an embassy with the few days of briefings I received in Washington on my way to Norfolk. Over the years, the military has become so sophisticated and so knowledgeable about how the foreign affairs apparatus works that, in many cases, I don't think that they need a political advisor anymore, except as an ornament, although I had had close contacts with the U.S. military throughout my career, e.g. the sale of the F-16, the Norfolk experience was discouraging.

Q: To whom did you report?

RUSHING: Theoretically, only to the Commander in Chief, a four-star admiral.

Q: But practically?

RUSHING: I didn't report to anyone.

Q: In Washington, State's Bureau of Political/Military Affairs could have cared less?

RUSHING: Could have cared less.

Q: They wanted to see the back of your head?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: But you got your instructions from them?

RUSHING: I didn't get any instructions and only an occasional query.

Q: A rather interesting way to run an organization. When you sat in the staff meetings with the Admiral and the other top Naval people, did you get the impression that your views were listened to? Did they find you useful?

RUSHING: I don't know. Yes and no. One of the things that concerned me was that, in these staff meetings, let's say, a Marine General, who was no friend of the State Department, would say, "The State Department's position on this issue is so and so." I'd say, "Not so."

Q: You were making friends all over the place.

RUSHING: That was the problem. Then I would call up someone in the State Department--almost never to PM. I'd call one of the geographic Desks and say, "Hey,

what's our position on this? Today in this meeting, this guy said it was so-and-so." The State guy would say, "No, it's not that way. It's this way." Which coincided with my prior understanding. My discussing this with State - to rebut what I knew was not the case - was not appreciated by my colleagues at Norfolk.

Q: Did you have access to the top at Norfolk when you needed it?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: Was being near to Washington, DC a help or a hindrance? Would you have been better off if you'd been in Honolulu or not?

RUSHING: I'm not sure but I think so, based on stories from other POLADs. One of the things that worked was that I'd go to Washington about once every three or four weeks and make the rounds (on a face to face basis) of all the people I had business with. That was helpful in keeping up-to-date, but aside from correcting Norfolk military misperceptions I'm not sure it added much to what was already known. The most useful people were outside PM. I must say, however, that there were not infrequent occasions when I could make a meaningful contribution that could shorten Norfolk's reaction time.

Q: You had no role in Desert Storm, and yet you could probably see the messages coming back?

RUSHING: I think Desert Storm was over by the time I got to Norfolk in August '91.

Q: Did you have a role in Somalia?

RUSHING: Somalia was run by Central Command out of Florida. CINCLANT provided ships and Marines.

Q: What about Haiti?

RUSHING: That was ours. Most were pessimistic that anything was ever going to work out there. At least in the short term, things seemed to be progressing, but serious long-term political and economic problems remain that will not be resolved in the foreseeable future. Most of the planning of a possible U.S. invasion was done at CINCLANT. I had little to do with it. I was concerned what the relationship of our military would be with the Haitian people themselves. I don't know whether I had any effect on that or not.

Q: Did you get to go to Haiti?

RUSHING: No, I didn't. With the possible exception of clandestine visits, no one went to Haiti from CINCLANT that I'm aware of, during my time there.

Q: Were you there when we called off the ship that was about to land?

RUSHING: No, I wasn't in Norfolk. I was back in Washington.

Q: That story remains to be told. How about Cuba? Was that a big issue while you were there?

RUSHING: Yes. I stayed in touch very closely with the Cuba Desk in the State Department. We had ongoing discussion and planning among the Departments of State and Defense and CINCLANT.

Q: What about the Russian Navy? Was that a great concern to us at the time or not? They're prowling CINCLANT waters.

RUSHING: Oh, yes, they are--they were anyway. Of course, the perceived Soviet naval threat had diminished by that time. We still monitored their movements very carefully.
Q: Did you accompany the Admiral on any trips?

RUSHING: Yes, Brussels several times, Iceland, different places in the Caribbean, Rome, the Azores.

Q: Your tour in Norfolk ended in '93 and you came back to the Department for a period. You worked on Special Projects in S/S. What did that involve?

RUSHING: I joined a small group of senior officers in S/S that was looking at a new way to automatically declassify messages, to get rid of a lot of top secret, very sensitive messages that ended up in S/S for filing and just stayed there forever. We did devise a way to accomplish this: both declassification and destruction.

Q: To whom did you report?

RUSHING: To the Executive Secretary of the State Department, the head of S/S.

Q: And after that?

RUSHING: I retired in April '94 after attending the retirement course, which was very well done.

Q: Looking back on those forty years, did the Foreign Service live up to your expectations when you entered?

RUSHING: It did at the beginning but became less so as time went by. I told our two sons, who are now in their 30s, that they should consider the Foreign Service, but my advice would be not to seek it as a career. In the event, the older is a district sales manager for the Johnson & Johnson subsidiary that makes Tylenol; the younger is a managing director of an investment bank in London.

Q: What would you select as the highlight of your career? What do you look back upon

as the most effective?

RUSHING: I think one of the things that I tried to do in Laos was to dampen down the war and not exaggerate what U.S. military force could achieve in Southeast Asia. I was not successful, but I made a try.

Q: You were pushing a terrible boulder uphill. Any other comments you'd like to make about the Service or about places where you were?

RUSHING: I think my job as Director of the Management Planning staff was fascinating and important to the U.S. as a whole. I liked what I was doing in Denmark very much, including the sale of the F-16 and our coverage and demarches made during Denmark's tenure of the EC presidency. My year's tenure as chargé in Dublin was particularly challenging. Although I'm not sanguine about the future of the Foreign Service, it's somewhat paradoxical that I've liked almost all the places that I have been and the jobs I've had.

Q: Well, I want to thank you, Charlie, for this very interesting discussion we've had. This is Tom Dunnigan and the date is July 2, 1996.

End of interview