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JAMES MOCERI

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INTERVIEW

Q: This is Lew Schmidt, interviewing Jim Moceri at his home in Auburn, Washington, on May 22, 1990.

Jim, I'm going to ask you to start out by giving a little background on yourself, what your early experiences were, and where you went to school--your education. If you had any preliminary work before you got into the government information program, you can cover that. And from that point on, once you get to the point of getting into the Agency, or its predecessor, then we'll simply follow your career from there, covering different aspects of your work in each location.

So why don't you start right now?

Bio Sketch - Education

MOCERI: I grew up in Seattle and went to school in Seattle--Garfield High--and then on to the University of Washington, where I graduated in 1937 with majors in European history and political science. In '37 I went to graduate school at Columbia University, hoping to study under Carlton J. H. Hayes, the leading authority on the history of nationalism.

During the course of graduate work at Columbia, I worked for the Federal Writers Project as a writer, and produced a series of pamphlets on subjects as varied as "Soil Conservation" for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the lives and works of New Jersey painters of the 19th century, Washington in New Jersey during the Revolutionary War. Transferring later to the New Jersey Historical Records Survey (also part of the WPA program) first as an editor and subsequently as a supervisor, I worked on volumes of local history, including manuscript collections and inventories of county and municipal archives. In 1940, I was asked to take charge of the largest and most important research project in American history then being carried out under the umbrella of the New Jersey Historical Records Survey. The project also had the sponsorship of the history department of Columbia University, a factor which had played some part in my selection as the new director. The objective was to produce a massive and indeed exhaustive history of the nearly 34,000 roll-call votes taken in the U.S. Congress from 1789 to 1932. I was responsible for the work of a staff of more than 100 people engaged in this and a series of

related projects. It was my first experience in what could accurately be described as large scale substantive and managerial program direction.

I must digress at this point to take note of my intellectual and political concerns from the mid-thirties to the outbreak of World War II. Although my general field of study was modern European history, my more specific interests centered on nationalism as a political force, the intellectual history of 19th century Europe (and on this subject Jacques Barzun created for my benefit a graduate seminar at Columbia), and the nature and theory of history itself. Politically I had come to the conclusion by the mid-thirties that fascism and communism posed in differing guises and for differing reason a mortal threat to the continuation of the liberal and humanistic achievements of western civilization. In reaching this conclusion I had been much influenced by the writings of the great Italian historian-philosopher Benedetto Croce. The failure of the League of Nations to check the Japanese conquest of Manchuria and Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia convinced me that a general war had become inevitable, at least on a Europe-wide scale.

Pearl Harbor--The War Years

Pearl Harbor marked the end of the entire Historical Records Research Program on which I had been employed. I later applied for a commission in the Navy as a junior officer, and served in the Pacific Theater. As a communications officer on the staff of the commander of the amphibious forces of the Pacific fleet, I participated in the Iwo Jima and Okinawa operations.

At the end of the war, I applied for and received a post-war fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation for research on Italian political developments in the 20th century, particularly the liberal opposition to fascism in Italy.

1947-49: Assistant Professor At College Of Northern Idaho; Leads To Fulbright Scholarship

From 1947 to 1949, I was employed as an assistant professor at a newly established college in northern Idaho at Farragut, the former Navy boot camp. There I handled the course offerings in ancient and modern history and in political science as well. Learning that a Fulbright program for Italy would be inaugurated in 1949, I applied for a grant to do full time research in Italy. My application was accepted, and in November of 1949, accompanied by my wife and daughter, I was on my way to Italy as one of the first group of Fulbrighters in Italy.

En Route To Italy, Moceri Meets (And Mollifies) Congressman John Rooney

At this point the recollection of an incident that occurred during our trip to Italy may constitute at least a minor footnote to a history of the Fulbright program. Almost the entire group of American Fulbrighters selected for Italy traveled together on board the vessel Saturnia in third class from New York to Genoa. About three days out of New

York I was summoned to meet an individual who I was informed was Assistant Secretary of State Peurifoy. After some preliminary conversation he informed me that he was accompanying Congressman John Rooney. The Congressman had had that day an unfortunate run-in with two young Fulbrighters and was so enraged that he was threatening to cancel the entire Fulbright program on his return to Washington. Having made inquiries and heard quite complimentary things about me and my wife, Peurifoy wanted us to join Rep. Rooney at his dinner table and spend the evening with him. Quite simply, our task was to mollify Mr. Rooney. Little could I have imagined that that would be my first diplomatic assignment. Apparently, my wife and I succeeded because nothing more was heard of the unpleasant incident. Only many years later did I learn that my first and only encounter with Congressman Rooney was with the man who later became the terror of USIA witnesses at budget hearings.

1949: Close Contact With Historian Benedetto Croce At The Italian Institute For Historical Studies In Naples

In Naples as a Fulbright scholar I was attached to the Italian Institute for Historical Studies, located in the home of Benedetto Croce, the distinguished Italian philosopher-historian in whose works I'd been greatly interested ever since my undergraduate days. I spent two years there. During that time, I had my first contacts with USIS/Naples, because Fulbrighters were expected to maintain contact with the Fulbright Commission in Rome through the local USIS office. In the course of my stay at the Italian Institute of Historical Studies, I was fortunate enough to have excellent personal rapport with Benedetto, the entire staff of the Institute, and all the young Italian historians working there in various fields of historical studies. This gave me a wide range of contacts in Italian life, because these students, mostly people in their early twenties, came from all part of Italy.

Activities At The Institute And Lecture At USIS Library Ultimately Leads To Entrance Into USIA Predecessor Agency

Q: Just to get this in perspective, what was the date that you took up your Fulbright studies in Italy?

MOCERI: As I said, I arrived in Italy in November of 1949. My Fulbright grant was renewed for a second year at Croce's request, so I remained in Naples at the Institute until June of 1950. During that period, people at USIS, particularly the branch PAO, Chet Opal, became aware of the degree of my acceptance in Italian intellectual circles.

This point was certainly made when I was invited to give a lecture at the USIS library. I chose to lecture on Charles Beard and his concept of American civilization. My impression was that people at USIS were rather surprised by the attendance at the lecture; the director of the Institute, Frederico Chabod, who was one of the most noted of contemporary European historians and at the time president of the International

Conference of Historians, came with the rest of his staff and many of the students. These were people who had never shown up at any USIS function before.

Word apparently got to USIS Rome and the American Embassy about my activities in Neapolitan intellectual circles. I was sounded out on the prospects of joining the United States information program and subsequently invited to apply. I hadn't thought of the possibility at all, because my intention had been to go on with historical research, my specialty having been European intellectual history in the 19th century.

I discussed the possibility with my Italian friends. They urged me to give it serious consideration because they felt that, if I joined the American Foreign Service in Italy, they would have a contact who at least knew the ABCs of Italian political life. As they said, "We don't have to explain the ABCs to you. You know them." These were people, young people, best defined as members of the Italian democratic center, outside of the confessional party, the Christian Democratic Party.

The feeling in these circles was that Americans in Italy talked to democrats but slept with the Fascists. I found their arguments persuasive, and decided, if I could be of help in furthering what I viewed as the common cause of the United States and the kind of Italy that I cared about, it would be worth making some contribution. So I went through the formalities of applying, on the assumption that, after all, I'd be sent back to Italy because USIS Rome wanted me.

Two elements in the experiences of my Neapolitan years are worth recalling because they later counted heavily among the factors that persuaded me to join the USIS sphere of activities in the Foreign Service. My closest Neapolitan friends, whom I had met at the Institute, were under constant, almost daily attack by the local Communist party leaders and intellectuals in the press, in communist publications, and in every forum of political cultural activity. The attacks on my friends, who were fondly referred to by their own democratic colleagues in northern Italy as "i quattro radicali del Mezzogiorno" (best translated as "the little band of Southern radicals"), were vituperative and all too frequently violent in tone: most common was the threat to hang them from the lampposts of Naples the day when the revolution would come. The post-war struggle between democratic and communist forces thus became internalized for me as a civil war in progress within the framework of Western civilization. If I really honored my friendship with these young Italians, I had a moral obligation to join forces with them in the common struggle to preserve and enlarge the arena of liberty in the modern world, a struggle which even then appeared to become long-enduring.

The second element was one that I came to call the "Great Fear of 1950." In the late spring and summer of 1950 a wide-spread conviction took root among my friends and in many other Italian circles that Soviet forces would indeed invade western Europe in August of that year. My friends actively engaged in planning escape routes and organization of eventual resistance activities. The danger never materialized, but the fear was not entirely groundless. The episode further strengthened my growing conviction that

the struggle to reaffirm and expand a liberal order in the post-war world was not a matter of abstract verbalisms but the very flesh and blood of politics, national and international.

1951: Entrance Into USIA Predecessor Organization: Initial Attempt To Assign Moceri
To Argentina Aborted Made Branch PAO In Bari

I left Italy at the end of June of 1950 and returned home to visit with my own family in the Seattle area. At one point, I got a call from Washington saying they had received my application, had processed it and were prepared to offer me an appointment if I would be interested in going to Buenos Aires. I thought this was strange indeed because I'd been asked by the American staff in Italy to join that staff in Italy, where I thought I could make a more direct and immediate contribution, based on a substantial knowledge of Europe and its history, particularly of Italian affairs.

I expressed my dismay. Oh, incidentally, I was told that this would be at the FSR-4 level. I had no idea what the FSR-4 meant and did not ask, primarily because I thought it was a little absurd to offer me Buenos Aires when I knew no Spanish. I knew nothing about South America. I couldn't see what kind of contribution I could make in the short term. I assumed that it would take me at least a year to learn anything, to be able to do any kind of meaningful work in Argentina.

Well, I refused. Two weeks later I got a call from someone apparently in the European division of the State Department. I was informed that the division was delighted to be able to offer me a position in Italy. After all, they had worked out this arrangement and were glad to offer me a position as director of the USIS operation in Bari, Italy. I was to open it up and that was quite important to them. Would I accept that position at a FSR-5/3 level? Again, I never asked what it meant in monetary terms.

Q: I wonder what happened to the four in the process?

MOCERI: [Laughter] Well, I learned later that it always would be a feather in the cap of any personnel officer to get someone at a lower rate than had originally been planned. But I thought, well, I knew Bari. I knew something of Bari. It was, among many other things, also the seat of an important publishing house. I felt I could make a contribution there. So I indicated my immediate acceptance. They asked me to report to Washington in early November of 1951.

So I arrived in Washington knowing absolutely nothing about Washington bureaucracy. I reported in to the personnel office. There I was told to report to the European branch and given a name and an office number. Arrangements would be made there for my briefings. I found the office and reported to the individual whose name had been given me. I asked what I was supposed to do. "Well, sit down and you can spend the next two weeks reading the files." So I lived with those file cabinets for two weeks, systematically reading their contents. Only then, in those files, did I learn that, in fact, not only USIS Rome had been insistent on the State Department making an effort to get me, recruit me, but also the

European division in Washington had been equally insistent and had recommended that I be offered an FSR-4 position.

The only memorable moment in that Washington experience was my attendance in a large auditorium at a full-scale briefing that Secretary Acheson gave on his recent NATO meeting in Lisbon. I came away enormously impressed by the man.

Such, then, was the extent of my introduction, orientation and briefing on Washington, the foreign service, USIS organization and functions in Washington and the field, and on my own duties and responsibilities. I had no idea who was in charge of information and cultural programs for the European area. I had no live contacts with anyone except the personnel and travel offices. Once my orders were cut, off I went, after picking up my family, to Rome and arrived there in January of '52.

On arrival, I reported to the USIS office on Via Buoncompagni in the embassy complex. I had been met at the plane by someone from USIS. I was told to report to Heath Bowman, the USIS Italy deputy director. My introduction, then, to official Foreign Service procedures was a call on the ambassador.

Assignment To Bari Changed By Ambassador Dunn To Florence

Q: Who was?

MOCERI: Ambassador James Dunn. In the course of the meeting, Ambassador Dunn informed Lloyd Free, the director, and Heath Bowman that he wanted me sent to Florence. There was no further talk of opening the post in Bari. They'd have to look for someone else.

The reason for sending me to Florence was that Ambassador Dunn was exceedingly unhappy with Colonel Vissering, who was the commanding officer of the military supply base in Livorno, which was the anchor for the supply line--our military supply line--to our troops in Austria and Bavaria. Colonel Vissering was a man who had achieved a certain notoriety. I'd remembered that there were articles in the Reporter magazine, Max Ascoli's Reporter magazine, on Colonel Vissering, who ran the operation pretty much as he saw fit and paid little or no attention to the American Embassy or Ambassador Dunn--to Ambassador Dunn's great displeasure.

The instruction I received directly from Ambassador Dunn was, "I want you to go to Florence. That will be your base. And I want you to keep an eye on Colonel Vissering and report on his activities and keep him in line with embassy policy." (I vouch for the accuracy of the quotation, for a neophyte could hardly forget the language of an order so direct and peremptory from so exalted an authority.)

Well, I may have been naive about government procedures, but I wasn't naive about political realities. And I was astonished that a man who was regarded as one of the stars

of the American diplomatic service at the time, a man of very considerable reputation after all, would think that by simply sending someone up as an observer, that this person could keep a strong-minded man like Colonel Vissering in line with Mr. Dunn's own policies, whatever those policies were.

I knew enough to know that you could not really control anyone unless you had some authority to do so. I had no written document. There was nothing that would empower me to even make inquiries and tell Colonel Vissering that I would appreciate being informed of his actions. I have always had good reason to believe that the Colonel was never informed, officially or otherwise, of the mission with which I had been charged.

At any rate, I left Rome after five days, a period during which I became acquainted with the staff in Rome. I went to Florence, where I reported to the public affairs officer, Marjorie Ferguson. I informed her of my new assignment, been said and that nothing had been said about my role in USIS activities. I was only to keep a watch on Colonel Vissering. [Laughter]

In the meantime, apparently, Rome decided that this would be a great time for Marjorie Ferguson to get some much-needed home leave.

Q: You could replace her.

MOCERI: [Laughter] So I was there as her substitute and put in charge of the program. I knew nothing about the program at this point, really. So I spent time familiarizing myself with the staff and the USIS activities in the area of Tuscany. And at the same time I made a call on Colonel Vissering in Livorno. And then I began to talk to people in the Livorno area.

Obviously, I thought it was simply absurd that I maintain any kind of control over Colonel Vissering. [Laughter] He was not the kind of man who was about to listen to anyone out of the line of command. And maybe he didn't listen to people in the line of command, either. But I did keep myself informed as to his policies with regard to labor practices and his relationship with various elements of the society of Livorno--its political society, that is.

In the course of making inquiries, I became acquainted with quite a few people in the Livorno area, including a Dr. Merli, editor of an interesting little magazine for intellectuals seriously interested in politics.

I think I should say that, at this point, Livorno had been administered since the end of the war by the Communist Party. The mayor of Livorno was a communist--a young communist intellectual, considered to be one of the coming lights of the Party, and, possibly, an eventual successor to Palmiro Togliatti. His name was Furio Diaz.

Furio Diaz was then a young man, about my age. I was then 34. His academic work had been in the field of Italian history and of historical methodology, another one of my principal intellectual interests. We later became acquainted and there were some interesting developments, to which I'll get in a moment.

He had heard about me from Dr. Merli, the editor of the magazine to which I have just referred. Incidentally, Merli was also an increasingly important figure among the Christian Democrats of the Livorno area. Many people might have been surprised by the relationship between the two men. Certainly, Americans would have been surprised that there was this kind of contact and relationship and even friendship among people who were exponents of opposing ideologies. But anyone who'd been in Italy knew that statistically the chances were that every third person one might meet could be a member of the Communist Party. And families were divided, and yet united, as Italian families often are.

I went about my work of learning something of the activities of USIS. I, of course, saw the material sent out by Rome: press releases, material for the press. I became acquainted with a number of Italian newspaper people in Florence, and plunged into the time-consuming routine of developing contacts with editors, publishers, newspapers, magazines, university people, particularly in the areas of politics and history, to identify those who had some influence in local political life, and reached out throughout the Tuscany area which at that time was, of course, communist-controlled. Almost every commune of Tuscany was under the control of a communist administration. I approached people like the people at Il Ponte, an independent left-wing monthly magazine, providing them with materials and (more importantly) laying the foundations for the kind of relationship that would permit serious discussion of political issues of common interest.

At that time, we had mobile units showing films around the countryside and in Florence itself. So gradually I became familiar with the whole array of USIS materials and techniques of distribution. That, simply, was the mechanical part. The real part was keeping informed as to what the political sentiments were, who the players were, who had any kind of influence, and in what ways.

And this in an environment where the democratic parties squabbled among themselves as much as they squabbled with the communists. Being the minority, they had little influence on actual political decisions made in the--both in the city of Florence and in the region itself.

Two Incidents Involving Moceri Contacts With Important Italian Political Figures And Related U.S. Embassy Reactions

Of memorable experiences, let me point out a couple examples. First, let me get back to Furio Diaz, the mayor of Livorno. Through Dr. Merli, with whom over time I had established an excellent rapport, Furio Diaz learned a good deal about me. In 1955, late '54, early '55, he sent out various feelers and indicated that he'd be interested in meeting

with me. Could I arrange for him to receive materials on the Soviet judicial system and practice? I viewed this as the first overture to an eventual break with the Communist Party, and realized immediately what the consequences could be. By 1955 Furio Diaz had established himself, in the opinion of many well-informed people, as the unnamed successor to Togliatti, whenever Togliatti would step down. His defection from the party in 1955, would have severely shaken the party, particularly the whole category of the intellectuals who were members of the party. And, of course, in the area of Tuscany there were a number of prominent intellectuals who were ardent party members.

I dutifully reported this to USIS Rome and received an interesting response: that I was to stay away from Furio Diaz and the matter would be taken care of through other channels.

Q: The old-line, political aspect of the ambassadorial hierarchy in those days, of course.

MOCERI: Well, it's hard to know what may have happened. I assume that at the time Rome decided the matter could be handled very quietly by someone else. It took no great power of divination to sense that the "someone else" proved to be a sometime American journalist living in Florence at the time, whom I knew reasonably well. The point is that Furio Diaz did not leave the party, as I fully anticipated he intended to do in 1955. He left only after the Hungarian revolution and the Soviet suppression of that revolution. Although his defection was an important loss for the Communist Party, it did not have the enormous political impact that it would have had in 1955, a year earlier. In the wake of the Hungarian Revolution, a considerable number of intellectuals left the party, and Diaz was only one among the more prominent. There were others, like Antonio Giolitti, the grandson of the famous premier of the once-democratic, pre-Fascist Italy.

Q: At this point, do you have any idea how the journalist went about establishing this contact? Was he able to provide the material regarding the legal system of the Soviet Union, as had been asked?

MOCERI: I knew that the journalist had received this charge. I decided, because I felt that there should be a clear distinction between my activities and CIA activities--I was very sensitive on this subject--I decided not to inform myself. So I do not know what he did, or whether, in fact, he ever established contact. I never saw Furio Diaz again. I never asked my intermediary, Dr. Merli in Livorno. And even though I saw Merli frequently after that, I felt it was just better to let the matter die. Because, in their minds, they must have been greatly puzzled by the strange way in which Americans did things. From their perspective, given what they knew of my intellectual interests, I was surely an "interlocuteur valable" for Furio Diaz.

Another aspect of my association with Dr. Merli in Livorno was that he was very close to the then-president of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Giovanni Gronchi.

Q: You're speaking of the journalist or...

MOCERI: I'm speaking of Dr. Merli, the magazine editor. Giovanni Gronchi was, as I said, then president of the Italian Chamber of Deputies and later became president of Italy. My friend Merli had obviously briefed him very carefully on me. Whenever Gronchi came to Florence, he made arrangements for me to meet him and spend an hour riding with him in his car around Florence. He would talk to me about his view of America and the Americans in Rome, the European situation and whatever else he felt Americans should hear from him.

Q: He was a Christian Democrat?

MOCERI: Yes, a leader of an important faction of the left-wing faction of the Christian Democratic Party. For reasons which I never quite understood, he had very poor relations with Mrs. Luce, who had become our ambassador to Italy. When he was elected president of Italy, the relations worsened. I think it was common knowledge that the kindest word, epithet, Mrs. Luce had for Gronchi was "that stallion." She really had contempt for him.

Q: Do you assume that he conducted his conversations with you in his car because he felt that there was a possibility he would be listened to elsewhere or that he'd be too visible and he just wanted you to have it in private?

MOCERI: Right. He learned, felt--because of the things his press secretary, who was my friend, had told him about me--that he could count on me to report accurately anything he said. So he would convey his view of Mrs. Luce and American policy in Italy and so on to me. And I would faithfully report it in written memoranda to Rome, copies of which were apparently sent to Washington.

In 1955, '56--I'm getting confused now, that was '56--Gronchi was invited to the United States.

Q: May I interrupt just a moment? If you were reporting Gronchi's attitude and feelings towards Mrs. Luce, they couldn't have been very complimentary.

MOCERI: Anything but. They were not complimentary.

Q: So you were reporting this to the embassy, or to USIS, with copies to Washington. To USIA in Washington?

MOCERI: I sent no copies to Washington. I reported to USIS Rome. I thought it was not up to me to report to Washington. That was a function of the Rome office. I assumed that the embassy political section did see the memoranda that I sent to our people in Rome--to Ned Nordness, the country PAO--and that the CIA people also saw them. Whether the political section had any interest in transmitting my reports to Washington, I don't know. I learned later that the CIA headquarters in Washington did know of my reports.

Q: The Washington office of CIA did not always inform the political office in the State Department.

MOCERI: Could well have been.

Q: Question is, did it ever get to the State Department?

MOCERI: That I don't know. I have no idea. All I know is, that when Gronchi did come to the United States, Mrs. Luce had recommended that he be given, simply, the courtesy of a brief, get-acquainted meeting with President Eisenhower. And that he then be dismissed by the White House and left to the various other agencies of government, to satisfy his ego.

The fact of the matter was that Gronchi spent six hours with Eisenhower. I was later told that this was the direct result of the CIA input, based on the various memoranda that I had sent about our conversations, my conversations with Gronchi.

There is another aspect to this story which has some interest, I think, for the whole question of the USIA role. Gronchi, through his press officer, my friend, asked that I be assigned to him, to accompany him to the United States. My friend felt this was great because I could explain all kinds of things about the United States to Gronchi, who had never been to this country before. He thought I could serve, in fact, as a consultant to him on American life, and so on.

The request was made verbally to the political section of the embassy.

Q: By whom? By Gronchi?

MOCERI: Gronchi, through his press officer. The response was, "We would like to have this in writing over the President's signature," something President Gronchi, and I would assume any other President, would never do. They would not put that kind of a request in writing. That was the end of that. [Laughter] I, of course, was rather upset about it.

I began to understand something about bureaucratic infighting within the American Government--an understanding that became the basis for my later firm belief that the various entities of the U.S. Government spent more time fighting each other than working on their common problems.

Q: Well, in those days, it was quite common for anybody on the political--the State Department regular political side--to look down upon anyone in USIA. And they refused to admit that anyone in that organization could have a political concept worth considering. So I assume that they felt this would be a slap in the face to them, and, consequently, they were never going to permit it.

MOCERI: I think you're quite correct. That was the conclusion to which I came. It led to my conviction that the only way those of us in USIA--because by that time we were a separate organization--could establish our own credibility and achieve any kind of status, was to be as good as if not better political officers than any other people in the State Department.

On Another Occasion Moceri Opportunity To Make Contact With Key Communist Party Central Committee Member Squelched By Ambassador Luce

And, therefore, we really had to understand the politics of the country to which we were accredited and work ourselves into that fabric so that we could move in it easily and learn. I had met a Montecatini employee responsible for management's relations with that giant corporation's labor force in the mines of the Grosseto province of Tuscany. He had good connections with the top management of the Montecatini industrial complex in Milano, a lot of experience in the labor movement and knew a number of the top cadre of the Italian Communist Party, including, especially, a certain Onofrio, who was the member of the Italian Communist Party Central Committee in charge of the training of communist cadres.

I had, from him, an open invitation to meet with Onofrio or any other member of the Central Committee any time I wanted. Such meetings could have been easily and quietly arranged. Having been slightly burned in the matter of contacts with the mayor of Livorno, I did let Mrs. Luce know of this new possibility through Ned Nordness. Mrs. Luce informed me, personally, on the occasion of a visit to Florence, that despite all the confidence she had in my judgment and discretion, she could not agree to my meeting with members of the Italian Communist Party hierarchy. If she allowed me to do this, she could not turn down the numerous requests she would inevitably get from other people in the embassy and elsewhere for arranging similar contacts.

I thought, to myself, we were really cutting off our legs, you know. I felt then that, especially, we Americans ought to be able to talk to anyone in the country.

Q: You were saying that American officers ought to be able to talk to anyone in the country. And I said, "Yes, and to each other."

MOCERI: Of course, to each other. Importantly, we ought not to deny ourselves access to any segment of political thought or action in the country, regardless of the attitude of the governing group. For it is in the nature of history that change occurs. And those who may have been in opposition or in dissent might one day be in power. And it also becomes a valuable means of checking on the claims and pretensions and, indeed, the effective power of the governing group. I might have more to say about this when I get to the question of my service in the Sudan.

Success Of Moceri's Fulbright Exchange Nominees

During all these years there were of course all the other, more conventional USIS activities in which I was heavily involved. A few examples, by way of illustration. In a city with a great tradition of private libraries and semi-private libraries belonging to generally restricted scholarly societies (sometimes centuries-old), I wanted the open-shelved USIS library to be as rich in its holdings as possible. So much of what had been published in America during the Fascist era and the war years was virtually unknown in Italy, exception being made for a handful of specialists. Moreover, given Florentine pride in the city's great literary traditions, I made every effort to ensure that our library had the most substantial holdings in American literature and literary magazines in all of Italy. I personally interviewed--and recommended as candidates to the Fulbright Commission in Rome--all Italian applicants for Fulbright grants residing in my territorial area of responsibility. For me it became a source of considerable satisfaction and even pride that virtually all my recommendations were accepted by the Fulbright Commission. In later decades most of these grantees achieved standings of some note in the political or intellectual life of Italian society. The same could be said, in even more unqualified terms, for my recommendations of candidates for our State Department-financed leader program.

As an illustration of this last point let me cite the case of Ettore Bernabei, who was when I first met him the editor of the Florentine daily Il Mattino d'Italia, the local mouthpiece of the ruling Christian Democratic Party. After we had developed a reasonably good working relationship, I made it possible for him to go to the United States on one of our leader grants. By the mid-sixties he had been elevated to the position of director-general of Italy's RAI/TV, the State's radio/television broadcasting monopoly.

Transfer Of Branch PAO, Florence, Ultimately Makes Moceri BPAO

Q: This is a little past the time when I should have asked the question but, did you, in effect, subsequently, become the Branch PAO? Or did the lady [Marjorie Ferguson] return and assume her position? And when you were undertaking these activities and these offers, were you then head of the program in Florence or not?

MOCERI: Yes, I was the head. When Marjorie Ferguson returned from her home leave, a decision had been made by Lloyd Free and Heath Bowman to move her up to Milano, which really was a much more important center because Milano was the economic capital of Italy. I'd been de facto head of the USIS office in Florence. And on Marjorie's return from home leave, I became the de jure head.

October 1953: Budget Cuts Cause Closing Of USIS Bologna, And Transfer Of BPAO There To Be Head Of USIS Florence, Situation Uncomfortable

Then, a year later, because of budget cuts in Washington, they decided to consolidate offices. And there was a decision to abolish the Bologna office as a separate branch post, retaining however the office, staff and library as part of the USIS Florence operation. Frederick Jochum, who was the PAO in Bologna, was transferred to Florence as the new

director. Being junior to Fritz in grade, I was downgraded to the rank of deputy branch PAO; something which greatly puzzled all my Florentine associates and contacts. Word kept coming back to me, "How do Americans run their administrative procedures?"

They found this move puzzling because they viewed the change in my status as a question of personal dignity; that it would have been more correct to have removed me from Florence rather than to subject me to the humiliation of a subordinate position in the same office. But there were games that were played. As Heath Bowman said, "They just wanted to see how the chemistry would work." And I was determined to make it work. [Laughter] After all, there wasn't much else I could do, and I did want the momentum of the program activities I had been developing to continue. It was more uncomfortable for Fritz Jochum, because he really had to overcome attitudes of puzzlement and even resentment among his Florentine contacts. I think it fair to say that he never really succeeded.

In the process, though, I also, in that period in Florence, established very good relations with a group of young university people in Bologna who had gotten a magazine and small publishing house under way. Working with Gertrude Hooker, an assistant cultural affairs officer in Rome, we got them interested in the USIS translation program. And they became--the group of Il Molino--became one of the principal publishing outlets for our translation program.

Q: What translation program?

MOCERI: The book translation program. Today Il Molino ranks as one of the leading publishing houses in Italy. It's almost as important as Mondadori, the giant among Italian book publishers. And for scholarly work, probably even more important. That, to me, was a real achievement.

So much of this, so much of my work with the intellectuals, magazines, newspapers and universities could be traced back to the initial contacts that I'd made at the Italian Institute for Historical Studies in Naples. That earlier association made it possible for me to move into almost any Italian city and rapidly develop a useful network of contacts and personal relations.

Unlike France, in Italy influence and prestige and power are all related to given circles. And the circles are always overlapping. Therefore, if you have entree in one circle, that entree enables you to move into any number of other circles. Each circle always radiates outward for almost always each member of the circle has ties with other circles. In France each circle is virtually self-contained, and movement from one circle to another becomes quite difficult to manage.

Q: In France, everything goes to Paris.

MOCERI: It's one thing and one group. As I have said, if you work with one group it's very difficult to move into another group. In Italy, it's quite different.

1954-55: Moceri Again Becomes Branch PAO, Florence, And Soon Adds Bologna, Venice, and Trieste To His Region

In 1955, the Allied military government in Trieste was dissolved and administration was turned over to Italy. Parenthetically, I should note here that Fritz Jochum remained less than a year before transferring to Washington in a more important position in the motion picture division. I thus inherited not only the Emilia-Romagna region around Bologna but also Venice, where our offices had been closed down, and its hinterland, the Veneto. All this in 1954. And then in 1955, Trieste as well. The territory for which I was responsible accounted for more than a quarter of Italy's territory and contained, after all, some of the most important universities, magazines, publishers, and newspapers as well as the electoral backbone of the Italian communist party.

Q: Were you then reestablished as the director of the regional office? Or were you still...

MOCERI: No, I had been restored to the position of branch PAO upon Fritz Jochum's departure for Washington.

Q: With an enlarged territory?

MOCERI: Yes. And Fritz had been partly responsible, I think, for the upgrading of my status. He'd come in suspecting that I would probably be disloyal to him. He made several trips to Rome to find out what I might have been reporting through other channels. I suppose you might say "back channels," [Laughter] although I didn't even know that term at the time. As he acknowledged later, he satisfied himself that I'd been completely loyal and that I kept our differences entirely within our personal relationship. In Washington, I know he was responsible for putting in a very strong word for me. It was only at the end of 1954 that I was given my first promotion.

Reversion To Discussion Of Legge Truffa ("Fraudulent Law") Incident Of 1953 Re The Italian National Election

There are, I guess, other things I should mention. One of my early encounters, at first unpleasant, with Lloyd Free was in relationship to the Italian political elections of 1953 and the famous Legge Truffa, the...

Q: Could you spell that, too?

MOCERI: Legge, L-E-G-G-E, and Truffa, T-R-U-F-F-A; literally, the "fraudulent law." This was a law governing the elections for 1953, to the effect that a party or coalition of parties which received 50% plus 1 vote--in other words, a numerical majority of at least one vote--would receive 66% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Americans seem not to have understood that this was the same law by which Mussolini had seized control of the Italian Parliament. It had been pressed, of course, by the Christian Democratic Party. They wanted to assure themselves of the majority. We saw this as a way of guaranteeing the passage of anything we wanted our friends in the Italian Government to do.

My own soundings, not only in Tuscany, but through my various friends in other cities of Italy, led me to the conclusion that unless Mario Scelba, who was Minister of Interior of the Christian Democratic Government, could manipulate more than 10% of the vote, the center coalition formed by the DC's and Liberals, Republicans and Social Democrats would not win the necessary majority.

There was a meeting of the branch public affairs officers in Rome in the early spring of '53. Lloyd Free presided. Naturally, the concern, the concern of all the people in the American Embassy in Rome, was the issue of the upcoming elections. Would the center get its majority? And there was great confidence that it would.

The reporting to Washington had been that they would win a majority, though it must be said that as the date of the elections approached the prediction of the margin of victory kept changing so that the margin kept shrinking. At the meeting, every branch PAO reported, for his area, that yes, things were going well and the center coalition would, indeed, win and win solidly.

This was one of my first meetings. And I spoke up. I was asked, by Lloyd Free, what the feeling was in Tuscany. I reported on that. I then broadened by statements to say, flatly, that I did not think that the center coalition would get its majority. Lloyd Free was almost visibly shaken. I was called in the next day and raked over the coals for my "presumption" in the face of the conventional wisdom.

Q: I'm surprised. Because I had known Lloyd Free before and I would have thought that he would have given some credence to that report. I'm surprised that he reacted the way you say he did.

MOCERI: Well, I don't know what pressures there may have been on Lloyd Free. After all, even a country PAO is not a free agent. And I have to assume that he was dealing with a situation, some aspects of which I did not know.

Let me say that, once the election returns came in, I got a telephone call from Lloyd Free. He asked me to come down to Rome to spend two days. I went to Rome. He called me into his office on my arrival. And he told me that he wanted, personally, to apologize for having raked me over the coals. He wanted me to understand that he recognized that I had been right in my analysis and he accepted that. And I was, as you can imagine, immensely pleased, because I think this was the first word of praise that I'd received from anyone in USIA. [Laughter]

Q: A similar situation arose in 1953 regarding Japan. Sax Bradford was my PAO in Japan. When he went to Washington on home leave in 1953, he was convinced that Yoshida, who was then Prime Minister, was going to be defeated decisively in an upcoming national election, because of a misstep he had made in the Diet. A majority, but not everybody in Japan thought so. Sax in his debriefing at the State Department assured everyone at State without reservation that Yoshida would lose. Two weeks later, Yoshida was returned by an overwhelming majority. You can imagine Bradford's embarrassment.

MOCERI: Yes. The American Embassy spent a good deal of time trying to explain away its miscalculation. There was always talk about the--something like 3,000 votes short of majority, without any realization of what the broader implications of such a victory might have been. This was stealing the elections, in the crudest sense possible, and in the pattern of a, by then, well-hated regime--a regime, which had brought Italy only disaster.

I was talking earlier about people I sent to the States. I sent another journalist, a young man named Lepri, to the United States on a Leader grant. Ten years later he was made the head of ANSA, the Italian news agency.

Well, this happened, you know, with many of the people I recommended for either Fulbright grants or Leader grants; people who in the years after I left Italy carved out a position of prominence for themselves in Italian affairs, even on the national level. Obviously, it meant that I felt very deeply about the importance of this kind of grantee-type program and a very strong sense of responsibility for selecting people who had the kind of substance that could lead to important positions in Italian life.

1955: Moceri Becomes Acting PAO for Italy For About Three Months

In 1955, I got a call from Ned Nordness in Rome, by then our Public Affairs Officer in Rome, to come down to Rome and act in his place. He had suffered an injury. So I went down to Rome and became acting country public affairs officer for about three months.

Q: And what date was this?

MOCERI: This was the summer of '55. Ned was hospitalized and then decided to take some leave until he had fully recovered. So for three months I was in charge of the Italian program--a difficult time, faced as I was with the problem of submitting the annual report and a country budget, to mention only two major items. I'd never dealt with a country budget before. Moreover, there was no deputy country PAO and I also had to assume the responsibilities of chief information officer--yet another vacancy at the top of the country program.

I think the thing that astonished me most in Rome was lack of coordination among the various officers of USIS Rome. They had country responsibilities and also local responsibilities. And messages would go out with little or no coordination. So I set up, for

myself, a procedure for reviewing absolutely all outgoing correspondence before it left our offices. And I'd send notes to people, saying in effect, "Look, why didn't you check with your colleague across the hall?"

I was appalled. I couldn't understand this sort of thing. The press section never talked to the people in the cultural section, and vice versa. Or one officer to another officer.

Q: Did you have any--as director--staff meetings?

MOCERI: Oh yes, I did. Of course, I did. The staff went through all those formalities, but when it came time to do their own work they never bothered to inform anybody else. So that occupied a lot of time. I was the lowest-ranking branch PAO in Italy, and outranked by all department heads in Rome headquarters. This meant that I could establish my authority only through exhaustive knowledge of all our operations. That was the only way I could do it with any credibility.

Massive 1955 Report On Evidence Of Effectiveness Of USIS Libraries In Italy
Eventually Falls Into Oblivion

One of the most important items of business during that summer of 1955 was the requirement to submit to Washington, together with the USIS Budget, the annual report on USIS Italy activities. I had been appalled by the lack of interest, indeed the indifference, shown by so many of our officers in our library operations in Italy. I was well aware of all the pressure from Washington for the submission of evidence of effectiveness. (I had my own views--skeptical, to say the least--on what often was palmed off as evidence of effectiveness.)

I realized I could use the authority of my new situation to produce a solid body of evidence that could be subjected to independent verification. I drafted a message to all our branches, requesting them to submit in their reports a specific accounting of the uses made of our libraries. Specifically, I wanted this in terms of university theses, papers, articles, materials prepared for public speeches, etc., by Italians using materials from our libraries.

I wanted titles, publication date, if any, when the material was prepared, who prepared it, under whose supervision, and for what purpose. My hope was that we could put together a checklist that could be analyzed and subjected to independent verification. I was insistent on that last requirement because I wanted branch PAO's to realize there could be no fudging or doctoring of the evidence.

We assembled all the material submitted in the form of a catalogue of items devoid of any editorial commentary or rationalization. I forwarded this massive catalogue as a separate report to Washington. It contained over 5,500 instances of use of library materials in the preparation of magazine or newspaper articles, university theses, publications, etc. from all of Italy in that one year.

As you'll recall, many years later in 1971, Henry Loomis instructed me to do a study of USIS library functions overseas. I searched high and low for a copy of that 1955 report from Rome. It could not be found. We searched in the retired Agency archives in Virginia. The original and any copies had simply disappeared--a report that I had every reason to believe would be considered in Washington to be one of the most impressive evidences of the effectiveness, not merely of the library, but of the USIS organization itself ever produced.

How could anyone have ignored all the implications of such a record? It had to mean that an awful lot of people in Italy had turned to the USIS sources. It meant a continuing and, in many cases, sustained relationship. Yet USIS Rome never heard a word from Washington about the catalogue or any use made of it. I was left to wonder whether anyone even looked at it.

Q: I didn't know about your study--and I'm trying to remember the year in which I was sent out, also by Henry Loomis; it was either '71 or '72--but at the time they had given me this "made" job (because I had come into conflict with Mr. Shakespeare), to set up and direct a newly created Resource Analysis Staff. One of the studies that Henry had asked me to do, and I think it was in late '71, early '72, was to check on the utilization of the libraries and the justification for their existence in several places. I covered the Far East because that was my particular point of interest. I sent two of my other people to other parts of the world.

And I think the whole thing traced back to the fact that Tom Sorensen, at one point, back in the mid-60s, among other things, had come to the conclusion that libraries are simply a frivolous use of our funds and ought to be curtailed; that we had a lot of libraries that were operating, but who in the hell was using them? That feeling tended to permeate throughout much of the Agency.

That may account for the disappearance of your report on Italy's libraries. It may, also, account for the fact that Henry wanted another check on them, expecting to get an adverse report. Oleksiw was on the same wavelength. I came back with a favorable report that they shouldn't be terminated, that they were vastly important aspects of the program.

MOCERI: If I may, sir, correct your historical recollection. You did that Far East Study because I asked for it. And I incorporated it, as an appendix, in my overall library report that Henry had asked me to do. The report was distributed in the Agency under the date of September 1, 1971. And, as I recall, you and I had some difference then, because you had the clear impression you had been asked to do this library study.

Q: I had been.

MOCERI: And I had the same impression because Henry had sent me a note on it, instructing me to undertake it. Perhaps you had other things of higher priority to do. As you may recall, I was then the head of that little unit that I created, the Analysis and Evaluation Unit, in the Office of Research. I asked if you would do the Far East because I was going to go to Europe and the Middle East and South America. And, you know, obviously, your report became incorporated in my 1971 study.

Q: I sometimes think Henry was not always aware that he gave different people overlapping assignments.

MOCERI: But my point was here, with all the Agency talk about effectiveness was one of the most important evidences of effectiveness. One could have gone to Congress with the material and made an excellent case, because this was a list not only of topics that showed the range of interest in the materials that we provided but also of people who had actively used our resources.

You know, these were certainly not the kind of library visitors that William Buckley had in mind when he said in a USIA Advisory Committee meeting, airily dismissing my library study, "Oh, people come in only to get cool because the libraries are air-conditioned." I'm sure Buckley hasn't changed his mind to this day, because hard evidence held no interest for him in matters on which he had formed an opinion, however groundless.

Well, I suppose there are many other things I could say about my Italian experience. I had had my share of frustrations and disappointments. I had generally managed to keep these under control and in perspective. One disappointment, however, cut quite deeply and certainly had a decided effect on my Agency career. The position of deputy country PAO had been vacant since the spring of 1955, when John McKnight and Ambassador Luce had had a parting of ways. Having served for three months as acting country PAO, acting deputy country PAO and acting chief information officer for a program as large as USIS Italy, when Nordness returned to his office as Country PAO in September of that year, I asked if he would consider nominating me for the position. He knew how satisfied Mrs. Luce was with my performance and how well she thought of me. He declined, adducing as his reason his conviction that in fairness to the Foreign Service all officers should be expected to move up the career ladder step by step. In October Mrs. Luce was in Washington on consultation. The Agency approached her on the subject of the vacant position and suggested the name of Charles Blackman as deputy to Nordness. Mrs. Luce accepted. In the meantime Nordness had second thoughts and called Mrs. Luce in Washington to suggest my name for appointment as his deputy. She told him that unfortunately she had just accepted the Blackman designation. According to Nordness, she would gladly have asked for my appointment to the position if Nordness had given her any hint of his interest for he knew how well she thought of me and how willing she was to do anything in reason for me. More than one person in Rome wondered why I never asked Mrs. Luce for anything because there were those who sometimes referred to

me as "her fair-haired boy." Frankly, I hated the very idea of being obligated to anyone of superior rank for a favor.

The Abortive Effort To Have A Prominent Italian Historian Write A History Of Clare Boothe Luce's Ambassadorial Period

Another incident involving my relationship with Mrs. Luce may serve as a minor historical or biographical footnote, because I don't think anybody else knows about it. In the same summer of 1955, Mrs. Luce had expressed to me a desire to have a reputable Italian writer do a thoughtful history of her ambassadorship in Italy. I said I thought I could arrange this. Later, I arranged an appointment with her office for her to meet my closest Italian friend, a young Italian historian, Vittorio de Capra Riis. Vittorio de Capra Riis had been my earliest Italian contact when I came to Italy.

He was, at the time, Secretary to the Italian Institute for Historical Studies, and probably the most promising historian of his generation. His specialty had been in the history of political thought.

In the intervening years, he had written an impressive volume on the origins of democratic thought in France in the 16th century. He'd been in 1950 one of those who'd urged me to talk about Charles Beard at USIS Naples because he knew about my high respect for Beard as an historian. He wrote an excellent essay on Carl Becker and became--in part as a result of our own conversations about American historians--more and more interested in the history of American political thought, as a major contribution to the general realm of democratic thought in the modern world.

I introduced Vittorio to Mrs. Luce. We had a wonderful meeting. He and I insisted that he'd have to have open access to the records of the embassy. I felt this was absolutely essential, because I saw it as a means of going beyond partisan polemics to a genuinely valid American policy in Italy from the end of the war. I felt we had nothing to be ashamed of and an accurate accounting would be very creditable.

At any rate, I think when Mrs. Luce realized that this young man was not going to lend himself to a propaganda job but wanted to do a serious piece of research, then she backed away--but very pleasantly. We all parted on very amicable terms.

The Proposed Oppenheimer Speech Incident, Nixed By Ambassador Luce

This brings to mind one other episode involving Mrs. Luce. In 1954, the then mayor of Florence was Giorgio La Pira, who really thought of himself in both deed and spirit as a modern Saint Francis. "The red monk," as he was called by some including Mrs. Luce. A man who never had a lira in his pocket and on more than one occasion had taken the coat off his back to give to a person he felt in need. "The Communist Christian Democrat," as he was sometimes called, decided to organize a series of annual conferences on the use of atomic energy for world peace. He was derided by many people for this kind of proposal.

He was a dreamer. He was the kind of person who could get 55,000 nuns around the world to devote a day of prayer for the salvation of Stalin's soul because he believed in the efficacy of prayer. He was serious about this.

He came one day to my office (and subsequently we met in his office) to discuss the possibility of American participation, because he felt that, without American participation, that is, the participation of the leader in atomic energy and possessors of nuclear bombing capability, his conference plan would have no world resonance.

I thought, "Well, this is an excellent opportunity for the Eisenhower Administration to start mending fences with the scientific community in the United States." There had been, as you well remember, the great split with much of that community over the Oppenheimer matter. Although it could be argued that I was being guilty of unusual political naivete concerning American politics, I felt instantly that La Pira's initiative could be used as a skillful ploy to get us over a pretty rough period in relations with American scientists. The American Government could simply designate Oppenheimer as the American speaker for this conference, or let it be known that it had no objection to Oppenheimer addressing this conference if he were invited by Mayor La Pira. Oppenheimer would not even have to speak in the name of the American Government. What could impress European intellectuals more at that time than to have the Eisenhower Administration demonstrate its even-handedness and its respect for the scientific mind.

Well, through Ned Nordness I relayed the suggestion and my rationale to Mrs. Luce, who apparently was just horrified by the thought of being the intermediary for such a communication to Washington. [Laughter] It never happened, but I still consider it a great political opportunity lost.

Q: It could have worked in so nicely with our subsequent Atoms for Peace exhibits all around the world.

MOCERI: Right. I remember that. There was one other episode, but I think that's probably enough on Italy.

Q: Before we leave Italy, I want to ask you one thing. Do you know whether Lloyd Free ever reported to the political powers in the embassy your analysis of the situation in Tuscany, with reference to the 1953 election?

MOCERI: I have no idea.

Q: He probably did not, or if he did, he may have done so in an offhand, cursory manner.

MOCERI: I think he was straightforward with me about it. And at that point, it didn't make any difference.

Q: Well, it did not make any difference, but it would have been interesting to find out. If he had reported your disagreement with the consensus of the rest of the people about it, it might have had some effect. I'm just wondering if he ever had the courage to bring it up.

MOCERI: I don't know. All I can say, Lew, is that I think that the mind-set in Rome was such, it was cast in concrete and there was no changing it. There was no willingness to question anything about it.

That also led to one of my firm convictions that stayed with me all through my Agency career. For God's sake, never take all your assumptions for granted. Keep questioning them. No matter how right they may seem to you, try to find out if today, at this moment, in this particular situation, they really hold. Because I think we'd have been so much better off if we had really recognized what was going on.

And we might not have taken whatever the Christian Democratic politicians were telling us at face value. I know a lot was discounted, but...

Return To An Incident In 1951: Reunion Of WWII Resistance Groups In Venice

Let me go back to my first days in Italy, when I went as a Fulbright grantee, because there is another episode that I would really like to be a matter of record.

In the spring of 1951, the various resistance groups--World War II resistance groups in Italy--decided to hold their first national meeting of the post-war era. So they organized a conference in Venice. My close Neapolitan friends--a group of five, who were known as the radicals of the south in democratic circles in Italy--asked me to go up to Venice with them.

I was delighted and eagerly looked forward to being in Venice. I thought, "Oh, all the people I've read about, people who were active in the resistance movement, are going to be there. And I can meet people like Leo Valiani, who was a close friend of Arthur Koestler and figured prominently in one of Koestler's novels. And meeting Ferruccio Parri, and all the other important figures in that Italian resistance movement."

I hadn't thought about the question of American representation until I got there and realized that I was the only foreigner at this meeting, in Venice, of all the major figures of the Italian resistance movement.

I said to myself, "The people in the American Embassy in Rome have got to be out of their minds. Are they so fearful of the communists that they don't want to be seen in the same arena with them, for goodness sake?" Because, you know, the communist propaganda line was that the communists really created and led the Italian resistance movement. This line, historically speaking, was nonsense. They played an important part, of course, because they were an important political force. They'd been an active underground during the Fascist era. But there were other groups, many other groups.

And here I was the only foreigner on the scene. An American figure of prominence in the Italian campaign of World War II, even as an unofficial representative, would have had an electrifying effect on that audience in Venice.

Q: This brings me to two questions. Was Dunn the ambassador at that time?

MOCERI: Yes.

Q: If you had been in the USIS, at that time, rather than a Fulbright grantee, you would have been expected to seek permission and you probably would have been denied it. I'm not even sure that anybody from the embassy political section would have been permitted to go, for the reasons that you indicate; a fear of contamination by the Communist Party representatives.

Dunn had a great reputation, but he was of the old school and a very conservative man, whom I never knew at that time, but got to know slightly later.

MOCERI: Oh, really?

Q: At that time, I wouldn't have known what his reaction would be. But I got to know him later, and I think that would have been the reaction. Dunn was in his last days as Ambassador to Brazil when I went to Rio in 1956. He had returned from retirement to replace Kemper, a political appointee who had somewhat embarrassed the U.S. as Ambassador to Brazil.

MOCERI: I have no doubt. I have no doubt of that. We were victims of a demonology. We thought in terms of demonology; so many of us did.

Q: We weren't too far wrong in the Cold War. But, on the other hand, we exaggerated our reactions and, apparently, we denied ourselves many bits of information.

MOCERI: Not only did we deny ourselves, but we also denied ourselves a positive effect on groups that had some kind of kinship with us in their democratic beliefs.

Q: That's right.

MOCERI: And we could have reinforced them.

Q: And, perhaps, had some influence on the communists, through that.

MOCERI: Of course, of course. I mentioned earlier that Furio Diaz, the mayor of Livorno, was looking for a way out, but he did not want to appear as, you know, a captive of the Americans. He did not want to appear as if he owed a future, his future, to the dominant political party, the Christian Democrats, or anyone else. He wanted to be

independent. He wanted it understood that he was his own man. And this is, you know, very important in the political world.

Moceri's Role In Establishing A Chair Of American History In The University Of Florence

Reflecting on what I have already said about my tour of duty in Florence, my first in the Foreign Service, I ought to record here certain aspects of that experience which may be of interest for the light they shed on my program activities and my standing in the Foreign Service.

In 1954 USIS Rome called me to enlist my help in persuading the Ministry of Education to establish a university chair in American history. Rome had tried for two years without any success whatsoever. I reminded Rome that its goal was utterly alien to the Italian academic tradition and would encounter, as they must already have realized, intransigent academic and political resistance. In the Italian university system only four cattedre, i.e., chairs or full professorships, in the area of historical studies were recognized: ancient history, medieval history, modern history and--the only national history--history of the Risorgimento and Italian Unity. After many exploratory discussions with most of my contacts in university circles, I had a series of meetings with Giacomo Devoto, then Italy's most distinguished philologist and dean of the faculty of letters at the University of Florence. Devoto was quite aware of my links with Naples and Benedetto Croce. With considerable patience and in great detail he outlined for my benefit the very lengthy, complicated, indeed tortuous procedures that had to be followed to achieve the goal I had set for myself. Under the best of circumstances it would take at least two years to move the proposals through the various chains of authority in the Italian state's bureaucratic universe. The very first and possibly most difficult hurdle was the person of the professor of modern history. Without his consent the question could not even be brought before the faculty of letters for a vote. That person was Delio Cantimori, not only one of Italy's best historians but the most distinguished intellectual in the fold of the Italian Communist Party. Thanks to the diplomatic overtures of several friends, his consent was finally obtained. And thanks to Devoto's unfailing support, the proposal completed its arduous journey through all the necessary organs of the Italian government and was approved two years later, not long before my departure from Italy.

Unsuccessful Moceri Attempt To Secure Old American Films For Italian Film Clubs

This represented my first effort to get direct Washington media support essential to implement a program activity. It ended in a disaster. And here is the essence of the story.

In the early fifties Italians were among the most avid devotees of motion pictures in the western world, partly as a momentary refuge from the taxing struggles of daily existence, also as an inexpensive form of entertainment, and finally as an interesting art form. It was a time when private film clubs, sometimes numbering hundreds of members, began to flourish in many of the large Italian cities. In 1953, Carlo L. Ragghianti, one of the most

respected art critics in Italy and a man who occupied a special status in Tuscan life because he had been the leader of the armed resistance in Tuscany during World War II, came to me with a fascinating proposal. As a prime mover in the organization of film clubs, he wanted to build up their membership and stature in their communities by offering in a multi-year cycle a comprehensive retrospective of American films from the early twenties to the end of the forties. He would provide the speakers to introduce and provide a context for each film. He would also make the arrangements for panel discussions and interaction with the film club audience. (Film clubs always arranged their showings in commercial movie houses.) All he was asking me to do was arrange for the loan of the prints necessary to sustain the proposed program. I was convinced that Ragghianti's proposal offered an extraordinary opportunity to extend the range and depth of USIS contacts in Tuscany and many other important urban centers of Italy.

My initial communication and subsequent elaborations and arguments, made with the knowledge of Frank Dennis, then the country PAO in Rome, were rejected out of hand by the motion picture division in Washington. The day I reported into Washington before beginning home leave in the summer of 1954, I was given a message informing me to go to the office of Turner Shelton, head of IMV, the next morning at ten o'clock. After cooling my heels for some time in IMV's reception room that morning, I was summoned into the presence of Turner Shelton to a blistering attack on my ignorance, incompetence and insolent insubordination. It is easy to imagine how this affected my view of our Washington media.

Moceri's Relationship To The U.S. Consulate In Florence During The "Reigns" Of Three Consuls General

My relations with our consulate in Florence seemed to be entirely a function of the personalities of the three consuls general under whom I served. I shall summarize each case briefly, using a single example to show the relationship to my role and standing in the course of my first assignment in the Foreign Service.

1) Charles Reed, my first consul general, was an "old China hand" who probably resented having been put out to pasture, however much the pleasures of life in the upper reaches of Florentine society. His normal attitude was one of disdain--and often amused contempt--for anything associated with USIS. When the New York City Ballet made its first trip to Europe in 1953 and appeared in Florence (its first city in Italy), the consul general instructed me to prepare a guest list for the reception he was planning. I prepared a list of more than 200 names, representative of the range of our contacts with the artistic, intellectual, political and media circles of Florence. Toward the end of that reception Mrs. Reed, who was normally a quite reserved and sometimes aloof person, came up to me and in a tone of genuine amazement said, "Why haven't I met any of these people before." A good question!

2) Richard Service, John Service's younger brother and Charles Reed's successor, was a classic example of the cool, reserved diplomat very conscious of his status. That very

attitude caused him to come a cropper in an incident involving our Ambassador, Mrs. Luce, and me. Mrs. Luce was scheduled to come to Florence for the opening of the first national exhibit of Italian arts and crafts. USIS Rome failed to inform me of her departure time from Rome. After checking all bases, I and my wife arrived separately at the station and met Mrs. Luce just as she was getting off the train. Dick Service, of course, had been there a half hour waiting for the Ambassador. As the two of them approached his car, he invited her to have "a very quiet, private dinner a quatre. Her clearly audible response was, "I'll accept only if you invite the Moceris." That evening she drove home her lesson with a vengeance; throughout the dinner she ignored Dick Service completely and addressed all her conversation to my wife and me.

3) Dale Fisher, Service's successor, was a different, younger breed. Several days after his arrival he called me to the consulate and said he wanted to have the benefit of my views of Italian politics. Over a period of several hours in the course of a few days, he tape-recorded my analyses of the Italian and Tuscan scenes.

1956: Moceri's Attempt To Have A Washington Assignment Ends In Taiwan

Well, so much for my Italian reminiscences. In 1956 I knew that if I remained in the Italian program I could expect nothing more than a third tour of duty as a branch PAO, regardless of Nordness's high regard for my capabilities. I also sensed that there were people in the service who thought of me as a narrow Italian specialist. More importantly, I was convinced that I had to learn and understand a good deal about our Washington operations before returning to the field in whatever position of responsibility. And I was very much concerned about the problem of guiding my daughter, who was just turning sixteen after seven continuous years in Italy, through a probably difficult reentry into American life and the American school system. I expressed all these concerns to Ned Nordness and emphasized that I needed a firm commitment that I would be assigned to a position in Washington. In due course I received the assurances I sought from Nordness. I left Italy at the end of 1956 with great regret, especially in the wake of the Hungarian and Suez crises, but with peace of mind over the prospect of a Washington assignment.

My travel orders read "for home leave" to be followed by consultation in Washington. When I returned to Washington in 1956, I was dismayed to learn from the personnel office that there was no assignment for me in Washington. In fact I was being scheduled to go to Bombay as the cultural affairs officer at that branch USIS office. The news outraged me, and I boiled over with anger. I flatly refused to go. Such a personnel action was utterly senseless. It was idiotic to send me back into the field, still with so little knowledge of, let alone experience in, Washington operations. My performance in Italy had been openly praised by people whose opinion I valued. To the considerable satisfaction of the country PAO and the Ambassador I had for more than three months managed and in some respects improved a USIS country program with a staff of 48 officers (almost all of whom outranked me) and a \$6 million budget. Why in the world should I accept a position ranking below the one I had occupied in Florence (with all its complexities) for virtually five years? After much fruitless discussion I was summoned to

the office of the area director for the Near East and South Asia, Hunt Damon. A lengthy, icy discussion failed to change my mind. Ending the discussion, Damon angrily informed me that he would see to it that I would regret my refusal to the end of my Agency career.

While the Office of Personnel was working out my personnel problem, I was assigned to a seminar on communist theory and practice. Nothing about that three-week course, including the appearance of Lyman Kirkpatrick reputed to be the governmental authority on communism, served to alter my rather low estimate of the level of intellectual discourse in the Agency. I had, after all, spent a rather considerable part of my graduate work on the political and intellectual history of Europe in the 19th century, including the origins and growth of Marxist thought and influence in pre-Fascist Italy; and I had lived for seven years in virtually daily proximity to the communist presence, polemics and threat to the democratic institutions of Italy.

Finally, the Director of Personnel, L.K. Little, called me in to inform me that I was being offered an overseas assignment that took care of most of my previous objection. The position was that of deputy PAO in Taipei. L.K. Little informed me that the PAO, Ralph Powell, had such extraordinary access to the highest levels of the Chinese Nationalist government that his intelligence information and political advice were vitally important to the ambassador on a virtually daily basis. This was summed up in the rather crude phrase, "Powell practically sits on the Ambassador's lap." The enormity of the claim would have been apparent to anyone who had the slightest acquaintance with Ambassador Rankin. I was also reminded how important all this and anything that strengthened this relationship were to the success of the Dulles-Robertson policy on China. This argument I found absurd: I had long held the opinion that our China policy was as meaningless as the Dulles "rollback" policy for Eastern Europe. Nevertheless I finally realized I had no realistic alternative. For once I received a decent set of country program briefings from an area office, IAF, particularly from Jim Halsma and Jack O'Brien. Everyone, especially George Hellyer, the Area Director, impressed on me the importance to the Agency that I run the entire USIS Taipei program on a daily basis for Ralph Powell. Unfortunately, I soon learned, at no little cost to myself, nobody bothered to convey that message--delicately or indelicately--to Powell.

PAO Ralph Powell, Inexperienced In USIA, Made Relations Between Moceri And
Himself Delicate And Difficult

After an exhausting 26-hour flight from Seattle (attributable to powerful head-winds over the North Pacific) we arrived at the Taipei airport at 8:30 in the morning. We were met by Powell and his wife. Powell rushed us through customs because it was imperative that I be at the Ambassador's 9:00 o'clock staff meeting. I never did understand why. Mrs. Powell insisted that after checking into the Grand Hotel my wife begin her rounds of diplomatic calls that very morning. When I asked for assistance in locating housing, both the Embassy administrative office and Powell, himself, told me to check the English-language China Post newspaper and have my wife order a pedicab through the hotel. If I

thought all this strange indeed, I was only beginning to learn how really weird was the environment in which I would have to work.

The USIS staff initially regarded me with some suspicion, the outsider, the newcomer who had to prove himself to them. I quickly realized that I would have to prove to each staff member, as tactfully as possible, that I knew his work and the nature of his responsibilities as well as he did. And I soon learned that with the exception of the executive officer every member of the American staff was new to the Agency and on his first assignment. I found it inconceivable and unconscionable that Washington could ever have allowed such a situation to happen. Within weeks I felt I had won their confidence as they began to understand that I cared about their work and their problems. Neither then nor later was the Chinese staff a problem.

Within days of my arrival I had my first intimation of the difficulties I would have to anticipate in carrying out the USIS program in the name of Ralph Powell. He came into my office one day holding in his hand a copy of a routine cable from Washington on a rather minor program matter. He informed me that this was a personal message to him from the Agency Director and I should handle the matter in that context. I soon discovered that he indeed believed that any communication from USIA Washington bearing the name of the Director was a personally directed message to Powell. The day after his first trip away from Taiwan since my arrival in Taipei he stormed into my office to accuse me of concealing a telegram from him. I patiently explained why the Embassy system of handling telegraphic traffic made it impossible to conceal a telegram for a senior official. I realized that he found my explanation unpersuasive. Before long Powell began accusing me openly and sometimes in the presence of others of systematically turning the staff against him. Our relations became increasingly strained during the rest of his tour. Because there was so much in the relationship that struck me as irrational and almost unbelievable I decided never to give as much as a hint of these problems to anyone in or from Washington. Well after Powell's departure from Taipei, Jim Halsema told me privately that IAF had been well aware of the difficulty and had been impressed by the fact that I had maintained a total silence on the subject. And I mention the matter here only because it is so illustrative of the consequences of errors in personnel selection.

Restructuring USIS Taipei's Program Objectives And Activities

Despite these problems I did over time succeed in giving our USIS program some shape, substance and coherence. I had to establish as an operational reality the concept that USIS Taipei was not an appendage of the USAID to satisfy whatever public relations whim it entertained. Learning that the single largest charge against our program budget was the cost of publication materials extolling the accomplishments of the Chinese Nationalist regime and sent to our Southeast Asia posts for distribution to the overseas Chinese communities, I determined to check this out with other S.E. Asian posts. Visits to those posts and discussions with the PAOs convinced me that the materials were neither wanted nor used. The most frequently adduced reason was that the host government for

nationalistic motives resented the distribution of such materials. I succeeded in abolishing the program and diverted the funds to other program needs.

The Chinese "Riots"--Embassy And USIS Destruction And Rebuilding

Perhaps my most important and enduring accomplishment--certainly the most time-consuming--was the design and refurbishing of new USIS facilities, both expanding and increasing the efficiency of our program capabilities. In the wake of the destruction of our USIS offices allegedly by a "rioting mob" just two months after my arrival in Taipei, the Taipei regime eventually ceded to USIS the use of the long-abandoned great fortress headquarters of the former Japanese governors-general of Formosa. The huge building was in such a state of disrepair that it had to be stripped to the skeleton frame and the entire interior reconstructed to serve efficiently our staffing and programming requirements. Because the Embassy building interior had been effectively wrecked in the same incident, the Embassy administrative staff claimed it could give me no assistance in the task establishing our new USIS headquarters. The entire burden of that task fell on my shoulders: locating and hiring a local Taiwanese architect-consultant, contracting for and supervising the extensive physical alterations, establishing all our design needs, scouring and acquiring in the Hong Kong markets all the furnishings and equipment. The final results were judged even by the Embassy staff to be impressive and handsome.

A word of explanation is required here to rectify the gross misconceptions surrounding the incident in which the Embassy and USIS quarters were destroyed on that Black Friday of May 1957 and the events leading to that incident. The incident had its origin in an event that had occurred a very few weeks before: an American sergeant had shot and killed a "Peeping Tom" Chinese coolie. Publicly, it appeared to be a commonplace, minor tabloid story with only two mildly titillating aspects, a glimpse of sex and the resulting confrontation of a white American soldier and a non-descript Chinese male. The facts were quite different: the Chinese was a colonel in the intelligence organization headed by Chiang Ching-kuo, son of the President, and he had been shot in the back, probably as a result of a quarrel over the division of spoils from an illegal activity. A subsequent Ambassador's staff meeting dealt entirely with the question of how to handle the episode discreetly and with the minimum damage to American-Chinese relations. After listening to much discussion and very conscious of my position as an absolute newcomer, I suggested and argued for a two-step solution: first, the Embassy should make a formal apology to the Chinese government, extend its deepest regrets to the widow of the colonel and offer an appropriate monetary compensation in accordance with Chinese tradition and practice; and second, the American should be tried as soon as possible in an American court-martial in Taipei, found guilty of murder, removed immediately from Taiwan, and at an appropriate time allowed to appeal the verdict in another military jurisdiction. The Ambassador seemed at least interested in my proposal, but the military present rejected it in the most vehement terms, draping themselves in the honor of the American flag and the military code of justice.

Within a very short time the court-martial, open to the public, was convened. A verdict of "not guilty" was brought in. The Americans, the great majority of the public present, rose to their feet and cheered. According to all reports, the few Chinese present maintained a stunned silence. The next day, Black Friday, the Chinese authorities took their revenge or, as I put it then, taught a lesson the Americans could neither ignore nor forget. At about ten that Friday morning a group of about twenty stalwart Chinese males, armed with crowbars, entered the Embassy building and proceeded to smash everything in sight. A few Americans, who tried to hide in the building rather than attempting escape, were injured. In the meantime a large, orderly and very quiet crowd of Chinese gathered around the perimeter of the Embassy ground to watch the unfolding spectacle. For that day and the entire weekend the American community was rife with reports of a rioting Chinese mob in the tradition of the anti-foreign Chinese riots around the turn of the century. The American media, as far as I could tell, indulged the same fantasy. There was not a shred of evidence of any rioting anywhere in the city.

On hearing of the activity at the Embassy, I decided to keep the USIS facilities open as long as possible without endangering the staff or Chinese in our facility. Late that afternoon at about four o'clock I was informed that the Chinese "wrecking squad" (as I even then referred to it) was leaving the Embassy and apparently was headed in the direction of our building. Quietly I ordered our office closed, sent everyone home, secured the building and left the premises at four-thirty. Half an hour later the wrecking crew arrived, accomplished its mission and vanished. It could hardly escape my attention that the USAID building was not a target. The following week I began an intensive search for photographic evidence of the behavior of the Chinese crowd at the Embassy. I soon had a collection of twenty or twenty-five photos, collected from various sources. From that evidence the only conclusion that could be drawn was that a group of perhaps two hundred Chinese men, women and children had gathered or been gathered to watch--without the slightest sign of emotion--an interesting spectacle. I sent all the photographs together with my report on the damages to USIS to USIA Washington. When I left Taipei two years later and checked into Washington, I asked about the photographs. They could not be found.

Because I took very deliberate care not to circumvent my PAO, I saw little of Ambassador Rankin during these events and for the remainder of his tour. My impression was that at least outwardly he did not display the agitation and outrage that much of his staff wallowed in.

Aside: Relationship With Ambassador Rankin And Respect For His Judgment

I had established, I thought, a good working relationship with him. I had developed respect for the man because he was judicious and calm and, I think most importantly, he knew what the limits of embassy influence really were. He had no illusions on that score. On my final meeting with him, a courtesy call just prior to his departure--I'm jumping ahead, now, chronologically--he said to me, "This has been an interesting tour, but the decisions affecting the fate of this island are not made here. They are made in

Washington, Moscow, and Peking." Here was a man who understood clearly the limits of his power and the influence of the American Embassy.

Analysis Of Rising (Grass Roots) Elements Of A Democratic Order In Taiwan

I mention this because I'd been urged by members of the political section of the embassy to turn my attention and USIS activities to the Taiwanese people, as distinguished from the mainland Chinese, and convince them about the value of democracy and the institutions of democracy and so on, and how America was really their friend. All of which, I regarded as utter nonsense, because there was no way that the Chinese Government was going to allow me to approach the Taiwanese population, which, at that point, was being held down very, very firmly.

On the other hand, there were taking root within that society, a number of rather important democratic patterns or practices, at any rate. These became possible because Chinese mainlanders were carrying out in Taiwan what they failed to do on the mainland: a very aggressive and effective land reform program, and setting up agricultural cooperatives, because no peasant could own more than approximately three acres of land.

The agricultural economy had to have credits if it was to rise above the subsistence level, feed a burgeoning population and generate foreign exchange. Through the cooperatives, the farmers themselves started pressing for measures. They needed credits. They needed fertilizer. They needed seed and tools. And pressuring the Chinese Government--the Chiang Kai-shek government--brought them such returns. This was democracy in action at that level. It was shaping the practice of democratic discussion and debate and the arts of exerting pressures on governmental entities. I regarded that as something that had to come out of the soil of Taiwan itself. It was not something any USIS operator was going to instruct a foreign populace about. [Laughter]

Q: Was the Chiang Kai-shek government at all responsive to those pressures?

MOCERI: They had to be, because they needed the food supplies for them and for the fastest growing population in the world and they needed the export earnings.

Q: So they really did give them some break, then?

MOCERI: Oh yes, they did. And that is why the Taiwanese nationalists, who called for the overthrow of the government and so on, all from the safe haven of the Japanese islands, were, I think, off base. Democratic practice cannot be imposed even by an exile movement, because the democratic practice has to have grass roots. It has to be born in the soil and be nurtured in the soil, in the land and the spirit of a nation. And in Taiwan of the fifties it was slowly, in this way, forming. And we can see the evolution of this process even now for I think what is happening in Taiwan today goes back to those early roots.

Q: I was just going to say, that was laying the groundwork and the foundation for the economic miracle that has been wrought in Taiwan.

MOCERI: Precisely, you see. Because it was those exports, the exports of that food, because they proved capable of producing far more than the needs of the island, far more. You know, they could routinely get three crops of rice every year. This fueled the exporting to Japan and to Korea and so on.

An interesting aspect--another aspect that I'd seen--of the agricultural revolution, was that the landlords, the great 300 families--and I don't know whether they were 300 more, plus or minus something--were given what seemed to be worthless bonds by the Chinese Government. These were, in effect, holdings in paper enterprises that then became the capitalist vehicles responsible for creating the light industry of Taiwan. These were the people who then became the owners and managers of the new industrial enterprises.

So there's a displacement of a class. And that displacement eventually created the opportunity for a different type of economic adventure, which then became the basis for Taiwan's remarkable industrialization, none of which people in '57, '58, and '59, when I served in Taiwan, could have foreseen.

Q: Not only could they not foresee it, but I don't think they fully understand, yet, what the base of that sudden explosion of industrial accomplishment has been or from what it came. I don't think it's fully realized to this day.

MOCERI: Well, that leads me into another thought. I wanted to get...

Demise and Departure of Ralph Powell

Q: Before you get into the other thought, just as a matter of curiosity, where was Ralph Powell in all this, during that time? And what happened?

MOCERI: Well, Ralph Powell's tour came to an abrupt end in 1958, during the Far Eastern Ambassador's Conference, which that year was held in Taipei. George Hellyer came out. Drumright was then the ambassador. The director of the Agency came out.

Q: By that time, Larson had probably been replaced?

MOCERI: Yes, he'd been replaced.

Q: It was George Allen that came out?

MOCERI: Yes, of course.

Q: He was the new director.

MOCERI: Well, I had asked my wife to set up a luncheon for Allen and Hellyer and the entire USIS staff at our house. We had luncheon there, in a fairly modest house, prepared by Modesta. And we knew, we all sensed at that luncheon, that all was not well. Of course, Powell was there.

What happened? About midway in the conference, Drumright called in George Hellyer and George Allen and said, "I want this man removed and I want him removed immediately."

Well, then it couldn't be done during the conference, so they asked for a week's time to get him out. Drumright simply could not tolerate him. He wanted him out of his hair. Now, I think that both Allen and Hellyer, reluctantly, had to abide by his request because Ambassador Drumright said he'd take it up with the Secretary of State if they weren't prepared to satisfy his wishes. That marked the end of Ralph Powell's career in Taipei.

Q: I think it marked the end of his career in USIA.

MOCERI: Yes, it was very brutal and very sad, in a way. I'd had terrible difficulties but, you know, I felt sorry for the man. But I later learned that we as a government do not do these things very gracefully. [Laughter] I learned that, particularly, in the Kennedy Administration, by the way.

Q: But then did you become the PAO?

MOCERI: I was made acting PAO. So I functioned with that transitory title for the remainder of my tour because, I think, Drumright may have made it known he wanted eventually to bring in USIS people he knew. And after the Quemoy crisis broke out, he brought in Dick McCarthy on a special detail and John Bottaeff as his deputy. I was phasing out, by that time. They were there, presumably, to help. But I couldn't quite understand why I needed that help. [Laughter] I and my information officer, Lucien Agniel, could have managed quite well. I knew the problems and knew something of the Quemoy crisis and the reasons for it and what the Chinese were trying to do.

Earlier Episodes of Disputes With Ralph Powell And DCM (then Chargé) Pilcher

Now I am reminded that I must refer to certain earlier episodes including a terrible dispute with Ralph Powell and the deputy chief of mission, a man named Pilcher, who was our chargé d'affaires for the period between Rankin's departure and Drumright's arrival.

Q: Oh, Jim Pilcher?

MOCERI: Jim Pilcher.

Q: Who had been the supervising consul general in Japan when I was in Japan, 1952-56. So I knew Jim very well. A Georgian.

MOCERI: Well, I don't know what your feelings are, so I hope you won't be offended by anything I say.

Q: I liked him personally, but I had reservations about his capabilities.

MOCERI: One of my early introductions to official American attitudes toward the Chinese occurred at an evening in Pilcher's home with the director of Chinese information and several other dignitaries, Powell, and myself. I was appalled to hear Pilcher, at one point, as we sat around after dinner, telling the Chinese about the glories of their own civilization and how civilized they were when we, in the West, were still swinging from the trees by our tails. You know, this is not conversation at some casual bar. This is the American deputy chief of the American mission, talking to a representative...

Q: Representative of the government.

MOCERI: ...foreign government. I'd never heard anything like this in my life. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. And I thought to myself, "Well, this is a consequence of the Dulles-Robertson line. We have to kowtow, in the traditional terms, to representatives of the Chinese Government."

Q: What did Ralph Powell say to that, by the way?

MOCERI: Nothing. Nothing.

Q: Nothing?

MOCERI: Nothing. When I gave vent to my surprise the next day, he couldn't understand what I thought was wrong about this. Now I really began to wonder whether it was really to be my fate in the foreign service to be repeatedly caught up in some very odd situations. I must recall here a couple of the odd things that had happened to me in Italy. An inspector-general recommended in 1953 that I be sent back to the United States for re-Americanization--a recommendation based solely on a conversation during the course of a luncheon that he arranged for me to have with him in Rome, in a cafe in Rome. The luncheon was to be in place of the inspection he had not done at my post in Florence because his wife had wanted to use that day for shopping. He started out with a question about Italian politics. So I proceeded to lay out for him all the essential elements of the Italian political structure and what was happening in the world of Italian politics. Assuming from the questions he kept addressing to me that he really wanted to know something of the political geography of Italy I went on at some length. And on that basis, he decided that I was much too involved in Italian affairs, I reflected an Italian attitude and needed to be re-Americanized.

Q: Who was the inspector?

MOCERI: Fred Oechsner.

Q: I don't think I knew Fred.

MOCERI: He had been head of the AP bureau in Berlin, if I'm not mistaken, in the 30s. A very fine gentleman.

Q: Was he the public member of the inspection team?

MOCERI: No, he was with the State Department. He was the State Department inspector with the responsibility of inspecting USIS activities in Italy. There was no team.

Q: I see.

MOCERI: Then later, before leaving Washington for Taipei, a woman in the Office of Personnel suggested I look in my personnel file. That's how I learned about this. I also learned that after I had been in Rome as acting country PAO for three months--or at that time, and in spite of what people knew about my relationship with Mrs. Luce--an Embassy panel sitting in Rome had recommended that I be discharged from the Service.

Two Clashes With PAO Ralph Powell And DCM Pilcher

At any rate, these incidents may help, in fact, to understand why I took so intransigent a position in two clashes that I had with Ralph Powell and Pilcher over what I viewed as the proper execution of my own responsibilities. I invoked my rights, as a Foreign Service officer, to report to Washington what I had observed and been told, that was of direct concern to U.S. policy interests.

One of the reporters--I don't want to confuse names, so I'll leave them unnamed--had been given very rough treatment by the Chinese Government. He had a solid reputation as one of the best American correspondents in the Far East. Based in Hong Kong, he had come to Taipei to cover Taiwanese developments in a series of articles for the New York Times. The Chinese did everything to keep him from getting out of his hotel in Taipei.

I thought, you know, "This is idiotic on the part of the Chinese." Here is a correspondent who has an excellent reputation in the Far East. And he's writing for the most important newspaper in the United States. Give him assistance. You know, maybe there are certain things you don't want him to get into, but there are ways of handling this.

He was absolutely livid. He had planned to spend a considerable amount of time on this particular assignment. And he realized that they weren't going to let him get out of Taipei for anything. He voiced his complaints to our press officer, Lucien Agniel. Agniel came

to me with this story and I said, "Well, this has got to be reported. It's too serious. Washington ought to know about this. Because, obviously, the correspondent is going to get in touch with his home office. And there are going to be inquiries. Both USIA and the Department ought to be aware of this."

Well, neither Powell nor Pilcher would let me send the message. I had drafted it over my signature and I wanted it forwarded. Well, I insisted on what I felt were my right as a Foreign Service officer and said, "Look, I'll file a protest on this." So they gave in and finally sent it in.

Not very long after that the question of Drumright's appointment as ambassador to Taipei came up. The Chinese Government had given its agrément to his appointment, but he made some unfortunate remarks in Hong Kong, before coming to Taipei. Reportedly he had indicated that the Nationalists would not find him the soft touch that Rankin had been. They'd find him very hard to deal with. They certainly weren't going to get the fighter planes that they'd asked for and that Rankin had promised them. Rankin was great at delaying tactics and he just kept delaying, delaying, delaying, which was proper because they couldn't take offense at that. He'd cite complications, difficulties, bureaucratic procedures, all kinds of reasons, you see.

Well, obviously, the Chinese in Taipei got wind of what was being said in Hong Kong. They had very good sources in Hong Kong. They came to Lucien Agniel and me to express their dismay and their disappointment. The editor of the Chinese Post, which was the local English-language paper, and other informal emissaries, were sent to the two of us.

So I drafted a message about this and wanted to send it to both State and USIA. Obviously, this development had to be of concern. Washington has to know about these things. The Chinese had wanted very deliberately and quite unofficially to get their unhappiness on the record. It was inconceivable to me that the information I had should or could be withheld from Washington. Our people there had to know that, as I put it, "there's a buildup of resentment here and this is a problem that's going to have to be dealt with."

Powell and Pilcher categorically refused to let me send the message. We had a long, heated argument, which degenerated into a shouting match. I had stopped smoking; it had been three years since the last smoke. When Powell accused me of treason--and the word "treason" was used--I was so outraged that I smoked three cigars and two packs of cigarettes that day. [Laughter]

I promptly wrote an undated letter of resignation. I said, "I want this letter to be on the ambassador's desk, Drumright's, when he arrives. If he thinks my action has been wrong he can put a date on it, and my resignation will be effective as of that date." I said, "I can't work like this."

Well, you can imagine the acrimony. They finally came up with a shrewd, diplomatic solution for the problem, because I was so adamant. They said they would send my message to Drumright in Hong Kong. And then Drumright could do with it as he pleased. Well, on that I caved in because I felt I couldn't--beyond a shadow of a doubt--call them liars. I didn't believe they would, but I also couldn't prove that they wouldn't. So the matter ended there.

You can imagine the acrimony on both sides. And I thought, you know, here was another bitter lesson to me on the problems of getting distasteful information back to Washington. It's a question of reporting--what do you report? Do you report only what the people in Washington want to hear? Or what needs to be known? And I felt my information needed to be known. The ambassador needed to know it. And the State Department needed to know that there was Chinese resentment. It wouldn't have taken much to figure this out.

Well, I'm, I suppose, casting the net of my recollections too wide for you. But I think USIS officers do find themselves in positions like this.

Q: I think they do.

MOCERI: And this raises some real questions. This is why I always felt we should be integrated with the State Department. There should not be the division between the political and the information, cultural; we should be integrated physically and functionally, as well.

Q: Well, you know, I don't thoroughly agree with you on this point. I think that had you been within the Department, you would have been subject to the same kind of repression and, perhaps, more so, because then you would have been in deliberate opposition to and in contravention of your superiors' recommendations and decisions. I don't think you'd have been as well off as you were as an independent. And that, of course, was the whole basis for the separation of State and USIA.

MOCERI: You may be quite right about this, in terms of the practicalities of the problem. But my experience, as other experiences I've had, do raise this question as a problem that has to be addressed, and addressed in fairness to the United States Government itself. It has to be addressed in whatever other kind of relationship is established.

Q: I think that the situation is not nearly as bad today as it was 25 or 30 years ago. What you were seeing, at that time, was the last gasp of a whole bunch of the old-line ambassadors, many of whom you know were holdovers from the pre-war years. They were ending their careers, and they felt like that. And that's the way they were always going to feel.

The newer ambassadors, who have come on since, and that includes some of the political ambassadors, have been much more accommodating; not only accommodating, they have insisted that USIA take a very definite role in the determination of policy and in the

explanation of what was going on. And they have respected the PAO's analyses, sometimes to the detriment of the political section.

So I don't think that the condition holds to the same extent today that it did then. But I, also, encountered situations where you, simply, could not make a recommendation to an ambassador. He would not have it. That was all there was to it. And one of our best PAOs, Willard Hanna, who was in Japan at the time, resigned over that very kind of a conflict with John Allison, when Allison was ambassador there.

MOCERI: Well, to the second of the two episodes worth mentioning: the Open Skies exhibit. I insisted that the Agency was promoting it for all it was worth. It was very important to us. I insisted that we schedule this exhibit. I went over considerable opposition on everyone's part in the embassy. I did stage the exhibit. And the Chinese were fascinated by it; fascinated by the photography involved, and the potential of the Open Skies exhibit.

See, there again, determined opposition. The Chinese information office finally agreed to it. And we did have it. And it was, probably, the most successful--in terms of audience attendance--the most successful exhibit we ever staged in Taiwan. This leads me quite naturally into mentioning the assessment that the Chinese made of my own position and work there. Shortly before I left, two CIA officers--you know, there was CIA all over the place...

Q: Their CIA or our CIA.

MOCERI: Our CIA. [Laughter] And they came to me and they said, "Now that you're leaving, you may be interested in what the Chinese think of you. And we've talked to a lot of officials." I assumed they had. [Laughter] By the way, Ray Cline was the head of the CIA operation in Taiwan at the time.

And these two said to me, "They say you're a very hard man to deal with. But you're also very fair. You won't do anything that you're not convinced is in the interest of your government. But the one thing they like is that they can count on your word. If you've said you'll do something, you do it." I thought it was high praise.

Q: Did you say, "Would you put that in writing?" [Laughter]

MOCERI: I never thought of that at the time. [Laughter] Well, from there I went--I thought I was going back to the States. I had talked to Bill Copeland, who was at the moment our new area director, then visiting us in Taipei on his first visit to his field posts. He wanted to know what I wanted to do. This was the first time any Washington official had expressed an interest in what I might like to do in terms of possible assignments. So I told him about the things I wanted. He asked me to write a memorandum to him, sort of a personal letter, outlining my background and my interests and what I would like to do.

You know, I considered myself, I believed what I was told when I came into the Agency, "You're available on a worldwide basis." I felt it wasn't up to me to stay in one particular area. I certainly welcomed the prospects of experience in different parts of the world.

The problem with that is that you don't build up the ties with a group of people who gravitate in a given area, as in South America, for instance. You remember that for all practical purposes we had a Latin American junta in the Agency that made South America its province.

1959: Assignment To The Naval War College

I thought I was open-minded on the subject of possible assignments. I left Taipei in April of 1959. I assumed that this time I would really get an assignment to Washington. But there was a sudden change. USIA had nominated somebody for the Naval War College as a USIA representative at the War College for the 1959-60 academic year and I guess the fellow withdrew. I don't know what happened to him. I went on home leave still thinking that I would finally get a Washington assignment. I was informed of my assignment to the War College by a phone call from Washington virtually at the end of my home leave in the Seattle area.

Q: At Newport?

MOCERI: Newport. So I had a year at Newport, which was important to me for several reasons, but especially for the war gaming experience. They had war games while I was there, two major war games. It had been my first real contact in the post-war era with the military. There were a lot of naval officers, Air Force people, and Army, all of the rank of lieutenant commander or commander, or the equivalent and all potential candidates for senior command positions in the military.

At The Naval War College: Two War Games Moceri Acts Contrary To "Rules"

In the two war games I was always assigned to the red team. I learned a lot, a lot about American obsessions and preoccupations. In the first war game, I was to act the role of the Soviet foreign minister. We, as Soviets, had moved planes and troops into Iraq. And this had caused considerable disturbance among US policy makers. The whole idea was to bring the two superpowers into a clash, an armed clash--over Middle East affairs.

Well, I didn't want to play that game because a conflict could not be in the Soviet interest. So I started organizing meetings, conferences, calls on de Gaulle, calls on the papacy, appealing to this or that body--all kinds of delaying tactics, to stall the Americans. Well, nothing developed because I flooded the control group with messages and a variety of diplomatic proposals.

Well, it got so bad that the blue team just decided, "We're going to finish this." They launched their attack, a nuclear attack, to which my red team responded, the Soviets responded, of course. In the exchange, the Soviet Union practically disappeared, for all practical purposes, from the face of the earth. I happened to be one of the survivors. Also, 100 American cities were destroyed. And the United States lost 120,000,000 people.

So I said, you know, "Look, all you have achieved is a Pyrrhic victory! This isn't any victory for you because what is emerging from all this wreckage is an American society transformed beyond all recognition. It's not the society you defended." The exercise taught me a lesson about American impatience.

All right, you could say it's just an exercise. But in the exercise military officers became so exasperated they finally went ahead with a nuclear response. It's the sort of thing that can happen.

Q: Sure. It could very well have happened.

MOCERI: And as the lessons were digested and I talked with the officers on our team, I said, "This is one of the things we've got to be concerned about. All I was doing was making it difficult by engaging, really, in just the normal practices of diplomacy, exhausting them to the limit. But this is what we've got to be prepared to face. And my appeals to de Gaulle and the Pope and so on, they were all calculated maneuvers. And there could have been responses to those maneuvers."

The second war game involved Vietnam. And the rules were set up for an invasion of Vietnam by the Chinese First Army. I was assigned as the political advisor to the Chinese commander.

Q: Of the Chinese?

MOCERI: Of the Chinese Army. We were given certain conditions under which we had to move our troops a certain way. I said, "The Chinese will never do this. They'll never move their troops like this." I refused, arguing, "In this kind of terrain you want this sort of thing? You think the Chinese are going to move as if this was the plains of Europe?"

Well, again, we lost that one. [Laughter] But I learned another lesson. And I thought of Vietnam. I first said, "The Chinese would never act like this, for goodness sake. You are being totally unrealistic. Your military have to consider how your opponents think and how they function and what their constraints are, including such things as their traditions and patterns of behavior."

And I remembered what I told my Italian friends, in 1954, after the fall of Dien Bien Phu. I said, "One day we're going to go in and we're going to have 1,000 times the power of the French. And we're going to commit errors because we're going to show the French how to

do it. We're going to commit errors on a scale 1,000 times worse." So now you know how I felt about Vietnam. To me it was the tragedy that was simply waiting to happen.

1960: Assigned To USIA Office Of Policy And Plans

From there, then, I was recruited into the Office of Policy and Plans, IOP, by Jim Halsema who as program officer in IAF had been thoroughly familiar with my work in Taipei.

Q: What year was this?

MOCERI: Well, I went...

Q: '60?

MOCERI: '60 I reported to Washington, in the last months of the Eisenhower Administration, as a deputy to Jim Halsema, who was the director of plans, in the Office of Policy and Plans. It was my first real taste of Washington. I once had an earlier experience that left a bad taste. A couple of people had come to me and said that I should get into the Soviet area, the research area, because this was the elite corps of the Agency. "Elite corps" was a term I didn't want to hear for even in the late thirties I had always associated the phrase with Nazi Germany. I didn't want to have any part of it. [Laughter]

Critical Evaluation Of Country Papers

At any rate, Jim gave me my first task. He wanted me to read all the country plans as they came in, and do critiques on them. I think I was the first, and possibly the only, agency officer to read every single country plan submitted from the field in a given fiscal year.

Q: Probably. You know, when I was acting director of the Latin American area, I read every single country plan out of the Latin American area, and wrote critiques on them. That was in 1958-9.

MOCERI: Yes. It was for me a revealing experience, because I came to the conclusion that, for most PAOs, country plans were no more than an exercise in boilerplate language to pacify Washington. For instance, you'd get something from Pakistan that went on interminably about such things as the commonality of cultural interests, heritage and the kind of world we both wanted. Come on, now. Let's have some sense of geography and history and the differences among people. Sure, they may have an interest in peace and we have. But their conception of peace is not necessarily our conception of peace, and so on.

Well, I felt then that, at least under the rules of the time, this was really almost a meaningless exercise. All kinds of inconsistencies and repetition. All the right words were there, whatever was considered acceptable to the Agency. And seldom did I see, in

any of the country plans, an attempt to come to grips with the real problems of the country, our problems in the country. So that was an illuminating experience for me.

Q: Well, after you had done that, and expressed your opinion, as I presume you did, what was the reaction of Halsema and the policy staff?

MOCERI: Well, Halsema sent my rather extensive critiques to the area offices. And that was the end of it. I suppose there may have been a few instances in which area people took into account my observations on a given plan. I think in most cases they simply ignored my critiques because I don't think the office of plans enjoyed much prestige or influence in the Agency at that point. I think it tended to be dismissed. You know, there was no Andy Berding sitting up at the top there. Of course, I never worked for him, so I don't know what he was really like as a person and operator.

Q: Andy was very well respected, but he didn't last very long because Dulles pulled him over to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs.

MOCERI: Well, of course, that was the tail end of the Eisenhower Administration. Throughout those months I was increasingly appalled by all the elaborate psychological warfare paraphernalia and so on, the things that were coming out of the Eisenhower White House, in terms of requirements. The laying out of 50 objectives for a country and what agency or element had this role or that role, and so on. It was frankly a meaningless paper exercise. I think too much time has been spent in the Agency on this kind of paper exercise, without addressing, in fact, avoiding the real problems that every mission faces overseas.

Q: How long were you in the Policy Office?

1961: Kennedy Takes Office; Tom Sorensen Becomes Deputy Director for Policy And Plans

MOCERI: Until October 1962. With the Kennedy Administration Tom Sorensen came in as head of IOP. Tom Sorensen, obviously looked on Jim Halsema and me as relics of the Eisenhower Administration. And, I guess, Jim got out--I forgot now where he went.

Q: Did he go to Cairo then?

MOCERI: Yes, he went to Cairo, which I thought was a very good assignment for him. And, I guess, for a time at least I was useful, in the sense that I knew the staff and what things were in the works. And I, actually, had to--it ended up that I was acting as a buffer between Tom and a staff that he didn't particularly like--sometimes to the point of open contempt.

He brought in Bob Lincoln as his special assistant. One day Lincoln came to me and wanted to give me some advice. Quite simply, I had to get myself and the rest of the staff moving as Tom wanted. I said, "You're asking me to kiss ass."

"Well, if you want to put it that way."

I said, "Well, I won't do it. I believe in calling the shots as I see them. I'll tell Tom what I think. I think Tom has to know that that's what I will do." Tom always hacked up all the draft memoranda that I prepared for his signature, but that is all right. You know, everybody has different editorial preferences. One person likes this style of writing and another person likes something else.

At this point let me backtrack for a moment in order to keep straight in my mind the chronology of events during the period I served under Tom Sorensen straight in my mind.

In the final weeks of the Eisenhower Administration, Jim Halsema asked me to prepare a set of proposals for new USIA program initiatives to be submitted to the incoming administration for its consideration. I saw this as a welcome invitation to put forward a number of ideas growing out of my field experience and especially out of my recent months of familiarization with USIA Washington operations.

Moceri Memo Of Recommendation For The New Agency Management

Over a matter of a couple of weeks I prepared a very lengthy memorandum incorporating some sixteen or eighteen proposals that the new deputy director for IOP ought to consider. Three of the proposals I still recall because I then thought and even now think of them as essential to the proper execution of our Agency's mission: a new Agency magazine, possibly a quarterly, to be called PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY, for worldwide distribution and devoted to analyses of contemporary democratic experience anywhere in the world; the organization on a permanent basis of a summer-long orientation program at several regional centers in the United States for foreign students coming to American universities on government grants, with foundation or private assistance or even their own family resources; and the establishment of a special resource center for a critical USIA audience, foreign correspondents in the United States. All these proposals were presented in considerable details in terms of both their justification and their implementation.

One day Tom Sorensen called me into his office to discuss my memorandum. I saw it lying on his desk and could not help but note that it had been subjected to extensive editing. I assumed that he was revising it to make both form and content to suit his style prior to forwarding it to Ed Murrow and Don Wilson. Whether he ever did I do not know; at any rate I never saw my memorandum again. In our discussion Tom mentioned only two of my many proposals. He dismissed the idea of a summer orientation program for foreign students on the grounds that it was really none of the Agency's business and anyway it would cost too much. He was definitely interested in the proposal for a foreign

correspondent's resource center. He did succeed in bringing about the establishment of the USIA press centers in Washington and New York for the foreign correspondents corps.

Q: Well, that would have been his kind of a ball park.

MOCERI: Yes. And so...

Q: That was action right away.

MOCERI: Yes. Much later I occasionally wondered whether my proposal for a Problems of Democracy magazine might have been the source of the thinking that led to the establishment of our DIALOGUE magazine under the editorship of Nathan Glick. I deeply regretted the failure to pick up on my proposal concerning foreign students in the United States. Increasingly in my overseas experience I worried about the thousands of foreign students going to American universities with little or no background or orientation on American society and life, the American university system--and all too often a command of English not at all adequate to the demands of a rigorous schedule of university studies. If USIA could organize through foundations, universities and other private channels summer orientation programs of four to ten weeks duration at regional centers around the country, where university plants were being under-utilized, we might succeed in having an incalculable long-term influence on the 60,000 or so foreign students in the United States each year. Looking back on the thirty-odd years that have transpired since I made those proposals, I can't help wondering how their implementation might have affected the range and depth of our influence on other societies.

March, 1962: Defense Department Annual Report Changes Strategy From Massive Retaliation To Graduated Response

In March of 1962, the comptroller-general of the Defense Department sent to Congress his required annual report. It was far from a routine report. It was fraught with far-reaching implications, as I realized when a copy of the report crossed my desk. It effectively signaled the abandonment of the strategy of massive retaliation in favor of a new doctrine of graduated response. When I had read the entire report, I felt it was of such crucial importance and complexity that intensive briefings should be held for all elements of the Agency, particularly the media, in Washington. I went in to Tom Sorensen to give my reaction and suggestion for Agency handling of the report. I ended my remarks by stating that this was the most important policy document issued by the Kennedy administration since its inauguration. Tom looked at me with an expression that seemed to suggest I was slightly "off my rocker." His only remark was, "We'll see about that." With that he picked up the phone and called his brother Ted, the special advisor to the President. Then and there I realized that, whatever was being said or thought of Tom in the corridors of the Agency, this direct link between the head of IOP and the office of the Special Advisor to the President could be of enormous importance to the Agency.

After a brief exchange on the phone Tom turned to me and said, "You're right." That ended our conversation. And no briefings were given along the lines that I had suggested.

April, 1962: Sorensen Shunts Moceri Out Of IOP To Be Head Of Press Coverage Team
For UN 18-Nation Disarmament Conference, And Full Member Of U.S. Delegation

It was clear that Tom really didn't want to have me there as his deputy or even as a member of the IOP staff. He brought in Burnett Anderson and I was shunted aside, out of the chain of command, without any assigned responsibility until the end of my two-year tour of duty in Washington when I could readily be shipped out to the first available overseas post. In the meantime I could be used for a number of temporary tasks.

In April, 1962 (I believe the date is correct) I was dispatched to Geneva for the opening of the 18-nation disarmament conference under UN auspices.

Q: Were you covering it for the press, or what?

MOCERI: I was to head the USIA coverage team, which I was putting together with the cooperation of the European area. Incidentally, I also went as a full-fledged official member of the US delegation--a first I was informed in the history of US participation in international conferences. Robert Don Levine, our PAO in Geneva, was very helpful in setting up the facilities for our coverage team. As an official member of the delegation I participated in all the delegation sessions and sat with the delegation in all the conference meetings. From the beginning the Soviets relentlessly taunted us for our failure to table our proposal for general and complete disarmament on the opening day of the 18-nation conference, as we had earlier committed ourselves to doing. Finally John McNaughton who was Assistant Secretary of Defense for international affairs brought over, after many delays, the official U.S. draft prepared for general and complete disarmament.

And I had the difficult task of reducing this intricate product of bureaucratic negotiations to a comprehensible statement and format for the use of the international press. So I got it broken down in three different ways to facilitate the indispensable cross-referencing. And I must say, McNaughton was very pleased. He couldn't believe that the whole--that whole voluminous and complicated package--could have been reduced to all its essentials without distorting any of the "nuances" as he said, and all written within the compass of thirty pages.

According to McNaughton, blood was spilt throughout the corridors of Washington to get the monstrosity cleared. There had been terrible inter-agency and intramural battles. And the sad truth was that it was really only a paper exercise. Everybody knew that nothing would come of it because under no circumstances would the U.S. agree to any kind of general discussion and proposal. And all that bureaucratic wrangling and battling over the prose and so on was really a tremendous waste of time. Again, an illuminating experience. And I was only pleased that at least the material that was distributed to press proved usable to a lot of the correspondents who were there.

It was an interesting experience for me because I came back with certain feelings about this whole process of negotiation with the Soviet Union. I thought we were throwing up a lot of unnecessary roadblocks, for a whole variety of reasons, many of which were not, I thought, sound. It was also clear to me that the Soviets, certainly, would not negotiate anything serious in the nuclear world unless they got over their obsession with secrecy. Little did I know about who was obsessed with secrecy. [Laughter]

I returned to Washington and wrote a report for Tom Sorensen recording my views and observations, what I thought we should do and what the USIA problem was. I thought our most critical task in dealing with the USA-USSR confrontation was to try to convince Soviet audiences that in an era of nuclear capability secrecy was no longer the advantage that it had been in conventional warfare, historically speaking. In fact, it would be a great detriment because it would be the source of not only grievous, but disastrous miscalculations. It was the sharing of knowledge that was the answer to the problem of defense in the nuclear age. Well, I didn't get very far with any of this. [Laughter] Yet, after all, that conference did lead eventually to the first test ban agreement.

Several Of Moceri's Expressions Of Doubt Re Kennedy Administration Policies--Notably
The Alliance For Progress--Annoyed Sorensen Et Al, And Led To Moceri's Assignment
Elsewhere

As I ought to have expected, there was no reaction at all to my report on my involvement in, and conclusions concerning, the disarmament conference in Geneva. So I now felt beyond a doubt that my days in IOP were numbered and I did wonder how much longer my presence would be tolerated. Even outside the official context of USIA I had picked up private signals that there was more than a little annoyance over my reservations concerning a number of policy positions and postures adopted by the Kennedy administration. A good example of these reservations was my criticism of the rationale for the Alliance for Progress and the obsession of the Kennedy-ites with the notion of promoting political change through economic and social reform. No group in power, I had pointed out, gives up power voluntarily. The solution to power is always a political solution. It's never an economic or social solution. So I thought that the Administration approached the whole problem from the wrong angle. And among the elements of the situation that caught my attention was the observation that Latin Americans--wealthy Latin Americans--were exporting more capital than we were putting into South America at the time. In short, I was objecting to what I felt was really public relations gimmickry, instead of substantive dealings with the real issues of our political problems with Latin America.

Another issue was the Castro business. I was convinced that we were making a world figure out of Castro, who represented an area, a country, that was probably despised by most Latin Americans anyhow. All we were doing was creating the image of a strong leader that could stand up successfully to the United States. We were wasting propaganda

capital on this. We were wasting agency resources. Later on, when I came back from Africa in 1967, I made that point to Hew Ryan. I got nowhere at all with Hew.

A Public Opinion Poll By Lloyd Free In 1960 Showing Wide Support For Castro Both Rural And Urban Was Ignored By Top US Government Echelons Just Before Bay Of Pigs Fiasco

Once again let me backtrack chronologically, because this reference to the exaggeration of the danger posed by Castro takes me back to the antecedents of the Bay of Pigs episode. In October of 1960, I had seen a lengthy article in Nation magazine on American military training of Cuban exiles at sites in Guatemala. I wondered and worried about this--and indeed the accuracy of the story--because I had seen nothing in the traffic crossing my desk and had heard nothing in the course of the daily policy guidance meetings in the Agency over which I had been presiding for several months. A month later I picked up in my office mail a copy of a report that Lloyd Free, then a public affairs consultant to Nelson Rockefeller, had prepared on a public opinion survey he had conducted in Cuba during the previous summer, that is, the summer of 1960. Lloyd's conclusion was that there was overwhelming support for Castro among both the urban and rural populations of Cuba. Although I had long been skeptical of the value of public opinion polling, I had considerable respect for Lloyd's abilities and intelligence (despite my differences with him over the matter of the Italian elections of 1953). I brought the report to Halsema's attention and urged him to apprise the Agency's leadership of its implications. I doubt that he did, and I heard nothing more about it. When the attempted invasion at the Bay of Pigs occurred, I was as surprised as everybody else. I immediately thought that anyone who had read Lloyd Free's report would not have undertaken to carry out such a scatter-brained operation. Months later when I saw Lloyd, I asked him about this. He ruefully told me that he had in the fall of 1960 distributed copies of his report all around the White House and in the foreign affairs community, including CIA and the Defense Department. One more illustration of the persistent inattention, indeed, indifference at the highest levels of our government to the fundamental importance and implications of climates of opinion in the arena of foreign affairs!

Moceri Attends Puerto Rico Conference To Kick Off Peace Corps Program

Shortly after my return from the disarmament conference in Geneva (May 1962) I was instructed to report to the Peace Corps to serve as the public affairs advisor for an international conference that Sargent Shriver wanted organized to focus worldwide attention to the problems of middle-level manpower needs throughout the underdeveloped countries of the world. A foreign service officer from State and I did all the unglamorous work of organizing the preparations for the conference. Shriver and his two principal assistants--advisors, if you will--Richard Goodwin and Bill Haddad, handled the more glamorous task of negotiations with the scores of foreign governments whose participation they sought for the success or--as I soon became convinced--the prestige of the conference. Early on, I concluded that the theme of the conference was important but the only sensible venue for dealing with the problem was through our

bilateral dealings with the underdeveloped countries. The conference took place that summer in Puerto Rico. It was only a modest success in the conventional public relations terms that I thought really interested Shriver and his associates. Certainly it attracted scant attention in the American media and possibly even less in the foreign media.

Despite the dim view I took of all these proceedings, the enormous vanity and arrogance of our principals, I came to value the experience because it gave me my one and only opportunity to meet Lyndon Johnson in the context of a working situation. That experience was altogether different from all the conventional wisdom and evidence concerning his impossible character, his phobias and his obsessions. Before I left Washington for Puerto Rico I was exhaustively briefed on his volcanic explosions, how he had to be handled, from what angles he had to be photographed, what Scotch he preferred, and on and on. When he came down to Puerto Rico to open the conference, I went to him and said...

Q: How was this? What was he doing?

MOCERI: Well, he was vice president at the time, right? Sargent Shriver had cajoled 72 countries into sending representatives to this conference on middle-level manpower needs of the Third World. And the vice president was asked to make the opening speech at this conference, essentially to impress all these dignitaries and high-level managers from foreign countries in attendance.

The State Department didn't like the whole idea but had to go along. They felt, "Well, Sargent Shriver's acting as if he's running a State Department of his own."

I guess Lyndon Johnson had to be content with these kinds of symbolic appearances and presentations. But I had heard from journalists in Puerto Rico who had come to me all about problems they had had with him.

Q: The other tape ended when you said the journalists in Puerto Rico had reported to you the problems they'd had with Lyndon Johnson.

MOCERI: Yes, on a previous visit to the island. So I went to the vice president and told him about this in the plainest terms. I suggested it might be very useful if he would meet with the press, allow photos to be taken, and to answer questions, possibly even have a drink with the press. He showed himself perfectly ready to do this. He wasn't at all disinclined. I didn't have any problems at all arranging with him to do all this. I thought he was actually quite gracious. People took pictures from various angles. And he answered all questions. It all went very well. That was my one satisfaction and I was glad for it because it gave me, at least, a personal insight into the man.

I thought that the whole conference was no more than an occasion for Shriver, Richard Goodwin and others just to have a world stage for themselves. That may be too cynical

but I didn't really see that this was a very effective means of tackling the problem and hardly an effective expenditure of energy.

On my return to Washington I learned that a decision had been made on a field assignment for me. My two years were up in Washington.

Q: You'd learned a lot of things.

Assignment As PAO In Khartoum

MOCERI: I had learned a lot of things. Evidently Tom Sorensen had decided in his wisdom that I should fill the first available opening in the field, the PAO position in the Sudan, replacing Henry Hudson. Especially after my briefings in the Agency area office and at State I felt rather strongly that my work in my earlier field assignments and my two years of Washington duty had earned me the right to a more important assignment than the Sudan. I knew nothing about that part of the world or the Arab world and Northeast Africa. It was unmistakably clear from my briefings that Washington viewed the Sudan with complacency as a quiet backwater country that was not expected to present any problems. All I really got in terms of briefings and preparation was "You go out there and have an easy, pleasant time of it." This was a State Department officer, Cleo Noel, if I recall correctly, that was his name. Many years later, he was an ambassador in Khartoum and was killed by a terrorist.

Q: I don't recall his name.

MOCERI: He was in 1962 the desk officer for the Sudan. And he said, "We're perfectly happy with that regime." [It was a military regime.] "We're perfectly happy. We have no problems. You'll have a nice, quiet time there. You won't have to do a thing. You just put in a couple of years. It'll be nice." It wasn't my idea of what I ought to be doing at that stage of my life in the foreign service. I didn't know anything about the Sudan.

I got there in November of '62 and remained for two years as PAO. Ned Roberts was the area director. In terms of guidance from the remote Washington vantage point, everything was going fine. There were no problems. We had no problems with the Sudanese Government.

Well, I got there and found myself seized with a pretty full set of management problems. The information officer was spending three-fourths of his day editing the wireless file for a couple of Sudanese newspapers. [Laughter] It seemed to me an unconscionable waste of time. You don't spend three-quarters of any day editing the wireless file. That's not the most important thing in the world in any set of circumstances. Sure, it shouldn't take all that time. The cultural affairs officer, who was new to the Agency, enjoyed his assignment--in my opinion because he had so little to do and relished the leisurely pace of foreign service life.

USIA Program In Sudan Was In Disastrous Condition

I'd had the previous experience of Taipei and thought that was a disaster--a situation that should never have been allowed to happen. Even if I were the most brilliant man in the world, I still shouldn't have been put into that kind of a situation. Because there are too many problems. One can say, "Oh, but you've got all new people. You can mold them the way you want." No, that's not the way to do business, in my book. And there had been nothing that prepared me for USIS Khartoum.

I knew that I had a lot to learn about the Sudan and our USIS program before I could venture to open my mouth about anything in the Ambassador's staff meetings. The bemused, seemingly indulgent contempt with which senior Embassy personnel looked upon USIS and its activities was quite transparent. The more I learned about the USIS program, the more I marveled at the rationale for its existence. The PAO residence, which I inherited, had fourteen air conditioners used year-round in the desert heat of Khartoum. The cost was unbelievable. I replaced them all and used two desert coolers, consuming about \$30 worth of electricity per month. I looked at our operations. The library was a fairly shabby operation. The magazine that we distributed, the Arabic-language magazine printed in Beirut left much to be desired in terms of program utility. Our cultural exchange resources were almost laughably minuscule in comparison with the joint activities of the Soviet Embassy and the Sudanese Communist Party in sending young Sudanese on four-year study programs in the USSR (an activity on which I reported rather extensively). An attentive analysis of the USIS country budget showed that 94% of a quarter million dollar operation was tied up in fixed costs. For the current fiscal year any new program initiative was virtually impossible, thanks to insufficiency of funds.

So I went about the business of trying to establish contacts with people, find out what was making this country tick, and so on. Thanks to some of the local staff, I met a number of people and most importantly some who had been senior civil servants trained under the British.

Well, one fact I learned that was especially interesting and indicative for me, the Abboud military regime had gotten rid of over 65% of all the civil servants trained by the British. One may say what he wants about British imperialism and British colonial administration, but people they trained they generally trained pretty well.

Q: They did.

MOCERI: And these were good people.

Q: They left a good basis for a logical government.

MOCERI: And I thought, "Well, something will have to give in this situation. These military people won't really know how to run a government. They get rid of all their trained bureaucrats. And bureaucrats have a function, after all."

And I got in touch with university students. Got to know quite a few of them, including a few university girls. And then southern students, the blacks of southern Sudan. I was really fairly careful at this point, because I realized that, like all authoritarian regimes, this regime could be quite restrictive and very intolerant of certain things.

Moceri Predicts Forthcoming Coup But Ambassador Ignores His Report

So I moved rather carefully. I did quietly arrange for people to come out to my house for dinner, music or just conversation. We talked of their problems, and I learned much about their country. Within four months I came to the conclusion that this regime's days were numbered. So I sat down and wrote a lengthy paper on the coming coup d'état, the conditions that were its seed-bed and why it would happen.

By this time I'd become quite friendly with the CIA station chief, in part because of the warm friendship between our wives. One day I said, "Look this paper over because I want to give it to the ambassador. I think it's a good reading of the situation, as I know it. And I want your reaction."

He read it and he says, "You're right. You should give it to the ambassador." And I figured, well, the ambassador will send it in. The ambassador was William Rountree. And I didn't know, before I went there, that Rountree had been ambassador to Pakistan and had been removed at the insistence of Lyndon Johnson, when Vice President Johnson on his swing through the South committed several gaffe's--to the barely concealed delight of the accompanying American press corps.

Rountree had had a remarkable career in the Department and he was very able. But at this point, I think he was gun-shy. He just wanted everything quiet, didn't want to raise any hackles or call undue attentions to himself.

The argument I advanced in the paper was along these lines: "The government has alienated every segment of the public sector, apart from the Army, and that too may be in question. There isn't an element in this country that supports this regime anymore." And I added, "Some incident will occur. Probably something like a student being killed or something like that. It'll be just like a leaf falling somewhere. The conflagration will take place. And this regime is finished."

Well, my guess is that Ambassador Rountree simply filed the report, buried it. At the time I was still very much the newcomer, our relations were formally correct but just that. Rountree was as always correct, very courteous, and generally quite a reserved Southern gentleman. I hesitated to ask about my paper and he never mentioned it. But word of my thesis did get around. You know, the wife of one of the political officers in needling, "Oh, Moceri and his revolution." And I was pointedly reminded of this when the revolution took--coup d'état took place. And it happened some 18 months later. The regime just

disintegrated when it was confronted by an angry but unarmed mob. Perhaps because it had no stomach for a bloody massacre.

Well, I felt this was simply a question of my objectively trying to read what the climate, political climate, of opinion was. And that this was one of my proper functions. And I felt that the political people weren't doing this. All I was hearing were expressions of considerable satisfaction with the way things were going, in spite of the growing unrest in the South in the spring of 1963.

The ambassador came to me at that time and said, "Why aren't you doing more to persuade the people, the Sudanese people, that we are giving our assistance to them?"

I said, "Because they don't believe it. And there's no way of making them believe that. They see our assistance going to a government, which then diverts the equivalent amount of resources for its own little war in the southern Sudan." The estimates in 1964 were that--when I left--were that already half a million people had been killed in that civil war.

There had been, I think, a total of a couple stories in the New York Times. Hedrick Smith came up from Cairo to cover the unfolding crisis in the South. I gave him a complete briefing on the southern problem, the problem of Arab-black relations in the Sudan of the missionaries and so forth. [Laughter] He said, "Don't give me so much detail. I can only file a 500-word dispatch a day. I can't explain all this in 500 words."

I said, "Well, that's your problem." But he was very good about it. I went at considerable lengths to brief him.

Eighteen Months After Moceri's Paper Prepared, The Coup Comes

On our wedding anniversary--I'm sorry for introducing this personal note. There always has to be some personal element in this. I was taking Modesta out to dinner; one of the few times we went out to dinner in the Sudan. And there was a restaurant a block away from the Embassy, up on the 14th floor of this new building. I'd made an 8 o'clock dinner reservation, but I got home later than I had expected. We hurried back to the center of Khartoum and drove to a round circle from which we could go directly down a street to the restaurant and Embassy. We were about five blocks from the Embassy, at the time. The street was completely closed. There were tanks all around. Every car parked on that street, as far as the restaurant and the Embassy was ablaze.

Had I gotten there 15 minutes earlier, either we would have been in the car and injured or killed, or the car would have been burned while we were having our dinner. And we would have been stuck up there. In the meantime, all hell had broken loose; gunfire, a seething mob, tanks maneuvering, troops getting into position around government buildings. Dropping my wife off at a friend's house, I picked up my information officer and circled the city for several hours, gathering impressions and information.

From that moment, the 22nd of October, all foreign missions lost all contact with the Sudanese. Our CIA lost all its contacts with the army and the police. The ambassador lost all his contacts. Things were so bad that the British ambassador was calling our ambassador to find out what he knew. And our ambassador was calling him. Nobody knew. Curfew was imposed. Yet I went out every night, seeking information from my Sudanese contacts.

Q: This was the coup that you...

MOCERI: This was the coup that I had foreseen and it had started with a protest staged by university students. Three university students had been killed, by the military, because they were protesting certain government actions. There was sporadic gunfire, and some shots came through Embassy windows. Our flag was pulled down. Large angry crowds milled around our building all day.

But I thought and pointed out to my colleagues, "You know, it's all very methodical. All you have to do is get here at 7:00 and the mobs arrive at 8:00. Then they go off at 3:00. And then you go home. So there's no real danger." But with the curfew, nobody traveled. Yet I went out, for more than a week, every night. And I'd run the barricades and the check points.

I'd come in to the Embassy in the morning and report to the ambassador on what I'd learned the night before from my contacts. Because I still had my contacts, and I thought they were good. My best source was this one person, who said to me, "I'm in hiding. I don't want to be part of the new government because I don't approve. But here is what I'm learning."

So I'd brief the ambassador. He'd call in his secretary and dictate a telegram to Washington. That was the one communication for the day with Washington. After a week, he got pretty nervous about it. And he said, "You know, I don't want you to risk your life just to take..."

I said, "It's all right. If I don't go out you're not going to learn anything. And I'm careful." You know, as I drove down any street I'd make sure that I had a place to turn around if I suddenly encountered something suspicious or threatening.

Well, that was over, and I soon left Khartoum, with the new government installed and taking actions against our interests in the Congo. Six months later, I saw Ambassador Rountree in Washington. He didn't remember that I had been there during the coup. [Laughter] I was appalled.

He had, incidentally, in early 1963 authorized only me to address any Sudanese group on the question of the blacks in America. He wouldn't have anyone else addressing the question about the blacks in America. The Embassy had been invited to address a group of very prominent Sudanese on the problems of the blacks in America. It was not an

invitation the Embassy could refuse. The DCM was designated to speak on behalf of the Embassy. And the Ambassador asked me to draft a speech for the DCM.

And I was honest in developing my account of the nature of the problem and the prospect for the future. I talked about the problem of the blacks, the problem of political power, the riots in American cities; you know, things were burning. I said there would be a lot more burning until the blacks realize they have to organize themselves politically. This is the way you got to power. You acquire power in a democratic country through political organization. And I pulled no punches.

I knew what the problems of the northern Sudanese were, what troubled them. They were afraid, because of their color, that we Americans would look on them as blacks. Well, of course, most of them may well have had...

Q: Well, they did have black heritage...

MOCERI: ...in their ancestry, because of the concubines, and so on, and the abuse. In this respect, I had played a really useful role. I had a lot of people out to the house for all kinds of briefings on these particular problems.

My time came, and, as I say, I left.

To go back to the summer of 1964, when tensions were building up, prior to the coup d'état, and the war situation in the south was getting much worse. There was a terrible missionary problem. And I think, maybe, Ambassador Rountree realized the situation was possibly beginning to unravel. I had talked to him about this problem.

I'd said, "You know, I have a number of contacts. I know a number of southern students. I know a number of northern university students. I know a number of northern university girls, which is a particularly special audience for my wife and me." I never could reach them on any significant scale, because of the problem of the Communist Party in the Sudan, which had a very effective campaign going, recruiting university girls over the issue of circumcision. The Party was making a lot of headway with that appeal.

I also knew a number of university professors and, of course, the newspaper people and so on. And I said, "Look, we have to know more about the attitudes of any opposition and the opposing groups out there. But I know that the government will probably become aware of my contacts or activities, and will probably learn to keep an eye on me. But if you want, I'm willing to take the risk and meet as many of these sectors as I can, cultivate them as assiduously as I can, provided you know what I'm doing, and that the day the government declares me persona non grata, you will know how to handle that situation and get rid of me without any damage to my career."

In other words, in that kind of closed society you have to take certain risks. If you have to establish contacts and can establish them, you should and must. Otherwise, how are you

going to know, with a controlled press, TV and radio, what is really going on and what people are thinking?

Well, he never really cottoned to the idea. He must have felt it would be too risky. So that went by the wayside. Yet it is a question that we must constantly consider.

I should add that, at the end of my first year, before the end of the fiscal year--that was fiscal 1963--I turned back \$56,000 to the Agency as unexpended funds. I said, "You withdraw these funds because I can't spend them to good program ends before the close of the fiscal year," which was, I guess, a shock in Washington. Certainly, a shock to Ned Roberts and his people. And I never recovered the money or anything. The next year's budget came out and I had \$56,000 less. Well, I didn't believe in wasting money. And I thought, well, this was another lesson to me about how money is used and misused in the Agency. So much for that item.

1965: Moceri Informed As He Is Leaving Khartoum That His Next Post Is To Be
Conakry, Guinea

Before my departure from Sudan, Dan Oleksiw had informed me that my next assignment would be Conakry. [Laughter] Well, at that point, I had to be told where Conakry was. As a political officer, who eventually was transferred to Conakry from Moscow, said, "This has got to be the end of the world."

I cannot imagine any reasonably seasoned officer, even if only a Class 2, being delighted at the prospect of a tour in Guinea. If ever a listing of countries in terms of priority ranking had been or were ever made up in the Agency, Guinea would certainly have been very close to the bottom of the list. Ruefully I reminded myself of what a personnel officer had said to me when she learned that I had in fact ended up in Florence as my first assignment in the foreign service, "Now that you have Florence, the crown jewel of the foreign service, you'll spend the rest of your career paying for it." I could not help thinking that Fate or Destiny or whatever we mean by such words was exacting a rather heavy price for a tour of duty that had been quite other than a ball. (In five years of service I saw less of Florence as a city to enjoy than I did in a week's sojourn as a Fulbrighter.) I did wonder whether the Conakry assignment might be the last chapter in my exile.

Once again I returned to Washington--this time for nearly six months thanks to mandatory participation in a counter-insurgency seminar and French language training. The seminar, which grew out of Walter Rostow's half-baked legalistic theories on the role of counter-insurgency in global strategy and Robert Kennedy's juvenile propensity for action at any cost, was in my opinion a great waste of time. Nothing in the six-week duration of the seminar persuaded me of its relevance to the mission of USIA. I could not help noticing that Frank Carlucci, a member of my group in the seminar, an officer returning as a hero from the Congo and destined for the highest positions in our

government, attended the opening day of the seminar and was not seen again until the last day.

I soon discovered that nobody in Washington seemed to think that a thorough briefing on Guinea in the context of US policy interests or of the commitment of USIA resources was important. Trying to find out anything about Conakry, from anyone in Washington, was really a hopeless task. Reflecting later on my Khartoum and Conakry experiences, I have found myself wondering with some amazement how Washington could send anyone out to a post with so little--if any--briefing on problems and the political significance of the country in terms of the general context of US foreign policy and interests.

Concerning the Sudan, I had been told essentially, "No problems. We're perfectly happy." Yet there were a host of problems, about which we needed to be quite candid with the Sudanese and, perhaps more importantly, ourselves. All our feeble efforts to strengthen Sudanese orientation to the West over the past thirty years and at a cost of millions upon millions have proven, beyond any possible doubt, totally ineffectual. The Sudanese Arabs, as I often pointed out, had constantly to prove to themselves and the Arab world that they were Arabic to the core, 110%, Arabs ne plus ultra. And all this fed by a relentless undercurrent of Islamic fundamentalism.

In the case of Guinea, all I could ascertain was that Guinea was important to our strategic interests because of its immensely rich, high-grade bauxite deposits, which had to be denied to the Soviets. My years in Conakry taught me the absurdity of this contention. Suffice it to say that, when the Guinean government was figuratively hammering the American Embassy and actually placing the American ambassador under house arrest, it was engaging in strenuous and successful negotiations with representatives of an American capitalist consortium for contractual arrangements for the exploitation of its bauxite deposits.

Finally, I arrived in Conakry (July 1965) and, to my astonishment, was met at plane side by Ambassador Loeb. Such was my curious introduction to a strange and occasionally extra-ordinary "Alice in Wonderland" tour. Loeb, publisher of a newspaper in upstate New York, good friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, prominent member of ADA, had first been appointed ambassador to Peru by the Kennedy Administration. When a military coup took place in Lima and he publicly criticized its leaders, he had to be removed. His loyalty to one aspect of the new posture the Kennedy Administration wanted to promote in its relations with Latin America was rewarded with an appointment as ambassador to Guinea. There had been every expectation that, given his considerable liberal reputation, he would get along famously with Sékou Touré, the President of Guinea.

My very first experience in Guinea was another case of presumption or, more charitably, miscalculation on the part of American officialdom. A private Ohio outfit had wanted to sell, or get rid of, two old DC-3s. They'd been trying to peddle them everywhere in sub-Saharan Africa without success. The company finally enlisted the support of the Kennedy

Administration. With that official helping hand they'd finally found an African country which would buckle under...

Q: Who wanted to start an Air Force. [Laughter]

MOCERI: Not quite. The Guinean government really wanted a civil aviation capability. So it purchased these two DC-3s with the blessing and backing of the USG. The planes had been fixed up and cleared by the FAA. The ambassador was just delighted. These planes had just arrived only a few days before I did. The Ambassador was invited--with some of his staff--to take the first ride in one of these planes.

Q: Who was piloting?

MOCERI: I don't remember his name, but I think it was an American piloting the plane. I'll never forget the experience. He asked me to go along. I was new and would get a view of the countryside, and all that. I was reminded that we weren't going to see anything of the countryside after that flight because Americans, except for the Peace Corps, were restricted to the city limits of Conakry. The morning after the flight, the ambassador called me on the phone and said, in high humor, "I want you to feel lucky you're alive." A strong thing, coming from the ambassador. "Well, the crew checked over the plane after we landed back at Conakry. And they found huge cracks in the landing gear." That became my introduction to the never-never world of Conakry.

Another side of that particular equation was that the ambassador seriously had entertained illusions of being a de facto financial advisor to President Touré, indeed was hopeful that an official announcement to that effect would soon be made. Loeb certainly did not know or understand his man. Touré had come up through the labor unions and the French Confederation of Labor. He had mastered all the communist techniques, had organized his party, had come up on top. He had stood up to Charles de Gaulle and been the only West African leader to say, "no" to de Gaulle's proposal for the union of the West African states and continued association with France. In retaliation, he had been left without any technicians to run the country; and all equipment had been rendered, at least temporarily, inoperable.

Well, on the fact of it, it was absurd to think that our ambassador could become the financial advisor to Touré. Touré had begun a correspondence with Kennedy. You know, "Dear John," and "Dear Sekou," and back and forth. [Laughter] And so, Touré thought that, to use a strictly American expression, he was a "soul brother" to John Kennedy. But that didn't mean he was going to take any instruction from a lowly foreign ambassador.

Well, he left.

Q: The ambassador left?

MOCERI: The ambassador left, about two months after my own arrival. And there was no replacement for more than a year. The DCM, Pierre Graham, became the chargé d'affaires. Some weeks later he turned to me and said, "You know, you have a real feel for these people. You get along. And you understand the situation." This on the basis of many conversations we had had. I was still trying to find out what the devil our US interest was in Guinea. Pierre Graham had fallen into the practice, or habit, of taking me along to his weekly meetings with Sékou Touré, initially as his note-taker. He evidently was impressed by the rapport that was developing between Touré and me. So he asked me to be his, sort of, de facto head of the political section. From that moment until the arrival of Charles Whitehouse as DCM a year later, I functioned as our unnamed DCM in all matters except administration. I initiated and drafted all political reporting. I prepared a lengthy account and analysis of Governor Williams' extensive meeting with Touré and the Embassy's annual assessment report.

1963 Visit Of Governor Mennen Williams To Conakry

In October of '63, Governor Williams, who was Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, came out.

So a large scale meeting was arranged with Touré. To eliminate any distractions, Touré arranged to have this full-scale exercise of Guinean-American relations at an isolated resort in the hilly hinterland of Guinea. Pierre Graham, the chargé d'affaires, asked me to be the note-taker for these sessions. And we spent all day at this resort in round-table discussion with Sékou Touré, his staff and key members of the party Politburo.

And I found myself wondering why Governor Williams was pressing so hard for freedom of education above all the freedom for private schools, and so on. This, I could only guess, was to liberalize a regime that wasn't about to be liberalized. [Laughter] It was really a waste of time.

Sékou Touré was masterful in delineating his own situation and his view of African politics. He went into the subject of colonialism in great depth. Publicly, he always talked about the imperialists: but privately, in talking to people like myself, he spoke most perceptively about the Africans and their problems. It was their tribal weaknesses that had opened the doors to the Europeans. They were responsible for their own downfall, is what he was saying.

But now that African leaders had taken over these colonies and their administrative structures, they were going to defend them.

When Governor Williams lectured him at some length about the extraordinary achievements in economic progress that the Nigerians had brought about through private initiatives, Sékou Touré warned him that Nigeria was on the verge of a terrible explosion and might well be torn apart by tribal rivalries and hatreds. I had to surmise that Governor

Williams was not impressed by Touré's forecast. Quite evidently, the Biafran crisis and ensuing civil war did not take Touré by surprise.

Sekou Touré's Vision For His Country Clashed With The Ideas Of Capitalism And Market Economy That US Government Was Trying To Pressure Him To Accept

Sekou Touré's argument was "We have a state and we have to build a nation of people," which made a great deal of sense. I thought that, in many respects, he was eminently reasonable and clear sighted. And I got along quite well with him. Pierre Graham and I used to call, regularly, once a week on him. Or he'd drop by Pierre Graham's residence and we'd sit at the pool and talk. We had, I thought, an excellent relationship that could yield us some advantage if we kept our sights on reality rather than ideology.

At one point, the situation got pretty tense, though, because the negotiations with the American companies were going fairly well, but negotiations with the United States were not going particularly well, for a variety of reasons, because we were promoting a very aggressive AID program, and insisting on a broad panoply of tight controls and reporting requirements. AID was inundating this country, which had really no bureaucracy worth the name, with demands for all kinds of reports and accounting procedures they were clearly incapable of handling.

And then we pressed for proposals that Touré didn't like at all, such as creating a special category of rice growers, who would have certain privileges because we would help them directly to increase their rice production. He saw this proposal as a means of promoting the growth of a new capitalist class, which he wasn't about to have; under no circumstances would he have it.

Well, I took what people in the State Department called a romantic view of Touré. I didn't think it was. I thought it was far more objective and realistic than the conventional wisdom in the Department or the media. I felt that he could be reasoned with, if you looked at his particular kinds of problems and at things going on in the country.

Now you must remember, in Conakry, we were all confined to the city of Conakry; we could not go out into the country. He wouldn't permit that except for the Peace Corps people. And he had a lot of problems with the Peace Corps. Eventually, he insisted on their being removed.

In terms of USIS activities, there was really not very much that could be done. I had a three-man staff: a cultural affairs officer, information officer, and a public affairs trainee. We had a little library. I tried to promote the Horizons book program. And we got some placement, but I had no illusions because I knew that it was difficult to control. We talked to people about titles for the program, and got the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information to go along with several of our suggestions.

Chinese Very Active And Offered Programs Much More Attractive To Guinea

But, you know, the Chinese--this is one area where the Chinese were very active and, I thought, were very good in their approach to people. They could offer Guinean officials and party cadres a lot more than I could ever offer. I had, at best, three exchange grants or something like that. The Chinese played to a fair-thee-well the parallelism with their own country and exploited the Vietnam angle to the hilt. They concentrated on the Ministry of Information people. That meant all the film people and the staff of the one newspaper, the party newspaper.

I thought they were better than the Russians at this game. They put up the capital for the stadium and they actually built the stadium with their own hand labor. They were very good at that.

U.S. activities were very limited. There was no possibility of going up country or going anywhere, outside of Conakry. Everything required government permission. They were all suspicious, except for Touré himself, who was confident in his own power. But the underlings were hostile; at best, agreeable in some respects and, in a few instances, we could get few things done.

But my task at this point was really doing the political reporting for the embassy. And all through that period, every political airgram, cable or communication that went to the State Department was something that I drafted and worked on.

By the spring of 1966, our relationships had seriously deteriorated. The rapport between our people in charge of our economic assistance programs and their counterparts had reached almost a breaking point. The already bad internal economy was getting worse. Touré's rivals and enemies in West Africa were mounting a drumbeat of attacks on Touré in their controlled press. Guinean paranoia was clearly reaching a point only just short of explosion. At this juncture Pierre Graham was called back to Washington for consultation in the Department. Prior to his departure, there had been in a country team meeting unanimous agreement that I should assume in Pierre's absence the position and authority of an acting chargé d'affaires (I no longer remember whether or not a message to that effect was sent to the State Department, but sending such a message would have been standard procedure).

Within a few days of Graham's departure the Guinean situation had visibly deteriorated to a very disturbing degree. The air seemed electric with nervous tension. Touré decided to hold an enormous rally and delivered his famous--many Westerners said, his infamous--speech summed up in the phrase "égorger les imperialistes". If he or members of the Bureau Politique were attacked and assassinated at any time, now or in the future, he instructed all Guineans to take upon themselves the initiative to hunt down and cut the throats of all the imperialists residing in Guinea. He added that it was not necessary for him to tell his Guinean brothers who were the imperialists: they already knew who they were. Shock waves of alarm swept through the small community of westerners. European expatriates spent hours conjuring up images of bloody massacres that had taken place in

the Congo. I refused to be misled by Touré's violent rhetoric and insisted on maintaining complete calm and communication, directly and indirectly, to all the American community my absolute certainty that disaster was not around the corner. In the next two days the Western ambassadors and senior diplomats came individually to see me, expressing their alarm and asking for my personal assessment and assurances about the US Government's position. I explained to each the reasons for my calm and confidence and reassured them that Washington shared my assessment. In offering that last reassurance, I was using a certain liberty and had to employ every device to hold the sense of panic in check.

Even the Soviet mission arranged to convey its concerns to me and sought my estimate of the situation. Our shared skin color gave them real worries.

The confidence I honestly held was warranted by the facts and my sense of Guinean realities but with one caveat. I had no knowledge or even intimations of what French intelligence and West African regimes hostile to Touré might be planning. Knowing full well the grudge in certain French quarters against Touré, I had no doubt that French intelligence was quite capable of organizing through other channels a neat and swift little surgical strike against Touré. Lacking any intelligence sources, I could not know or even guess whether the will to strike was there. I drafted a lengthy cable to Washington, detailing the reasons for my assessment and my confidence that American lives were not in danger. I also conveyed my concern about the hypothetical possibility of a foreign undercover strike operation, in which case I could not guarantee the safety of Americans in Guinea. Therefore I requested the Department to inform me whether the American intelligence community had any information to indicate that the possibility was more than hypothetical. After discussing my draft with my three most senior associates, I sent off the cable.

On his return an agitated Pierre Graham told me that the phrase "danger to American lives" set off alarms all over the State Department. At his morning staff meeting an irritated Secretary Rusk asked who was this person who had sent in the cable. I was chagrined to realize that nobody had carefully read my cable or understood what I was requesting. So ended a brief, inglorious tenure as an acting chargé.

Not long after this episode one Assistant Director for the African area, Mark Lewis, came out and told me that Frank Shakespeare was furious because I hadn't submitted my monthly activity reports. I became very indignant about this, furious to be honest, because I had been working interminable days and generally late into the night, analyzing, rewriting, reporting and doing all the essential functions of a mission that nobody else was prepared or willing to do. And I was doing what I could in USIA, which was not very much.

I went to the chargé, Pierre Graham, and to the AID director. And I said, "Look, I've been raked over the coals by my area director. I'm charged with neglecting my USIS program. I feel that I have been doing all the serious work of political reporting. I've been doing what

I have been asked by both of you and the so-called country team to do. Now I am being reprimanded and insulted. Either you straighten our Mark Lewis or I'm quitting the Agency. Because I just can't work under these conditions. If I don't have the confidence of people back in Washington in what I'm doing, that I'm making sensible use of my time; and if they don't see all the political reporting, copies of which are on their desks, and they have no idea that I'm doing it, then something is seriously wrong."

Well, they called Mark in and talked to him, made the point that I was an invaluable member of the country team and I'd been doing this important work. Mark withdrew his charge and said he'd go back and straighten it out, but I don't know that it did me any good, anyhow. [Laughter]

Q: I suspect he probably said, "That isn't what you're supposed to do.

MOCERI: You know, this was a case where USIA ought to have recognized that, at best, we had a minuscule USIS operation that, in itself, could not mean very much in this kind of context.

By early fall of 1966, an American Ambassador was in place. The Department had finally appointed Robert McIlvaine. I wrote his statement for his presentation ceremony to Touré. And everything seemed to go very well for the first couple weeks.

Sekou Touré felt that because of the remarks Ambassador McIlvaine had made, he had found a kindred spirit in McIlvaine, and everything would go well. Here was an ambassador who really understood him, etc.

During Stop Of Pan Am Flight At Abidjan, Guinean Foreign Minister Removed From Plane And Detained By Ivory Coast Military. Touré Retaliates: Arrests U.S. Ambassador. Widespread Repercussions

Unfortunately, shortly thereafter, the Guinean foreign minister had to go to an all-Africa conference in Addis Ababa, and decided to fly the most convenient way--a Pan Am flight stopping over in Conakry, and going on to Addis. Apparently the Guineans hadn't checked as to what stops the plane made in between. The plane put down in the Ivory Coast at Abidjan. And he [the foreign minister] was taken off the plane...

Q: He was taken off?

MOCERI: ...by the Ivoirian military, and put under house arrest in a military camp. Well, the next morning, our ambassador in Conakry is placed under house arrest. And Sekou Touré, and everyone else around him is in a rage. During the night, VOA had carried the story about the forcible removal of the Guinean ambassador from the plane in Abidjan, and his detention in a military camp. That's how Sekou Touré learned about it, from VOA. In his mind, you see, the VOA knew everything that was going on in Africa.

We hadn't gotten the message. And, obviously, I hadn't stayed up all night just to try to listen to a VOA broadcast, nor had Washington sent any word to us. Well, I got this call from our administrative officer: "Look, our ambassador's under house arrest. You better get down to the foreign ministry and see what can be done about this." So I raced down--not being under house arrest--saw the people I knew, and they told me what the situation was. In response to my protestations, they assured me they would go to Touré on the matter.

Well, we later learned that there had been some kind of communication foul-up from the State Department, and the message had never gotten to our embassy. So we were not alerted as to what happened. Well, the Guineans found this pretty hard to believe.

At any rate, the order placing McIlvaine under house arrest was lifted. I think it was the next day. But by that time, Sekou Touré had decided that the only way he could get his foreign minister released was by bringing pressure on the United States and adducing, as the reason, that Pan Am was U.S. property, property of the U.S. Government, and therefore, the U.S. Government, which knows everything that goes on in Africa, could work this deal.

Well, apart from misconceptions about what is government ownership and what isn't, Sekou Touré was right. There was no way he was going to get his foreign minister back unless the United States brought pressure on Abidjan to release him, which is what happened. And, eventually, he was released.

Q: What was he picked up for in the first place?

MOCERI: The two countries, Guinea and the Ivory Coast, had not gotten along in...

Q: I know they didn't get along, but any particular...

MOCERI: No, no particular reason. Apparently Houphouet-Boigny decided he'd get hold of one of these guys and put pressure on Sekou Touré and so on.

Well, then there were waves of anti-imperialism--anti-Western imperialism protests whipped up and so on. So, it was a very, very disagreeable period. This was the time when I first learned about facing popular militia in many parts of the world--kids with guns and trigger happy. The potential for disaster was all over the place.

The Frightening Incident At The Stadium

At any rate, finally, the foreign minister, Beavogui, is released. And our ambassador returns. And there's a great celebration organized to welcome back the foreign minister in the stadium. And all the troops, all the members of the party, are called. And the place is jam-packed. It was originally intended as a soccer stadium, you see. So it had quite a capacity, perhaps as many as 25,000 people.

We had discussed in our country team meeting how we were going to handle this. Obviously, you know, we had to appear. It was a formal occasion, and there simply had to be an American presence.

Q: The American ambassador was there too?

MOCERI: Yes. Everybody was there. Charles Whitehouse had replaced Graham in the late summer. So I argued that the ambassador, who had been humiliated by house arrest, should not appear. I felt that Whitehouse should not appear, in part because he was at that point hardly known to Touré, in part because he was the DCM. I felt that money bags, the AID administrator, should not be there.

I said, "I think I'm the only one who should go. I'm not the personal representative of the President of the United States. I don't represent the money. They know me. Sekou Touré has dealt with me. He knows me. He knows what my place is. Beavogui, the foreign minister, knows who I am." The Guinean Ambassador to Washington, who had come back, knew me, and apparently had told his superiors that I was one of the best friends Guinea had in the American Embassy. On an earlier occasion I suspected he had read or been told about one or another of my reports to the Department.

Q: The Guinean Ambassador to Washington had returned?

MOCERI: The Guinean ambassador. So I said, "This is the only sensible way. For me to go. We've got to be represented." So I took the very junior political officer with me, a fellow named Robert Houdek, who today is chargé at our embassy in Ethiopia. I like to feel that he did learn a few political lessons from me. We had a very good relationship. Because I felt there should be at least two people there. And I told him, "The first time anybody uses the term 'American imperialism' or 'American imperialists,' I have to walk out. If I get up, you get up immediately with me and walk just behind me."

We arrived at the stadium in the Ambassador's car and flying the American flag. Both troops and the malice populaire were all over the place, at the entrances to the grounds, lining the drives and at the entrances to the stadium itself. Crowds were milling around on the grounds and the surrounding streets, because the stadium itself was filled to capacity. We had no problem entering the stadium area and getting to our seats in the section reserved for diplomats directly under the President's tribune.

For a while it all seemed a blur of speech-making, chanting and prolonged bursts of applause. This was an audience of certainly more than 20,000 who were there because they knew they were expected to provide the proceedings the atmospherics of sustained din.

Beavogui rose to his feet to deliver his speech. As he approached the rostrum and microphones, he was given a thunderous welcome of shouts accompanied by waves of applause.

Then he launched into an impassioned denunciation of the American imperialists. And the moment he said "The imperialists from the United States of America" I stood up.

I turned to Bob Houdek and said, "We're leaving." Just as I started to walk out, the foreign minister paused, pointed directly to me, and shouted into the microphone, "The American imperialists." Instantly the whole place broke into a scream of rage; a great roar welled up from all the assembled host, echoed by the crowds that had not been able to get into the stadium. I didn't care about inside. I did, for one moment, feel concern about the throng outside. But I thought to myself, "Well, somehow we'll get to the car and we'll get away."

The moment I started down the steps to the stair well, Sekou Touré, I was told later by the Italian Ambassador, leaned over and talked to his aide. His aide scurried out. I was told he went down to alert the president's personal bodyguards to make sure that I got out and got out safely. By then the whole place was lined with these milice populaire. The president's bodyguards had to drive them out of the way; literally ordered them to get out of the way and let the car by. For a brief moment it appeared that the milice populaire would not give ground. Well, they finally got out of the way. But Bob Houdek said, "it was a scary experience." But that passed, too.

Q: You might have been the first martyr in Guinea.

MOCERI: Could well have been. [Laughter] It was possible. But you know how it is in these situations. You do what you feel you have to do. And I thought if something had to happen, it was better to happen with me involved than with the ambassador, or with, say, the AID director.

The tantrum that lay at the center of this event was not without serious consequences that left nerves jangled and an unrelieved state of tension that crackled like electricity. The Ambassador's premises were invaded by a small crowd. The Peace Corps was expelled. (I believe I am correct in saying that this was the first time the Peace Corps was expelled from any country.) More than twenty people in the mission complex were declared personae non grata. The team of Pan Am people who had been assisting Guinea in the development of plans for a civil aviation capability was ordered to leave the country. As soon as these obviously retaliatory measures were ordered and completed, Guinean-American relations entered a period of uneasy, ever wary peace.

In the meantime our Ambassador had been recalled to Washington for consultation, as a signal to the Guinean government of our dissatisfaction with its actions. For the benefit of Charles Whitehouse, our DCM and now chargé, I prepared a lengthy memorandum to explain the breakdown in Guinean-American relationships, my thesis concerning the

political factors at work within Touré's party that had probably forced his hand, and the role that I suspected the Chinese to have played in the entire affair. But I also felt this was not enough; I was convinced we had to develop a response that would forcefully drive home the point that Guinea could not abuse the American interest and American representative with impunity.

Moceri's Proposed Plan For Embassy Operation In Wake Of Stadium Tirade But Ambassador Rejects It

I said to Whitehouse, "Look, we've got to work out a plan. Because we can't let the Guineans get away with this. We've been humiliated and we have to show that, as a great power, we do not accept humiliations. And the way to do this is, step-by-step, to scale down the entire mission."

"The Peace Corps director is gone. But we must also remove all the high-ranking people and heads of agencies around the ambassador. Abolish my position and send me out. Then the next person to go should be the AID director, then the head of the political section, and on down until we leave the ambassador with a staff of five people, simply to represent the United States; pure representation. We're here if you want to talk to us. You can talk to us. We're willing to talk to you. But that's all. no aid, no programs, nothing."

Well, he thought it was a good idea. I was convinced this was the only way of responding to those in Touré's party who had been influenced by the Chinese, and to Touré personally. Touré would get the message that we were highly displeased and that the initiative, then, for repairing the relations, rested with him and his party. This was what I was after. Because I felt no USIS program made sense anymore in this situation, I eliminated my position--no doubt much to the surprise of our African area office. And I left Conakry.

No one else left because the ambassador, who had at this point returned, would not agree to the implementation of my entire plan. You know, "You cut down this far then why have an ambassador?" was his reasoning.

So I went back to Washington and was sent out interviewing candidates for USIA.

Q: Suggesting that their first post might be a trainee in Guinea? [Laughter]

MOCERI: Well, then Guinean Ambassador to Washington talked to people in the State Department, asked that I be sent back to negotiate a new cultural agreement with the foreign minister. Mark Lewis came to me, informed me of this proposal and seemed to have assumed that I would be agreeable.

I said, "No, you can't do this. This is absolutely wrong. It's not right. Because then it weakens the case that I've been trying to make, you know, on behalf of the United States. We're not seeking to make amends. Come on. Send someone else. If you really believe

that they will, in all earnestness, negotiate a new cultural agreement with us, send somebody else. Don't send me. Precisely because they've asked for me." So that ended my connections with Conakry.

Q: Well, did they ever send anybody?

June, 1967: To The Murrow Center At Fletcher

MOCERI: I don't think so, no. I don't think so. And well, things that happened after that. So, in the meantime, here I was, you know, going around interviewing candidates. Then I got a call from Henry Loomis' office.

Q: This was what year?

MOCERI: Well, 1967, possibly June of that year. And I was asked--Henry said, "We need someone up in the Murrow Center at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Ambassador Gullion, who is the dean, is anxious to get someone to replace Arthur Hoffman."

So I said, "Sure, I'll go." This was June of '67.

Q: Let me ask you this, now. What was Henry's position then? Because he didn't become deputy director until the election of Nixon, and that was in 1968.

MOCERI: Then I'm mistaken. He was at VOA. That's right.

Q: He was still at VOA. After VOA, in 1965, Henry left the Agency for a while.

MOCERI: That's right. He was.

Q: He was over at the Office of Education.

MOCERI: That's it. Who was it who called me? Now I've forgotten.

Q: In 1967, it couldn't have been Henry.

MOCERI: Well, at any rate, I hadn't had my home leave yet, so I came for home leave, out here in Auburn, Washington. And I got this call that I was being designated to go to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. And I remember I bought that car I had, that Chrysler. I still have it. And we drove across the country and landed in Medford, Massachusetts. Met with Gullion. And it happened that there was an affair, shortly after, for the opening of the academic year. And Tom Sorensen was up there. And Gullion hadn't heard of me, so Gullion asked him--Tom told me this later--what he thought of this new fellow he was getting, his Murrow fellow. [Laughter]

And Tom told him, "You're getting one of the best officers in the Agency. [Laughter] Whether Tom meant it or not, I don't know. But at any rate, it was very nice of him. So I got off on the right footing. That was enough for Gullion. So I spent two years there, which, in itself, was an interesting assignment.

In addition to teaching the graduate course on propaganda and a seminar on problems of public diplomacy, I undertook a number of separate projects.

First I wrote a paper and made a presentation to the Ford Foundation for research funds for case studies in public diplomacy. And got \$156,000 from the Ford Foundation for that. Got it after much negotiation. The funds were released to the Murrow Center after my departure in 1969, and I thought badly used; the wrong kind of case studies and the wrong kind of people doing them. It could have been very valuable.

Gullion had an idea about the relationship of civilization and foreign affairs. It was a very vague idea. I think he just liked the combination of words. And he wanted me to write a paper on the subject.

Well, what I was interested in at this point was the problem of analyzing, with some accuracy, the patterns of behavior of a foreign society. All that you couldn't do in terms of the conventional political reporting. What was required was a different order of studies that would develop a sensitivity to an understanding of the institutions of the country, the evolution of the institutions, their practices, the modalities of the political process in the country, in other words, and the effect of the culture of the country on the thinking of the country; what parameters it established and so forth.

I wrote a lengthy paper on this subject. And Gullion started peddling it around. He claimed he fell asleep reading the paper and that's all right; that's my prose. But the points were made and the Henry Luce Foundation gave \$500,000 to underwrite a professorial chair on the subject for a five-year period. It was to be an area of special studies.

In my paper I had illustrated the sort of things I thought needed careful examination. I explained, however briefly, a number of situations in recent history starting with the importance and implications of the European climate of opinion prior to World War I. Drawing on my earlier studies of history and political science, I touched on the miscalculations of diplomacy and the political élites, on the passion, the mystique of war; of a war as a purifier, which was very much in the air in Europe at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. How this had influenced behavior and so on. Well, that was only one of the many illustrations that I worked up in this paper.

Gullion submitted my paper as a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities. And I forget at this moment who the head of that body was at the time. He was a medieval history man --very good--who found the whole idea very stimulating, from an academic point of view. And I said I felt that, for Fletcher, it would be an important training for the political officers--eventual political officers--because so many went

through Fletcher and then ended up in the Department as political officers. And I'd seen some of the inadequacies of political officers of the day.

The NEH people liked the idea. And so they pursued it with Fletcher School. In the meantime, of course, I'd left. By the time they got into serious negotiations, I was back in Washington, at that point.

Q: This must have been 1969.

MOCERI: Yes. So, finally, the case officer said, you know, "I'm going up and I'd like you to come with me." So the Agency let me go up. They were going to have a two-day review. And coming back on the plane, he said, "Look, it's up to you. I'm not convinced that the school has the capability to mount this kind of program, to implement what you have in mind."

Q: Who was this? The case officer?

MOCERI: The case officer from the Endowment for the Humanities. Out of a sense of loyalty I answered, "Well, yes, they do have the capabilities. And this is the ideal place for this kind of program. Because so many people who go through the Fletcher School for Law and Diplomacy wind up in international affairs. And it's these people who ought to be aware of the kinds of dimensions they are dealing with, or in, other societies, and had been largely neglected by most people involved in matters of foreign affairs." I gave him my assurance that Fletcher had the capability to carry out this kind of program, if they were properly financed.

NEH gave Fletcher \$500,000 in seed money. And they had the Henry Luce Foundation grant, for five years, of \$500,000. The school had gotten about \$1,155,000 out of proposals based on papers that I had written. On working on these papers I was always convinced that I was in a real sense making a contribution to the Agency's area of concern--after all--very much so.

When the Fletcher School received the NEH grant, Ed Gullion was in Washington on other business. He came by to see me in IOR. He said, "You know, I'd ask you to join our program, but you people in the Foreign Service, you're just too rich for our blood." Meaning I was making too much money for Fletcher. [Laughter]

Q: Too much? A Foreign Service officer? What the hell is he talking about?

MOCERI: Yes, that's right. I was never invited even to give a lecture in that program once it was set up. It's still going. But it is not at all the sort of thing I had in mind.

Well, backtracking a bit, at the end of the first year--see, now we're in '68--Gullion asked the Agency if they'd leave me at the Murrow Center for another year, because I was in the midst of these negotiations and I was carrying on the Murrow Center and doing the

lecturing and so on. The Agency agreed. So I stayed the second year. And then in the spring of 1969, Gullion called Loomis and asked him to let me stay at Fletcher a third year. Loomis said, "Oh no, Jim is too valuable an officer. We need him here in Washington."

1969: Moceri Sent To Paris To Set Up Press Operation To Service European Media During Moon Landing

Well, the first think I heard was that I was to go to Paris for the Apollo 11 mission, because the Agency needed someone to set up a press operation in Paris to service elements of the European media. I thought, "My God, you're sending me? I'm a class two officer. I've had a fair amount of USIA experience. You can send any junior officer to set up a press operation, if you think you need a press operation in Paris for the European journalists. There are going to be 2,000 of them down at Canaveral for this event."

Well, it wasn't up to me to question, so off I went to Paris. Lee Brady was the PAO, and he offered me the services of Collette Gaudin as my staff assistant in their press center to be operated under the joint auspices of NASA and USIA.

Even as we set up the operation I continued to think, "This is a Mickey Mouse affair. You (meaning the Agency) send a class four officer and give him the experience of working with the French. Fine. Okay."

Well, as you know, we tried to do the best we could there. I still thought it was so much window-dressing for the benefit of inter-agency relations, but the fellow from NASA, who was with me, thought it was a good operation. I had an arrangement with the Hamelle Photo Laboratory so we could get almost immediate reproductions of space pictures, excellent color reproduction, in any quantity and for European distribution. Kodak used this same firm for their own work. This arrangement was made possible through Collette Gaudin's contacts. And we had excellent cooperation from the Hamelle people. We did have some measure of activity with the press.

Maybe we provided some useful service, but I had my doubts about its importance. After all, the scene of action was Canaveral and NASA headquarters. What people did come in? The journalists that did come were those, I guess, that couldn't get permission or backing to go to the United States. [Laughter]

Moceri's Idea Of Getting French Industry Involved In Jointly Funding NASA Space Efforts Is Quashed In USIA

At that time, because there was talk about the problems of NASA funding, there was a solution: we make the space enterprise a North Atlantic joint enterprise. Get the Europeans to come in and share in the development of the space program, etc. And almost simultaneously, the Economist came out with the same sort of idea.

I asked Collette Gaudin if she could do something for me, because--I said, "I have this idea and I'd like, before even mentioning it to Washington, to sound out important people in French life, to see whether the French would really respond to anything like this." I added, "Here's the kind of people I want," and mentioned a string of industrial categories I would like to have covered in arranging contacts.

Because I thought, you know, there's no point in my trying to present something like this to USIA and then eventually introduce it in government consultations in Washington, if I come to the conclusion that the Europeans really aren't interested in becoming partners in this kind of enterprise and sharing the financial burdens, as well as potential benefits.

Well, I must say, she did a superb job.

Q: Who was this, doing this for you?

MOCERI: Collette Gaudin.

Q: Oh, yes.

MOCERI: You may remember meeting her.

Q: Oh, yes, I remember. She later died, unfortunately, of cancer.

MOCERI: I knew that she'd had cancer. That was the last I knew. I didn't know that she'd died.

Q: She died about 19--oh, it was in the late 70s. I had written her a letter. I hadn't heard from her for some time. And then I got a letter back from Pierre, her husband. All it was, was one line, enclosed by black border, announcing Collette's death.

MOCERI: Well, through my assistant, Collette Gaudin, a luncheon was arranged, at one of the best restaurants in Paris, for about 20 people, all top-level executives in some of the major industries, like the metallurgical industries, the steel works of southern France, and people in the railroad administration. And she had done a truly extraordinary job of getting all these people to participate in what to be honest, was a meeting with a low-level Washington functionary.

So we had this elaborate French luncheon that I never tasted because I spent all my time talking about this proposal, this idea of mine, and trying to get their reactions to it. I thought my clinching argument was, "Look, would you rather spend your \$750,000,000 a year subsidizing certain West African countries, or put it into a future like space, along with other partners of the North Atlantic Treaty arrangements and the United States, under the conditions that you all share, according, at least, to the financial contribution?"

Well, there was not only interest and agreement. They were fascinated by the possibility. I don't think they were merely being polite. I think they genuinely saw this as a real possibility for the future, with certain potential that the French might well be interested in.

I came back to Washington, after the whole thing was over, and thought I should report to the head of IOP, William Weathersby. And I started to present this idea of mine. I explained the background and how I talked to Frenchmen. I had a list, then, of names and so on.

And he just--I felt as if I had been blown out of the office. "Oh, come on. It's the silliest idea ever. You could never get Congress to even think of agreeing to anything like that. Because no matter what is said publicly, we want to keep exclusive rights to any technology that's developed, etc., etc." He gave all the reasons why my idea was ridiculous.

Fine, Okay. I forgot it. Let's forget it, then. I didn't pursue it. I didn't feel I had any right to go beyond the head of IOP. Theoretically, I had been operating under the umbrella of that office. So nothing, actually, ever came of that.

Meantime, well what am I doing here? It was disconcerting to be part of a corridor brigade. Jim Halsema had written to me in Paris sounding me out on my willingness to work with him in connection with an Arthur D. Little study. He wanted me to join him, as his assistant and serve as liaison with the A.D. Little team. So that was what I came back to. I thought it was a matter only of a few weeks' work, or a month or two. It drifted on. You know the history of that.

*Q: I know. I got all involved in that. I thought it was the lousiest idea that we ever had.
[Laughter]*

MOCERI: And obviously, there was a breakdown in communications on both sides. I tried to serve as an effective liaison, which meant getting to the Arthur D. Little people to understand what some of the Agency problems were. But, as you know, nothing came of that. And there I was again, without an assignment.

I made the rounds of the office. I went to people like Barbara White. I knew there was a vacancy in IOP as her deputy. Apparently, she wasn't interested, even though I'd helped her on more than one occasion in her career. I'd been partly responsible for her getting her first field assignment as branch PAO in Turin. Until that point she had occupied only staff positions in Rome. And she had worked under me in IOP when I was Jim's deputy, Jim Halsema's deputy, back in 1960-61.

In Search Of An Assignment Moceri Sets Out Plan For An Analysis And Evaluation
Unit; Plan Accepted And Moceri Heads It

So I kept spinning my wheels in search of an assignment. And I think Jim Halsema came to me to report that Henry Loomis was interested in this suggestion that I dreamed up for an analysis and evaluation unit. Would I spell it out? So I did. I wrote a fairly long paper on the proposal. I didn't hear anything more for quite a while.

Then Jim informed me that Henry was talking to people, because Henry felt it should not be in his office. It was something he wanted, but he didn't want it in his office. He thought it might go in research or some other place. And he wanted a class one officer to head it. I was a class two, so obviously, he didn't even think about me. He apparently offered the position to a number of class one officers, all of whom refused it because they thought it had no power and would carry no authority.

My idea was quite simple: whenever the deputy director--in this case, Henry Loomis--had a problem that he wanted to look at and get an objective point of view, he'd turn to this unit and say, "Look into this for me and give me your report." And it would be intended, really, primarily for him. He'd be the one and only customer for it.

As I said, it was offered to a number of class one officers and they turned it down. Finally, apparently Henry decided, well, "Let's give Jim a crack at it; let him try it. Let's work out the bugs in it and see how it goes." So the unit was set up under Walter Roberts. So I had to report, in a sense, to both. And that began a fairly long period of intensive work on a great variety of agency problems.

I still feel that, that kind of independent unit, if you get the right people for it, should be set apart from inspection; apart from the general administrative setup, the lines of command, and so on, and be simply responsive to the front office, with no stake in any kind of a solution.

I'll cite only one example: Henry Loomis apparently had read the country plan for Nicaragua. I'm talking now--we're already into 1970 and I, by this time, had gone 11 months without an assignment, permanent assignment. Apparently, for some reason, maybe because he was planning to visit the Dominican Republic, as well as other places, Loomis had looked at the country plan and then asked me to write him an assessment of it, in my terms.

I was astonished to discover that they had as many officers as we had--in 1970--in Italy; as much money in their program, as we had in the Italian program.

Q: In the Dominican Republic?

MOCERI: Dominican Republic. And I said, "What sense does this make?"

Q: All the aftermath of that 1965 intervention.

MOCERI: That's right. And you know, nobody could shake it back down again or get it down to a reasonable level. Well, I'm sure that Henry was surprised. And I'm sure that the PAO must have been furious if he ever learned that I was the cause for a fairly drastic cut in his program. But that was the sort of thing that could be accomplished, without having too many bureaucratic wheels spinning.

And I wrote countless papers on a great variety of Agency problems, you know, anything that interested Henry.

1972: Moceri's VOA Study

Q: Was that what eventuated in your VOA study?

MOCERI: Yes. Oh, it was for this one purpose that O'Brien became a temporary member of my group. Because I think it was Henry Loomis who wanted O'Brien to sit in on it.

Q: As a special assistant?

MOCERI: Yes, but in the sense that he was serving then as Loomis's eyes and ears. And he was intrigued by the approach I adopted and the way we went about tackling the problem. And I think that was the beginning of a genuinely serious analysis of VOA broadcasting requirements and facilities. There had been previous studies, such as Chet Opal's study of VOA, and a number of other studies. However, none of them had really established a set of rational criteria for an analysis of technical requirements, which is what the change was.

I took and continue to take considerable pride in that undated 1972 VOA study of mine, entitled "VOA Languages and Technical Facilities." It was the first and most basic of the several extensive analyses I prepared on VOA and international short-wave broadcasting. I was greatly heartened by Loomis's very positive reaction, especially in the light of his own very considerable experience in VOA. When I concluded my summary presentation at the oral briefing he had set up, his first remark to the group present was to the effect that "At long last we have a real handle on VOA operating requirements." My own view was that the study should be viewed as the first step in a much-needed, thorough inquiry into the entire spectrum of VOA operations. I very much wanted to do the one follow-up study which would go to the heart of VOA operations, the nature and rationale for VOA broadcasting as an instrumentality of the American government. My field and Washington experience, especially the latter, had convinced me that the phony claim of the VOA operatives to the broadcasting of uncontaminated, objective news allowed them to get away with murder and constituted a gross misconception of the role of VOA as a governmental entity and a media resource for foreign audiences. Henry Loomis flatly turned me down on my plea for such a study: it just was not worth the cost of a bloody battle. It took me a long time to understand that Loomis was stating a fundamental, inviolable law of bureaucracy: top managers never do battle with subordinate elements which are believed to have a constituency in Congress or elsewhere in Washington.

Parenthetically, Charles Wick's plan for a one billion dollar VOA modernization program--about which I could learn nothing except for the meager account in the New York Times--struck me as being the greatest boondoggle in the history of the Agency.

I feel that the 1972 study was at least the beginning of a fairly sane approach to the problem of VOA requirements. And that led, eventually, to a 1976 study that I did for the State Department, of VOA, Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Europe technical requirements, which laid the basis for Congressional authorization and funding of 17 new transmitters for the three broadcasters. The conclusions of that '76 study were held over, on Kissinger's instructions, for the new Carter Administration. Brzezinski wanted to review it himself before anything was approved. But what was sent to Congress, as the report mandated by Congress, was almost word for word the paper that I submitted to the State Department when I was back there on consultation to do this study.

Followed By Subsequent Studies In 1975 And 1976

I had also done another VOA study, but that was in 1975, on the use of satellite circuits, in place of our domestic stations, for relaying signals to our overseas bases.

Q: Now, what was the date on which you officially retired?

MOCERI: April of 1976.

Q: Then you were called back in when?

MOCERI: In October of '76, and I was given six weeks to do that study, although the State Department had been instructed many months before to meet a Congressional mandate for a report on the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. official international broadcasting. And I finished that. And as I said, the report was submitted and then it was sent to the White House, to Kissinger, who didn't want to act on it, because it was the end of the Ford Administration. And so it was held over.

Q: Carter was elected in '76.

MOCERI: Yes. So he took office in January of '77. And Brzezinski held up the report until he had a chance to review it and then submitted the same report to Congress, as Carter's report. And in that report--and the recommendation was that Congress appropriate the funds for the 17 additional transmitters that I said were necessary for all three operations--each transmitter being allocated to Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, or the VOA. I was absolutely confident this met the necessary and sufficient requirements for a adequate and audible signal.

I discussed the problem of jamming and the limitations of jamming. And I pointed out that simply adding extra transmitters would not solve the problem, because it was easy enough to add jammers to overcome any transmitters that were put on stream.

The other study in '75, I had replaced Walter Roberts as assistant director for research, was on the use of satellite circuits in VOA relays to our overseas facilities. I had just one tremendous battle with VOA.

Q: Was Ed Martin still the engineering director at VOA at that time?

MOCERI: Yes.

Q: You would have always had an argument with Ed Martin on satellite transmission.

MOCERI: The worst problem came from the director of VOA, who...

Q: Oh, Ken Giddens?

MOCERI: Ken Giddens. When, after my retirement I was called back for a few days of consultation in connection with my study, I learned that there had been even personal attacks in memoranda to the Director on me and my integrity. Because I had proposed, in the study, the substitution of satellite circuits for all, or most, of our domestic transmitters, and therefore, the elimination or mothballing of those transmitters and the elimination of the 27 engineering positions involved, to help pay for the cost of satellite transmission. I felt we could get a 99.4% reliability in signal delivery. Intelsat and other organizations stood by that assurance as a guarantee.

And I had to face arguments about the Soviet ability to blast our satellites out of the sky. And then where would we be? My retort was, "Well, when that day comes, it doesn't make any difference whether VOA transmits or not."

Q: The big balloon is up.

MOCERI: Then I, of course, learned that in subsequent years they employed the satellite circuits for relay purposes. Thus VOA got both the domestic transmitters and the associated engineering which they preserved in the positions and the satellite circuits, and so on. Part of a few strange battles in VOA.

Moceri Ends Agency Career First As Deputy, Then Director Of Research

I suppose that about winds up my account. While I was the head of the analysis and evaluation unit in IOP, a vacancy occurred in the office of research, the deputy slot under Walter Roberts. Walter Roberts asked me to take that over, so I became his deputy. When he left to go to the school...

Q: He went to the Board for International Broadcasting, at that time, which was controlling both RL and RFE?

MOCERI: No, I think...

Q: No, that's right. Walter went first to the Center for Strategic International Studies, with headquarters over there in the same building with the International Club, 1800 K Street.

MOCERI: So I was appointed--on Walter's recommendation--to the director's position and ran research. I thought it needed a major reorganization, in terms of the focus of research. I wanted it focused on our media activities abroad. I distrusted much of the work that was done, in large measure because it had so little relevance to field needs and problems. But I felt if we do this--for instance, VOA research, audience research--I thought we had to do it on a systematic basis; set up certain principles. And I know, there was tremendous resistance on the part of the research staff proper, who, I think, saw me as a person who wanted to make a lot of wild changes in their methods of operation and their work. And, naturally, in part, resented me as a Foreign Service officer. They were all civil servants, Ph.D.'s, or M.A.'s in sociology, in social studies, expert in methodologies and no sensitivity to the realities of field operations. And they couldn't see this person who wanted research that had--could have operational inputs. And, you know, I like all Foreign Service officers would be here today and gone tomorrow. So the problem was just to last him out. [Laughter]

At any rate, what I was trying to do was restructure research so that it would have operational significance. Because I thought, this is the only way you're going to make any sense in terms of our field operations. And we undertook, you know, a great many studies. I had some problems with our director, on the subject, particularly of VOA audiences. He was interested in impressing Congress, and I didn't want him to go before congressional committees and make statements...

Q: Which director are you talking about? VOA director?

MOCERI: No, no. The Agency director. [Laughter]

Q: Let's see. Jim Keogh had come in as Director at that time?

MOCERI: Yes. Jim Keogh. You know, I felt if you're testifying before Congress, you'd better be able to back up your statements. The wild stories about immense VOA audiences simply made no sense. And if you had a couple good questioners in Congress, you could be mighty embarrassed. Because our research showed time after time that audiences were much less than VOA people were talking about; that audiences were concentrated in certain areas, and were certain kinds of audiences. And that you couldn't talk about, you know, the majority of the Russian people listening to VOA. All my evidence showed that in most parts of the world, wherever we could do on-the-spot

research, the VOA audience (those who tuned in once a week or more often) in urban areas ran about 5% of the urban adult population.

There I borrowed an idea from Henry Loomis, the politically curious segment of a population. That was the audience that should have interested VOA. Well, and then things like our research on the magazine that the Agency was distributing in Tehran. It was clear, from our research data--in a country where research is difficult to conduct--that over 65% of the mailing list maintained by USIS Tehran, never got the publications that were intended for them.

Q: Who was the PAO in Tehran at that time? It wasn't Gordon Winkler, was it?

MOCERI: Yes.

Q: It was?

MOCERI: Yes.

Q: That was his baby. He thought that was the greatest publication that ever existed.

MOCERI: Yes, I know. [Laughter] You could image the problem.

Q: That's why I asked the question.

MOCERI: The interesting thing is that all those reports that I issued and distributed in the Agency at that time were all unclassified. And if anybody in Congress or any journalist had had any sense, he could make the Agency look awful. And that was what I was worried about. But then I thought, you know, leaving them unclassified is the best cover they've got. Because who's interested in unclassified documents?

Q: Yes. If its not classified, people assume it isn't important.

MOCERI: No, it's not important. And nobody asked the questions. I said to Jim Keogh, "You know, what you're going to have to say, if someone in Congress asks you about this particular magazine. Although we claim that the distribution cost--production distribution cost--is \$1.00 per copy, it's really \$3.00 per copy." That gets pretty expensive, especially when you don't know who's getting it.

Well, it was that kind of research that I felt was really important and really would have an operational utility for our Foreign Service officers in the field. Now, obviously, I had a lot of resistance. [Laughter] I encountered a lot of resistance among our colleagues, PAOs and so on, who began to feel rather uncomfortable with some of these studies.

MOCERI: One of the last studies I directed concerned American investments in Mexico and Mexican attitudes towards that investment. This was a research project that was

undertaken at the behest of the American Chamber of Commerce in Mexico City. In what had become my standard operating procedure, I had to recast the conclusions of the research report in order to make sense out of the data and make it pertinent to the concerns that the Chamber of Commerce had expressed. The Chamber of Commerce invited me to Mexico City to brief its membership on the results of the study. It was my last foreign trip, in January of 1976. And I took Dick Monsen along because I knew he was going to be my replacement.

I had to tell the American Chamber of Commerce the sad results of our research: that they, themselves, had done the worst conceivable job with their own Mexican staff. So how did they expect the attitudes of Mexicans outside of their own organizations to be at all favorable to them, when their own employees, no matter how high ranking--if they were Mexican--had no real understanding of the role of the relationship of American investment to capital export, profit earnings, etc. They were really in ignorance.

So these results came as quite a shock to American industry, or American business, in Mexico. And I suppose one could generalize from that, to American business elsewhere, their own role. My God, if they do such a wretched job of familiarizing their own staffs with their role in the country, how could they expect the American Government to make amends for them, and straighten things out, and gain universal acceptance, and so on? That was one, final, interesting lesson.

Q: Well, Jim, this has been a fascinating interview. I have enjoyed it. I can't tell you how much I enjoyed it.

MOCERI: Thank you.

Q: And I thank you very much for giving me all this time.

MOCERI: You're welcome. I've even deprived you of lunch. [Laughter]

End of interview