Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR PRINCETON LYMAN

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INTERVIEW

Q: Let me just ask how you got the name "Princeton."

LYMAN: The easiest explanation is that I have brothers named Yale, Harvard and Stanford. I also have a brother named Elliott and a sister named Sylvia. I don't know how these nomenclatures got started. I guess it was an extraordinary example of immigrant parents determined that their children would go to universities. Of course, being very practical, we all ended up in the University of California – not the expensive schools we were named after.

Q: Let start with when were you were born and something about your parents.

LYMAN: I was born in San Francisco in 1935. My parents were both immigrants from Lithuania. They met in Boston. My father finally ended up in San Francisco after having bounced around the East Coast for a while. In San Francisco, he bought a small pie store which he then converted into a grocery store. He then invited my mother to come to California and they got married there and remained there.

My father in particular was a "news junkie." We listened to every newscaster all day long. In those days, the radio waves were filled with reporters, and commentators like Cecil Brown, Gabriel Heater, H.V. Kaltenborn, etc. We listened to one after another. In those days, we had four dailies in San Francisco; my father read every one from cover to cover day in and day out. So we grew up in an atmosphere which focused on news. We worked a lot in the store and listened to the radio while we worked. Then, as now, San Francisco looked toward Asia; so international events in the Pacific especially were important.

We grew up during WWII. That also had a great influence on our interest in international affairs. I remember that as a small child wondering what the newspapers would cover once the war was over, because every day all the pages were filled with war reports.

Q: How far had your parents gone in school?

LYMAN: My father had gone through high school or maybe even a little beyond that. He had some Jewish religious training, but much of his knowledge was acquired by his own efforts. He spoke six or seven languages; he had a wonderful library in the house. He was mostly self-educated. My mother probably didn't get beyond high school.

Q: This was a period when many were self-educated. Harry Truman, for example, didn't get beyond high school, but was very knowledgeable thanks this his constant reading. In those days you could do that without people asking for your diplomas. Did your father wish you to pursue Jewish education?

LYMAN: Yes, he did. We all went to Sunday school when we were small. Then I went to Hebrew school every day after my day in public school; I did that for seven years. As so often happened in our family, we all started at the same time, which meant that my oldest brother was twelve and I was six. My parents put a lot of emphasis on Jewish education.

But my father was a part of the European socialist revolutionary tradition (although he himself was not a revolutionary), which gave him an anti-institution bias. So he refused to join a synagogue, yet we children were to attend. It was that kind of thing. But no doubt that our Jewish education had considerable impact; it was a major part of our orientation and culture.

My father's anti-institutional bias came out in other ways. He hated the phone company; that was his symbol for all that was evil and exploitative in large institutions. So he wouldn't pay the phone bill until after several reminders from the company, until it threatened to cut off the service; only then he would pay it. He did this virtually every month. He made several small gestures of rebellion like that.

Q: Was father involved in any of the labor union movements which were so predominant in California?

LYMAN: He didn't get involved in any of that, although we were very conscious of Harry Bridges a radical leader of the longshoreman's union and his politics. But my father, being a small store owner, had a conservative side to him as well. He was for protecting small business; as I said we all worked in the business, in part so that he wouldn't have to hire any union laborers. So he was both a liberal and a conservative tinge to his philosophy.

Q: Did you have periodic discussions over the dining room table?

LYMAN: We talked about international and other political affairs. However, my parents during my formative years worked in the store 12-14 hours a day, seven days a week. So we didn't see them that much, except when we worked at the store. We had a live-in lady at home who provided much of our care. After the war was over, the store reduced its hours of operations, but before then, we mostly saw our parents at the store. We would eat there and see them there.

Q: Where did you live in San Francisco and where was your father's store?

LYMAN: We lived in the Richmond district which was close to the beach. I grew up thinking that the whole world didn't see the sun before twelve because in that part of San Francisco, the fog didn't lift until then. The store was in a neighborhood – the Fillmore district – that had become largely an African-American community. When my father first opened the store, it was a fairly high class neighborhood; e.g. Henry Morgenthau's family lived there. But by the time the depression and WWII had taken its toll, the neighborhood had become a blue collar neighborhood, largely, as I said, African- American. So we traveled back and forth between the Richmond and Fillmore distracts.

Q: I recognize that we are now talking about a very different era than today, but I wonder what the relationship between a Jewish shop keeper and his black customers were then?

LYMAN: As you say, it was a different era. We didn't have the kind of tensions that one might see today in places like New York and Washington – black neighborhoods and Korean grocers. We had the general problems of people who may have had too much to drink or who stole, but we also had very close relationships with a whole range of customers with whom we became well acquainted. In those days, my father would give credit and that gave him some cache with the neighborhood. We used to let the customers have the goods they needed and just kept a credit log on them. So I never felt the kind of racial tension working in the store which one hears about in other venues and times.

Q: As you suggested, there was no doubt as you were growing up that you would go to university. Is that right?

LYMAN: That was taken for granted, although ironically, my brother Elliott, who was the only son not named for a university, indeed did not go to college. The rest of us all followed in the tradition started by my oldest brother who went to the University of California at Berkeley. I did a year at Stanford before transferring to that university, but there as never any question that we would all get university degrees.

Q: Where did you go to grammar school?

LYMAN: I went to Lafayette School, which was close enough so that I could walk there from my house – eight or nine blocks. I remember some of my elementary school teachers, especially my fifth grade teacher who was a very strong woman. They did a lot for us.

Q: How about reading?

LYMAN: The lady who lived with us was also determined that we do very well academically. So I learned to read before I went to kindergarten; we were constantly encouraged to read and read. What we were not encouraged – and that was a great loss – was to learn another language. The lady convinced my parents that if they didn't speak English to us, we would never learn it. So my parents spoke Yiddish to each other, but always English to us.

Q: Where did you go to high school?

LYMAN: I went to George Washington (GW) High School. In San Francisco, students were free to attend any high school they wished; they didn't have to attend their neighborhood school. GW was one of the few that had a high academic, college-oriented, program on the one hand and on the other, a very elaborate technical training program for those who wanted to get into such things as automotive repairs, etc. So the school had a very good mix of students. We had a lot of racial diversity. My brother Stanford who was two years older than me became very close friends with some Chinese American students; that really influenced his career choice; he became a leading scholar on the role

of Orientals in America. It was a very good school, with some outstanding teachers. They had an impact on our writing abilities as well as some of our extra-curricular activities. I still have a subscription to *Atlantic Monthly* which we were advised to do by our English teacher.

Q: What were your literary interests?

LYMAN: I read a lot of dog stories when I was younger – we had a dog. I read all of Albert Terhune's books, and Black Beauty and similar books. I liked historical novels—like Les Miserables which are still my passion today. But I must admit that in high school, I didn't do much more reading than I was assigned. We had a lot of homework and in addition, I had to work in the store after school for four hours. So by the time I had finished eating and doing my homework, there wasn't much time for anything else. I did try cross-country running only because it was the one sport which didn't require after-school practice time.

Q: By the time you had finished high school, what kind of a store did your father own?

LYMAN: It was a typical corner small grocery store. It had fresh meat, fresh fruits and vegetables as well as alcoholic beverages, which were the most profitable items. It was a store that could be managed by just the family. My father and mother stayed with this store until the late 1950s (my mother died in 1948) when the neighborhood deteriorated and had to be torn down and redeveloped.

Q: Did you pick up any management techniques while working at the store?

LYMAN: Yes particularly later on when during college, we kids ran the store on week-ends. My father would not go in very much and my mother had passed away. So we split responsibility for the various aspects of the store. Eventually, I was put in charge of the butcher section; I also did the book-keeping which I had learned from my mother when I was about 13 or 14. I hated to work in the store when I was a kid, but it was probably a good education.

Q: What about a social life?

LYMAN: I had one. We all belonged to a Jewish youth group called AZA. That and high school were the center of my social life. I was president of my high school class for one semester and a school officer in my senior year; that shaped much of my social life. In fact, I met my wife then – that is, we started dating in high school. She was the daughter of German Jewish immigrants, who had escaped just before the worst of the Nazi atrocities took place. She almost broke up with me because she could barely face the prospect of traveling around the world and moving from place to place. But she finally overcame that concern and we became engaged during my undergraduate college days and married right after graduation. She supported me to a considerable extent through graduate school by working in a bank. Her undergraduate degree was in social work, but

not having a graduate degree, she couldn't pursue that profession. We lost a child during my graduate school days, which was very traumatic. When we came to Washington, she went to work for the Red Cross for a while. We later had three more children; two were born soon after our arrival in Washington after which she stayed home to take care of them. But she was always wary about going overseas – very nervous.

There was some worry on her parents' part about her marrying a Lithuanian Jew. But I got along very well with her parents so that any reservations dissipated quickly. But there was no question that they wondered how this "mixed" marriage might work out. My wife picked up a lot of that skepticism while growing up. But I think WWII was a great leveler. Everybody pitched in to help the Jewish refugees regardless of country of origin and soon found out that all faced the same challenges. So many of the prejudices abated during this period, but some of it was still there.

My wife always jokes about that what people call "Jewish" food was not what she was accustomed to as a child. What she was used to was "German" food. What we called "Jewish" was really eastern European food. She never had gefilte fish in her house; she didn't know what that was until much later. I think this was the lighter side of the cleavage that existed among the various segments of the Jewish community.

My wife's attitude toward her heritage was different than mine. My folks didn't speak Lithuanian; they spoke Yiddish, as I mentioned earlier. Their attitude toward that part of their heritage was positive. My wife has always been troubled by her German heritage because of the Nazi era and she has never gloried in speaking German. She never even wanted to visit Germany; when I made a trip to Berlin two years ago, she was appalled.

Q: You graduated from high school in 1953. Were you interested in foreign affairs by this time?

LYMAN: By the time I graduated, I knew that I wanted a career in foreign affairs. I thought that my focus would be Asia – south or south-east. I had some thoughts about dividing my life between government work and teaching. So even in high school, I aspired to obtain a graduate degree.

Q: What attracted you to the international arena?

LYMAN: I guess it was partly growing up in a family where the parents had come from Europe under difficult circumstances, partly because my young life was as an observer of WWII and partly because international affairs seemed exotic. If you wanted to leave home, how much better can it be than being in a far away place?

Q: Did your parents describe to you at any great length the family history?

LYMAN: It was more an indirect transmission than an outright history lesson. They didn't talk a lot about their lives in Lithuania nor about their parents and grandparents.

My father left Lithuania in 1911; so he didn't have much contact with his family during WWII and very little if any afterwards. My parents may not have spoken directly about their lives, but one could sense some of the difficult times they had to overcome.

Q: In 1953, you had a choice of entering the military or going to college.

LYMAN: I went to college and received deferments all the way though undergraduate and graduate schools. As I said, I spent my first year at Stanford. I majored in political science.

Q: Why did you leave Stanford?

LYMAN: I wasn't very happy with my room-mates. They seemed to me to be too frivolous as well as too class conscious. I guess I just didn't feel comfortable there and didn't enjoy the experience. The academic program was excellent. The Western Civilization course that I took – as a requirement for freshmen – was one of the best courses I took in college – absolutely first class. So Stanford was academically very good, but I didn't like my fellow students. Furthermore, I had a lot of friends at Berkeley so that I decided to transfer after my freshman year.

I was at Berkeley from 1954 to 1957. This was before the student rebelliousness had manifested itself. But by the time I graduated, the beginnings of that mood was becoming noticeable. During my stay, fraternities were still very prominent; in fact, I was in a Jewish fraternity for two years, but spent my senior year in an apartment.

At Berkeley at that time there was a great emphasis on sports without any denigration of the academics which were an extremely good balance. But there was not much of a social movement or any protests. We could pick that up when in my senior year, the student government shifted out of the hands of the fraternities – for the first time – into the hands of people who were more interested in social causes and who didn't live in fraternities. We could notice changes coming.

Q: Was the Asian-American community as prominent in your days on campus as it is today?

LYMAN: No. But I might just note that my old high school is now 50% or 60% Asian today. That was not true when I attended it and the same thing goes for Berkeley. As I said, my brother Stanford was very close to the Asian-American students. At that time, the Chinese community had not broken out of Chinatown. Now of course, there are large segments of that community in the Richmond district where I grew up. A whole new generation has exploded into all kinds of neighborhoods and professions. So Asian-Americans were present in the 1950s but were not as prominent as they are today.

Q: Your degree was in political science?

LYMAN: Right. One of my professors had been a Foreign Service officer – Eric Bellquist. I told him I was interested in the State Department and he encouraged me to pursue it. We had a lot of conversations about the Department and the Foreign Service. He was very helpful both in giving me sound advice as well as helping me obtain a scholarship for graduate school. I joined one of Berkeley's first honors programs in political science with two professors, who were not interested in international affairs, but who were very good. I wrote a long paper on French policy in Algeria – a hot subject at the time.

This was the time when the French were deeply involved in the war for independence in Algeria. The issue was how the French would manage to extricate themselves from Algeria. My paper focused on the options available to them.

I was also very active in the Berkeley debate team. We had an annual debate between Cal and Stanford. It was always on the topic of French foreign policy. I was fortunate in my senior year that the topic just so happened to be French policy in Algeria. So there was a great deal of interest at the time in colonialism and related issues.

Q: I assume that in view of your background, you were not very sympathetic toward colonialism.

LYMAN: Correct; I was a strong supporter of independence for Algeria and the other colonies.

Q: Did your academic courses begin to look at the consequences of the break-ups of these empires?

LYMAN: Yes; we discussed the issue in my courses on American foreign policy and others as well. But the preoccupation of all academic studies was the Cold War which was really emerging at the time. So we had discussions about the collapse of the empires, but it was related to the impact on the Cold War.

Q: Did Berkeley at the time have any voices articulating Marxist theory?

LYMAN: Not really. The leading light in international relations was Professor Ernest Haas, who wrote a great deal from a centrist point of view. We did not at the time have a vocal leftist faculty member.

Q: When you graduated from Cal in 1957, where did you go then?

LYMAN: I went to Harvard graduate school. I was accepted by both Harvard and Princeton, but Harvard offered me a scholarship and furthermore my professors urged me to go there. I was at Harvard from 1957 to 1961 when I acquired a PhD. I was still considering a period of time as a college professor.

The PhD program in Harvard consisted of two years' of course work, after which you almost automatically received a master's degree if you were in a PhD program. You had to pass an oral exam and then you spent two years writing your dissertation. A lot of people took longer than that, but I was very fortunate. I had an advisor who was also very oriented towards government service. He told me not to make the PhD the story of my life; it is just one step on a long journey. He urged me to finish it as quickly as possible and then to go to Washington to start my career. That is what I did; I did not go abroad to do any research; I did it all in the U.S. But it was during this time that I began to focus more on Asian studies.

What was worrisome to me and to the universities about PhD programs was that there were a number of people who became professional students. They would spend years and years in an academic institution. They could do so by living modestly. I was a teaching assistant for my last two years at Harvard; I had colleagues who lived in the dorms, received a very modest stipend, but who worked on their dissertation for four, five or even six years. They worked on it word by word; then they would take parts of their dissertation and write article after article. I didn't want to end up like that; I was anxious to get the dissertation finished and to move on with my life. My advisor fortunately felt the same way; had I had a different one, I might also have had been stuck in Harvard for several more years. Later, some of the universities on the East Coast began to apply limits forcing candidates to finish their dissertation within a given period of time.

Q: The period between 1957 and 1961 was a very active on American campuses. How did it play out at Harvard and did you participate at all?

LYMAN: A lot of Harvard people were called to Washington after Kennedy's election. Everybody was talking about joining the administration; for me, who had that desire even before the Kennedy victory, it was an exciting period. McGeorge Bundy was one of the people I worked for as a teaching assistant and he went to Washington as the National Security Advisor. I had taken a course from Henry Kissinger, who became involved in Washington later, and also worked as an assistant to him. So everybody at Harvard was excited and so was I. There was a lot of controversy in the early days of the Kennedy administration with the "Bay of Pigs" fiasco. There was a lot of anger and discussion about that at Harvard.

At the same time, the South-east Asia problem began to loom over the horizon. I did my dissertation on U.S. alliance policy in South-east Asia. I had two thesis advisors who were at exact opposite poles on this issue. They were at such logger heads that they had not spoken to each other in over a year. One was William Y. Elliott, a very conservative professor from Virginia; he had worked for Republican administrations. He was the hawk. The other was Rupert Emerson, a great scholar on colonialism. He had written a major book on Africa and had done a lot of work on Asia. But as I said the two had not spoken to each other until they had to sit together for my oral examination on my dissertation.

Q: How did that work with two advisors so different in their outlook?

LYMAN: I was very fortunate. I was casting around to pick a thesis advisor. Professor Elliott was more conservative than I was and I knew that my conclusions would be quite different from his. Nevertheless I had another instructor who advised me to go with Elliott because, she said, one can disagree with him and still have his respect. After I had written the first couple of chapters, he and I agreed to disagree, but he never used that against me.

The dissertation examination was wonderful for me because the two professors, both of whom I admired, had not talked to each other for over a year, but started to do so during my orals. They had a wonderful discussion while I sat there; toward the end of their dialogue, they asked me a few perfunctory questions and passed me. I think I accomplished two things in my examination: a) I had passed and b) I had brought these two antagonists together. This took place just as the Vietnam controversy was just beginning; one could see the tensions growing between these two professor representing broad audiences that would argue constantly over the next decade any beyond.

In my dissertation I focused on how the U.S. had put alliances together and the implications of making them. I looked at SEATO, ANZUS, etc. and examined how these multilateral alliances impacted on southeast Asia. I looked at the different commitments that we had made under each alliance – and they were very different from NATO, for example. None of the southeast Asia ones had the concept of an "attack on one was attack on all" as NATO had. The one clear recollection I have of the dissertation was that it seemed to me at the time that we might compromise on Laos, but not on Vietnam. Eventually, I was proven correct. Kennedy sent Averell Harriman to work out a deal on Laos in the 1960s. But Vietnam became a quagmire in which we got deeper and deeper.

Q: Were you the only one worrying about this part of the world?

LYMAN: No, it was beginning to get a lot of attention. It had not reached the emotional zenith of later years because we were not deeply involved yet, but it was beginning to be a test on where one stood on the Cold War – whether you were a hawk or looking for some accommodation with the communist world. Southeast Asia became one of the litmus tests.

Q: Did McCarthyism have any impact?

LYMAN: By the time I reached Harvard, it was pretty much history. But it did give me profound experience while I was at Berkeley. In fact there were two profound experiences. One was the McCarthy area which we found frightening, particularly for my parents. They saw it as a renewal of all they had hoped to have left behind – harassment for one's beliefs. I remember this period as vividly as I recall the WWII era. I will not forget the deep sense of unease that McCarthy generated.

The other profound experience was the Rosenberg trial. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were tried in 1950-51 for selling atomic secrets to the Soviets. It was a major spy trial which resulted in a death sentence for both. That was an extraordinary outcome at the time. It is still a controversial case and we now have material coming out of the Soviet archives which casts a somewhat different light on the whole episode. For Jewish-Americans, it was a very traumatic experience because not until the Pollard incident many years later was there such a challenge to the identity of Jewish-Americans. The Rosenberg trial raised the question of whether one could be a hyphened American and still be loyal to the U.S. So for my parents, and our relatives this was a very traumatic experience. Were the Rosenbergs really guilty, which would have been terrible as a case of misplaced loyalty, or was this just persecution of Jews? The death penalty only heightened the concern of the Jewish-American community. So both the trial and McCarthy's antics had a very profound impact on us because it raised the question of how one proves one's loyalty. Much of the faculty at Berkeley – and we – were quite concerned about McCarthy. We almost naturally aligned ourselves with the liberal, anti-McCarthy faction. To the extent that we were politically active in college, we supported Adlai Stevenson. I don't recall that here was a lot of activism on campus, however, but we did discuss all these matters at some length.

Q: I must say that I am still disturbed by the sentence in the Rosenberg trial. Another case that had an impact was the Hiss case which hit the WASP community. He disappointed a lot of people. Let me now move to another subject: Israel. Did that issue engage you much?

LYMAN: The independence period of 1948 and the outcome of the war was quite gratifying. It was the era of Israel "doing no wrong." For my family and I am sure that for a lot of other Jewish-American families, Harry Truman's recognition of Israel within minutes of its declaration of independence always stood out as one of his great feats. You may know that there was some sentiment, expressed most strongly within the Jewish Reform movement that was non-Zionist. In San Francisco, we had a prominent Rabbi who was opposed to Israel's independence. He caused great controversy in the Jewish community. Finally, he was let go from his pulpit because he represented a view-point which was not in the mainstream. Much of that sentiment has now disappeared.

Q: When you got your PhD in 1961, did you consider joining the academic world?

LYMAN: Yes; I applied to the U.S. government and at the same time I sent my resume to various parts of the academic world. I took the Foreign Service exam and passed it, but did not join it. That was a quirky turn in my career. I had come to Washington from Harvard to take the oral exam. I was asked what newspapers I read and a number of questions about various aspects of international affairs. The funniest question of all had to do with my foreign language capability. I told the panel that I had studied French primarily. I was asked whether my wife spoke any foreign languages. I said that she spoke German. The next question was whether I ever read French to my wife and she read German to me. I answered in the negative because we could not have understood what the

other was reading. The question really puzzled me, but the panel did not pursue the issue. I do remember that at the end being told that I had done very well and that since this was 1961, I could expect my first assignment to be to Africa. They reeled off all the capitals where we might be establishing representation; they were all new to me since I had never studied Africa. Who had ever heard of Ouagadougou? They asked me if I knew where these places were. I confessed that I did not. They suggested that I'd better learn because that was were I would be assigned.

I left the room thinking that I had just spent four years concentrating on southeast Asia; I had no interest in Africa whatsoever. So I looked around to see what other agency in Washington was involved in foreign affairs. I was directed to the foreign assistance agency. I went to see their people and was offered a job in its Far East bureau. I then had to choose between that offer and one that I got from Duke University – which was for one year but paid better than the government. I decided to join the Agency for International Development (AID) – which had just been formed as a successor to the International Cooperation Administration.

It was very exciting because it was a new agency with a lot of new ideas about development. The people were exciting. The person who had a lot to do with my employment was James Grant, later the head of UNICEF and a well known development economist. I was not an economist; I had only taken one undergraduate and one graduate course in economics. But I became the liaison for the Far East bureau with the Pentagon, which led to a deep involvement in counter-insurgency. At the time, I was very much in the camp of "the realists in foreign policy" – I have recently written about that in my article on "Ethics and Diplomacy." For example, in the discussions at Harvard about the Bay of Pigs, I took the position that the U.S. sometimes had the right to take certain actions if it feels threatened. That was not the view expressed by the left-center of the political spectrum. So I was always a liberal, but also a realist which was very much attuned to the Kennedy philosophy.

One of the reasons AID hired me in fact was that I was a political scientist. My involvement in the issue of counter-insurgency was not really an economic issue. My role was to see what role AID could play in the whole counter-insurgency movement.

Q: Did you spent most of your time on Indochina, or did you also get involved in other areas such as the Philippines?

LYMAN: Most of my time was devoted to Indochina and Thailand. I did a little work on other areas, but the focus was on southeast Asia. We did have a crisis in Indonesia during my tour in AID and I did a little bit of work on that; as a matter of fact, I almost was assigned to Djakarta. In 1963, I accepted a job with the new AID director, Bill Ellis. But then there was a confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia and the agency froze all assignments to that part of the world. So later I went to Korea instead.

Q: When you arrived in AID in 1961, what was the situation in Indochina?

LYMAN: As I said, there were some very exciting things happening in AID. The whole concept in the creation of the new agency was that all the elements of economic development would be pulled together under one agency; prior to this, technical assistance, capital loans, etc were all handled by separate agencies. The new focus was to be on country programs; AID was to do whatever it could to turn a country around to economic development. I think the Taiwan experience was a driving force in this new approach. Good land reform, good policies and lot of capital and training would bring major economic growth to a country. So that became the thrust of AID programming.

Then we had to face a security problem in southeast Asia. A lot of AID personnel resented this issue because they were concerned that the focus on that would reduce development efforts. I swung from one camp to the other at various times. Some people thought it was disloyal to work on counter-insurgency.

Our involvement in Vietnam was deepening at the time. We were creating more institutions to handle the various aspects of our Vietnam operations. But there was a fear of spill-over – "the domino theory" – and we thought that Thailand would be the first to be endangered. The question was how we would keep Thailand from falling. I remember the ambassador predicting that we had two years left to do something; other wise Thailand would be lost. As long as I worked on Thailand, the ambassador used that two year time frame.

We focused on what could be done to stop the growth of insurgencies. In Vietnam, a question of equal importance was what it would take to prop up the regime to make it more acceptable to the people. What programs could be developed to make the regimes more popular?

I must say that I became disillusioned with our counter-insurgency programs. I thought they had become oversimplified, quite shallow and naive.

Q: The Kennedy brothers were of course deeply interested in counter-insurgency. How did that manifest itself, if it did, in your relationships with the Pentagon and other agencies?

LYMAN: Bobby Kennedy loomed very large on this issue. Years later, while reading the "Best and the Brightest" by David Halberstam, I found out that I had been sitting outside as a potential resource person at one of the most important meetings that Bobby was chairing on southeast Asia. He ran the counter-insurgency effort of the government. He pushed everyone very hard on counter-insurgency. It was therefore very difficult to take different approaches which might have improved the program. I think the Kennedys were very influenced by Colonel Landsdale who had worked in the Philippines and was the model for The Ugly American – a very influential book.

There were two basic problems. It was one thing when one was dealing with a reformer

like President Magsaysay in the Philippines as Landsdale had done. But if you were dealing with a government that was deeply entrenched and set in its ways as in Vietnam, one could only work at the margins. Secondly, as I wrote in a classified report at the time, was what I called "The Candy Bar Theory of Counter-Insurgency." We still saw ourselves as the troops marching through conquered territory during and after WWII, handing out Hershey bars to the cheers of the local population. So the thought was that as long as we handed out enough "candy bars" – schools, hospitals, clinics, etc – at some point everyone would come out and cheer. Unfortunately, the problems were much deeper and therefore not susceptible to "candy bars" alone.

At the same time, I was telling my AID colleagues that they should not only be concerned with long-term development; but that they also had to play in the shorter term counter-insurgency game to make those programs as effective as possible. For example I felt that through small credit programs or provision of fertilizer, we could get the farmers more involved in counter-insurgency. So I found myself with somewhat different views from those in both AID and in the counter-insurgency programs.

Q: How did you find the Pentagon on these issues?

LYMAN: There was some friction within the Pentagon about the emphasis on the "Green Berets" and the use of elite U.S. military in these counter-insurgency programs. I attended one CINCPAC meeting in Honolulu in 1963 where Robert McNamara was briefed on the progress of the war in Vietnam. I remember that clearly because the military gave a very up-beat assessment – we were winning and would win if we only kept up what we were doing. McNamara noted that this was the only war the U.S. was engaged in at the time and that all necessary resources would be provided. In retrospect, I think all would admit that both the briefing and the McNamara response were wrong. The briefing has stuck in my mind because it was so positive that it was understandable why the administration just kept going. The military indicated no doubts about the progress it was making; all it wanted to do was more of the same.

Q: Did you find that your academic work was useful in your AID job?

LYMAN: I did a lot of work in my graduate days on the French in Indochina. I read all the parliamentary debates that were held in Paris and the negotiations led by French Prime Minister Pierre Mendes - which led to the 1954 settlement by which France left the war. That led me to considerable skepticism about U.S. chances of success in Vietnam. The French had tried many different approaches, all of which failed. I thought that the U.S. had gotten ourselves involved in a situation which would not be easy to resolve. There were some delusions on our side that the French just had not known what to do and we did. In fact, history indicated otherwise. I was a great admirer of Mendes France; I thought that he had been quite successful in reaching the 1954 settlement. I only wished that we could have had similar success.

The history of Indochina mad it quite clear that there were very complex social and

political aspects of Vietnam that would be very hard to accommodate. The movement for independence had sprung deep roots; I don't think we fully understood that.

Q: How did a political scientist fare in AID, particularly one that had some skepticism about what the Kennedys were trying to do?

LYMAN: I always felt that I was somewhat of an interloper – both as a political scientist in an economic development agency and later as a former AID person the Department of State. It was fun; I enjoyed it. I had a lot of respect fro my AID colleagues; they liked the idea of having a political science person in their midst. They had hired me because they wanted a political scientist. This somewhat unique position gave me considerable freedom to pursue avenues that might have been closed to others – e.g. the relationship of political and military activities, the inter-relationship of aid and development. So I was somewhat of an interloper, but it was a good situation for me.

The AID experience got me very interested in economic development. I became much more knowledgeable about economics and development and the elements that made up an assistance program and what worked and what didn't work.

Q: Did the Cuban missile crisis have any major impact?

LYMAN: That was a very traumatic moment for the country. However, I don't think it was until later that we realized how close we had come to a war. At the time, the actions and reactions took place so quickly that only a few I think knew where things really stood; it was not until the history of the time was made known that we understood what a close call that had been. But even in 1962, it was a scary situation. The fact that it was resolved so quickly and apparently so much in our favor just further enhanced the Kennedy administration's reputation for its skill and adroitness.

Q: How did you view AID's administration at the time?

LYMAN: When I started, AID had one of its best administrators, David Bell. He fostered an intellectual atmosphere that has never been equaled. He had, as part of an advisory group, some of the finest economists in the country. They would meet monthly on a Saturday and I was fortunate to be able to attend some of those meetings. I could listen to a fantastic, profound discussion about economic development and our approaches to it. The chief AID economist in those days was Gus Raines, a well known Yale economic scholar and later Hollis Chenery from Harvard. So we had a stimulating intellectual atmosphere.

Later, the agency became much more politicized and much more administratively focused. Eventually, AID did not even put economists in leading positions. So the intellectual atmosphere that I encountered when I first went to work for the agency and which I found so rewarding and gratifying gradually slipped away.

Q: In 1964, you moved on. Where to?

LYMAN: I was scheduled to go to Vietnam. The AID director had offered me a job as his special assistant. It was obviously an area that I knew well. But then President Kennedy appointed Maxwell Taylor as our ambassador; he wanted a new AID director whose first decision was to freeze all assignments. So I was left out in the cold, but along came an offer from an extraordinary AID professional, Joel Bernstein. He was very influential; he had a tremendous and powerful intellect. He was going to South Korea as the AID director there. So I went with him.

I was in Korea from 1964 to 1967. When I got there, Korea was considered the "rat hole" of American aid. Our program was considered a total failure; Korea was viewed as a hopeless case. We had poured lots of money into that country seemingly with no results. When I left Washington, I commented to my boss while we were discussing Korea that perhaps there might be some hope for exports. His response was: "How much seaweed can the world absorb?" I always remember that as Korean exports rose into the billion of dollars. But that was typical of the AID attitude toward Korea when I first arrived.

Korea had just gone through a long period of rule by Syngman Rhee. Under Rhee, the country had terrible and distorted economic policies. Rhee's rule was followed by elections which were however overtaken by a military coup. By 1964 when I arrived, Park Chung Hee, a general, had been president for a year.

We had a large assistance program which covered most of the economic sector in the country. We trained social workers for example, while at the same time doling out large amounts to cover for balance-of-payments deficits. We also provided a large subsidy to the Korean military which came from the sale of imported U.S. food products.

Seoul then was a city with only one or two decent hotels. It had one semi-fancy hotel – the Chosun. There were a lot of shacks. The twin office buildings – one which housed the U.S. embassy – had just been finished. There was no subway system. We lived in army barracks on a U.S. military post – almost all the Americans lived there. It was a crowded and poor city. There were no signs of hunger, but also no signs of a middle or upper class.

Q: What was your job?

LYMAN: I had a similar job in Seoul as I had in Washington. I was in the program office, whose director was a very fine economist with whom I later wrote a book on Korea. My job was to liaison with the embassy and the military. I also sponsored a social science research program by Korean scholars whom I came to know and respect. I also participated in doing over-all economic planning which brought political and military aspects into our country programs. I worked a lot with our military assistance office and with the embassy. At the embassy I met Philip Habib who was then the political counselor. He later became a very important figure in my life. Winthrop Brown was the ambassador – an extraordinary fine, dignified and intelligent ambassador.

Q: Tell us a little more about Joel Bernstein.

LYMAN: Joel was a PhD economist. He was an extremely thoughtful, meticulous person who was determined to have a very successful, comprehensive economic development program in Korea. He wrote extensively on all aspects of the program and beyond; he was a very strong figure. In those days, AID mission directors had a lot of discretion – much more than today. They could shape the program as they saw fit. Joel did that. He developed a partnership with the deputy prime minister, who then was the chief economic and financial officer of the government. Every Friday, the two would meet together for four or five hours. They covered every aspect of economic policy.

Joel brought in a large group of top flight American economic advisors. They in turn worked with a core of brilliant young Korean economists. Joel was fascinated by everything. For example, as I mentioned, I wanted to start a program of social science research to support a number of Korean academics who were unhappy in part because there were no funds available for research. Some were not too friendly to the U.S. So I suggested we start a research program. Joel said fine.

He was interested in military strategy. He once gave me a paper which he told me to deliver to the four star general in charge of all U.S. and UN forces in Korea. Joel wanted to send it as an annex to the assistance program request. It was an analysis of our entire security posture on the Korean peninsula. After the general read it, he told me that he would refuse to clear it. I asked what I should tell Joel. The general said that the reason he would not clear it is because if Joel sent that in, there was nothing that the general could submit to the Pentagon.

We were working in an extraordinary atmosphere. I got deeply involved in two issues: a) Korea's involvement in Vietnam – that was a major issue on which I wrote an article later in Daedalus; and b) the turn around of Korea's economy. When we arrived in 1964, the major question that every Korean – including the Kaesong girls (the Korean equivalent of a geisha) – tried to pry out of every American was what the U.S. aid level would be for the following year. It seemed as if Korea would live or die by the answer to that question. We of course couldn't tell them until it was announced in Washington. When I left Korea three years later, no one cared about the aid level any longer. It was not an issue for Koreans.

In the 1964-67 period, the Korean economy turned around greatly and that brought a new confidence to the Koreans – they could get along in this world without American aid. They could compete even with countries like Japan. They could be a major economic success.

Q: What were the sentiments when you arrived about Park Chung Hee?

LYMAN: There were attributes of Park that we should not forget. He was determined to

change Korea's psychology. He wanted to discard the inferiority complex that was running rampant in the society. He did this in two ways: a) he was determined to make the economy a success. He fully supported a group of young, bright PhD economists led by the deputy prime minister who felt they could turn the economy around. Therefore he approved changes from the old Rhee policies; e.g. the government abolished subsidies, increased interest rates to encourage savings, adjusted the exchange rate and encouraged private investment through government direction and resources. Secondly, he undertook to re-establish diplomatic relationships with Japan, which was a traumatic event in light of the strong anti-Japanese feelings held widely by Koreans. Students demonstrated in the street against the decision and other groups joined them. But Park kept plugging away, telling his people that their antagonism towards Japan was at least in part due to their feeling of inferiority to the Japanese and therefore their fear that the Japanese would exploit them if diplomatic relationships were started. He told his people that their fears were unwarranted.

These were the positive aspects of the Park regime. He was very self-confident as he showed by running for office in 1967. He did win that election, but then went on, like so many people of his inclination, to change the constitution so that he could be president for life. I think that led to the coup and his assassination in 1979. In 1964, our security interests on the peninsula were so predominant that we were more concerned with the stability of the regime and Park's interest in remaining our ally. When Vietnam began to be a crisis, the question then became whether Park would support us there by sending one of his divisions to fight along the Vietcong. That became the major preoccupation.

There was lingering resentment against Park Chung Hee because he had in fact brought to an end the brief period of Korean flirtation with democracy in 1963. The U.S. was at that time caught somewhat in the middle, not happy with the end of Korean democracy, but needing Park Chung Hee. Of course, in those days, we didn't have the same emphasis in our foreign policy on democratic values as we have today. We didn't have the same emphasis on human rights. We did deplore some of the heavy-handed tactics of the regime and in fact, started a training program for the police on how to handle demonstrations without using deadly force. It was a successful program which unfortunately was later abolished by Congress in a reaction to what was happening in Vietnam. Our chief advisor on this program invented bamboo underwear for the Korean police which prevented rocks from having much effect on the police; they just bounced off the bamboo. So the police could withstand considerable more student antagonism without over reaction. There were parts of the police program in other countries which were not so benign, but in Korea we tried to ameliorate the confrontation. The embassy really took the leadership of this effort.

As I said, I started a program for social science research for academics so that they could explore their interests. I worked with the press. I used to write the political overview for the AID mission program submission. I was always concerned that the embassy might not agree with my views. I did not need to be concerned; Habib would sometime look askance at what I was writing because he thought it a little naive, but he an his staff did

not interfere very much. I remember one meeting chaired by Ambassador Brown which Joel and I attended. I was to give my assessment of some political development that was a hot issue at the time. At the end of it, Brown turned to me and said: "Young man, you are just wrong!" Fortunately, one could survive comments of that kind without lasting damage being done to your reputation or standing.

As I said, I became acquainted with Phil Habib; I was one of his greatest fans. He was the political counselor of the embassy. He was obviously concerned by any signs of deteriorating stability such as student demonstrations. He also worried about the security issues and the North Korean military. He also became involved in getting the Koreans to send one of their divisions to Vietnam. He was a very strong minded individual. He could be very sarcastic, but also very tolerant. I did not see a lot of the embassy's cable traffic; in addition to being a separate agency, we were in a different building which did not foster close relationships. But on the other hand, we didn't have any major clashes either.

Q: Your job was essentially to write?

LYMAN: My main responsibility was to write overviews and strategies for the AID mission, but also to develop initiatives, and to take responsibility for inter-agency matters. For example, I used to work very closely with the U.S. military on the annual allocation of assistance to the ROK military. It was partly an AID responsibility because the funds came from the sale of U.S. food aid. For example, we would sit down together with the Koreans and go over their military budget line by line, pledging to support some items and not others. We also would comment on the adequacy of the budget, finding some items over-funded and others under-funded. So our contribution to the ROK military budget was a negotiated amount. That annual exercise took up a considerable amount of my time. I also worked very closely with them on how we would support the Koreans in Vietnam.

I did a fair amount of writing within and for the mission primarily on the interaction of the political, economic and social spheres. The program office was responsible for drafting the program plan.

Q: How did you get your information?

LYMAN: I talked to a lot of people, both Koreans and Americans. We had a cracker-jack Korean staff that gathered a lot of information on the economy. One of them in fact went on to become deputy prime minister. We had a tremendous amount of economic information gathered primarily from the government with whom we worked hand-in-glove. The political information came primarily from embassy reports that I read supplemented by my friendship with a number of academics whose views were quite insightful. Of course, the academics had to be somewhat guarded in their comments; Korea in those days was not exactly an open society. Some were closet Marxists, but had to disguise that. They were mildly critical of the government – of its heavy handedness. They were a little more sympathetic with North Korea – certainly more than the

government and most of the people, but always in a guarded way.

We had a daily translation of the Korean press which I would read cover to cover. There weren't at the time many publishing outlets so that the academics would always welcome our assistance. The Asia Foundation also was very helpful with the academics; this was a San Francisco based organization which supported a lot of academic programs in the region. While I was in Korea, CIA's support of the Asia Foundation was exposed. Because the U.S. government had not yet started its democratization or human rights programs, a lot of our efforts in these areas were covertly funded by CIA and it used the Asia Foundation as one of its conduits. When this came out, I sat down with a number of my academic friends, all of whom had received grants from the Asia Foundation. I asked them whether they were not shocked by these revelations. Their reaction startled me; they were not surprised because they considered that all U.S. funds – for assistance programs, for publications, for public relations, etc – came from the CIA or its equivalent. All U.S. funds in their view were intended to buy Korean loyalty. That really shocked me; their cynicism was an eye opener for a young man like myself. They accepted the view that if they took U.S. grants, they would have to pay a price.

I might just tell an anecdote that reflects on this attitude as well. I got to know one Korean academic quite well. I talked to him often, but as time passed I realized two things: a) that he was convinced I was working for the CIA and b) that he was sure I could get him a visa to the U.S. I agonized about how to disabuse him of both views. How could I convince him that just because I was in AID and talking political science that it did not mean that I was a CIA agent? I finally figured out a way. We had lunch one day during which I described to him the whole AID programming system – the preliminary analysis, the project proposal and all of the other documents that the agency required. I named every one of AID's many documents, with acronyms, etc. It was such a detailed presentation that I could see the academic coming to the conclusion that I really did work for AID and not CIA. After that lunch, he never treated me quite the same way.

Q: How was North Korea viewed at that time?

LYMAN: At the time, the North was considered much more successful that the South. The North was industrializing and developing economically, while South Korea was in a hopeless funk. Just the opposite of today. The North had inherited almost all of the Korean industry; the South had been the agricultural area. That gave the North a great advantage and it had besides the support of the Soviets and the Peoples Republic of China. It had a high educational level. It was then, as it is today, a very secretive society so that we didn't have a lot of information about what was going on. We knew that the country was highly regimented, but it was also much more economically developed than South Korea. There was therefore a worry that pro-communist sentiment, even insurgency, could develop in the south.

What happened to change things for the better in South Korea was very important. Even before the Korean war, there was an extensive land reform program. That reform wiped

out the feudal aristocracy. It started with our occupation right after WWII led by a fellow named Lejinsky; he in fact copied MacArthur's program in Japan. The Korean War was the final straw for the landed gentry; they lost what ever they still held. The reform program was important for two reasons: it created peace in the country-side – it bought South Korea a generation of peace. The government didn't do a lot for agriculture, but at least people owned their own little farms. Second, it took the landed gentry out of agriculture and turned them into industrialists. They were given government bonds in exchange for their lands which they then invested. Many of their children became academics. One of the studies that I sponsored did a study of the Korean academics and found that they were nearly all descendants of the landed gentry – which was an amusing finding in itself.

Land reform broke the feudal backbone of South Korea. I think that had a very profound effect.

Q: Was it true that Park Chung Hee decided very early in his regime that he would not let the urban population gain from low rice prices? He wanted farmers to be content with their lot.

LYMAN: This was one of the major economic changes. What Syngman Rhee had done was to under-report his country's agricultural production in order to maximize the amount of food aid that he could request from the U.S. That abundance of food allowed him to subsidize food prices in the cities. That discouraged farmers because they were obviously receiving little for their products. So the country became increasingly dependent on outside assistance. He could get away with this disastrous policy because the U.S. so generously supported his government with budget support and other assistance programs.

Park Chung Hee got rid of that system and this was one of his major innovations. First of all, the agricultural reporting was improved and we began to have a real sense of farm production. The pricing structure was changed which not only increased farm income but enabled us to reduce our food aid program. He was willing to accept the unhappiness of the urban dwellers – including student demonstrations. In part, he could afford to make this policy change because the economy was growing and employment was increasing; so that the price increases were not as traumatic as they might have been in a depressed economy.

Q: Was there any feeling of optimism about South Korea's future in 1961?

LYMAN: When I arrived, the country was still considered a basket case. The question was what were the realistic expectations. Within a year, I think our psychology turned around, but we gradually remained in fact more cautious than the South Koreans. Year after year, from 1964-67, their output projections were far more sanguine than ours; they were right and we were wrong. But as I said, by 1962, it was clear that the economic situation was changing for the better.

Korea's participation in the Vietnam War also gave them a boost, both psychologically and financially. Their construction companies found fertile fields in Vietnam; that was the beginning of their international ventures that have been so successful. Other markets opened up for Korean industries and they became export oriented. The government also got some financial aid to pay for its participation in Vietnam. We had some indirect role in this export process because we used to get reports of what our people in Vietnam needed which we passed on to the Koreans. Once Korean troops were in Vietnam, I think there was also some preference given to Korean contractors. We used to joke that it would be wonderful if the Koreans could find a market for their rocks – their country side was filled with them. Lo and behold, Vietnam became a major consumer of Korean rocks because their were needed for road constructions. It was like manna from heaven.

The Koreans felt very strongly that Japan had turned around economically because of the Korean war. Therefore they viewed Vietnam as their equivalent of the "Korean war." I don't think that in fact Vietnam was as financially significant as people thought, but it certainly was psychologically. It did give South Korea a greater international exposure.

Q: Tell us a little about what you saw in the attitude of our embassy and military towards the Koreans.

LYMAN: It changed a great deal in the period I was in Korea. As economic development was taking hold, I think we all began to see that Korea might have a future and that it was not the hopeless case that we had assumed. Two ways, beyond land reform, in which the U.S. was involved, helped the turnaround.

From 1950-1965 the South Koreans went from a literacy rate of 20% to 80%. You can't underestimate the importance of that. Their devotion to education was extraordinary. Related to the surge in basic education, tens of thousands Koreans went to the U.S. sponsored by AID and our military to some extent. When they had finished their training in the U.S., many returned to Korea. This was important because while the country was in a state of economic depression, that training was not well used. But as it escaped its malaise and the economy took off, we found trained people all over the place. There were people who had been trained in one field but because they couldn't practice their profession had taken lower level jobs in banks, in the bureaucracy, in factories, etc. But when the opportunity arose, they came out of the woodwork and said that they could do whatever new program was being assessed. So the country suddenly tapped into a talent base that had never been used before. We were amazed by the range of well qualified Koreans available to participate in economic development.

Second, when the Johnson administration wanted to reward the Koreans for their participation in Vietnam, the White House proposed a profound idea: to set up in Seoul an Institute for Science and Technology. The U.S. would build it and then turn it over to the Koreans to run. It was built after I left. One of the reasons the Koreans were so supportive of this proposal was because it gave them an opportunity to entice their scientists who had stayed in the U.S. or other foreign countries back to Korea. These

Ph.D.s had stayed in the U.S. to teach; many had fled to avoid the draft which was universal in Korea. So the government first allowed these Ph.D.s to skip military service. Those who did not return because they felt too settled in the U.S. were offered an opportunity to spend a sabbatical year in their native country. The government built them housing on the campus of this new institute. Korea attracted enough highly trained and skilled professionals to allow the institute to become one of the most important support systems for Korean industry. It was something akin to tapping into the diaspora without requiring the Koreans to return to Korea permanently. It was a brilliant move on the part of the government.

Q: I saw some of this many years later when I was Consul General in Seoul. One of my file clerks came to me and said that her brother had been offered two scholarship and wanted my advice on which one he should take. The choice was MIT or CalTech. I was stunned, I thought she might have been talking about two small schools, but this was the cream of the drop. I was left speechless.

LYMAN: The Koreans' appetite for science and technology has been terrific.

Q: Did you see any evidence that Park Chung Hee was taking any political interest in the economic issues facing his country?

LYMAN: He obviously was very pleased by the progress Korea was making but I think he knew very little about economics and left the management of that aspect of the country to his deputy prime minister. The deputy was a big, burly, savvy guy; he was smart enough to assemble in his office a corps of very bright young minds whom he protected against the political people who were either jealous or didn't like the reforms that were being installed. He told us that he had to provide his people with extra income because the government salaries were just not enough to attract the kind of staff he needed and he protected them against others, as I said. Park Chung Hee in fact gave the deputy prime minister carte blanche – as long as the economy was doing as well as it was. I think he did not get very much involved in economic policy; he recognized that he didn't know much about it.

I am told that later in the 1970s he would go to the economic ministry periodically just to check up on things, but that didn't happen while I was there.

Q: Did you worry about a North Korean invasion or other military action?

LYMAN: It was very much on everybody's mind; it colored the whole atmosphere. When you went to the DMZ, you felt that the Korean War had just ended the day before rather than 11 years earlier. There was considerable tensions; the troops were dug in. We had a large military presence there. The threat was considered as if the war had just ended. It had a profound effect on people's attitudes because it added an element of insecurity all the time. People felt that all that been built since 1950 could be totally destroyed as indeed it had been during the Korean War.

On the other hand, this feeling of insecurity gave the military considerable political power. National security came first in the Korean psyche.

Q: How was the performance of the Korean military in Vietnam?

LYMAN: They were reported to be brutal, fearless. It was said that they had executed some of their own troops for discipline reasons. They fought fiercely when they did fight, but were not a major player in the war. They sent their best soldiers and they built up a reputation for being a great fighting machine. Part of the reason for joining in Vietnam was as a pay-back for those countries who came to their aid during the Korean War. Another reason for their participation came from their new found optimism about their country's future.

Q: What about Japan?

LYMAN: Koreans had a constant fear of Japan along with loathing and a deep, deep resentment for the Japanese occupation. They were concerned that Japan would dominate them economically and exploit them; even after Park Chung Hee "normalized" relations with Japan, direct Japanese investment was forbidden – and that has lasted until quite recently.

On the other hand, a number of Korean industries had been quietly trading with Japan. Korean silk was being sold in Japan as Japanese silk. So there were connections between the two countries, but the population on the whole resented Japan and feared it.

Q: What about corruption?

LYMAN: It was significant. For example, we knew that every investment that was approved by the government – as it had to do for every investment – required the investor to make a contribution to Park Chung Hee's party. One of my colleagues – an economist in the mission – said that he didn't mind that contribution as long as the investment made economic sense. Since most of the investments tended to be good ones, he didn't mind the corruption too much.

But corruption was clearly present. There were rake-offs in almost every government investment decision.

The *chaebols,* industry conglomerates, were just becoming the industrial powers that eventually made them world-famous. They had not yet branched out into major industries; they were mostly importers in the early 1960s, but they were signs of their empire-to-be. They started with fertilizer plants and other basic production. Cars, shipbuilding, etc were to come later.

Q: Was our mission in Seoul beginning to think of Korea as a "second Japan"?

LYMAN: I don't think so. Japan had progressed so far that it seemed unlikely to have any competitors. And Korea had a long row to hoe. I don't think anyone in Seoul in this period anticipated Korea's economic success. Today, it is the 11th largest economy in the world. No one could have dreamed of that in the 1960s. We were sufficiently encouraged by the progress that we did witness. When I was there, the Koreans still couldn't make a shirt that would fit a Westerner. A few years ago, you couldn't buy a shirt in JC Penney's that wasn't made in Korea. So in the early 1960s, we were just happy that the economy was growing at all and that was enough success for us.

There is one story which illustrated to me what was going on. While I was in Seoul, they built a big fertilizer plant in Ulsan – in a joint venture with Gulf oil, I think. The factory went into production a year ahead of schedule. I went to the Minister for Science and Technology to inquire how they managed that feat. After all, a fertilizer plant is a complicated production facility. He asked whether I remembered the fertilizer plant that the U.S. had built in Korea in the 1950s. I told him I remembered it well because it was an abject failure; we never succeeded in having the output it was supposed to have; we used to drive Congressmen miles and miles out of the way just so that we would not be anywhere near that plant. The minister said that it may have been a disaster for the U.S., but for Korea it was a learning lesson. Every engineer in Korea had trained on that plant. They learned more about fertilizer and its production than any other country in the world. So then, when they began to build their own plant, they knew how to do it right. I repeated that story in AID over and over again because it was a clear illustration of the importance of training which was more valuable than the construction of the plant itself. We thought the project was a failure; in fact, it was a great training opportunity for the Koreans. I think this story tells you a lot about the Koreans and about how we measure success and failures.

Q: How did you feel about Korea when you left in 1967?

LYMAN: When we left, we felt that Korea was a model for a successful Third World country that wished to rise. It was a success not only for the Koreans, but also for AID because we had assigned a very highly talented team to Seoul. We had some of the best people in the agency. We thought that if we could find another country that might become a "second Korea", we should concentrate there the same quality talent as had been assembled in Seoul.

When my tour in Korea was up, after some agonizing, I made a decision to take a year off and with my colleague David Cole write a book, Korean Development; The Interplay of Politics and Economics. We wanted to explain how politics and economics had interacted in Korea and how economic development was leading to a more open political process. We also discussed the other side of that coin; that is, how economic development had allowed the government to keep a tight rein because people were trading political freedom for a rise in the standard of living. So we left Korea very pleased with what we had witnessed in the three year we were there and my colleague, David Cole and I

recorded the history of that period.

After a year at Harvard University writing the book, AID offered me a job of heading up a new office that had been mandated by Congress; it was called "Popular Participation in Development." It was Title IX of the Foreign Assistance Act; so the office was to be called the "Title IX Office." It was really a ploy by the Congressional sponsors to try to move AID towards programs which today fall into the category of "Democratization." But that word was considered so sensitive in the aid business, that the Congress used that euphemism. At that time and for many years thereafter, one of World Bank's dogmas was that economic development was not supposed to become enmeshed with political issues. They were not supposed to touch any political sensitivities, but focus on alleviating poverty and creating economic development. Brad Morse and Donald Frazer, the two Congressional sponsor of Title IX maintained that there were inequities in economic development in part as result of the organization of the political system. If people didn't have a greater voice in governance, then development would not reach them. They wanted AID to do something about this perceived inadequacy and that was the origin of their amendment.

The office was started before my transfer, but its head had decided to move on. So the agency asked whether I would be interested after my year at Harvard.

Q: So in 1968 you took over the "Title IX Office." What was the agency's ethos when it came to an office such as yours which was not part of a regional bureau?

LYMAN: I had come into AID as a political scientist, as I have mentioned. I had always worked on the political aspects of development. So I was known to have that interest, which was made even more evident with the publication of my book. When AID was given the Title IX mandate, they saw that I was a candidate who might be a good fit for this new program. Also the people with whom I had worked in the Far East bureau had risen in the ranks and they knew that I was at Harvard; they also indicated their interest in having me take that job.

I ran into a lot of resistance later on in this job, both in AID and to some extent, in the State Department. My task was uphill in several respects. First of all, there was still that AID mind-set which opposed mixing development and politics; they thought it endangered both efforts and by becoming controversial, would make the agency's ability to conduct its projects more difficult. But also, there were people in AID who thought they were already abiding by the Title IX mandates. These were the people who worked in community development or on cooperatives; they thought they were already involving the poor and therefore did not want any more requirements.

We looked at the issue from a different point of view. We argued that one had to scrutinize more carefully who really participated in the project. In fact, the coop people were really the elite in many ways. We also began to look at political and legal institutions. As a central functional office, we did not run many country programs. In the

AID programming system, country mission approval and sometimes even the embassy's (our ideas having considerable political content) had to be obtained before any project could be initiated. We sponsored a lot of research; for example, we gave grants to study the role of parliaments, the role of the law, etc. Yale Law School, Duke University and NYU Law School formed a consortium to train parliamentarians and others. We sponsored a research project which later became the basis for books by Sam Huntington and others on how development impacts on political stability and how the various phases of political and economic development interact. Today, with the emphasis on democratic development, our work of thirty years ago is main-stream. But in the early 1970s, it was considered a little far out. So we had to pick missions where we knew that some people were interested in our approach; sometimes we found that an embassy was more receptive to our projects than the mission. It was a good program and we had a lot of fun with it. It was challenging and in light of subsequent developments, it seemed to have been on the right track.

Q: Do you recall any particular embassy that was interested in your program?

LYMAN: We got a good reception from Pakistan and East Pakistan. I went out and spent five weeks looking at rural development programs in what is now Bangladesh. I was looking for what part of the population these projects were reaching and what alternatives might be in terms of widening participation. There were some very dynamic projects headed by a Dr. Amir Khan that were becoming well known for their contribution to the mobilization of the poor as well as teaching them how to save money and become self-sufficient. I also got good support from our mission in Colombia.

There were a number of missions that decided not to participate in our activities. Some embassies said that we were encroaching in their territory; they didn't see why AID was getting involved. In those situation, the topic of widening political participation was very sensitive.

I think that our research efforts were probably the more influential part of our activities. Some of these projects were in collaboration with other countries, but most of it was done by American scholars since the main audience was us; we wanted to have a better understanding of the process and the effect that our development policies might have on a country's political process. For example, ironically towards the end of my tour, AID itself was moving on an emphasis to help the poorest of the poor. Congress was pressuring the administration to concentrate on the poor. We sponsored a project by Rice University which concluded that without economic growth for the whole country, not much progress would be made. I think the most influential research we did was with professors Irma Edelman and Cynthia Morris which looked at data from a number of countries and developed a theory about which phases of economic development caused political instability and what kind of political changes one needed to anticipate. Sam Huntington picked up on this study and wrote a book No Easy Choices which came to the same conclusions. Although from his point of view, instability was always to be avoided. I think that the AID policy makers may well have subscribed to the Huntington theory,

although in the developing countries this linkage between economic and political development did resonate with certain groups that were questioning the general development philosophies – the emphasis on growth that was so prevalent in the 1960s, raising instead questions of equity, who was participating, etc.

So we did sponsor seminar overseas that brought together some Americans with representatives of developing countries to look at some of these issues.

Q: Did you find that the work that stemmed from academia had any audience in the bureaucracy?

LYMAN: We believed that one of our jobs was to be a transmission belt; we felt that very strongly. So in our office we published summaries of various academic studies so that the policy makers would be aware of what was being said in academia. My office was part of the Policy and Program Coordination Bureau, which was the policy making office in AID. Although our efforts were not yet mainstream since we were pushing some new ideas, we did have some impact and we were able to use our position in the organization to get some of our views to AID Administrator John Hannah, formerly president of Michigan State. We made him aware that these questions of equity, political participation, etc. were of some importance. In a perverse way, this approach played into the emphasis of the "poorest of the poor" that Congress had pushed in the 1970s though with less attention to the political dynamics.

Q: You served in the early years of the Nixon administration. Did you find that either the president or Kissinger were interested in your work?

LYMAN: Virtually none; we were on our own. There has always been a difference of opinion on whether the assistance program should be used to meet short range foreign policy objectives or whether it should focus on long term economic development. There were some appropriated funds – e.g. economic support funds (ESF), some military assistance – that were made available to meet short range political objectives. The longer term programs got lip service support from Nixon and Kissinger, but they didn't pay any attention to them unless of course one became a p.r. [public relations] problem. So the assistance program did relatively well in those days because it had congressional supporters, but when the administration wanted to do something for a "friend" it used other vehicles besides the economic development programs.

Q: What were your conclusions about AID during this period?

LYMAN: AID was coming to the end of an era of the 1960s when the emphasis had been on macroeconomic growth. The belief had been that if enough capital was devoted in a concentrated way in a developing country, then there would be a rising standard of living. At the time, a very popular book The Stages of Economic Growth by Rostow had been published; it suggested that as the title indicates countries go through various stages and when one is completed, it would move on to the next. That was the accepted wisdom; the

Korean and Taiwan experiences were wonderful models for that theory. Taiwan was successful with Korea not too far behind. The complexities of really poor countries, with more serious problems and where most likely conflicts were raging, had not really been analyzed. So by the late 1960s, we were reaching the end of an era based on the generally accepted theories I have just described. Congress was showing signs of unhappiness with assistance programs.

In 1971, Congress voted down the AID authorization which was a very traumatic experience for the agency. Then Congress wrote its own bill which emphasized the need to take care of the poor. It criticized the then program as being too geared towards the elites and the powerful and for depending too much on macroeconomics. In some respects, the work of my office fed this congressional criticism because we were emphasizing the need for wide participation in economic and political development, but we didn't anticipate that our mantra would become a "religion." So the 1970s was the era of the "poorest of the poor" with the cardinal aim of assistance programs to help the poor. We were led to a stage where AID refused to have anything to do with growth; I used to joke that we fired all the economists and hired only anthropologists and sociologists. The social scientists were very interesting and good and gave us some new dimensions, but "growth" almost became a bad word. "Growth" was "old think." This seismic shift was too much, but it dominated our assistance thinking of the 1970s and Congress loved it – particularly those who opposed the use of aid for political objectives. So authorization and appropriations acts emphasized assistance to the poor, while setting aside funds for meeting political objectives – ESF. So I went through the early part of this assistance transition before I left the "Title IX" office in 1971.

Q: Was this new approach really intended to increase the standard of living of the poor or was just to make sure they didn't starve?

LYMAN: In theory, the concept was that the poor were not benefiting sufficiently from our assistance programs, but I think in fact these new programs were merely maintenance efforts. The hope that the poor could be organized and become a political factor in a country and therefore a beneficiary of economic assistance was not realized. By narrowing the definition of what helps the poor – meeting basic human needs – the economic development program became too narrowly focused. Let me give you an example which I encountered later. Congress wanted us only to help people to grow food. AID sent a team to Liberia to develop a food production program. The farmers thanked us and then asked what they could do to increase their rubber production – a main staple of the Liberian economy. We responded by saying that this was not in our charter; we were there only to help with rice production to meet their food needs. We were not interested in helping them with cash crops. It was a totally unrealistic approach; the small farmers just couldn't understand how we were trying to help; they needed cash as well as food. So by the late 1970s, our approach to economic assistance had become much too narrow. I think that the program corrections started in the late 1960s were important; we had not been paying sufficient attention to the equity, participation and income distribution, but the correction was much too sharp; the program threw out a lot of good aspects leaving it

with a much too narrow view. The research project my office sponsored at Rice University, mentioned above, tried to make this point.

Q: Did your office make an analysis of where our assistance programs had been?

LYMAN: Not really, but the bureau of which we were a part, did a good deal of work on that issue. Our research focused on our experiences in a few countries – what the impact of our development policies had been. So our conclusions were primarily country specific rather than universal. We were also looking at new institutions in these countries which had never been touched by our programs. For example, we began to look at the role of parliaments; that was a very radical approach when we first proposed programs to train parliamentarians. Now of course that is an established practice, but at the end of the 1960s, our efforts met with a lot of questions. We started a training program in Albany, New York for parliamentarians from developing countries which continues to this day, although with a different funding source.

We began to look at the relationship of the legal system – or absence thereof – and economic development. NYU and Yale Law schools conducted programs of research and training in this area. We essentially focused on non-economic areas and their impact on economic development. That was considered "far out" at the time.

Q: Did you feel you were treading on a lot of toes?

LYMAN: Yes, in both AID and State. Some of the ambassadors and some of the missions felt that we were getting into ground much too sensitive. For us to encourage the missions and embassies to engage on issues of equity, participation and kinds of political institutions that a country should have was considered beyond the pale because we were suggesting involvement in areas considered too sensitive.

On the other hand, there were a number of political officers who supported our approach. They viewed our efforts as a new dimension in our foreign policy. I should also note that while we were taking a long-range view, many embassies were understandably concerned with the "today" and our relationships in the present and not the future. They didn't want to ask the question whether the regime then in power would in five years' time produce an unstable situation. So we were not welcomed in a lot of countries. We had to search around for missions that were willing to try our approaches; when we found one, I would send some of my staff to the country to conduct seminars on the issues or we would send some researchers to do their work.

Of course, we ran into resistance within AID itself. For one, AID personnel thought we were getting into areas which were not appropriate for an economic development effort. They were interested in food production or health care issues or construction, not political matters. Secondly, they thought that we were raising questions that was getting in the way of their work. They were good technicians, but did not have much experience or indeed interest in who was participating in the process. If they managed to produce more food,

then they viewed as AID having done its job.

Q: What was the reaction of the assistance recipient governments?

LYMAN: We were getting more support from the people in developing countries who had been raising some of the same issues as we were. There was considerable ferment in some of these countries. People were questioning the development paradigm. I had good cooperation from the government when I was working in East Pakistan. Some of the African governments were interested in the issues we were raising. But since we were not an operational office – that is we had no projects to run – but more a research-policy office, we didn't engage governments directly very much. Our foreign contacts were primarily academics.

Q: Was there any cooperation between the Peace Corps and AID?

LYMAN: Very little. In its early days, the Peace Corps went out of its way to distance itself from official U.S. representation, either the embassy or the aid mission. So there was relatively little cooperation. Later, a lot of good cooperation developed, but in late 1960s there was very little.

Q: Who were some of the driving forces in Congress?

LYMAN: I earlier mentioned Brad Morse and Don Frazer; they were the significant driving forces. Brad Morse, a Republican, later became the head of the UN development program. He was very popular and influential. Don Frazer was a very liberal Democrat; he was on the foreign assistance authorization committee. He was uneasy about what he considered as inequities in the development process. In those days, two influential congressmen could get their views enacted without too much difficulty. They were our chief supporters and protectors; AID had to report annually on the Title IX program which kept the agency's feet to the fire. We stayed very close to Morse and Frazer; they participated in a lot of our meetings and seminars. I think they had something to do with the later congressional mandates to do more for the poor.

Q: The Vietnam war was at its height at this stage. What impact did that have on your work?

LYMAN: In a very strange and perverse way, we became touched by the war because there were people in the counter-insurgency program, who were arguing that they were trying to move the same agenda as our office. The counter-insurgency programs were intended to "win the hearts and minds" of the Vietnam people. During this period, I participated in some seminars sponsored by RAND and others on this program. We tried to distance ourselves from the Vietnam efforts, although we participated in a lot of meetings, because we viewed those programs as different from what we were pushing; they had a heavy political agenda of a different sort. Vietnam was an entirely different matter from a typical developing country and our efforts there were not really relevant to

our assistance programs in other countries.

I had a very emotional experience with Vietnam during this time. AID had great difficulty recruiting career people to go to Vietnam. It had to fall back on forcible assignments – ordering people to go. But that didn't really meet the needs. So AID started a major recruitment program to fill positions in Saigon and in the CORDS (a joint State-AID-DOD program in the rural areas) programs. It hired lots of people, on a non-career basis, but as the war began to phase down, these people argued that they should be rewarded with career appointments. They felt they had been in the front lines of "real" development. They had learned lessons that regular AID staff had not and that therefore the agency would benefit by keeping them on the payroll. They filed a sort of informal grievance petition to personnel. I was asked to go to Vietnam to spend a week with these officers and then to give the agency some advice on how it might handle their grievance. I was selected partly because of my Title IX responsibilities and partly because I was well known to those who wanted this survey made.

It was a very emotional week; we became well acquainted with these people. Many of them seemed to be right out of Terry and the Pirates – the old comic strip about civilian soldiers of fortune. They were very dedicated; after all, many had risked their lives. But in many cases, they were also people who took the Vietnam assignment as an escape from their lives in the U.S. I was fascinated by this group and came to like many of them very much. One of my staff who went with me had served in Vietnam and had become disillusioned and an ardent opponent of our efforts there. So he became involved in some heated and emotional exchanges which I had to calm down. I came to the conclusion that the Vietnam experience was so atypical that it bore little relevance to our development efforts elsewhere. The people in Vietnam had developed perceptions that bore very little resemblance to conditions elsewhere. For example, they told me that if they had had as much money as our other assistance missions, they could have done a lot more. I had to tell them that they had three times as much money as any other aid program. They were also operating in a nearly autonomous, military-related environment that would not be the case almost anywhere else. So they had a skewed conception of development and how to promote it. I had to recommend that they not be granted career status, at least *en masse*, and most of them did not get it. But it was a very difficult week.

I came to the conclusion that in general these recruits for Vietnam would not in most cases make good officers for service in other posts. Of course, there were exceptions; that is, individuals who would be good candidates for a career appointment. But as I said, it was hard for me to make that recommendation because in an intense week, one becomes personally involved and it was very hard to remain objective.

Q: Let's move on to 1971. What happened next to you?

LYMAN: This was an era of a lot of activism. I was wondering how I could engage in some of the issues of the day. So I formed a group in AID to look at employees' grievances. We did not have a union at the time. The group was called " The AID

discussion group." I think we drove the personnel types up a wall. The group was largely made up of minorities who felt that they were being discriminated against. Through this group, I met Assistant Administrator for Africa Sam Adams. He had a tremendous intellect and was a real scholar in African affairs. Sam had served in AID missions as well as having been our ambassador to Niger. He asked me to come to join him in the Bureau for African Affairs. I had never worked on African matters, but I was so impressed with him that I agreed.

So for the next five years (1971-76) I worked as the head of what later became the Project Development Office of AF.

Q: Let me go back to the discussion group. You mentioned that it was primarily attended by minorities. Who were these people?

LYMAN: Let me step back a little. Fortified by my visit to Vietnam, I was opposed to our involvement there. I had been mentioned for assignment there in 1964, but didn't go; by 1971, I didn't really want to go. I looked around for a way to be more active on such issues. But as I talked to activist people in the bureaucracy, I found that most were involved in political issues. They felt they had an adequate voice. So instead, I didn't feel that AID employees needed a group to try to influence policy in AID. So we brought some people together to see what they were interested in. The consensus seemed to be that the "system" was not working well for them. Most of the people who attended this first session were primarily African-Americans and women. In our group, we had the first woman who after a long and bloody battle, had been allowed to take her husband overseas as a dependent. That was a major break-through at the time! That change occurred in the late 1960s and that was due primarily to the efforts of this woman. She still carried the emotional scars from that experience.

We had a lot of African-Americans who were primarily in clerical or semi-clerical jobs and who felt that they were not being provided opportunities to advance. I found that concerns about the "system" was higher among this group of people I talked to than those involved in policy. So we formed this discussion group which would meet monthly to discuss a specific subject. We would invite AID officials to come and join us. We had some pretty lively exchanges because the "system" was difficult. For example, people felt that when an opening was advertised it in fact had already been given to someone who had "the inside track." So people went to great length in applying only to find that they had wasted all their time and effort. We tried very hard to see whether that system could be made more transparent. For example, if there was a candidate in the office where the vacancy was to occur, that might be made public. We recognized that this might create some problems, but it was fairer than *sub-rosa* system then in effect.

We talked about the agency developing training programs so that employees could up-grade their skills and have some hopes for promotion. I don't know how much progress we made. I think that perhaps the major break-through did not occur until later when employees could join a union. When the union really got off the ground, the discussion

group became superfluous and was disbanded. I chaired this group for about two or three years and then turned it over to someone else. It was a powerful experience because it really opened my eyes to the discrimination that existed against women and African-Americans. We were not terribly popular with the establishment, but we were tolerated.

Q: How did the establishment treat you?

LYMAN: I was in a position that I was sufficiently well-regarded professionally in AID that I could act as a sort of protector of this group. I don't think they could have made the waves that we did without my involvement. As I said, I don't think we were favorably regarded by personnel or administrative people, but we didn't really cause them any great anguish, so that they could live with us. Most of the hard times we gave them was in these monthly meetings. We addressed some real issues and I think there were some people in management who felt that it was useful to have a forum such as ours; later, I think they preferred to deal with us rather than the union. I didn't suffer professionally from my participation; some people may have raised their eyebrows but since my professional work was well regarded, I don't think I suffered because of my leadership of this discussion group. I think I got into more trouble because of my opposition to the Vietnam War. I did get involved separately in some anti-war activities and that caused me a lot of grief.

What happened is that a colleague and I decided to organize a meeting in the State Department to allow State and AID personnel a chance to discuss their feelings and doubts about the Vietnam War. W took pains not to publicize the meeting outside the Department. We invited a critic of the war from a think tank in Washington. Somehow the fact of the meeting leaked and the press began calling me about what they were calling an "opposition rally" in the Department. The next day there was a story in the press. Some people in the State Department were incensed about the meeting and demanded that my colleague and I be fired. This was before thee was a dissent channel in the Department and the forum that now exists for such meetings. The issue went to the Secretary of State.

AID's General Counsel, Stephen Ives, went to the meeting with the Secretary to defend us. My colleague and I sat outside the meeting waiting to hear our fate. We later learned what transpired at the meeting. William Rogers, then Secretary of State, and a lawyer, asked if we had reserved the room for the meeting properly. There was a quick phone call to the meeting reservation office. The response was that we had indeed reserved it appropriately. The next question was had we indicated the purpose of the meeting. The response was that that information was not required on the application. Rogers, good lawyer that he was, determined that there was no basis for action against us. When we heard the news, we were understandable relieved, but the incident had also unnerved us. My colleague left AID not long after.

There is a humorous side to this. At my retirement ceremony, many years later, I told the story of this incident and concluded, "Now when you go to reserve a room in the

Department, when they ask you the purpose of the meeting, you will know why."

I might mention that I also became involved in Under Secretary of State for Management William Macomber's management change efforts. I had been asked to join the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) Board of Directors. The "Young Turks," State Department officers, many of whom had served in Vietnam, who believed the State Department needed major reforms to stay relevant, had just captured AFSA. Lannon Walker was the leader, ably assisted by such people as Bill Harrop, who became the president of the organization. I became the AID representative on the board. I was introduced to all the ferment that was going on – the "Diplomacy for the '70s". The "Young Turks" were strong supporters of a unified Foreign Service – including AID and USIA – which would encompass most of the U.S. government people overseas. In view of my policy bent, I found this proposal very attractive.

I was on the board for two years. I was very much involved in AFSA activities. It was very dynamic with a lot of dialogue with Macomber and his people.

It was also an emotional time. There was a lot of controversy about the nature and future of the Foreign Service. During this time, AFSA had to face the decision of whether to become the collective bargaining union of the Foreign Service. That issue divided the Foreign Service community very sharply. Many people felt that AFSA should not become a union, but remain as a professional organization. On the other hand, we on the Board considered if we didn't become the bargaining agent, then AFGE (the CIO-AFL union which represented the Civil Service) would take on that role. That would mean that the Department would have to deal with two organizations, each considering itself as the representative of the Foreign Service.

It was a very difficult decision. There were a lot of questions about the future of the Foreign Service; e.g. specialists versus generalists, relation to the military and to economic developments that were taking center stage in foreign affairs. Many of the "Young Turks" felt that the Department had to become more involved in such matters as arms control, development, etc which were becoming increasingly the province of special groups in the government, making it increasingly difficult for the State Department generalists to oversee and coordinate our foreign policy. Much of this drive stemmed from their experiences in Vietnam, where many of the "Young Turks" had served. They and many others felt that as more an more of these specialized subjects became important the Department would lose control of the foreign policy making and less relevant in the affairs of our government. The Foreign Service would have to change – in outlook, training and other ways. This was one of the causes of the tensions that existed. The question of how the Foreign Service adjusted to the new realities was at the center of this debate.

Q: I remember well the arguments some were making that if the AFGE was to become the representative union, then the Foreign Service would be seen just as another piece of the larger government service without recognition of its unique role and requirements. There

was concern that our special needs and requirements would be lost entirely in the vast expanse of government employees.

LYMAN: That was certainly one of the arguments. The other part of that argument was that AFGE could not adequately represent the professional needs of the Foreign Service.

There was a price however to pay for AFSA becoming a bargaining unit. Once that had happened, managers in the Department could not sit on the AFSA board. That over the years has led to a situation in which some of the most senior Foreign Service officers have not and could not be part of the AFSA leadership. That has created somewhat of a split between the senior and middle and lower ranks. Now there is a separate organization for the senior officers called the "Senior Foreign Service" – a somewhat informal organization established to represent the views of the leaders of the Foreign Service. That was the price that had to be paid for becoming a collective bargaining union.

Q: As an observer in those days, I felt that much of the "Young Turks" efforts were designed to drive the "deadwood" from the senior positions in the Department and Foreign Service – to be of course replaced by the "Young Turks." I suspect that once the "Young Turks" became senior officers, this drive ameliorated. One had the feeling that AFSA had become the representative of a group of mid-career political officers who were anxious to rise to the top.

LYMAN: I think it is true that Tom Boyatt and some other political officers were very active. But I think the major theme articulated at the time was that the Foreign Service was an "up or out" system which meant that people had to be competitive in order to move the "deadwood" out. Undoubtedly, there was some truth to your analysis.

Q: How did AID fit into this mix? Was AFSA at all concerned about these people?

LYMAN: The Young Turks did, although I suspect that many in the Foreign Service sort of looked down on AID people as somewhat different, if not actually inferior, to the Foreign Service. But I think the AFSA board clearly tried to overcome that view. It should also be said that some antagonism also existed on the part of AID personnel who considered themselves "purer" in their pursuit of development, not short-term political objectives. There were also some Foreign Service officers in State who saw themselves as being of a different breed from all other government employees; after all, State Foreign Service officers were presidential appointees. There was this class distinction. The "Young Turks" felt that all this needed to be changed so that all employees overseas could be represented by AFSA. They pushed the idea of more interchanges among foreign affairs agencies which I found very attractive. This was one of the reasons I enjoyed being part of the AFSA board.

We had to make a lot of difficult decisions during this period including "whither the Foreign Service," the question of collective bargaining, etc. I do think that our work had an impact on the Service.

I must say that the issue of minorities and women, with which I was so familiar from our discussion group, did not really grab the board's attention. It became an issue much, much later.

Q: So you served in the African Bureau between 1971 to 1976. Tell us a little about Sam Adams.

LYMAN: Sam was an extraordinary individual. He had taken a PhD in African studies at the London School of Economics after graduating from Tuskegee University. He had served in Vietnam as an education officer as well as in Nigeria and worked his way up the bureaucratic ladder. He became mission director in Morocco and ambassador to Niger. In the early 1970s, he became the AID assistant administrator for Africa. Sam was scholarly; he was sensitive and intelligent; he was a brilliant and inspirational speaker – there was a whole group of us who were inspired by Sam Adams and we are still close friends. Sam is now retired and lives in Houston. I talked to him on the phone just recently. [Sam Adams died in 2004.]

He was actually moved out from his job to make way for a political appointee sometime in 1974 or 1975. That was unfortunate. He was a tremendous person. I still encounter people who had a relationship with Sam. I just ran into a young man last week who said that he owed his career to Sam Adams; Sam had recruited him. As I said, Sam inspired us.

We had a major drought at the time in the Sahel region of Africa. It was one of the first droughts which caught the attention of the international community. Sam understood the area extremely well and he understood the pressures of desertification which was destroying arable land. So much of our focus for the my first three years in the bureau was on this national catastrophe. One hundred thousand people had died because of the drought. Sam was an inspiration; we all felt that we were engaged in something very exciting at the cutting edge and which had a major humanitarian component. We took some innovative approaches. I and some others wrote speeches on the subject for Sam. It was a very exciting time.

Q: Is desertification cyclical? What can be done about?

LYMAN: Yes, the droughts are cyclical, but the desert has been moving south. A lot of efforts have not worked very well. People thought of planting belts of trees, but trees need a lot of water. I think the best way to deal with this phenomenon is to improve land use practices – i.e. reducing pressure on the land. For example, in a case of unintended consequences, in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the European Union had dug a lot of bore wells in the area to allow people, who normally drove their cattle south for water to get the water near them. The problem was that the cattle remained around the wells and destroyed all the vegetation in the area. That contributed to the degradation of the region allowing the winds and the sand to destroy the grazing areas. So the whole process of

encouraging people to cease their nomadic life style actually made the situation worse.

There were a lot of naive theories about what to do to stem the desert. Some people wanted to change the whole livestock industry to make it more meat oriented – establish fattening ranches. The anthropologists we hired – that was the "in" profession at the time – said that there was something about the nomadic culture which allowed its people to use the land better than our experts; they felt that the nomads were more interested in milk-producing cattle rather than raising them for meat. We went through all sorts of experiments. I think that most of the projects we started in those days probably failed. We did train a lot of people and some of our projects were successes. The area has droughts today, but there are not 100,000 people dying because of them. The people are much better organized and prepared to deal with their environment. There is now an international desertification convention and a whole variety or programs directed towards improved land use in order to stop or at least slow down the spread of the desert.

The problem has something to do with rain patterns as well. Over the last 100 years, African people moved agriculture north because that is were the rains were. Now as the rains recede, people were left on very marginal land – where they probably should not be in any case from an agricultural point of view. So the evolution of weather patterns has had a major impact on desertification. We had some interesting meteorologists working with us. That was one of the wonderful things we could do in the 1970s. We put together teams of economists, sociologists, agricultural economists and from other disciplines giving us an inter-disciplined approach that would be very difficult to mount today. Some of the meteorologists would talk about 100 years rain patterns; others would give discourses on the impact population growth had on land. So it was a very heady time; we had enough resources granted by Congress, which also was concerned about the Sahel because it became an item for newspaper coverage.

Q: Was the new medium of television a factor? We are now moving into an age when foreign policy is dictated at times by TV coverage. Did it have an impact on your work?

LYMAN: I think the Sahel issue was one of the first TV stories that had an impact on our foreign policy. We felt tremendous pressure. The newspapers wanted to know what the U.S. was doing about all of this misery portrayed in TV. Sam Adams came under a lot of fire because some people thought he was not doing enough. Congress was very concerned because of the public outcry. It was one of the first instances when TV and the media focused on an area that most people in the world didn't know existed. They made it a big issue which helped us get money from Congress. We were able to mount long term programs. One of my colleagues very wisely worked with Congress to make the Sahel a separate part of the assistance program with its own funding to be spent over a long period. That allowed us to stay in that politically very insignificant region and permitted us to work there for many years.

Sam Adams first went to see David Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Newsom had a background in African affairs. Adams presented the case for a

special focus on the Sahel. But Newsom found that there was little support within the Nixon Administration for an emphasis on an area of such little political significance. So he went to see Senator Hubert Humphrey, then chair of the Africa subcommittee. Newsom explained the seriousness of the situation in the Sahel. Humphrey asked if there should be a hearing and perhaps a special U.S. response. Newsom, careful not to overstep the boundaries of his authority, simply said that was a decision for Humphrey. Of course, Humphrey responded, and there was subsequently special Congressional earmarks for a Sahel program.

Q: Did you seek and get any cooperation from the Europeans?

LYMAN: We did a lot of work with them because they were major powers in the Sahel area. The Europeans had very different approaches; they dealt with larger projects whereas we were more interested in smaller projects in many areas. They worked through European contractors and therefore were not as involved as we were in the sociological and culture issues on the ground. The French were an exception; they knew the area better than anyone else, but they also had a peculiar approach. They considered the Sahel as "their area" which made their approach to he issues very colonial and protective. They looked on as competitors; I didn't think they were entirely pleased with our role. We did have a lot of cooperation with French research institutes. On the other hand, we had major differences on the questions of livestock and water management. I think that gradually we all came to the conclusion that some of our past projects were just wrong.

Q: How did we deal with the countries in the region?

LYMAN: They were difficult. In those days we were not concerned with democracy and human rights as we are today. That made it a little easier to work with the regimes then in power. We did have to deal with a coup in Niger, with lots of trouble in Chad, etc. It is interesting however to note how little interest we showed in the domestic politics of the countries in which we were involved. The governments were of course concerned with what was happening in the region because the drought was a major preoccupation; that it generated tremendous amounts of foreign aid was not lost on those countries either. So they formed their own multi-lateral organization, which still exists today, which became a way to beat the drums on their behalf. We put a lot of money into building up this organization's capacity to do research and analysis. Most of these countries, being Francophone countries, continued their close relationships with France and other Europeans. They did welcome us in part so that they could play us off with the French.

There was political instability in the Sahel. Governments did fall as I noted before – some indirectly as result of the drought. I think some of our projects contributed very little to meeting the challenge because some of these governments were unable to implement them.

Q: What about food aid?

LYMAN: Food aid was a large part of our program; we were always careful to make sure that the import of this aid did not discourage local farm production. This was a major issue in the 1970s. The problem was that the kind of food we delivered was not the kind that the inhabitants could grow. They liked rice, but it was very expensive to grow. So the countries asked us to pay for dams so that areas could be irrigated and therefore produce more rice. What the climate of the region was useful for was sorghum and millet. So there was some tension between our food aid, which changed tastes and subsidized governments, and the promotion of local agricultural production. We had big arguments about the dams. The U.S. eventually decided that we would not pay for the construction of dams, but several of the Arab countries did. A whole series of dams were built along the Senegal river, which have contributed to a marked improvement in rice production, although the new irrigation did not have the impact that people had hoped for.

Q: Did the anthropologists object to any phase of our efforts?

LYMAN: We had a lot of tensions over what our program might do to a culture essentially tied to the land and cattle. The anthropologists challenged the presumption that the structure of the livestock was detrimental to the environment. They didn't believe that. The accepted wisdom of the agricultural experts from the West was that the natives were ruining the environment; no one owned the land so that everybody overused it. The anthropologists insisted that there were some traditional practices which might ameliorate the negative effects and furthermore that the relationships between the farmers and the herders had a logic to it. So we were constantly trying to meld these opposite views in some way. Probably the anthropologists were correct; we tried through some projects to change the livestock industry, but we did not have much success. On the other hand, it was very questionable whether this nomadic life style could continue and prosper.

Q: Was there any major influx of people from the land into the cities as we have seen in some many places?

LYMAN: People were flowing into the cities which were major consumers of rice and meat. It actually became cheaper to import those goods from other countries like France and Australia than to buy it from the nomads, not to mention that the local meat was very tough. Rice was obtained from the U.S. food program at lower costs. So these countries had to balance the demands of the urban dwellers and those of the rural communities.

The other problem we ran into frequently was a political one: the nomads did not recognize borders. They just moved wherever they wanted to. A lot of the countries therefore became interested in settling the nomads so that people who were not citizens would not violate their borders. This of course ran against the nomadic culture. We probably had some sympathy for trying to change the nomadic lifestyle for the wrong reasons. The governments were trying to do that for political reasons; they could control people better if they stayed in one place.

Q: We are now discussing a period which was the height of the Cold War. Did that have

any influence on our Sahel rescue program?

LYMAN: Not at that time. Later when I became the AID director in Ethiopia, this factor became the over-riding consideration. The Cold War and our concern for communist penetration of the continent played a major role in such programs as those we carried out in Angola and on the Horn. But it didn't effect our programs where the possibility of communism was so remote.

Q: Did you run into a lot of problems as you tried to organize the Sahel program?

LYMAN: We had a lot of organizational problems inside AID. Finally, we organized a separate Sahel office. A lot of resources became concentrated in that office. In that regard, Congress eventually appropriated a specific amount for the Sahel programs – a move which ran into a lot of opposition in the rest of the Africa Bureau. That eliminated the flexibility of moving money from the Sahel to other programs in Africa. I myself had some reservations about this Congressional initiative which lasted for several years.

For Congressmen who opposed the Vietnam war and who didn't like the use of AID resources to support our efforts there, the Sahel crisis represented to them a golden opportunity to authorize an assistance program for something they always thought aid was for. The Sahel had no strategic significance for the U.S. Our interests were essentially humanitarian. That made it a perfect area for a U.S. assistance effort in the eyes of the Congressmen. Those Congressmen therefore loved the Sahel program. So we had a curious situation where an area where we had no strategic interest was popular with the anti-Vietnam crowd. Later on, of course, people wondered why we were dumping all this money into an area of no strategic interest.

Q: What did you do with the media?

LYMAN: We did a lot of work with the media. That is how I became good friends with David Ottaway of the Washington Post — we traveled through Mauritania together. The media was initially very critical of our response to the crisis – we were accused of not doing enough. But we worked with them so that they would have a better understanding of what we were doing.

Q: Beyond the Sahel, what other areas were you concerned with?

LYMAN: I did a lot of work on the Horn of Africa. Eventually, in 1976, I became the mission director in Ethiopia. At the time, we were not very active in southern Africa because South Africa was viewed as a pariah state; we did have programs in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland largely devoted to training. We had a major program to provide Americans to work in those governments while their bureaucrats came to the U.S. for training. It was a rather extraordinary effort. We actually had quite a few American citizens working for these foreign governments in southern Africa. Eventually these efforts were phased out as these countries acquired their own well trained bureaucratic

cadre. But for a while, it was a very large program.

Q; *What was the situation on the Horn of Africa during this period and what were we doing?*

LYMAN: In the early 1970s, the Soviets were deeply involved in Somalia. Our ally in the region was Ethiopia. We had a sizeable aid program there, but we were struggling with the Ethiopian government because we felt that land reform was essential for economic development. Ethiopia had a very feudal system with a lot of absentee landlords. The Swedes were very active in Ethiopia working very hard on this land ownership issue. The emperor and his advisors resisted changes in land ownership. So we had a large aid program, but it was always surrounded by tensions, particularly on the land issue. We were caught in the familiar dilemma of how far to push to a valuable ally in the region.

In 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by a Marxist-oriented military group. After that, our relations steadily deteriorated. During my tour there, it got even worst. This change in regimes forced the Soviets to make a choice between Ethiopia and Somalia who were at war with each other during most of this period. They finally chose Ethiopia and abandoned Somalia. The Soviets poured a lot of resources into Ethiopia. This Soviet reversal caused a response form the U.S.; we allied ourselves with Somalia. The whole history of the Horn during the 1970s and 1980s was very much entangled with the Cold War.

Sudan at the time was sort of an ally of ours. Nimeiri was the president. He had just ended the civil war in the south which gave him a reputation of being a relatively good leader. We had a fair sized aid program in the Sudan which was also a part of our foreign policy strategy.

Q: What was the situation with our Kagnew situation? [The U.S. had a large military base and communications center at Kagnew in northern Ethiopia, an area that is today the independent country of Eritrea.]

LYMAN: It was a very dicey situation. In 1977, the Ethiopians ordered all our military to leave the country. They gave us four days to leave. The embassy pleaded for more time, but it didn't get anywhere. The U.S. military sent in all sorts of air transport which helped getting our people out within the four days. Before the military left, it destroyed all sensitive documents and equipment; that was the end of the Kagnew station and U.S. military presence in the region. Ironically and fortunately, this happened at a time when Kagnew was becoming less significant. It had been a very important communications facility, but with the advent of satellites, ground stations were becoming less important.

Q: What happened to our aid programs after the change in government in Ethiopia?

LYMAN: We continued our program in Ethiopia but at a decelerating rate. By the time, I got there in 1976, our program was focused almost entirely on drought and drought relief

– purely humanitarian. When I suggested that we start a rural road building project, it was vetoed by the Congress. There was a lot of suspicion in the Ethiopian government about our motives and that too limited us to drought relief. This drought had started in 1974, which was covered up by Haile Selassie for a long time. A lot of people died. When the world began to hear about this drought, it attracted a lot of media attention and enabled us to start our drought relief efforts. In fact, the drought and the lack of government action on it was one of the reasons the military coup was successful.

We established an institutional relationship with the leader of the Ethiopian drought relief program. That continued even after the coup with its anti-American bias.

Q: What was our response to the military coup?

LYMAN: We tried to figure out what to do. We wanted to hold on to pieces of our program. For example, we had a large program at the university which we wanted to continue. But that gradually deteriorated. We tried to continue some of our agricultural programs and that effort also deteriorated. We faced not only an anti-American regime, but the domestic U.S. support for our Ethiopian program also diminished considerably. There was a lot of anger about what had happened during the coup and immediately thereafter. Many members of the emperor's family were executed; others were held in captivity for many years. My predecessor in Ethiopia became very much anti-regime. He knew a lot of the people who were executed and so he was not a very strong proponent for an aid program in Ethiopia.

We did send out feelers to the military government in Addis Ababa. We tried to find out what the limits of the regime's tolerance was. But as I said, there was considerable negative feeling in the U.S. against the new regime and that also limited our flexibility. Some people pointed out that the new regime was conducting a land reform program which we had pushed for many years. It was a sweeping reform program using university students to mobilize the peasants. But this program soon turned sour. It became a violent and arbitrary program with political control exerted over the peasantry, and the land collectivized rather than turned over to the peasantry. Thus Americans who had been in Ethiopia before, during and after the regime transition turned strongly against our further involvement in that country. I couldn't even encourage my predecessor to think constructively because he was so negative towards this new regime.

Q: What about Somalia?

LYMAN: Our efforts were very much for political reasons. It was primarily in response to the Soviet moves in the Horn. That program was also very much drought relief oriented. We cooperated with Siad Barre because the Soviets had left him high and dry. We saw Somalia as our new base to combat the Soviets in the Horn. It was somewhat awkward because later when a full scale war between Ethiopia and Somalia broke out, we could not endorse Somalia's efforts to seize Ethiopian territory, but did continue our assistance programs in Somalia. It was not much of a program; it was there primarily for

political reasons.

Q: In general, did AF feel that it could do something permanent to relieve natural disasters?

LYMAN: I think there was a very strong feeling in the Sahel group that there were some exciting things that could be done to arrest these processes. We commissioned a large research project – $1 Million – with MIT to look at alternatives including irrigation and other preventative measures. People were very positive about things that could be done. There were a lot of meetings to discuss remedies; it was a very activist period.

As far as Ethiopia was concerned, the consensus was that the emperor and his cronies were the problem. If land reform were instituted, then it was felt that the situation could be changed, even though the land did not produce much.

Nigeria was a different situation. There we had one of largest programs in the world beginning in the 1960s. But when oil was discovered in the early 1970s, we phased out our program. When I was later working on Nigeria, the residual projects were primarily training and some educational projects. I think our rapid phase out turned out to be a mistake because the Nigerians essentially squandered their resources. Oil prices were high; they did not join the oil boycott against the U.S. in the 1970s, but the Nigerian government was so full of corruption that by the 1980s the country was littered with projects started but never completed. The Nigerians were more interested in the pay-offs than they were in the projects; the "earnings" were then salted away in overseas accounts. It was a great waste, which was exacerbated by the fall in oil prices in the 1980s leaving Nigeria in a state of ruin. The only encouraging aspect, which was short lived, was that in 1979 the Nigerians held an election and returned to civilian rule. That raised some hopes for improvement in the economic situation; they were also dashed. The military returned to powering 1983.

Q: In 1976, you went to Ethiopia. Why?

LYMAN: I was asked whether I would like to become the mission director there. I had been in Washington a long time and the AID personnel people were raising their eyebrows at the length of my Washington tour. I agreed with that. Also my wife had finished her work for an M.A. So the time seemed propitious. I looked on the assignment as a challenge. I found Ethiopia a fascinating place. It had a lot of issues: land reform, social pressures, etc. It just fit my agenda. Also we still had hopes of doing business with the government.

When I went out, I was encouraged by AID to see if there were areas besides the drought relief that we could cooperate on with the government. I took with me a very good team and we tried very hard to sell a range of programs to the Ethiopians. We were not successful, but that had been our mandate which I took on as a very interesting challenge.

Q: You were in Ethiopia from 1976 to 1978. What was the situation when you first arrived?

LYMAN: It was an interesting time. We did not have an ambassador; the president had nominated someone whom the Senate refused to confirm. He was very controversial for what he had done in Southeast Asia. So for my entire tour, I did not have an ambassador. The chargé – Art Tienken – was very, very good. Art realized after a while that he was just not holding the fort, but in fact was there as the head man for a long period. He did a super job. He was low key and understood the political situation thoroughly.

At the senior levels of the government – Mengistu and his cohorts (the Dergue) – were moving up, killing their way to the top. It was a mysterious group; there was no public knowledge of who belonged to that group. Right after the 1974 coup, the men at the top were not that radical. Some even wanted to settle the war with Eritrea which had been draining the country of valuable resources for many years. Mengistu used the Eritrea issue to rise to the top. He accused his opponents of trying to sell out Ethiopia. Then he killed them – one after another. He literally shot his way to the top in 1976-77 period. So we lost the people we thought we might be able to work with. What we eventually ended up with was a rabid anti-American regime.

As a result, little by little, we had to withdraw much of our presence. For example, we had a military assistance program; it ended in 1977 when Mengistu took over. Cyrus Vance was under great pressure from the Congress to terminate our assistance to Ethiopia. There was a wonderful moment in a public hearing when Senator Inouye asked Vance if the military assistance program to Ethiopia had been terminated. Vance said that that decision had been taken. Then Inouye asked Vance whether the Administration has informed the Ethiopians. The answer was "no". Then Inouye said: "Well, you have now!"

That termination became very controversial because, as in the case of Pakistan, the host government had put up a down payment on some military equipment, which we did not deliver but didn't return the money. Art was trying to balance all of these pressures, but slowly he began to realize that the Mengistu government was not one that we could work with, certainly not on security issues, but also on political ones.

On the other hand, there were elements in the government that we knew well. I don't know what the CIA was doing at the time, but there was suspicion in the American community that the agency had continued its ties to the Ethiopian security agencies and might even have been supplying them with military equipment. I don't know whether that was true, but that was the sentiment in our community.

For my part, we found that there a lot of ministers who were very sympathetic and who wanted to work with us. However, they had no more influence with the Dergue than we did; there was so much suspicion of the U.S. that the leaders would not consider any new projects. The press reflected the leadership's view of the U.S.; it provided a drumbeat every day of anti-American sentiments.

Q: Where did this sentiment come from?

LYMAN: I don't really know. How can a country which has had so much western presence develop a core group of Marxists and anti-Americans? In part, I think it was the university. Sometime, in the 1960s, someone decided that it would be good if the military were exposed to higher education. So some military officers went to Addis Ababa University. Unfortunately, much of the faculty was very radical – including some American radicals. They taught a lot of Marxist theory and propaganda, to which the military was exposed. So that was one reason.

The other reason was that the ideology of the revolution was against the emperor. He represented feudalism and all old fashioned, passé views. The antidote was radicalism – mobilize the peasantry, break down the feudal hierarchies, destroy the royal family and the upper classes. Marxism fit into that view well. So the West was tainted by its relationship with the emperor which served the Dergue well. It was a further excuse to eliminate their opponents.

Q: I know that the emperor sent many students to communist countries? The ones I met were turned off by their contact with Marxism. How did you find it?

LYMAN: The same way. I experienced elsewhere that Africans who studied in the Soviet Union came back very negative. I think the military was more influenced by what they learned outside the communist bloc. They were interested in their own power-grabbing. The alliance with the Soviet Union proved to be very profitable; much military hardware poured in – far more than we were ever willing to do. Furthermore, the Soviets were willing to back the nonsensical war against Eritrea. So the Dergue was opportunistic as well as ideological.

While we were there, a very strange split occurred. In the country, there was a very, very radical group. It thought that the revolution had become too military. They were ideologues who had studied in Europe. When they returned they became the ideological gurus. They became disillusioned because they found Mengistu was first and foremost a military dictator. He didn't understand the purity of the ideology. So these people formed an left opposition and started shooting ministers on street corners, etc. This situation ushered in what was called, "The Red Terror." The government went into homes, arrested or shot suspected dissidents, while the leftist rebels continued their killing.

There was a period when we had a 6 p.m. curfew. We heard shooting every night because the conflict between Mengistu and the ideological left was intensifying. It was a very violent period. Yet we had a well functioning drought relief program. I had good relations with the leaders of Ethiopia's drought relief agency and with a number of ministers – almost all of whom defected eventually. I have seen them in Washington over many years. They were decent people trying to do the right thing, who eventually just gave up. The situation became intolerable for them. In fact, the Dergue was very suspicious of the

permanent bureaucracy. The internal situation and the war with Eritrea began to drain resources, both human and capital.

Then there was a legislative issue we could not solve. The issue was the compensation that was given (or more exact, not given) for expropriated property. By congressional mandate, this dispute put a stop to all our programs except emergency relief. Eventually, this issue was resolved, but it took a long, long time.

I tried to develop two regular assistance projects – one in agriculture, which the Ethiopian leadership vetoed, and a rural program that Congress turned down. So while I was there, although we recommended a couple of new initiatives, our main effort was drought relief. I should note that under drought relief, we actually did some agricultural development projects with the Ethiopian authorities.

Shortly after the Dergue ordered the American military to leave in 1977, the Ethiopians ordered half of the embassy and USIA staffs to leave. There is always some humor in these situations. USIA had a very small movie program which allowed Ethiopians to see American movies. The last movie they showed before the "leave order" came down was The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming. So half of the embassy and the USIA was ordered to leave, but not the AID mission. Art Tienken said: "You guys must be wearing the white hats." This was a traumatic moment for the American community. The people who were ordered out were only given a few days to depart. The Navy medical research program had to be closed down completely. So we were all very demoralized. USIA in fact also closed down leaving a small truncated embassy and the AID staff. Later in 1978, I left.

Q: Why did the Ethiopians, with all their Soviet assistance, do so poorly against the Eritreans?

LYMAN: The Eritreans were tough; they were highly motivated and disciplined. The Ethiopians thought they could just outnumber their enemy. They would throw a whole host of peasant soldiers against the Eritreans, who would mow them down. The Ethiopians did control the major cities, like Asmara, but the Eritreans ruled over the rest of the land and conducted a classic guerrilla war. They controlled the country-side and hampered all Ethiopian efforts. Every time the Ethiopians tried a frontal assault, the Eritreans would just shoot them down from their well hidden positions. The Eritreans had major support bases in the Sudan. There were a lot of refugees in camps there which served as a recruitment base and as back up facilities for the soldiers. So the Eritreans could always move back into the Sudan to regroup and then return to the front. Furthermore, Mengistu had other fronts to defend; there was considerable tension with Somalia. He threw considerable manpower and resources into these wars, but he did not really succeed in winning any of them.

Q: How was the drought relief delivered in light of the transportation problems in Ethiopia?

LYMAN: It was very difficult. We had to truck the goods as far as the roads would let us and then people had to come down the mountains, get the food and carry it back. We didn't want to establish drought relief camps because that would make the population entirely dependent on relief. So we tried to steer away from those as much as possible which meant that people did have come a good distance to pick up the food stuff. There was no way to distribute it to all the villages because many of them were unreachable except by helicopter.

This relief effort was seen as a temporary measure. Hopefully, the rains would return allowing the continuation of the self-help efforts by the villagers. When I was there, there was not only a drought, but also an outbreak of a terrible disease called ergotism. That came from a fungus found in grain, which we in Europe and the U.S. guard against very thoroughly. In the Middle Ages, it was believed that it caused such things as "Saint Vitas Dance"; it effects the human circulatory system and leads to auto-amputation because the blood circulation ceases. It was striking a lot of Ethiopians way up in the mountains. In fact, this was an area which I had not been allowed to visit – the government would not let us go there. But when the disease struck, I was allowed to go to the area – driving with my team as far as we could and then helicoptering the rest of the way. We brought an expert on this disease – some fellow from Oregon. He was just marvelous; he discovered the source of the disease – in some of the grains that people were eating. Then the Ethiopians launched a big education program which tried to teach the villagers which grains should not be eaten.

When the rains did come, people would return to their long standing food production efforts. But I think since food delivery was so difficult, drought relief was not a long term solution.

Q: Did you have any problems with the local warlords who in other places would control the food distribution?

LYMAN: There was relatively little of that. We had AID inspectors looking at our programs, accounting for our resources – vehicles, etc. There was no sign of theft. Later, in 1980s, the situation did change for the worst. In that drought, there was considerable diversion of assistance – much to the Ethiopian military – and there was considerable corruption. We were very fortunate because in my time there was still a revolutionary ethic which put great emphasis on the absence of corruption. That lasted until the early 1980s and then it began to fray. So we didn't have much corruption.

Q: What about the Soviet efforts?

LYMAN: The Soviets and the Cubans were steadily increasing their presence. The Soviets were mostly military men who were providing training. The Cubans were into ideological training. We saw that they would take young children – preschoolers and higher – to go through an ideological training program. We could see these kids running

down a road chanting ideological propaganda, all generated by the Cuban teachers. In the American School, the Ethiopian kids also attended this Cuban brain-washing program. When they returned, they exhibited considerable distrust which our children felt. That was an upsetting experience.

Q: So you really were in the middle of the Cold War.

LYMAN: Absolutely. We had no contact with the Soviets and none with the Cubans except when we saw them running down the streets. It was a very difficult period for U.S.-Ethiopia relations. It was hard for the embassy to do its job, even though it was staffed with good people.

Q: Were you under pressure to close the AID mission?

LYMAN: That in fact happened right after I left. My successor closed the program. The relations had reached the point where we decided that our investment was not worthwhile. When I was there, there was still some hope, based on the beneficial results of the drought relief program, that the right people in the government might become amenable to expanding the assistance program. But more and more of the people we worked with defected to be succeeded by people who looked at us with great suspicion. It eventually became impossible to conduct any kind of program. Our decision was discouraging to some Ethiopians as well as to ourselves.

Q: How was it to live in Ethiopia in the late 1970s?

LYMAN: My wife and our three children were there with me. The kids attended the American School – one in first grade, one in ninth grade and one in 10th grade. Later on, I understood that their Ethiopian experiences had a greater impact on them than I realized at the time. I recognized it when I read my daughter's essay – for her college application – about the violence that she saw and heard all around her in Addis Ababa and what happened to her good friends after they participated in the Cubans' ideological training. It was quite an experience for the kids. On the other hand, their life was somewhat isolated. The American school did have to close on a couple of occasions because of the violence – or threat thereof. And that made an impression. But they also went horse-back riding, etc. There were certain areas outside of the city which were safe to visit. So they did get a chance to get out of town. But it is still was a highly restricted experience because there were a lot of places which we could not visit. One of my daughters loved her time there, her friends in the school, etc.; one of my other daughters could not wait to get out; and the youngest daughter didn't really care one way or another.

My wife taught at the American School. She went through one very scary period. The emperor had given the school his approval and had said that it could teach whatever it wanted. The new government, being suspicious of any American tainted institution, sent representatives one day to inform the teachers that they had to go to a police station to get a work permit. The principal of the school became concerned for his teachers. He asked

those teachers who were spouses of American officials – and who thus had diplomatic passports – to be the first to go to the station. My wife went down and said that it was the scariest experience of her life. She was questioned repeatedly and finally was asked by a military man to sign a statement written in Amharic. She and the other teachers refused. They were asked whether they had told the truth. They said they had, but that they couldn't read the document that they were supposed to sign. Under the circumstances, they would not sign something they didn't understand. The situation got very tense. Finally our consul general arrived and he got them out of the station. But my wife said that it was a very scary situation. The school stayed open, but it was understood that it was being watched which made everybody uneasy and worried.

Q: So you left Ethiopia in 1978 and then what?

LYMAN: We were on home leave with orders to return to post. But AID came up with another new angle. Jimmy Carter had become president and the White House wanted to create a new Institute of Science and Technological Cooperation (ISTC) to work with developing countries, particularly middle income developing countries. This new organization was to be separate from AID. A planning office was established in the New Executive Office building, working with the president's science advisor. AID was to second a senior official to that office. I was asked to take on this assignment. With mixed feelings, I accepted and didn't return to Ethiopia. We had told everybody in Addis that we would be returning and that gave me some pause. We never really said goodbye to our friends. Many in Ethiopia thought we had known of this assignment but had not told them. That hurt a lot.

Q: In 1978, you were assigned as deputy director of a new office which was to plan an new institution called the Institute for Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

LYMAN: That is right. The institute that was being considered was part of President Carter's initiative to create a new kind of cooperation with developing countries. He was seized with the idea that some countries – which we call "middle income" such as Brazil, Columbia, etc – needed a different kind of cooperation with the U.S. than a normal assistance program. These countries were phasing out from being aid recipients. Frank Press, then the president's science advisor, and some people in the NSC felt that in lieu of aid, we should develop a new cooperation which would stress science and technology. This was thought to allow a different kind of relationship from that of an aid recipient. Many of the Latin American and other presidents had said to Carter that they would like this kind of effort.

The new institute was to be able to develop cooperative efforts with any countries, but obviously it focused on those that had the capacity for this kind of collaboration. In fact, this focus caused us considerable trouble with Congress because Congress at the time was targeting the "poorest of the poor." One of the opponents of this idea was Congressman Solarz, although by no means was he the only one. He thought this program would be something for the "elite" which would take resources from those countries he thought

really needed help. So as we worked on this new idea, we shifted emphasis to be more inclusive by having a broad outreach to the developing countries. This would also have allowed the U.S. to have another means to assist poor countries besides the normal aid program.

The concept was also very controversial in AID. Those of us from AID who worked on it were almost considered traitors. At the time, there existed an authorization for an International Development Cooperation Administration (IDCA) – which existed until 1998. That organization was to include AID as well as other parts of the government concerned with assistance efforts. It never really came about, but there was there was this authorization for a super-structure over AID. Under IDCA the idea was to establish this new Science and Technology institute and take from AID those functions and staffs related to science and technology. So there would be two development institutions under IDCA. People in AID were extremely suspicious and unhappy with this prospect. They didn't want to lose the science and technology research arm. So there was considerable tension between AID and our office. In fact, AID went to Congress and lobbied hard against this new institute. So it was not an easy effort.

The impetus outside the government came from the scientific community – people who were not in the mainstream of assistance efforts – people who dealt with questions of energy production and consumption and what we now call "environmentalists". They had felt that they had had no place in our assistance programs, no programs which allowed them to interact with developing countries. Furthermore, that community thought that there were areas of R&D and scientific collaboration that AID neglected. There were a number of academics that were supporting the establishment of the new institute.

We worked on the concept for two years. The effort ended disastrously.

Q: Were you forced to focus on the energy area because the world had suffered a major set-back because of the Arab boycott?

LYMAN: We actually didn't. The pressure from Congress was to focus more on important research areas that would assist all developing countries and perhaps even the U.S. So we focused on areas like health – the resurgence of tuberculosis. We looked at new and different approaches to agricultural research. We tended to place heavy emphasis on training to allow the development of a scientific capacity in the developing countries to tackle their own problems. We did not focus on energy a lot; in retrospect, we perhaps should have, but we didn't.

Q: Did some of the developing countries see this institute as a way to bypass the U.S. patent protection process?

LYMAN: That issue did arise; it was a very important one for those developing countries which wanted greater access to American technology. But that was only part of the reason why this institute enjoyed great support form developing countries. There was another

important aspect: in 1979, a UN conference on science and technology for development had been scheduled to take place in Vienna. This was an idea that Henry Kissinger had promoted. That conference was building up a large head of steam just as we began our efforts. So our initiative was intended to be the keystone of the U.S. presentation to this UN conference. We were going to point out that we were establishing a new organization which would allow developing countries to begin to develop a scientific and technological capacity to be used for their economic development. We were scheduled to send a huge delegation to Vienna. Father Hesburg, from Notre Dame, was slated to head the delegation. Ambassador Jean Wilkowski was assigned for a full year to prepare for this conference. Ambassador Tom Pickering, now the undersecretary for political affairs, was just beginning his tour as assistant secretary for oceanic, environmental and scientific affairs. He was fully supporting this conference. So this was an important factor in our work. The purported U.S. initiative was considered a major contribution to development.

Q: Was the view of your group that the U.S. was far ahead of other countries in the scientific and technology areas?

LYMAN: There was a feeling that we had been providing assistance in those areas rather than cooperating. We tried to emphasize the cooperative nature of our initiative – i.e. research that would assist the developing nation and the U.S. at the same time. But it was clear that we would have to assist in building a research capability in the other country before real cooperation could take place. In fact, we had a big argument within our office on this issue. We had one group who focused entirely on capacity building; it felt that should be the focus of our efforts. They wanted to create a science culture in the developing country. There was even an advocate for pre-school education in science in the hopes of creating that culture without focusing on specific sectors. The problem with that approach was that Congress viewed it very skeptically. That led us to concentrate on specific areas for research like tuberculosis which we could justify by pointing out how many lives could be saved through such research.

We had to find a balance in the office on this issue, although we ended up with a strong capacity building component in our proposed program. That was of great interest to the developing nations. They wanted to build a capacity which would allow them to work with American industry which would in return provide more technology. They hoped that the scientific and technological innovations could be taken up in international fora, but first they recognized they would have to build their own research capabilities.

Q: How was Europe and Japan to fit into this new initiative?

LYMAN: This was an American initiative. It was to be a piece of our total assistance program. A lot of European countries had similar institutions. For example, Canada has a science and technology institution separate and apart from its normal assistance programs. The Swedes have the same thing. So we were copying existing models which other countries were using to separate assistance from science and technology cooperation. Japan did not have anything like this, but they were very interested in our approach. All

other countries supported the idea of using the UN for some of these cooperative efforts.

Q: We in the U.S. have some of the best laboratories in the world. Was there any concern that we might just be duplicating those institutions in other countries?

LYMAN: I don't think that that issue really ever arose. We never got that far. Our efforts were almost entirely focused on obtaining Congressional support for the new institute. We encountered tremendous suspicion by the large agricultural research community in the U.S. which had a very cozy and comfortable relationship with AID. It was very suspicious about moving that relationship to a new organization with which they were not familiar. So we spent a lot of time on the politics of establishing this new institution. We never really got out to deal with the developing countries until we reached Vienna.

Q: How did that conference turn out?

LYMAN: The conference was very interesting. When we went, the ISTC was still our major initiative even though Congress had not yet passed on it – and never did. Like many UN conferences, all parties agreed on the concept, but when it came down to resources, the problems arose. The developing countries were pushing very hard for creating a new UN fund for science and technology. The U.S. delegation was committed to object to any new international institution or additional assessed UN funding. After two weeks in Vienna, there was no resolution in sight. I was working very closely with the leader of the developing countries caucus – a brilliant man named Francisco Sagasti from Peru. One night, in the men's room, he and I struck a compromise. He took it to his caucus and I took it to our delegation; that started a wonderful "ballet" in the UN. Both his caucus and our delegation approved the compromise. Then the question arose of how it was to be introduced into the conference so that it wouldn't look too cute. We got to the chairman and discussed it with him; he agreed to introduce it.

So late one night – midnight or after – the chairman suddenly said while listening to the debate, he detected the elements of a solution. He asked that he be given an hour by which he would return with a proposal. Everybody agreed and the chairman left for an hour. When he returned, he read word for word the agreement that we had reached with the developing countries. The Japanese were taking notes like crazy; then they noted that I already had a copy of the chairman's proposal. They were confused. But then the chairman left out the final paragraph. I wondered why. At that moment, a Latin American delegate got up and said that the chairman's proposal was all fine and good, but he on behalf of his caucus wanted to make one addition. He read the last paragraph which then made the document seem like a Latin American proposal. The chairman accepted the proposed addition and the whole assembly voted for it. It was brilliant. My Peruvian friend and I called it the "john solution."

The compromise consisted of the following: 1) the UN would establish a commission on science and technology for development; 2) there would be an inter-governmental group of experts which would study how to finance the UN initiative and would report back to

the UN in one year's time. In this way, there was a promise of UN action without a U.S. commitment. That was the solution and the conference was able to adjourn at 6 a.m. on the morning after the last day. I became a member of the inter-governmental group as did Francisco Sagasti. That effort partially succeeded, but without the U.S. We finished our report at the end of 1980, in which we came up with a proposal which called for a combination of assessed and voluntary contributions to finance the development of scientific and technological capacity in the developing world. Ronald Reagan however had just been elected president. I was told in no uncertain terms that the new administration would not support this program under any circumstances. So the U.S. opted out, but the UN initiative did get off the ground and still exists today.

In the meantime, something else happened. We were worked day and night to try to get Congressional approval for the proposal to start the Institute. We had strong support in the House because there we worked with the Committee on Science and Technology which was intrigued by our idea. It would have supported our proposal. But in the Senate, we had one opponent – Senator DeConcini (the Democratic senator from Arizona who later ran into great difficulties with the S&L scandals.) He decided, for entirely unrelated reasons, that President Carter needed to be taught a lesson and needed to be shown that the U.S. Senate was an independent institution. Very cleverly, he looked for some administration proposal which didn't have a major base of support and therefore was vulnerable; he chose our Institute. He attacked the proposal fiercely. His staff came and went through our files; we were accused of violating a 1912 law – it said that no one in an administration could lobby Congress in support of a proposal or request (clearly unenforceable and unconstitutional); they took an unapproved salary list for the new Institute and ridiculed us for the "unwarranted" high salaries that we were proposing. In the end, the provision for the Institute was stripped from the foreign aid bill. That was very demoralizing. The person who headed IDCA during this situation was spineless. He sent the charge about the 1912 law to the Justice Department to see whether we should be indicted for criminal activity – an action that had never been taken in the 60 plus years that the law had been in effect. We were told to close shop. I was instructed not to answer the telephone with the name of our office. I was by this time the head of the planning staff having been promoted a few months earlier. IDCA pretended that I didn't exist. It was an extraordinarily difficult and demoralizing period.

Then AID suddenly decided that it would incorporate our proposal once more in its own 1980 budget request. So we were suddenly put back to work officially and instructed to produce a Congressional presentation document for AID in four weeks. We brought in D.A. Henderson from the public health school at John Hopkins to lead the effort. We worked day and night, seven days per week, for those four weeks and produced one more presentation, which however also failed. Not everything we did was lost. Many of the science and technology cooperation programs that we had proposed were later quietly incorporated into the regular AID program. This was done to demonstrate that a new institution was not required to conduct these cooperative programs. AID signed a contract with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out the programs. So our work was not a total loss, but I was personally devastated by the experience.

There was only one silver lining. In Churchill's memoirs about WWII, he wrote about how Chamberlain had selected his cabinet in the 1930s. Churchill was by then in his 60s. He was passed over by Chamberlain. Churchill thought that it was the end of his career. He wrote: "Little did I know o'er head beat the wings of fate." Sometimes, apparent defeats turn out well. So it was with me. I was feeling very low and very bitter about IDCA sending the accusation to the Justice Department for an investigation which after six months (during which I was in political and professional limbo) Justice sent back indicating they had no interest in the issue. During this period I received a call from Bill Harrop in the Department. He knew me from our AFSA days. Bill asked whether I would be interested in joining the State Department, on detail from AID. So I went to see Phil Habib and told him that I had been offered a position in the Department. It was at a somewhat lower level than I had hoped. Phil replied emphatically, there was only one agency which would allow me to pursue my interest in foreign policy and that was the Department of State. So in 1980, I joined the staff of the Department's Bureau of African Affairs.

Q: How did the senior staff in AID react to the management problems that you were facing?

LYMAN: There was a mixed reaction. There were many people in AID who were vigorously opposed to the concept of the Institute, because, as I mentioned earlier, they were concerned by the potential transfer of some AID functions and staff to another organization. They thought it would weaken AID and I think that was a legitimate concern. As I have also mentioned, they looked on me as a sort of a traitor.

The upper levels of AID on the other hand recognized that this was a presidential initiative; this was something that Carter wanted and they had assigned me to the project. So they understood my predicament and frustration and eventually some of the scientific and technical research staff in AID also became more understanding.

When I was "left out to dry" a lot of my personal friends became quite concerned. I had brought with me to the planning office a number of AID colleagues; they suffered the same fate as I did, but they were taken back by AID. We had a number of contractors who just left. It was a very difficult and painful time which fortunately over the long term did not ruin my relationship with AID. Doug Bennett, the head of AID was not a problem. He had been in the foundation and academic world and hoped to become the next head of the Rockefeller Foundation. He later became a college president.

Q: Since your assignment to AF was on detail from AID, talk a little about the State-AID relations during this period?

LYMAN: From State's point of view, AID was somewhat a temporary organization. There was a lot of elitism in the Foreign Service – e.g. all FSO's were presidential appointments. There was a lot of friction in the field because AID people tended to get

promoted faster which sometimes resulted in the DCM being outranked by the AID mission director. That caused a lot of uneasiness.

There were also differences between State and AID about the political elements of the assistance program. This often focused on the use of "The Economic Support Fund (ESF)" which was intended to be used for more political purposes than technical assistance, for example. AID was interested in long term economic development, so that the objectives of two agencies conflicted in some respects. So the relationship was correct and polite, but at time uneasy. The concept of IDCA was also a source of tension for it to give the administrator direct access to the president – i.e. an independence that AID did not enjoy.

When I came to AF in 1980, I started as an office director – the Office of Inter-African affairs. I was probably one of the highest ranked office directors in the bureau at the time because I was then an FSR-1 which today the equivalent of a senior Foreign Service officer. In the final analysis, it proved to be a blessing because I was put in charge of an office that dealt with everything except economic development which was handled by another office. So I dealt with security issues, with Congressional relations, with labor issues, with political planning – all the subject matters that dealt with more than one country or sub-region. It was a catch-all office. I was able to demonstrate in my first year that I was able to handle more than just economic development. I could engage in a variety of issues unrelated to economic development.

When the Reagan administration took over in 1981, Chet Crocker became the new assistant secretary for Africa. He found that the existing staffing pattern had one deputy assigned to economic and humanitarian matters, another who worked on security assistance. He wanted to change this so that one deputy would handle all resource transfer issues. After talking to me, he offered me that job. So I became a deputy assistant secretary, with responsibility for resource transfer issues, economic policy, and overseeing the functions of my old office. I stayed in that job for five years.

Q: Let's go back to 1980. When you reported to the bureau, what geographic areas did AF cover?

LYMAN: It originally covered all of Africa, but in 1980 North Africa was split off. So by the time I went to work AF covered only sub-Sahara Africa. That split created some issues; for example, Morocco left the Organization of African Unity (OAU) because the OAU granted recognition to the Polisario movement – a group that was fighting a war of independence in the Western Sahara against Morocco. So when we worked on western Sahara issues, we ran up against the bureaucratic problem of Morocco falling under the jurisdiction of NEA. It took a very different view of western Sahara than AF did. NEA's position was that Morocco was a U.S. ally and if it wanted the western Sahara, we should not object. We looked at the issue from an African point of view. Morocco was being isolated from the rest of Africa which we thought unfortunate. So periodically we engaged in issues that were in part of NEA's jurisdiction, but most of our efforts were

focused on sub-Sahara matters.

South Africa and the independence of Namibia were hot issues. Don McHenry, who was our UN representative, was trying to settle the Namibia independence issue. Dick Moose, who was the assistant secretary in the final year of the Carter administration, was heavily involved on those issues as well as the Horn.

I worked on Nigeria policy – what should be our policy towards that country? How much did we support democracy in that country? Shehu Shagari had been elected in the previous year. His government was however shaky (it would be overthrown in 1983).

There were issues about our labor program in Liberia that came to my office. But most of my time was focused on security assistance questions – what kind of military assistance should we be providing in Africa, which included the development and justification of a military assistance budget. We worked with various regional offices on a host of issues including Congressional relations.

Q: What were we trying to do with our security assistance programs?

LYMAN: At the time, we did not have the major emphasis on democracy that we have today. We more or less accepted military dictatorships as a fact of life in Africa. The fact that the Africans spent a lot of money on their own military was of concern. But we were still in the Cold War era; we were very concerned about the shift that had taken place in the Horn of Africa. We were establishing a relationship with Somalia in lieu of the one we had with Ethiopia. We provided military assistance to Somalia who were fighting the Ethiopians.

A lot of security assistance went for training. Much was used to get access to the African military; we exposed them to the U.S. by bringing them to our country for training. We also had a foreign military sales program, designed to sell end use items to the Africans. In the following ten years the U.S. gave up much of the close control of the technology that we would sell to Africa. In the early 1980s, we did not want to expand the range of technology and technological capacity. For example, we did not at the time sell night vision equipment. The Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs kept a tight control on those kinds of exports. Later in the decade, all those restrictions were essentially abandoned. Under the Reagan administration, the concept of restricting the export of military end use items, regardless of sophistication, was essentially abandoned. The idea of managing military technology took second place to building alliances through the sales of military equipment. By the end of the 1980s, there was very noticeable change in our policy which allowed Africa to procure some of our most sophisticated military technology.

Q: Were you concerned about this change of policy?

LYMAN: I thought it was of great concern. I gave a talk on it in the mid-1980s pointing out that this was one of the causes of some major changes on the continent. I thought it

was turning traditional kinds of conflicts into much bloodier affairs, thereby creating an entirely different environment on the ground. We in the bureau were not able to influence this change of policy to any degree. Chet Crocker did not see it as a major issue. Furthermore, the arms control regime was entirely different than it had been at the beginning of the decade.

Q: How did Chet Crocker operate?

LYMAN: Chet was brilliant; working for him was one of the finest professional experiences I had. I often told Chet that it was one of the finest but also most exhaustive periods of my life. We rarely left the office before 9 p.m. Chet had a brilliant conceptual framework for dealing with southern Africa. It was pilloried by many and it did have some shortcomings. But Chet felt very strongly that he had a framework for dealing with the Angola- Namibia-South Africa nexus. Namibia was under a South African mandate, voided by the UN. South Africa refused to cede control, fighting an independence movement there as well as using Namibia as a jumping off point for support of the UNITA rebels in Angola. The Angolan government in turn was supported by the USSR and by Cuban troops brought in to help against UNITA. Chet focused on getting a solution to the Angola situation which included the withdrawal of the Cuban troops. He felt that this was the only way to get South Africa to go along with the independence of Namibia as well as getting the support of a Republican administration and Congress for an active policy in the region.

As I said, he was pilloried by many quarters because some people thought that the Cuban withdrawal was an unnecessary condition for Namibian independence that he had thrown into the mix. People who had been working on the issue in the previous administration were very angry. Furthermore, his concept involved what he had termed as "constructive engagement" – more open engagement with South Africa because he felt that they had to be a partner in any final settlement. People misunderstood Chet to some degree; he understood that once the South Africans were out of Angola and Namibia, they could no longer claim that apartheid was an external problem. South Africans viewed themselves as surrounded by communist regimes which fostered the domestic liberation movement – what they called the "Great Onslaught." So the South African military and security institutions were determined to fight the opposition as far away from their country as possible – even up to Kenya if necessary, they used to say. Chet knew that if the South Africans left Namibia and if there was a settlement of a similar civil war in Mozambique, they would then have to face apartheid as in internal issue.

However Chet never quite articulated this view in the way I have done. Furthermore, he never did take the time to speak to this issue with South African blacks. So he was not well liked in South Africa by the blacks. He also had a major problem with the conservative wing of the Reagan administration which misinterpreted Chet's policy as too soft on the pre-Soviet Angolan government. They also wanted an even closer relationship with the South African government. Chet had a tough time with Bill Clark, first Deputy Secretary of State and later Reagan's National Security Advisor who wanted at one time

to personally visit the South African troops in Namibia; Chet vetoed that. In addition, he had to fight off Bill Casey, the CIA director. If you read Chet and former Secretary of State George Shultz' books, you will see how Casey undermined Chet's – i.e., the official U.S. – policies time and time again.

So Chet had a brilliant conceptual framework. He was so confident in it that when matters turned sour in the mid 1980s, he would not change his views, as others might have done, because he felt that sooner or later, the southern African countries would have to accept his solutions. By the end of the decade, he was successful.

Chet spent a lot of time on southern Africa. He had a team of seven or eight people that would meet for hours – maybe once or twice each week – in his office pouring over strategy and implementation. This team worked intensively; he coopted people from the Carter administration who had been very suspicious of him at the start and then became very loyal. But although he was so focused on southern Africa, he was determined that the rest of the continent would not be neglected. That responsibility fell primarily to Jim Bishop, the political-military deputy, and me. Lannon Walker, the senior deputy, and Frank Wisner then Chas Freeman his successors also worked on southern Africa. So it was Jim and I who had to keep track of the rest of sub-Sahara Africa. That was the reason we had to stay so late at night because ever single night we met. with Chet to brief him and discuss with him events outside of southern Africa. The meetings were scheduled for 6:30 p.m., but often started later so that we couldn't go home until those meetings were finished.

As I told Chet later, we understood that that not only did he know want to what was happening, but also what we were doing about it. Chet laughed and said: "You really understood that?" I told him we couldn't miss it. Chet was an activist; he wanted the U.S. actively involved on every issue. He became a strong supporter of my efforts to deal with the economic issues of Africa. Ironically AID didn't understand this interest or support it at first. We in the State Department became strong advocates of structural adjustment – that the African countries had to restructure their economies to turn away from highly centralized state control, from subsidies for the cities that hurt the countryside; all the policies that had ruined their economies over the last twenty years. We wanted AID to shift from project related efforts to more strategic broad policies related adjustments. AID was very reluctant to do that in those days.

We made some mistakes and some of those structural adjustment efforts were not properly designed. But over ten years, this concept became well accepted; the African countries recognized that they had to go through this process. We also had to reschedule debts and that took some doing because it needed the approval of the Department of the Treasury and the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB). We had to get the World Bank and the IMF to work together. All of this was my task. Chet was very supportive of this new economic policy that we were pushing. It was novel for U.S. foreign policy to push for economic restructuring in foreign countries. We became great advocates for change, even though it created some turbulence.

At the same time, we were involved in a number of Cold War issues. I was defending security assistance, which AID considered an anathema – if they thought that I had been a traitor before, you can well imagine what my former colleagues thought of me now. In retrospect of course one could second guess us for some of the assistance we provided, as, for example, to Sudan where President Nimeiri was considered our "ally" or Liberia and other places like that. We defended our approach within the Department, with the White House and with Congress. My most difficult task, I think, was defending military assistance to Zaire.

These were exciting times. We had a great deal of discretion. I felt I knew exactly what Chet wanted to do. I felt confident in representing him. In turn, Chet gave us a lot of leeway, although, as I mentioned, we went over the day's events every single night. We did a lot of things. It was an exciting, exhaustive time.

We also did something else. During this period, we became aware that 9,000 Ethiopians Jews (the Falasha) had crossed the border into the Sudan secretly. They were hiding in camps in southern Sudan. Israeli Prime Minister Begin had contacted the U.S. government asking for help with the Ethiopian Jews. He wanted to bring them to Israel. Israel was under a lot of pressure on this issue. There were a number of "radical" Jewish organizations – e.g. The American Association for Ethiopian Jews, the North American Committee for Ethiopian Jews – in the U.S. which were attacking the established American Jewish organizations as well as Israel for alleged "racism." These young groups pointed out that American Jewry and Israel had been quite forthcoming when it came to Soviet Jews, but were not raising a finger to help their "black brothers." They were disrupting meetings of the Jewish organizations; they were pillaring Israel. So Began came to the U.S. seeking assistance. We hemmed and hawed; eventually we began to get reports that the up-rooted Ethiopian Jews were starving to death. They were in hiding and burying their dead in the dark so they wouldn't be discovered.

The Refugee Bureau at the time was caught up in its own politics. It was headed by Jim Purcell, a wonderful man. There was a political coordinator for refugees, Eugene Douglas. The relationship between the two was not very good. Under Douglas was an activist on the issue of Jewish refugees, Richard Krieger. They were scheduled to go to a UN meeting in Geneva and they asked me to come with them. I was not told really why I was wanted, but I went anyway. I knew the meeting was to be about refugees, for which I was responsible in AF. While we were there, we were asked to join a discussion with another organization called the International Commission for Migration (ICM). ICM had been founded with U.S. help to assist in relocating people displaced after WWII. When I entered the meeting room, I looked around and noticed that the Mossad (the Israeli intelligence organization) was represented as well as our Refugee Bureau and the ICM. I then realized that the meeting had been called to devise a plan to get the Ethiopian Jews out of the Sudan. The refugee coordinator from our Sudan mission was also there (he later was accused of being a CIA agent and he played it that way, but he really was a State Department employee). He was gung ho about helping the Falasha. Krieger also wanted

us to take some dramatic action, using all assets necessary. I found myself as the lone representative of the U.S. government who understood what the limits of our assistance might be.

CIA wanted nothing, but nothing to do with this problem. So I became the U.S. representative to work out a plan to rescue the Ethiopian Jews. We did work out a plan. At my insistence, the Israelis were to undertake certain responsibilities. I insisted that our embassy in Khartoum would be protected – there were some suggestions that our embassy be involved in some financial transactions, which we could not ask an embassy to do. We were dealing in the Sudan with the Nimeiri regime which was basically an Arab government, although an ally – fragile, but an ally. But Nimeiri could not openly deal with this issue.

We already had some indications that at least one Sudanese high official – the Vice-President – was prepared to cooperate covertly. There would be considerable amounts of money involved. I told the Israeli that they would have to handle that aspect on their own. I volunteered our refugee coordinator to provide a lot of the logistics involved in moving these refugees. The plan involved the Sudanese government official who would make sure that there would be no interference if busses were rented to carry the Ethiopians in the middle of the night for about 200 miles to an airport on the coast where they would be picked up and flown to Israel – also in the middle of the night. We were warned by the Sudanese government that if this effort became public, it would be canceled. The Sudan government was willing to provide the necessary security for the operation, but that was going to be the extent of its involvement. The Israelis wanted to make sure they only took Falashas and not other Ethiopians. They were to screen all who got on board the planes. Our refugee coordinator would rent all the busses and handle the relationship with the Sudanese. We had to convince a very skeptical UNHCR to go along, but it was not directly involved.

Q: Did you run into any opposition from the UN which normally will not participate in any covert actions?

LYMAN: We kept them out of it. We told the UNHCR to stay out of this operation. It had known about this group, allowed them to get into terrible straits and yet ignored them when they were dying. So there was a lot of antipathy toward that UN agency by people working on this situation. The UNHCR was happy to stay out of it. We used the ICM instead; it was willing to take the risk. It was at the time a much smaller organization that it is now. I would later criticize Jim Purcell, who became the head of ICM years later, for allowing the membership of ICM to increase because I told him I didn't think that this agency would ever replicate the kind of operation it did in the Sudan with so many new members.

The Israelis were to charter the planes with their own funds. They entered into a contract with a Belgian concern to fly into the Sudan in the middle of the night to take the refugees out. Israel also appealed to American Jewish groups to raise money for the operation, also

secretly. The Jewish community raised around $50 million this way.

I might mention that I had no authority – none whatsoever – to put this plan together. Finally, when the details had been worked out, I told the group in Geneva that I then had to return to the U.S. to sell the plan to my superiors.

I returned to Washington and talked to Chet Crocker. I told him about the rescue operation and asked for his views. He was taken aback a little and instructed me to go to brief the Executive Secretary of the Department. I did that and he took it to Secretary Shultz who took it to the cabinet. I was then instructed to convey approval of the plan on behalf of the U.S. with the understanding that only I and Dick Krieger would be involved. Krieger had made a major gaffe because he sent a message to our Sudan contact through the Sudanese embassy thereby possibly exposing what was supposed to be a very covert action. So I had to supervise him very closely for protection for both of us and perhaps many others.

He and I were the only ones that were allowed to read the cables on this operation. A special caption was established for cable traffic on this subject. We were the U.S. government on this matter. As Chet said the other day at a panel, that was delegation of authority! I was given the authority by the U.S. cabinet to run an operation as a deputy assistant secretary.

I had several tasks. First, I had to keep track of all the planning and participate in it. I had a meeting in my house with Mossad representatives, DoD, CIA (very reluctantly), and my colleague Jim Bishop who I decided should also participate. We worked all the details down to the last possible contingency.

Then came the problem of all of the advocacy groups. We had to convince them that we were going to take action without mentioning anything about the operation. These groups had to trust the U.S. government, which was very difficult for them to do. I finally won over the two main organizations that I mentioned earlier. In fact, they became our allies; this was very important because secrecy was essential; any public mention would have been very detrimental if not fatal. The operation was to take place in November, with our planning having been started in the summer of 1984.

This was a very tense time for me and my family because I would have to work very late into the night; I would get calls from one of the American groups warning me that word of the operation had leaked out. I should mention that most radical organization was the Canadian Association. It wanted to keep sending people into southern Sudan to help the Ethiopians. Had that been allowed, they would have stumbled across all the preparations. I had to convince these people not to go. They would ask why and I told them I could not tell them. They just had to trust us; if they didn't they would just upset the whole apple cart.

Then we had to keep the press quiet. The Boston Globe, the Washington Post, the New

York Times, The Wall Street Journal all had the story. Peter Jennings at ABC had the story. I had to go to every single one of them to beg them to sit on the story. I told them that if the operation were to go public, the Ethiopians would be in serious danger. I must say that every one of the media outlets suppressed the information they had; I don't think that today that would be possible.

Unfortunately, the Israeli media was not so disciplined. On November 20, the operation started and for every night for about six weeks, a bus load of people would be transported to the airfield and taken to Israel – all in the dead of night. This occurred night after night until an Israeli who was working on the operation, gave a press conference for his own political purposes. He announced that the rescue of Ethiopian Jews was underway. One Israeli paper ran with the story; the U.S. media had not. Then a Jewish newspaper in Washington ran the story. I had pleaded with them not to do so, but I was ignored. At that point, Peter Jennings and others called me and told me that as long as the Jewish paper was going to print the story, they couldn't hold it any longer. So the whole operation became public before it was finished, causing Nimeiri to stop it completely. Five hundred people were still left in southern Sudan stranded.

Partly in response to the Jewish groups' pressure, Senators sponsored a resolution, which was approved unanimously, which called on the U.S. government to do something about the ones that had been left behind. Vice President Bush ordered the U.S. government to undertake this directly. I thought that was a very high risk policy. I said that we had stayed away from actual participation in the first operation. But Bush thought it was time to get officially involved. He went to Khartoum to see Nimeiri and to tell him that we wanted the last few hundred Ethiopians taken out. Nimeiri agreed, but it too was to be a secret operation. So American C-130s were to fly from Europe to the Sudan, take them on board, fly them up through the Red Sea – avoiding Egyptian radar – and deliver them to Israel. That was done. It was a magnificent operation which I monitored from the Pentagon "war room" listening to the radio broadcasts as the planes landed and took off. If any one of them had crashed, it would have been a disaster. The Ethiopians were all rescued, but it was also the end of the Nimeiri regime. He was overthrown soon thereafter in 1985. We have had trouble with the Sudan ever since.

It was a very exciting, nerve-wracking humanitarian effort.

Q: Did the Egyptians play any role?

LYMAN: None. We kept it secret from them; the planes had to stay outside Egyptian radar.

Q: How did the immigration of 9,000 Ethiopians go unnoticed in Israel?

LYMAN: Normally, the Israelis control their press. They have a much tighter security lid and the press was instructed not to mention this activity. It was only when the head of the Jewish Agency mentioned it at a press conference that the Israeli media decided that it

could go with the story. That is when it unraveled much to my dismay since we were so close to completing the operation.

Q: Did your religious affiliation have a personal effect?

LYMAN: Being Jewish, I suppose gave me a little more credibility with the Jewish organizations, but on the other hand, my primary concern was whether the U.S. government wanted to participate and how it could do so. The green light was given by the cabinet once I had prepared a plan that minimized U.S. exposure. I think the Jewish organizations understood that I was sympathetic to the challenge, that I understood the issue as well as the divisions in the Jewish community. The Jewish establishment was under great pressure from the more radical organizations; fortunately, I could deal with all of them. So I think my religion was helpful.

As to minimizing U.S. exposure, I was concerned that we protect the ways we conduct business overseas. For example, we couldn't ask the embassy to use its diplomatic pouch to transmit cash, which what the Israelis wanted us to do. There were certain other actions that I did not want our embassy in the Sudan to be involved in. I worked very closely with Hume Horan, our ambassador in Khartoum. As I said earlier, CIA did not want to get involved at all. The refugee coordinator, as I suggested, was sort of a "cowboy." He did more than I think he should have. One of my primary responsibilities was to assure that the U.S. government's participation be very, very carefully managed. We tried to follow "the book."

Q: How much did the domestic politics play?

LYMAN: In the beginning, I think the administration approached the issue on essentially humanitarian grounds. The Ethiopian Jews were starving; I don't think there was any question about that. The Israeli government wanted our help and we had not been able to be forthcoming before when Begin asked. So geopolitics played a role in the decision.

Once the operation became public, leaving some Ethiopian Jews stranded, then domestic politics played a major role. Bush was besieged by large contributors; although the Jewish community tends to vote Democratic, the Republicans had their share of support, particularly from large Jewish contributors. These people made their voices heard loud and clear. There was a major Los Angeles contributor who really was all over Bush on this issue. When the administration received a letter urging further actions signed by 100 Senators, it was then clear that it had to respond positively. As I mentioned, I was opposed to direct U.S. intervention, but in retrospect, it may have been the only way to get the remaining Ethiopians out. Bush made the decision and he and his staff went ahead, although I was involved to some degree. In the final analysis, his efforts were successful.

Q: Did NEA have any role?

LYMAN: In an operation that I don't think could be duplicated today, there were just two of us working on this problem in the whole Department. It was true of course that Shultz and a few other senior officials knew about it, but operationally, only two of us were involved. We wrote all the cables, cleared them with no one else; all the incoming cables were distributed only to us. No one else saw them. So we were completely in charge and entirely on our own. I don't think this process could be duplicated today.

I did work very closely with the Israeli embassy. Benjamin Netanyahu was the DCM. He made the mistake of mentioning the operation at an open lunch one day for which I had to give him a 45 minute lecture! There was one person in the Israeli embassy who was the official liaison with me. He later became the general counsel of the Foreign Ministry. All messages to the Israelis were passed through him and he would bring messages from Jerusalem back to me. The Mossad representative, with whom I became well acquainted and who later headed the Mossad when Netanyahu became prime minister, whenever he came to Washington would meet with me; the official liaison was the embassy. That is the way we coordinated with the Israelis; I checked with our Sudan mission by cable. Even our embassy in Israel was only peripherally involved.

Q: How did Horan react to all of this?

LYMAN: Hume was perfectly comfortable with the way we were handling it. His refugee coordinator, as I mentioned before, was a "cowboy" whom we could not control and whom we later found out exceeded his instructions to a large measure. He was co-opted by the Israelis somewhat. He probably did things that we did not want him to do with the Israelis. Later he gave a very self-serving account to the Los Angels Times, filled with details. That made Horan a little nervous, but he was comfortable with the way we had segmented the responsibilities.

As I mentioned, we were dealing with one of the Sudan's vice-presidents. He was perfectly prepared to be helpful. Hume was helpful in answering a lot of questions from him, explaining the meaning of some of our statements. So the ambassador was comfortable as long as the operation was covert. We were trying to protect the embassy as much as possible to minimize the chances of condemnation – or worst, violence – against it. Nimeiri obviously was aware of what was going on.

Q: I thank you for this description of a successful operation which I think has been greatly neglected. Let me go back to your more normal responsibilities. You mentioned that every evening, you and Jim Bishop would meet with Chet Crocker to brief him and discuss policy. This appears to be a very-pro-active approach. Did any other European foreign ministries have a similar approach?

LYMAN: We had considerable contacts with the Europeans – particularly the French whose former colonies were in much of Africa, also the British to some extent. I instituted a regular bi-annual meeting with the French to discuss economic issues in Africa. My counterpart later became governor of the EU Bank. We met in Paris one time

and in the U.S. another. We had round table discussions on all of the issues – debt rescheduling, strategic economic issues. On southern Africa, there existed a contact group consisting of Great Britain, Canada, the U.S. and Germany. It focused on Namibia and Angola.

We had a number of crises. For example, there was a civil war in Chad which had a major Libyan involvement. We had to decide which faction we should support and what kind of assistance we should provide. We decided to back Hissein Habre, a former president of Chad, who later regained power and threw out the Libyans. Unfortunately, he proved to be a cruel and autocratic ruler, and was later overthrown for his excesses. He took refuge in Senegal. In 2006, Senegal agreed to try him for crimes against humanity.

Liberia was a major crisis. We spent literally hundreds of millions of dollars trying to make Samuel Doe into a legitimate ruler. Doe, a poorly educated sergeant, had taken over the country in a bloody coup. We spent a lot of money on him and failed. We were guided again by Cold War-type concerns. The Libyans and Ethiopians were making overtures to Liberia.

We were dealing with the Ethiopia-Somalia crisis. That took a lot of our time. Jim Bishop and I worked closely together throughout our time as deputies to Chet. On the organization chart, he was responsible for politico-military issues and I was to take care of long term planning. In practice, we always worked together. I handled resources, many of which were related to Jim's responsibilities. There was another deputy who worked on private sector issues, but he was not very much involved in our activities.

Q: Did the French require a lot of time so that they could understand what we were doing?

LYMAN: Unlike some other people who had worked on African matters over long periods, I did not feel that we should be competing with the French in Africa. I felt that a cooperative approach would be desirable, even while recognizing that we might sometimes have different objectives. They had commercial interests which could not be interfered with; they were nasty and vicious if you crossed them on those interests. I know people whose careers were ruined and personal reputations destroyed by the French when they tried to break French monopolies. On the other hand, we shared a lot of objectives. We both wanted stability; we did not want countries to collapse economically. So I worked very closely with the French on economic policy. They were concerned about the economic viability of the Ivory Coast and Senegal. They were a little uneasy about structural adjustment programs; so we discussed the issues and collaborated in the Paris Club. Jim Bishop also spent a lot of time with the French; he spoke the language fluently, which I did not.

I spent a lot of time with the Italians on Horn issues. So we spent a lot of time with the Europeans as did Chet.

Q: As I remember, the French were the only western power willing to send troops to Chad. Did you get involved in that?

LYMAN: The French were beginning to get tired of putting their troops off-shore. Chad was a real problem area for them which they never could solve. But we put together an African intervention force in Chad – primarily Nigerian troops. The French agreed to this approach in part because they had no solutions themselves. That intervention force entered Chad and then stood by idly while Hissein Habre marched around them and took over the government. The Africans were very embarrassed by this experience; they were very angry at us. Furthermore, we never paid the Nigerians, as we had promised to do if they took part in the intervention. So it was a not a very good experience for us. The French did not oppose our plans; for them Habre was as useful anybody else. We gave them much more leeway on security in other countries. We worried more about the Libyans than they did which led us to take the course we did in Chad. But elsewhere, the Libyans were not a threat and therefore we counted on the French to maintain stability and security.

The French were happy to have us spend some economic resources in Africa – as long as it didn't displace them. We were not interested in doing that in any case.

Q: We have often been accused on providing assistance for commercial reasons. Did profit for American firms play much of a role in our policy?

LYMAN: Not really. The emphasis in our foreign policy to support commercial interests was to come much later – in the late 1980s when Larry Eagleburger and others were pushing the Department in that direction. We did not spend a lot of time on that aspect. I sometime have to laugh when I hear people say that "constructive engagement" and our southern African policy was based on protecting our interests in mineral exploitation. I remember meeting with Chet when someone raised that accusation. Chet said that it didn't matter who ruled South Africa; it would have to sell its minerals regardless and we were the most likely customers. So he did not consider those issues to be that important.

The sanctions issues were a different problem. American companies had to abide by that regime. Chet's opposition to sanctions was not based on American commercial interests; he was much more concerned about sanctions getting in the way of "constructive engagement." It is true that we were beginning to encourage more investments in Africa. That is why Chet added a deputy to work with the private sector, but the impact of our efforts did not occur until much later.

Q: Can we talk a little about the Horn of Africa?

LYMAN: The Horn was a major concern. We were trying to contain Ethiopia. We were putting a lot of stock on Siad Barre, president of Somalia. Our policy also had to take into consideration the desire of the Pentagon to have access rights on the east coast of Africa. So we were trying to fashion agreements giving us access rights in Kenya and Somalia.

We had a big U.S. military installation in Somalia; we built a big runway and improved the port. We had a military access agreement with Kenya; we had a lot of ESF resources devoted to those arrangements.

I had to go to Europe to try to convince people there that the Ethiopian occupation of two obscure towns in Somalia was a terrible threat to security on the Horn. I remember returning from that trip wondering why I ever went. For the Europeans, the issue was rather mundane. The Italians did have a great interest in Somalia – a former colony – but they also had a big interest in Ethiopia. We spent a lot of money, giving $90 million per annum to the Sudan, tens of millions to Barre and some to Kenya (even though it was not following good policies) – all out of the ESF appropriations. The whole effort was very much part of the Cold War; it was an anti-Libyan policy; and Middle East related. We spent a lot of money; I can't say that in retrospect that it paid off in the long run. It did give us some immediate returns – the bases. Eventually, Nimeiri was overthrown, Siad Barre ruined his country and was thrown out and the American military after a while came to the conclusion that these facilities in east Africa were not all that important.

Q: Talk a little more about the impact of the Cold War on our south-of-the-Sahara policies.

LYMAN: Africanists are always looking for ways to put resources into Africa. So we played the Cold War card internally in the administration as a way to accomplish our main objective. Africa was not really strategically important; the Pentagon cared very little about Africa except for the access facilities which were related to the Middle East, not Africa. But we in AF would play up the threats in Chad and Liberia, from Libya, and from communists in Mozambique and Angola. In the 1970s Kissinger was deeply involved in the Angola issue; our support of Angolan rebel Jonas Savimbi had a Cold War rationale. Some of us did not think that these were the most important issues in Africa, but if those were the rationales which got us resources, we used them.

The Cold War did impact on the way we did business. We ended up supporting people who in retrospect we probably should have denied support: Nimeiri, Siad Barre, Mobutu (in Zaire), Samuel Doe. On the other hand, looking at Mozambique, we helped settle a terrible civil war there and thereby managed to turn that country away from socialism and ruinous economic policy; that was a very successful policy. If the Angolans had not managed to screw up a peace agreement, they too would have benefited. One of the events that made Chet's policies a success in Angola was the end of the Cold War – when the Russians and the Americans worked together to settle the conflict.

In sum, we did play the Cold War card; some of it was legitimate and some was an excuse to obtain resources out of Congress and the administration. That was the name of the game at the time and the Africans joined right in.

Q: What about our concern about state socialism or central management of an economy?

LYMAN: There I think we did play a constructive role. As I mentioned earlier, structural adjustment was a key and vital part of our policy. We believed that state control of the economy led to subsidies which led to corruption. That structure had to be torn down. The countries were collapsing economically; their external debts were overwhelming them. I spent a great deal of my time trying to prevent the collapse of those economies by putting together packages of World Bank, IMF, ESF, and debt rescheduling in exchange for policy changes by the threatened countries. Somebody rightly observed at the time that these countries should have been in Chapter XI bankruptcy processes. But there is no international Chapter XI.

For this purpose, I assembled a group in Washington, consisting of Treasury, the Department's Economic Bureau (EB), our executive directors to the World Bank and the IMF, and AID. The group coordinated our policies towards each of the countries in economic difficulties. I chaired the group and moved it in this direction even though some of the agency representatives found it hard to accept that there could be a centralized coordination point. We called it the "Wheeler" Group – named after Joe Wheeler, who helped put together the first few meetings. That designation stuck for five years, long after Joe, who was with AID, went off to another assignment. We could not formalize this arrangement, or give the group a formal designation, because Treasury would not have participated. As long as we kept it informal, we were able to develop a set of common polices and to coordinate our various activities. We worked on Zambia, the Sudan, etc in order to keep those countries more or less solvent. This effort was really the prelude to later debt rescheduling policies. At the time, that policy did not exist; we were just trying to keep these countries from collapsing. We insisted that in return for our assistance, the economic polices would have to be changed.

That was the good aspect of my work. I think we made some terrible mistakes on the other hand in Liberia on which I also had a lot of responsibility. After investing a lot in support of Sammy Doe, we got him to call an election which he stole. At that stage we should have abandoned Liberia. At the time, a lot of people were willing to overlook democratic elections in Africa as an impossible goal. We tried to salvage the situation with lots of money; when that didn't have the desired effect, we should have walked away. Instead, we had to watch a terrible civil war break out; it lasted for many years and may not be over yet. [It ended in 2004]

Q: In retrospect, do you feel that the U.S. role has an indispensable role in Africa?

LYMAN: We were very active in Africa. It was to Chet's credit that he was able to sell an activist policy to the Reagan administration. He had great support from Secretary Shultz, Shultz called him "Mr. Africa." Chet was an activist; he believed he could influence events by being pro-active. We had a fair amount of money, mostly ESF, to devote to supporting our policy objectives. ESF resources were non-project; it was for general purposes such as balance-of-payments support which was vital to the recipient countries. Since for the first time we pulled together the various efforts of the U.S. government and international institutions in so called "packages", we were very influential.

Chet was the leader of the negotiations on Angola and Namibia in southern Africa. He was out in front there. We were out in front on the Horn because of our strategic interests. We were active because we had a very strong assistant secretary who convinced others that our activity in Africa was vital and important. So I think we were quite influential in Africa.

Q: If we hadn't been so active, would there have been any other country that might have played the role we did?

LYMAN: The French would always have been active in their former colonies. They may not have taken the same approach we did; the World Bank was very important. On the other hand, I don't think that without us the IMF would have become so engaged; we worked night and day to get that institution involved. It really didn't want to touch it. Of course, now it is stuck with a large African debt, as IMF people will remind me whenever I see them. But the IMF had to become involved; without it, the countries would have collapsed. I think it is clear that we were the only country that could have the reach across Africa that we did have. Unless there had been a calamity, I don't see any other countries being able to be active on the whole continent. The Africans wanted us as an alternative to European influence.

But then look at today. We are not nearly as influential today as we were in the 1980s. There are a lot of civil wars on the continent; it is hard to play the same role as we did in the last decade, although Tony Lake is doing a wonderful job on Ethiopia and Eritrea. I think it was important to us and to the Africans that we played such a vital role in the 1980s.

Q: Then in 1986 you became U.S. ambassador to Nigeria. How did that come about?

LYMAN: Actually, it resulted from a tragic event. Tom Smith, the ambassador and a great expert in West Africa, became very ill. He could not continue in Nigeria. So I was asked by Chet Crocker whether I would be interested in the assignment and I said "yes." Smith was a fantastic guy who worked right up to the end of his life. In fact, when I went to Nigeria, Tom wrote me a 21 page letter. It was the best orientation and briefing that anybody could have. He covered everything. He wrote because he had difficulty in speaking. It was a fantastic orientation on what it would be like to be the ambassador to Nigeria. He was a great man.

Q: You stayed in Nigeria from 1986 to 1989.

LYMAN: Correct.

Q: Did you have any difficulties being confirmed?

LYMAN: None. There was a lot of Congressional interest in Africa. The hearings were

right on target and I didn't have any problems.

Q: When you left the U.S., what did you expect in Nigeria?

LYMAN: At the end of 1983, there had been a coup in Nigeria when the democratic government had just won its second election. It had been a fairly corrupt government, but nevertheless it had been re-elected. What replaced it was a stern military dictatorship led by General Buhari; previous military regimes had not been too harsh in Nigeria prior to 1983. It rapidly became very unpopular. On the other hand, Buhari was fairly clean and was vigorously pursing corruption, including some corrupt dealings in the military. Then in early 1986, there was another coup led by General Babangida. He was much more benign than his predecessor. He also may have acted because of the corruption investigations.

So when I arrived, Babangida was the president. The two main issues were the return to civilian rule and the restoration of a functioning economy. I found Babangida to be extremely shrewd; he was one of the few African leaders who had a grasp of economics – at least the relationship between economics and politics. So for the first part of my tour, I thought that Babangida was a very constructive leader. He later made some major mistakes which led Nigeria into a very bad situation.

But during the early parts of my tour, we were relatively optimistic about Nigeria's future. The major argument within Nigeria centered on whether Nigeria should sign off to an IMF loan program, which called for considerable austerity and adjustment. The exchange rate for example was unrealistic; it had generated a lot of corruption. Budget deficits were out of control, etc. The IMF would demand a lot of changes. Babangida conducted a major public debate about the IMF loan program. The answer from the public was negative. So Babangida said that Nigeria would conduct its own economic recovery program. What he did, in fact, was institute a program which certainly had IMF and World Bank informal approval. In essence he called for the same remedies that the international institutions would have – devaluation, elimination of the multiple exchange rates, freeing of the foreign exchange market. His program did bring a lot of austerity which was unpopular in the urban areas, but it did have a positive effect on the economy. The economy stopped its downward spiral; it began to recover a little bit; there was more production and more exports.

Babangida then launched a very complicated multi-year program intended to return the government to civilian rule. It was to end in 1989 or 1990. It was a very tightly managed program. The basic assumption was that Nigerian politics were so corrupt that the process could not be left to politicians but had to directed from the top. The government was to approve each political party and oversee every step toward democratic elections. It if had been carried out with a great deal of sincerity, it might have worked, but in fact Babangida missed an opportunity. During my tour, both the programs seemed headed in the right direction. The economic program was reasonably on target; when it seemed to be veering off in the wrong direction, I had two allies in the government that I could

contact with my views; they would in turn go to Babangida to tell him that he was going off the rails. It is interesting that later, when all programs were being misdirected, that both of my allies in the government had left office.

Q: Did you see Babangida shortly after your arrival?

LYMAN: I presented my credentials fairly quickly. Actually, having a meeting with him was something that I had to learn how to do. What we learned was that going through the foreign ministry, which we were told was required, was the wrong approach. At first, there was a foreign minister who was a super-proud academic – we are good friends today, but he was prickly then. He had a bit of the negative third world outlook on western countries. In any case, the foreign ministry did not have much influence in the presidential palace.

So I had to find allies within the presidential office if I were ever to have access to the president. At first, I used his aide-de-camp who is now living in Virginia and is another good friend. That got me in at first. Later, I began again to have great difficulty with access. By dint of good fortune, I was asked by a Lebanese business man – he represented a very important community in Nigeria (Lebanese businessmen ran a lot of industries and had very good contacts in important Nigerian circles) – who called me and said that Aliyu Mohamed who was the head of military intelligence, wanted to see me. I didn't know him, but I agreed. The meeting was to take place at the Lebanese businessman's house. I found out that what was on Mohammed's mind was that he had applied for a visa to travel. In Nigeria, the availability of a visa was an important achievement – I used to be importuned about visas more than any other subject. He had received the visa, but he told me that one of his aides had made a terrible mistake. In sending a picture of him to the embassy, he had sent one that showed him in uniform. He never traveled with a picture of himself in uniform. He asked whether I could have the visa reissued with the right picture. I told him that he would have to have a new passport because our visas were stamped right into the passport. If he did that, I would have a new visa issued. But I told him (hinted at a quid pro quo) that I was having a great difficulty in seeing the president and asked him what he might be able to do about my problem. So he became my entree to the president. Whenever I wanted to see the president, I would call Mohammed and he would arrange a meeting; the foreign minister was very seldom there.

Q: What was Babangida' s background? What did you think about his style?

LYMAN: He was a military officer. He was from the middle of Nigeria. He was a Muslim. He was called the Maradona (a soccer star) of politics. He was clever and shrewd. He played politics extremely well; that is he played people off against each other. I admired him because he understood in principle that if there traditional sources of corruption in Nigeria were to be broken, it would require breaking the national government's hold over the economy. For example, the government would have to abandon requiring licenses for foreign exchange because that made everything corrupt. So he canceled the need for licenses for foreign exchange. He liberalized, to some extent, the

Nigerian economy so that the sources of power were more widely held. That is what I meant when I said he understood the relationship of politics and economics.

As I said, he had planned a way to manage the political processes at all levels – local, state and national. I found when I went to see him that he was quite knowledgeable and understanding. There were times when we had some real differences over issues, but on the whole, I was impressed by his regime. He surrounded himself with some very shrewd people – the minister for finance and governor of the central bank. They became my two allies. So on the whole, I had very positive views of Babangida.

There were issues of concern to us which we could not quite eliminate. For example, Nigeria had a ban on the import of wheat and rice which was an anathema to American exporters. It was a source of corruption, stimulating smuggling of those products and making some Nigerians very rich. They used to pretend that the smuggled wheat had been grown in the north, which was really not true. I once gave a speech on that issue which caused a scandal because it suggested that we would apply trade sanctions.

We also wanted to get Nigeria to recognize Israel. That did happen after I left. Babangida had a wonderful response when I first broached the subject. He said that this issue was a political problem for Nigeria; it was not a religious issue – "after all they are not Christians!"

Q: The Nigerians have a reputation for being very shrewd, particularly about financial matters. Did you observe that?

LYMAN: It is true. The tragedy of Nigeria is that its people are so clever, but it is misapplied and used for purposes which really do not move the country forward. The Yoruba are great traders – this is one of about 200 tribes living in Nigeria, but three main groups: Hausa in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest and the Ibo in east. Many Nigerians are great traders. They are not great investors in production and manufacturing. But they are brilliant traders. Everybody one talked to was in the "import-export" business. That covered a broad spectrum, including some illegalities. Nigerians are very clever. There is a whole division in the FBI devoted to Nigerian crimes. When I was in Nigeria, the Nigerians were beginning to become involved in the drug trade in a major way and that continues even today. They don't grow any of the narcotics; they are just traders. Because Nigeria belongs to the British Commonwealth, they had almost unfettered access to India, Pakistan and other opium production areas. The Nigerians became the conveyers and traders. The drugs would enter Nigeria and then be spread around Europe and the U.S. Now Nigerians have become major heroin traffickers. While I was there, the Nigerians did not have control over this traffic; in fact, they were in denial as are a lot of other countries. They used to excuse it by saying that they were poor and this was a way to get rich off the rich people. We used to point out that the use of the narcotics was becoming a domestic problem for Nigeria and that it was demeaning to the whole country. Gradually, they began to see what was happening, but by this time, the corruption had reached very high levels of the government.

We had a DEA agent on the embassy staff; he was very cynical. He used to complain about the Nigerians that I used to invite to my house because he suspected that all Nigerians were involved in the drug trade. So I asked him to give me the name of one Nigerian whom he felt I could invite with perfect confidence that he was not involved in the drug trade. When I was having my farewell party three years later, I told him that I was still waiting for that one name. He said he was still looking!

The Nigerians are a dynamic and fun people. I keep telling people that when I go to Nigeria, I have a lot of fun. I say that even when the Nigerians have their hands in your pocket, they are fun. Once I was in a large crowd and a Nigerian did put his hand in my pocket. I stopped him and all he had to say was: "Sorry!" This trait is unfortunate because the Nigerians are a dynamic people; they have a rich art culture, in which we got involved. But they have a tendency to focus on the buck, trading primarily, and not to invest for the long run. Huge amounts of Nigerian capital is outside the country. That is a shame. They have let their agriculture slide precipitously. That is the negative side of the Nigerian character.

The other matter we worked on was Nigerian assistance for our efforts in Angola. Chet Crocker was still the assistant secretary. I went to President Babangida and former President Obasanjo – who lived about 1 ½ hours away. I wanted them not only involved in the peace process, but to open the door for Africans to deal with Savimbi, the rebel leader in Angola. That was a very delicate matter in those days. We and South Africa had been supporting Savimbi and therefore made him an anathema to many African states. Savimbi was not welcomed by most African states because he was supported by South Africa. Chet was engaged in a very complicated process trying to settle the Namibia crisis, by getting the Cubans out of Angola. Part of the solution was to bring Savimbi into the political process.

So I went to Babangida and he was intrigued by the possibilities. He was willing to play, but the person most interested in this opportunity was Obasanjo. He was then a distinguished ex-head of state. He was willing to try; he went to Angola where he had good relations with the government. He did talk to Savimbi and did open some doors. So I found myself having two roles in Nigeria, dealing with the current and the former presidents of the country. I must say that in general we and the Nigerians did not have a lot of disagreements on foreign policy. Sometime the foreign ministry would issue some typical anti-American complaints, with the South Africa issue being the main cause. This was the Reagan administration which was not very keen on sanctions against South Africa.

But on the whole, our relations with Nigeria were good. One thing I did with Babangida, which my successor did not do, was to meet with him alone. I almost never took any of my staff to these meetings. He usually didn't have anybody with him; except Mohammed from time to time. I never mentioned these meetings in public, nor did I share the substance of the conversations with any other ambassadors. Not many people saw the

president; some of my fellow ambassadors complained about that and therefore I did not tell them of my meetings. The British High Commissioner and I were the only foreign representatives who had regular access. We protected that and I think it made a lot of difference.

I gave a lot of speeches. I talked about democracy, but I was careful in my remarks not to slam the government. That I think also added to the confidence that Babangida had in me. As I said earlier, later Babangida went off the tracks for a lot of different reasons, but for some time he did a fine job in my eyes.

This was my first experience in managing a "country team." I had had some very good advice from Tom Smith, who understood thoroughly how important an ambassador was to the morale of the embassy staff. One of Tom's hobbies was to make furniture. One day, while doing that, he cut his hand. Someone said to him then that when his hand hurt, all the hands in the mission hurt. He learned that if an ambassador carried a frown on his face, everybody became worried. In an embassy such as Nigeria, everyone keyed off the ambassador. I found that what had told me was absolutely true. The ambassador set the tone; if things were going well and the ambassador was happy, everybody worked that much harder. If the ambassador worried and fretted, so did the staff.

We had a very good mission. It is not unusual that morale is high in a "hardship" post. Morale does go up and down. We would have great spirit, and then one month later our medical officer, who was one of my guides to tell me what was going on, would walk into my office to tell me that morale had sunk in the toilet. So I then had to rebuild it. But the country team was very good. Not surprisingly, there were differences, but we could always come to some agreement. The Inspector General's office praised us for being one of the four best managed missions in the world. I was very proud of that. People worked well and hard. We used to have ship visits which were very popular. We tried to keep the community involved in various activities.

We had a very tiny assistance program. But we had a full country team, including some military representation. We had a very tough station chief; she was consumed with ferreting out possible recruitment of our staff by the communists. That created a little friction because she investigated some of her mission colleagues.

Q: Was the fact that the station chief was a woman part of the problem?

LYMAN: That was part of the problem, but it was also during this time that the Sergeant Lonetree activities in Moscow became public. The Marines were accused of letting Soviet nationals into the embassy after hours. Our station chief worried mainly about our Marines and communicators, who she felt were the most vulnerable to penetration attempts in part because, as in many embassies, these groups felt somewhat separated from the rest of the staff. There were a couple of bars near the embassy; many communicators and the Marines went there for a drink after work. She found out that there were some suspicious characters in the bars as well; she was worried that some of

our Marines might make good targets. In fact, one was enticed into an affair with a Nigerian-Indian woman, which was at least questionable. I found out later that the station chief kept files on various embassy staffers. I think she had a legitimate concern since the Cold War was still raging. We had to tell the Marine to break up with the woman – she was married and had a lot of Soviet friends.

But the larger problem was alcoholism. I had to send two people back to the States for treatment. One came back after his treatment and became an advocate for Alcoholics Anonymous. I must say that the Department has a good system for treating alcoholics.

Q: What was the process for that?

LYMAN: We had four cases while I was in Nigeria. I had a very good medical officer who was very good at spotting alcoholics. He was very sensitive and attuned to the usual signs. We had one spouse who got terribly drunk and with her husband's agreement, we sent her home. We had a communicator who had a serious alcoholic problem; we sent him back for treatment. He got excellent treatment in the Department and returned and formed the first AA chapter in Nigeria. He toured the country and helped set up additional chapters. We had a third person who had had previous bouts with alcoholism and showed signs of returning to former habits. We worked with him and he sobered up again. I had to send one Marine home for alcoholism.

I felt I could send people home if alcoholism created a problem at post. If they were members of the Foreign Service, they were treated by the Department's medical staff. The Department's program was a good one; it was sympathetic, not punitive. We had to be alert for signs of alcoholism; being overseas was sometime an invitation to do some heavy drinking. I think alcoholism was my biggest personnel concern. One of the problems of working overseas is that living in a small community, one tends to become much more familiar with the personal lives of your colleagues than you would when working in the U.S. When I was a deputy assistant secretary, the personal lives of my staff were none of my business. But overseas it is another situation entirely. In the first place, you can't avoid knowing almost everything that goes on in the official American community – and beyond. For example, there were two couples who had swapped spouses; that became a major issue. Life overseas is not private; you live in a fish bowl and what you do affects the whole community. It is just one of the facts of overseas life you have to deal with.

Q: What about the economic issues?

LYMAN: They were vital. Fortunately, we had a strong economics staff, even though recruiting people to serve in Nigeria was generally difficult. We were fortunate in that we had people back in Washington in the personnel assignment process who cared about Nigeria. Marshall McCallie was there; he had worked on Nigeria; he chose bright young officers just out of their initial training program or ready for their second tour. He encouraged them to go to Nigeria; so we had lots of bright young officers who were the

backbone of the mission. I recruited John Campbell as my political counselor; he had been in Geneva and had never worked on African matters, but he was terrific. [In 2003 he returned as ambassador to Nigeria.]

The economics section was key because we were heavily engaged on economic reform. I was trying to get the Export-Import Bank to make or guarantee some loans to American firms willing to invest in Nigeria. The only way we could do that was to ensure that the Nigerians would repay the loans. That was a problem because Nigeria was already overburdened with debts. So I assigned two junior officers to sit in the finance ministry to collect the repayments of these loans. I told them they would learn a lot because they would have to follow a paper trail and learn the process backwards and forwards. They would also have to badger Nigerian bureaucrats. I told them they would learn more about the Nigerian economic system than they would have in any other way. We were successful; we collected millions of dollars for the Export-Import Bank. I nagged the senior officials and these two young officers followed the paper trail to make sure that the loans were repaid. The officers told me that they had learned a tremendous amount doing that.

I did a lot to encourage American business – some successfully, some not. I worked a lot with oil companies. Export-Import Bank provided financing support for a large shale oil project for Mobil which has turned out to be a great success. Shale oil was easy to extract; it was right on the earth's surface. Most of the American oil exploitation in Nigeria is off-shore, in deep waters. Shell was the principal producer there. Mobil had a grant for one shale area, where the oil was present and cheap to mine. But it needed a big Export-Import loan to do it. I worked tirelessly with the Export-Import Bank, with Mobil, and with the Nigerian government. It was a very successful as was the Kellogg fertilizer plant, which unfortunately later the Nigerians screwed up. But for many years, it was a very successful project for Kellogg.

Q: Where did the money that the American companies undoubtedly paid, go?

LYMAN: Oil companies made money; Kellogg made money. The Nigerians are partners in every one of these investments. Usually, the Nigerians guarantee that they will plow back so much money into maintenance and further development. However, the Nigerians never live up to their end of the bargain. So the American companies either cover the deficits or they let the production decrease. So Nigeria produces much less oil than it could because the Nigerians refuse to plow some of their earnings back into necessary maintenance or expansion. They take all of their share and fail to recognize their shortsightedness. This was typical in the oil business and was true with the fertilizer plant. That plant really was worn out in a few years. The oil companies would constantly complain about the Nigerian lack of contribution. Granting ownership of oil off take was also a major means of corruption in Nigeria.

That attitude is part of the problem. This is one area where Babangida failed to take action. The temptation of making short term investment in oil is so great that the

president in the final analysis made millions and really neglected the long run.

Lot of the money earned by the Nigerians went into off-shore banks. Chet Crocker recently wrote a paper in which he used World Bank data showing that capital flight from Africa has been about $150 billion. In Nigeria, the estimate is that in the three years – 1976-79 – that Obasanjo was president about $11 billion left the country. This revenue is primarily generated by oil returns, although some of it also comes from the drug trade and other commerce.

The system works as follows: the Nigerian government has a 40-50% share of the oil production. That allows it to give contracts for the shipment of the oil to world wide destinations. If someone wants to help just one crony, you would allow him to use one tanker and never record the transaction. That would make him a millionaire over-night. If he has friends, he splits the profits. About 90% of Nigeria's foreign currency earnings comes from the oil business. The temptation for corruption is overwhelming. Babangida fell into it like every one else and pretty soon, he was giving out concessions, and making a personal fortune. Fortunes in Nigeria could also be made by smuggling in wheat and rice as well as through the drug trade. All the earnings from this corruption or illegal trade is sent to banks in other countries. Some of it goes into property purchases. The military was buying up the choice properties in Lagos; it was a scandal. They used Lebanese fronts to buy restaurants and big houses; so the foreign exchange earnings either went off-shore or into real estate.

Look at Babangida today. He put millions of dollars into Obasanjo's presidential campaign and thereby bought back his influence. But Nigeria is run down. I was there in February as part of an election observer team. I saw no progress in nine years.

Q: One of my colleagues visited the University of Nigeria during your time and said it was a waste of time because it was on strike frequently or shut down otherwise.

LYMAN: What he told you was absolutely correct. To go the universities was depressing then and is still today. In the 1970s, during the oil boom, Nigeria built 26 universities. Some of them were top flight, in part stemming from the time when the British administered them. American universities also had sister institution relationships with some of the Nigerian universities. These relationships were very important. But two things happened. We closed most of our assistance program because at least on the surface, Nigeria was rich. Then all the relationships dried up, except for a few minor instances. By the time, I arrived in Nigeria, most of the faculties in Nigerian universities had no relationships with the U.S., unlike in the decades before when the connections were very close. Most of the faculty was anti-American; they were resentful and unhappy. In the meantime, oil revenues were decreasing. So the Nigerians had university infrastructure, but no money for books or maintenance or journals or faculty. So these institutions became spawning grounds for unhappiness, strikes, politicalization of the faculty. I had good friends teaching in the universities; I was always amazed that they managed to teach at all.

But rationalizing this university system was impossible because every state had to have its own institution; every ethnic group wanted its own university. So while I was in Nigeria, new ones were being built – beautiful campuses – even though the older ones could not be sustained. It is a serious problem which I discussed extensively when I was in South Africa. We have to learn how to build relationships outside of the assistance programs. To do that, we have to devise some other kind of support beyond the assistance program. Otherwise, when aid programs are terminated, so are the relationships between an American and a foreign institution. We do not have a structure for middle-income countries. I could see that happening in Nigeria; all the great relationships of the 1960s and 1970s had dried up.

Q: Did the relationship depend entirely on the availability of government funds? Could the American universities have participated using their own resources?

LYMAN: Some universities continued their programs for their own academic benefit, but they were a fraction of what they had been. Universities are under pressure to spend for domestic purposes and not international ones. Some of the relationships lingered, but minuscule compared to before our aid program was terminated. We didn't have faculty exchanges; there weren't Nigerians studying in the U.S. to the same degree as before. I used to struggle to keep the Fulbrighters happy because they attended these universities and were very discouraged by the strikes and the continual interruptions of their education. It was a sad story which I am sorry is no better today. The Nigerian students are not getting a very good education in a country of more than 110 million people.

The Midwestern universities consortium continued – Michigan State, Indiana and Ohio State to some extent. They maintained some relationships; they had a numbers of scholars who had an interest in Nigeria and who continued to work with those Nigerian universities with which they had established contacts. This relationship continued and we benefited from that, but it was a smaller enterprise than it had been; it should have been a much larger cooperative enterprise for a country of Nigeria's size.

Q: How well did the embassy's political reporting work in a country run by the military?

LYMAN: We had pretty good travel access. It was not perfect, but pretty good. We had a consulate in Kaduna, which was very important because we found that the Nigerian military was less firm in their rule in the north than they were in Lagos. So our consulate had much more informal access to the military elite; we used that frequently. I used to go and see people there in a different atmosphere.

I traveled to all the states and met with a variety of people. Usually, one of our political officers would go first to make the necessary arrangements. I think in general we had pretty good access to a variety of Nigerians. In retrospect, we didn't anticipate sufficiently the problems that Nigeria is now experiencing in the delta – that is where the oil is. We knew there was some unrest because the people who lived there never got any benefit

from the oil revenues, while their environment was being destroyed. I think they had some valid complaints. But we didn't focus on that region. We reported a lot on the transition; we reported on the drug trafficking which was a high priority for the political section and the DEA office. We also reported on Christian-Muslim tensions which often broke out in violence, as well as on human rights issues. We had good contact with the human rights groups, who were not happy with the situation. So in general, we did not have too many difficulties in sending reports on the political situation in Nigeria.

Let me just add further thought on the religious issue in northern Nigeria. We have always been concerned by Muslim fundamentalism. In Nigeria's north, there was a group of traditional Islamic emirs. The challenge to these emirs came from what I would call "radical" Islamists. The emirs were not necessarily Islamic scholars; they were feudal lords. They did not fit the image of a ruler for the "radical" Islamists; in their mind, rulers should be clerics, not feudal lords who happen to be in charge because their fathers and the grandfathers had been rulers. That "radicalism" came from Saudi Arabia, not Libya. The "radicals" had gotten their education and training by Saudis. They wanted Arabic to be the spoken language, not Hausa; clerics should be the rulers, not these feudal descendants. The establishment in the north was very nervous about this challenge.

We did have differences within the embassy between the "optimists" and the "pessimists." We used to discuss the future of Nigeria to a considerable extent. The CIA station was comfortable in Nigeria because their targets in Africa are mostly other embassies. There were a lot of such embassies in Nigeria. There were a lot of countries that used their representation in Nigeria for regional purposes. We had a large presence from the communist countries, which provided a lot of opportunities for the station. CIA had a fairly significant presence. It did not have a completely satisfactory relationships with its Nigerian counterparts because the local security establishments included some very shady characters – they tended to be cruel, repressive and untrustworthy. I had a good relationships with the military intelligence organization, as I mentioned earlier, but I refused to have anything to do with the police establishment which was headed by a guy who later became Abacha's personal security chief. He was a cruel thug, in essence. We wouldn't have any contacts with him. He once arrested an American; I used my military intelligence contacts to get him released.

Q: What were the Soviets, Libyans, and Cubans up to?

LYMAN: We were very concerned about the Libyans because, at that time, they had established a fairly strong presence in Benin, which was a neighboring country. We succeeded in getting the Nigerians very concerned about the same thing. We emphasized that Benin being right on Nigeria's border, was an important security issue. The Nigerians recognized the potential subversion problem. Furthermore, the north was greatly concerned by extreme Islamism, which was not home grown. There was some pro-Libyan sentiment in that region; I was criticized sharply by some academics there because they accused us of being too hard on Libya.

The Cuban presence was not an issue. We worried about the communists. Our chancery was right next to the Bulgarian embassy. The Bulgarians were known as some of the most aggressive of the communist bloc. So we worried about the possibility of penetration of the Nigerian intelligence units, as well as their activities against us. The Soviet relationship was beginning to change by the late 1980s and I became rather good friends with the Soviet ambassador. He was very candid about the changes going on in his country, about what impact Afghanistan was having on the Soviet psyche. He said that he himself had been affected by the Afghan situation. When I went to Moscow, I visited with him. So we could feel the change coming, as evidenced by the openness that the Soviets were showing, which the CIA people saw as a great opportunity.

Q: Did the situation in Chad have an effect on Nigeria?

LYMAN: Yes. The Nigerians have a large interest in Chad. There were clashes between the two countries over some territory – some islands. The Nigerian had border problems with Chad, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. Those borders continue to be flash-points.

Q: What was your impression of the Nigerian military?

LYMAN: The military was so deeply involved in domestic politics that it became a decreasing military asset to the country. Politics and money became their thing. Babangida periodically spoke of professionalizing his military – getting them out of politics and corruption. But that never really happened and today, the military is still the most powerful force in the country. During my tour, all the state governors were military officers; they were rotated every few years. They were all making lots of money. Being a governor was also a stepping stone for promotion. A lot of idealistic young officers had come in with Babangida. That coup was essentially fostered by young officers who wanted to "clean up" the system, but one could see that over a period of time, they also became corrupt. People who continued to protest against the system were just pushed aside. The idealism turned into opportunism. It was sad to watch; it may have been inevitable, but it was still quite depressing. I knew a lot of the young people around Babangida. They had been the coup's instigators; they had ridden in the tanks and uprooted the old order. At the time, they were certain that they would clean the place out. Then little by little, they were either pushed aside or started up the ladder and became governors and the idealism seeped out of them slowly, but surely. Today, they all have money in some off-shore bank. One did go to jail; one went into exile.

This was one of the sad aspects of Nigeria. I used to visit the governors; some were friendly and some were not. I found one matter that always "opened the door." If a governor was being unresponsive, I would ask whether he had ever studied in the U.S. That changed the entire atmosphere. The governor would begin to talk about his experiences in the U.S. – how warmly he had been received by the Americans during his military training; how some families had taken him in. One governor turned out to have gone to Oklahoma State College and had been the punter on its football team. He asked me for the scores of his ex-team's games. We don't appreciate how much the American

experience is appreciated by foreigners; in Nigeria, it opened a lot of doors for me in the Nigerian military. I was able to establish good relationships with most of the governors, many of whom later became leaders of their society.

Q: What about AIDS?

LYMAN: During my time, AIDS was not a serious problem. In fact, it astounded many people why that disease had not spread to Nigeria. It had nothing to do with the promiscuity of the Nigerians; they were certainly not into abstinence. It only started to spread rapidly in west Africa a little later, although even then Nigeria was not affected as many of its neighbors. For some unknown reason, the Nigerians have been spared in the main. [No longer true today, 2006.]

Q: Where there any UN issues that arose during your tour?

LYMAN: Nigeria was chairman of the anti-apartheid committee of the UN. When I first arrived, Joe Garba was the chairman – he was the permanent representative. Joe Garba had been a thorn in the side of the U.S.; as a leader of the anti-apartheid group, he was very critical of the U.S. policies toward South Africa – constructive engagement, reluctance to impose more sanctions, etc. Chet Crocker hated Joe Garba. One of my first acts in Nigeria was to advise Babangida to either tell Garba to tone down his rhetoric or replace him. I might note that now, Garba and I are very good friends. Babangida assured me that he understood our concerns and our South African policies, but of course Garba's rhetoric was very good for Nigeria. Eventually, a year later, Garba was replaced, but for internal political reasons. He was succeeded by Ibrahim Gambari who is still there; he took a much softer approach to our relief.

The other issue concerned Cuba. Nigeria was a member of the Human Rights Commission of the UN; it was investigating human rights abuses in Cuba. We lobbied very hard for Nigeria to take a very tough stand in the final report. We were successful one year, but not the next. Jeb Bush came out for a private visit and while he was there, asked whether he could see Babangida to urge him to stand fast on the Cuban issue. He did that. I might take a minute to expand on his visit. At the time, Jeb Bush was the son of our recently elected president. He was not then, as now, the governor of Florida. He was on the board of directors of an agricultural pump company which I had been very anxious to see in Nigeria and had lobbied the Export-Import Bank hard to approve a loan to it. That is the reason he was in Nigeria. That relationship later became a source of some embarrassment to Bush because his opponents have constantly accused him of using his influence to get Export-Import Bank loans for that company. I have had to talk to reporters about it often. Anyway, Jeb Bush came to Nigeria to be present for the opening of a plant operated by this company. The White House said (at that time) that it did not provide Secret Service protection to members of the Bush family. I was terrified because the plant was right on the Chad border; we had the president's son as a visitor without any protection. So I went to the Nigerians and asked for help to assist our own security people. Lo and behold, when he arrived, Jeb Bush had the biggest security contingent we

had ever seen. His motorcade was about forty cars long; our security people were traveling along with their walkie-talkies, but the Nigerian security people were there in force. Jeb said he had never seen anything like it, even when his father traveled.

I had to fly north to meet Bush because I had sent my armored car there for Jeb's use. Then we had to fly back for his meeting with the president. The Nigerian government was very accommodating and said that it would make one of its cars available for the governor and myself. It was a military car. For the first time, Jeb Bush told me that he wanted to talk to the Nigerian president about Cuba, even though he was on a private visit. I said ok, but I noted that he might be taking the president by surprise. I advised him to be careful about that; I also told him that I had raised the UN committee issue with the foreign minister, but that when I visit the president, I never know who will be in attendance – as I noted earlier, quite often the foreign minister was not. So I suggested that in raising the issue, Bush should try to not to hit the president too hard, lest he become embarrassed. So we went to see the president and sure enough, on this occasion, the foreign minister was present, as well as many others. Jeb Bush begins to discuss the issue and Babangida said he knew all about the issue – he said that I had already discussed it with the foreign minister. It was a wonderful meeting, much to my surprise and I wondered why. Then it struck me; the car had been bugged! The Nigerians knew what was going to be raised and were well prepared. It was a good lesson!

Q: Talk a little about your relationship with the embassy's consular section.

LYMAN: I got very good advice from a consular officer who was in our ambassadorial class at FSI. He advised me to stay away from visa issues as far as I could. He suggested that I tell everybody that this was a matter entirely under the jurisdiction of the consular officer. It was the best advice I could have received because in Nigeria, <u>the</u> currency is visas. When my wife and I went to a restaurant, people would approach us with their passports and ask about visas. Every Nigerian I knew called me about his nephew or cousin – who often weren't really related. My best answer was: "You know our system is such that the consul general has the final authority on visas; I don't have that. I can not touch the matter or over-rule him" Most would express skepticism, but I told them that in our crazy system, that was the way it was. I told them that the most I could do for them was to ask the consul general to interview the applicant. It is in fact American law, thank God. We had a consul general who was very sensitive; if he had a border line case, he would ask me whether the applicant was one of our contacts. But if he saw a case that was just not eligible, he would deny the application. I remember one case where a very distinguished Nigerian lied to me about a supposed relative – after a while I learned that your best friends could not be counted on when it came to visa questions. In this case, the Nigerian told me that the applicant was his nephew; it turned out, however, he was not his nephew at all and secondly he had been arrested on a drug charge. When the consul general said the applicant was not admissible, that was the end of the story as far as I was concerned. I never tried to over-rule him. But it was one of our major preoccupations. The Nigerians accused us of having corruption so that some were taken first while the rest of the line of applicants waited for hours. We used to have huge lines, starting at 5 a.m. We

used to put secret agents in line just to check to se whether the guards were in fact being paid off to let some get ahead of others. We never found any evidence of corruption, but the accusations kept coming. There were people who were selling information and some probably got paid for "influence" which they didn't have.

We had a morale problem in the consular section. Dealing day in and day out with potential fraud, the consular officers would become very jaded. They began to think that all Nigerians were a bunch of liars. I remember going to see Joan Clark, the assistant secretary for consular affairs, to ask her what I might do about this morale problem. She said that she would tell her young officers that if they were the applicants they might well behave in the same way. What we did was to rotate the young officers so that they would have other experiences besides visa issuance. I would invite them to the residence to have dinner with other Nigerians, whom they were not likely to see in the consular section. We were trying to keep them from being totally jaded.

We had to be very careful about visas because some Nigerians were trying to obtain entrance into the U.S. to smuggle drugs. Others just wanted to leave Nigeria. There was a lot of pressure on all of us; I was constantly called, but the advice I got from my colleague in the ambassadorial course, was just great. I never got involved in the adjudication of a visa. It saved my life! I know ambassadors who didn't follow that practice and regretted it.

Q: Did you have many American expatriates?

LYMAN: We had a very large group that they themselves called the "Niger wives." These were Americans, many African-Americans who were married to Nigerians. They numbered in the thousands. They were not a very happy lot because Nigerian men, when in the U.S., were very different from what they were at home. At home they reverted to traditional attitudes toward women, and allowed their wives to be dominated by their in-laws. We once put on Raisin in the Sun – a play which includes a scene of a Nigerian man wooing an African-American woman. He spins all the yarns – she will be a princess in Nigeria. The Nigerian men in the audience just howled at those lines; they identified with this guy soft-soaping the American woman. They just went crazy over it. Nigerian wives bandied together; they established their own association. Some were very unhappy and then had to fight over the custody of their children because the children couldn't leave Nigeria without their father's permission. We had some kidnappings; some left and asked our consular officers to look after the children. That was a constant issue.

We had an annual affair which we called "The Fourth of July in February." Anyone with an American passport could come for some refreshments and games on the grounds of the residence. We had a wonderful fair each February. All the American-Nigerian wives would come. It was a great time. We kept in pretty close contact with these women through the fair and the American School.

From time to time, we did have an American involved in the drug trade. I remember one

woman, an African-American, who was jailed because her boyfriend became involved in drugs and then abandoned her. Our consul general became very sympathetic to this case. He used to visit her and bring her some necessities. Our DEA representative had no sympathy for her at all. I should say that both of these officers were African-American. The tension reached such heights that I would not allow the case to be mentioned in a country team meeting. I was faced in this case with totally different views, untainted by any racial considerations. The consul general saw the woman as a human being who was seduced into participating in an illegal activity while DEA saw just one more slimy person who was involved in the drug trade.

Q: Did you have any high level visits while you were in Nigeria?

LYMAN: The most senior official who came was Secretary Shultz. He came shortly after I arrived. It was a very successful visit. Babangida seemed to be doing all the right things at the time so that Shultz found a situation which was quite acceptable to us. There was one glitch. The security people brought sniffing dogs. We had one major security problem at the airport. Our security people insisted on putting up barriers to hold the reporters back when the secretary disembarked. I said that that was not done in Nigeria. The security man said that I had a choice: it was either a barrier or if any reporter got near the secretary, he would be knocked down. So I agreed to barriers. The Nigerian chief of protocol, who was under severe pressure anyway, threw a fit. The reporters had a field day; the headlines were about the Americans having taken over the airport.

We had a press conference at the embassy. So the security people had their dogs sniff every reporter. I assumed the dogs must have been trained to detect weapons, but I don't really know why security insisted on such precautions. The reporters were outraged; metal detectors where one thing; being sniffed by a dog was on entirely different level – in Nigeria, that was a real insult. So all the reporting that came out of that conference was about dogs; Shultz' substantive remarks were barely mentioned.

Then we did something even more extraordinary. The dogs had been placed in the three or four different sites that the secretary would be visiting. After his visit, the Department sent a C-130 to pick up the dogs. The Nigerians were incredulous that this huge cargo plane would be sent to pick up the dogs. So that became a major media story too.

In the meantime, the secretary's office wanted to know how the boss' trip was playing. I found it very difficult to find a way to explain that the dogs were attracting more attention than the secretary. Finally, I invited the reporters to my office and asked whether any of them were interested in the substance of the secretary's visit. They looked at me with some amazement and then asked me to talk about that matter. Then they wrote some good stories. Other than the dogs, it was a very good visit. Shultz is a great man; Obie, Shultz's wife, was still alive and was with him then. She was terrific. My wife had not yet joined me at post because she stayed with my daughter who was just finishing high school, but she did come out for the visit.

The one other important visitor was former President Jimmy Carter. They treated him like a sitting head of state.

Q: Were the Nigerians involved in peace-keeping while you were there?

LYMAN: Yes. They were involved in a few UN peace keeping operations. That was the source of great pride to the Nigerian military; it was also a great opportunity to train their troops. But at the time, these were only a few operations and none in the immediate area. Just before I arrived, there had been an incident in Chad. We induced the Nigerians to go into Chad as part of an African peace keeping operation. It became a great embarrassment to them because they stood on the road while the rebels went around them and took over the government. The Nigerians thought that we would pay for their participation and we never did. So one of their first experiences with peace keeping left a bad taste in their mouths. But they did become involved in Lebanon and other hot spots in the world.

Q: Please talk a little about the Nigerian media.

LYMAN: The Nigerian media is very sensationalist. It is very political. All the newspapers are owned by major political figures. I had good access to the press; it printed a lot of my speeches. Once I gave a speech on US-Nigerian relations and I touched on the wheat import ban. I mentioned Section 301 of the trade act, which called for some retaliatory sanctions against major embargoes. The media picked up this minor point that I had made and accused me of threatening sanctions against Nigeria; it pointed out that we didn't apply sanctions to South Africa, but here was poor Nigeria and we threatened it. My remarks became a major flap. I sent my speech to Babangida and he saw that the press was making a mountain out of a molehill and cut off further media discussion of my comments. He had that kind of influence on the media.

But the press was very sensationalist. We had good USIS programs which worked with the press. But the media was a frustrated group unhappy with a military dictatorship. They had limits on their freedom. At the time, we witnessed the blossoming of news magazines, patterned after Newsweek and Time. One was called Newswatch or something like that. I think the magazines were better than the papers. They did some quality work despite being under pressure from the government; in fact, from time to time, they were closed down. That became a real human rights issue that we worried about. We kept in close touch with them and I spent a lot of time with magazine staff members because their articles were of such good quality. Magazines became very popular.

The only bombing that occurred in Nigeria as far as I know was a letter bomb sent to one of these magazines killing the editor.

One of the daily papers was owned by Chief Abiola. Abiola later became famous because he was reported to have won the presidential election in 1993, which however was annulled by Babangida. Abiola was arrested and died in jail. I knew Abiola well; he was a

weird, strange man. He would have made a terrible president, if he had been allowed to take office. He tried to manipulate me and tried to use me in his papers for his own purposes.

Q: Did the intelligencia play any role in Nigeria?

LYMAN: Yes, but it, particularly the academics, had become bitter and cynical and negative. There was the Nobel Laureate playwright Wole Soyinka; he was living in Nigeria at the time. He later went into exile when Abacha became president. I knew him fairly well. They were very cynical about Babangida. I was more hopeful and this is was one of our major differences. In the end, they were proven right.

We talked a lot about the anguish that the Nigerians feel for their country; it is unique in the world. They were constantly writing and talking about what they should not have to live under military rule – which they had for the past 20 years out of 26. They continually questioned themselves why they suffered through these regimes and what was wrong with themselves that they couldn't return to a permanent democratic system. They really suffered intellectually, all the time. It was their mantra, day in and day out. I thought this self-examination might have been useful up to a point, but the Nigerians carried it too far. They were tearing themselves apart, but never doing anything about it.

Q: When you left Nigeria in 1989, what future did you see for the country?

LYMAN: The Nigerians would ask me that all the time. I used to ask them in what time frame. I speculated that the next five years would be very difficult, but that in twenty-five years, the country could be in good shape. Nigeria had an agricultural base; it had more oil and gas than it knew what to do with; it had 26 universities. I thought that Nigeria could be a powerhouse in 25 years, assuming that it followed a sensible path. But it would take time.

I thought that Babangida would be shrewd enough that he would be able to manage a transition to a civilian government. I never understood why he just didn't retire from the military and run for president as a civilian. He should have, but he didn't for complicated reasons. I asked some of his friends repeatedly why that had not happened; I never got a straight answer – they may not have known. After I left, there was a coup attempt. Many people told me that they thought that it had a major impact on him. He thought he knew his army inside and out; when the coup took place, he was badly shaken; a mortar shell fell right in his bedroom, which was vacant at the time. He withdrew within himself. He always had been in communication with his people; everyone had seen him. Now he moves to Abuja, the new capital in the center of the country, where he was hard to reach and was surrounded by a small coterie; he became out of touch and fearful for his life. He let the economic reforms slip, and corruption became rampant. He tried to pull off a managed election; he thought the northern candidate would win. Instead Abiola won, but the army refused to let him serve. The election was nullified; Babangida lost all influence and then turned the government over to Abacha, who became the worst ruler that Nigeria

ever had. Everything went down the drain. It was sad because I think Babangida had the potential to raise his country to much higher standards, but for one reason or another, just went off the tracks.

Q: You knew Abacha. What did you think of him?

LYMAN: He was the last person I would have wanted as head of state. He had been the Army chief and then became minister of defense while I was there. His sole interest was money – for himself. He was as corrupt as anybody could be; he let the Nigerian military capacity go down the drain. He was cruel and narrow-minded. I became very despondent when he became president. He was as bad as the pessimists predicted.

Q: So you left Nigeria in 1989. What was the next assignment?

LYMAN: When I left, I was proposed by the Department to become the next ambassador to Kenya, but the post went to a political appointee – Smith Hempstone, Jr., a journalist. I was asked whether I would consider becoming the senior deputy in the Bureau of Refugee Affairs. At the time, the Department had this bureau as well as a special representative on refugees – an anachronism left over from the Vietnam refugee days. The Bush administration had proposed combining the two jobs in one bureau; Congress objected. They wanted two separate offices. So then, instead of the deputy position, I was offered the job as director of the Refugee Bureau. I accepted that. It was a good job; I was familiar with most of the issues from my days in AID and when I was involved in a number of humanitarian efforts in AF.

I had to work out a relationship with the special representative, who was very political. There were a lot of tensions between our offices, but we managed. My bureau controlled all of the funds. We had a good relationship with Congress; our requests were approved without change. Our Senate committee was the Judiciary committee, then chaired by Ted Kennedy with Alan Simpson the ranking minority member. The House committee was tough; it was headed by Bruce Morrison, but we didn't run into any major problems.

One major issue during my tour was Soviet Jews. They were coming out of Russia in large numbers for the first time with visas issued for Israel. They were stuck in Europe; because they refused to go to Israel and wanted to come to the U.S.

We wrestled with the problem of the Vietnamese boat people. They were building up, but they did not qualify as refugees. There was considerable opposition in the U.S. against forcing these people to return to Vietnam.

Then we had the Kurds who were pressing on the Turkish border after the end of the (first) Gulf war. Those were the three major issues that we faced.

I was the director of refugee affairs from 1989 to 1992.

Q: Tell us a little more about the special representative for refugee affairs?

LYMAN: She was a lawyer from Chicago. I found her to be a very decent person. Her office was sort of an advocacy office. She had a staff of mixed qualities. As I said, we controlled the budget. It wasn't a perfect relationship, but she and I kept it under control. Our staffs had a lot of quarrels; I had some quarrels with her staff. She would make speeches all over the world trying to raise attention for the refugees. We ran the program – about $500-600 million. Most of it went to multi-lateral institutions.

Within the Department, we had a very curious structure. I reported to the undersecretary for administration, Ivan Selin. People would ask why that was the case. Selin had entered the State Department after having worked as one of McNamara's "whiz kids" followed by being very successful in business. He became involved in politics and with the Bush victory, was offered the job as undersecretary for administration. He demanded that one policy office be assigned to him. So they gave him refugee affairs. Ivan loved it; he could play on the political arena. Ivan was a good guy to work for. He was fun, full of ideas, and you could argue over issues with him. He got deeply involved; it was more fun than desks, space, and elevators which were his other responsibilities.

James Baker, as secretary, wanted nothing to do with refugees. He didn't want to be bothered with those problems. So our point of contact became the deputy secretary, Larry Eagleburger. Eagleburger understood that he became responsible for all the matters that the secretary didn't want to touch. Baker wasn't unfriendly; he just didn't have time for us except in one instance that I will describe later. Larry told me he hated refugee affairs, but he knew what was expected of him; he was always there for us and responded to our requests.

For example, the law states that once every year, a cabinet level person was to come to Congress to consult on how many refugees would be allowed to enter the U.S. The refugee bureau had two programs. One was relief for refugees overseas and the other was to bring refugees to the U.S. That second function was a hot political issue. I used to argue with people who wanted to split the bureau into two because I understood that it was the domestic political issues which enabled us to obtain resources for the overseas work. We used to have feuds between the two camps; those responsible for the relief work overseas accused us of spending disproportionate amounts of money to bring refugees to the U.S. while the ones overseas suffered. I used to tell them to stop fighting because without the refugees brought to the U.S. we would lose a lot of Congressional support for our overseas work. One of the first things I did was to end this debate between the two parts of the bureau.

As I said, a cabinet level official would be required to tell Congress what our plane were for the following year, specifying the number of refugees from each country whom we would admit to the U.S. Baker refused to be that witness; he was not going to spend time on this issue. He said that Louis Sullivan, Secretary of HHS, should be the administration's spokesman. Sullivan did it for one year and said "never again." So we

had to find some other witnesses; we went to the lawyers to see who might fit the Congressional requirement. The lawyers agreed that when Baker was out of town and when Eagleburger was the acting secretary, that satisfied the "cabinet level" requirement. So we would wait until Baker left town and then Eagleburger would consult with Congress. Eagleburger was a fantastic guy; the problem was that when he appeared on our behalf, the committees didn't want to talk about refugees; they wanted to talk about other foreign policy issues. So I would sit next to Larry, listening to question and answers on China, or Russia or anything but refugees. At one hearing he turned to me and said: "You are no god damned help!" I told him that I had nothing to contribute to his world *tour de force*. Larry was great.

On the issue of Vietnamese boat people, the discussion was much more difficult. Bush didn't want to return any of these people even if they were judged to have left Vietnam for economic reasons, not to flee political persecution. The British on the other hand who were "hosting" most of the boat people in Hong Kong insisted that they were "economic refugees". They were not "political refugees" and therefore had much less justification for asylum. The British had screened them thoroughly and were afraid that unless they were returned to Vietnam, more and more would land in Hong Kong, where they were a real economic burden. This became a huge emotional issue. The non-governmental organizations also opposed the return; many of them had their roots in Vietnam – e.g. Rosenblatt who headed Refugees International. They claimed that the screening process was inadequate; the interpreters weren't any good, etc. In Congress, people like Steve Solarz was also opposed to their return.

On the other hand, there was the international refugee community which insisted that distinctions be made between "economic" and "political" refugees because the south-east Asia countries who were reviewing the boat people were just not willing to keep those who could not prove persecution. We were in the middle of this very intense dispute. I believed that after proper screening, those who had fled in the hopes of improving their economic status, had to be returned to their native country. UNHCR agreed with the principle of distinguishing economic migrants from political refugees but was loath to get involved because it also didn't want force people to go where they didn't want to go. This was also the position of the International Organization for Migration. No one wanted to do it forcefully. So over years, we put into place a comprehensive program that informed people that they had not qualified as a refugee, but if they returned to their native country voluntarily they would be given some financial assistance and we would monitor what the Vietnam government did to them to protect them if there was a any discrimination. That program, with a few glitches, worked. Most of the people who fled for economic reasons have returned to Vietnam.

By and large, most of the Vietnamese refugees have now returned to their native land and the program I think was considered a success. But it was a political nightmare. I had a problem in that the British were constantly pressuring us because most of these refugees had landed in Hong Kong. The Bush White House on the other side was adamant that these refugees would not be returned forcefully. Larry Eagleburger became the

intermediary because he had a very close relationship with Brent Scowcroft, the national security advisor; all we in the Department wanted was a little wiggle room – just a little bit – so that we might be able to find a solution. So that was one major issue – it was very painful.

The second issue, as I mentioned, was the Soviet Jews. The Soviet Union was collapsing and suddenly the emigration doors were opened – after decades of us pushing against them. Almost any Jew could get a visa to go to Israel. But these people didn't want to go there. They would leave Russia for Vienna and Rome and just stay there. So the western world found thousands of Russian Jews who had to be supported, they were placed in refugee camps. Congress was going berserk, wanting to know what we were going to do about this pending disaster. Our immigration people were saying that not all of the refugees qualified for entrance into the U.S. and furthermore, since they had visas for Israel, they were really not refugees in the normal sense. They had not all been persecuted and they had a safe place to go.

Congress then passed an amendment to our immigration laws which authorized entry into the U.S. if a person was a member of a persecuted group; the persecution did not have to be directed at the individual. Under the new law, INS determined that about 80-90% of the Jewish refugees would be eligible for entrance into the U.S. I had a very innovative deputy, Priscilla Clapp. Ivan Selin had introduced her to me; she is now our chargé in Burma. Priscilla had been working on this problem while working on the Policy Planning staff. Ivan asked me to meet with her; she had served in Moscow and he thought she was brilliant. He was right and I hired her to be my deputy. She devised a plan to prevent further build-up in Europe, which I thought was quite ingenious, but that made Congress very nervous. She noted that the Soviet Union was opening up; its days as a closed society were coming to an end. She argued that since we didn't want these camps in Europe; she suggested that we devise a system which would allow these people to apply for refugee status while staying in Russia. They would be processed electronically through an interview mechanism in our embassy; then their applications would be adjudicated back in the U.S. If they met our criteria, they would be flown directly to their destination without any lay-over in Europe. In addition to being a much more humane system, it would save the U.S. approximately $40 million which were being spent to sustain those in camps in Vienna and Rome. I agreed and we set up a system which is now used by us world-wide. When we went to Congress for approval, we met some nervousness because there was no guarantee that the Russians would cooperate.

Then we had to decide how many of the eligibles would be allowed to actually immigrate. The American Jewish community was very divided on this question. Congress was at least six months behind the Jewish community. Congress thought that these American Jewish groups would be pushing for unlimited immigration. That was not true. There was considerable sentiment for having the Russian Jews go to Israel. Israel wanted them; it needed them. They had visas to go to Israel and some Jewish groups supported the completion of that process. Brining all of the Russian Jews to the U.S. would have been very costly. On the other hand, there was a part of the Jewish community which held that

since we had been in the forefront of the struggle to allow emigration from Russia, we could not now turn our backs and say that once the Jews had left Russia, they were someone else's problem. It was a very divisive issue.

We suggested that a compromise be reached which would allow Russian Jews who had relatives in the U.S. to enter the U.S. under a 40,000 per annum limit. They would have immigration rights ahead of anybody else. Those who didn't have U.S. relatives and who would have to wait their turn on our immigration list, had the choice of going to Israel immediately. The American Jewish community accepted our proposal. It took Congress a little while to realize that this compromise was acceptable to American Jewry. Israel was not happy because it wanted all of the refugees; in the final analysis, it got 80% or more.

We set up this computerized system for processing the applications, which was housed in Arlington, VA. Scanners were just coming into their own in those days and we used them. Our Moscow embassy loved it because it eliminated the long lines of visa applicants; applicants just picked up a form from the embassy which they then sent to Washington or gave to the embassy. All the processing was done in Arlington. We would notify the applicant when he or she should show up for an interview at our embassy. We established the International Organization for Migration in Moscow; we bought all the travel tickets. We processed all the refugees in the camps and closed them. The best part of it all was that the system worked. The Russians did question how we could process someone as a refugee when he or she had not left their country; we told them that they would be amazed by what the U.S. could do! Of course, they were really delighted because it got rid a problem for them as well. So Priscilla came up with this brilliant solution and saved the U.S. government $40 million in the process. Our Moscow embassy was reluctant at first because it had to establish an INS processing system in very limited space, but in the end agreed that it was far better than having the long lines of applicants. 40,000 Jewish refugees entered the U.S. every year.

To address Congress we had two people in Arlington who did nothing but answer congressional inquiries. The necessary equipment was privately paid for. Congressional offices would inquire about the status of some applicant whose relative lived in the Congressman's district. Our employee would look into the computer and then was able to give an immediate answer. Congressional offices loved the system because they were able to respond to their constituents immediately. So it worked and was a success.

We did one other thing. The Jewish community came to us and told that they were happy with how things were going, but were worried if the whole system were to collapse – as it almost did with the coup against Khrushchev, the Russian Jews would be trapped. I went to the secretary and received approval to make a contingency plan for the evacuation of a 1 million Jews out of Russia. We worked secretly with members of the American Jewish community, with CIA and with some others. We developed a contingency plan using a radio system that already existed and which was used to broadcast Jewish news. We selected evacuation points; we decided who would go to Israel and who would come to the U.S. and how we would transport all these people. It was a very elaborate plan, but

thankfully we never had to implement it. But we were prepared if our system was shut down, we had alternative arrangements based on an existing communication system which would have allowed us to direct Russian Jews to escape their country. David Harris, of the American Jewish Committee, said to me at one stage that he recalled that during WWII his mother was trying to escape the Nazis and tried to obtain assistance from every embassy in Europe; she never had any response. He was very happy that in fifty years, the situation had changed so drastically and that the U.S. was now willing to assist with the evacuation of one million Jews.

Q: Did anybody else open their doors to Soviet Jews?

LYMAN: A handful; for example, the Canadians used the same criteria as we did – i.e. close relatives living in Canada. A few countries in Europe, like Germany, were willing to take some immigrants. But I think that over 90% of the Russian Jews were settled in the U.S. or Israel.

Q: How was the communication with the Israeli government?

LYMAN: I had a lot of problems with the Israelis. We needed them, for example, to assist us in the processing of people who although holding Israeli visas, wanted to come to the U.S. They were very reluctant to help. They just didn't want to do anything for someone who didn't want to come to Israel. I was fortunate that I worked with an Israeli on the Falasha issue who by now had risen to the senior level of the Likud government. I called him personally to enlist his help. Even then, it was tough going. The Israelis just didn't want to be helpful; they insisted that every Jew should come to Israel. In the end, we got their grudging cooperation.

Q: What was your impression of the Russian Jews who came to the U.S.?

LYMAN: The settlement of those Jews was also part of our program. We worked closely with HHS and the voluntary organizations in the U.S. who assist in settling refugees. The latter did much of this resettlement work; the U.S. government is just not equipped for that kind of endeavor. Without them, we could not have brought in the 90,000 refugees annually as we did. These organizations found them shelter; they helped them through the first weeks in a strange country; they were tremendously helpful. What we found out about the Russian Jews was that, having been accustomed to a communist regime, they expected more from the government than we could deliver. For example, they expected us to find them jobs and other services which the U.S. government just doesn't provide. One of the toughest tasks of the voluntary agencies was to explain that the American system just didn't work that way. They did provide language and other training, but the refugees had to find their own jobs. A lot of the Russians Jews complained about that; their expectations were entirely different from the realities of the system. I think that over time, they have adjusted. A lot of them were not very religious so that their relationship to Jewish religious groups was not great. Over time, I think they have done very well. Some unfortunately became criminals and that has been a problem.

The Ethiopian refugees do very well. They depend far less on social services than any other immigrant group. The Vietnamese are a different story. Many did very well, particularly the second generation, but a lot of first generation refugees ended up on the welfare rolls. That has created a lot of problems for us. Finally, there are groups – the Laotians and the Cambodians – which are very hard to assimilate partly because of language problems and partly because many came from rural backgrounds.

Jim Baker did get involved deeply on the issue of the Kurds. Right towards the end of the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein launched an attack on the Kurds in the north. The Kurds moved in mass toward the Turkish border, across which were large Kurdish communities. More than 500,000 Kurds began to press on the border; the Turks refused entry; they had enough Kurdish problems of their own. The UNHCR insisted that the Turks let the Iraqi Kurds in because that was the principal of asylum – these were real political refugees. The Turks refused. The Kurds congregated on the mountains, but they couldn't stay there because winter was about to set in which would have been devastating. This became a big issue and the U.S. was held responsible by many for creating the problem.

Secretary Baker was on his way to the Middle East. He decided he had to see the situation with his own eyes. So I flew out with him. I must give Baker a lot of credit for going to see the situation. He went up to the Turkish border by himself – no one was allowed near him when there were reporters around. So when he came back, he told me that he had never seen such a situation before; he said that I might have, but for him it was a real eye-opener. He thought it was awful and that we had to do something. He wanted to bring in our military. I told him that that was of course possible, but that it would constitute an enormous commitment by the U.S. I stayed in Turkey to work on this. Baker, as soon as he got on his plane, called the president and asked that the U.S. military be dispatched to help the Kurdish refugees. I got the word while I was in Turkey to negotiate with the Turks access rights for U.S. troops – thousands of them – to go the border to help the Kurds.

Mort Abramowitz was our ambassador. He knew refugee problems from his south-east Asia experiences. Mort and I negotiated with the Turks who initially were delighted to have this assistance until they saw the details. They couldn't believe the size of the military force we were contemplating. Baker on his way back from the Middle East, stopped in Geneva to talk to the UN agencies. He instructed me to meet him there when I was finished in Turkey. He left Geneva so disgusted with the UN agencies that Margaret Tutwiler asked me how I could ever work with those people. But to his credit, Baker was so moved by the Kurdish plight, that he got the president to approve the deployment of American troops.

We did something at the time which has become a very important precedent. We had to twist the arm of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. We said that the Kurds would not be allowed into Turkey, but at the same time we could not leave them on the mountains. There was only one option left: return them to their homes while establishing

a safe haven for them in Iraq. That could only be done through the intervention of the U.S. military who would clear the Iraqi troops out of the area and maintain some security for the Kurds. The UNHCR had to accept at the same time that despite precedent it would have to help people who live in their own country – not usually perceived as "refugees." That demand agonized the UNHCR; it was a new effort for it, but since that time, UNHCR has provided help in other situations to people who might in the strictest terms not be considered as "refugees." The UNCHR is still agonizing over those efforts because they are concerned that they are weakening the principle of asylum. In any case, the UNHCR came through in the Kurdish situation and that was a major turning point for that agency.

General John Shalikashvili was assigned to lead our troops in northern Iraq. At the time, he was assigned to a European command. We told the Iraqis to pull back from the towns which we wanted to protect so that the Kurds could return to them. The Iraqis complied. We told the Kurds that there would be no refugee camps; that there would be stops on their way home where they could get food, but that they were going back to their homes. They all followed our instructions and they are now in their homes, secure and free from the Iraqis. It was a sensitive time; I wanted the military to expand the security zone as far as it could, but the NSC and Eagleburger were getting very nervous; the military were operating without any real instructions. Shalikashvili wanted to occupy every town he could that made sense; finally we drew a line which separated north Iraq from the rest of the country. I think our efforts were very important to the evolution of the world's thinking about refugees; it established the principle of safe haven in a country and not requiring people to flee across the borders before being able to obtain assistance. I made the same argument in the case of Kosovo.

So those were the three major refugee crises I dealt with. Again, I want to credit Secretary Baker for his involvement in the Kurdish crisis; he was moved by what he saw and convinced the president to take the appropriate actions.

Q: Did you have problems with the Kurds?

LYMAN: Yes and that continues to this day because we had to deal with two major rival organizations. It has become a larger problem when the administration of the area was turned over to the Kurds; now we have to struggle to keep them focused on Saddam and not on fighting each other. When I was involved, the leaders of these two factions were delighted that they could return their people home under some security arrangement leaving them to govern their own people. They were in effect given northern Iraq. We had essentially established Kurdistan. So from their point of view, what we did was far better than having their people try to cross into Turkey where they were not wanted and where their people would have to live in
refugee camps.

Q: Did you have any refugee problems in Central America or Africa?

LYMAN: Haiti was a major concern. In Central America, we had an issue which had a very ironic aspect because it dealt with the return of the Contras to Nicaragua. The war was over and the question was who would take responsibilities for taking care of the Contras. Nobody wanted to have anything to do with them. They were no longer the heroes they had been a few years earlier. I was approached by Ted Morris who had been a colleague of mine in AID. He pointed out that the families of the Contras were in camps across the border and entirely left on their own. They needed to be returned to their own country and resettled. AID had the resources, but no expertise in this field, nor was Ted getting any support within AID. So we used the Refugee Bureau as the avenue through which funds were channeled to UNHCR and other organizations, like the OAS, to help these families. I think it was perfectly legitimate for us to assist these families and see to it that they were resettled since we had been largely responsible for their situation. But we were the only U.S. government organization willing to engage in this effort; AID couldn't and wouldn't. ARA was very happy for us to take care of this problem; they wanted it done, but were delighted that someone else would do it.

Q: Was there any other problem with the resettlement of the Contras and their families?

LYMAN: There were a lot of complications in Nicaragua; it had a system for handling the issues, but there were a lot issues about land ownership as well as some tensions caused just by the Contras' return. These tensions may still continue to this day. Land was the major issue; the Sandinistas thought that land had been given to them and didn't want to return it to the Contras. The Nicaraguan government did its best to separate these two groups so that not too much violence broke out.

Q: You mentioned Haiti a little earlier. Could you explain that problem?

LYMAN: The 1989-92 period was before the Aristide's election and the subsequent coup that overthrew him. We had had a low level of Haitian refugees coming on boats from their country. Our practice, much to the objections of the human rights advocates, was to intercept these boats on the high seas; then we would fly an INS official to the boat where he would interview the refugees to see whether they satisfied our requirements that their return might subject them to persecution; those who did not qualify were returned to Haiti. It was not a major stream so that our practices did not receive as much public attention as it did later.

After Aristide's election and the coup that brought him to the U.S., there was a flood of these boat people. There was a real public debate of what we should do. Florida didn't want them, at least in the numbers that were fleeing. The Coast Guard continued its practice of high seas interception, but the numbers had increased dramatically. For a while, the Coast Guard would let the refugees stay abroad their ships for humanitarian reasons, but didn't know what to do with them. It wasn't practical to return them directly to Haiti because of our concern of what the military dictatorship might do to these people. The U.S. was not prepared to allow them on our shores. So they were kept on the Coast Guard boats. I was getting daily calls from the commander of the Coast Guard who

wanted the issue resolved.

It was a very contentious political issue in the U.S. The decision was made by the Bush administration at the NSC to put them in our Guantanamo Bay base. It was a practical decision which alleviated a serious Coast Guard problem. The "Black Caucus" was livid about this decision, but there were countervailing forces which did not want the Haitians in the U.S. We worked out elaborate procedures to have them interviewed in Guantanamo by the INS. Certain human rights groups complained about this process; they didn't think the conditions were right and they wanted a presence on the base so that they could counsel the refugees. They filed a case in court which went all the way to the Supreme Court, arguing that the U.S. did not have rights to do this. The government won the case.

So the refugees were being processed on Guantanamo. Those that were accepted as "refugees" were brought to the U.S.. Then there was a second problem. The Haitians had a high rate of HIV infection. That generated a debate whether those should be admitted to the U.S.

At the time, we also tried to develop a regional approach to placing the Haitians. We urged the UNHCR, which was very critical of our program because it felt that we were violating the international protocol on refugees, to try to get other countries in the region to take some of the Haitian boat people. We were essentially unsuccessful. One or two countries took a small number – 100 or 200. We incurred the expense of setting up and maintaining refugee camps in those countries, but these efforts hardly made a dent in the total problem. Most of the other countries refused to take the Haitians.

Then we tried something else. As we did in Russia for the Jews there, we said that we would process people in Haiti. They were welcomed to come to the embassy and if they were able to show that they had a legitimate fear of political persecution, then they would be processed and granted the necessary visas. That also was not satisfactory to many human rights groups. We used this process in the hopes of reducing the dangers that many Haitians were running by taking to their rickety boats – a lot of people were drowning.

So we had lots of people on Guantanamo. The Navy was very unhappy, Colin Powell, then the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was complaining. The human rights groups and the "Black Caucus" were dissatisfied. I should note, however, that one member of the "Black Caucus" called me to ask me not to send any of the Haitians to his district; he said he had enough refugees already. This situation remained largely as it was until the Clinton administration took over.

Q: What was your impression of the staff of the UNHCR and the non governmental organizations? Did they have any positive ideas?

LYMAN: The High Commissioner, Madame Ogaka, was herself very critical of our Haiti policies, but she worked very hard on two matters: 1) getting other countries in the region to take some of the refugees; and 2) monitoring the situation in Haiti. We worked very

closely with her on a range of issues. She still reminds me today that I chased her all over the Caribbean by phone to inform her that we wanted to develop a regional program and would she take that issue up with the countries she was visiting for other reasons. She did try, even though she was not very successful.

We also asked the UNHCR to set up an office in Haiti to check on people that were being returned to assure that they would not suffer discrimination or persecution from the Haitian government. They did that, but they were not happy because in their minds they were being complicit with our program; in the final analysis, they cooperated because it was better than any other realistic options.

I found the human rights groups, as I told them when left the Refugee Bureau, unrealistic in many ways. First of all, they were sharply critical of the U.S. position on Haiti in general. I told them that from the meetings I attended, the Bush administration was very committed to the restoration of democracy in Haiti. It was working towards this goal as best it could. Secondly, I pointed out that the U.S. was facing a dilemma in how to handle this large influx. We had to work out an interview process which met the requirements of the law. I thought that the Guantanamo process was not intolerable, and that it was the best of the very few realistic options available to us. Lot of those groups did not share my views. They wanted the whole process eliminated so that the Haitians could be brought directly to the U.S. I sympathized with them to a certain extent, but I didn't think they were entirely realistic and were not taking into account the complexity of the issue.

As I said, the situation remained pretty much as it was until the Clinton administration took office. Clinton, during the campaign, had said that he was going to change U.S. policy on Haitian refugees; he was going to allow the Haitians direct access to the U.S. By the time he won the election, reports were being received that 200,000 Haitians were ready to come after his inauguration. So he immediately reversed his stance and continued the practices of the Bush administration. Eventually, Aristide returned to power in Haiti.

I think that the Haitian crisis was a turning point in American, as well as in other countries, thinking about what to do when a refugee crisis arises. The standard practice, as approved by the UNHCR, was that when a refugee flow began, they were to be given asylum. That was the first obligation. However, in an age when refugee movements ran into hundreds of thousands people, more and more people were beginning to think that the first option was to try to solve the problems which had generated these exoduses. Otherwise, thousands were to spend the rest of their lives in refugee camps, not to mention the succeeding generations. In Haiti, the fundamental push for people to leave was solved to a great extent by restoring democracy. It didn't stop the boat people entirely, but the numbers dropped dramatically. When democracy was restored, it was much more difficult to prove that someone would be subjected to political persecution; some still qualified under this criteria, but they were far, far fewer than when Haiti was under a military dictatorship.

Q: Did you monitor what was happening to the Haitians who were repatriated?

LYMAN: Yes indeed. We asked the embassy to monitor those Haitians whom we returned. By and large, the embassy, to the extent it was able to do so, did not find that these people were being persecuted. A lot of the people we returned came from rural areas and were not politically active. They were economically desperate given the miserable conditions in Haiti. People were absolutely miserable and saw their only hope in escape. Some were political activists, but most were trying to escape dire poverty. You really couldn't blame them for leaving; I used to say that if I had been a Haitian, I also would have tried to leave. But it didn't follow that because of their economic plight, the U.S. should have let them all in. I admit that it is a very difficult dilemma, which we face still today from different sources. We did highjack the Haitians on the high seas or to put a better face on it, we were trying to save them from drowning. We were trying to keep them from reaching U.S. territory because once they had reached our shores, they could invoke the right of asylum through a well defined legal process.

I think I have now covered the three major refugee problems that I faced. We did spent time on a variety of humanitarian crisis in Africa, with which we dealt as best we could.

Q: When you left the Refugee Bureau, the Bush administration was still in power. Where did you go in 1992?

LYMAN: I went to South Africa as ambassador. I was there from August, 1992 to the end of 1995.

Q: How was your confirmation hearing?

LYMAN: It was very interesting. I lobbied for the job because I wanted to go to South Africa very badly. I had thought of trying to get that appointment when I left Nigeria in 1989. I agonized whether to step forward and by the time I decided to become a candidate, the job had been filled by a very fine man, Bill Swing. But by 1992, I didn't hesitate; I wanted to go.

The situation in South Africa had changed dramatically and I was very lucky. The Cold War was over and therefore the conservatives in Congress who viewed the African National Congress (ANC), Nelson Mandela's party, as a communist front and Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Mandela's rival, as the champion of capitalism were no longer so vociferous. They probably still felt the same way, but the South African situation was no longer as critical in their minds as it had been a few years earlier. So I didn't face the same pressures that my predecessors had. Furthermore, the debate on sanctions was over. There had been a fierce debate in the 1980s on this issue; Congress passed the sanctions in 1986 over Reagan's veto. The whole anti-apartheid issue had been very contentious; U.S. policy had been very contentious. Those issues had also faded into the background.

Mandela had been released from prison; negotiations had begun. I went to South Africa at

a time when the heated debates in the U.S. had stopped. That made an enormous difference.

When I left the U.S., people kidded me by saying that the negotiations would be over by the time I arrived in Pretoria, but that in light of my AID experience I was the right man for the post-transition period, which would emphasize economic development. In fact, the negotiations collapsed in May, before my arrival. The political situation remained very unstable for the next two years.

Q: Tell us a little bit about the negotiations?

LYMAN: In 1989, F.W. de Klerk took over the government. In early 1990, de Klerk surprised every one by legitimizing the ANC and the communist party, whose leaders mostly were in exile or in prison or underground. There had been tremendous turmoil in South Africa in the 1980s. A state of emergency had been declared; there had been large and sometime violent demonstrations with many casualties. Most people thought that the unrest would only be ended by a bloody civil war.

De Klerk surprised everybody by his very radical approach. He allowed all the opposition parties to operate in the open; he let Mandela out of prison. A way was found to allow the exiles to return. In 1991, a formal negotiation was begun to develop a transition process. By early 1992, it seemed that agreement was very close. But in the May of that year, the negotiations reached an impasse. The issue was how to develop a new constitution. Both sides had probably gone further than their constituents were prepared to support. Mandela was clearly ahead of his people; he was ready to accept a requirement that 70% of the parliament would be required to approve or amend a new constitution. De Klerk was holding out for 75% – he was assuming that his party would garner more than 25% of the vote in any election. Suddenly, the two sides found that they were not as close as they thought. The negotiations broke off.

There was a terrible incident in a town called Boipatong where the police mowed down a number of demonstrators. De Klerk went there to show compassion and that turned into another riot. More people killed! The ANC then said that it was breaking off any further negotiations until the violence ceased. When I arrived, there was another crisis looming – even larger than the Boipatong one. The ANC called for large demonstrations which threatened to break into violence. In September, the ANC marched on Ciskei – one of the "homelands" – areas that the South African government had set aside for the blacks which were allegedly independent although no one else recognized them as such. People were shot down; it became another crisis.

When I arrived, the negotiations were in total disarray. The threat of more violence was palpable. No one knew where the country was heading. There was an interesting aspect to all of this which is the focus of the new book I am working on. During the summer of 1982, George Bush wrote to both de Klerk and Mandela volunteering the services of Secretary James Baker who, the president said, had just led a successful mediation effort

in the Middle East after the Gulf War. Baker was prepared to assist the two South African parties to resolve their differences. Before leaving Washington, I was briefed on this idea and I knew that the administration was really anxious to be involved in South Africa. But both Mandela and de Klerk declined the offer with thanks. They felt that the negotiations in South Africa were their problem which they wanted to resolve on their own. They both thought the U.S. could be helpful, but not as a mediator.

That exchange set the tone for our policy for the next few years. We were facilitators of the process; we were not mediators. In my view, that is what gave the South African settlement its strength. It was their negotiation; we were not a third party to it. Whatever agreements were reached, they were theirs. Nevertheless, we did play an extremely important role. Before I could even present my credentials, I was told by the government that my assistance was welcomed in trying to overcome the existing impasse. So I met with several governmental officials and Mandela. I had letters from Bush for both Mandela and de Klerk, urging that they find some way to resume negotiations. We and the British as well as others did everything we could to get the two parties back to the negotiating table.

Mandela and de Klerk finally met towards the end of 1992. They came to an agreement which changed the direction of the negotiations. First of all, de Klerk agreed that Mandela and the ANC would be the principal party in the negotiations – i.e. that Buthelezi and his Inkatha party would be a secondary party to the negotiations.

Furthermore, de Klerk and Mandela agreed that instances of violence would not be allowed to interfere with negotiations. That was a key element in moving the process forward.

Q: What was the role of the Inkatha? Was it seen primarily as a "spoiler"?

LYMAN: Buthelezi was a special personality. He had been a homeland leader, but he had refused independence. For years, he had demanded Mandela's release. But his party and the ANC was locked in a violent struggle for control of his homeland – the KwaZulu Natal. When Mandela was released, Buthelezi felt that Mandela was taking the leadership role in the anti-government struggle eclipsing his own status. De Klerk's people therefore, saw the Inkatha party as a potential ally against the ANC thereby denying the latter the role of the predominant black party. But by the end of 1992, de Klerk realized that the key black leader was Mandela and that negotiations could only be successful if the ANC were recognized as the majority black party in South Africa.

Q: The agreement on not allowing violence to cause a disruption in the negotiations minimized the opportunity for mischief for those opposed to the agreement. I think we have a similar situation in the Israeli-Palestinian situation today.

LYMAN: Both parties had said before that they would not negotiate until the violence was under control. If violence broke out, then they expected the other side to take

measures to keep the violators under control. Under the 1992 agreement, these violators were not be allowed to control the process. The negotiations were resumed at the end of 1992.

There were of course a lot of violent incidents. It became the sorest point between Mandela and de Klerk over the next two years because Mandela was convinced that de Klerk could do more to stop the violence. It was believed that he was using it to put pressure on the ANC, but despite all the suspicions, the two parties never again broke off negotiations.

Q: I gather from what you have said that both the blacks and the whites instigated violence?

LYMAN: Much of the violence that was taking place in 1991-92 was between the supporters of the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom party. That allowed de Klerk to say to the blacks that the problem of violence was their problem. Mandela suspected – and now the evidence shows it – was that much of the Inkatha's activities were being instigated by elements within the government. They were arming and training the Inkatha forces; they acted as provocateurs. It turned out later that in fact, these white elements had managed to place black provocateurs in the ANC. So it is now clear that these elements were very much instigating the violence and in some instances, even participating in it. As I said, Mandela suspected all of this, but de Klerk denied it.

Q: At the time, did you notice efforts by de Klerk to lead the Afrikaners toward a peaceful solution, despite the efforts of some to sabotage any resolution of the strife?

LYMAN: De Klerk always argued – with some doubtful credibility – that he didn't know that these provocateurs were taking action. They finally were exposed. The UN Security Council sent in observers – it was the first time that South Africa allowed a UN presence in its territory. Then de Klerk appointed Judge Goldstone to investigate these acts of violence. He eventually turned up clear evidence that much of it was sponsored be elements in the government. De Klerk then fired some people in the security forces, while maintaining the whole time that he was unaware of what was going on. It became quite clear that there were elements in the security forces completely opposed to any settlement with the ANC.

However, the intellectual leadership in the government and among the Afrikaners had come to the conclusion that an all white regime could not last much longer. They felt that a deal had to be negotiated. One of my predecessors, Ed Perkins, said to me that de Klerk's objective was to save the country for his people. I think Perkins was absolutely right; it was the key objective of de Klerk's negotiating goals.

We did several things during this time. First of all, I felt we had to build greater credibility with the various groups in South Africa. Within the ANC, for example, there was still considerable resentment about what was perceived as a lack of US support for

the blacks during apartheid. They managed to confuse entirely the objectives of "constructive engagement" which the South African government portrayed as full support of its efforts. That was not the case, but that is the way the government painted it. So I had to build up credibility with the ANC as well as the government which resented our sanctions and which felt that Clinton, based on his campaign statements, would be so supportive of the ANC that the government would not get a fair shake from the new administration. Thirdly, I had to deal with Buthelezi who had still some support in the U.S. He was a very prickly individual; nevertheless he had to be part of the solution and could not be neglected.

We did a lot of work trying to build up credibility. We had a top notch staff – a point that I have made to the Department over and over again. We had a first rate AID mission with flexible resources. We had three consulates in South Africa – Johannesburg, Durban and Capetown. So I had resources to know what was going on in the country and to be able to get in touch with the right people. We had two Afrikaans speakers. They had been assigned to cover the parliamentary debates, but they became my eyes and ears with the conservatives because they could speak to them in their own language. Later I had a Xhosa speaker; we had one officer, Pamela Bridgewater, who sat almost full time in the ANC headquarters in Johannesburg; she became a close confidant of Nelson Mandela and other senior ANC leaders. She later became the consul general in Durban; when she went there, she was replaced at the ANC by Robin Hinson Jones. Both these officers were part of a full consulate general in Johannesburg. We had an agricultural attache who was prepared to put me in touch with the white and black farming communities – in addition to his job of selling wheat and corn.

We had a terrific defense attaché, and a first class CIA station. I compare my situation in this period with the poor guys today, like my friend Howard Jeter who went to Nigeria without a political counselor and an embassy staffed primarily by junior officers and no consulates outside of Lagos. I asked him how he could possibly manage. I don't know the answer particularly after my South African experience where, as I said, we were well served by a superior staff. I had that terrific advantage which allowed me to play an active role, not at the negotiating table, but all around it.

We built our credibility both by public and private diplomacy. We demonstrated that we supported the negotiating process; we supported the ANC as the more legitimate representative of the black community; and we were critical of governmental positions which we recognized as non-starters such as suggestions that would have denied the majority real political power.

Q: Were there a lot of gimmicks floated?

LYMAN: You bet. For example, de Klerk wanted a tripartite presidential organization – himself and Buthelezi and Mandela. This triumvirate was to make all the decisions regardless of any parliamentary wishes. That would not fly. At times, de Klerk floated ideas about a veto by the minority. We would say to all that it was acceptable that

minorities be protected, but the majority could not be denied the right to govern.

We were also very critical of some ANC tendencies to show their power in ways that would provoke violence. We urged them to stop some of the marches they were planning and we constantly kept working to sustain the de Klerk-Mandela dialogue.

Q: How was your involvement perceived by the various parties?

LYMAN: I think they all listened to us. South Africans have told me that we did establish considerable credibility. I have returned to South Africa to interview the leaders for my book; I saw de Klerk and the ANC people and I see Mandela from time to time. I think that history will support my views that we played a positive role. Mandela understood that following the transition, relationships with the U.S. would be very important to his new government. He wanted his people to understand and accept that. So he was interested in establishing a good relationship with the embassy and our government. But we had to earn his respect which we did by establishing our credibility through public diplomacy. I gave a lot of speeches, all of which were given considerable thought, including when and where they would be delivered.

The real test for us was how to handle Buthelezi. He was in fact the largest obstacle to a resolution and was the source of a lot of the violence. He was very difficult to deal with. He is a very strange person, very complex. There was some irony in our relationship with Buthelezi. I was representing a president whose administration had stated that it did not wish to be too closely associated with Buthelezi – he was on the "wrong" side of the issues. My position was that Buthelezi was a vital part of the negotiations and that we had to spend as much time on him as was necessary. I said that I would have to fly to Zululand as often as I could and that I would have to find ways to bring him and keep him in the process.

Over the course of the two years, I found Buthelezi very recalcitrant and very difficult. Finally, I made the decision to go public with my criticism of him. That made him very angry and he took after me publicly. We would get together and patch up our relationship, only to return to the public spats soon thereafter. I worked very hard with the ANC to encourage it to patch up the difference with Inkatha. We told them that they were not taking Buthelezi seriously enough. The Durban consulate was the Buthelezi "watcher." The consul general was first Bismarck Myrick and then Bridgewater. They would visit him in his capital and see him when he came to Durban. They dealt with his people all the time. It was a very important continual contact.

I flew to see Buthelezi often. He had other visitors as well. The situation became clearer and clearer to me over time. Buthelezi was advocating some positions which were as unrealistic as some of those advocated by others. His advisors kept pushing for what they called a "federal constitution" that was really a confederal constitution. It would have left their province virtually autonomous – if not actually independent. They kept painting their idea as an American-style constitution. They were both sources and victims of

violence. I became a fairly tough public critic of Buthelezi which made him angry but increased our credibility with the ANC. We worked hard to keep Buthelezi in the process. We sent a special envoy to meet with him.

I also worked very hard on Mandela trying to convince him to reach out to Buthelezi. I discovered that the two of them had one thing in common: they never forgot a slight. Each time I talked to one or the other, I would have to listen to the same litany of alleged slights – phone calls and letters that went unanswered. They did meet eventually, but it was not successful.

The climax came in the spring of 1994. We were getting very close to an election. The government and the ANC had agreed to an election; they had agreed on a new constitution and on all other issues. But Buthelezi continued his role as a spoiler. He said he would not agree to any of the resolutions reached by the government and the ANC. His stance threatened to turn into a civil war in his province. I had a large congressional delegation visiting South Africa in May 1994. I was scheduled to speak to the Durban chamber of commerce. So I took the whole delegation with me and they listened to my speech. Buthelezi was also on the dais. My theme was that it was time for all parties to come together and prepare for the election. It was a very dramatic address. I got a standing ovation from a largely white business crowd. Buthelezi was furious with my comments; he told the congressional delegation that they had been brain-washed by the American ambassador. On the other hand, Mandela quoted my speech over and over again.

As I indicated, I have gone back to South Africa often. During one of these visits I asked one of the Inkatha senior officials why my speech made Buthelezi so angry while having such a big impact elsewhere. It turned out that many believed Buthelezi had the backing of foreign governments as well as the support of the white business community. I showed that he had neither.

Buthelezi decided to enter the elections at the very last minute, as result of many pressures put on him.

We worked very closely with the British and the Germans. There was one interesting aspect to this cooperation. The British had been the most up-front external actors before 1992. Robin Renwick was their ambassador; he was almost a pro-consul. He has written a book on his experiences. After Renwick's departure, the British government made a conscious decision to assume a lower profile in South Africa. So we ended up as the most publicly involved foreign government in South Africa. But I continued to work very closely with the British and the Germans and later with the Japanese as well. We consulted frequently on all of our efforts.

I need to talk a little bit about how we used our resources in our efforts to assist the South African parties to reach agreement. This was an important aspect of our efforts. We had a very flexible AID program, as I mentioned earlier. When I arrived, all the aid flowed

through non-governmental institutions, at Congress' insistence. Many of these NGOs were white-led, raising a lot of resentment in black community. I had an AID director who understood the situation; he developed procedures that shifted the emphasis and provided assistance to black NGOs. These were the people who would have key roles in the government after the 1994 elections. We funded a lot of conflict resolution processes around the country; that was our way of trying to keep the violence from exploding.

We put more than $25 million into the election – voter education, etc. We used the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, as well as others as our contractors. We supported South African election monitors as well as American ones. We also provided experts on every issue that was being negotiated – freedom of speech, federalism, etc. We were not at the negotiating table, but we certainly were all around it. We provided ideas; we supported an exchange program for experts. We thus enriched the dialogue as did the Europeans who were also involved in providing this kind of assistance. We were not the only American institution involved in this effort to smooth the negotiations; there were American foundations involved – many of them had been working in South Africa since the 1980s. When I talked to Arthur Chaskalson, now the president of the constitutional court, he reminded me that in the 1980s the South Africans had access, through the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, to the best brains in the U.S. When it came time to negotiate, the U.S. government was not needed at the table because the delegates had been preparing for this over a decade with the assistance of a lot of foreign brain power and they were ready to negotiate a constitution. I think this experience is a good illustration of how American support for a political process can be most successful.

Q: Did the collapse of the Soviet Union seem a precursor to the fall of the white government?

LYMAN: The collapse of the Soviet Union had a profound effect on the white government. It had been portraying its struggle for survival as a war against communism. After the collapse, that could not be used. The government understood that it couldn't use that line again and that had a profound effect.

We undertook a lot of preparations for the post-transition period. Ron Brown, the secretary of commerce, came and did a lot of good work promoting trade between the U.S. and South Africa. He assured the South Africans that they had a bright economic future and the U.S. would help as much as it could. Our assistance program continued but it was inadequate to meet all the challenges that the new government had to face. Mandela had been let to believe – primarily by a number of American visitors – that his agreement with de Klerk would be viewed as a "second Camp David" with all the economic benefits that the parties who were there enjoyed afterwards. He was led to believe that if he could achieve a peaceful transition there would be such substantial assistance which would follow. It turned out to be just $600 million over three years – not nearly what Israel and Egypt received after Camp David.

When Vice-President Al Gore came as head of the delegation to witness Mandela's inauguration, Mandela pulled him aside and told him that he wanted to fly to the U.S. immediately so that he could address a joint session of Congress and demand that the U.S. triple the assistance level. Gore suggested that he talk to me about these wishes. I spent the following year struggling with this Mandela vision. He publicly referred to our aid program as "peanuts."

Q: You were the ambassador during a change in administrations in Washington? What were your impressions of the new "team?"

LYMAN: There were a lot of rumors when the Clinton administration first took over that I would be replaced. Quite frankly, I understood that the administration was under considerable pressure to assign an African-American as ambassador to South Africa. The Department fought very hard against the idea. It insisted that I was there, had done a good job and was the right man for the times. One of the prominent candidates for the job is alleged to have said to the administration that I should not be replaced. I was very grateful for the support. So the administration backed off and I stayed in Pretoria. Unfortunately, it did replace Bill Swing in Nigeria after he had been there only a year with an African-American to please that constituency.

If I had been replaced, it would meant a disruption in our efforts in South Africa in early 1992 which was one of the most difficult periods with negotiations just being started again and with us trying to play as helpful a role as possible. Even if an experienced man had been appointed as the new ambassador, the interruption and the hiatus that that would have caused would have been unfortunate.

Q: In any case, with a new ambassador, some South Africans would have tried to peddle ideas that you had turned down thereby creating more confusion.

LYMAN: That is right and a whole new testing period would have begun. I was grateful to the administration for leaving me at post.

Furthermore, the new administration was much more favorably inclined to Mandela that its predecessor. It was also very skeptical of Buthelezi. I was given an enormous amount of discretion. I was given backing and authority; I was rarely second-guessed. My philosophy is that, as ambassador, if you want to remain in control of policy you provide Washington with your sense of the situation and direction. You don't just report. You interpret events and outline a strategy to achieve our goals. An ambassador has to take the initiative; otherwise a vacuum is created which Washington will rapidly fill. So I always tried to stay a step ahead of Washington. I was in fact encouraged by Washington to take the lead and to provide an annual assessment which would include an outline of efforts for the following year. So we tried to stay in control of policy. We had good backing in Washington; first Assistant Secretary Hank Cohen at the end of the Bush administration; then George Moose who could not have been more supportive. He visited us periodically and was in touch by telephone continually. The NSC did not really get involved. It was all

over the African Bureau on other issues such as Angola, but it was content with what was happening in South Africa. It had no criticisms of our efforts. So I felt all the time that I was getting good backing from Washington for the policies which we initiated.

Q: Did you have any troubles with Congress? Senator Helms?

LYMAN: Helms seemed to have lost his interest in South Africa. That helped in many ways. The person who had a strong interest in Buthelezi was Congressman Dan Burton (R-Indiana). When I came home for consultations, I always went to see Burton, but it was clear that in general, the conservatives had lost interest. But the Black Caucus and some other liberal groups were very interested in what was going on in South Africa. We had a lot of congressional delegations, primarily from the House International Relations Committee. Harry Johnston from Florida was the chairman of the subcommittee on African affairs. He was very active and visited us several times. But these congressmen also supported what we were doing. Every once in a while, some conservative Congressman would show some uneasiness with what was considered communists or communist-leading people on the ANC, but it was no longer a hot issue.

Q: Tell us a little, if you will, about your conversations with Mandela and de Klerk.

LYMAN: Mandela, whom I saw fairly often during this period – sometimes at dinners, sometimes at meetings, sometimes at his office – is a man of great dignity and great courtesy. We used to have very candid discussions. One had to understand that while he was able to laugh at himself, you had to treat him with dignity. People would make a mistake if they joked about him. He had his peeves. I found that any conversations about Buthelezi had to be conducted very gingerly, but we could be very candid. He liked to hear what we were thinking and he wanted us to know a lot about what he was thinking. I met often with his ANC people as well as those involved in the negotiations – Cyril Ramaphosa and Joe Slovo. I found that I could talk to Mandela very easily, exchanging ideas. As I said, he was anxious to stay in touch; he would call me on the phone frequently. He would call the president and other high ranking Washington officials. He made his own phone calls.

We had one very long intense exchange after the election. This dealt with chemical and biological warfare. In general, we had a very good relationship with Mandela. I think he felt that we were supportive; that we were not working against him.

De Klerk, I think, was initially more skeptical of our role; he was uneasy with the Clinton election. On balance, however, once he felt that the U.S. was giving him credit, he thought that we were being fair and objective. You have to remember that we brought him and Mandela to Philadelphia to receive the "Freedom Award" in 1993. I think that was welcomed. He saw the president. I met with de Klerk fairly often; I didn't have any trouble seeing him whenever I felt it was needed. Sometimes we would meet alone, sometimes with his staff. I saw all the ministers on a regular basis. I had no difficulty seeing them all. We were very close to de Klerk's principal negotiator, Rolf Meyer. We

saw him often to compare notes. De Klerk didn't like to hear that we would not support him in getting some of the outcomes he desired. He was very prickly on the violence issue. But in the final analysis, he made the changes that was necessary to keep his country going.

Q: Tell us about the 1994 elections.

LYMAN: They finally were held in April. The sides had been negotiating for years; at the end of 1992, I made some public criticisms about the slow pace. In 1993, Chris Hani was assassinated; he was probably the second most popular ANC figure. He was the head of the communist party and very popular. When he died, we thought that South Africa would blow up. It was this event however that drove the ANC to demand a firm election date. Without such a date, the prediction was for a calamity. So the date was set as April 1994.

The government's line was that it didn't object to holding elections, but it wanted a full constitution in place between the elections and the time a new constitution was to be ratified. The ANC just wanted a transition document. De Klerk rejected that and demanded a full constitution. So 1993 was devoted to writing a new constitution. Once the election date was set, it became a very important date. My argument with Buthelezi was over his desire to postpone that date; in my view, the process had dragged on long enough. The election passed much more peacefully than we had anticipated.

I should mention one other area where we played a significant role. One of the issues in the transition was whether the right wing, including the security forces, would support whatever arrangements might be agreed upon by the government and the ANC. Among this group was a retired general, Constand Viljoen. He was elevated to the leadership of the right wing. He was very popular as a former general and farmer. He was a hero to the right wing; he was an Afrikaner. He later admitted that he had flirted with the idea of a coup in conjunction with the military. We spent enormous amount of time with him. We asked the Pentagon to send us some savvy generals who might appeal to his professional soldier qualities. We talked to him about the dangers of a civil war. We sensed that he really cared about his country, unlike some other members of the right wing. He did agonize over what a civil war might do to South Africa. In the end, Mandela charmed him into saying that he would study the idea of a separate state for the Afrikaners – a proposition that was not viable under any circumstances.

One day, Viljoen called me and asked whether he could trust Mandela. Would he really come through? I assured him that Mandela could be trusted. So he made the decision to participate in the elections; that was a very critical decision. Just before the election, he was supposed to sign an agreement with the ANC; he called me on the phone to inform me that in his view the ANC was stalling and that he was being hood-winked with potential catastrophic results. So I called Thabo Mbeki, Mandela's deputy, and told him that the agreement had to be signed and very soon. I was called back and told that the agreement would be signed on Saturday. Viljoen asked whether I would co-sign as a

witness. I told him that we had not done so for any of the previous agreements, but that in this case, I would serve as a witness. I was the only ambassador to show up for the ceremony.

Q: It sounds as if the U.S., although not a mediator, was able to influence both sides.

LYMAN: Absolutely. We worked day and night at it; I had some of my staff who worked with the conservatives. We had to identify people in that group who were approachable and those who were completely hopeless. I met with some of the latter; we eventually ceased meetings with the more extreme; it would have been a waste of time to pursue them.

The role of my staff was crucial. They were in touch with the conservatives; they knew them well. They encouraged me to pursue contacts with the more sensible members of the conservative community. I worked with the Pan African Congress (PAC) – the radical black group. We refused to train them for the election until they had accepted the process, and put down their arms. They would have preferred to continue an armed struggle.

I think it is fair to say that the embassy was everywhere trying to bring the parties together. It was a very exciting time for me and our staff. We felt that we were part of history. I had a labor counselor who introduced me to some anti-Buthelezi labor leaders in KwaZulu Natal. We had to meet them in the middle of the night because they were concerned for their lives and were at risk from Inkatha. That counselor managed to establish contacts which none of his predecessors were able to do. He earned their trust for the first time because previously the AFL-CIO had not trusted the South African labor leaders. Through his good efforts, I met ANC labor leaders; I could listen to their concerns and could see what we might do to help them. That was part of our effort to build up credibility with all segments of South Africa. It was not a job which I could have done by myself; it called for a dedicated staff which broke the normal bounds of their jobs. I mean they could have been satisfied to just write their usual reports. The labor officers and others went way beyond that; they met and kept in contact with leaders of a lot of organizations and groupings.

Q: Did you have any problems with any outside groups who although present to assist in the election, did in fact pursue many of their own goals?

LYMAN: We had an enormous number of election observers from the U.S. The UN came to help with the election and we worked well with them. We approached the "Lawyers Committee for Human Rights" – an American NGO. We asked that they appoint someone to coordinate the activities of all of the election observers who were flooding the country – assigning them to districts, getting them to work with their South African counterparts. They took over that role with our financial assistance. They kept the Americans organized and deployed in an organized fashion. That Committee played a major role.

Support from Washington was very important. Mandela always called George Bush even after Mandela had been elected president and Bush was retired. Whenever Mandela came to the U.S., he would call on Bush. Mandela liked the personal touch that Bush had. Later on, Mandela became very close to President Clinton. Ron Brown was very active in South Africa as was Dona Shalala who came out at critical times. There was a major delegation from the U.S. for Oliver Tambo's funeral. These visits were critical to our credibility. Oliver Tambo had been the leader of the ANC when Mandela was in jail. He was loved by many people, but had in effect been shunned by the U.S. for a very long time. He died in the spring of 1993. The Clinton administration made a decision – with which I did not agree at first – to put together a huge delegation for the funeral. It was the right decision and I had been wrong. Dona Shalala was chosen to head the delegation. What I didn't realize at the time was that she had deep roots in South Africa because she made many contacts there when she was the president of the University of Wisconsin. Jesse Jackson, and many others came as part of the delegation. They had a profound effect on the ANC. It was viewed as a sign of the U.S. great interest in South Africa and its new leadership. Shalala gave a wonderful speech, even though she was sandwiched in between the PLO representative and the Cubans. She said that that could be the end of her political career! She was terrific. The U.S. delegation was given great respect; the whole delegation sat on the dais at the funeral. Jackson also gave a speech.

The ANC gave a reception that night and it was very clear that the U.S. delegation had made a profound impression. So that visit was very important to our efforts to build a relationship with the new government; it wiped out what ever bitter feelings there may have been for the vilification of the ANC that had been practiced in the U.S. for so many years.

We had a lot of people who were doing their own thing. It was not a major problem, but one that we had to be aware of. It was good to have such a sizeable American involvement in the elections.

We had a major sensitive issue, which rose right before the election and continued afterwards. In early 1994, we discovered through our intelligence assets that, contrary to de Klerk's directive, the biological and chemical warfare capability continued, and had not been destroyed. It was much more serious that we had thought. We faced the question on how to handle the issue in the middle of very dicey negotiations and in the run-up to the crucial election without it disrupting the transition. For a while, there were only two of us in the embassy who were aware of and were working on this problem. That was our station chief and myself. In Washington, of course, all sorts of people were familiar with the situation. We argued that the matter had to be handled with great care. We wanted to pursue it and see what and why the program was continued. The South Africans were about to making a submission to the Biological Warfare Convention, which was misleading. But we could not undermine de Klerk in the middle of the transition; we needed his good will. We certainly did not want this issue to become part of the election campaign.

So we met with de Klerk and briefed him on what we knew. We convinced him to give us access to some of the people who were working on the project and to put the basic data, which was of greatest concern to us, under some kind of control. I told de Klerk that he would have to brief Mandela on this program; I pointed out that we would not have any credibility with him if he were not briefed and later found out that the Americans knew all about it. Unfortunately, according to de Klerk, he couldn't reach Mandela. So we and the British decided that we would do so – briefing Thabo Mbeki. When the new government took power, we urged that Mandela be briefed and that we meet with him on it. That took almost a whole year. When he finally heard about the program, Mandela called a meeting and decided that he would also not destroy the data – which I found very interesting – but he did promise to put it under lock and key. He also put some control on the scientists who were being pursued by such countries as Libya. He put the principal scientist on the government's payroll which caused him great problems later when that man was put on trial for a variety of offenses. When Mandela was asked why he had hired that man, he said so that he could keep him from traveling to countries like Libya. We handled the issue before the election in great secrecy; we had some lengthy and heated debates with Washington which was sharply divided on how to handle this issue. There were some people who wanted to expose the South Africans for having used some of the stuff; the others just wanted the issue to be kept to non-proliferation, i.e., preventing the information of the scientists from falling into the hands of for example the Libyans. In the embassy, we were saying that we had no proof that any of the material had been used; there were allegations, but in fact we were bluffing in some respects when we approached de Klerk and said we knew a lot about the program of use in South Africa.

Furthermore, we felt that the issue was one that the South Africans should be allowed to investigate first. We passed on the allegation, but the responsibility for determining the extent and the nature of the program was a South African duty. We agreed that we had to worry about the non-proliferation issue in which we had a major stake. We told the government that if it tried to cover up this program, we would go public, but that in the first instance it was their responsibility to bring the matter under control. It worked out fairly well; the program was investigated and although the controls were not perfect, at least it has some controls. I must say that in the weeks before the election, the station chief and I agonized over what course to take. We met endlessly with the British who recognized as we did the delicacy of the information we had.

Q: Did you get involved in any efforts by the South Africans to determine responsibility for alleged crimes by governments perpetrated before the transition?

LYMAN: I took positions on this issue, both publicly and privately. I supported strongly the establishment of the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission." I stated that a blanket amnesty, without any reference to the past was just not realistic. History would surface year after year and cause considerable tensions every time it was raised. I pointed out that we still agonized over the Vietnam War even twenty years later. I told everyone that they had to deal with their past. How that was done was South Africa's business, but something had to be done. They worked up a very elaborate process which allowed those

who confessed to crimes committed for political purposes to be given amnesty. We supported the concept, but did not get involved in the details.

Q: The election was not a surprise.

LYMAN: The election came out as people had anticipated. The ANC just missed getting the 2/3 of the parliament, which it needed to pass constitutional changes without allying itself to another party. That was just as well. They captured every province, but two. I had told everyone that Buthelezi would be a factor; most people had dismissed him as a non-entity. In fact, he won his province.

Q: You were there how long after the elections?

LYMAN: Mandela was inaugurated in May, 1994 and I left South Africa at the end of 1995. The inauguration was magnificent. It was a wonderful affair. The election itself was touch and go. We didn't know whether violence would break out. There were bombs exploded at the airport on the morning of the elections; the police arrested all the perpetrators which was a good sign; there was no more violence that day. That gave us a clear signal that the security forces would abide by the results of the election.

As I said, the inauguration was magnificent. We were allotted ten seats; our delegation was 65 people – typical U.S. We had a congressional delegation as well as one from the administration which included Vice President Gore and his wife Tipper as well as the First Lady, Hillary Clinton. Unfortunately, the secretary of state didn't come. The highest ranking Department official who came was Dick Moose, the undersecretary for management. Christopher had always taken the position that as long as the transition process was moving along, he didn't have to spend any time on it. He didn't object to what was going on; he just didn't spend any time on the issue. He only made one trip to South Africa and that was towards the end of his term. Mandela resented the neglect that the secretary had indicated. The Department's participation was very strange. As I said, the vice-president and the first lady came as did Ron Brown, the secretary of commerce and Secretary Donna Shalala of HEW. I know it gave us great supported during the period leading up to the elections, but when it came time to celebrate a success, the Department did not show. Obviously, it was not important to Christopher to be seen at a celebration of a process that the U.S. had devoted so much attention. Mandela made a sarcastic comment about his absence. I should note that Mandela at first had a hard time with Clinton; he had been very close to President Bush. He liked Bush because Bush called him periodically. I remember that during my first meeting with Mandela, I said that I had brought a letter from my president; I was then told that "I have very good relationship with George Bush; he calls me whenever he takes some action that touches on South Africa even if he knows that I might not like it."

But the inauguration was unbelievable. Hundreds of thousands of people showed up to cheer Mandela, many from all corners of the world.

Mandela walked to the dais, followed by all of the chiefs of staff. He took his seat in the front row; the military chiefs sat being him. Colin Powell, who was a delegate, said: "That is the transition." Mandela gave a great speech; de Klerk became a second vice-president, which was a very gracious gesture. Mandela offered a spirit of reconciliation. The felling among whites and blacks alike was that finally South Africa was free. The whites were freed from apartheid, with all of the condemnation that went with it.

Since then, of course, a variety of problems have arisen, but that is not surprising.

Q: By the time you left in 1995, how did you feel things were going?

LYMAN: I thought things were going pretty well. Al Gore did something very important which I hope is continued. [It was discontinued under George W. Bush] He established a bi-national commission headed by himself and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki. Under the commission's umbrella, sub-committees in various functional areas – e.g. education, commerce, environment – were established. These were cabinet level committees which were intended to establish long term relationships that were not aid dependent, but which would put the two countries into some long-term, mutually beneficial, relationships. The problem was that all the agencies represented on these committees expected AID to pay all the costs. I fought against that concept because I felt it was important for these committees to distance themselves as much as possible from economic assistance. The commission enabled the two countries to reach agreement on some very tricky issues; e.g. the case being pursued by the Justice Department where South Africa entities had violated sanctions and had sold arms to Iraq. It was a very contentious issue which was finally resolved by the two vice-presidents. I thought that this process worked well.

The South Africans were disappointed that there wasn't a greater American investment in their country. But they were part of a world-wide process in which nothing comes easy. Investors proved unmoved by the glamour of the end of apartheid. But when I left, I thought our relationship with South Africa was on a pretty solid foundation and I think it has remained that way despite the many problems that arise in such areas as trade, intellectual property rights, etc. Toys R Us, McDonald's, and other U.S. companies for example, charged that its trade-marks rights were being violated in South Africa giving rise to lengthy negotiations. But I consider issues of that kind to be part of normal country-to-country relations.

Q: How about the nuclear issue?

LYMAN: That issue was settled quickly early in my tenure. By the middle of 1993, de Klerk announced that he had nuclear weapons and that he had destroyed them. That decision was developed without much direct U.S. involvement. But the U.S. had been pressing South Africa on its nuclear program for years. De Klerk opened his facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which told us that it had been given *carte blanche*. So the nuclear issue was taken off the table very quickly.

Q: Was AIDS a problem in the early 1990s?

LYMAN: I have looked back on this issue. We had someone from the CDC working with us on this matter. We worked with a South African NGO which was involved in this problem. When I look back at the early 1990's, I must say that our experts predicted that if the government didn't get the incipient epidemic under control that there would be 5 million people infected by the year 2000. That prediction was very close to the actual results. We assumed that the new government would really put great emphasis on HIV/AIDS prevention because the person with whom we worked most closely on this became minister of health. But the new government in fact ignored the warning signs. The minister got involved in some controversies; she spent a lot of money on a musical intended to dramatize the problem. Later, Thabo Mbeki, the president who succeeded Mandela got into a crazy controversy about the origin of AIDS. The government lost momentum on this issue. In retrospect, I don't know whether we could have done more; we were misled because we thought the new government would pursue that matter with some energy. We didn't realize how devastating the epidemic would become.

The other issue that we flagged repeatedly to the new government was drugs. I raised the issue with Mandela at the beginning of his administration, in 1993. We brought people from the U.S. to discuss the problem. We suggested that when South Africa opened its borders, every drug cartel would be vying to start business there. And so it was. But with a bad police force and a lot of other problems, South Africa became a source for smuggling and a consumer of drugs.

Q: What about the crime problem?

LYMAN: During the apartheid period, the government had allowed black organized crime to operate in the townships. When apartheid ended, those gangs moved out of their territory and preyed on the whole country. The police force was very corrupt and inefficient, some of whom were involved in crimes like car hijacking. It had been controlled by whites; its task had been to protect the whites and control political violence. It was not to root out crime. So when crime started to spread, the police were hopelessly overwhelmed. This police ineffectiveness has become a major problem of world wide renown. Downtown Johannesburg has been deserted by major businesses; all the major hotels have moved to the suburbs joined there by large business concerns. The murder rate is very high dealing a major blow to tourism. They are beginning to get a handle on it, but it has been very difficult.

Q: You left South Africa in 1995. What was next?

LYMAN: I became the assistant secretary for international organizations (IO). I started in mid-1996, but I was not confirmed until early 1997 and then I stayed another 18 months. When I returned to Washington, I told everyone that South Africa had been my dream assignment and that my career had been fulfilled. So they gave me IO. I didn't want another assignment in Africa.

My confirmation was held up for nearly a year because of an issue having nothing to do with me. Senator Pressler from South Dakota had taken up the case on behalf of Linda Shenwick, an employee of U.S. mission to the UN in New York. She had been supplying information to the Congress on the UN, largely negative information. The U.S. mission to the UN had taken some administrative action with regard to her performance, and Pressler was determined to hold up my appointment until she was exonerated. I was the "hostage." In the interim, after six months, when the senior deputy in IO was named ambassador to Namibia, I offered to take over the Bureau on an acting basis as senior deputy. That angered some in the Congress. Finally, Pressler was defeated in the 1996 election and I was confirmed the following January. It was an unhappy order. I confess that while others were watching national election results in November 1996, I was totally focused on South Dakota.

Madeleine Albright was our ambassador to the UN when I first went to work in IO. She later became secretary of state. She indicated to me that her top priority was to win Congressional approval of the arrearages which we owed to the UN. I spent much of my time negotiating this issue under very difficult circumstances. I had told Albright that I had worked a lot with Congress during my career and that I was prepared to help her in her pursuit. It was made much more difficult after the 1994 elections when the Democrats lost a lot of seats.

Doug Bennett, my predecessor, had had a great deal of difficulty with Albright. In fact, he had been shut out of all negotiations with Congress on this arrearage issue. When I went to the Hill, I found that this was a different Congress from the ones I used to work with. It was nasty; it was disrespectful of Clinton and his administration. There was some improvement after 1996, but it was still a very difficult institution to work with. Furthermore, peace keeping had been so controversial – after Bosnia and Serbia and Somalia – that much of Congress took on an anti-UN hue. We were dealing therefore with a sizeable and influential opposition.

The major issue was how much we should compromise to get a deal completed. I was being pushed very hard by the Department's legislative affairs office (H) to make compromises. Sometimes, I felt pushed in directions with which I did not feel comfortable. But in the end, we did negotiate a deal primarily with Senator Biden which I cut despite H's advice. I gave him our bottom line number that H had recommended not be given up. Their view was that Biden could not be trusted, but I pointed out that he was the only game in town. Most of the Democrats would not fight for us; Biden said that he was only working on the issue because there was only one bill in front of the Committee and he wanted something passed. I had to trust him since he was the only one willing to carry the ball. He did in fact get approval from Helms, the committee chair, for the bottom line figure – $927 million.

But that Congressional approval led to tremendous conditionality for the UN – roughly some 30 conditions. The supporters of the UN, including the UN Association, considered

the deal a travesty. People like Don McHenry considered it a travesty. There was considerable sentiment against this deal with some persons suggesting that the president refuse it. I told them that they may be right in their opposition to the conditions – reduction of personnel, of our dues, etc – that Congress had stipulated, but that it was the best deal possible; furthermore, I contended that the conditions were not as onerous as they sounded. I had consulted with the UN constantly – privately – to make sure that they would not interfere too greatly with the UN's efforts. Some of the conditions would have been implemented in any case; Kofi Annan was willing to do some of them, some were mostly symbolic, but some were very difficult – no growth in budgets, 10% reduction in personnel, reducing our dues (which turned out to be the toughest issue of all). But the deal was done.

But it then fell apart over the abortion issue. Congressman Christopher Smith attached a rider – the "Mexico City" language that the former President Bush had just endorsed, but which President Clinton could or would not accept. That delayed the completion of the deal for two years. During that time, the peacekeeping burden grew enormously. So Richard Holbrooke, who became ambassador to the UN in 1999, had a very difficult time. But he could do what I couldn't and that was to mobilize total White House support for payment of our dues. We didn't have enough of that support during our negotiations, but Holbrooke did and would.

Q: Was Albright, when she became secretary of state, continued her interest in this issue, and did she have much backing in the Clinton administration?

LYMAN: She remained very interested in the UN, but her focus became the Iraq issue. That consumed a great deal of her time, as well as that of Tom Pickering, the undersecretary for political affairs, and many others. The questions were the sanctions, the inspection regime, etc. That became the number UN issue for the administration. Both she and Tom were on the phone every single day calling Bill Richardson, our ambassador to the UN or Annan on this subject; the question of the arrearages took second place, by far. Albright did want our dues paid; she encouraged our efforts and supported making a deal with Senator Helms, but she wasn't willing to go as far as that would have required, i.e., to obtain some compromise on the abortion issue.

Q: How was it to deal with Senator Helms and his staff?

LYMAN: I had a very difficult time with the Republican staff until I realized that the only way to deal with it was to see the staff one at a time. When they were in a group, they were hostile and would not give very much. But in a one-on-one situation it was a different atmosphere. Then they were courteous and respectful; in a group, each was showing off trying to demonstrate their *bone fides* to the rest.

We also had another problem, which became a major public issue. We had an employee in the UN Mission in New York who provided negative information on the UN to Congress. When I would meet with Congressmen or staffers, I would be told that the

woman in New York was the only one they would believe. I was told that if I didn't bring her with me, I would not be granted a meeting. That was a real problem because she had a completely negative view of the UN; as far as she was concerned, that body couldn't do anything right. Some of the information she provided was just wrong. But once she had submitted the information, it became the gospel. It was a very awkward situation. Later, the Mission gave her an unfavorable rating which she protested. In retaliation, the Senate held up the confirmation of several Administration nominees; she also was the reason for my confirmation being held up for six months. But this situation made our relations with Congress very difficult.

Furthermore, I couldn't get the Democrats to support us as strongly as we needed. They were sympathetic, but they pointed out that since the 1994 election, they were in the minority. We – my staff and I – spent hours after hours looking at the consequences of the conditions that the Congress wanted to impose. We worked with the House, where the chairman of the International Relations Committee, Ben Gilman, was a weak leader, although I was personally close to him having worked with him on refugee affairs. He was a wonderful man, but a weak chairman. His staff was leading him in circles. We could not come to an agreement with the House. All we could do was to get Lee Hamilton to block what the Republicans wanted to do.

So I turned to the Senate again and that is when I found Joe Biden who was willing to try to strike a deal. But then Helms decided that he didn't want a deal because he had other fish to fry – e.g. the reorganization of the Department to include USIA. So that became part of the package. Once he signaled that he actually wanted a deal, I could sit down with his chief of staff, Tom Kline, to begin serious negotiations. I could tell Tom that this condition for the UN or that one was just ridiculous or that it was acceptable; he would point out those requirements that he felt were absolutely indispensable for him and his boss. Tom and I worked very closely together for months, working through each condition one by one. He had to have some stick, like reimbursement for U.S. contributions to peace-keeping – no more provision of American forces on a *gratis* basis. I needed to eliminate some of the conditions that would have required a reduction of UN budgets, and elimination of some UN agencies.

The actual determination of how much the U.S. would actually pay on its arrearages (over $1 billion) was left to Senator Biden. Tom had told me that Senator Helms' figure was $600 million. I said that that was just not enough; if that was all that we could get, then the whole agreement would collapse. I went to see Biden and he asked me what our bottom line was. He said that I had to trust him. So I gave him our figure – $927 million. The next day, he called me and asked whether that amount could not be cut further. I said that he had our bottom line; we had already cut it far below what the UN thought we owed. That same night, he called again and told me that he had gotten approval from Helms of our figure. He said that we had twenty minutes to accept. I called Congressional Relations and told them of the deal. Barbara Watson, the head of that bureau, said that I should agree. So I called Biden back and the deal was sealed.

Q: This must have been one of the highlights of your career.

LYMAN: It was a very frustrating process. I didn't enjoy it one bit. I like diplomacy; I don't like haggling. When we were working on Security Council reform, that was diplomacy and I enjoyed that; it was a tough issue with lots of problems, but I was dealing with representatives of other governments. But dealing with the U.S. Congress was an entirely different matter because I had to deal with so much criticism. I don't mind criticizing the UN for some of its well known failures, but the irrationality of some of the Congressional criticism is what got to me.

To be perfectly honest, I lost out in my relationships with Madeleine Albright. It was during this period as assistant secretary that my wife became very ill. So I turned IO's responsibility for the Iraq issue to my deputy. Secretary Albright didn't particularly care for my deputy, Molly Williamson. She was terrific, but for some reason the two just didn't click. Albright wanted someone in the assistant secretary position who would work on Iraq to her satisfaction. The climax came when the U.S. lost a vote on Cuba in the Human Rights commission. I took the fall for it, though part of the blame – if there were any – belonged to the Human Rights Bureau. So after that, Albright asked me take another assignment. I decided instead that it was time for me to retire. She chose David Welch who is a wonderful officer and an Iraq specialist as my successor at IO. I had done the deal on arrearages and we agreed that it was time to retire.

Q: Albright did not leave her position with great accolades. What was your impression of her managerial style and capabilities?

LYMAN: I think that all the criticism about the lack of strategy and vision was hog-wash. In fact, no one had a post Cold War strategy. She had as good a one as any. She saw a world community tied by democratic principles and free trade. There were some countries that fit in that vision and others which did not. She tried to get as many as possible into the first category which was as a good a strategy as anyone had devised. I gave speeches on that vision and fully supported her concepts.

She fought hard on those issues that she felt strongly about, like the UN dues one. She did not become a UN baiter. Her difficulties came when she had to trust the State Department; she could not overcome her misgivings about the institution. There were officers whom she trusted and liked and then there were many she did not trust. She trusted Skip Gnehm, the director general of the Foreign Service, for example. He had been her principal deputy in New York. As I said, she had misgivings about the institution and I think people felt that somehow.

To be perfectly frank, I think there was too much emphasis on her image. When successful, it was useful because it allowed her to make a pitch for more resources for the Department in which she was partially successful. She did level out the trough that had been dug by Congress. She gave good publicity to diplomacy. But after a while, this image effort just became too much. It began to interfere with delegation of authority. For

example, our ability to talk to the press was greatly restricted and tightly controlled. We could not talk to a national media person without permission from the Bureau for Public Affairs. This rule was changed toward the end of her tour, but for most of her tenure I and all other assistant secretaries were blocked from appearing on various TV shows. It was silly because we could have made a better public case for our positions on such things as the UN dues.

Furthermore, I think that Madeleine conducted too much diplomacy personally. During Iraq negotiations, she was on the phone with other foreign ministers working out the wording of UN resolutions. That disempowered people below her; who was going to negotiate with an assistant secretary if the secretary was ready to be involved. Yet she complained that too much work landed on her desk. That happened because she became personally involved in negotiations on specific issues. Yet the official line was that she was interested in empowering the assistant secretaries; I don't think that is what happened.

On the other hand, she worked hard; she had more vision that people gave her credit for. She did have a good rapport with many of her counterparts. In a meeting that I attended which was called to discuss Albright's tenure, Larry Eagleburger noted that at the end of every administration, everyone dumps on the secretary of state. He said that he greatly sympathized with her.

Q: That I think brings to the end. I want to thank you very much for giving us so much of your time.

End of interview