

## NAMIBIA

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Carl C. Cundiff	1977-1980	African Affairs, Economic Policy Staff Director, Washington, DC
John J. Taylor	1977-1980	Political Counselor, Pretoria, South Africa
	1985	U.S. Observation Team member, Windhoek
Richard Bloomfield	1978-1982	Ambassador, Portugal
Donald F. McHenry	1979	Ambassador to the UN, New York
James L. Woods	1979-1994	DOD – Director, African Affairs, Washington, DC
Clayton E. McManaway Jr.	1981-1983	Staff Secretariat, Washington, DC
James K. Bishop Jr.	1981-1987	Deputy Assistant Secretary, African Affairs, Washington, DC
Chester Arthur Crocker	1981-1989	Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Washington, DC
Peter David Eicher	1983-1985	African Affairs Officer, Bureau of International Organizations Affairs, Washington, DC
John Hurd Willett	1985-1987	International Organizations, African Affairs, Washington, DC
Robert E. Gribbin	1985-1988	Deputy Director East African Affairs, Washington, DC
Edward Gibson Lanpher	1986-1989	Director of Southern African Affairs, Washington, DC
Gilbert D. Kulick	1987-1989	UN, Deputy Director, South African Affairs, New York
Herman J. Cohen	1987-1989	NSC Africa Advisor, Washington, DC

Harmon E. Kirby	1987-1989	Director, US Political Affairs, Washington, DC
Robert B. Morley	1988-1991	Director, Cuban Affairs, Washington, DC
George F. Ward, Jr.	1996-1999	Ambassador, Namibia

**JOHN HUMMON**  
**ICA, East and Southern Africa**  
**Washington, DC (1960)**

*John Hummon was born in 1930 in Ohio. He graduated from Albion College in 1953 and later earned an MA and PhD from the University of Michigan. Mr. Hummon began work at the Agency for International Development in 1960 and worked in Tanzania, Nigeria, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and as the Mission Director in Botswana. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1999.*

*Q: What was the context in terms of how Botswana saw itself in relation to the Southern African complex? What were their fears or hopes in that context?*

HUMMON: During the time when I went out there, South Africa was still under apartheid. Given the situation in South Africa at the time, none of us anticipated the peaceful transfer of power that would take place. I think all of us out there thought there would be a blood bath.

We were trying to strengthen Botswana and other countries in that area such as Zambia and Zimbabwe away from their reliance in the past upon the South African economy. In this context, there was much attention, particularly in the regional program, given to developing routes for goods to move in and out of Botswana and Zambia and Zimbabwe and Malawi and other countries without having to go through Durban, the main port in South Africa.

I liked to think, quite frankly, when I was in Botswana that the Botswana program, and our involvement in SADCC regional activities, and the development of the outlines of a program in Namibia were an attack upon the evil of apartheid.

We had only been in Botswana a short time when South African gun ships came in and bombed Gaborone, the capital. The bombing was a mile or so from our house, or maybe more; we were never in any danger. They killed about 12 or 13 people - supposedly at an ANC base of freedom fighters, or "guerrillas" in South African terminology. It was a rather tense situation during the years that we were there. One priority of the people of Botswana was to develop themselves so that they would have greater independence from

South Africa. And we were trying to help in several areas. We wanted, for example, to strengthen tourism, and to help poor people living near game areas to profit from the benefits of tourism and to get involved in game cropping if possible. This was an area of promise; it seemed to us; which we discussed with the people of Botswana. After I left, the Mission jointly developed with them a natural resources management project. There are tremendous game resources in Botswana in Chobe and the Okavango Delta.

**ROBERT C. F. GORDON**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (1964-1965)**

*Ambassador Gordon was born and raised in Colorado and educated at the University of California. He joined the Department of State in 1950, becoming a Foreign Service Officer in 1954. His Washington assignments include a tour with the Department's Executive Secretariat and with the Bureau of Near East, South Asia and African Affairs. His first overseas post was Baghdad, Iraq, after which he served in Sudan, Tanzania and Florence, Italy. He was appointed Ambassador to Mauritius in 1980, where he served until 1983. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989*

*Q: What was your impression of President Nyerere?*

GORDON: Of course, when we were there he was the great intellect in both the African independence movement and the movement of "we will correct all of our ills with a well-organized socialist directed society." And, of course, we see that that brought him to no good. It helped ruin what agricultural base they had in the first place. I didn't have too much of an impression except I knew he was very highly thought of.

He was a great pain in the neck already to the United States. But he was somebody we had to work with and he could be very helpful because he had an enormous amount of influence with other black African leaders. He was revered as the great father and so on, and so forth. And I understand that he at one time was trying to be very helpful as one of the front line states in the Namibia-Angola-South African negotiations that have just come to fruition in the last months or so.

**WILLIAM B. JONES**  
**Office of Program Planning and Analysis**  
**Washington, DC (1966-1969)**

*Ambassador William B. Jones was born in California in 1928. He graduated from UCLA in 1949 and USC law school in 1952. He joined the State Department in 1962 serving in the Bureau of Cultural Affairs,*

*UNESCO, and Haiti. Ambassador Jones was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.*

*Q: What was our policy? What were our objectives that you were trying to further?*

JONES: We were trying to give the new leaders of the new emerging nations, most of them became independent in the early 1960s, a favorable view of the United States and also give us an opportunity to get to know who they were and to size them up. So we were very careful in selecting leader grantees that had potential for becoming leaders in their country.

We also had a program called, "The Southern Africa Refugee Program" which was developed by Averell Harriman. That program targeted what were then Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola, South Africa and Namibia. We brought students out of the Southern African area, took them to Lincoln University in Pennsylvania where we set up a training school as part of that University, and they stayed there until they were capable of going into the mainstream of the U.S. colleges and universities. Sometimes they stayed at Lincoln as much as two years. Then they would go into the university system, get a degree and then go back to their own countries. The theory was that we wanted to favorably influence towards the United States the best and the brightest coming out of the Southern Africa countries.

It was so successful, that we opened up a second center at Rochester University where we also brought in students from Southern Africa. We tried to target the best and the brightest, whereas the Soviet Union, who was our major adversary, generally would roll an airplane up and just take a load of students to Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. We could never match them in terms of numbers, but we tried to beat them in terms of quality.

The people we selected were very carefully chosen by our embassies and also by collaborating with the African resistance groups. We had very close relations with Edwardo Mordalin who was then the head of FRELIMO which was the resistance in Mozambique. He had studied in the United States and he personally selected students to come under the program. We also had very close contact with SWAPO and with the two resistance groups in Southern Rhodesia, which is now Zimbabwe, with Robert Mugabe's group, for instance.

We would bring them into a center at Broken Hill in Zambia. There they would be processed and sent from Broken Hill to Dar-es-Salaam and from Dar-es-Salaam they would be sent to the United States. I made a couple of trips out to that area to look at those facilities and to see how the program was going.

That program stayed in existence until Henry Kissinger became Secretary of State. At that time, he decided to cancel the program as part of the famous "Tar Baby Option," what was presented in terms of what our policy would be towards Southern Africa. Henry Kissinger believed that it was highly unlikely that the Southern African countries were

going to gain independence and that, therefore, our program of trying to influence the future leaders was counterproductive. He felt we should maintain close ties with the governments in place, which was Ian Smith, at the time, in Rhodesia. He abolished the program. He cut it out entirely. That was; I guess in the very early 1970s, when the program was allowed to die.

*Q: Have you had any reading over the years about how these leaders, these grantees, performed later on in these countries, which became independent and moved on their own way?*

JONES: I left the African program in 1966 and became an Office Director in Program Planning, so I lost touch with many of them. But from my conversations with my colleagues, a number of them did become very prominent in their own countries and are in positions of influence.

*Q: This takes us up to about what?*

JONES: I left CUAFA in 1966, and I became an office director in what was then called the Office of Program Planning and Analysis which was to develop a planning system--the old PPBS as it was called in those days. In planning our budgets--program planning and budgeting--we would allocate funds directly related to program objectives and program objectives must be related to foreign policy objectives. So I devised a program planning system, whereby you would first determine the foreign policy objectives in a country, then you would analyze the categories of grants that you have and the amount of money that you had available, and determine what would be the most effective mix of grants in order to further our foreign policy objectives in that particular country or region.

*Q: We are talking about the end of the Johnson Administration. How did the Johnson Administration at this stage see Africa? We are really speaking about Africa south of the Sahara, aren't we?*

JONES: Yes.

*Q: How did they see it?*

JONES: In those days it was the entire continent. AF covered all of Africa, not just south of the Sahara. We had Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt. We had the whole continent.

*Q: How did the Administration see Africa? What were our concerns?*

JONES: The major concern was to prevent Soviet influence in the continent, to convince the emerging African states to adopt the democratic system basically, and to prevent the spread of communism and Marxism through the continent. Our programs were designed to further those broad goals. Obviously, in each country you had a set of separate country goals. Some of them might have been economic, but most of the time they were political

goals. But in essence, the thrust was to prevent the spread of Marxism in the African continent.

**RICHARD L. JACKSON**  
**Africa Bureau, North Africa Office**  
**Washington, DC (1970-1971)**

*Richard L. Jackson was born in New York in 1939. He received his Bachelor's Degree from Princeton University in 1962 and his Master's Degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1964. His career has included assignments in Mogadiscio, Tripoli, Thessaloniki, Athens, Rabat and Casablanca. Mr. Jackson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 17, 1998.*

*Q: What about, in your particular brief, let's take decolonization first. I would think Namibia would be an issue all the time. McHenry basically did that, didn't he?*

JACKSON: Right. There was a contact group on South Africa that he was front and center in. There were a number of us working on it. I was peripherally involved with the contact group. Decolonization, of course, is a vestige of the UN. There was then a vast decolonization bureaucracy and committee structure, as well as a fixed agenda they went through each year, often without real-world impact. Literally some of the territories on the decolonization list that were debated annually had smaller populations than the staff of the committees considering them, particularly the small Pacific islands territories. We were regularly drawn into the Decolonization Committee debate on Puerto Rico, which they insisted on working through each year with numbers of witnesses from Puerto Rico, from splinter parties that didn't represent mainstream opinion. But the UN I found to be, at least for the initial year or two until you realized the repetitiveness of it all, quite an exhilarating place to be. I enjoyed multilateral diplomacy, the experience of spending time in the Delegates Lounge and mixing it up simultaneously with diplomats from many countries. It was easy to find contacts for lunch and, if you've worked at political reporting abroad in a bilateral setting, it was like plucking fruit from a tree to be in such a large setting and an important dimension, I think, for Foreign Service officers to have.

Some of it was funny. We would frequently be lobbying on close votes to turn out countries of like mind with us to make sure the vote went as we hoped. For the littlest countries, that could mean finding the one delegate who might also be a student at Columbia and perhaps helping them get a baby sitter in order to get to the UN and be present for that one day of the week. But it was fascinating to see how coalitions were formed and how they changed and split. It was very interesting, as I got into the Non-Aligned brief, to begin to understand how that grouping of countries has really shaped the workings and functioning of the UN and actually set its agenda through a series of prior regional meetings of the Organization of African States, for example, or the Arab League. These regional meetings generated resolutions which were then ratified at a non-aligned

meeting with considerable horse trading. The outcome was an agreed document of the then-101 Non-Aligned States, now a larger number, which they brought to the General Assembly, so countries like the U.S., not party to those groups, were confronted with a fait accompli to which they could make little input. Also notable at that time was the beginning of a non-aligned core group on the Security Council, which depending on Council elections in any given year, ranged between six to eight members. Hypothetically, with both Yugoslavia and Malta or Cyprus in the same year, nine members, a majority of the Council, was also possible. In this way, the Non-Aligned succeeded in shifting the balance in the Council from formal, transparent, public meetings to the behind-the-scenes informal meetings, in the process altering the way that key institution works, in my view.

**PARKER D. WYMAN**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1972-1974)**

*Parker D. Wyman was born in Illinois in 1922. He received his AB from Harvard University and served in the U.S Army during World War II. His overseas posts included Berlin, Cairo, Dusseldorf, Milan, Saigon and Addis Ababa. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.*

WYMAN: I served there under two very capable career people, first Don Easum and then Steve Low. It was a fine experience. We dealt with some unusual situations during the time I was there. We not only had the transition from military to civilian government in Nigeria itself, but we spent a lot of time talking with the Nigerians about achieving majority rule for the area called Rhodesia, later Zimbabwe, and independence for the area called South West Africa, later Namibia. The Nigerians carried a lot of weight in Africa and were thus one of the players in the efforts to achieve those goals. They were quite willing to hear what we had to say about those issues and occasionally they exerted a helpful influence on the negotiations regarding them.

I think our efforts with the Nigerians were of some help in the resolution of the Rhodesian problem. I remember well how hopeless the goal of majority rule within the near future had looked to most people at that time. I particularly remember talking to the Indian ambassador, Avtar Singh, a friend of ours dating back to Cairo years, about the Rhodesian question. He was totally in favor of majority rule but I remember his saying at that time, "You Americans waste so much of your time on that issue. As long as Ian Smith runs the government of Rhodesia, you're never going to be able to convince him to give up his control or move in the right direction. It's a hopeless case while he's still there and I'm surprised that you keep spending so much time on it." The United States had already been working on this problem for a long time and this was one of those foreign policy situations where there would be many years of failure before American efforts finally helped to solve the problem, in 1979 and 1980. People don't realize that it often requires many years of unremitting effort before we can finally solve some of our foreign policy problems.

**RICHARD J. DOLS**  
**Desk Officer for Botswana**  
**Washington, DC (1972-1975)**

*Richard J. Dols was born in Minnesota in 1932. In 1954 he received his bachelor's degree from St. Thomas College and his law degree at University of Minnesota. He served in the US Air Force from 1955-1958. During his career he held positions in France, Vietnam, Canada, Swaziland, and New Zealand. Mr. Dols was interviewed by Charles Stewart Kennedy in 1992.*

*Q: What type of aid were we doing?*

DOLS: All kinds really. We were still into some infrastructure, a lot of vocational training and that kind of thing. I got the AFL-CIO's African program involved in vocational training as well as building a huge dam in Lesotho. We were still building big things like that. Like a road in Botswana, this was a most interesting one.

The South Africans mightily objected to us building a road from Zambia to Botswana and down the east side of the Botswana border towards South Africa. They claimed it was going to be an avenue of terrorism. You have to know a little about the geography... There are four countries that meet at a point on the Zambezi on the south, Namibia on the west, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) on the east and Zambia on the north. As usual the colonial area maps were very poor and it was uncertain whether these four borders met at a quadric-point or whether there was a little gap of territory, water, in the middle of the Zambezi that connected directly Zambia and Botswana. That is where we wanted to build the bridge. We didn't have a legal problem if we had a little gap, but if there was a quadric-point it would be impossible without putting it over a little bit of Rhodesia and a little bit of Namibian territory, which was old Southwest Africa in those days. So we went round and round and studied colonial era documents on it and did everything else to figure out what had happened. It is like old surveys, none of the documents matched.

Again we came to a common sense solution. Maybe we can't build a bridge, but nobody can object to our prescriptive right, that is the right of ancient usage, to operate a ferry across there. There had been a ferry going across there for 50 years between Zambia and Botswana. So we will build a road up to both sides and run a ferry. We took a few shots from South African and Rhodesian territory and some other harassment, but the road was built and the ferry runs to this day. I didn't see hordes of terrorists marching along the road.

**JOHN D. PIELEMEIER**

**USAID/Africa Bureau, Project Development  
Washington, DC (1973)**

*Mr. Pielemeier was born in Indiana in 1944 and graduated from Georgetown University. He joined the Peace Corps in 1966 and served in the Ivory Coast. He served in numerous USAID projects in Brazil, Liberia, and Southern Africa. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1997.*

PIELEMEIER: Oh, very much so. I hate to mention this, but it's true that while we were on this trip in the Kalahari Desert near the end of the trip whoever was driving somehow got out of the "spoor," and we got stuck. While we were trying to dig ourselves out (which took quite a while) the vehicle's engine continued to run. This had been a long day's journey. Eventually, the engine of this Ford F250 overheated and "froze up." This was literally in the middle of the Kalahari Desert. As it turned out, we were finally able to have the vehicle towed to Ghanzi in the far western part of Botswana. The vehicle was a "total loss." The engine was totally destroyed. To bring a new engine that far out was a very difficult task. I think that we eventually sold the vehicle. It's the only time that I've ever been in an AID vehicle which was essentially destroyed.

*Q: My goodness!*

PIELEMEIER: We decided at that point that the traffic on the road, which was equivalent to about 10 vehicles a day, did not warrant surfacing the "track" or improving it with AID resources. I understand, from talking to somebody recently, that that road has now been paved. However, that relates more to the opening up of Namibia. At that time Namibia was not independent. Now the road is part of a Trans-African Highway scheme.

*Q: Did you have anything to do with the railroad at that time?*

PIELEMEIER: The railroad ran North and South into Zimbabwe. It was a "rattle trap" railroad. Like many things in the Rhodesian days it was put together and kept together with "chewing gum," wire, string, and anything else that they could find. We did not get involved in improvements in the railroad. I think because the railroad had to depend on a South African port.

It was decided not to improve the railroad to improve access to imports. Ports were a real problem. Namibia was not yet independent, Mozambique had just become independent, with a Leftist government, and aid donors were reluctant, at least initially, to make resources available there. Many of the initial studies focused on how to get goods to this area, without depending on South Africa.

I must say that we in the region were all concerned about the future of South Africa. There were many studies done, not by AID, but by scholars and political scientists, on options for South Africa. I think that one of them, by John St. Jorre, was extremely well done. It saw the only hope for South Africa as breaking its society into "racial configurations" involving Asians, coloreds, blacks, and whites located in their own

particular areas with their own, local control. I don't think that any of us imagined that what happened eventually, under Nelson Mandela, could ever happen. I can't remember anyone talking about a peaceful transition to black rule in South Africa, that is, with black majority rule of the whole country. It seemed to be just unthinkable.

**JEAN MARY WILKOWSKI**  
**Ambassador**  
**Zambia (1973-1977)**

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

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

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

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

**LEWIS M. (JACK) WHITE**  
**Economic Policy Staff, African Affairs**

## Washington, DC (1973-1978)

*Lewis M. White was born in August 1921 in Virginia. After serving in the US Army from 1943-1946 he finished his bachelor's degree at Georgetown University. His career included positions in Colombia, New Caledonia, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Morocco. Mr. White was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in June 2001.*

*Q: What was your impression of the African leadership during this i'73 to '78 period?*

WHITE: They had authoritarian governments, and too many of them were oriented toward the Soviets - like Zambia. Under Kenneth Kaunda, they nationalized practically everything. In Malawi they had Hastings Banda, who was a dictator for many years. They had Kenyatta in Kenya. But he at least there was harmony between the races in Kenya when he was there. They say he ended up a rather wealthy man.

Kenya wasn't too bad in those days, and Houphouet-Boigny in Ivory Coast probably was one of the more effective presidents. I thought he really was a very good president. I didn't think much of Mobutu in Zaire. But the situation before Mobutu was even worse. Idi Amin in Uganda was not only a dictator of the worst sort, but a buffoon. But Milton Obote who came before and after him was no better. Julius Nyerere was the long-time ruler of Tanzania and was considered a decent man - he translated Shakespeare into Swahili - but he was ruining the country economically and there were many human rights violations. A bright spot was probably Botswana under its first president Sir Seretse Khama, who was married to an English woman. There was racial harmony in the country and the country's wealth from diamonds was used for the benefit of the country. As I recall Rwanda and Burundi had received their independence from Belgium but were plagued with ethnic strife between the Tutsis and the Hutus. The Central African Republic was being ruled by the dictator Jean Bedell Bokassa, who had himself crowned as Emperor and finally massacred a number of schoolchildren because they were not wearing the school uniforms manufactured in his factory. He was arrested by the French after ruling about 13 years. Cameroon was relatively stable under the rule of its first president Amadou Ahidjo. In the mid-seventies General Felix Malloum was the president of Chad. In those years Chad was having difficulties with interference by Libya in the internal civil conflict between Muslims in the north and the non-Muslims in the South.

In those years Nigeria had a population of close to 100 million and was one of the world's largest producers of petroleum. In 1993 the corrupt and dictatorial government of General Yakubu Gowon, who was the leader during the Biafran war, was overthrown by Murtala Ramat Mohammed, who instituted reforms in preparation for democratic elections. When he was assassinated Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo continued these reforms until there were democratic elections shortly after I left the Bureau. He is now the president of Nigeria, having been elected in 1999 for a second term.

In South Africa the Boers were still trying to hold on to power but their position was becoming more and more difficult. After the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and

Angola became independent in 1976 the South Africans were providing help to rebels against the socialist regimes in those countries. They hung on to the territory of South West Africa which they had governed as a mandate and were fighting the Swapos under Sam Nujoma who wanted the independence of that country. Namibia did not become independent until about 12 years after I left the Bureau.

Some of the countries that we considered communist in those days have now changed. Benin, for example, that was ruled for many years by Mathieu Kerekou, a Marxist, now is considered democratic and pursuing an open market economy. I could probably talk about the other sub-Saharan African countries, but this is probably sufficient to suggest the changes that have occurred since the fall of communism.

*Q: Did you feel part of your job was persuading American firms, making the ground firm for American firms, to invest in Africa?*

Q: Yes, and trade. I've always said that Nigeria was a country of over 100 million and had tremendous oil wealth, and that was the place where they would find the market if they were patient enough to develop it. Of course, there was a lot of corruption in Nigeria. It was all over Africa. There was a lack of regimes of law in most of the countries to make them attractive for countries to invest.

And there were other oil countries, too. Gabon had quite a bit of oil. Angola had oil, too. In fact, all during the communist years, they had Chevron producing oil over in Kabinda, separate from the main part of Angola by Zaire. This oil no doubt provided most of the foreign exchange for the Angolan government.

*Q: Were you able to help any investment in Africa?*

WHITE: In what way would we help it? We'd give them investment guarantees. There were some cases of expropriation that had not been resolved by the time I left.

*Q: And to encourage companies to invest there.*

WHITE: Well, we would, especially in petroleum exploration. Even in the socialist countries they would welcome investment in extraction industries; even though our government was neutral to other investments, they would favor investment in extraction. We promoted that as much as possible if we thought there was oil someplace.

**KENNETH N. ROGERS**  
**Consul General**  
**Luanda, Angola (1974 -1975)**

*Kenneth N. Rogers was born in New York in 1931. He received his BA from Ohio State University in 1953, and his UJD from George*

*Washington University in 1958. His career includes postings abroad in Hong Kong, Saigon, Luanda, Kingston, and Tangier. He was interviewed on October 21, 1997, by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: What was the feeling when you went out? They said they had to get somebody out there in a hurry. What were our concerns?*

ROGERS: There were three parts to it. They needed somebody who knew the country to go out and find out what was going on in the bush and who spoke Portuguese. At the same time, there was an enormous refugee problem, airlift and sealoft. They reached back in history and found out that I had a lot of sealoft experience in the Navy, moving people about. I don't know if they could find anybody else or not, but they sent me. It worked out. It was very exciting and extremely dangerous. When independence was about to occur... We were phasing down. We had tremendous difficulty with our missionaries who were in danger. We had to help some of them escape. They had radios. The MPLA, which was winning, felt quite correctly that the missionaries were sympathetic toward UNITA. I went in and helped a number of them get out. Some of them went south across the border into what is now Namibia. Some went out by air and various other ways. It was an exciting time. I went all over Angola at that time in a small one engine airplane. There were refugee movements...

**SAMUEL B. THOMSEN**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Botswana (1974-1976)**

*Samuel B. Thomsen was born in Minnesota in 1931. After serving in the US Army from 1952-1954 he received his bachelor's degree at University of California Los Angeles in 1956. During his career he had positions in Vietnam, Laos, Washington D.C., Botswana, Nigeria, and an ambassadorship to the Marshall Islands. Mr. Thomsen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in August 1996.*

*Q: How about Namibia and Angola during this mid-'70s period? Were there any problems there, and did they get reflected in Botswana or not?*

THOMSEN: Barely. If you look at a topographical map, we're looking at a political map now, but a topographical map would show you that the border between Namibia and Botswana is very heavy dessert, it's almost uninhabited on either side. If you go to the nexus of Angola, Namibia and Botswana, there is a major river. But there were some incursions where rebels would move across into Botswana to try to escape South African forces. But it was only temporary. The people of Botswana were very careful not to allow themselves to be drawn into a significant cause celebre of some kind. They ignored a lot of what happened on their borders just to avoid being drawn in. It was a very wise policy, and they did it very low key.

**KAATHRYN CLARK-BOURNE**  
**Deputy Director, Fisheries Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1975-1977)**

*Kathryn Clark-Bourne was born in 1924 in Fort Collins, Colorado. She received a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Washington. She later received a master's degree in mass communications from the University of Minnesota. Ms. Clark-Bourne's career included positions in Iran, The Netherlands, Nigeria, and Cameroon. This interview was conducted on August 2, 1995 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: What did we want and what did the Soviets and Canadians and Japanese want?*

CLARK-BOURNE: All everybody wanted was one, conservation of the species and, two, to be able to harvest the species. The seals migrate from off of Southern California up to the waters off Alaska. Both the Japanese and the Russians were fighting to take larger catches. Our concern was more for preserving the species.

I learned a lot out of it. There were several interesting things. One is that this species of fur seal is found in only one other place and that's off the coast of Namibia. The second is that those seals that are harvested are skinned in one place only--I believe it's in South Carolina. The Namibians send theirs there. Then, the pelts usually go off to European markets. The meat goes to mink farms in the US to feed the mink. The Namibians were starting to harvest and wanted to send their animals to our plant. We said they had to prove that they were harvested humanely. For the members of the treaty, "humane" meant the young seals were hit on the head and stunned and then their throats were slit. This way, they don't feel anything. It ended up that we sent Aleut fur seal hunters from Alaska down to Namibia to teach them how to harvest humanely. They then were approved to send their animals here to be skinned.

**THOMPSON R. BUCHANAN**  
**Africa Bureau, Director, Central African Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1975-1977)**

*Thompson R. Buchanan was born in California in 1924. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in international relations in 1947 and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Mr. Buchanan entered the Foreign Service in 1948. His career included positions in Paris, Frankfurt, Moscow, Bujumbura, Libreville, and Leningrad. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 15, 1996.*

*Q: This is May 15, 1996. Tom, we mentioned those two things and then we will talk about a delegation. Was there anything else about Angola that you wanted to add?*

BUCHANAN: I am not sure I mentioned Stockwell. Ed Mulcahy was my boss, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and he and I would go over to be briefed by CIA in the Angola Task Force on what was happening. They were trying to persuade us that we could still win the war, or at least block what was perceived generally to be a Soviet-inspired Cuban takeover of Angola. We normally were fed a bill of goods that had not too much relation to reality. We did not know exactly what sort of material was still "in the pipeline" from before the cutoff of our aid, at least that was the claim. We were briefed by a very energetic, earnest young man, Stockwell, who was born in Zaire of missionary parents. He was sent into the bush to talk to Savimbi, provide military equipment to UNITA and the FNLA, and come back and tell us what was happening. He, of course, gave us the CIA version of events, but underneath it all he was disgusted by what he considered American exploitation of Africans for selfish national motives. He later resigned from CIA and wrote an expose of our Angola policy.

I was also disgusted, not so much by our exploitation of the Africans, which I suppose as a somewhat old cynical FSO didn't surprise me, but by what I considered the foolishness of our policies. I felt that Nat Davis had been absolutely right in arguing against our involvement in what was essentially a tribal war in Angola, under its veneer of ideological labels. Without CIA's heavy involvement, there would have been no pretext for Moscow or Havana to send a large expeditionary force to Angola. We had essentially allowed ourselves to be manipulated by African leaders, on ideological grounds, to support their aspirations for tribal power. Henry was, of course, convinced that any failure to support those who claimed to be anti-Communist would signal weakness to our enemies, and a shift in the global power balance, and result in an unraveling of our alliance systems.

Viewed in hindsight, the massive Cuban intervention had the positive effect of forcing America to look more seriously at the problems of Southern Africa, and in particular of Rhodesia. We began playing a more active and creative role in helping bring about a peaceful transition to independence in both Rhodesia and Namibia. In that sense, an essentially foolish policy had what the Communists would call "objective" virtues. In the final analysis, it accelerated the process of change within South Africa itself, which was very far from Henry initial intention.

**DONALD B. EASUM**  
**Ambassador**  
**Nigeria (1975-1979)**

*Donald B. Easum left Madison, Wisconsin for Washington, DC to enter the Foreign Service in March, 1953. He served as ambassador to Upper Volta and became Assistant secretary for African Affairs in 1974. A year*

*later he was appointed ambassador to Nigeria. He was interviewed by Arthur Day on January 17th and March 12, 1990.*

EASUM: The other thing we [Nigeria and the US] agreed was on Namibia where Carter explained what the Group of Five was trying to produce a democratically elected government in Namibia, withdrawal of South African control, and the UN is sponsoring this in resolution which finally became Resolution 435. Obasanjo liked that, and he said, "Have you put it to the UN Security Council yet?" And Carter said, "No. We're planning to. We're worried about the Russians." And Obasanjo said, "I will lean on them not to veto." And he did. He called in the Russian Ambassador, and he told him, "Don't you people veto." And he sent the Nigerian Ambassador in Moscow in to see his counterpart to say, "We, the Nigerians, do not believe you, the Russians, should veto this which is sponsored by the major five allied powers. We think this makes sense." And they didn't veto.

**STEPHEN LOW**  
**Ambassador**  
**Zambia (1976-1979)**

*Ambassador Stephen Low was born in Ohio in 1927. He received his bachelor's degree from Yale, and his master's and doctorate from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. In addition to Nigeria, Ambassador Low served in Uganda, Senegal, and Zambia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Q: Why was this?*

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

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

*Q: You're talking about Ian Smith.*

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

*Q: You're really talking about the rivalry between the two Africa groups. Who among them would have power?*

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

The situation was complicated by the number of parties involved. Not only were we talking to the Africans and white Rhodesians, but periodically we went to South Africa to tell them what we were doing, then to Mozambique to brief Machel; to Tanzania to bring Nyerere up to date; and back to Zambia to do the same with Kaunda. Sometimes we would include Seretse Khama or his successor, Masire, in Botswana. Even though they wanted to be kept informed they would all say "Don't talk to us. Go back to the parties and get their agreement. We're all for you." The Frontline states, all wanted a solution, and supported our efforts. The war was hurting them too. However, their leverage with the Patriotic Front was limited. PF forces resident in Zambia and Angola were strong compared to the local armies. The South African position was not entirely different. Though there were no Rhodesian forces inside its boarder, popular sentiment was such that its leverage over Smith was also limited. The South Africans were frank. They told us they would not participate in imposing a settlement on the Rhodesians, but that if we could get an agreement between the parties, they would help see that it stuck.

At first, Mugabe and Zanu did not accept American participation. He insisted on the fiction that the only party with whom he could negotiate was the British, whom he held

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

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

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

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

The Washington meeting between Nyerere and Carter took place just before Vance, Owen, Young and a whole plane load of others were due to go to Salisbury to present the published proposal to Smith and his government. We flew from London to Nairobi where it was decided it would be more appropriate to spend the night than Salisbury. In Nairobi we and the British were arguing over a detail in the proposal (I don't remember what it was). We only came to a final agreement at about three in the morning. Then we got up at four to go out to the airplane to fly to Salisbury. The Rhodesians in the meantime had

held their federal, white only, elections the night before and they had been up all night awaiting the returns. The meeting which was held the next morning was extraordinary. People would periodically nod off to sleep on both sides of the table while we droned through the provisions of the proposal one after another. But we didn't inform the Rhodesians at that meeting of our agreement that the independence forces would be based on the liberation armies. That was left to Johnny and me at a smaller meeting with Gaylord and the technical officials that afternoon. To neither of our surprise, they went through the roof, saying they didn't think there was much chance of an agreement on that basis. However no one had yet rejected the proposals.

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

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

The solution which was being worked out was second or third best to both sides. At that point, each thought it could do better either through continuation of the armed struggle or,

in Smith's case, either war or the Internal Agreement. And so the negotiations were put in abeyance for a while.

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

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

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

At that point we left Zambia for an assignment to Nigeria. But the process continued. A Commonwealth Conference was held in Lusaka. Margaret Thatcher came there with a changed assessment of the situation from the views she expressed before the election. Peter Harrington and her Commonwealth partners had done their work. It was quickly agreed to return to the negotiations but without formal U.S. participation, though we and the British understood that we would work closely to support the effort. Their negotiations were based on our modified Anglo-American Settlement Proposal. It was somewhat modified during the course of tense negotiations led by Lord Carrington at a Lancaster House conference attended by all parties and by December agreement was achieved. A British governor went to Salisbury in early 1980 and elections were held the middle of the year, resulting in a Mugabe victory and independence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LOW: There were actually three tracks. The internal settlement was the third. Smith's preference would have been to defeat the armed rebellion and retain power for the white

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

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

In Lagos the Nigerians were absolutely convinced that the British were going to fix the elections and impose a solution. I spent a lot of time talking to Foreign Minister Adu trying to explain that the British wanted a settlement that was acceptable to the population so that they could get out of Rhodesia honorably. The Nigerian leadership was very skeptical. My long involvement with the situation helped convince them that the election would be fair and that they should back it, and accept the results. In the event, they were surprised that it was, indeed, a fair election, that the British accepted Mugabe's overwhelming victory and proceeded with the agreed transition which would result in turning the country over to him.

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

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

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

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

Kaunda had a great regard for President Carter whom he had met in Washington. He told me more than once, "Carter is too good for you Americans. You're going to reject him. I believe him but I don't think you support him." When Carter was defeated for the

reelection, he told me "I told you so." Andy Young was the other American he had great respect for. Because of the two of them Kaunda trusted the U.S. more than most other non-African countries during that period.

But my real discussions, where there was a lot of give and take, were with his personal assistant, Mark Chona and later on with his replacement, the author and economist, Dominic Mulayisho. They were young, bright, talented and likeable Africans with whom I could be quite frank. They were a channel to Kaunda which I used instead of the Foreign Office at their request! During those three years I did not visit the Foreign Office often. Rhodesia/Zimbabwe issues were handled in the presidency by Kaunda and his staff. When Secretary Kissinger or the Department sent a message that was supposed to be given personally to the chief of state, as happened more often than it should have, I could often get to Kaunda, but sometimes I would have to deliver it through Chona or Mulayisho. At this later stage in his career, Kaunda was most comfortable with the people who had been with him from the beginning. Still he was often quite friendly and warm. On one occasion when David Owen, British foreign minister was visiting Lusaka, We were having dinner at the British high commissioner's home. In the middle of it, I got a call from Government House. President Kaunda wanted to see me. So, I excused myself and went over. Kaunda gave me a message for the British foreign minister. I was a little embarrassed vis-à-vis my colleague and friend, the British high commissioner who was sitting right there. Kaunda felt more comfortable dealing with us, and he wanted to be sure we got the message too. Like many Africans he had a love-hate relationship with the British. He was not fond of them, but when Queen Elizabeth visited Lusaka, nothing was good enough for her. He turned everything inside out for the visit.

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

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

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

LOW: No, I don't ever recall an unpleasant encounter. Not like the Soapy Williams affair when a white Rhodesian punched or slapped him when he arrived at the Lusaka airport. We would arrive, there would be a large crowd including both public and press to greet us and ask a few questions. Pictures would appear in the papers and occasionally they would publish a cartoon commenting on our efforts. Smith made it very clear that we were to be treated as serious people, seriously negotiating, so that virtually everybody we saw was respectful. We made few if any public speeches and no effort to appeal to public opinion. We obviously couldn't have done that. I did a lot of background press interviews. After each round of talks Johnny would do it for British journalists and I would do it for the American press. It seemed to me much preferable that the press has an accurate general impression of the direction things were going than to have them go off with some

wild rumor that had no foundation. During much of the first half of 1978 there was talk of an all Parties conference. We even had picked out a date and place at a meeting in London. The press was desperate to find out the details. We were all flying back to the United States on Vance's airplane with a press section in the rear. By the time we got to Washington, they had found out where and when it was to be held. In fact it never took place, but the ability of the United States government to keep a secret of this kind is not very high. The press is very skillful. They know how to weasel something out of a group of people. They will start out with a wrong statement trying to get you to contradict them and then build on small facts till they get what they want. It is kind of a game, and they are very good at it. It is particularly difficult dealing with the press when there is a specific fact like this that they are trying to get. We wanted that meeting to take place outside of the glare of publicity so that the Africans could concentrate on the substance of the negotiations instead of continuing their rival campaigns for public support.

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

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

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

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

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

On my mission with Cledwyn Hughes we had both concluded that there was no possibility at that point of proceeding with the negotiations. The sides simply weren't prepared to make the accommodations that would have been necessary for a settlement.

My feeling was that we didn't have much of a chance at that point, but I remember when I went to say good bye to President Kaunda he gave me a pretty copper tray and made a little speech. He kidded me about not spending a lot of time in Zambia. Then he turned serious and said that it had never bothered him because "You were working on the most important problem Zambia had, the search for a settlement in Zimbabwe." Then he thanked me, I believe quite sincerely, for my efforts and said he felt that we had done our best and that it had been worthwhile. I had always believed that it was essential for the U.S. position in Africa and more broadly in the world that we be seen to be making a serious and good faith effort to find settlements to the Southern African problems in Zimbabwe, Namibia and ultimately in South Africa. Because the Africans themselves could not force change, they would use all the leverage they had to get us to resolve these problems for them. Unless we were actually trying to do something about it, they would take it out on us in every international forum in the world. I further felt that you never knew when you were going to have a lucky breakthrough; when things were going to change as they inevitably would, hopefully for the better. Eventually, the people involved would recognize that neither side was benefiting from further violence, and that negotiation and compromise were the best way out. You have to have a framework set up and a basis for agreement worked out so that you are ready when the moment comes. I had no idea at the time that that is exactly what was going to happen before the year was out. Yes, it was discouraging at the moment we left, but I had no doubt that we had been moving in the right direction, or that we should continue. Eventually I knew a settlement would be reached, probably along the lines we had set out. I didn't expect it to be so soon.

**HARVEY F. NELSON, JR.**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Johannesburg, South Africa (1976-1979)**

*Ambassador Nelson was born and raised in California. He was educated at Occidental College, the University of Stockholm, Sweden and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. After serving in the US Navy and teaching at Bowdoin College, Ambassador Nelson joined the Foreign Service and served in Washington and abroad, primarily as a political officer dealing in Scandinavian and African affairs. In 1985 he was appointed Ambassador to Swaziland. Ambassador Nelson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.*

*Q: When you arrived in South Africa, who was the government and how did we deal with it?*

NELSON: Botha became president in 1978. We engaged the government more and more during my tour. We didn't work directly on South Africa's internal problems. Rather we concentrated on trying to achieve independence for Namibia. There seemed to be possibilities because there were several groups in South Africa - Germans, South Africans, the colored population and the blacks, primarily the Ovambos - and some

political parties which seemed amenable. So there were possible allies in South Africa. Don McHenry, a very talented African-American, came out and started a process to gain independence for Namibia. We brought the French and the Germans and the British in to join us in this effort. So we had a consortium to work with the South Africans who were willing to consider some new status for Namibia. No one knew exactly what that status might be. So we began to work on some kind of process that would ultimately bring independence to South-West Africa. The development of this process was in the works through my entire tour. I think it moved pretty well, but we could not bring it to fruition. But we developed a framework which was not used right away.

*Q: I gather from what you have said is that we put apartheid aside and focused on Namibia and Southern Rhodesia.*

NELSON: That is right. It was something akin to what we are trying to do in the Middle East; work on peripheral issues saving the hardest to last. In cases like those, it is important to develop trust and show some successes. In South Africa, we didn't have a clear road-map of where we were going. We knew the objective, but no one was certain how we would get there. In the end, we played a catalytic role because the final decisions could only be reached by the people living in the region. A lot of people in the U.S. didn't understand that. A lot of Africans elsewhere didn't understand that. They expected the U.S. to impose a solution. That can't be done. It does not work. The final resolution must be left to agreements reached by the people living in the region.

*Q: Did the South African government give the embassy a lot of grief over the sanctions?*

NELSON: No; at least not to me. The ambassador may have heard more complaints.

I can't remember any difficult problems we had with the South Africans about sanctions. I don't know what discussion had taken place with them. That was the ambassador's bailiwick, and I didn't really get involved. When I was chargé, I did have a meeting with the South Africans about the Namibia negotiations. They didn't enter those negotiations willingly. They felt they had to, but it rankled. Don McHenry was the lead U.S. negotiator on South-West Africa. This meeting included British, French and German representatives, as well as the South African foreign minister. The president of South Africa, John Foster, chaired the meeting. He had received a false report about McHenry and took the opportunity to lambaste him. He called him a "reverse racist" and vindictive with no integrity. No one spoke out to defend McHenry, despite the fact that all the other delegations and the foreign minister knew the report that had set off the president was untrue. So I had to respond to the president. I told him that with all due respect, he was working from a false report and that Don McHenry was one of the finest individuals on earth. I went on to say that when McHenry said something, you could be assured that it was true. That was the only time that I ran into criticism of what we were doing.

**CARL C. CUNDIFF**

**African Affairs, Economic Policy Staff Director  
Washington, DC (1977-1980)**

*Ambassador Cundiff graduated from the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee and the Fletcher School at Tufts. He entered the Foreign Service in 1966. His career included posts in Saigon, Paris, Lagos and Abidjan and he was named ambassador to Niger in 1988. He was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 1996.*

*Q: During the period that you were in this office, in the Bureau of African Affairs, was it your sense or the general sense that things were going downhill rapidly? Or was there some hope about individual economies in Africa? Would you have any general observations about how things on the economic side seemed to be progressing?*

CUNDIFF: My impression is that at the time there was a general sense of optimism about the future of Africa economically and politically. This was a period, you may recall, politically when we were working on bringing about independence in Zimbabwe for example. Bringing about majority rule, rather, in Zimbabwe and bringing about change eventually in South Africa and Namibia. It was a period when I think a lot of the political focus was on Southern Africa. But it was also a period when, as you may recall, Nigeria was a democracy and Shehu Shagari was the president. I would say that there was quite a bit of optimism in general about Africa. Not unreal optimism but generally a fairly positive view.

**JOHN J. TAYLOR  
Political Counselor  
Pretoria, South Africa (1977-1980)**

**U.S. Observation Team member  
Windhoek (1985)**

*John J. Taylor was born in Arkansas and attended Vanderbilt University before joining the US Marine Corps and eventually the Foreign Service. Overseas Taylor served in Ghana, Taiwan, Malaysia, China, South Africa and Cuba. He also served in INR, the NSC, as the deputy assistant secretary for intelligence coordination and as the chief of mission in Cuba. Taylor was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.*

TAYLOR: I was offered the job of political counselor in South Africa. In light of my interest in Africa and especially given what was happening in South Africa, I was delighted to accept. I stayed in South Africa until 1980.

The National Party leaders decided that the Carter Administration was launching a campaign to bring down the Government and end apartheid. When Vorster returned home, the white dominated media went into a feeding frenzy attacking the alleged

American threat against South Africa. At the same time, Washington increased pressure on Pretoria for progress on the Namibian question. The issue had been before the UN for many years. During World War I, first the British and then the South Africans had occupied Namibia. South Africa of course ran the territory as an apartheid state. UN Resolution 435 called for independence for Namibia. South Africa finally agreed to discussions on Namibia's future with a UN "Contact Group," including the US, Britain, Germany, and Spain.

In sum, a great deal more was going on than our embassy in South Africa had ever experienced. The U.S. Administration was pushing a vigorous anti-apartheid policy, demanding progress on the Namibian issue, and in a related policy joining the British in an effort to promote negotiations over the future of what was then called Southern Rhodesia. Meanwhile, the South Africans were carrying out various covert projects to destabilize the new Marxist Governments in neighboring Angola and Mozambique. Until 1976, the US Government had been involved in the former project, providing lethal aid to Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA organization. The Embassy was also focused on uncovering evidence that South Africa was embarked on a nuclear weapons project. Meanwhile restlessness in the black community was increasing as was re-examination of the future by the white elite. All that made for a full plate for the embassy and especially the Political Counselor.

*Q: Where were you actually located in South Africa?*

TAYLOR: I was part of the small embassy team that moved every year from Capetown to Pretoria and back. Pretoria was the executive seat of government and the Parliament was in Cape Town. This was the arrangement made at the time of Union after the dreadful Boer War. The High Court was in Bloemfontein. I arrived in Pretoria a year after the uprising in Soweto, which was the most dramatic confrontation between the black community and the government since the slaughter of demonstrators in Sharpsville in the early 1960s. In fact, the Soweto uprising was much more violent and lasted much longer than the earlier troubles. By 1977, the black community throughout much of the country was militant and active.

In my political section, I had two officers who followed internal affairs. Steve McDonald was one. Steve, an ebullient and gregarious man, was a superb officer - just the right man for the job. He had a wide range of contacts in Soweto and other townships around Pretoria and Johannesburg. He regularly played basketball on the courts of Soweto, and at his home frequently played the guitar and sang soulful ballads for his black and white South African friends. These close personal ties between an embassy officer and the non-elite black community of South Africa were precedent breaking. Unfortunately, after this tour in South Africa, Steve resigned from the Foreign Service, but he continued to work on African affairs for various NGO committees and organizations interested in that country and U.S.-South Africa relations. He is still active in that field today.

*Q: Who was the ambassador?*

TAYLOR: Initially, it was Bill Bowdler. He was succeeded by Bill Edmondson in 1978. Afterwards, Bowdler became Director of INR, then Assistant Secretary for American Republic Affairs. When the Reagan Republicans took over the White House, they gave Bill something like two hours to clear out of his office. It was like a Bolshevik revolution. They blamed him for coddling the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

Bowdler and Edmondson, were both fine ambassadors in every respect. Both Bills were effective in carrying out Carter's mandate to put pressure on the South African government to reform and demonstrate to the black community our support for peaceful change. At the same time, we needed to work with the South African government on a number of key issues. Among these was the future of Rhodesia and Namibia. Shortly after my arrival the UN "Contact Group" on Namibia sought to open negotiations with the South Africans.

Several US/British delegations also came to South Africa to talk about Rhodesia. Andy Young, our UN ambassador, led a couple of these teams. Their objective was to encourage the South Africans to urge the leader of the white Southern Rhodesian government, Ian Smith, to negotiate an end to the Emergency (the guerrilla war) and a transition to a majority-rule government. I accompanied some of these delegations to Harare where talks were eventually begun on the holding of one-man-one-vote elections.

The political section reported the ongoing dialogues with the South Africans on both Rhodesia and Namibia and provided analysis of Pretoria's position and recommendations on how we might move things along. The United States did not have representation in Rhodesia or Namibia so we also reported on internal developments in those territories.

*Q: How did you find dealing with the South African foreign ministry, especially on the Rhodesia and Namibian issues?*

TAYLOR: The South African diplomatic corps was very professional. We had a productive relationship with them. My South African colleagues were highly educated and strictly oriented to problem solving. I worked most closely with Neil Van Hearnden, who was the foreign minister's principal aid on the issues of Rhodesia and Namibia. I saw Neil at least once a week at lunch; sometimes if the issues could not wait for the weekly lunch we would meet in his office to discuss hang-ups in the negotiations. Neil was definitely a pragmatic diplomat. As in any negotiations, "the devil is in the details;" and we were the detail men, seeking to find compromise language that all the parties could accept. His approach was always a positive one, and, I think, so was mine. Neither one of us was confrontational or ideological.

The foreign minister himself, Piek Botha, was a character – flamboyant and swashbuckling. AT the time he reminded me of Von Ribbentrop. But he was not a die-in-the-wool defender of apartheid. He was in fact a realist also, but a good actor as well. Occasionally, he would let slip something - in his speeches or comments - which suggested that despite his bombast and bullying attitude, he did not agree with the white apartheid code He seemed too understand that the days of apartheid were numbered. In

our assessments of the evolving situation in South Africa, we would occasionally point to Botha as an example of the weakening of confidence in the system on the part of the Afrikaner elite. Botha came from a prominent Afrikaner family. He was an intellectual who understood the dynamics and realities of the South African situation - social, economic, political, and international. Pik played a key role in persuading the Rhodesian regime to switch its fundamental strategy, abandoning white rule and instead banking on the success of a white-supported, moderate black-led political party. As far as their own country was concerned, Botha, Van Heerden, and other members of the Afrikaner intelligentsia, including politicians, journalists, and university professors, understood that the death of their apartheid system was also a matter of time. But, still, they hoped to delay the day of reckoning for many years.

*Q: On the Namibia and Rhodesia as well as apartheid, did you run into many ideologues who were less interested in solutions than they were in their soap-stand?*

TAYLOR: The average National Party MP was still a “bitter ender,” believing wholeheartedly in the goodness and workability of the apartheid system. The Prime Minister, John Vorster, was among them. The average Afrikaner man-in-the-street was even more benighted. In South Africa, the Afrikaners and the English both had hoary democratic traditions. Thus representative democracy, the rule of law, and freedom of speech existed for the white community - at least as long as one did not become involved in stirring up the black community.

*Q: Why did the South Africa want negotiations to succeed? Wasn't it in their interest to maintain the status quo?*

TAYLOR: It was calculation of enlightened self-interest on the part of people like Pik and my friend Neil. Other Afrikaner elites, including many in the *Broderbund* (a semi-secret organization of the Afrikaner elite), were also able to see that at least the Afrikaner had to start moving gradually away from apartheid. The most prominent leaders of Afrikaner South Africa – religious ministers, politicians, teachers, etc - were tapped to join the *broderbund* - something like being tapped for “Skull and Bones” at Yale. It was this group that informally determined the position of the Afrikaner community on any issue of great public debate. The head of this group, while I was there, was Chancellor of Rands Afrikans University. It became clear to me in my conversations with him and his peers that a decisive segment of the elite had seen the 1976 uprising in Soweto as a watershed. The uprising together with increasing international pressures, such as the militant rhetoric of the Carter administration and economic and financial sanctions, were changing the mind-set of intellectual Afrikanerdom.

Unlike South Africa, the black opposition in Rhodesia had taken to arms and a full-scale guerrilla and terrorist war was raging. With the advice and support of Pik Botha, Ian Smith began to support the emergence of a black elite class that would be less radical and more amenable to political compromise. The leader of this new black group was a Protestant Bishop named Muzorewa. The Bishop received assistance from both the Smith government and Pretoria in building a political organization. Pik and eventually Ian

Smith believed that Muzorewa could win an honest election. Pik and the Afrikaner elite decided to follow the same strategy in Namibia. There they decided to accept independence for Namibia but they expected to continue control through a mainly moderate, black dominated, multiracial political movement - although the leader was white. As in Rhodesia, the South African Government believed that this puppet party could win a popular election in Namibia against the nationalist guerrilla group, SWAPO. The moderate, white supported black parties in Rhodesia and Namibia were seen as potentially leading a new bloc of African nations that would be friendly to South Africa. Botha and van Heerden both thought that the days of absolute white rule in Rhodesia and Namibia were numbered and that the longer the liberation movements went on, the more radical they would become.

Ian Smith had implanted special branch (intelligence) operatives throughout Rhodesia - in every village lived a paid supposedly secret agent. These agents served as the “eyes and ears” of the government. In my lunches with Neil, we would discuss what was happening in Rhodesia as the elections neared. He would tell me with increasing confidence that the Muzorewa group was making headway in its struggle for power. The Special Branch agents were reporting that the Bishop would win a free election. The Lancaster House negotiations in London were concluded with the Rhodesians and South Africans convinced that the Bishop could defeat Mugabe and Nkomo - the two prominent black leaders of the long insurgency. As the election began, I can remember Neil telling me that the Bishop would certainly win; the only issue was his margin of victory. As it turned out, Muzorewa was slaughtered at the polls; he got something like 8% of the vote. It seems the villagers had told the special branch agents what they thought they wanted to hear - they would vote for Muzorewa. The Bishops’ defeat shocked the establishments in both in Rhodesia and South Africa.

This result in Rhodesia influenced the South Africans to hold back on the Namibia negotiations. In 1979, we had been close to an agreement on holding elections in Namibia. South Africa had felt for sometime that its allied political organization in that desert state, the “Turntable Alliance,” could be victorious in a free and open election. The South Africans held a unilateral election themselves without benefit of UN monitoring. It turned out that 110% of the Namibian population voted!! This election “victory” further emboldened the South Africans to believe that their adherents would win a free election in Namibia. So they began to be more accommodating in the negotiations with the “contact” group. But after the very poor showing by Muzorewa in Rhodesia, the South Africans pulled back, recognizing that they had very badly judged the situation in Rhodesia and probably in Namibia as well. Ronald Reagan’s victory in the 1980 Presidential elections also encouraged them to believe that American policy would become more friendly. Negotiations continued off and on over the years. In 1988 the negotiations on Namibia and Angola took place in Havana, where I happened to be the chief of the US mission or Interests Section. But, again, that is getting ahead of the story,

*Q: Tell us about Andy Young’s visit. How did the embassy react?*

TAYLOR: The trips were successful. Andy was very open; he got along very well with the Afrikaners. He was not confrontational even with the hardest line types. He was philosophical and very effective in the negotiations. The South Africans in turn respected him. Thus Andy played a valuable role in bringing the South Africans along on the Rhodesia issue. He gave them confidence that although the Carter Administration's rhetoric was stronger than that of any previous administration, it nevertheless would try to be helpful and not adversarial or confrontational. The U.S. was not going to go beyond public pressure and persuasion. Actually, the Administration in fact did not apply any major economic sanctions, even though it had legislative authority to do so. I think Andy Young was helpful in showing the South Africans that we were interested in solutions and progress, not in specific actions that might have been confrontational and which might have defeated the end purpose. We wanted solutions that were also best for South Africa.

*Q: What was our evaluation of the Biko episode? Did we think it was governmental policy or the doings of some over-eager local policemen?*

TAYLOR: The police and the government were intent on intimidating the black leadership. Early on I made a trip to the Eastern Cape to call on black leaders, including Biko. After I arrived at the airport in Port Elisabeth, I went to pick my rental car. At the desk, I was told by the young woman employee that two men had asked whether a man named Jay Taylor was renting a car with her company. She had told them, yes. As I left with the keys, I could see in the terminal window two men following me. I got in my car and drove around the parking lot. I was clearly being followed. I had an appointment to see a colored activist before my appointment with Biko. The police followed me all the way to this meeting and the ostentatiously waited outside the man's house. They were obviously trying to intimidate the black leaders with whom I had appointments. The gentleman I visited that afternoon was arrested the next morning. I was scheduled to see Biko that same morning, but when I arrived at his office, I was told that he had been arrested the night before. Two days later, we learned that the day after his arrest, Biko had died as the result of a beating. Of course, it seemed possible, even likely, that Biko and the activists I had seen in Port Elizabeth were picked up because I had made appointments with them. The intent presumably was to intimidate the activists and discourage me and my colleagues from making such contacts. Since black dissidents like Biko were regularly detained in any event, we decided to continue our contacts with them, if they were agreeable.

*Q: Did we do anything after we heard what happen to Biko?*

TAYLOR: We let the regime know in no uncertain terms that we considered this a heinous crime. The State Department called in the South African ambassador in Washington and Bowdler told Pik Botha that the killing was an outrage that reflected either a malevolent government or an out-of-control police force. Of course, the South African Government denied that they had anything to do with the death; they claimed he had died of natural causes. The Justice Minister, Jimmy Krueger, was an unreconstructed Afrikaner who strongly supported apartheid; he publicly proclaimed, "The death of Steve

Biko leaves me cold.” But the killing it was a turning point in terms of energizing international pressure on South Africa and activism in the black community.

*Q: Did we believe at the time that the security apparatus was a force upon itself, not necessarily responsive to the political leadership?*

TAYLOR: They were basically responding to the political leadership. But they had considerable leeway, as usually the case. They had secret covert units. These were exposed during the investigations of the 1990s. Some of these units had pretty much of a free hand. The justice minister, for example, might not have known precisely when an assassination was planned and carried out. By the 1980s, the security services had gone beyond arrests and beatings. Bombs were being sent to ANC leaders in Mozambique, Zambia, and Angola. The South African Defense Forces (SADF) were mounting raiding parties against ANC facilities and people in Angola and Mozambique and even Zambia. BOSS and military intelligence sent Letter bombs to ANC leaders in exile. The SADF increased its raids into southern Angola in pursuit of SWAPO fighters and to eliminate their bases. South Africa increased its military aid to and support of UNITA, the Angolan insurgents, in order to hinder SWAPO’s operations in Namibia and to challenge Cuba’s military presence in Angola. The Cuban military presence had originated in 1975-1976 as a response to SADF intervention in Angola in support of UNITA and its leader Jonas Savimbi. The UNITA leader, incidentally, at this time put himself forward as an anti-communist fighter but originally he had been a Maoist,” purporting to be more Marxist than the MPLA.

“BOSS” was the fitting acronym for the Bureau of State Security. “Boss” was also the appellation that blacks traditionally used when addressing white males, not just their employers. The BOSS headquarters was in the same building in Pretoria as the US Embassy. The security services were large; in addition to the bureau of state security, intelligence and covert teams existed in the police and the military.

We had several excellent attachés during my tour there. One went on to become a respected academic specialist on Africa. But a few considered South Africa an important strategic country in the U.S. global “Cold War” against the Soviets. They viewed the maintenance of a white government as vital to our security interests even if we did not agree with its internal policies. We had a standing order that no Embassy official or members of his or her family was to travel to Namibia. This ban was intended to demonstrate our opposition to South Africa’s continued occupation of Namibia and its failure to carry out UN Resolution 435 that called for independence. I was the exception to this rule. I went regularly to as part of my responsibilities. One day, we learned that our army attaché had, without approval, accepted an invitation from the South African army and toured its military camps in Namibia. He felt that he had to accept the invitation to get a better understanding of the military situation there in light of the ongoing negotiations. I felt that in light of his blatant breach of standing instructions, the attaché should be sent home. The ambassador, however, after giving the officer a severe lecture, let him finish his tour in Pretoria.

Shortly after this incident, the Ambassador dispatched me on a two-week tour of all South African military bases in Namibia. The bases were primarily along the Namibia-Angola border where the guerrilla war was being waged with SWAPO, the black Namibian nationalist movement, and across which South African Defense Forces launched raids and sent military supplies to UNITA. The South African military provided me an escort and transportation, usually via helicopter. Learning that I was a helicopter as well as fixed-wing pilot, the South African pilots let me ride in the co-pilot's seat and sometimes take the controls. Sometimes I traveled in huge lumbering anti-personnel carriers called "Hippos," which were especially designed to absorb and deflect land mines. Later, during the suppression of the black uprisings in the 1980s, I would see on television these great metal beasts bullying their way through Soweto and other townships.

*Q: What was our view of the military situation in Namibia?*

TAYLOR: It seemed the South Africans had the military situation pretty much under control, unlike in Zimbabwe where guerrilla groups were able regularly to mount night raids and then safely scurry back across the border. Terrorism was a regular and violent reality in northern Namibia, an area called Ovamboland, but only sporadic in Windhoek and the rest of the country. In Namibia, the white farmers, none of whom lived in the northern part of the country, did not have to worry about being ambushed as in Rhodesia. Nevertheless, the South African presence in Namibia was a drain on the country's resources. Only a few deaths a month among the white conscripts began to create a backlash. Within South Africa, whites were free to express their opinions, and the parliamentary opposition and white intellectuals in general constantly hectored the Government about Namibia. Sentiment was growing among South African whites in favor of an exit from Namibia.

*Q: What was the embassy's view of boycotts?*

TAYLOR: Different views existed on this subject. Some felt that the burden of the boycotts would fall on those least able to bear them; namely the black community. An economic squeeze on the country would likely increase unemployment primarily among blacks. This embassy group supported a policy that focused on persuading the South African business community to institute policies of equal recruitment, training, pay, and working conditions for blacks. Almost all American businesses in South Africa subscribed to the so-called Sullivan Principles, which incorporated these goals. In some American and British-owned companies, blacks were increasingly employed in supervisory and senior positions. Those Americans against sanctions believed that the withdrawal of US investment would just make the economic situation worst for the blacks.

Most of the black leadership in and outside South Africa, however, supported boycotts, financial sanctions, and any other legal measure that would apply economic pressure. If the black community suffered as a result these measures, they believed that the community's standard of living was already so low that additional unemployment would

only have a marginal effect. I personally thought we should avoid an all-out economic war on the country and instead apply selected but especially painful sanctions - as in the banking world.

*Q: Was our embassy prominent in trying to bring change as compared to the representation of other countries, particularly Western European ones?*

TAYLOR: In terms of political pressure on the South African system, I think we did play a leading role. This was because the South Africans felt they could survive a European effort to totally isolate them, but over the long term and perhaps sooner they would collapse if the US opted for such a policy. On economic and financial sanctions, the Europeans were in the lead. The Europeans also generally took a stronger stand on Namibia.

*Q: You mentioned that Steve McDonald of your staff was the officer primarily responsible for liaison with the black community.*

TAYLOR: Yes, as I said, he was exceptional. We also had a more junior officer, Rich Baltimore - an African-American - who also concentrated on black South African affairs. He was likewise an excellent officer. He had recently received a law degree from Harvard. One FSO in the section spoke Afrikaans. He maintained contact primarily with that community and also with other white groups, reporting on their attitudes as well on parliamentary politics. A fourth officer worked across the board, as we all did occasionally. We also made a point of knowing leading MPs, key government bureaucrats, journalists, writers, professors and other members of the chattering classes. In addition, like FSOs everywhere, we exchanged views on subjects of the day with our diplomatic colleagues. We covered the waterfront pretty well.

*Q: Were these contacts primarily for source material for reporting?*

TAYLOR: Yes, but they were also elites whom we tried to influence. We assessed views across the board on internal affairs and also on subjects like the negotiations on Rhodesia and Namibia. The objective was to understand the dynamics of political life in South Africa, perceive trends, and where possible increase understanding and support for the views of the United States Government and of the American people. I also served as the Ambassador's advisor and reporting officer in regard to the on-going negotiations with the government on the two neighboring territories as well as on other non-economic subjects. The ambassador made representations to the foreign minister and I worked with Van Heerden and others in the Ministry on a range of issues, including not only the question of internal oppression, but also on: South Africa's armed intrusions in neighboring countries; its relations with these and other African countries; its nuclear program; its position in the United Nations; and its position on issues of concern to us in international organizations. But we did not get involved in any discussion about a possible *quid pro quo* for any significant change in the government's domestic policies.

*Q: Were we suggesting to the black community that the time would come when it would rise to the country's leadership?*

TAYLOR: They did not need us to tell them that. The black leadership believed that victory was only a matter of time. They were remarkably optimistic. This attitude really began in 1977 or perhaps even much earlier. Biko presented an outstanding example of this up-beat attitude.

*Q: Did your government contacts indicate any unhappiness with the killing of Biko? Did any of them see it as a major mistake?*

TAYLOR: Many white intellectuals felt it was both horrible and stupid. I am sure Pick Botha felt that way. Neil Van Heerden was extremely angry with his "stupid fellow Boers." He could not understand how the police and the Justice Minister could be so dense as not to see the repercussions of their actions. He and other Afrikaners realized that the murder had consequences, particularly internationally, which far outweighed any temporary benefit it might have had domestically. They were correct of course. Biko became a martyr at home and abroad.

*Q: Were you at all concerned that Baltimore and McDonald in their continuing presence in Soweto might be stirring up trouble for the U.S.?*

TAYLOR: We were not out of order in these activities. Certainly we were not breaking the law. The South African regime would periodically protest our visits to Soweto and other areas and our contacts with black leaders. It would, for example, protest to the ambassador about meetings that I held with various leaders of the black community through out the country. I was accused of making provocative statements in these meetings that encouraged unrest. But the regime could never present any evidence of to back up their charges.

*Q: How did you and the ambassador and other members of the embassy handled the social activities - the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, dinners, etc.?*

TAYLOR: The Ambassador and other Embassy officers made a point of inviting to their social events - and working lunches - a cross section of people from all South African communities. We paid no attention, of course, to apartheid. I found lunches to be the most productive way to get to know persons of interest. During my three years in South Africa, I probably hosted two or three hundred lunches.

When the ambassador hosted a large reception, the Political Section would provide him with a list of potential invitees that always contained a large percentage of black citizens. The same process was usually used for smaller affairs, such as dinners. We not only wanted to be inclusive but also to clearly appear to be that way. I do not remember any white South Africans refusing to accept invitations to mixed social affairs. One outstanding USIS officer in Johannesburg was an African American. He and his young family found life in apartheid South Africa frequently irritating and sometimes

oppressive. They could of course go where members of the local black community could not - by showing their diplomatic passports. Nevertheless, his presence would sometimes raise eyebrows and indirect signs of disfavor. Our Harvard law graduate, Rich Baltimore, however, was a bachelor, and a very sophisticated young officer. He found dealing with apartheid an interesting challenge. For example, for a time, he had a white girl friend from the French embassy. He enjoyed escorting this young lady to restaurants or movies where all the other customers were, of course, white. He laughed at the glares and curious glances he would receive on these occasions. Rarely was he ever challenged to show his passport because the theater, hotel, or restaurant staff always assumed that no South African black would have the nerve to do what he was doing. Once, while driving from Capetown to Pretoria with his French girl friend, he spent two nights in hotels on the road. In both cases, he had advance reservations and in neither case did the desk clerk challenge him, even though he was probably the only black who had ever stayed at these hotels, especially one with a white female companion. White beaches were other places he integrated. So Rich "had a ball" challenging the system, but for African-Americans who had families the situation was different. They had a tougher time.

*Q: Did you have any American, black or white, entertainers who used the stage to make statements?*

TAYLOR: In the late 1970s a movement began in the global arts community to put South Africa on the proscribed list. So we had few American entertainers. The boycott of South Africa started with the international cultural community. One year, South Africa did host a world boxing championship, which became a big occasion. It was held in a large rugby stadium. The African-American boxer beat the South African champion, an Afrikaner. The black community took delight in the outcome. The white community feared boycotts in the sports arena - most especially rugby, which was an obsession - more than other anti-apartheid action abroad..

*Q: Was Buthelezi in the picture during the time we are discussing?*

TAYLOR: Buthelezi was certainly a political force; he held the middle ground in between the regime and the militant black community, led by the ANC, which at the time was, as you know proscribed. Other militant black groups contended for influence, like Biko's Black Consciousness Movement, which had not yet been banned. Buthelezi was the leader of the Zulu tribe; he was not in the line of ascension to the Zulu throne, but he was related to the royal family. His ancestors were something like chancellors to the hereditary king of the Zulu nation. The king, however, was only the nominal leader of the tribe. Buthelezi was the real political leader. He was a well-educated man, but on special occasions appeared in the stunning leopard skin cloak of the traditional Zulu warrior.

He participated in the local elections even though they were held under apartheid ground rules. Buthelezi was also chief minister of Kwa Zulu, the Zulu "homeland." Most of the black community strongly opposed the homelands as a key component of Grand Apartheid with a capital "A." But Buthelezi viewed his election in Kwa Zulu as a step forward. He continued, however, to attack apartheid and the central government. He

believed that working within the established system might be a quicker way to end apartheid and white control than the path chosen by the ANC. We were in contact with Buthelezi and his Inkatha Party primarily through our consul-general in Durban.

*Q: In your contacts with the universities - and USIS' - did we notice any change in outlook among the white students?*

TAYLOR: Yes. USIS travel grants were given not only to promising young black leaders, but also to white student leaders and young white politicians of both the National Party and the opposition. The white universities in South Africa were excellent academically but, except for Stellenbosh, the major Afrikaner college, also hot beds of anti-apartheid thought. They were the spawning grounds in the white communities for the "new South Africa." Professors in these institutions also generally recognized that refusal to change would lead to more and greater violence and to international pariah status for the country.

Responding to these pressures, domestic and foreign, the government proposed a new constitutional arrangement. Many in the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. viewed this proposal - put forward by the new Prime Minister P.W. Botha, as a token gesture totally without significance. Of course, the black community in South Africa felt the same. The Ambassador and I agreed, however, that P.W.'s "reform" was a first step away from grand apartheid. It moved the white regime from a set hard position onto the first gentle decline of the famous slippery slope. The government's objective was to try formally to incorporate the "colored" and Asian communities into the political life of South Africa. In the new dispensation, there would be three parliaments: a white one, a colored one, and one for Asians. The status of the black community did not change. The assumption was that the "homelands" would continue and that was where the blacks should and would find their political life. It was a strange, Jerry-rigged, three-ringed parliament, which obviously did not please anyone; it was an effort by the regime to show that it was not opposed to having people other than whites involved in the political life of South Africa. In addition, the Nats hoped to co-opt into the system the colored and Asian populations. The National Party had excluded the former ethnic category excluded from the voter rolls in 1948.

The three-ring racial parliament did not make sense of course, but still we saw it as a first step toward an unraveling of the system. It also promised to split the National Party. The most conservative wing of the Party vehemently opposed giving any political rights, even nominal ones, to any non-whites. That was another reason why we at the embassy were more positive about the regime's proposals than most others. The arch-conservatives in the Party saw the new dispensation as we did - that is as a first step toward if not onto the slippery slope.

It meant, we believed, the eventual end of a system for which the Afrikaners had fought for centuries - a purely white, Afrikaner-dominated country. The right wing of the right-wing National Party understood that to grant even the small accommodations suggested by P.W. Botha was to start the beginning of the end of apartheid and all that the "Nats" had cherished. The government's proposal, in the view of the extremists, violated the

fundamental principle of South African governance - only whites had political rights. That principal was at the core of the conservative philosophy. Once the Party allowed a token departure from the principle, the ultra- right correctly understood, the rationale of the whole system would rapidly erode.

In the end, the archconservatives lost and new parliaments for coloreds and Asians were duly elected, with those two communities in theory having the same political rights as whites. This took place shortly after I left, but at the time the debate was going on, it was clear to me that deep fissures over the future of apartheid were opening in the white community. The Afrikaner intellectual elite were looking to a process of reform that might take many years, but they were intent on eventually finding a “new dispensation” that most black South Africans could accept. They understood that the “crumbs” that the regime was offering would not be adequate and that more progressive action would be required.

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*Q: In 1986, you left INR/EAP. What was your next assignment?*

TAYLOR: Before going on, I might note that while I was still serving as Director of Analysis for INR/EAP, the head of the US observation Team and Liaison Mission in Windhoek, Namibia, an FSO by the name of Stan Keogh, was killed in a terrorist explosion. Stan had replaced me as political counselor in South Africa and then was appointed to the mission in Namibia. Loving my travels in Namibia as I did, I volunteered temporarily to replace him. In the summer of 1985, I worked in Namibia, traveling and writing reports on the security and political situation, including in the combat areas. I submitted endless thoughts on how we might try to get the talks underway again on implementation of UN Resolution 435.

**RICHARD BLOOMFIELD**  
**Ambassador**  
**Portugal (1978-1982)**

*Ambassador Richard Bloomfield was born in Connecticut in 1927. After serving in the U.S. military during World War II, Ambassador Bloomfield attended the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and joined the Foreign Service in 1952. He subsequently served abroad in Bolivia, Mexico, Uruguay, Ecuador, and Portugal, specializing in Latin American economic affairs. He was interviewed by Richard Nethercut in 1988.*

*Q: Were you in Portugal at a time when the issue of Angola was a concern to the Portuguese, or is that something in their past?*

BLOOMFIELD: Oh, no. Not their past, it's a constant obsession with the Portuguese. The Portuguese, most of them, were heavily marked by their African past. They took great

pride the fact that they were the European country that, in a sense, explored the rest of the world to the East, not to the West, because they really had to share that honor with the Spanish. But, you know, Africa, they were the first ones who sailed around there, and India, and so forth. Also, many Portuguese, of course, served in the military as conscripts in Africa and they fought this long war against the African independence movements. And there was something like almost a million Portuguese that came back from Africa after the independence. So you couldn't have a conversation with a Portuguese for more than ten minutes without Africa coming up, no matter what you'd been talking about. So it was of concern to them, but it was also a concern to the United States, and it was really for that reason that I had some involvement with that situation because we were, at that point, trying to get...well, during the Carter administration...to get the South African government to comply with the UN resolutions and grant Namibia its independence. And part of that problem, as it still is if you read the papers the past few days, is the Cuban troop presence in Angola. And since the Portuguese had special knowledge of the country, we would periodically consult with them about Angola. I remember Don McHenry used to come through Lisbon when he'd go to Luanda to negotiate with the Angolans, and so forth. So, yes, it was a fairly lively issue.

*Q: Were there other topics, or incidents, that you would consider major achievements or frustrations during your period in Portugal?*

BLOOMFIELD: It's much more difficult for me in that tour to point to specific achievements, because it really was a situation in which, while we had a great deal of influence, the degree to which we could effect internal developments was much, much less than the case of, say Ecuador, when I was there. So what I can say was accomplished but I can't take any particular credit for it was that by our general posture of trying to show the Portuguese people that we were interested in their country, that we had good relations with them, that we respected their leaders and had them to Washington, that we did give them assistance, even though they didn't think it was enough, that by our general attitude and presence we did to try to reinforce democracy in the country.

**Donald F. McHenry**  
**Ambassador to the UN**  
**New York (1979)**

*Ambassador Donald F. McHenry was born in Missouri in 1936. He received his bachelor's degree from Illinois State University and his master's from Southern Illinois University. He taught at Howard University before entering the State Department in 1963. Ambassador McHenry was the U.S. Representative to the United Nations. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993 with a continuation of the interview in 1998.*

*Causes of Namibian independence:*

McHENRY: Ironically, the whole situation in Angola and Namibia got its major break largely, 90 percent, as a result of the arrival of more Cubans, so many Cubans that the South Africans became concerned that they might get embroiled in a fight inside of Namibia, and therefore now were interested in a peaceful transition in Namibia.

Angola was very much a part of the negotiations on Namibia, very much a part of the agreement that we finally reached on Namibia, which, though held up in implementation for the 12 years of the Reagan and Bush administrations, still was the basis for Namibian independence.

**JAMES L. WOODS**  
**DOD – Director, African Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1979-1994)**

*James L. Woods was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. He graduated from Ohio State University and Cornell University and served in the U.S. Army in Germany. He has served in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, which supplements an outstanding career in the Department of Defense. Mr. Woods was interviewed in 2001 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Problems with South Africa:*

WOODS: When it came to Namibia, I was again part of the team that Crocker had to put together and go out, because the Cuban withdrawal having succeeded and the South African withdrawal from Angola having succeeded, the South Africans were now hunkered down in camps in Namibia, and UN 435 was supposed to unfold. On the day - April 1 - that it started, the rather unintelligent head of SWAPO, and future president of Namibia, Sam Nujoma, sent his army across the border with their weapons. He would later explain that nobody had told them that they couldn't return with their weapons. They were just going home and, had he been told, they could have put their weapons somewhere else. But anyway the reports started coming in, SWAPO/PLAN, two dozen here, six dozen there, 200 here, coming across the border. So the South Africans said, "We've had it. It's five minutes into the new era, and look what they're doing." So they just came boiling out of their camps in their armored vehicles and proceeded to massacre these poor bastards who were basically clueless infantry on foot with light arms, and they were just being mowed down. You know, the pictures then, the Caspirs were coming back with these dead bodies draped all over them. It became a big turkey shoot. Well, Chet put the team together and we all flew off to Namibia and, you know, we were to put the cork back in this bottle.

**CLAYTON E. McMANAWAY JR.**  
**Staff Secretariat**  
**Washington, DC (1981-1983)**

*Clayton E. McManaway, Jr. was born in North Carolina. He graduated from the University of South Carolina and served in the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps. He served in Phnom Penh and Saigon, and as Ambassador to Haiti. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.*

*Q: Could you give me this because I try to document this as I go along?*

McMANAWAY: There weren't many light moments in that job. It was an extremely demanding job. I was in there at six in the morning and would have a six inch stack of cables to go through before the phone would start ringing. I would get home about 11 at night. I would go weeks without seeing my wife and daughter awake and that puts a lot of pressure on a marriage, I tell you. But it was one of the most exciting jobs I ever had. It was just one thing after another.

Each Bureau has a personality. EUR is sort of like Europeans with pin striped suits and everything sort of proper. ARA [Bureau of Inter-American Affairs] is mañana, very laid back. AF [Bureau of African Affairs] is sort of insecure, although they didn't have to be when we were there. They had a strong front office. They would come up on the screen and then go away, come up on the screen and go away. There weren't that many issues. Namibia was the issue, I guess, at that time. Then EA [Bureau of East Asian Affairs] was the most convoluted. We had standard ways of sending documents out, of putting together documents for the Secretary of State. It was straight forward, but they could never follow that. They always came up with their own scheme with a memo on top of a memo, etc. It would be a very convoluted thing that they would send up. It was very Asian, very strange. EA was probably the worse at trying to get around other Bureaus and not getting the clearances. But the Bureaus do have their own personalities.

**JAMES K. BISHOP JR.**  
**Deputy Assistant Secretary, African Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1981-1987)**

BISHOP: I started to work in AF in June, while Lannon Walker was still the acting Assistant Secretary. Then Crocker was confirmed and I worked for him for the next six years. There were three major problems confronting Chet: first, southern Africa--the previous administration left an on going struggle in Angola between forces backed by the Soviets on one side and the South Africans on the other. We were restricted by law from providing arms to either side or otherwise becoming militarily involved in that struggle. The internal situation in South Africa was repugnant to a growing part of the American public. The fate of Namibia was bound up with events in South Africa and Angola, and

this was a subject of grave concern to a number of our European allies. One of the more important lessons learned by the Reagan administration was that while Africa might not have been of great interest to it, it was of interest to some of our European allies. That forced the administration to pay more attention to it than might otherwise have been the case.

Tanzania was part of my area of concern, but our engagement with President Nyerere was limited. There wasn't too much empathy between the Reagan administration and Julius Nyerere; to the extent contact existed; it revolved around southern Africa's issues. He was not much a factor in those, but an effort was made to keep him from playing a spoiler's role. Crocker was on the road about one-third of the time. His principal deputy--first briefly Lannon Walker, followed for four years by Frank Wisner, and then Chas Freeman--also concentrated on southern Africa issues. This led to very complex negotiations which brought to closure the Namibia peace process and gave rise to its independence, which brought an end to the war in Mozambique, and which led to a peace accord in Angola. All of this was accomplished while engaging with the South Africans, the Congress and the world on the issues of apartheid and sanctions in South Africa. Princeton Lyman, myself, and the other deputies, were given considerable latitude to deal with the problems in the other parts of the continent. Princeton looked after the economic and refugee problems, while I looked after political, intelligence and military issues. Obviously, when there were important decisions to be made, these required Crocker's approval and sometimes those of the Secretary or the President.

I did not think that our intelligence collection efforts were particularly helpful in the decision making process. Our intelligence on the parts of Africa which were of principal concern to us was not good. The ANC (the African National Congress) executed people that it suspected of spying. That was a considerable disincentive to recruitment. Our ability to penetrate other important circles in southern Africa also was not very good. We did better with intelligence that could be gathered by technical means; there was a considerable amount of that available. At times of conflict we did deploy additional assets to Africa; e.g. when the Libyans invaded Chad broke out we had a U-2 aircraft which over flew the country on a regular basis collecting order of battle information. We moved teams to Africa to develop the films quickly so that we were able to support the French military with very recent intelligence on the deployment and activities of the Libyan military once they became engaged in Chad. But intelligence from human sources was not particularly good throughout Africa. Intelligence assets were principally employed against the "main enemy", i.e. the Soviets, in cat and mouse recruitment games of dubious national interest values.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, our UN Ambassador, was a thorn in Crocker's side as he dealt with southern African issues. She and Pat Buchanan, then in the White House, took issue with him on the Namibia peace process. They both were much more comfortable with the South African government of the day than most were Americans and including those of us who worked on the issue in the State Department. They were very resistant to seeing a government led by the ANC coming to power as a consequence of a process that

involved majority rule. They justified their position as anticommunist. I thought that at least with Buchanan it was racist in inspiration.

**CHESTER ARTHUR CROCKER**  
**Assistant Secretary for African Affairs**  
**Namibia (1981-1989)**

*Assistant Secretary Crocker was born and raised in New York and educated at Ohio State University and the School for Strategic and International Studies (SAIS). He served on the National Security Council (1970-1972), as Professor at Georgetown University (1972-1977), and as Director for African Affairs at the Center for Strategic and International Affairs (1976-1980). In 1981 he was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and served in that capacity until 1989, at which time he rejoined the faculty of Georgetown University. Mr. Crocker was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.*

CROCKER: Now, I have to do a little sidebar here. We inherited from the Carter Administration an initiative on Namibia specifically, for Namibian independence, which had been launched by something called the Western Contact Group, which consisted of the Western members of the Security Council in 1978, namely Britain, France, Germany, Canada and the United States. Two of those, of course, are permanent members of the Council and the other two are not.

So we inherited from the Vance period, from Don McHenry, particularly, who had worked this problem, that structure of the Western Contact Group. So one of the early issues that we assessed was are we going to continue to work with the Western Contact Group on Namibia, are we going to press forward with something called “the Western plan,” otherwise known as UN Security Council Resolution 435 for Namibian independence, or are we going to abandon it and go in some very different direction?

The point I’m making, though, is that Haig understood from the get-go the importance of having allied support for whatever it was we chose to do, so the question then became: what is it we will choose to do? Will we just continue with that Resolution 435 approach, or will we change it? And so we had a ten-week policy review in early 1981 over that precise question.

*Q: Well, out of this policy review, exercise of everybody looking at the matter and Namibia, what did you come out with?*

CROCKER: Well, of course Namibia is a pretty small place in the broader scheme of things, but it was the litmus test issue and the hot issue, the pregnant issue, throughout southern Africa and to some degree in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Rhodesia had just become Zimbabwe. Mozambique and Angola were both Marxist ex-Portuguese territories

that were in the hands of governments at the time that we viewed as aligned to Moscow. In the case of Angola, very aligned to Moscow.

South Africa was obviously the regional superpower, but it also was a deeply troubled society with a racist system of government. Legislated apartheid was not only evil but it was failing, visibly failing. And therefore the question was, how will South Africa change, what will be the process for achieving change in South Africa?

So this was part of a bigger scheme of things. Our approach was, you don't start with South Africa. You start with the issue that's hot and that's Namibia, because that's the one that everyone's expecting you to address and the one you kind of have to address because of the inherited diplomatic groundwork, the expectations of the diplomatic process. It's a sequential thing.

And so what we said was, we will try to work with the new government of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, we'll try to work with the African Front Line States (FLS – Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), we'll try to work with South Africa, to get a negotiated solution in Namibia. But there's got to be something in it for South Africa. It's not going to work if it's just decolonizing the last African colony.

After all, the liberation group in Namibia had not liberated any of Namibia. It was sitting next door in Angola and in Zambia and it was rather feckless, militarily .. So if we want the South Africans to cooperate on a diplomatic approach, there's got to be something in it for South Africa. And by the way, there's got to be something in it for us.

As we look across that region at that time, 1980-81, what do we see that might be a positive incentive, a worthy goal, for us? Well, getting the Cubans out of Africa would be a big prize, because they were the only conventional threat that could lead to imposed military solutions next door in Namibia. The Cubans were the only organized conventional force that you could say was in some way going to be able to challenge the South African conventional forces, or to impose their own solutions in neighboring countries of the southern African region when there might be political issues of interest to them. They were a strategic wild card – both for the Castro regime and in a larger sense for the Soviet global enterprise.

So our view was that what had to be done was link a Namibian settlement to an Angolan settlement, in which Cubans would depart from southern Africa on a time phased negotiated calendar of withdrawal. So we said, "We're not scrapping Resolution 435, we are adding a pragmatic reality to 435, which is that there will have to be parallel movement on the Angolan track."

And we set up this construct and then had to try to sell it, first to the allies, then to South Africa, then to the African front line states, including Angola. So it was a very, very ambitious departure. We were saying, "Yes, Namibian independence, linked to Cuban

troop withdrawal from Angola and this will transform the strategic environment of southern Africa.”

That was what we came up with in our policy review. Once we revealed it, which took place a little later, the press would ask Al Haig questions like: “Well, have you abandoned UN Security Council Resolution 435?”

“No.”

“Well, haven’t you added a new condition?”

And Haig would say, “It’s not a condition, but we think there’ll have to be some empirical simultaneity.” This was classic Haig-speak. So we had a policy of empirical simultaneity, in other words linkage.

*Q: As you were going through this, what was the role of the contact group, the other four Western powers?*

CROCKER: They were concerned.

*Q: Yeah, how did they feel? First place, they must have been sort of suspicious when your crew came in, weren’t they?*

CROCKER: Very and some of them were inclined to write us off and others were inclined to do the opposite, which is to try to work with us and influence us as best they could. And of course our cousins in the UK were the best at that. They were very familiar with the process of trying to educate the Americans. “Toilet training” was what we called it. They always reminded us of the Churchillian phrase about how the Americans usually do the right thing, after exhausting all alternatives.

They came over on weekly missions to test the pulse. And they would reach out to me and then when I wasn’t in the room, reach out to my colleagues: “How’s Crocker doing? Is he going to make it? How’s the internal review going? Is Haig listening to Crocker, or is he listening to the other people, or listening to Kirkpatrick?” The Brits were really connected here and they always have been. So they were watching and

*Q: This is, of course, before the great love affair between Reagan and Thatcher came.*

CROCKER: He admired her from the get-go, but, yes, you’re right, it was before it really got intense.

So the British embassy here and the FCO in London was working us, as they’re good at doing, to find out exactly where the ball was and when the next meetings were and whispering a word in different ears, to try and work for the right outcome. So we talked to the Brits a lot. I think they played by far the most aggressive and, in terms of trying to persuade Washington to move in the right direction, effective diplomatic hand.

This took, as I say, ten weeks, maybe it was twelve. And then one bright day Al Haig went over to the White House with the policy paper and the recommended strategy in southern Africa. We were doing other things, too. We were working the Liberian crisis, the Libyan crisis, the Chadian crisis, a few other things. But this was the number one issue on the plate. Haig went over to the White House and had his conversation with the president.

And I'll never forget, he came back at the end of the day and you could tell he'd had a long conversation, interesting conversation. He called me upstairs. Just me, he didn't call in my colleagues who were part of this review: Elliott Abrams, Paul Wolfowitz, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Harvey Sicherman, others. He may have talked to them separately, but he called me up, sat me down, said, "Well, Chet, the president's on board. We're going to get out a policy document that will confirm that this is our policy and it will have a number and so forth. I'm going to tell you, Chet, the president's not too steeped on these issues, but he's on board."

I don't know what took place in that room. I suppose history books will tell us, but they went back and forth at it and I guess the Secretary was persuasive and the President may have said, "Well, give it a shot."

I can't emphasize enough how ambitious this was, to take an inherited diplomacy that was UN-based, that was supported by all the Africans, which the South Africans were very skeptical of and had refused to go along with and then link it to a wholly new factor, namely a strategic shift in Angola, that the Soviets could block, Castro could block, the Angolans could block and then we say, "We're going to launch this new thing in an allied context."

*Q: Yeah, and trying to look at it, at the time, it would have sounded like a strong no-policy policy. In other words, if you're throwing in the Cubans, what was in it for the Cubans to get out, or for the Soviets and all of that. So, in other words, by linking it, it meant that it would sound like, "Okay, we're all for you, but you have to do this," which was an unacceptable thing. At the time, did you see any real possibility of getting the Cubans out?*

CROCKER: Oh, yeah, we did and of course we were bullish and hopeful and optimistic, as younger people often are and we were off by a few years in thinking we could get this done in 18 months!

But there was something in it for the Angolan regime and for the Cubans and others on that side, namely the removal of South Africa from the borders of Angola, a fundamental strategic shift. Namibia's bigger than Texas. When you talk about decolonizing a place bigger than Texas, you are changing the strategic balance of southern Africa in a very fundamental way that's actually got something in it for Luanda, for the Angolan regime and therefore for the Cubans, who were their safety blanket. So, yes, there was something.

It wasn't just the South African forces and their own cross-border activities into Angola. It was also the South African connection to UNITA and Savimbi that would be changed by the decolonization of Namibia.

*Q: Namibia was really, for a sparsely settled area, big, but sparsely settled, it was sort of a keystone for this whole*

CROCKER: Absolutely, absolutely. The first time I did consultations in the Front line states, I'll never forget it, my meeting with Julius Nyerere, who was at that point the president of Tanzania but also the chairman of the Front line states and he sat me down and gave me a few history lessons, which was his style. He was called Mwalimu for a reason, Swahili for "teacher."

He didn't like this new approach, was skeptical that we could pull it off, but he also said, "Namibia is the key. Namibia comes first. We've dealt with the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe problem. The next issue on the African agenda is Namibia. Focus your attention on Namibia. If you can get it done, you have my support."

That was the nature of the message and the sequencing was so clear. Nyerere understood the geopolitical reality and confirmed our own analysis. We often tried to explain during the middle Eighties, when we got into deep controversies over apartheid, to explain to people here that the only logical sequence was Nyerere's - Namibia had to be decolonized first. You're not going to change apartheid in South Africa until you've dealt with Namibia. That was the sequence. He understood that. I understood it. It was essential to wind down and end the cross-border, internationalized warfare first, before the internal conflicts could be addressed.

So, you're right. It was the keystone.

*Q: Let's talk about the early period in general.*

CROCKER: Put it into three periods, maybe, early, middle and late.

We phased the rollout of the new initiative, let's call it the linkage-based Namibia-Angola settlement process. The first phase was to get some agreement on things that would need to be fixed or changed or modified at the edges concerning the inherited Resolution 435, the UN settlement plan for Namibia.

You could say it was chipping away, because what it was doing was adding a couple of ingredients related to such issues as the monitoring of SWAPO bases in Angola, the question of whether there would be some constitutional principles that would guide the first Namibian Assembly once elected, some parameters so that there'd be some chance for a power sharing constitution to emerge, some issues related to the so-called impartiality or partiality of the UN system, because the UN was going to supervise the transition in Namibia once it started.

So how to assure the South Africans that the UN-led process would be “impartial,” as between the local, internal Namibian parties and SWAPO, which was the armed insurgency or liberation group.

Anyway, the first phase of the negotiation was to deal with those issues and we did make some headway and we were working what I’d call finer points of diplomatic amelioration or emendation of an existing agreement.

And it was a way of demonstrating to everybody that this elaborate machinery, the Western Contact Group, the African Frontline States, could work under our leadership, we could actually move from one thing to the next and we could have meetings and we could produce outcomes that everybody had signed onto.

By the summer of ’82 we’d kind of finished with that and we had some significant degree of engagement with very good people in the Frontline States, from Mozambique, Botswana and Tanzania particularly, actually, it was very interesting.

So that was progress, but it was very detailed material. One of my colleagues called it “diplomatic needlepoint,” very fine grained stuff.

*Q: As you were doing this, did you have somebody back there stitching away? Could you see a pattern emerge, was this going the way you saw it would, or was it just, “Okay, let’s go out and try this and try that” and watching it being put together?*

CROCKER: We were working two sides of the street, two sets of agendas. The Namibian agenda I’ve just been talking about was more of a needlepoint variety, it was very, very detailed and legal drafting stuff, stuff that had a lot of UN dimensions to it.

*Q: Because it was a UN*

CROCKER: Plan.

*Q: But it also was technically a UN trust territory, wasn’t it?*

CROCKER: Well, it was, in the eyes of many, yes, it was supposed to be a UN trust territory. Not in the eyes of South Africa, of course which was in complete control of the place and had been since it was given a mandate to administer it after World War I.

*Q: When you bring the UN in, you have to*

CROCKER: And they’d be the ones implementing the settlement, so it had a number of UN dimensions and we had to work hard on that.

Yes, I think that we had a sense that progress was being made and we had a team of people who were working on those issues in considerable detail with great skill and

working with contact group counterparts who were also down in the weeds detailing with this stuff and were good at it.

And when we found African frontline people who were also good at it and a few South Africans who were good at it we were able to make some progress.

I will confess to you this progress was hard to describe for a New York Times journalist, because it was “eyes glaze over” kind of detail..

But at the same time on a separate track we were working to open up channels with the Angola government and to get them to agree to the principle of Cuban troop withdrawal and we spent probably sixty, seventy per cent of our time trying to do that, trying to get a breakthrough – a workable channel of communication – with the right Angolans, trying to figure out what kind of a formula they could buy onto, some sort of a “Yes, in principle, provided that” or “Yes, if” formulation. It took a long time to get that.

*Q: The Angolan government, was their feeling, as we saw it, that without the Cuban troops they would go down, or did they feel they could take care of the situation?*

CROCKER: Well, they didn't put it this way of course, but the Cuban troops were the safety blanket for the MPLA regime.

They depended on them very heavily for dealing with UNITA and this is part of the story that in hindsight becomes clearer and clearer, UNITA was becoming more and more capable of challenging the MPLA during this time period.

So the military pressure was increasing. It wasn't American military pressure. It was UNITA with the benefit of substantial South African-support.

So the Cubans became more indispensable, up to a certain point, from the standpoint of this very weak regime.

*Q: I think this would be very tricky. From the South African point of view, would they want essentially a neutralized, benign Namibia, it's a stretch of desert and they don't really need it, or were there aspirations for certain parts of the South African government?*

CROCKER: There was a significant minority of Afrikaans-speaking Namibians, both white and colored, who voted in local elections and who were members of the National Party, which was the governing party of South Africa at the time and it became sort of a hot issue in the National Party caucus: “Are you going to sell out to those American negotiators who are trying to make peace?”

It was that kind of thing, more than it was that they had a huge stake. Namibia was obviously heavily subsidized by the South African treasury, it didn't have a strong tax base. There was a mining industry, but not much else and there was an ostrich farming

industry, not much else besides that. And a lot of bureaucrats and a lot of railway subsidies and military bases and that kind of thing.

However, it was obviously geopolitical space and depth and it was what separated “communism” from South Africa, and Namibia’s was a huge buffer. It’s bigger than Texas.

If you lost that, it meant that if SWAPO came into office or if somebody else promoted by the Angolans comes into office, you’ve got the “communists” right on your border.

We tried to break constructive engagement down into phases that would develop a kind of inexorable momentum, because we knew that all the other parties would want to talk to us about the Namibia process linked to Resolution 435.

They would be much more reluctant, much more twitchy, when it came to talking about the Cuban-Angolan track.

So our theory was that we would try and make this inexorable momentum on phases one and two, which dealt with first the constitutional principles for a Namibian constituent assembly, which would take place during the UN-supervised transition.

And then secondly to clean up, under phase two, some of the issues that had not been resolved in the previous diplomacy from the Carter Administration, specifically things to do with the composition and size of UNTAG, the UN force, when it would come in and things to do with the role of the UN special representative, who had already been designated at that time as Martti Ahtisaari and the question of UN impartiality, an issue which the South Africans had made a big deal about. They claimed that the UN as an institution was all on one side against them.

So these were issues we addressed in phase two and primarily in 1981-82. By the time we got to ’82 and into ’83 we were really spending the overwhelming bulk of our time on the Cuban track, which was phase three, getting the Cuban track to move. Now that we had shown, if you like, our capacity to move the South Africans, this presumably would give us leverage to move the Angolans and therefore the Cuban track.

That was the theory and that’s the way we proceeded. It was that kind of a sequence.

So now in our story we’re up to ’83 and we can perhaps leave it there and go to some other African issues for a moment and then come back again.

**PETER DAVID EICHER**  
**African Affairs Officer, Bureau of International Organizations Affairs,**  
**Washington, DC (1983-1985)**

*Mr. Eicher, son of an American oil geologist, was born in Saudi Arabia and raised in the US and abroad. He was educated at McGill University, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California, Los Angeles. Entering the Foreign Service in 1973, Mr. Eicher became an Africa and Human Rights specialist, serving at posts in Fiji, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Switzerland as well as in Washington and at the United Nations in New York. Mr. Eicher was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.*

*Q: It is always, of course, an important thing to try to get African votes in the UN which has so many African members. I mean, people were talking about Chad and trying to drum up support for American positions on other issues. I mean you must have found yourself very busy with so many votes in your portfolio.*

EICHER: Very busy. But, in fact, it wasn't so much about trying to line up African votes, although that sometimes entered into the job. The way the office worked, if there was an issue we needed votes on, the officer responsible for that issue would draft a cable to all diplomatic posts, or all members of the Security Council if it was a Security Council rather than General Assembly issue, setting out the U.S. position and giving talking points for the American embassies and USUN (the U.S. mission to the United Nations, in New York) to use. So, if the problem were, say, a Middle East issue, the officer in charge of Middle Eastern affairs would have to write the cable and talking points. They would clear it, of course, with me and others to make sure it was sensible and appropriate for the country or countries they were sending it to, and then the cable would go out to our embassies. If the cable were on an African issue, I would draft it and get it cleared. Sometimes we would have to craft specific points to make with specific African countries, but that was rare; there were just too many issues and things happened too quickly.

Occasionally I'd get a call from one of the USUN people in New York, most often, in fact, from Ambassador Richard Schifter, who would say, "Look, we need four more votes on this resolution or that resolution. Which African countries do you think we should hit and what kind of incentives can we offer?" or, "Can you see if there's a little AID money that we can offer to Guinea Bissau to win their vote" on whatever issue, that sort of thing. Schifter was a master of vote counting. He was not officially responsible for African Affairs at USUN, but he was the only one of the five U.S. Ambassadors to the UN who seemed to care much about Africa, even if it was primarily in the context of getting votes. The U.S. ambassador in New York who was in charge of Africa was Alan Keyes, the same Keyes who later ran unsuccessfully for president a couple of times. He had been a mid-level Foreign Service Officer and he was suddenly appointed as an Ambassador in New York as a result of Jeanne Kirkpatrick's intervention. Although Keyes was nominally in charge of Africa at USUN, I don't know how he actually spent his time; he never seemed to be involved in any of the African political issues; maybe he was spending his time self-promoting. He would never even return telephone calls, unlike the other ambassadors. Schifter seemed to be the only U.S. ambassador in New York – out of five – who had a strategic, pragmatic view of how to make issues work at the UN. The others were so-called "neo-cons" (neo-conservatives) who seemed more focused on

ideology than on getting things done; they would usually rather lose a vote and stand proudly alone on principle than look for an approach that might put the U.S. on the winning side. So, although Schifter's calls always meant more work for me, I came to appreciate his outlook. I learned a lot from him, which proved very useful during my later assignment to the UN in Geneva, where vote-counting and strategic approaches to specific countries were often very important in getting resolutions adopted.

In fact, my job turned out to be mainly a Namibia job. I was chosen, selected for the position, by the Africa Bureau because the position was regarded as "their man" in the UN Bureau (the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs). At that time, by far the biggest African issue in the UN was Southern Africa and, in particular, Namibia. Namibia was starting to be a very hot issue, with the U.S. much involved in negotiations aiming at Namibian independence. It turned out to be just a fascinating job from that perspective. You may recall that I had covered Namibia during my tour in South Africa five or six years earlier, and I was still very interested in Namibia. I became part of Assistant Secretary Chester Crocker's "team," as he called it, which was a little group of half dozen people who were working on the Namibian negotiations. Because Namibia was technically a UN trust territory, and anything which came out of the negotiations would have to be approved by the UN, UN people were very much involved. There was a UN "Commissioner from Namibia," and the secretary-general himself was much concerned about Namibia. It was an issue for both the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the UN Trusteeship Council. So, Namibia became the issue for my tour in IO/UNP (Bureau of International Organizations Affairs, Office of United Nations Political Affairs). I spent far and away more time on Namibia than anything else; well over half my time on just that country, out of a continent with 50 countries.

There were other things, of course, that I did have to spend time on. Other Southern African issues were always hot – South Africa, of course, was still an apartheid state at the time, which was a very big issue at the UN. There were lots of UN votes on South African issues. At one point during my tour, the U.S. even voted in favor of a Security Council resolution increasing sanctions on South Africa; I was proud of my role in that, which was an achievement, especially since it was the Reagan administration. There were also other African issues that arose at the UN, things like Western Sahara and the problems in the Comoros. Sometimes, I'd even get sucked into non-African issues. When the Russians shot down a South Korean Airlines Boeing 747 full of passengers that strayed over the Soviet Union, I was dragooned to hand carry up to New York some huge charts and photos for our ambassador – Jeanne Kirkpatrick – to use during a Security Council meeting. We had to get special permission to take the big portfolio on board the plane, since it was way over-sized.

And, of course, there was the annual meeting of the General Assembly, which involved lots of preparatory work, talking points and so forth. I'd also go to New York for the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) each year, for the opening week or so, when all the heads of state and foreign ministers would be there. I'd be attached to Crocker, rather than to my own assistant secretary. He would meet with African leaders and I'd go along to some of them. A meeting with Robert Mugabe sticks in my mind; he came

across as quite a hard-liner, sort of proud to be a Marxist and anti-Western, even way back then. Sometimes we'd have a private room in a hotel to meet people, but often it would be in the UN "delegates' lounge." That was a terrible place to have meetings – it was incredibly crowded and noisy during the big UNGA week and everyone would be looking over your shoulder and it would be hard to hear. It would even be hard to find places to sit, it was so crowded. Me or my counterpart at USUN, Gerald Scott, would have to go save seats well before a meeting. Poor Gerald usually got stuck with that, since he was the control officer, but I remember helping out.

*Q: On Namibia, when you took over, when you had the job, what was your impression of Chester Crocker and "constructive engagement" and all that? I'm talking about from your own way of looking at it.*

EICHER: Well, there are at least a couple different things I guess I should say. I had already dealt with Chet Crocker a little bit when I was on the Liberia desk. Liberia was not at all the top of his agenda, but Liberia issues would get to him from time to time. And, of course, there were the Africa bureau staff meetings where I would see him and occasionally there would be a Liberian visitor that I would sit with him with. So, through this kind of day-to-day business I got to know him a little bit. I liked him very much and I liked his style. He was thoughtful, low-key and friendly and a gentleman. He seemed to appreciate advice and ideas. He was a good person to work for. I liked that.

As for "constructive engagement," I was not really a fan of that at all. But the policy was not really all that different from what the U.S. had been doing before, it was mainly a different name and a different spin, and perhaps a greater intensity of engagement. It's not as if the Carter administration had broken ties with South Africa; they were also engaged. Constructive engagement as a policy was more complex than it seemed on the surface; it did have reasonable policy foundation that was trying to move things in southern Africa in the right direction. Opponents of the policy generally equated "constructive engagement" with cozying up to South Africa, but it was really regional policy – you had to engage with South Africa if wanted to make progress on Namibia and other regional issues, as well as on South African internal issues. So, it was something I thought I could work with. When I joined the Foreign Service, I had made the decision that I would try to influence events and make my contribution to change from inside the policy process rather than trying to promote change by protesting from outside. So, this job was a chance to try to do that. Crocker was the kind of guy who would listen to advice, and who could be influenced by sensible arguments, so I might be able to make a difference. And, of course, peace in Namibia was something I believed in very much and it was exciting to be involved in that process. So, despite my initial policy reservations, I was happy to give it a try, especially since Namibia had been one of my beats a few years earlier so I was already interested and had some good background experience. It was nice to be back a few years later seeing what was happening to Namibia. Negotiations were starting to move at that point. This was already two or three years into the administration.

Crocker's management approach more than lived up to my expectations. He had "team" meetings regularly to discuss everything that was going on in the negotiations. These

almost had the atmosphere of university seminars, which might not be odd since Crocker was a professor. There were only about half a dozen of us, and he would listen carefully to all points of view. In fact, he seemed to have structured the team to include people with differing points of view, or at least that's how it turned out in practice. A couple of the team members would usually argue for a very tough line on every issue, a sort of "punch them in the nose" approach, and a couple of us would usually argue for a softer, more diplomatic approach. There were "memo wars," with each of us drafting short memos to Crocker setting out our different points of view on the issues that came up and arguing for different courses of action. Crocker liked the memos; he always read them carefully, almost like a professor reading school papers and making little written comments on them. So, we got the feeling that our views were really appreciated and taken into account. Sometimes our arguments would win the day and we'd be making policy on a key issue. It was exciting stuff.

*Q: What was the issue on Namibia?*

EICHER: Namibia had been a German colony, South West Africa, before World War I. It was taken over by the British and South Africans during World War I and then administered by the South Africans under a League of Nations mandate. By the 1970s and 1980s, the South Africans were still unwilling to let it go, and so the big issue was to get the South Africans to agree to Namibian independence. Back when I was serving in South Africa, the South Africans had started a whole process to take Namibia to independence in a way that was not at all approved by the international community. The UN passed a number of resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 385 and 435, which said that Namibia would have to become independent through elections under UN supervision and control. The issue was really how to convince the South Africans to let go of Namibia in a way that would be internationally acceptable.

Before I moved to UN affairs, the administration seized on a strategy that included a lot of carrot, as well as stick. They had asked themselves, "what can we give the South Africans as an incentive to get them out of Namibia?" The answer they came up with was to convince the South Africans to give Namibia its independence in return for getting the Cuban troops out of Angola. This would benefit the South Africans by eliminating the great Soviet, communist, threat to southern Africa that they were so worried about. In theory, then, Namibia would become independent without becoming communist and posing a security threat to South Africa. This strategy was called "linkage," linking the Cuban withdrawal to Namibian independence. It was a clever strategy in the sense that if it worked, the United States would win all around, both by getting the Soviet, Cuban, threat out of Southern Africa and by getting Namibia independence. This was still in the days of the Cold War, and in a sense the Namibia/Angola conflicts were partly proxy wars for the great powers. On the other hand, the strategy was much criticized internationally, because why should Namibia be held hostage to what's happening in Angola? All the black African states – and most of the world – officially rejected linkage, although they would still talk with us about implementing it. Linkage was the policy pursued for many years by the United States, ultimately successfully, although not while I was still working on the issue.

So, we were involved in a series of negotiations with the South Africans, the Angolans, the African “Front Line States,” and the UN and others. I was personally involved in a lot of these. I traveled with Crocker to Southern Africa and I always accompanied him to New York. He would go up to New York approximately every six weeks to brief the Secretary-General, who at the time was Perez de Cuellar. I probably spent more time with the Secretary-General than any of my colleagues at USUN, except Jeanne Kirkpatrick maybe.

*Q: What was your impression of Crocker in the United Nations? I ask because he was coming out of a Republican administration and some other Republicans were not overly friendly to the UN. There was a whole right wing Republican element that was almost egregiously anti-UN.*

EICHER: I don't think it was quite as bad then as it has become since. I mean, there was not quite as much of today's attitude of “we have to destroy the United Nations,” or “let's cut the top ten floors off the UN headquarters in New York and no one will notice.” You remember of course, that George Bush, the first George Bush, who was still vice president at the time we're talking about, had been ambassador to the United Nations. I think there was a realization that the UN was a useful organization, that it was one that we needed to work with. A lot of the problems between the U.S. and the UN at the time came from the outside, Jesse Helms and other members of Congress, who were withholding our UN dues, which was a real mess. You know, I think there's a widespread, general mischaracterization or misunderstanding of the UN among Americans. Everyone complains that it's ineffective or “do-nothing,” but actually the UN can only do what the member states want it and allow it to do; it doesn't really have independent power to go out and do things on its own. So, often the same people who are badmouthing the UN for not doing this or that – for example, “the UN failed in Bosnia” or “the UN failed in Rwanda” – are the same policy-makers who would not authorize the UN to use force in Bosnia or Rwanda. It's a bit perverse. The UN is an easy whipping boy but it really only reflects the lowest common denominator of the international community.

I think Crocker had quite a constructive approach to the UN. Just the fact that he went so often to consult with the Secretary General and other UN officials shows that he had a good approach. He accepted that the solution to Namibia had to be in the UN context, to meet UN stipulations, if it was going to work. I never remember him taking a particularly negative view.

Jeanne Kirkpatrick was ambassador in New York at that point and she was quite a powerful and difficult figure. Namibia seemed to be one of the few issues that she yielded on, for whatever reason, letting Crocker handle it by himself. I suppose she had things that mattered more to her. She just didn't get involved. Even when we saw the Secretary General, she never came along. We very rarely briefed her when we went to New York, although we would meet with some of her deputies. She was supportive of what we were doing and if we needed her occasionally to make a point in a speech, or something like that, she would do it. So I guess I was lucky compared to my colleagues in UNP, who

were very scared of Kirkpatrick because she tended to get involved unpredictably in issues and she had a bad temper. Since she was a member of the Cabinet, she would go directly to the White House if anybody disagreed with her on anything. I was happy not to have her involved in my issues. I was affected peripherally as she exerted tighter and tighter control from New York over at the UN Affairs Bureau in Washington. Eventually, we could not send an instruction cable to New York from the State Department without first sending it up in draft to be approved by USUN. If they approved the draft, then we could send it officially to them. It didn't really affect me on Namibia, but it did on a few other issues, although for me this was mainly procedural – I can't remember an instance where USUN disagreed with something I wanted to send them. It was really bizarre that an Ambassador would have the power to clear her own instructions, but that was just the way the system was. The assistant secretary for international organizations was more or less a nonentity.

*Q: Who was that at the time?*

EICHER: Gregory Newell, I believe his name was. He was a young political appointee and I think he understood what the situation was. He focused mainly on management issues at the UN and on the other UN agencies rather than on political issues at the UN as such, because clearly he was not going to be able to take control. In fact, we sometimes thought he was put there specifically to avoid having a strong assistant secretary who might clash with Kirkpatrick. I remember when I joined the Bureau making my courtesy call on Newell and him giving me his list of the Bureau's priorities. I was amazed that they were all things like cutting UN budgets and improving management; there was nothing in there at all about making peace or finding solutions to international problems or any political issues.

But I was in a funny situation. Although Newell was my assistant secretary, I really worked for Crocker. I had a good office director in UNP, Ed Dillery, and there was a good DAS, Roger Kirk. They seemed delighted to have one of their staff so deeply involved in the Namibia negotiations, so they didn't give me any trouble; they were very supportive. In general, there was so much going on in New York all the time on so many issues, that I only had to keep them very generally briefed on what was going on with Namibia.

*Q: From your perspective, how did the Cuban problem fit into the situation in Angola? In the first place, what seemed to be in it for the Cubans to be fighting there and second, why would they want to get out if that's what the U.S. wanted?*

EICHER: Well, that was an issue. We certainly were not dealing directly with the Cubans. They had a good-sized military establishment in Angola at that time. There were also, I believe, smaller establishments in some other parts of Africa as well, in Ethiopia and in much smaller numbers in two or three other places. This was part of their policy at the time. It was the Cold War, and the Cubans were a Soviet proxy. I have no doubt that the Soviets were paying the bills. But, even from the Cuban perspective, sending troops to somewhere like Angola, which had a Marxist government and its own civil war going on,

would fit right in with the Cuban policy of trying to spread the worldwide revolution. This was after the days of Che Guevara, but the Cuban idea of trying to spread the revolution was still alive.

There was a sometimes vicious civil war going on in Angola between two of the former liberation movements which had been fighting against the Portuguese. The MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) was in power in the capital and was the official government, the ones we had to negotiate with. UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), under Jonas Savimbi, controlled the southern half of Angola and was supported by the South Africans. The U.S. was also secretly, or not so secretly, funneling assistance to UNITA. The Cubans were in Angola supporting the MPLA government. The civil war teetered back and forth. Sometimes UNITA would move north and control most of the country; sometimes it would be beaten back closer to the border region.

The Cubans were apparently very competent troops, and that worried the South Africans. The various Angolan factions were not terribly effective fighters so the South Africans didn't feel much threatened by them; they felt like they could handle the Africans without much problem. But having the Cubans there was different. The South Africans weren't scared of the Cubans – there was no threat that the Cubans themselves would try to cross into Namibia or South Africa – but having the Cubans there complicated life for the South Africans. The Cubans made the MPLA stronger and threatened Savimbi. If the Cubans got to the Angolan-Namibian border, they would probably assist SWAPO in making incursions into Namibia. So, the Cubans made it a more difficult and dangerous situation for the South Africans. If Namibia were to become independent while the Cubans were in Angola, the Cubans might well be a real threat to Namibia. If Namibia were to get internationally recognized independence, the new government might even invite the Cubans into Namibia. So, even though it was the U.S., not the South Africans, which came up with the idea of “linkage,” it was a real incentive to the South Africans.

Just one more fun point on the Cuban troops in Angola. The South Africans could tell where the Cubans were based in Angola through aerial photography. Suddenly, after the Cubans arrived in Angola, the aerial photos started showing that baseball diamonds were appearing at some Angolan military bases and near other concentrations of soldiers. Now, the Angola soldiers would, of course, play soccer to amuse themselves when they had free time; Africans were not baseball players. The Cubans, on the other hand, were great baseball players. So, it followed that if you saw a baseball diamond in an aerial photograph, it was a sure sign of a Cuban presence. I don't know if the Cubans ever knew they were giving themselves away in that manner, but I always thought that was an interesting story of how baseball fit into southern African diplomacy.

*Q: Were there talks going on essentially between United States and Cuba over this?*

EICHER: No, the talks were mainly with the South Africans and with the Angolans. I personally was never involved in the Angolan talks at all. There was an informal division of labor within the team, with the Africa Bureau's principal deputy assistant secretary,

Frank Wisner, and the Angola desk officer doing most of the talks with the Angolans. Crocker and two or three others, including myself, were dealing with the South Africans and the other so-called Front Line States. And the big goal was to get what we called the “calendario,” a calendar, a schedule for withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. The carrot for Angola was an independent Namibia, which would make it much more difficult for the South Africans to be able to help out Jonas Savimbi and UNITA, in their guerrilla war against the Angolan government. South Africa was giving assistance to Savimbi through its bases in northern Namibia. South Africa had even occupied part of southern Angola with its own troops, ostensibly to keep out the SWAPO guerrillas who would occasionally try to infiltrate from Angola into Namibia.

Anyway, the carrot for Angola was that if Namibia became independent as a result of our negotiations, then the South African forces would withdraw from both Angola and Namibia. They would be a thousand miles from Angola, where they couldn't help Savimbi as effectively. The Angolans had ostensibly brought in the Cubans on the basis that South Africa was occupying part of Angola – as well as to help fight UNITA – and they had said at some point that they wouldn't need the Cubans to defeat UNITA if the South Africans weren't there. So, there was a real incentive for the Angolans to cooperate with the peace process, and to discuss “linkage” with us at the same time they officially rejected it.

For the two years I was on the job, the Angolans danced around very adroitly and deftly. They showed great interest in the U.S.-led negotiations and they did talk regularly with us. They never made flat rejections that would have ended the negotiations. You know, they were sufficiently involved to keep us engaged and believing that progress was possible. And, there was actually occasional progress.

The biggest breakthrough we had during my time was what we called the “disengagement.” We were able to get an agreement from the South Africans to pull their troops back completely out of Angola into Namibia, and the Angolans to withdraw military from the border areas in return, and to keep the Cubans out of the border area. This agreement really was a big deal. It showed the policy was working and producing results. We thought the disengagement could create the political basis and political will and momentum to really launch into Namibian independence. This agreement was finally nailed down during a wonderful trip I took with Crocker around southern Africa, where we met half a dozen presidents. This was one of my wonderful Foreign Service experiences, being involved in a peace process that was working and meeting with a whole range of prominent leaders that I had been reading about since my university days. We met in Zambia with President Kaunda – I've got a great picture of him serving me tea – and in Tanzania with President Nyerere and in Mozambique with Samora Machel. We even went to Malawi, even though it wasn't regarded as a Front Line State, where we had an amazing meeting with President Hastings Kamuzu Banda, an ancient dictator with a twinkle in his eye, who sang us songs in an African language and quoted stanzas of Caesar in Latin. He gave us a British-style, fancy high tea in one of his palaces in Kasungu, an out-of-the-way little town; I remember that he took five sugars in his tea. I

wrote up what I thought was an amusing cable on the meeting, with the subject line “Kamuzu in Kasungu;” I even mentioned his five sugars.

All these guys were old-time independence leaders who were still presidents of their various countries. Nyerere and Kaunda were the real leaders of the Front Line States, the ones who mattered most. I remember Nyerere, who we met with in Dodoma, a city in the middle of nowhere in Tanzania, being especially impressive, and especially leery of the American initiative, at the same time as he would have been delighted to see it work. We were able to go to all these out-of-the-way places because we were flying in our own little plane. The African presidents were all very pleased at the South African pull-back but cautious about whether it would really lead to independence for Namibia. Still, it was the only game in town and they admitted it was good progress. They all agreed to support our effort – or at least not to oppose it. So it was a good success. They agreed to continue to pressure the Angolans for progress if we could continue to pull the South Africans back. We also met with the South Africans, of course; that was the first stop. We had to be sure they were really willing to go through with the disengagement before taking it to the Front Line States. The South Africans also produced Jonas Savimbi for us to meet with; we met him at the home of the South African minister of defense. Savimbi was an impressive fellow.

So the agreement was reached. The South Africans began to pull back their troops. And, we actually established a U.S. liaison office in Windhoek, both to monitor the disengagement and in anticipation that we would make more progress and it would turn into an embassy at the time of independence. We had discussed this with the African leaders and they didn’t object. I volunteered to go out and help set up the office, USLO Windhoek (U.S. Liaison Office), the first U.S. office in Namibia, and to stay there temporarily as part of its staff. Bill Twaddell was the chargé at USLO, I was the DCM. It was just a short-term, six-week assignment but it was fascinating. I think opening any American embassy for the first time in a new country would have to be interesting. Namibia was doubly so – even though it wasn’t actually an embassy – since it was in the middle of such a big political issue and was getting so much international attention, and because the U.S. was the only foreign country really there on the ground and involved in the negotiations. For me it was even more interesting, since I had been working on the negotiations which led to the disengagement and because I had worked on Namibia before and knew the internal scene a little, and how this fit into the bigger picture of the negotiations. USLO got a lot of publicity; there was a lot of hope that this was really going to lead to the end of the Namibian problems. Everyone was very upbeat.

Once I was at USLO, we got around Namibia quite a bit. We got up north, to the war zone and visited South African military installations. We visited Swapokmund, which was a very pretty little German colonial town that seemed like it came right out of the turn of the century, and Walvis Bay, which was Namibia’s only port and was an issue in the negotiations, since it had been a South African enclave even while the rest of Namibia was a German colony. We met all the local politicians and prominent personalities, of course, many of whom were the same people I had known during my South African assignment. A lot of them were not very happy, since Namibian independence under

international auspices would mean the end of influence for many who had been operating within the South African system. But there were also a lot of people pleased to see progress, at last. Also, everyone seemed to like the opening of an American office since it seemed to signal the end of a long isolation. We were in close touch with the South African military, which gave us reports to pass on their progress in pulling out of Angola. They also kept us posted on any incidents in the border region. In particular, they were upset by any indications that SWAPO would use the South African military pull-back to try to increase its incursions from Angola into Namibia. I did a lot of political reporting.

And then things began to fall apart. The Angolans still weren't producing the "calendario," which was needed if we were going to move into the next phase. And the South Africans were complaining that SWAPO was still coming in across the border. So, slowly it came unraveled. Things were still going well when I returned to the U.S. Bill Twadell and I were only there for about six weeks. The idea was that we were available immediately so we'd go out for a few weeks and get things started, then the Department would send out the longer-term team to replace us. The longer-term, or supposedly longer-term team, was headed by Dennis Keogh, who was killed within a week or so after he got there in an explosion at a gas station. It was a station that I had visited not long before. The South Africans put it down to SWAPO terrorism.

*Q: This was a chance explosion or what?*

EICHER: They said that he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time, that he wasn't actually targeted personally. But no one ever knew for sure. We speculated a lot about who would have gained from killing him, whether it was SWAPO or the South Africans. You could make a case either way, but it seemed that South Africa might have the greater incentive, and certainly they were better placed to pull something like that off, if they wanted to. Explosions in Namibia did happen from time to time, but it was relatively rare; it's not as if they were happening every day, or even every month. And SWAPO usually targeted power lines and other isolated targets away from population centers; it was rare for civilians to be hurt. SWAPO really was not an effective military force. It didn't have much capacity to undertake attacks. So I was never entirely comfortable with the idea that Keogh just happened to be somewhere when a SWAPO bomb happened to go off. It wasn't impossible, but it just seemed too unlikely, especially if it were a random bomb rather than a targeted one. It was a real tragedy. Dennis was a good guy. I had been with him just a few days before; I felt really hard hit by it. His widow later joined the Foreign Service and I got to be friends with her. Another friend was killed in the same bombing, an American army officer who had joined USLO Windhoek a couple of weeks before I left. Very sad.

The Department found a replacement for Keogh, Jake Jacobsen, who I had known during my tour in South Africa. USLO remained open for about a year altogether, then it started to become a political problem. As the disengagement fell apart, the office in Windhoek lost its nominal *raison d'être*. It started to draw criticism, especially in the UN, as a U.S. diplomatic establishment that shouldn't be in Namibia until after independence. The Department – and Crocker's "team" – was divided on whether to close it or not. It still

did some useful reporting, and some people were afraid that closing it would signal failure. I felt a personal attachment to the office and hated to see it closed, but in the policy discussions I argued that it should be closed; it had become more of a liability than an asset for us. Crocker agreed and so it was closed down.

*Q: You've got this peace process going on over in Namibia but you haven't really said much about the Namibians. Was there a Namibian entity that was different, I mean, essentially an independent Namibian entity?*

EICHER: There were a variety of things going on. In most ways, the internal situation had not progressed a lot over the past few years, I mean, it was much the same as I described it when we talked about my tour in South Africa five or six years earlier. There had been some evolution in internal politics. The old Turnhalle conference, if I remember correctly, had reached some agreements on how they would govern Namibia, and I think they had even set up a government that they were running under South African auspices. I know that they still talked a lot about declaring independence – that would be an unrecognized, South-African backed independence, and we had to spend a lot of time warning the South Africans not to let them do that since it would complicate any chance for real independence.

So, there were still all these internal parties, most of which were ethnically-based. And they did have some power over local affairs, but South Africa was still really in charge. The South Africans had started this process of trying to bring Namibia to independence in a framework that they could manage and control, which would be friendly to them, and having launched the process they were now in the unhappy position of restraining their Namibians allies who wanted to go through with independence. The racial situation was much more relaxed than in South Africa. Segregation was still generally the rule, but it was breaking down quickly and it was not at all as oppressive as in South Africa. There were more places open to all races and there wasn't the same pervasive police effort to enforce apartheid-like regulations. That was already true even back when I served in South Africa a few years earlier and it was much more so when I was there to open USLO.

SWAPO, as I've said, was the principal liberation movement. Crocker used to call it "the world's least successful liberation movement." It certainly wasn't making much progress on the battlefield but, it was recognized internationally; it had official status as a UN observer; it was regarded as legitimate. The South Africans would say that SWAPO only represented the Ovambos, which is one of the northern tribes, but by far the largest group in Namibia, making up just over half the population, I think. South Africa would have preferred a solution more like what they were trying to do within South Africa, to have an ethnically based government in Namibia that wouldn't be dominated by Ovambos, but give an equal say to a range of much smaller groups, the Hereros and the Bushmen and so forth. Curiously, SWAPO still had an internal branch that operated openly and legally inside Namibia. There were also half a dozen prominent former leaders of SWAPO and another, defunct liberation movement, SWANU (the South West African National Union) who had returned to Namibia and were cooperating with the South Africans. One of the

old SWANU guys I met with, I remember, was the person who first coined the term “Namibia” as a name for South West Africa. There were a few others, as well. But most Namibians generally favored SWAPO and internationally recognized independence. It was clear that SWAPO was the most popular political force in the country and would win a free and fair election.

During the negotiations, we did meet from time to time with SWAPO, usually on our trips to New York, where we would see Theo Ben Gurirab, their UN representative and “foreign minister.” Sometimes we’d meet the leader of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, who was not very impressive or very effective. But we realized that we would need to keep SWAPO on board if the negotiations were to succeed. That wasn’t really very hard to do since our goal was Namibian independence, which was also their goal. But they didn’t trust us and so they would never have anything positive to say about what we were doing. We counted on the Front Line States to keep SWAPO in line if we ever needed to. I remember that Nujoma would spend most of his time traveling around Africa trying to drum up more support for SWAPO; he didn’t have any clear base of operations. He certainly wasn’t in the field leading any kind of military effort from Angola; he was much more of an armchair general. When we wanted to send him a message on the status of the talks or to consult with him, we would send out a cable to all African posts entitled “Where’s Sam?” Eventually, one of our embassies would come back with a cable saying “he’s here” and we’d be able to get a message to him.

*Q: Who were the South Africans you all were dealing with? Did they see an end game? Well, I mean how were they approaching this?*

EICHER: They were tough cookies. The main one that we dealt with was Pik Botha, who was the foreign minister and he was just a loud, blustery sort of fellow, with a tendency to lecture you. He had been foreign minister for a long time; I had seen him in action when I served in South Africa. He was supposedly one of the more enlightened, young Afrikaners of the Nationalist Party, but with us he put the emphasis on being tough and threatening. He always had a gang of compatriots with him, which would include a lot of senior intelligence people, you know, the head of South African military intelligence and others who would frequently be at the meetings we had with Botha. Maybe he was acting so tough for their sake. Anyway, they were always making threats, “we’re going to invade Angola” and “we’re going to bomb,” and “why don’t you guys understand that we’re doing your work for you by holding off the Soviet menace, so why are you putting pressure on us?” and on and on along those kind of lines. So it was never an easy negotiation with them. And for all that, we knew that Pik Botha was probably more liberal and more inclined to a solution than his boss, P.W. Botha (no relation), the prime minister would have been. We met the South Africans in Pretoria or Cape Town, or once we had a several-day session with them in Cape Verde, which was about half way between Washington and Pretoria. The Cape Verdeans were one of the few African countries that would let the South Africans in, and it was so out-of-the-way that we could have a meeting there with no publicity. Frank Wisner used to meet the Angolans in Cape Verde, as well, sometimes. Anyway, for all the South African blustering, we thought a

deal on Namibia was doable; it wasn't going to be easy but it could be doable. And ultimately, we got it done, but not while I was still working on it.

*Q: You left there when?*

EICHER: I left there in the middle of 1985.

**JOHN HURD WILLETT**  
**International Organizations, African Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1985-1987)**

*John H. Willett was born in Massachusetts in 1941 and received his BA from Kenyon College in 1961. His career has included assignments in Gaborone, Tunis, Bordeaux, Paris, Rome, Strasbourg and Rabat. Richard Jackson interviewed Mr. Willett on December 21, 1998.*

WILLETT: Oh, much more activist, more conceptual and all-encompassing. "Reversal" might be too much, Dick. It was the old policy of "We favor an end to apartheid" suddenly given some meat. The U.S. had always supported a peaceful solution to the Namibia problem, but instead of just wishing, we started doing something about it. Crocker would invite ideas. First of all, he was a scholar and an academic, smart as a whip. He was also an elegant man, in thought, speech and appearance. He had, for better and for worse, almost a French way of addressing people. Of course, he put off a number of congressmen, because he could not brook a fool. On the other hand, Crocker did such a beautiful job that it was hard to get at him. The conservatives loathed him for going too far one way, and the liberals for not going far enough. In my view this means he must have been doing something right. Now, I didn't make those long trips to southern Africa with him because I didn't want to. When this became clear, Chet didn't push it. On the other hand, he did use me for Security Council debates and, as I mentioned, for meetings with Perez de Cuellar.

I heard -- I had already left Washington by this time -- that when the Namibia problem was solved, all the assistant secretaries attending a senior staff meeting in the Secretary's office stood up and applauded when Chet walked into the room. He'd brought back the document, the "peace in our time," the real peace in our time, not the pipedream Chamberlain carried home from Munich. Even now things are holding up. Angola has slipped a bit, but South Africa's staying the course, and so is Namibia. Had it not been for Chet Crocker, things would doubtless be a hell of a lot worse. Arnie Raphael's widow, Nancy Ely Raphael, was, as I mentioned, a key team member.

**ROBERT E. GRIBBIN**  
**Deputy Director East African Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1985-1988)**

*Ambassador Gribbin was born in 1946 in North Carolina and graduated from the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee and SAIS. He served in numerous posts including Bangui, Kigali, Mombasa and Kampala. He was named ambassador to the Central African Republic in 1993 and ambassador to Rwanda in 1996. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.*

*Q: When you left there by 1988, South Africa was not your thing, but what was the general feeling about Chet Crocker and his approach to South Africa? Did you see a change coming, or did you feel it was beginning to make some sense?*

GRIBBIN: He started in 1981, but by 1988, we still didn't know what the outcome would be. The South Africans seemed very entrenched. They received much negative publicity. The Congressional sanctions had at least gotten people's attention and maybe had caused, created, or intensified a sense of isolation, a realization that South Africa was really behind the times. But South Africa did not begin to move out of its fortress stance until 1988 and 1989 with the Namibian agreement. That was a sea change in terms of relationships within southern Africa, because South Africa agreed that if the Cubans left Angola, they would grant independence to Southwest Africa as Namibia. South Africa's security would then be assured by cooperation with neighbors rather than by military dominance of them - which was an important transformation in how they achieved international security. That was the end, if you will, of the Cold War in Africa. Chet Crocker is due credit for helping this happen.

*Q: All this time we were involved in various negotiations down in southern Africa about the situation there, in Namibia and Angola and all that. Did Uganda play any role in this as a friend in the African court or anything?*

GRIBBIN: As in most African countries, including Uganda, we kept the government, the Foreign Ministry and the president's office, abreast of developments, including the evolving situation in Namibia. Sam Nujoma came through Kampala from time to time, and we would always try to make sure that we had had a word with his hosts before he visited.

*Q: He was who?*

GRIBBIN: Nujoma was the head of SWAPO, who became the first president of Namibia. Southern African issues were not foremost in Uganda's sphere of interest. Even so, foreign ministry officials were interested in all of Africa and were interested in new leaders. We got involved a bit in Liberian/Nigerian issues, even over in Uganda, as there was an Anglophone connection to those West African states. Uganda's immediate foreign policy horizons were very much confined to its own neighborhood. Sudan was, of course,

still in flames. Uganda had always provided some covert and some not so covert support to the southern liberation movement.

**EDWARD GIBSON LANPHER**  
**Director of Southern African Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1986-1989)**

*Ambassador Edward Gibson Lanpher was born in 1942 in Richmond Virginia. He earned his undergraduate degree in 1966 from Brown University and was sworn into the Foreign Service later that same year. His first post was as a Rotation Officer in Tel Aviv, Israel but later his Foreign Service career took him to such posts as Gabon, England, Zimbabwe, and Australia before he was appointed Ambassador to Zimbabwe. He was interviewed in June 2002 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: You came back in '86. What did you do?*

LANPHER: I got on a plane one day in Harare and got off the plane the next day in Washington and went right to work as director of Southern African Affairs working for Chet Crocker, the Assistant Secretary.

*Q: You did this from '86 to when?*

LANPHER: To the summer of 1989, three years.

*Q: Southern Africa included what?*

LANPHER: Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Angola, and still not independent Namibia.

*Q: What was the status of...? This was a period of very active negotiation, wasn't it?*

LANPHER: Yes, and great tension. As soon as I got back to Washington, I was in the midst of the great congressional debate on sanctions in South Africa over apartheid. The Reagan administration, which I was working for, was against the sanctions. Congress in its wisdom, and I think probably they were right, thought that the Reagan administration wasn't being tough enough on South Africa, so by God, they were going to be tough on South Africa. So they did pass the sanctions in September 1986. It was a pretty furious debate.

*Q: What did they use you for? I assume you were thrown into the battle.*

LANPHER: Yes. Well, I was writing talking points and going to the Hill. I had a pretty large staff in the Southern Africa office. I had 15 or 18 officers. We were busy. We were

busy the whole three years I was there routinely working a full day on Saturday. Not only did we have the South Africa, we had a civil war in Mozambique, a civil war in Angola, protracted negotiations for Namibia's independence, and our grand plan was also to get the Cubans out of Angola. We had great leadership with Chet Crocker, who many people in Congress and in the press wanted fired, dismissed. But he had a 100% loyal backer in Secretary Shultz, who took a great interest in Southern Africa and backed Chet to the hilt. I used to go up with Crocker to see Shultz probably about once every 10 days and Shultz would hear us out and say, "Keep up the good work." It was kind of the Lord's work. It was not easy and we weren't making much progress until about the fall of 1987. Up until that time, the Soviet Union had been staunchly supportive of Angola and the Cuban involvement in Angola, but we started to get signals in the fall of 1987. This was coincidental with all the changes then taking place in the Soviet Union. The Soviets, until the fall of 1987, used to come to see me in groups of two or three, somebody watching everybody else. These weren't very productive meetings. But in the fall of 1987, a Soviet diplomat called me up and invited me out to lunch one on one. This developed a pattern of every couple of weeks, he'd call up and say, "Let's have lunch." Gradually, I sensed that the Soviets were getting fed up, wanted to cut their losses in Angola and were searching for a way out of it. The Soviet diplomat started saying disparaging things to me about their Angolan allies they'd stuffed to the teeth with money and military equipment and disparaging things in a subtle sort of way about the Cuban involvement there. I told Crocker about this. It jibed with some other signals we were getting. For the rest of '87 and all of '88, we really pushed up the pace of our diplomacy because we were beginning to get results. We had countless meetings of all parties concerned, which was the most disparate grab bag you've ever seen - the Soviets, the Cubans, the Angolans, the Namibians, the South Africans, some of whom we didn't even recognize, like the Angolans and the Cubans. But we sort of chaired these meetings, Chet did. We had them in strange places. We'd do it at the UN in New York. I had a great deputy who was sort of my team leader, Larry Napper, who really was the backbone of the team. It was led by Chet, but I minded the store and Larry went to the meetings. But we'd have meetings in strange places for a good reason. Like Brazzaville. You don't have serious meetings in places like Geneva because people enjoy it too much in Geneva or Paris. So we always chose out of the way places like Brazzaville, where people would come, do business, and then try to get the hell out of town as fast as they could. It worked. We achieved a settlement in getting the Cubans out of Angola, Namibian independence, and the whole package deal of South African withdrawal from Angola as well. The package deal was signed just before Christmas 1988. It was a great success for American diplomacy.

*Q: Was Namibia taken care of?*

LANPHER: Yes. We signed the agreement in December 1988. I guess the elections and formal independence for Namibia came in 1989.

*Q: What was the prognosis for Namibia? Did it have any real future?*

LANPHER: I don't know. I think it's done fairly well. It's a huge area. It's rich in things like diamonds. The northern part of the country is pastoral agriculture. But it has a tiny

population. It's about the same size in population as Botswana, about 1.5 million people in an area the size of maybe bigger than Texas. To a certain extent, when you look at some of the other problem areas around the world, one of the advantages of southern Africa is, it's relatively under populated. Sadly, AIDS is under populating it even more. If you take the example of Zimbabwe, when I left in 1995, the life expectancy was projected to be about 60 and now they're talking about it maybe going to 40 within the next five years. AIDS is the biggest killer of kids under five. As many as 43% of women tested in antenatal clinics test positive.

**GILBERT D. KULICK**  
**UN, Deputy Director, South African Affairs**  
**New York (1987-1989)**

*Gilbert D. Kulick was born in Connecticut in 1942. He attended the University of Texas and graduated from there in 1963. He earned his M.A. from UCLA in 1965. In 1966 he joined the Foreign Service. His posting included Mogadishu, Addis Ababa, Tel Aviv, and Washington D.C. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 29, 1993.*

*U.S. efforts in Namibia, South Africa, & Angola*

KULICK: During most of this period Crocker's agenda involved getting a settlement in Namibia. This is something which, he believed, could be done. He didn't think that we could "abolish" apartheid in our time--or his time, anyway. But he did think--ultimately correctly--that South Africa could be induced to withdraw from Namibia and that Namibia could be brought to independence, in accordance with the UN resolution passed in 1975. In effect, this resolution terminated South Africa's legal right to be in Namibia and mandated that Namibia should become independent, effective immediately. The philosophy [underlying this UN resolution] was that you have to work with the South Africans. They're there primarily for security reasons--or, at least, that is an argument which they make and which has some validity, particularly when Angola, to the North, was full of Cubans and Russians. [Crocker's] approach was that by getting the Cubans to pull out of Angola we could then demand that the South Africans pull out of Namibia--a symmetrical kind of arrangement, whereby Namibia would become a neutral "buffer" between two, non-hostile states. His view had been that, were South Africa to withdraw from Namibia while the Cubans, in effect, were running Angola, the Cubans would then overrun Namibia, and the South Africans would wake up having an outpost of the Soviet Union on their northern border. That is an oversimplification, but that was essentially his view.

**HERMAN J. COHEN**

**NSC Africa Advisor  
Washington, DC (1987-1989)**

*Ambassador Herman J. Cohen was born in New York City. After graduating from The City College of New York, he joined the Foreign Service in 1955. His career has included positions in France, Uganda, Zambia, Zaire, Senegal and Rhodesia. Ambassador Cohen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 15, 1996.*

*Independence of Namibia*

COHEN: Well, Namibia, the independence of Namibia was decreed by a UN resolution back in 1985, Resolution 425 which had been sponsored by the Carter administration. They went out of office and the resolution still had not been implemented. For us it was a very interesting resolution because we wanted to sponsor the independence of Namibia. It was a good thing; it was the last colony in Africa. Secondly we were interested in getting Cuban troops out of Africa. You know our attitude toward Cuba is very negative. To see Cuban troops in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique was not very good, so we wanted to do everything possible. Crocker had the idea of linking the two. He wanted independence for Namibia in return for Cuban troop withdrawal. His plan was resisted by a lot of people especially the left wing in the United States. We shouldn't link the two; we should only be interested in getting Namibia out of the clutches of the South African regime, forget about Angola.

Our line was that it was in the interest of the U.S. for Cuban troops to be taken out of Angola, and also for Namibia to become independent, two big foreign policy objectives. Nobody could argue with that. However, the people who were fervently supporting the UNITA movement asked what is UNITA going to get out of all of this? We said if there are no Cuban troops facing them; it would be easier for UNITA to force the government to negotiate with them. We had wanted to improve the negotiations with a solution for UNITA as part of the package. The Angolan government refused. They said all they would discuss is Cuban troops, South African troops that were also in Angola and Namibia. They would consider that package but not relations with UNITA. We had to keep UNITA supporters stroked. They kept accusing us of wanting to abandon UNITA.

**HARMON E. KIRBY  
Director, US Political Affairs  
Washington, DC (1987-1989)**

*Ambassador Harmon E. Kirby was born in Ohio on January 27, 1934. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in international relations and served in the U.S. Army overseas for two years. His Foreign Service career included positions in Geneva, Madras, New Delhi, Brussels, Khartoum, Rabat, Lome, and Washington, DC. Ambassador Kirby retired*

*on September 29, 1995. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 31, 1995.*

*UN / U.S. involvement in Namibia:*

KIRBY: You almost have to begin by looking at the other side of the equation--there was no way for us to avoid the Namibian question. Those forces in the world which were determined to see the end of colonialism and the liquidation of what had started out first as a South African protectorate under the League of Nations and, later, a South African protectorate under the UN over what was then called South West Africa (Namibia today), had placed Namibia squarely on the international agenda. The African caucus in the UN had, over a long period, made a very considerable issue of getting South Africa out of Namibia. The UN had become seized with Namibia in a very major way in the late 1970's and 1980's when the UN adopted resolutions and set up a structure designed to lead to Namibia's independence. There was a UN committee which was supposed to oversee that process. Those wanting to end the colonial period, and particularly the UN's African caucus kept the heat on South Africa to grant independence and withdraw from Namibia. This became one of the primary foci of African efforts in the UN, and the U.S. had, early on, declared itself in favor of the UN call for independence. And so it was a logical extension of the position we had taken to work with the international community to try to bring about a peaceful transition, because the concern had always been that it might not be peaceful. There had been insurgent activity in Namibia from SWAPO. We had always seen it as in our interest, and had argued that it was in South Africa's long-term interest, to see this link between the South African and its protectorate dissolved so that a peaceful Namibia could take its place in the international community. And that's why all the effort was expended on Namibia.

**ROBERT B. MORLEY**  
**Director, Cuban Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1988-1991)**

*Robert B. Morley was born in Massachusetts in 1935. He received his BA from Central College, Iowa. After joining the State Department in 1962, he served in Norway, Barbados, Warsaw, Caracas, and Quito. Mr. Morley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.*

*Q: What is the role of the director of Cuban Affairs within ARA? We don't have relations with Cuba. Is it special? How would you define it?*

MORLEY: The formal title is not Director for Cuban Affairs. It is Coordinator for Cuban Affairs. It implies that the office coordinates all U.S. government policy and activities with respect to Cuba. Our policy was and remains a very special one, one that is unique or nearly unique in terms of our bilateral relationship with any country. One of the major responsibilities of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs was to ensure that no branch of

government did anything contrary to our policy. That was sort of a negative thing. We had to clear any contacts with the Cubans by any agency. For example, the Cubans participated in the negotiations on Southern Africa (independence for Namibia, end to the civil war in Angola) because they had ground troops actively engaged in military operations in Angola. Whenever talks took place, a representative of the Cuban government participated and thus I would go along and be on the American delegation.

This served two purposes. Number one: to make sure that whatever was accomplished at these meetings did not impact on our bilateral policy toward Cuba. The second thing was that these meetings on other issues provided an opportunity for an exchange with Cuban officials that might not otherwise be possible. It was a low-profile forum. They had somebody on their delegation and there was me on our delegation. At least once during every session of the negotiations on Southern Africa, we would sit down for breakfast or coffee or something and just review the bidding. Not a lot was accomplished in terms of bold new initiatives, but the political climate both in Havana and Washington would not have been supportive of bold new initiatives. We just simply talked, explained, answered questions, defined the limits of what we were capable of doing, and suggested perhaps a modest new initiative. For example, I was able to foster better cooperation on the narcotics and law enforcement fronts by bringing them up on several occasions in this context. If you look at the map, you will quickly see that drug shipments coming up by air from Colombia and even Central America flew through Cuban airspace. Sometimes traffickers would use Cuban air strips to refuel and transfer cargos. What was needed was a working arrangement between US and Cuban law enforcement officials at the operational level, enabling both sides to deal with a situation immediately. A system of direct communications between working level people was established. Over time, this worked better and better. Even during periods of tension between the United States and Cuba in the three years I was there, this cooperation never diminished. It was so clearly in the interests of both sides. The drug trade was anathema to Fidel Castro. He was afraid that it would get a foothold in Cuba and he did not want his people corrupted by narcotics, nor did he want narcotics consumption to be a problem in Cuba. So, in this small but tangible area, cooperation proved possible. It was probably a factor in the trafficker decision to reroute shipments from the Caribbean area through Central America and Mexico. Cuba is a natural barrier. If we could keep aircraft from over flying Cuba, traffickers are denied routes across the Caribbean to southern Florida.

This was just an example of what could be initiated during informal conversations with the Cubans on the fringes of the Southern African negotiations. We never negotiated anything bilateral, but just exchanged ideas.

GEORGE F. WARD, JR.  
Ambassador  
Namibia (1996-1999)

WARD: Namibia was for several decades a German colony. It was placed under South African control by a League of Nations mandate after World War I, having been occupied by a British/South African force during World War I. The League of Nations mandate was taken over by the UN when the UN was created, but South Africa violated the terms of the mandate and the UN's relationship with South Africa deteriorated from 1945. It reached a point at which the UN declared South Africa's role in Namibia to be illegal. That didn't change anything right away, but over time it meant that the UN began to support at least politically the liberation forces in Namibia, the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO), which started as the Ovambo People's Liberation Organization. By the late 1970s, with Cuban forces in Angola, SWAPO began to use Angola as a safe haven. They began to wage a guerrilla war against the South Africans, who turned Namibia into a military bastion for operations in Angola. All along Namibia's northern border, you find these airfields with 10,000 runways, which you usually don't find around Africa. In the early '80s, at the beginning of the Reagan administration, a young Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs named Chester Crocker was appointed. Crocker saw ending the war as his primary task. Chet became a power broker, a mediator, and a protagonist in the Southern African conflict. He negotiated with the South Africans, the Russians, the Cubans, the Angolans, and others in search of an agreement. He worked through a so-called Contact Group of Western nations and succeeded in bringing the conflict to a conclusion. As a result, Namibia became independent on March 21, 1990. By then, the leader of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, was already head of the Namibian constituent assembly. When the assembly approved the new constitution, Nujoma became president. Parliament was elected through free and fair elections. Namibia was launched. When I got there, Namibia was six years old.

#### *Relations with U.S.:*

Namibia was an interesting place. Many of Namibia's leaders had been educated in the U.S. because they were sent to American universities under UN scholarships. For example, the Namibian foreign minister is married to an American. He has a degree from an American university. The Namibian prime minister has a degree from an American university. That was also the case with several others. There was degree of acquaintance and familiarity with the U.S. that was unusual in Africa. At the same time, in the back of their minds, they remembered that we had not supported their liberation cause through much of their struggle. In fact, the U.S. had pursued a policy called "constructive engagement" with South Africa. The Namibians felt that constructive engagement with South Africa meant destructive engagement for them. So, there was both warmth and a little bit of distance. You're correct in saying that the U.S. interests in the area were limited. Our interest was in stability, in keeping Namibia in the democratic column in Africa, where they were not many countries on that side. When I went there, Namibia was one of the two or three democracies on the continent of Africa. Namibia was a place where there was a free press, a free judiciary, where the government regularly lost cases in court and accepted defeat, where the press criticized the government and was not shut down. Over time, unfortunately, the trends in Namibia did not develop in a positive way in any of those areas. I saw increasing attempts to intimidate the press, attempts by the

executive to stretch the constitution. But all in all, Namibia remained a democracy, a place where people lived without fear of the government.

The three U.S. interests that I thought paramount were, first, preserving Namibia as a democracy, second, promoting economic development and trade with the U.S., and, third, helping Namibia make a positive contribution to regional security. There were some significant opportunities for American business. These included contracts for offshore oil and natural gas exploration and production. The Namibian government was also very interested in American water desalination technology, and concluded a deal with one U.S. Company. We were also active in helping Boeing sell a 747 aircraft to the Namibian national airline, which had a decent business flying passengers and freight to and from Europe. There were some power projects in the northern and southern parts of the country that were of interest to companies such as General Electric, Raytheon, and Fluor. In addition, there was the prospect of American participation in the Namibian fishing industry. Americans were also very influential in the diamond trade in Namibia, and the country's large uranium mine, controlled by Rio Tinto, and had long-term supply contracts with U.S. power utilities. Thus, even though the absolute amount of trade with the U.S. was small, it had several components and was growing.

In the area of regional security, we focused on peacekeeping and de-mining. One of our purposes in training Namibians in de-mining was to put together an indigenous African military de-mining capability that could be used on peacekeeping missions. The Namibian President and Defense Minister were enthusiastic about this project and supported it wholeheartedly. We even talked about establishing a Southern African de-mining academy in Namibia. We were also successful in gaining Namibian participation in a few U.S.-sponsored regional peacekeeping exercises. In one instance, Namibia hosted units from all over Southern Africa for a training course on combat medical care. Between de-mining missions and peacekeeping training, we had an in-country presence of U.S. Special Forces for more than half of my time in Namibia.

I should not leave out mention of one tragedy. On September 13, 1997, a C-141 cargo aircraft of the U.S. Air Force delivered a team of Special Forces and several tons of de-mining equipment to Windhoek. The aircraft took off for the return flight to the U.S. on that same day. Tragically, the plane collided at 39,000 feet off the coast of Namibia with a German Luftwaffe aircraft that was en route to Cape Town. Despite a large-scale search and rescue effort involving many aircraft from the U.S. and other countries and as many as 200 USAF personnel, no survivors were found from either aircraft.

#### *Land/Resources:*

There are two deserts in Namibia, which is twice the size of California. The Kalahari Desert is shared with Botswana and South Africa. The Kalahari Desert is a scrub desert. There is the occasional tree and grass. Then there is the Namib Desert, which is a typical sand desert. It is one of the most stable geological formations in the world. It hasn't changed in millions of years. That desert runs right down to the sea. Windhoek, the capital, is located on the large central plain, which is 5,000-6,000 feet high. The plain is a

dry savanna, which also looks a lot like a desert to the uninitiated. It's a country with quite a few resources. There are diamonds, natural gas, and uranium. They have a large fishing industry. They have a coastline with a couple of interesting German-flavored towns on it. The population is under two million. If the Namibians can keep their act together on the economic side and maintain a free political system, they could have a bright future.

*Government performance:*

I soon discovered that one of the highest priority issues for the country was getting rid of land mines and unexploded ordnance left over from the war. This was an area in which the U.S. military could help. With the help of the U.S. Army, especially the Special Forces, and funding from the Department of State, we pulled together enough resources for a comprehensive de-mining program that was accompanied by a thorough public affairs effort on the dangers of land mines and unexploded ordnance. We worked closely with the Namibian Defense Ministry and the Namibian Defense Force. In both cases, I was surprised and pleased by their effectiveness and professionalism. I found working with them to be quite easy. They delivered on promises.

I remembered the other day in the wake of these terrorist attacks that every year we were asked by the State Department to urge the Namibian government to ratify ten terrorism covenants that had been agreed on internationally. Every year, I would go in to see the Foreign Minister along with allied ambassadors and make a strong case on the importance of ratifying the agreements forthwith. He would promise that they would do it right away. The next year, we would go and do the same thing again because nothing had been done. I checked just the other day with my successor and found that they never got around to ratifying the covenants. So, other parts of the government were less efficient than the Defense Ministry.

*Basic services:*

When you visit Windhoek, you see a First World city. In fact, Windhoek is amazingly clean. There is hardly any litter. They have a tradition of good mayors and officials who care about the city. They have events like Citizens Cleanup Day. Even the shantytown areas of Katatura, which was the "township" for Blacks during the days of Apartheid - are supplied with basic services. Potable water was available not only in Windhoek, but in most towns throughout the country. There were reasonable standards of healthcare. Services were delivered. Unfortunately, the healthcare system is breaking down under the pressure of the AIDS epidemic, which is just overwhelming the country. The school system needs work because standards of education for the Black majority under Apartheid were disgraceful. Mathematics, for example, was intentionally taught poorly if at all to Blacks. We had major assistance programs for elementary and secondary education. We were trying to help the Namibians transition from a system based on rote learning to more modern standards. Progress was slow, but there was a great hunger for learning throughout the population.

### *Relations with South Africa:*

One of Mandela's first acts that earned him a lot of gratitude in Namibia was to give Walvis Bay to Namibia without asking any payment in return. Walvis Bay was a South African enclave on the Namibian coast. It was a port and home to a significant fishing fleet. Walvis Bay had never been Namibian. It had been historically an offshoot of the Cape colony. So, in giving it to Namibia, Mandela was really extending the hand of friendship. And giving it debt-free was quite extraordinary. In the background, however, there was a love-hate relationship between Namibia and South Africa. Namibia was dependent upon South Africa in many ways. It was in a customs union with South Africa, the Namibian dollar was kept at par with the South African Rand, and South African farms supplied Namibia with foodstuffs. Namibia was self-sufficient only in meat. Because of the linkage with the Rand, Namibia can't exercise its own monetary policy except to a very limited extent. A lot of Namibians go to university in South Africa. President Nujoma of Namibia was not particularly close to Nelson Mandela, although he respected him. Mandela was not his type. Unfortunately, President Nujoma in recent years has decided to emulate Robert Mugabe rather than Mandela, a bad choice in several ways.

### *AIDS:*

When I got to Namibia, the disease was just beginning to make significant inroads. Because of the way USAID works, it is very difficult for an ambassador to access foreign assistance funds rapidly for emergency purposes. The problems of violence against women and children and the HIV/AIDS epidemic were closely linked. We convinced the State Department to let us use our human rights fund to launch a multimedia campaign on violence against women and children. In fact, Lou Mazel won the State Department's first Human Rights Award for that program. I supported and continued it after Lou left. The Namibian government was inactive, virtually inert, on the HIV/AIDS issue, and HIV/AIDS sufferers were being ostracized. The Namibians were in denial with regard to HIV/AIDS. The newspapers carried many obituaries of young and middle-aged people each week, but no one was reported as dying of AIDS. They either died "suddenly" or "after a long illness." HIV/AIDS was sometimes referred to as the "wasting disease." HIV/AIDS sufferers were shunned by their neighbors in Windhoek and would return to their home villages. There, they would again find rejection and isolation. People were dying of AIDS under trees out in the bush. Amidst all this, one young woman had the courage to admit that she was HIV positive. She was a very articulate young woman. Her name was Emma. As part of our human rights campaign, we launched an effort against the ostracism of HIV/AIDS sufferers. We made a film called "Emma's Story," which made the point that HIV/AIDS positive people were still alive and that they could contribute to society. That film was quite a success. It was placed in every Namibian school. It helped improve the quality of life for at least some HIV/AIDS sufferers. Despite our urging, however, the government still basically did nothing. The president's son, according to well-founded rumors, died of AIDS. The president never spoke out on the issue. He never talked about the need to use condoms. Until very late in the game, he

never talked about even the desirability of abstinence. By then, upwards of 25 percent of the sexually active population was HIV-positive.

The health authorities first of all had limited means. The best hospitals in Namibia are private hospitals, but few Black AIDS victims have the means to pay. The public hospitals were overwhelmed. The health minister told me in late 1998 that all the resources she had for important purposes such as malaria control and polio vaccination were being used for care of HIV/AIDS patients. Namibia had a very difficult malaria problem in the north, with over 400,000 cases annually. People were dying of malaria even though effective treatment was readily available at relatively low cost. The government just did not have the money.

In Namibia truck drivers and other travelers spread it. The Caprivi Strip (the part of northern Namibia that is shaped like an arrow going from west to east) is serviced by a hard-surfaced road that has become an important international transportation artery. In large part because of the presence of so many truckers and other travelers, the Caprivi Strip region has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the country. Traditional customs and practices have also played a role in the spread of the disease. For example, men often refuse to use condoms, believing that the latter detract from their manhood. Traditional healers have been known to share HIV-tainted blood. In other cases, traditional healers have allegedly told HIV-positive men that if they had sex with young virgins they would be cured. Such advice resulted in a wave of rapes of very young girls and even infants, increasing the problem of violence against women and children. We picked that up as one of the themes in our campaign against violence.

#### *Involvement in the Congo:*

Namibia has a permanent water shortage. Eventually, it will be necessary to acquire more water either through desalination or other means. Desalination is very expensive and involves reliance on western technologies. Nujoma saw the Congo as a possible source of water. His grand plans for diverting rivers in Angola and the Congo had only a loose connection with real possibilities. Nujoma also saw the Congo as a source of mineral wealth and as a market for goods that could be imported through Namibia and transported along Namibia's excellent road system. Like so many others, Nujoma was fascinated with the idea of getting a piece of the action from mines in the Congo. In the latter dream, Zimbabwean President Mugabe, who acquired extensive personal interests in the Congo, influenced him. At first, this exploitation of natural resources was done very quietly. One only heard rumors, which sounded increasingly credible.

We counseled Nujoma and any other Namibian official who would listen against military involvement. The single person who seemed to have doubts was the civilian Minister of Defense. His views were overridden by officials in Nujoma's State House and by the uniformed military. By the time I left, however, the Namibians had begun to suffer military deaths from combat and accidents. A UN helicopter had crashed with Namibians on it, a Namibian helicopter had crashed, and they also lost some infantry soldiers. There were about ten dead in all. The state funeral seemed to turn public and official opinion

against the war. The government realized that it had made a big mistake by getting involved, but it also wanted to save face. They didn't want to just run away. So, even though they realized they had made a mistake, they stayed in the Congo for more than a year afterwards, albeit avoiding combat to the extent possible. Their dialogue with us about ending the war became much more productive.

*1999 UN Security Council membership:*

Another rough spot was connected with Namibia's election in 1998 as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. We supported Namibia's candidacy because we generally support the nominee of the Organization of African Unity for Africa's seats on the Council. Namibia was elected in the fall of 1998 for a term beginning in January 1999. When the State Department asked me, drawing on my UN experience, how I thought Namibia would vote, I said I thought we had trouble ahead. They had a very close friendship with Cuba, close relations with Libya, although there was no Libyan embassy, and a strong historical friendship with Russia as a successor to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union and Cuba had given them a lot of aid during the liberation struggle. So, on issues that mattered to terrorism, Iraq, and others thought they would be a thorn in our side. In fact, that's exactly what happened. My last months there were spent trying to persuade the Namibian government to consider some of these issues a little more objectively and not to vote by knee jerk.

Unfortunately, just after I returned from post, they took a position against the Security Council Resolution authorizing NATO intervention in Kosovo. They did that for a truly strange reason, basing their position on their experience with the mini-rebellion in the Caprivi Strip. I predicted they would do that, and it turned out to be the case. They saw Kosovo as a breakaway province from Yugoslavia, and therefore a negative example for those in the Caprivi Strip who wanted to break away from Namibia. Talk about all politics being local! Their behavior on the Security Council was really erratic, motivated by idiosyncratic factors and their historical friendships. I was gone for most of their tenure on the Security Council, but the U.S.-Namibian relationship on the Council was not a happy one, despite a later visit to the country by Richard Holbrooke.

*Caprivi Strip Rebellion:*

The people in the Caprivi Strip are ethnically different from the other ethnic groups in northern Namibia. They are probably more closely related to some of the tribes in Zimbabwe and Zambia than they are to most Namibians. In addition, the people in the Caprivi Strip have been historically friendly to UNITA, the Angolan rebels. Although I don't think the history of this will necessarily ever be written, it looks the rebels were assisted by UNITA and perhaps by some people in Botswana. Namibia's relations with Botswana were not always very friendly. Of course, the idea of an independent Caprivi Strip is ludicrous. The Strip is totally landlocked, and was created by colonial edict at the Conference of Berlin in 1884 because the Germans wanted to have a channel of communication between their colonies on the western coast of Africa and those on the eastern coast...there is no African ethnic reason for its existence as a separate entity.

The rebellion itself was small-time stuff. A unit of insurgents established an encampment and ended up killing some Namibians whom they had forcibly recruited. The Namibian police and army got involved, martial law was declared, and 16 people were killed. A very promising tourism industry in the north was wiped out. Tourism is very important to Namibia's future, but few tourists are willing to expose themselves to armed conflict.

Also around this time the Namibian government agreed to allow the Angolan army, which has its bases on the coast in the west of the country, to use roads in Namibia in order to attack UNITA bases in the central part of Angola. The road system in Angola had basically been destroyed in decades of conflict. That resulted in UNITA soldiers coming into Namibia to mine the roads. So, just about the time that we were hoping to declare Namibia land mine-safe, new mines were being laid. Fortunately, the number of new mines was rather small. Just as I was leaving post, we pulled the Peace Corps out of the northern part of Namibia because of the danger. Thus, Namibia's democratic and economic prospects began to fade a bit, almost solely because of poor leadership and decision-making. One of Nujoma's responses to his new difficulties was a half-hearted attempt to stifle Namibia's free press. Unfortunately, I have heard more recently that he is going after the press with more conviction.

*End of reader*