

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

WILLIAM H. LEWIS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 24th of October 1996, and this is an interview with William H. Lewis. Bill and I are old friends. This is for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Bill, let's start sort of ab initio, let's start at the beginning. Could you tell me when, where you were born, and something about your family?

LEWIS: I was born in New York, grew up in Tucson, Arizona, and the reason was my father, a mining engineer with Anaconda Copper -- but his background was even more, how shall I put it, adventuresome. He actually was Welsh by origin, and grew up in South Africa. During World War I, serving under General Smuts, he helped chase a famous German general through East Africa ... never did find the fellow, but came down with malaria. And then, after the war, served as a British District Officer in Nigeria and, later, in Sudan. He subsequently returned to South Africa and was awarded a degree in Mining Engineering. In due course, he migrated to the United States and was offered a position with Anaconda Copper.

Q: Where did he meet your mother?

LEWIS: He met her in New York when he was at a conference, and they became engaged, and in due course, married.

Q: Could you talk a little about your education, growing up in Arizona? When were you born, by the way?

LEWIS: I was born June 4, 1928; this was the period when Charles Lindbergh became well known. I was little known, but subsequently determined to rectify that. I went through school in Tucson, attended Amphitheatre High School, the University of Arizona, briefly, but then I came East to get married, and matriculated at George Washington University; also took degrees and studied at Johns Hopkins University, the School of Advanced International Studies, and went to Oxford for a period of time -- for a bit of "seasoning" and get Arizona out of my system -- and then returned and finished up with a doctorate degree at American University in Middle Eastern and African Studies.

Q: What brought you to Middle Eastern and African Studies?

LEWIS: Family heritage; my father's background and interests. He had also served during World War I under General Allenby in the Middle East, and was a bit of an Arabist himself. As a result of this, he provided all the romantic stories one does to offspring about the great Middle Eastern Arab world, and so forth. So it was all part of family tradition.

Q: When did you get your Ph.D.?

LEWIS: I was awarded a Ph.D. in June 1960; it was based upon the pure research I did under a Ford Foundation fellowship in North Africa living among Arab tribes in Morocco.

Q: Could we talk a little about your thesis, or your dissertation?

LEWIS: The dissertation was an effort to evaluate political dynamics in a tribal community. It was a study of a clan group called the Zaire tribe; they were originally of Arab ancestry. They arrived in Morocco in the 11th century, and became Berberized; they, over time, reversed the usual historic process. Usually the Berber population, the original inhabitants, were the ones who became Arabized by way of culture, language, and religion -- but here was an Arab tribe, a very small minority group, an offshoot of the famous Zemmour tribe doing the opposite. By becoming Berberized, they had scandalized their fellow Arabs; in disgrace, they retreated as a tribal community into a narrow gorge area called the Khorifla-Gorge. The Gorge was an effective defensive redoubt. There they became essentially shepherds and farmers. What attracted me to study them was the reversal of cultural assimilation processes. Why an Arab tribe would turn toward Berber culture? They, however, became influential in Moroccan politics after independence in 1956, and one of their leaders was appointed senior minister in the government of Sultan Mohammed V, Mohammed ben Youssef, who to this day, is regarded as the George Washington of the Moroccan struggle for independence.

So they were a fascinating group, and what I was trying to do was to determine what shaped their attitudes, their opinions, in terms of government, both local, regional, and national, and what their aspirations were in the post-independence period. The title of the dissertation was "The Jackal-Eaters of Romani" -- they were jackal-eaters, which also was forbidden food according to Arab culture and tradition. The full title was "The Jackal-Eaters of Romani: A Study in Tribal Politics".

Q: In 1960 you got your doctorate; what did you do with it?

LEWIS: I put it on the wall! No, I had actually taken leave of the Department of State to do this work; I had been in the Department of State for about five years, in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, then under the direction of Allen Evans, and I decided that if you were going to do a good job in the intelligence and the research field, you should go on and get a Ph.D. So I was approved a leave of absence once I was awarded a Ford Foundation Overseas Fellowship in 1958.

Q: Well, then let's go back to the Department of State when you entered. You entered about 1955, would that be?

LEWIS: 1952.

Q: '52. You went into INR, Intelligence and Research; what area of INR?

LEWIS: I specialized in North African affairs, and that's why the Department agreed to a leave of absence to work abroad on a dissertation. Since I was specializing in the region where I was going to be doing the study, they thought it was worthwhile, improving one's skills in Arabic and French, etc.

Q: Was your concentration on North Africa, was that basically the Maghreb?

LEWIS: Basically, it was the Maghreb, which in Middle Eastern Studies Program terms embraced Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, but my area of responsibility in due course extended eastward to include Libya, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somaliland. So it was sort a northern stretch; the only territory that was excluded was Egypt, which fell within the Near Eastern Branch.

Q: This is, of course, an interesting time because Arab nationalism was just beginning to get on its feet, and Nasser was coming along. While you were in INR, what was the view of whether North African and Arab nationalism?

LEWIS: It was directed towards Arab nationalism in '52; pan-Arab nationalism came later with the rise of Gamal Abdul Nasser, which would be 1954-1956 but he didn't really assume supreme importance in Egypt until 1957, after the Suez invasion the previous year. It was General Naguib who was in charge of the Egyptian government in the initial post-1952 coup period.

In 1952, you must remember, the Cold and Korean Wars were upon us. The U.S. had developed an approach to the Maghreb which was called the Defense in Depth strategy; this was developed shortly after the formation of NATO. The belief in military circles was that we really couldn't defend the narrow waist of Western Europe; we just didn't have the military manpower and materiel. Therefore, we needed to have a geographic fallback position. What was adopted was this Defense in Depth strategy, which was predicated on our experiences in World War II, the strategy being one in which we, together with the British and the French, would build military bases in North Africa. Consonant with that strategy, for example, we negotiated the Caffrey-Bidault Agreement in 1951, which permitted us to construct four Strategic Air Command bases in Morocco, plus access to a Naval Air Facility called, in those days, Port Lyautey, but is now Kenitra, and also an intelligence collection station, or listening station, at Bounadel. In addition, we constructed the famous air base, Wheelus Field in Libya.

For their part, the British and the French, consonant with strategy, strengthened their military positions in the area. For example, the French built or added to facilities in Morocco and Tunisia, where they had a protectorate agreement, as well as in Algeria, which was regarded as part of metropolitan France. The British built military facilities in Cyrenaica in the eastern province of Libya, together with strengthening military facilities that they had available to them in the Suez Canal area.

Well, military necessity shaped our attitudes and our policy with respect to Arab nationalism during this period. By 1951-52, in the case of Morocco, then Sultan Mohammed V, was publicly aligning himself with the Istiglal Party and other independence minded nationalist movements there, thus outraging the French. In due course, in 1953, he was deposed and sent, along with his young son, Hassan, the present ruler of Morocco, and his young sister, to Madagascar in exile. The U.S. government, quite frankly, didn't utter a word of protest, even though the removal of the Sultan was the product of blatant French machinations. If you want to go into that I can give you the whole background, in due course.

Q: Well, I don't think we need to on this, but looking at it from the INR point of view and the State Department, I mean, our role was passive.

LEWIS: Well, the U.S. policy was passive. INR itself was divided: those of us, myself included, on the North African side, tended to be somewhat more sympathetic to local aspirations for independence, whereas those in the European section of the Bureau tended to support the French and British positions in the early 1950s. But both of our disagreements counted for little since overriding strategic interest and high policy were determined elsewhere. The intelligence community might look and examine nationalist movements, their leadership, and regional dynamics, but that didn't mean that its assessments could help shape policy on contentious issues.

Q: Well, was there a lot of conversation and talk in INR about 'we should be doing this;' or 'we should be doing that'? I mean, or was there a general sort of understanding that well, defense of Europe comes first?

LEWIS: You had a situation which was essentially schizoid; good researchers, intelligence officers, were continually trying to collect information on leaders, key leaders of nationalist movements, their base of support, and so on, leaving to Defense Department officials the responsibility of looking at military requirements and military threats. Our collection and evaluation efforts were basically directed towards the strengths or weaknesses of the nationalist movements, where their domestic support came from, and their external sources of support. For example, Moscow was providing some material assistance. With the rise of Nasser, his government became a significant channel, providing substantial amounts of assistance. External influence was accorded high priority and this was the principal subjects we were tracking at that time.

Q: This is before the Wriston Program. Could you talk about how INR was constituted, and who were the people, the ones you were dealing with?

LEWIS: INR basically consisted of three types of specialists. The first group in that early period were recruits from the World War II OSS, who hadn't entered the CIA but became part of the INR "Old Guard". The second group consisted largely of young fellows, such as myself, who were research scholars and area specialists. We came in through the Civil Service. And then you had Foreign Service Officers who were assigned to the Bureau for brief tours; most were specialists who tended to regard their period of service in INR as a sort of banishment or exile since they were out of the policy mainstream. Most of the latter I encountered regarded INR assignment as temporary captivity.

Q: You were dealing with this North African segment from when you came in '52; when did you leave?

LEWIS: I took my leave, in terms of the doctoral period, in 1958, and then came back early in 1960.

Q: And in early '60, where were you?

LEWIS: I was reassigned to INR at that time, but then in due course I came under the tutelage of a gentleman, Ambassador Julius Holmes, of World War II fame, and became his protégée. Julius felt that I should spend a bit of time in the Department of Defense; he called it "seasoning", as I recall, political/military seasoning, and through his exertions, I spent three years in the Policy Planning staff of ISA in the Office of Secretary of Defense, working with some people who are well known these days: Morton Halperin; Leslie Gelb; Reggie Bartholomew, currently our ambassador to Rome, who was himself a young scholar and specialist; and several others.

Q: How did you get attached to Julius Holmes?

LEWIS: It was as a result of a special task force that was organized at the behest of the Secretaries of State and Defense called the State-Defense Policies Study Group, called upon to deal with contemporary issues. Ambassador Holmes was appointed as head of the group and directed to conduct an in-depth analysis of political trends in the Middle East and North Africa. I was selected by Secretary Rusk to be the person representing the State Department on the North African area. The fellow who was dealing with the Near East was Curtis Moore, who was later killed in Khartoum -- an old friend of mine. At any rate, we worked together for about a year, and apparently Julius Holmes found me irreverent but responsible in my dealings with the military, and he felt that I would have a useful career in pol-mil affairs if I transferred out of INR. Tom Hughes was then the Director of INR, and he was somewhat opposed but as I say, I fell under the spell of Julius Holmes, and I went along with career guidance.

Q: While you were on this board under Holmes, what was your impression of the planning from the Defense Department; was it a them-and-us type thing, or more collegial, or how...

LEWIS: The State-Defense group, the group with which I was associated, had previously done a study on Latin America, another on East Asia, and this was followed by a study on future U.S. basing requirements overseas. The basing study was done at the request of the Secretary of Defense. I arrived on board as the basing study was coming to conclusion -- it was important from the military perspective to get State Department input, because State would be responsible for helping negotiate access rights and status of forces agreements. My impression when I arrived, and throughout the period that I was with the study group it was collegial nature of the effort. There was very little rancor or animosity, and I thought the team worked very well together. As a matter of fact, I think today the government would be well served by reconstituting such joint efforts.

Q: Were there any particular issues that you dealt with that you can recall?

LEWIS: Across the geographic board, Curtis and I were covering all of the Middle East as well as North Africa, in which issues such as arms transfer policies, how to deal with the rising Arab nationalism in the area, how to deal essentially with the ongoing conflict

between Israel and the Arabs -- not just the Palestinians -- and one of the equally challenging issues, the future of post-Haile Selassie. What's likely to happen in that ancient empire called Ethiopia when Haile Selassie "shuffled off this mortal coil." So there were a whole interlinking skein of issues that we were covering. To provide depth to our analysis, we traveled widely. We visited with a number of the military CINCs responsible for the Middle Eastern and North African affairs, with EUCOM, and several others. Particularly constructive and supportive were General Lemnitzer in Europe and Ambassador Bruce in London, both personal friends of Ambassador Holmes. The result was a finely tuned policy report.

Q: How did we view arms sales to Israel and to the Arab world at that time, because this is before the '67 war when things changed.

LEWIS: Generally, we tended to be rather restrained and moderate in terms of sales to both parties. This changed in the wake of the '67 war; President Johnson decided the U.S. should tilt our arms sales policy in favor of Israel, and of course, many of the old Middle Eastern hands in the Department were pretty much opposed to this, but such was the Presidential decision, and that was it. Unfortunately after '67 there was a dramatic tilt, one that continues to this day.

Q: But while you were there, it was on a....

LEWIS: The basic position was that there should be a parity of effort, in other words, we should do as best we could. The problem you had at that time, in the early and mid '60s, was that Nasser was not viewed as one of our friendly Arab leaders in the Middle East. He had turned toward the Soviet Union for his arms supplies and force training, but then we had others who were requesting assistance -- for example, the Moroccans were requesting military equipment, the Tunisians under Habib Bourguiba, before he was dispatched by Qadhafi, King Idris and his government were looking for military equipment and other forms of military assistance. So one could be fairly even handed until you got closer and closer to Israel, then you had a little problem as to where and how you would begin to deal with Arab government requests. We were very favorably disposed toward Jordan; King Hussein was regarded as a friendly Arab leader. And, of course, Turkey, as a member of NATO, was a non-Arab beneficiary of our military aid programs.

Q: Did we view Nasser as a Soviet tool at this point, or someone who was taking advantage of the largesse of the Soviets? How did we view him?

LEWIS: Well, during the Dulles period -- the 1950s -- he was viewed by some policy makers as an implacable foe of the West, not just the United States; this despite what happened in Suez in 1956. You have a carryover of this perspective into the 1960s as well, particularly with the increasing number of Soviet Mediterranean Fleet visits to Alexandria and the large number of Soviet military advisers practicing their "magic" in Egypt. Throughout, there was a tendency on the part of some people in our government to regard Nasser as a Soviet surrogate. Others who were somewhat more sophisticated,

would tend to view him as an important, significant independent nationalist leader, but one capable of a lot of mischief, as we witnessed in Yemen, where poison gas was used by Egyptian forces.

So you encountered divided opinion, some inclined to be more balanced in appraising Nasser in terms of his constructive aspirations, others harboring a negative assessment in terms of his close ties with Moscow and his misadventures in Yemen and elsewhere.

Q: What about farther down in the Horn of Africa; I was trying to figure out who was going to replace Haile Selassie. I had the INR Horn of Africa desk '60-'61.

LEWIS: When the coup attempt occurred....

Q: It was a fake coup, but I was trying to figure out who was going to succeed this guy, and the first reports are essentially 1913, and they kept, on a yearly basis....

LEWIS: The Emperor had a favorite son who got killed in an automobile accident,...

Q: Yes, Duke of Harrar.

LEWIS: That's right. When the Imperial bodyguard sought to overthrow the Emperor-- he was traveling abroad at the time, in Latin America -- one of the remaining sons aligned himself with the bodyguard, in the midst of the coup. As I recall, when we helped to rush the Emperor back to Addis Ababa, the disloyal son was at the airport. Selassie deplaned, looked at his son, and said, "You know, I wish you weren't here." In other words, "I wish you were dead, get out of my sight." The Emperor survived on the throne until '74, so he had a pretty good run, some of our better known dictators go.

Q: While you were looking at this, did the problem in Algeria raise its head, of what to do and all?

LEWIS: Yes, the Algerian problem became something of a very real policy concern during this period for several reasons. One, King Hassan had established very cordial ties with us. His father, Mohammed V, died under strange circumstances in 1960. Hassan ascended the throne, and became closely associated with us. He had sent Moroccan troops to Congo, now present day Zaire, at our urging during the 1960s crisis; he was clearly serving as an intermediary in Arab discussions with the Israelis. So we were favorably disposed towards him. In addition, despite the demand that we remove ourselves from the Strategic Air Command bases in Morocco, there was a gentleman's understanding that we could keep some military supplies lodged in several of them, so long as we did not provoke public awareness about our presence.

So King Hassan was a leader with whom we shared a community of interest, and who we were inclined to support during this early 1960s period. Algeria emerged from its traumatic struggle for independence in the summer of 1962, and then experienced a near-

civil war by mid-1962. Colonel Houari Boumedienne rushed his 25,000 troops to Algiers, captured the city, and declared Ahmed ben Bella President of Algeria.

Well, the Moroccans became very much concerned: who was this Boumedienne? What's happening in neighboring Algeria? There were border difficulties between the two countries, and while they had pledged during the Algerian struggle for independence that, once independence was achieved, political unification would follow; it never materialized, obviously. But the Moroccans felt that while the French were in charge of Algeria they had stolen Moroccan territory, and in '63 a really bloody border war broke out between Morocco and Algeria over a series of oases called "the War of the Sands". I remember State people getting very nervous -- were the Moroccans going to get defeated and with what consequences? And at this time, ben Bella aligned himself with the Soviets, then Col. Boumedienne, who was his Defense Minister, toppled ben Bella in '65. Because of the poor performance of his troops during the "War of the Sands" turned to the Soviet Union for additional military equipment. Ben Bella himself had visited Cuba and aligned Algeria with Castro, proclaiming that Algeria was going to become the international headquarters for national liberation movements. So clearly, we and the Moroccan government were very concerned about Algeria and what the dickens was happening there.

Q: How were you viewing these concerns; did you feel we had sound analysis of what was happening, did we have any policy?

LEWIS: We had sound analysis regarding what was happening in the region. We were called upon to provide our analysis and conclusions; on two occasions, for example, I was dispatched with a certain general, whose name I should not provide you, to Morocco, for meetings in Rabat to assess the "Algerian threat to Morocco"; the Moroccans were very agitated and feared that they might be subject to a major military collision. We were seeking to calm them down. We were dealing at the time with General Oufkir then security chief to King Hassan. In the early '70s the military tried to get rid of Hassan....

Q: This is the famous birthday party?

LEWIS: Yes, the King's birthday party, where cadets attacked the Royal palace, located just outside of Rabat. The king had hidden himself away in the bathroom and secured access to a phone, and was rescued. But the more famous incident was the following year, when he was returning from his annual vacation in France aboard his 727 airplane. Lo and behold, three American-supplied F-5 aircraft attacked the 727, and riddled it. It shows the combat proficiency of the pilot training we had provided the Moroccans that they failed to take the plane down, with the King onboard. He engaged in a ruse, had the pilot say that the Monarch was dead in the passenger cabin, and couldn't the crew be spared. The F-5 pilots agreed, permitted the plane to land at Rabat-Sale airport. Out popped the King, and accused Oufkir of masterminding the effort to kill him. It was reported in the press a few days later that Oufkir had committed suicide -- reportedly, he had 14 bullet holes in his body. It stretches credulity to believe he had committed suicide, but one never knows: if you couldn't down a 727....

But to get back to the main point, we had two annual meetings with Oufkir exchanging evaluations of the nature of the Algerian threat. Basically, our assessment was far from alarmist when compared with that presented by the general. These exchanges reflected a close relationship, a very close relationship.

Q: You were in ISA (International Security Affairs) from when to when?

LEWIS: I went into ISA in 1966 and stayed there until 1969; I covered the Middle East and Africa for Mort Halperin, McNaughton, and Paul Warnke -- the latter after McNaughton tragically died in an airplane crash, Paul Warnke then was appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. It was a pleasure to work with Paul and his Deputy Ralph Earle who is currently the Deputy Director of ACDA. He's the son of the former governor of Pennsylvania. It was a well-knit, congenial group, a good mix of military and civilian experts.

Q: How did the mix during this '66-'69 period, how did you find working in the military? Was there a difference?

LEWIS: The culture is very different, and obviously the learned doctrine that helps guide policy -- the history of war, military strategy -- you needed to become familiar with all of it. You also needed to have some familiarity with force structure analysis. That's helpful when you're doing arms transfer programs, which I was assigned later on, for purposes of orientation and training. It was a different world, but a professionally productive world to live in, highly structured, rigorous in terms of analytical approach. When it came to military questions and related policy issues, we in State just didn't have enough people with the experience, knowledge of this culture; the military and civilian professionals could run circles around most State Department people.

Q: You had this Middle East area, and the '67 War came, when Israel looked like it was on the ropes at one point, and then which turned into the Six Day War, and won out, and there was a major tilt towards Israel as far as arms supply and all that. How did this hit our military?

LEWIS: It was an interesting reaction from my perch. One, the military was dazzled by the Israeli military performance, and as a result, they spent a great deal of time with counterparts in the Israeli Defense Staff looking at Israeli war fighting strategy, the tactics, trying as well to understand the preparedness deficiencies on the Arab side.

From the military intelligence point of view, the principal areas of interest were the doctrines and tactics the Egyptians had absorbed from the Russians, and how were they applied or misapplied. It was part of a learning process -- especially a need to collect battle assessment material. But also, to repeat, there was a genuine admiration for what the Israelis were able to accomplish against three major foes virtually simultaneously: the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Jordanians. The respect was palpable.

When it came, however, to the question of arms policy, that was more a civilian type of question; the military could obviously offer advice and suggestions, but the decision was largely made by civilian authorities. Even here, divided counsel was evident. Some policy makers in the Pentagon were leery about tilting arms supply policy too heavily in favor of Israel. They felt that there would be a negative reaction in the Arab world where we needed access to bases, and this could cause unanticipated difficulties.

You may recall that in '67, just as the Egyptian forces were suffering this humiliating defeat, Egyptian radio said that the Israelis were not supermen, that in actual fact, much of the war had been conducted by the American Air Force flying out of North African bases and elsewhere. Well, our DOD officials acknowledged the big lie could gain credibility in terms of arms aid for Israel; this could lead to a lessening of support for us in terms of access to bases and special relationships. And this actually occurred. When Qadhafi, for example, seized power in September of '69, he immediately called for negotiations for the withdrawal of American and British bases in Libya, and we felt compelled to accede.

Q: Was there a problem later after the '73 war; there were screams about the supplies we were giving to the Israelis, that they were drawing down on our stocks for our wars; was this a problem after the '67 war, or did the military feel that the supplies to Israel could go through without any particular....

LEWIS: There were no major problems with the general notion. We had difficulty with which item of equipment would be provided; the Israelis were constantly pressing for the most advanced American military technology and equipment. The U.S. military tended to be reticent. You generally found that there was pressure and counter pressure on this; it was not an easy exercise. It doesn't mean that our military didn't want to supply some material, it was the items that were on the Israeli list that became....

Q: What was your role; I mean, how did you fit in?

LEWIS: In due course, I was involved in coordinating State and Defense policy in arms transfers, in addition to covering the Middle East and Africa. We began to turn out something called the State-Defense Policy Guidance Document on Military Assistance Worldwide. This was at a time when Ron Spiers from the State Department's PM Bureau was very much in favor of it. This was the time when ISA's Paul Warnke thought it was a great idea. They agreed to put me in charge of the effort. I was constantly negotiating with State and Defense before we turned out this document. It then became the source for field guidance for all of the commands and embassies after being cleared by the two Departments. It was very useful. When I returned to the State Department, a member of Congress, I forget who it was, secured a copy of it, and asked then-Secretary Rogers in the Nixon Administration, while testifying, "Is this your document?" And Rogers said, to Ron Spiers' surprise and not bemusement, "I've never seen this thing before in my life."

Then we dropped the whole exercise, after Rogers had avowed that this was not an official document. It was a rather frustrating experience. Poor Rogers, he just was not properly briefed.

Q: Focusing on the '66- '69 period, how did we view the French?

LEWIS: Generally, in terms of the French, we tended to regard them as competitors with the United States. They began to enter, for example, the Latin American arms market, which some of our people, military as well as some in the State Department, regarded as American preserve. The French were flogging military equipment there, and this became a sensitive issue. In due course, you may recall that Senator Fulbright -- I'm jumping ahead now to the early '70s -- insisted that we engage in what we called "a self-denying ordinance" -- that we would not sell "advanced" military equipment to Latin American, military establishments in Latin America. In the period, I think it's '71-'74, and again later on, under the Carter Administration, the same self-denying ordinance applied. The British and French jumped in and they gained a tremendous amount of market share, as far as advanced military equipment was concerned. That began to become a question in the late '60s. If we don't sell, the French will do it, and if not the French, then obviously the Russians and the like. There was little collaboration you may recall. The French had pulled out of the NATO military system in '67. The military relationship had begun to get a little tenuous. The only place it wasn't tenuous, we now know, was on the nuclear side; we helped the French develop their nuclear arsenal with technical advice.

Q: When you were talking about Africa below the Sahara, was there much demand for arms down there, and were we doing anything with it?

LEWIS: Well, we provided some modest amounts of military equipment in the '60s to Liberia, basically because we needed military access to Roberts Field, and we also had the LORAN station there, Voice of America was there, and so on. It was a modest amount.

Obviously, the military advisory group sent to Liberia was not really very effective in creating a 'Liberian Wehrmacht'. I know I was there in 1960 with Loy Henderson, and when Loy was making his tour through Africa...

Q: A famous tour....

LEWIS: We decided to open all those posts, and I was taking somebody else around Africa at the time, and we kept running in and having drinks together, and one day Loy and this gentleman and myself were in Liberia. We were invited to a banquet in Loy Henderson's honor, and seated on my right was a woman wearing medals, and I said to her, "What exactly is your position, if I may ask?" And she said, "I'm the Minister of Defense." She wouldn't have known a rifle if she fell over it, but she was part of the Tolbert clan. Obviously it worked out pretty well from the Liberian perspective.

We then met with the American, I think he was a Lieutenant Colonel, who was head of the military advisory team there, an African-American team, very honest, and we asked him whether the Liberians were militarily fit. And he said, "Sir, when I tell them to go left, they go right." He observed: "This is not an Army; I just want you to know what we have here." I said, "You're trying to professionalize them?" He said, "No, we just want access to the benefits." The Liberians were armed men, but they were not soldiers.

Q: What about, in this arms sale, again, during this particular time, '66-'69, what about American firms: Lockheed, Boeing, whoever makes tanks, whoever makes backpacks -- in other words, were you feeling the impact either through the manufacturers themselves or through their Congress people about you've got to sell more stuff?

LEWIS: When I was in the Pentagon, there were a number of trade associations -- aerospace trade associations, and the electronics trade associations -- and they sought to influence policy in Defense and State -- less so in State, more Defense -- and on the Hill trying to secure support for military sales abroad. In that period, U.S. military sales were beginning to rise very rapidly, although agricultural exports remained our leading export. However, the military was beginning to come up for a substantial portion of market share. The associations were ubiquitous. They had, of course, their natural base in the Defense Department. When you retired, if you were a military man with sufficient rank, you went to work for some of these firms. This was all pretty much understood.

The firms were very effective in their lobbying. One of the contentious issues, and it remained a contentious issue even in the Carter Administration, was whether American embassies and consulates should serve as intermediaries for these firms when their representatives arrived in town. Should they sponsor them with local officials? Who should have primary responsibility? Should it be the Commercial Officer? Should it be the Defense Attaché? If you happened not to have a Defense Attaché in the area, should it be the Station Chief and his people?

Some of the companies were very, very successful in developing a multi-stage and multi-faceted approach. They would bring some of the foreign dignitaries, Deputy Ministers of Defense, and others to the States at company expense, take them around their plants in an effort to enhance sales. At the same time, they were lobbying Congress. A whole series of networks in operation.

Q: Say you were dealing with Liberia or Iran or something, where you can't do this because Congressman So-and-so is in the pocket of, say, the Iranians, or Company X or Company Y, were you feeling this?

LEWIS: Yes, and if you had any sensitivity, you realized what was going on. There was a famous case of an American Congressman who went to the Republic of Korea. This particular Congressman liked his bourbon, and he liked other pursuits. The Korean company in Seoul, and the government, took care of his every need. This was during the period of Bill Porter, our Ambassador to the Republic of Korea.

Q: I was not there at that time.

LEWIS: This particular Congressman was satisfied in every way. During his last evenings séance with a lady of the evening, she informed him that the Republic of Korea was defenseless against naval attacks. He said, in his best Southern twang, “My dear, I’ll get you a cruiser, I promise.” He had to have certain shots administered to make sure that he didn’t come away from Korea with more than he had gone in with.

Q: What about the Soviets? One, as arms sellers, or in the field you were dealing with, what role were the Soviets playing at this time?

LEWIS: We understood the Soviet’s goal was to develop a reputation as a global power, not merely a European power. The Soviets were expanding their Navy at a very rapid pace. This was a matter of very real concern. They were also trying to flog/sell some of their naval and air force equipment. Clearly, they were trying to demonstrate that they had a global reach comparable to that of the U.S. As evidence, they were seeking access to home ports, and bunkering rights for the Soviet Navy. As quid pro quo they were using offers of military equipment to secure overflight landing rights in Africa and elsewhere. Some of our ambassadors got a little hysterical and stretched, if you will, their powers of analysis.

There was the case of an American ambassador when news was announced in this particular African country that its government had granted the Russians overflight and landing rights, who dispatched this apocalyptic telegram: “And so I’ve now lost this country from the American point of view.” His message was viewed as nonsense, but it’s entirely possible he was trying to get an increase in AID funds by inflating the “crisis.” It produced a negative reaction, probably a black mark on his record.

But, clearly, what the Russians were doing was trying to establish a reputation for global reach, an ability to emulate the United States. The Soviet Navy had been a coastal Navy, but now covered the world. Giant Soviet aircraft were now capable of shipping massive amounts of military equipment. It was part of the power projection game that was going on. Russian efforts deeply concerned us at the time, especially in the Middle East region.

Q: Did you find that, I mean you were sort of in the, it was called arms transfer, but let’s say arms sales business.

LEWIS: I wasn’t selling. I was involved in helping to shape policy in terms of which countries and what amounts, of equipment and training should be available. If I’d been out selling, I’d be a multi-millionaire and well-established in Monaco.

Q: Well, at the time, as I recall it, we were talking about this very fancy Soviet equipment and all that, most of which almost every time it’s come up against American or British or French equipment has not done very well at all. Do you ever get the feeling that we were overselling the Soviet menace?

LEWIS: Obviously, from a Defense Department point of view, the natural impulse was to engage in worst case analysis, for obvious reasons. Soviet equipment proved of varied quality. By the time we were afforded an opportunity to examine some of their main battle tanks, we found they were pretty good. And I think the consensus began to develop within the analytical community, military and civilian, that part of the difficulty when they transferred high performance equipment to Third World countries the Soviets didn't provide them with adequate training or tactical indoctrination. As a result, quite often the Third World recipients were not using the equipment properly. For example, the after-action reports in terms of the Six Day War out of Israel was that the Egyptians just simply didn't know how to deploy and operate their equipment efficiently. The Egyptians learned from their mistakes and the performance in combat conditions improved. They certainly proved much more effective in '73 when some of the equipment, such as main battle tanks, performed well. Their surface-to-surface rockets were not bad at all. Their major deficiencies were in such high technology areas as electronics.

Their aircraft, also, were of varied quality. I was involved in a military survey mission to Sudan back in '77. I served as the senior State Department representative. The mission was led by a Major General. We were looking at some of the MiGs the Soviet Union had supplied to Sudan that were 30 years old at least, both in technology and fire support systems. You couldn't expect the MiGs to put up a good show against an American F-5. But by the time other countries got into the newer generation, more contemporary stuff such as their present SU-29s, they have a pretty good combat worthy aircraft.

In the Third World, part of the problem was poor training, limited spare parts, inadequate doctrine and orientation, and so forth. Many of the instructor pilots were not very proficient, but that's the best that the Soviets made available. Egyptian pilots were inferior in every respect compared to the Israeli pilots. In the '73 war, though, that was offset by the better use of anti-aircraft and other air defense systems. As a result, some of this advantage that the Israelis clearly had in terms of pilot proficiency and aircraft capability didn't hold up all that well in the initial stages of the conflict; that's why the U.S. felt compelled to make aircraft replacements available to Israel in the Yom Kippur War of '73. The Egyptians had learned to adjust and to adopt improved tactics.

Q: How did you get out of ISA. I mean, once you're over there, and your sponsor like Julius Holmes must have moved on, and...

LEWIS: Yes. Ambassador Holmes, sadly, died in 1968 of lung cancer.

Q: So what happened?

LEWIS: Another unanticipated development. President Nixon decided, in view of Congressional criticism, to establish a Presidential Commission to examine American arms transfers and economic assistance programs, a review intended to meet Congressional criticism. He put together a commission headed by the president of Bank of America, Rudy Peterson; designated by the White House, the Peterson Task Force. A

four-star general was on it, as was Cardinal Cook and Bill Casey. It was a very distinguished body.

Q: The head of the CIA, a very, let's say controversial figure.

LEWIS: Yes, I mean, he often excoriated the staff for its initial draft papers and then he walked out of the plenary sessions. He had that interesting style of not giving full attention, but knew all the answers anyhow. At any rate, I was the designee for the Department of Defense to cover arms transfer policy issues. The staff director, an old friend of mine, Ed Fried, from Brookings Institution, a fine economist, served as Executive Secretary and Staff Director. I prepared the military section of the report. In due course Ron Spiers, Head of PM, said, "Bill, it's time for you to come back; you know too much to stay away; why don't you come back and join us at the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs?" And I said, "I'd be delighted." Ron and Tom Pickering brought me back and appointed me Deputy Director of the Military Assistance and Sales shop in 1970. By then we'd finished the Peterson Report, it was submitted to the President. Mr. Nixon received the report and approved it, and asked that some of us put together new legislation to be called a "New Foreign Assistance Act," embracing some of the principles in the report I had developed. I met with State and Defense lawyers, and we finally put together an impressive piece of legislation, and the White House presented it to the Congress. The only thing Congress accepted and passed into law was the proposal that the State Department create a new position, that of Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance Coordination -- the word "coordination" was intended to bring together State, Defense, and AID under State policy "direction". The rest of our legislation was ignored.

Q: What was the issue that...

LEWIS: The issue Congress addressed was whether there should be clearly defined State Department supervision and coordination with the Department of Defense on arms transfer policy and AID on supporting assistance. It was Senator Fulbright who pushed for this legislation. He believed State had not provided adequate oversight and policy supervision.

Q: Was lack of White House interest the problem?

LEWIS: I always suspected lack of White House interest in the overall package we had presented to Congress. On the other hand, this was a "Democratic" Congress, why give a Republican president all the White House wanted? That was my take on it. At any rate, we had labored mightily, there it was, one little thing. And for my -- how should I put it -- as my reward, I was called in by the Deputy Secretary, and he said, "Now, Bill, I want you to work to set up this new Office of Under Secretary for Security Assistance." And I said, "Well, that's fine, who will I be working with?" "Well," he said, "I'm going to bring back somebody who's a tough old Foreign Service officer to work with you on this. His name is George Newman." I was delighted having known George for years, so I sent out a telegram saying, "George, I'm really looking forward to working with you". And back

channel came this message: “What a rotten development this is!” He loved his existing posting as DCM, Bangkok. At any rate, an unhappy George Newman was brought back to Washington. I was then being seconded for an all-out effort to create the Office of Under Secretary for Security Assistance. However, the assignment placed me in the middle of a delicate problem. Might we go off the record on this one?

Q: No, let's stay on the record, and you can edit when you want, but I think..

LEWIS: I have the greatest respect for Ron Spiers, I always thought he was a fine fellow to work with. I was not aware at the time that he and George Newman were not always on cordial terms. George never apprised me, and I was not aware of when or where they had previously “crossed swords”. George and Ron simply couldn't get along. Ron, I think, wanted to limit the mandate, the span of control of the Office of Under Secretary for Security Assistance, because if it were large, as expected, this would constrain his authority as head of PM. George, of course, wanted to give the new office full authority. I was caught in the middle of the controversy, and I finally said, “I've got to do something.” We had temporary offices on the first floor, a magnificent suite actually. George was occupying the throne room pending arrival of the Under Secretary designate, and I went to Ron, and I said, “I'm going to put the two of you together in the throne room, and would you please sort it out? You're killing me, the two of you, because, you know, I can't serve two masters at the same time.”

In due course, they entered the throne room; they were in there an hour with the door closed. And it was a most delicate situation for me. I was reporting to Ron, my superior, and I couldn't be disloyal to George. They could not agree on jurisdictions. And as the dispute persisted, AID got into the act and sent some AID people to “assist.” They duly reported to the Director of AID on internecine conflict in State. The Defense Department sent some officers over, who provided similar input to their “masters”.

We finally got the mandate, and inscribed it in the Federal Register. Later, the White House informed us who the incumbent was going to be. Remember the name Curtis W. Tarr?

Q: Who?

LEWIS: Curtis W. Tarr.

Q: No.

LEWIS: Curtis W. Tarr had been President of Sarah Lawrence University, but was from California. When the Nixon Administration arrived in Washington, the President appointed Ehrlichman and Haldeman to find a candidate to fill the position. Tarr wanted a time in Washington, so they had him replace Hershey, to phase out the Selective Service System. Did an excellent job, from what I understand. Shortly thereafter Secretary of the Air Force Seamen announced plans to retire; he'd had enough of life in Washington, and Curtis apparently was promised by Haldeman and Ehrlichman that he

would be nominated for Secretary of the Air Force within a year. He was urged to take the position of Under Secretary of State on an interim basis. He accepted.

Curtis is a gentleman who had this sort of Western twangy type of accent, 6 foot 7 or 8, huge, tall fellow, skinny. Unfortunately, he gave the impression of being a bit of a yokel. I mean, he was pretty savvy, but he just could not escape that impression. For example, if ambassadors made official calls, he would throw his long legs over the conference table, and say, "Tell me, pardner, what's going on in your neck of the woods?", which is hardly traditional State Department style.

Curtis did not succeed in his quest to become Secretary of the Air Force. Watergate intruded, and Ehrlichman and Haldeman became otherwise engaged. Tarr departed after a while, to pursue other activities. He went to work for John Deere, Vice President of Midwest Sales. In due course I returned to PM.

Q: Now, this Under Secretary for

LEWIS: Coordination...

Q: Coordination.... it sounds like one of those almost non jobs.

LEWIS: It was a seventh floor State Department position. The incumbent obviously was going to be resisted by AID since Security Assistance embraced the Economic Supporting Assistance Program. It also included the public safety program that Alex Johnson had sponsored, and of course, the military side. The Defense people were not about to surrender the family jewels. It was very difficult to bring them into camp. And George Newman and I then decided to put together something called the Security Assistance Program Review Committee, to encourage inter-agency cooperation.

Well, that concept was fine, except the Pentagon was resistant to program reviews under State Department auspices. AID was conducting its own reviews on the grounds that if it was good enough for the Under Secretary of State to organize one, AID should have its own review processes. So it really didn't quite work out terribly well. Moreover, problems arose in the State Department. The Geographic Bureaus and PM preferred to report to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. They were circumventing Curtis Tarr whenever possible. It was akin to rival Tong groups going at each other. And they didn't give poor Curtis a chance. It's a position that has evolved away from security assistance, covering technology and nuclear proliferation matters.

Q: So you went back to Political and Military Affairs.

LEWIS: I went back to Political and Military Affairs just before Henry Kissinger arrived as Secretary of State -- it had to be '73.

Q: Before we move on, by mentioning Henry Kissinger, in any of the things that you

were dealing with did the National Security Council play any role, I mean in talking up to this time we've already been talking about.

LEWIS: Well, the role it played essentially was to provide oversight and architecture for the activity that Dr. Kissinger had established. It was the National Security Study Memoranda series, under which the President directed that sensitive national security policy studies be conducted. It was a magnificent maneuver on his part. He then created early on in the Nixon Administration something on the order of eight or nine inter-agency committees. Kissinger presided over each and every one of them. This afforded him a span of oversight that controlled information to the President, brilliant maneuvering on his part. One of the committees included arms and arms transfer related matters. I don't want to enumerate each of the committees, but as a result of this approach, we were directed in Tarr's office to take a look at insurgency in Thailand and what counter-insurgency efforts the U.S. might support.

Q: National Security Study Memorandum.

LEWIS: National Security Study Memorandum, '69. It directed that the Office of Under Secretary for Security Assistance organize an inter-agency team to go out to the field and study counter-insurgency problems up in the Chang Mai area of northern Thailand. Curtis approached me and said: "Why don't you lead the team, Bill, you know how to work with the military and the CIA." I put together a team of about 25 people; CIA was fully represented as were Defense and AID. We proceeded to Bangkok and went up to Chang Mai. We had a splendid counter-insurgency staff in our embassy in Bangkok; Bill Stokes was its director; I don't know if you know Bill.

Q: No, I don't know him.

LEWIS: Bill was present and was exceedingly helpful, gave us all sorts of charts and information. And the insurgency problem in Chang Mai was substantial and some of our Embassy officers on the military side were frank to admit that the Thai military wasn't doing all that well in coping. I came back to Washington and prepared the report for submission to Dr. Kissinger.

Q: At that time, I don't know how it'll be later, but Bangkok and all of Thailand was known as sort of the Sin Capital of the world, and it was a meeting place for everyone, and anybody who went in there sort of got caught up in it.

LEWIS: George Newman and Curtis thought it was a fine report. The recommendation was that the U.S. Government should not take on major responsibility in the counter-insurgency effort. Now this was in 1972, our country was torn over Vietnam.

Nevertheless, Kissinger did not welcome the report. He wanted a more active series of policy recommendations. It was only later we learned he wished to send a signal to the Chinese government that the U.S. was seriously considering getting involved in Chang Mai, and that they would be well advised to reduce their support for the insurgency. To

Kissinger's consternation, my report concluded that it was a Thai problem, it's not disastrous therefore, let them handle it.

I passed the report to the White House, and Kissinger asked -- demanded -- according to his emissaries that the report be withdrawn. To his everlasting credit, Curtis Tarr said, "Absolutely not. It's an honest report," and he, Tarr, would support its findings. Kissinger reportedly said, "I don't want this report" and tried to return it. Dr. Kissinger was furious; he pigeonholed the report, and the first thing he did, when he later arrived as Secretary of State, Curtis Tarr was summarily dismissed. I had forewarning, and, as a result, I managed to secure a one year sabbatical and retreat to the Brookings Institution. Tom Stern helped me to secure my evacuation from a bureaucratic kitchen that was enflamed.

Q: Bill, I always put at the end where we're going. The next time we'll pick this up, you had to get out of town... get out of the State Department, and get away from Henry Kissinger. This would be '73?

LEWIS: Yes, '73. I went to work with Phil Farley in preparation of a book on arms transfers. Do you know Phil?

Q: No.

LEWIS: Farley was a former head of PM and a recognized arms control policy specialist.

Q: Alright, we'll pick up on that point. This is the 13th of January 1997. Bill, okay, you're in, what is it, arms transfer?

LEWIS: Well, do you want to talk a bit about our Brookings experience?

Q: Yes, let's talk about the Brookings experience.

LEWIS: My Brookings experience was in itself unique. Henry Owen, who was then the Director of the Foreign Affairs Division, who had himself had extensive State Department experience, approached a private foundation to finance a study project on U.S. arms transfer policy. He and Phil Farley, who had left the government, approached me and asked if I would join them to conduct the study over a one-year period. I accepted the invitation. The book that emerged was entitled, Arms Across the Sea, published by the Brookings Institution. It was a critique of Administration policy in the arms transfer field, with several recommendations for improving planning strategy and resource allocations. This was a period during which Dr. Kissinger came to the State Department as Secretary of State. I was expected to return to the Department sometime thereafter and pursue my erstwhile activities in the arms transfer field.

Q: Well, let's go to the Brookings study. First place, could you describe at that time, during the early '70s, the atmosphere of the Brookings Institute, as you saw it?

LEWIS: Brookings was a dynamic institution. It afforded me an opportunity to gain and broaden perspectives on policy issues and related problems. Brookings had a number of divisions within it, inhabited by serious professionals from the academic and the policy communities. Many were on leaves of absence, much as myself, looking at such issues as the peacetime military, whether or not the draft system, or selective service system, should be returned, or a professional army maintained, which was then being introduced, and the degree to which the turning toward a professional army would diminish support for military service abroad.

Another group was looking at the question of nuclear weapons strategy and problems associated with implementing the SALT I agreement, following on with a second agreement on SALT II.

A third group we were closely with was concerned with the threat of Soviet efforts to undermine conservative regimes or moderate governments in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. This at a time when Dr. Kissinger had been talking in general terms about a period of detente vis a vis Moscow itself, and this was a contentious study by specialists at the Brookings Institution. While the institution had enjoyed, if one might use the label of being a "liberal" institution, the staff there was really a good representative mix of conservatives and "liberals," if anything, the Brookings Institution was adopting a centrist position. I say this because this was at a period shortly after President Nixon and his National Security Advisor had come to regard the Brookings Institution as a haven of, how should I put it, anti-Administration doves. This was a period too, you may recall, when there had been the break-in at Brookings sponsored by the Administration; and there had also been the Pentagon papers expose. So the atmosphere, at least in the Administration in Washington, was one of unhappiness with the Brookings professionals. I found the Brookings group I dealt with very professional, quite impartial in their judgments -- there was a slant in some of the assessment and evaluation -- but essentially a centrist in the foreign policy/national security areas.

Q: What about as you were doing the study on arms transfers? It's a fancy way of saying arms sales, is it?

LEWIS: Well, no, because the program had several dimensions. You had, for example, the grant program; grant military assistance, which was assistance provided with equipment, training, and the like, on a non-reimbursable basis. You also had within the program, even though it was designated security assistance, the economic component called Economic Supporting Assistance that was administered by the Agency for International Development; and then, of course, you had for a short period of time the Public Safety Program, which in itself derived its inspiration from Alex Johnson, who was regarded as the godfather of that program. So it had various components; it wasn't simply a sales program. But the assessment that Phil Farley and I undertook was one in which we tried to see what the rationale or justification was for the various programs, and whether or not there were areas in which their coordination and management could be improved significantly.

Q: Did you find that you had certain ideas before you went into this, and was there any sort of change towards what you were doing after you sort of looked at them with somebody else?

LEWIS: Well, I approached the Brookings study somewhat pragmatically, having been involved with the Presidential Task Force in '69, and having been involved with the establishment of the Office of Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance; and also having served within the Bureau of Political Military Affairs establishing a planning and analysis staff. I came to Brookings with a number of clear-cut ideas as to what might be done to improve or enhance the program. Quite frankly, Phil Farley had a somewhat more reserved position as to what really should be done, could be done, might be done with regard to the program, so during our period of association, there was a considerable amount of give and take from each side. I was pushing, if you will, the envelope much more than Phil was prepared to accept during the early stages of our combined effort.

Q: As you did your combined research, did you find, was there a problem getting information from the government, or was it pretty much there?

LEWIS: Well, there were a number of open sources, such as testimony before Congressional committees by various State and DOD representatives. So there were other open sources. In addition, we conducted a number of interviews with former Chiefs of Mission and others who had been involved in recommending transfer of military equipment to various countries. And then, of course, there were also seminar-type meetings, in which we brought together a number of practitioners and academics for lunches at Brookings to exchange views and to try out some of the ideas that we planned to put in the book.

Q: So the book came out, and this was a published book, so what was the name of it?

LEWIS: The title of the book was Arms Across the Sea, which has a certain piquant quality to it as a title; I didn't particularly like it -- sounded like Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire to me -- but that's the way it goes. I didn't have final veto rights over the title of the book.

Q: But it was published when, in

LEWIS: In 1975.

Q: You came back when to the State Department?

LEWIS: Well, I was told when I departed for the year that my position as the Director of the PM Planning Staff for Arms Transfers would be held open for me, but in the intervening period, there was a need to place other Foreign Service officers in some of these positions. By the time I returned, that position was closed to me. The Office of Under Secretary of Security Assistance was then under the direction of Carlyle E. Maw. Carlyle had been personal lawyer to Secretary Kissinger in an earlier incarnation, then

was Legal Counselor to the Department shortly after the arrival of Mr. Kissinger as Secretary of State. I was told that Mr. Maw was very heavily engaged, despite his shift of responsibilities to Security Assistance, in dealing with legal matters, most particularly, the Halperin suit against Kissinger that followed after Halperin had had his civil rights violated.

Q: This was the wiretap case.

LEWIS: The wiretap case, yes. So Maw was discreetly involved in providing legal advice to Kissinger. He was a distinguished lawyer in his own right, but had very little background experience in arms transfers. I was invited to come on board as his Special Assistant in, I believe, '74-'75. My responsibility was to oversee the entire arms transfer program from the remote perch of the Under Secretary. In this position, I worked very closely with Tom Stern, who was then the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs. Tom and I had known each other for several years, and had worked closely on policy issues.

Q: You were doing that from when to when?

LEWIS: 1974 to 1975, I believe.

Q: What were the main issues in policy at that time?

LEWIS: A number of issues arose. For example, in '74 you had the invasion of East Timor by the Indonesian military; the question arose as to whether or not we should terminate, or at least suspend, all arms transfers to the government of Indonesia, since this action was a clear violation of the United Nations Charter. The initial position taken by the East Asia Bureau and myself was to suspend the arms, but, in due course, Secretary Kissinger overrode us, contending that Indonesia was of great strategic value to the United States, and that while human rights concerns and related matters were important, the security interests of the United States required us to continue to provide military equipment and training.

Q: Well, this is just at about the time of the fall of South Vietnam, wasn't it?

LEWIS: This was also at the time of the fall of South Vietnam, and we were deeply involved. Let me take a step back. With the signing of the agreement in Paris in '73, just before I departed for the Brookings Institution, we had agreed with the government of North Vietnam to terminate our arms supply to South Vietnam within a specified period of time. The government of North Vietnam, for its part, indicated it would not take advantage of the situation by increasing its military presence in the South. We had a very finite deadline, and in that finite deadline, there was an operation that was launched, we worked very closely with our friends in the Pentagon. It was code worded "Enhanced Plus". This involved operating, within the agreed deadline, to provide the ARVN forces with a substantial amount of upgraded equipment. For example, we decided that we would provide them through our friends and allies, F-5 aircraft. F-5 aircraft was not

available in large numbers in our military inventory; so we prevailed upon the governments of the Republic of Korea, Iran, and one or two others, to make F-5 aircraft available to the government of South Vietnam within the deadline. That was nibbling at the margins of the agreement, however.

Q: Did you get any feel during this time about how Henry Kissinger felt about this business, I mean outside of saying, "Don't mess with Indonesians"?

LEWIS: Well, the general impression one had was that Dr. Kissinger, even when he was National Security Advisor, viewed arms transfers as an appropriate and effective instrument of policy. Given his global view -- that of a grand strategist -- he believed that certain selected countries should become the beneficiaries of our arms transfers. Within his strategic framework, he also believed that the United States couldn't always and everywhere assume a stabilizing role in various regions of the world, such as the Persian Gulf, Asia, and South Asia. And, therefore, we should select, identify, if you will, so-called middle powers, friends of ours in each region, that could play a "policeman's" stabilizing role. A classic example of this was the Persian Gulf. In '69, if I recall the date correctly, the British government announced that, as a result of financial considerations, it could no longer provide the security forces necessary to ensure a stable Gulf area. Actually, the entire region East of Suez fell under the British retrenchment decision. In 1972, then-National Security Advisor Kissinger, as a result of a series of studies called "National Security Memoranda", prepared a determination or decision memorandum for signature by President Nixon that Iran would serve as an effective replacement for the British in the Gulf area. And we were directed at that time to launch a major arms transfer sales program, on the order of several billions of dollars, to the government of Iran. The Shah, most curiously, at the same time, was in large measure responsible for increasing the price of oil through the oil cartel, all of which had an adverse impact on the U.S. economy. We were caught in the paradoxical position of supporting a friend and ally in a policeman role, while suffering double jeopardy in terms of arms transfers and, if you will, the attack on our economy. A classic example of real politik in misdirected action.

Indonesia, as an emerging middle power, if I am not mistaken, could play a major balancing role in the Southeast Asia area. That is why Kissinger insisted that our arms program continue to be maintained in Indonesia after the East Timor takeover. Then there was the classic example in Southern Africa, the so-called "Tarr Baby Study", which involved a National Security Memoranda study that engaged the attention of Tony Lake at the time -- who was on the White House Staff. Dr. Kissinger was looking for an emerging middle power in sub-Saharan Africa. The study concluded that most of the Black African nations would be beset by insecurity and instability; there was only one area in which you would have a very large stabilizing element; that would be the "White Redoubt" regions of Southern Africa. The W.R. embraced South Africa, and if you will, Southern Rhodesia, which had broken away from British colonial rule, Angola, and Mozambique. This view, then, led the United States to adopt a hands-off posture in independent Black Africa and low key support for White Redoubt regimes. Events took a sudden turn in '75 to undermine that policy. But covertly, prior to the debacles, we began to provide assistance through various agencies, to South Africa and others.

Q: Was there any resistance to this covert supply? I mean, was it known to our office?

LEWIS: It was known to our office, but this was at the direction of the White House, and then-Secretary Kissinger, so obviously, this was established policy, and one might enter a dissenting vote, but it would have no effect whatsoever. As a matter of fact, there was general view -- at least it was my impression -- that on the part of Dr. Kissinger and his immediate subordinates, that the traditional Foreign Service and Civil Service bureaucracy were of uncertain loyalty and not to be kept terribly informed as to what Kissinger's motivations and plans embraced.

Q: Did this office ... you weren't there during the transition, you'd left it by '73...

LEWIS: I had left by early on in '73. The reason for this as I think I indicated earlier, were the warning signals clearly arising. Curtis Tarr was summarily dismissed within 48 hours after the arrival of Dr. Kissinger, for reasons I think were fairly obvious.

Q: Yes, so that's when you went to Brookings.

LEWIS: Yes, I found a bolte hole in Brookings.

Q: Well, when you came back from Brookings, you came back when?

LEWIS: I came back in ... let's see, Kissinger came onboard in '73, did he not?

Q: Yes.

LEWIS: I came about a year later, in '74.

Q: No, wait, Kissinger came....

LEWIS: He came onboard in '73, right after the election, as a matter of fact, so I returned in '74.

Q: Well, Kissinger was still in, but you had been out of the line of fire and the line of sight....

LEWIS: I was, so to speak, sanitized and "rehabilitated".

Q: So where did you go then?

LEWIS: That was the point at which I could not return to PM, since my position was encumbered, and I was appointed Special Assistant to Carlyle Maw, Office of Under Secretary of Security Assistance. I devoted most of my time trying to sort out policy differences between Bureaus, since Mr. Maw was deeply involved in the Halperin case, and had little real interest in arms transfer.

Q: Well, you were doing this Special Assistance from when to when, now?

LEWIS: Let's see, '74 to '75. In '75 Bill Schaufele, who was Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, asked me if I would be interested in coming onboard as Director of the Office for Regional Affairs. I gladly accepted the invitation.

Q: While you were the Special Assistant for arms transfers?

LEWIS: Security assistance.

Q: Security assistance. Were there any issues ...I mean you mentioned, was this when East Timor came in?

LEWIS: Yes, this was when East Timor became a contentious issue.

Q: Oh, yes, and the Vietnam thing.

LEWIS: Vietnam was very much at the center of crisis management.

Q: Then when you moved over to the African Bureau, had you had... what was your experience?

LEWIS: Well, I had been in the African Affairs section of INR for a number of years, I had also served in the Office of National Estimates, CIA, on assignment to cover Africa and the Middle East; this was the 1960-62 period. I had also served, you may recall, in '67 and '68 and part of '69 in the Policy Planning Staff of the Office of the Secretary of Defense covering African and Middle Eastern affairs, so I had a fair amount of background.

Q: What did your job consist of at that time? You were doing this from '70...

LEWIS: The African Affairs assignment?

Q: Yes.

LEWIS: This would be from 1976 to 1978. Primary responsibility of the Regional Affairs Office in the Bureau of African Affairs, at least as assigned to me by Bill Schaufele, was to be responsible for bringing together various of the several offices in the Bureau to establish a coherent overall strategy for arms transfers and security assistance, to help develop planning for funding outyear programs, as they were called, and to basically be involved in assistance missions to countries in the African region. I directed and later was Deputy Director of three missions in Africa involving arms transfers. One was to the Sudan, where President Nimeiri, having thrown Russian advisors out, turned to the United States to upgrade Sudanese military capabilities. There was also Ethiopia, where we were involved for awhile in the removal of the U.S. from Asmara station which had

been opened in the late '40s by the U.S. military and an examination of the type of facilities we should have as a result of our withdrawal from Ethiopia. Another mission was to Kenya, where the government had expressed growing concern about Somali incursions and the prospect of Somali irredentism leading to the destabilization of the East African area. And finally, I was also required to attend NATO expert meetings on Africa; they were held twice a year in Brussels, to discuss security issues and looming problems in the African region.

Q: Was there very definitely a division of Africa into the French zone of influence? I'm talking about your particular affairs with arms, and maybe a British one, and then an American one, or....

LEWIS: Geographically, there were two functional offices, the regional office, concerned primarily with security issues, and related problems, plus providing an overriding view of the region as a whole; the second functional office was Economic Affairs. But in geographic terms the Bureau was divided into an Office of West African Affairs, no distinction between Francophone and Anglophone; Office of Central African Affairs, which was essentially Zaire and neighboring territories; East Africa; and Southern Africa, Southern Africa embracing primarily South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, and Rhodesia. The North African region, which had been part of the African Bureau's area of responsibility, had been hived off by Secretary Kissinger shortly after his arrival as Secretary. He had decided that Turkey and Greece should fall within the purview of the Bureau of European Affairs, and as a consolation prize, North Africa to the Bureau of Near Eastern/South Asian Affairs. So the African Affairs Bureau was stripped of linkages to the Mediterranean area, courtesy of Secretary of State Kissinger.

Q: What were your main concerns? You mention the Sudan. Why did we think of the Sudan as being important?

LEWIS: By 1975 and '76, Nimeiri had gotten rid of Russian advisors. The Sudan was the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa geographically. It was regarded as strategically placed vis a vis the Red Sea-Persian Gulf region, and therefore was of considerable strategic value in terms of our interests. Secondly, we became aware that Sudan's leader, Col. Nimeiri wished to be closely associated with the United States. He would support our policies on Middle Eastern questions, which was considered of potential value. Sudan was also regarded as important because of the unstable situation that was beginning to emerge in Ethiopia. In 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie, our friend of over three decades, was toppled from power. He was replaced by a military committee in 1974 consisting of 130 military men, officers of general rank, and colonels down to sergeants, who tried to guide the country. I don't want to bore you with all the convoluted details. But the ruling committee (Dergue) could not agree on policies to be pursued in the post-Selassie period; there was a contest over power which was resolved in the most democratic fashion possible -- the committee members began to draw their pistols and shoot each other! And a number of the generals, not being particularly proficient in the use of arms, were carried out, and a gentleman emerged, Mengistu, who we had trained in the United States. He was known in Ethiopia, perhaps not affectionately, as "the Sharpshooter". Colonel

Mengistu, by '74 and '75, was beginning to make clear that he was going to reorient Ethiopian foreign policy away from the West in general, and the U.S. in particular. In addition, by '75 he was unleashing the so-called Red Terror campaign against Western-trained intellectuals and university students. Some of the professors were actually lynched, hung on lampposts as warning signs for other refractory elements. Some of us were rather disturbed by this; I felt at the time that university professors might be expendable, but university students should be safeguarded from this type of Red Terror campaign.

Q: Yes.

LEWIS: So our interest in Sudan, in part, was influenced by events in neighboring Ethiopia.

Q: Kagnev Station by that time, what was....

LEWIS: Kagnev Station by the mid-'70s had lost its strategic military value. In the '40s and '50s it was an important listening post, involving intercept communications and the like, covering the Middle East and portions of Africa. It was of great value to us, at the time. As a result, we supported Haile Selassie when he incorporated Eritrea as part of the Ethiopian Empire, in violation of the UN resolution that said Eritrea should remain an autonomous entity. But in the course of the years, advanced technology reduced the importance of Asmara Station. Secondly, Eritreans were rebelling against Ethiopian rule and the situation was becoming increasingly unstable in Eritrea generally. We decided, in due course, that we should close down Asmara station, particularly as the Red Terror Campaign continued to mount. With the arrival of the Carter Administration in 1977, President Carter determined that Ethiopia would no longer be a major beneficiary of our U.S. arms transfers program. The Mengistu regime retaliated by saying, "Well, then, you'd better get out of Kagnev immediately", and we withdrew with some alacrity in that period.

Q: Was Somalia considered completely in the hands of the Soviets at that point?

LEWIS: Well, you may recall that when Somalia gained its independence in 1960, it had five stars implanted in its national flag; the stars were symbolic of Somalia's irredentist ambitions, that is, the integration of the Somali populations in all of the Horn area. The first star, of course, being Somalia itself; the second star being British Somaliland, which was peacefully incorporated into Somalia shortly after its independence; the third star represents the enclave of Djibouti, only half of whose population was Somali; the fourth star represented the region of Ethiopia, which encompassed one-third of Ethiopian territory; and the fifth star involved the northeastern portion of Kenya. If the Somalis had succeeded, then obviously it would have led to the unraveling of nation states throughout the Eastern portion of Africa.

The Somalis began to cast around for an external supplier of arms to assist them to create a national army. The Italians, the former trustee power, showed some interest, but the

government in Mogadishu turned to the Soviet Union; since the U.S. was the principal arms supplier of arms to Ethiopia it made good sense in Mogadishu to have another superpower serve as countervailing element. The Russians became the principal supplier, and as quid pro quo they secured access to a major naval base in the northern portion of the Somali republic.

With the arrival of the Carter Administration, one of the tenets or planks of the Carter Administration was, if you will, to reverse the Kissingerian approach -- no major arms transfers should occur without approval by the President. The U.S. government would begin to reduce the level of U.S. arms transfers annually, and there would be stricter oversight of the activities of corporations flogging arms transfers. This seemed to signal growing withdrawal of the United States from real politik policy as represented during the Nixon-Kissinger period.

Peculiarly enough, shortly after the arrival of the Carter Administration, the President was approached by Anwar Sadat in the name of several Arab governments from the Red Sea-Persian Gulf area saying, "We're very much concerned about the growing Soviet presence in this area, and we would like to see the removal of the Soviet presence. When can we anticipate U.S. support?" The President reportedly gave a noncommittal reply, but didn't say no. The Sudan became the first target; with the ejection of Soviet advisors, the Sudan should be encouraged to turn to the U.S. for arms. We acquiesced. The decision was to say, "Yes, we're prepared to do this," as a result of the survey mission in which I had been involved.

With regard to Somalia, there was a meeting of the National Security Council, and President Carter had invited a Time Magazine correspondent to the meeting. As they were addressing the Red Sea-Persian Gulf area, somebody pointed out that the Russians still had a naval base in the Hargeisa area. The President apparently said, "Well, we've got to do everything possible to get rid of that base." And so, despite protestation that we were moving away from a real politik position, in the case of Somalia, we clearly were adopting a contrary position. This was reported in the Time Magazine, and people in Cairo, Riyadh, and Teheran concluded, "Aha! We do have the President on our side!" Their governments began to urge that the Somalis terminate their dependence on the Russians. At that stage, a certain Russian official began to urge that the Somalis themselves not undertake military action to get control over the Ethiopian Ogaden region, that they behave themselves. This cautionary note was reinforced by the visit to the area of Mr. Fidel Castro. The Bearded One urged the Ethiopians and Somalis to resolve their differences peacefully. The Somalis were told that if they would intervene with the Soviets supplied military equipment in the Ogaden, this action would lead to a termination of Soviet military assistance to Mogadishu. In May or early June of 1977, for some unexplained reason, the White House National Security Council staff prevailed upon the President to agree to a shift in American policy. The shift involved agreement that the U.S. would provide arms to Mogadishu. As quid pro quo, the Russians would be asked to leave Hargeisha. That is my personal appreciation of the demarche, but that signal sent to Mogadishu then freed the Somalis to invade the Ogaden region.

The point basically was that within a few weeks after that the Somalis did invade the Ogaden, the Russians did terminate their military assistance program. The Somalis then called in their pledge from Washington, but the White House determined that the Somalis had been condemned by the OAU for the invasion of the Ethiopia. Hence, we could not provide arms to the Somalis at that time. We had argued previously that our arms were for defensive purposes, but what the heck, rifles shoot in all directions, so the distinction was without merit.

The unraveling -- should historians write, should study this misadventure -- was truly significant regionally. Precisely at the time that the Somalis were requesting American weapons, the Saudis, the Iranians, and the Egyptians had supplies available. The Egyptians were going to provide Soviet arms for the Somalis, the Saudis and the Iranians were going to provide American arms, and as their planes were prepared to take off, Washington suddenly sent a signal saying, "No, we can't do this because of the OAU and the fact that the Somalis are being characterized as aggressors in this matter." So they backed off, there was confusion all over the place as to what was Washington's intentions.

Q: This was all part of, I mean, the Carter Administration had problems, they kept getting involved and then pulling back, as with the neutron bomb and so-called other things.

LEWIS: It was all part and parcel of the same thing. But this helps, I believe, explain in part the reason why the Shah of Iran, in the midst of his crisis a little later, in 1978, was never quite sure what American policy was, because we were emitting all sorts of signals in Washington at the time, all terribly confusing. The Administration never got itself sorted out in that region.

Q: I was following this whole Horn of Africa thing, kind of fascinating, and particularly at that period. What was your feeling at the time, what should we do?

LEWIS: My feeling at the time was that we should stop pretending that we had a hands-off policy, first of all. Secondly, that it was in our security interests to make clear to the Somalis that we wanted to see Hargeisha evacuated by the Soviets. If they could, good and well, we would supply American arms, but with the proviso the Somalis were not to use American arms for the invasion of the Ogaden. We never made that clear; our signals were ambiguous. By then it was clear that Mengistu was somebody we couldn't work with. The problem we had in trying to shape policy was that the then-Assistant Secretary of State to Africa was much more interested in the Southern African problem.

Q: This was Bill Schauffele?

LEWIS: No, this was Richard Moose.

Q: This was a good, solid issue that the Carter Administration could get its teeth into, Southern Africa, Black versus White, and that sort of thing.

LEWIS: Well, there was that. And remember, too, we had our special Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young. Andrew Young felt, quite properly, that the tilt of the Nixon Administration, in particular Secretary Kissinger, had been in favor of the White regimes in South Africa. This was unacceptable policy, and that President Carter needed to reverse it.

By the time the Carter Administration arrived in 1977, the U.S. was not held in high esteem in Black Africa, because by then our unbalanced position had leaked to the press. You may recall, as a matter of fact, in '76, Dr. Kissinger was busily involved in trying to resolve problems relating to Angola and Rhodesia. He tried to tour Africa, and was not received by a goodly number of African chiefs of state; they held him in very low esteem. With the arrival of the Carter Administration, Andrew Young and others, quite properly, said, "No, we have to publicly set aside the Kissingerian policy." This became priority number one. But there were divisions within the Bureau, as to how to deal with other regions such as the Horn of Africa. On the Horn, there was an inclination on the part of Moose and others not to become deeply involved, eschewing real politik approaches. As a result, the decision making responsibility migrated to the White House staff. Here, once again, you had division of view in terms of how to deal with the festering Horn problem.

Q: Well, does that continue throughout the Carter Administration?

LEWIS: No, it didn't. You then had a series of events which led the Administration to change its position. Now this involved linking, if you will, the Horn region of North Africa with the Gulf area. By '78 and '79, you had, of course, the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and the arrival of the Ayatollah Khomeini. You also had the insertion in '78 of Soviet forces into Afghanistan, and the fear in some Washington circles that the Russians, once they subjugated the people of Afghanistan, would move on Iran, and thereby gain control of the Persian Gulf region, traditionally viewed as one of the basic objectives of Soviet national security policy. As a result, in January of 1978, President Carter, during his State of the Union Address, declared that the Persian Gulf was of the highest possible interest to the United States, and that we were therefore going to create "an American rapid deployment force" to be inserted into the Gulf in the event of an act of aggression by an unstated party. Everybody understood this to be the Soviet Union. This represented a major reversal of policy in terms of the Horn area and the Gulf. Why? Because we didn't have a rapid deployment force. We started to create one, but if you had such a force in the United States, where was it going to be based once deployed overseas. How would they get there?

We started, after the State of the Union Address, a mad dash led by American diplomats and Defense Department officials, to gain basing rights in the region. We negotiated special access agreements with Egypt, which accorded us the right to overfly or land at selected Egyptian airports and to use the Suez canal in the event this rapid deployment force had to be moved into the Persian Gulf. We negotiated the same with Sudan; we arranged for naval rights at Port Sudan. We established compatible rights with Somalia, and with Kenya. We signaled Moscow we were prepared to project American military

forces into the region should circumstances warrant. And what was the quid pro quo? We agreed in exchange for these rights that the U.S. would make arms available for these countries providing access rights. By the time you are at the final stages of the Carter Administration, there has been a complete reversal of national security and arms transfer policies.

Q: Were you, although you were dealing with regional affairs, did you get involved in this?

LEWIS: Only in the implementation phase, that is, conducting surveys and attempting to determine what problems required early resolution.

Q: You know, later on, when we ended up sending troops into Somalia to quell disturbances and try to feed the people, there was a great deal of criticism that the Somalis were basically a bunch of warlike tribes...

LEWIS: Clans.

Q: Clans... were shooting at us, and it was our fault because we had armed them.

LEWIS: There are two things that are misleading here. First of all, there were those who contended that we should support the Somalis in their desire to create a unified nation state, since the Somalis constituted a clearly identifiable ethnic community. Presumably they spoke one language, which they didn't -- there were a number of sub-dialects. And they appeared united by a common history and culture. As we have seen, that was not the case, and should never have been viewed as such, a terrible mistake on our part.

But in terms of your question they were using American arms: and cast-off Russian arms to pursue the irredentist goals. The main military contingent under General Said used American arms. Some of the clans opposing the General were using old Russian equipment. In addition, in this part of the world, as elsewhere, there were plenty of private arms dealers prepared to cash in on local conflicts. So it's a bit misleading to assume the Somalis were totally dependent on American arms. They had access to a wide variety of weaponry.

Q: Do you recall what was going on in Angola, Mozambique, that area?

LEWIS: Yes. Let me offer a context. Remember that until 1975, the policy clearly favored the Whites Redoubt regimes. In the case of Angola and Mozambique, both were under Portuguese colonial control. With the death of Salazar in '75, the situation began to unravel, from the perspective of Secretary Kissinger. In the case of Mozambique, its transition to independence came relatively rapidly and without too much internal upheaval. Frelimo, the leading liberation movement, quickly took control, and was operating reasonably effectively at that time, and was collaborating over economic issues with the Southern Rhodesian and South African governments -- although on an unofficial basis.

The situation in Angola was entirely different. In the case of Angola, the struggle against the Portuguese involved three parties. One was a party directed by Holden Roberto -- I always thought his name should be Robert Holden -- of the FLNA, a very minor group located in the northern portion of Angola, and enjoying covert support from Mobutu and company in neighboring Zaire. The second political group was the Unita movement under Savimbi, located in the central portion of Angola and controlling the country's diamond mines. The third was a group led by Agostino Neto, which had seized control of the capital city of Luanda. Dr. Kissinger was apparently experiencing a Stenglerian phase at that time. The government of South Vietnam had fallen, Turkey had invaded Cyprus, and NATO was in disarray over the invasion. You had the emergence of a Socialist regime in Spain, after the death of Francisco Franco, and the growing influence of the Communist Party in Italy was of concern to the Secretary.

Q: And Portugal, of course, was...

LEWIS: And Portugal, as well.

Q: I mean, it was almost a write-off

LEWIS: Almost a write-off. Kissinger also believed that the effort at detente with Moscow was not working terribly well, and the U.S. post-Watergate was increasingly on the defensive from a strategic viewpoint. He believed that detente had been undermined by Soviet actions in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, he apparently believed that the Russians were under an obligation to notify us as to what Sadat's intentions were, and failed to do so. The Russians argued they didn't know because Sadat had thrown out all Russian military advisers a year previously.

In 1975, Kissinger believed that the U.S., being on the defensive, would be challenged somewhere in the world by not specifically the Soviet Union, but by Soviet surrogates, possibly in the form of liberation movements. The Secretary determined that Angola was where the challenge would arise. He directed that the U.S. undertake a covert action program against the Neto group, to throw them out of Luanda. Working closely with the South African government and through our CIA, a "flying column" of mercenaries was organized to enter Angola and to gain control of the capital.

At that time, you may recall, we had an Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs who objected and requested reassignment as a form of protest. He was reassigned and Kissinger persisted in adventure. The flying column entered Angola and were cutting through Neto forces, with the assistance of Savimbi and his crowd. As they approached Luanda, Holden Roberto and Savimbi suggested it would be more seemly to permit their forces to enter the capital. The mercenary force stood down. We agreed, as did the government of Pretoria. In the intervening period, the Russians injected thousands of Cuban troops and provided military supplies. Lo and behold, the flying column was sent flying back to neighboring Namibia.

Kissinger then wanted to raise the ante, but by then our intervention had become public knowledge, and Congress then passed the Clark resolution which enjoined the U.S. further involvement, covert or non-covert, in Angola and Southern Africa. Kissinger's effort failed rather badly. But, we continued, covertly to provide arms to Savimbi, and kept the movement alive until the arrival of the Reagan Administration, when the operation became a lynchpin of the Reagan Doctrine -- i.e., support for anti-Soviet insurgency operations.

Q: Did you get involved with this?

LEWIS: Only indirectly. This was a covert action program. We bureaucrats in the Bureau were excluded from any involvement.

Q: While you were dealing this whole time particularly with Africa, did the legitimate arms sellers in the United States play any role; I'm thinking about selling planes or equipment. I mean, did they come to you and say, "You got to get us a bigger market", or this type of thing?

LEWIS: The period at the onset of the Carter Administration was an interesting one. Carter and his people in the White House and in State, believed generally that human rights considerations should be an overriding concern in foreign policy -- that the U.S. should no longer be the world's leading arms supplier. In short, the Administration wished to move away from real politik, towards ideal politik, emphasizing human rights and support for democracy. Consonant with this, then, the President issued a directive, PD-13, in May 1977, that declared the U.S. should not, among other things...

Q: '77.

LEWIS: '77, yes; U.S. embassies and consulates should not provide assistance to American firms marketing military products in the Third World. The PD also announced the President intended to personally review major arms supply sales to countries in the Third World. Various other limitations and restraints were directed, and remained in effect until the overthrow of the Shah.

Q: What was your impression, try to capture how things were run, of Dick Moose as head of the AF.

LEWIS: Moose had been a junior Foreign Service officer who early in his career decided that he did not wish to continue in the Foreign Service. Being from Arkansas, he was invited to join the staff of Senator Fulbright. Moose was deeply involved criticizing U.S. involvement in the Vietnam conflict, convinced that the U.S. was on the wrong track in Vietnam. During the Ford Administration, he endorsed the view that we should shift priorities in the foreign policy area away from the use of military force and emphasize human rights concerns, as well as support democratization efforts in the Third World. When he returned to the State Department in '77, Moose was appointed Deputy Under Secretary for Administration. But after several months something went awry. At that

time, as the Director for African Regional Affairs, I was responsible for setting up a Chiefs of Mission conference; it was held in Abidjan in the Spring of '77. The purpose was to discuss new strategies that might be adopted in Africa. Andrew Young was the principal driver in terms of policy content. Moose indicated to me that he would like to attend the conference. He was invited, and did so as Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration. He and Andrew Young apparently hit it off personally. They agreed on a policy approach that would be accorded high priority to Southern Africa and the White Redoubt problem. As a result, Andrew Young supported Moose's moving down from the number five to the number 12 position at the State Department, i.e., Assistant Secretary for African Affairs.

Moose clearly mistrusted his inherited Foreign Service bureaucracy. He apparently believed that a number of us were unreconstructed, unrehabilitated real politik, and that he should look elsewhere for loyalty and support for policy approaches. This became manifest with tensions that developed with several office directors, whose careers suffered badly as a result. In one case, one deputy office director was in such disagreement with Moose's approach that he requested he be relieved of his responsibilities and transferred elsewhere. So it was a Bureau that had difficulty in the initial period adjusting to shifts in policy, as well as adjusting to Moose's idiosyncratic way of running the Bureau itself.

Q: I take it he was not as well organized; this is the problem with the Carter administration, and of course, the irony is he came back under the Clinton Administration again as the head of the Administration.

LEWIS: His credentials were not impeccable as far as Administration was concerned, and it showed up in the way in which he handled Senior Foreign Service officers in the Bureau, as well as his handling of officers returning from field assignments. He tended, on the whole, to be quite suspicious of anybody who had served in Kissinger's State Department.

Q: Did you find, when you were looking at regional affairs, that there were certain areas that you say, like Chad and elsewhere, this is French, and let's just stay out of it?

LEWIS: In the period prior to the arrival of the Carter Administration, I think there was a greater degree of mutual understanding between ourselves and the French with respect to Africa and African problems. Kissinger himself, I think, developed a very close relationship with the French Foreign Minister and others in the French government. There was not as much disparity of view and friction as we see today, under the Chirac government.

In the Carter period, the emphasis on human rights and condemnation of governments Francophone or Anglophone, for abuses, proved an irritant to the government in Paris. The British had a different view; they didn't feel that their interests were threatened by this; they did feel the need to engage in polemics with Washington, because on the whole, London believed the special trans-Atlantic relationship was holding. On the other

hand, some British corporations, and officials in defense, expressed concern with Carter Phase II foreign policy, in which we began seeking access to military facilities in Africa and offering arms in exchange. I remember such an occasion with regard to Kenya. I was the Deputy Chief of a military survey mission that was assigned to Kenya; the Head of Mission was a two-star general, a very, very fine officer. He and I got along exceedingly well. We both wished to avoid excessive exuberance in providing military equipment to Kenya. We did make a recommendation to the White House that was subsequently approved -- i.e., the U.S. should sell a squadron of helicopters to the Kenyan government to enhance their long-range reconnaissance capabilities in the northeast area. This was intended to ensure some degree of control over refractory Somali clans. I was invited to London to meet with people in the Ministry of Defence. They made it clear that as far as Defence were concerned, and made it very clear that as far as they were concerned, Kenya was their preserve, and that they would oppose in every way possible the sale of American military equipment to the Kenyan military.

Moreover, they expressed unhappiness that General Hill, leader of our mission, had indicated to the Kenyan Minister of Defense that corruption was rampant in the Kenyan military, and that was one reason why the U.S. government proposed to approach our special ties with a great deal of caution. Hill urged the Minister of Defense to have his generals clean up their act. Well, not surprisingly, it was reported to London, and during my discussions with British Defence officials who noted; "You realize that this impetuous general of yours has to cast suspicion on the integrity of the Kenyan military establishment, but indirectly he is pointing an accusatory finger at us. He is suggesting we're turning a blind eye on corruption within the Kenyan military; we resent this very deeply." It was an attack on our mission, which I tried to shrug off. It also reflected a British sensitivity with respect to the arms market and the appearance of American competition.

Q: Did you have anything during this Carter period, any dealings with Patt Derian, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights?

LEWIS: Yes, we did. Derian arrived in an inhospitable atmosphere which reinforced her view, that there had been too much of Kissingerian nonsense, to put it politely. Patt was intent on ending this. Assistant Secretary Patt Derian made clear that the human rights performance of other governments would be closely scrutinized. Patt made it a point to bring in newly-minted American ambassadors before they departed for field assignments, to wave a finger under their noses, and say rather directly: "Well, ambassador, I want you to know I'm going to be watching your performance in terms of human rights, and if I get any indication that you're not performing up to the standard demanded by the White House, you're going to be recalled immediately for reassignment." In other words, Patt proposed to be the Inspector General for human rights matters. Her approach had the desired effect in some quarters.

But Derian sometimes went off the reservation a bit. I remember when I was in Khartoum involved in a military survey mission, that Patt had been apprised of a terrible -- and it was terrible -- problem of female circumcision, a tribal rite in Sudan. Patt had a message

sent out to Khartoum demanding our ambassador approach President Nimeiri and insist that this practice be terminated post haste. The ambassador reported back that he had admonished the President of Sudan on this matter, not that the President could do a thing about it.

Q: This was Nimeiri?

LEWIS: Yes, this was Nimeiri. The ambassador, an old friend of mine, reported back that he had admonished the President on this matter, and the President would take appropriate action. In actual fact, he hadn't said a word to the President. The intervention would have been viewed as blatant intervention in Sudan's affairs. Nevertheless, Patt did have an impact elsewhere. Remember that Patt, very much an activist, was involved in the early phases on the unfolding Iran crisis. It was Patt and her Bureau that held up the sale of police equipment to Teheran in '77, the contention being that the Shah had adopted authoritarian measures and that gross human rights abuses were becoming apparent. Therefore, the U.S. should not provide crowd control devices. Well, the Shah became aware of this and was very much distressed, particularly after the episode involving the Somalis. But to his surprise, adding to the confusion over American policy, you may recall that President Carter arrived in Teheran around Christmas time of 1977 and toasted the Shah for the very liberal leader he was. By that time, we were flogging something like \$50-60 million in military equipment to the Iranians, and we had 40,000 Americans there. But this is added to the Shah's confusion. Here you have one part of the Department sending out critical epistles saying you can't do this, and then the President arrived saying, you're a fine old fellow.

Another facet was the requirement to produce country-by-country human rights reports and evaluations. That became another contentious issue -- i.e., whether various office directors in the African Affairs Bureau, as well as elsewhere, were providing the toughest-minded, most hard-headed evaluations of human rights situations. Before annual reports were issued, a tremendous amount of time was devoted to "negotiations" in which perceptions clashed repeatedly.

Remember that this first arose during the Kissinger period, as Secretary of State. Congress had indicated in legislation that human rights reports should be prepared each year; initially, Kissinger was unalterably opposed. He believed that from a diplomatic point of view could undermine relationships; but he did not publicly declare opposition, as I recall. He encouraged delaying tactics on the part of State Department people, however.

Q: What was your impression of influence while you were there on Andrew Young and our African policy?

LEWIS: Andrew Young was, for all intents and purposes, the principal architect of our African policy, establishing the basic frame of reference and goals for policy. Recall that at the time of the arrival of the Carter Administration, the U.S. government in general, and State Department in particular, were held in very low esteem by most Black African

leaders. By 1976 they were aware that our policy was to ignore them and to concentrate on White Redoubt Southern Africa. When Young arrived at the UN, he found that we needed to establish the credibility that we were adopting a different approach to Africa's problems. Early on, he made an extensive swing through sub-Saharan Africa, meeting with Chiefs of State and convincing many of them regarding U.S. intentions, although some remained agnostic. The highest priority would be Southern Africa, he pledged, and the U.S. would do everything in its power to work with the British in the case of Southern Rhodesia to end the White regime there. It would also end any special ties, military, paramilitary, covert in nature, with White ruled South Africa; indeed, we would exercise pressure on the South African government to withdraw from Namibia and to withdraw its support for Savimbi in Angola. That was the first priority.

The second priority was to assist Black African governments. We would feel free to criticize them where there were gross and consistent human rights violations, we would, as we began to draw down the levels of arms transfer programs in Africa, try to replace these programs with significant increases in economic aid. Peace Corps involvement would increase as well. We proposed to move towards a confrontational posture with the White regimes, and seek to end the UN role in Namibia. We would also try to enhance economic prospects in the other areas of Africa.

Q: Was he able, did you feel his hand where you were involved?

LEWIS: Not on a daily basis, but my impression was that any significant initiative that might be taken by Moose and company would be checked out first with Andrew Young, and if not Andrew Young, then Andrew Young's deputy at the United Nations, R. Aggrey. And so that became the preferred channel on that side.

My impression was, and remains, that essentially, with the exception of Northeast Africa, the White House generally deferred to Andrew Young, his deputy, and Dick Moose with regard to the remainder of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Q: Now, during the Kissinger regime, it had been an article of faith that there was a significant Soviet threat in the area, and really, even before that. I mean, we were talking about the Soviets in the 1960's in the Congo and elsewhere. What was the feeling within the Bureau during this time you were there, the '75-'80 period, of the Soviet threat?

LEWIS: During the '75 period, when Dr. Kissinger was orchestrating strategy, it became an overriding concern in terms of the Secretary's perspective, particularly Soviet support for African liberation movements. The Secretary remained, in '73 and '74, wedded to the strategic notion that the U.S. should treat most of Black Africa with -- in the term of the day -- benign neglect, and that the U.S. priority was to ensure that the White Redoubt area of Africa should be secure from Soviet influence. Consonant with that view, the approach he took was to support Mobutu in Zaire. Mobutu was our creature, we created him in 1965. He was the recipient of a substantial amount of American assistance, official and covert. Mobutu was a channel for the provision of assistance to the Unita movement and to Holden Roberto, to ensure that Angola did not become a Soviet satellite.

In the case of the Mozambique, we turned a blind eye and did not denounce the creation of a counter-Frelimo liberation movement, which was supported by Southern Rhodesian Whites, and by the Government of South Africa.

In the case of South Africa, we clearly exchanged intelligence information, and estimates on the Soviet “threat” in Southern Africa. That was an abiding concern, but it was consonant with the findings of National Security Study Memorandum #39, in the context of world-wide competition with Moscow.

Now, this represented a paradox, in the sense that here we were entering a period, Kissinger thought, of detente with Moscow in the early ‘70s. He attempted to massage Moscow; yet, we wanted middle regional power closely aligned with us on security issues. You had a certain hedge here, reflecting incompatibilities of policy and strategy vis a vis Moscow. Detente, but we don’t want Moscow to gain control over sub-Saharan Africa.

Q: Within the African Bureau, and from the posts, and getting information, was this, did they tend to see things in a more parochial way? I mean, they weren’t seeing...

LEWIS: There was not the true global strategic overview that Kissinger had fashioned. On the other hand, Bill Schauffele, as Assistant Secretary, was very cognizant of Kissinger’s preferences and did attempt as best he could to keep a balance in terms of realistic approaches. But Kissinger was the overriding force as far as the policy on the continent was concerned.

Q: How about when the Carter Administration came in? Did the Soviet threat seem to be still as great?

LEWIS: I tend to view the Carter Administration as Carter Phase I and Carter Phase II. Carter Phase I was the one in which there was a benign view of the world at large in which the President expressed a desire to shift away from real politik policies -- to de-emphasize military force, military power, alliances, arms transfers and to favor instead democracy and human rights concerns. That approach held up until the end of 1978 and early ‘79.

When you enter Carter Phase II, you have the Carter Doctrine relating to the Persian Gulf, and the search for bases, and the use of arms transfer -- this represented a complete reversal of position. You may recall that at that stage, the onset of Phase II, Carter said, I think, with political embarrassment, “Now I understand what the Russians are up to.”

Q: We’re talking, really, about post-Afghanistan, in a way, which was the...

LEWIS: Post-Afghanistan?

Q: Well, I mean, the post-invasion of Afghanistan by Soviets in December ‘79.

LEWIS: Correct.

Q: And then, of course, we have the Iranian hostage takeover.

LEWIS: The hostage takeover and the perceived shift of the power pendulum in favor of Iran in the Gulf area. This produced a U.S. emphasis on the Horn region as a zone in which we would contest Soviet influence. This was the situation in which you have the arrival of the Reagan Administration. The Reagan Doctrine is announced, and part of the Reagan Doctrine emphasized that we would create our own liberation movements -- e.g., the Contras in Central America -- and these liberation movements would seek to overthrow Communist regimes.

One of the areas that we contested was Ethiopia, and we began covertly to provide assistance to the Eritrean liberation movement and others, to get rid of the sharpshooter, the infamous Colonel Mengistu, who had now turned full bore to Moscow to prop up his regime and who was seeking to transform Ethiopian society along essentially Marxist lines.

Q: Well, during the time you were in the African Bureau, it's been sort of a tenet of faith regarding African policy that the boundaries of these states may be lousy, but any changing of the boundaries of the states would be even lousier. How did you all feel about this?

LEWIS: There was full acknowledgement that the OAU Charter stipulated that the boundaries inherited from the Colonial period should be respected, that there could only be changes as a result of peaceful negotiation, not under duress. Therefore, there was recognition in the Carter White House that the Somalis, when they invaded the region, this could not be supported. The OAU would not sanction or approve the invasion of Ogaden in any way. There have been many boundary disputes, and military force has been used outside the Horn region. You may recall the war between Tanzania and Uganda, when Idi Amin tried to seize control of territory; finally Tanzanian forces and Ugandan threw out Idi Amin.

In terms of boundaries, they are meaningless with respect to the ability in many countries to monitor them -- there is recognition they have no ability to patrol or maintain control over their boundaries. They are frontiers, zones of geographic expression, and indeed, as time went by, after many of these countries became independent, the fiat of government didn't extend throughout the country; the span of government control was circumscribed.

Boundary disputes erupted elsewhere. For example, the Libyan invasion of Chad and the Aouzou Strip involved multiple boundary questions. The OAU tried to deal with them by sending out wise men, which didn't work terribly well.

There was the Moroccan claim, historically grounded, to territory in Mauritania and Mali. Shortly after Morocco gained its independence in 1956, the then George Washington of

Moroccan independence, Mohammed V, issued a public statement saying that the boundaries of Morocco should be extended to include all the historic frontiers of tribes that one time or another owed loyalty to the Moroccan monarchy. This led to a brief but punishing border war in 1963 with Algeria, and of course, it opened up after Francisco Franco's death the question of Western Sahara. Most of the African OAU member states recognized the SADR, the government in exile, not Morocco's control. Morocco also had to reconsider its claims to northern Mauritania and northern Mali. But these things still obtain, and could lead to future conflict.

Q: Bill, again, the time you were there, what about the role of Libya and its influence south, into the area that AF was concerned with?

LEWIS: In the case of Libya, its boundary was reasonably well determined by cartographers at the time of its independence in 1950-1951. Libya was viewed by many as a geographic expression, one presided over by the monarch Idris I, an elderly gentleman without male issue, as they put it in England. But we financed Libya so that we could have access to a base called Wheelus Field outside Tripoli.

In September '69, Idris was overthrown while on vacation in Turkey, and control of Libya then fell to a young military officer named Muammar Qadhafi, a man of limited background and foreign affairs experience. In due course, Qadhafi tried to unite Libya with the other Arab nations; he's a firm believer in Arab unity. He had been influenced heavily by Nasser when Qadhafi was a young student. But each of his efforts to form a federation with Arab neighbors fell apart. Sadat couldn't stand his primitive views; he couldn't get along with Syria; an effort at federation with Tunisia lasted 72 hours, when Bourguiba, the then-President of Tunisia, heard about it -- he hadn't been consulted by his Foreign Minister; he terminated it quickly and sacked the Foreign Minister from office.

As a result of rising frustration, Qadhafi was looking elsewhere for targets for federation, and Chad looked like a promising area. There was disagreement over the Aouzou Strip, and on top of this, people in Northern Chad -- nomadic and semi-nomadic -- were Muslim. But they did not control Chad politically. The top echelons were controlled by a Black African population called the Saras, a tribal group. The Saras had benefited most directly from French rule and therefore controlled the senior echelons of government.

The problem was the people in Northern Chad were dissatisfied under the Sara domination. The Sara were not Muslim, they were not of the same culture and background. Insurgency erupted with regularity in Chad. Qadhafi, increasingly frustrated by an inability to enter into a long-lasting federation with Arab countries, decided to extend Libya's frontier southward. Libya was to have an empire-building mission in not just Chad, but all of the Saharan Desert regions. According to the best reports we had, the Libyans intended to create a central African republic, united with Libya. Chad would be the starting point, to later include portions of Niger, Mali, Mauritania, and ultimately even southern Algeria. I mean, this man appeared a megalomaniac.

Qadhafi sent covert assistance to the tribes of northern Chad, and in due course, even sent some Libyan forces into the conflict. The OAU intervened, failed to negotiate resolution of the problem, and it fell to the Reagan Administration to deal with the problem.

As Libyan forces went into Chad, Khartoum expressed its concerns and asked Washington to signal Qadhafi we could not accept the intervention of Libyan forces in northern Chad, thus threatening Sudan. We deployed a mighty force -- I think it was six or seven F-15's, unarmed -- to Khartoum, whereupon Qadhafi said, "What, they're unarmed, the Americans aren't terribly serious." The firmer came later when the Reagan Administration decided that Qadhafi would be Public Enemy Number One in Africa, and that we had to thwart his ambition.

Q: I'm really talking about the time you were...

LEWIS: Yes. Briefly, the point is that in due course, the French were prepared, at the urging from Washington, to intervene with military forces and curtail the activities of Mr. Qadhafi south of a certain parallel in Chad. But while we were involved in the Bureau, under the Carter Administration, we didn't really deal directly with Chad in any meaningful way. We relied on OAU "wise men" to intervene and try to solve the problem.

Q: Any other countries in Africa, Zaire,...

LEWIS: Nigeria was a matter of growing concern, because there we faced the problem of the seizure of political power by the military. Democracy and human rights, you may recall, was the leitmotif of the Carter Administration which hoped the military would return power to civilian authority -- that Nigeria would return to the path of Democracy. That hope failed, failed very badly. I think Andrew Young and others were deeply disappointed on that score, because it raised doubts in some circles that we had to bring representative democracy to Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and to South Africa. So in a sense, Nigeria undercut that argument.

Q: So, I mean, you know, the assumption was well, the Blacks can't get it together.

LEWIS: Well, there was that, and also, if you're talking about human rights, then you have the question of one man rule and all the rest of these things. You have that fascinating character Emperor Bokassa and the Central African Empire killing his countrymen.

Q: Was Idi Amin going when you were there?

LEWIS: Idi Amin was Ugandan autocrat.

Q: This was in Uganda.

LEWIS: Yes. He was overthrown by the Tanzanians in 1979, and has received sanctuary in Saudi Arabia. He professed himself to be a Muslim. An interesting case, Idi Amin. He also, like our friend Bokassa in the Central African Empire, was a sergeant who rose through the ranks and in due course seized power. In the case of Idi Amin, he had received paratroop training by the Israelis, and proudly showed his paratroop patch, yet he was a Muslim. And when we had that '76 crisis in which an Israeli plane was seized and landed at Entebbe Idi Amin played host to a number of Israeli citizens.

Q: Did we get involved during that time?

LEWIS: In the rescue operation? Yes, we did, because at that time we still had some influence in northeast Africa. The Ethiopians had to be approached in terms of overflight by Israeli military aircraft. I believe we quietly, even though we were not on good terms with Mengistu, made clear to some people that we hoped they would not interfere. The Ethiopians acquiesced to overflight. I don't think the Sudan was directly involved; it was primarily Ethiopia.

Q: Any other areas?

LEWIS: Let me think. The other area, of course, that was very contentious, was Zaire, but we prevailed upon -- Congress despite a great deal of grumbling -- to continue to provide significant amounts of aid. Our military aid did not produce a very significantly improved performance on the part of the Zaire's military.

Q: What was your, maybe some of the other people in the African Bureau, feeling toward Zaire and Mobutu at the time?

LEWIS: Well, during the Kissinger period, clearly the Zaire account, as they put it, was under the control of the Secretary, a few of his advisers, and the Central Intelligence Agency. The principal support channel was outside of the hands of the State Department. We did have an Ambassador named Bob Oakley, who tried to ameliorate the situation. He was severely chastised by Mobutu who, I think, attempted to have him removed. Did Washington pull Oakley?

Q: I can't remember. Well, you left the African Bureau in what, 1980?

LEWIS: Yes, '79-'80, and went to George Washington University and enjoyed my period there, and in doing so, established a graduate program in security policy studies, which remains to this day the largest professional program in the School of Foreign Affairs.

Q: Did you find when you moved to the academic side that there was still a tie to the government?

LEWIS: What do you mean by "tie"?

Q: Well, in other words, were you ever called upon to help look at things and that, or...

LEWIS: Oh, yes, I was invited to participate in some State Department meetings dealing with primarily Northern Africa, but also West African problems involving boundary disputes. Another matter of very real concern at that time was the growing spread of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa and the political/military implications. I was also invited by members of Congress to write a special report on the Horn area and the post-Carter policies that might be adopted.

In recent years, I've been associated with the Department of Defense's National Defense University, and with the Institute for National Strategic Studies, which is not an academic institute; it actually does perform special and useful services for the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, some of the unified commanders such as CENTCOM. These are policy analyses and contingency studies.

Q: Well, going back to the time you were in the AF Bureau: I'm in the process of interviewing Stephen Solarz, of Congress; he at one point had the committee for Africa. Did he come into our purview at all while you were there?

LEWIS: Only in the latter stages. During much of the period that I was there, it was Congressman Diggs who was Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa. The relationship with the Department was frequently contentious, because Diggs believed that the Kissinger approach, with the benign neglect and all the rest, was racist, or reflected denial of traditional American values. And so, he tended to be very skeptical about policies in Africa during his stewardship of that particular committee.

Solarz came somewhat after that, and I had to deal with Solarz for a bit of time. He was somewhat more even-handed, but he, too, was skeptical on policy issues. Solarz was a very much more constructive and activist type of chairman during his period, and I thought he did a very, very good job.

Q: Well, Bill, why don't we stop at this point?

LEWIS: I agree.

End of interview