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

JOHN W. MCDONALD

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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview has not been edited by Mr. McDonald]

Q: Let's start at the beginning, could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your parents?

MCDONALD: Certainly. First of all, let me say how pleased I am to be a part of this program and am looking forward to our interaction in the time ahead.

I was born in Coblenz, Germany, a product of the First Army of Occupation, on February 18,

1922. My father was a Major in the occupation force from Louisville, Kentucky, and my mother was an American from Brooklyn, New York. They met in Coblenz and married there. I was born there.

Q: How did your mother end up in Coblenz?

MCDONALD: Well, that is quite a story in itself. She was a public stenographer in New York City, had her own business, and decided when World War I came to an end that she wanted to be a part of the rebuilding process. She wanted to be a part of the action, I guess. She went to the YMCA, the Young Men's Christian Association, in New York City, which was recruiting people to go to Coblenz, the center of the First Army of Occupation. They had opened some new offices there. She talked her way into going and got on their payroll as a secretary/public stenographer.

While she was there, as I remember the story, she went to a fancy dress ball and she, for some reason, got dressed up as a jockey. And my dad, who was a cavalryman, who had been on the Mexican border fighting Pancho Villa, and then was in the World War I occupation, I guess, fell in love with her at first sight. Here he was, a cavalryman in his boots, and there she was a jockey, in her boots, and anyway one thing led to another and they married and I was born there.

He was 46 years in the military, so I was what we call an Army brat, I moved around wherever he moved and wherever they moved. He lived to be 92 and my mother, 90, so they were around for quite a while.

Q: When did your family leave Coblenz?

MCDONALD: At the end of 1922, I guess I was about six months old. He went with the military first of all to Fort Riley, Kansas, and then Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to the Army General Staff School. So we were in Kansas, I guess, for the next six or seven years.

Q: Where did you go to high school?

MCDONALD: Well, I went to high school in several different places actually. He was assigned to Culver Military Academy, Culver, Indiana, and then Washington, DC. I went to Hall Junior High School in Washington, DC. At Fort Bliss, Texas, I went to two years of high school in El Paso. And the last two years I went in the Hawaiian Islands. I graduated from Roosevelt High School on Honolulu, because my father was posted there. I graduated in 1939.

Q: So in 1939 you were out of high school. Where did you go?

MCDONALD: Well, from Honolulu my dad was posted to the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, as Professor of Military Science and Tactics. I thought I was going to Dartmouth, but when he got posted there as professor, it was free tuition, so he said, "Boy, you are going to Illinois." You know, we don't have the same choice in those days as you do today; I didn't apply to ten universities. So I went to the University of Illinois. My sister, who is a year and a half younger than I am, also went there. We liked it, so we just stayed.

My folks moved a year later to Fort Knox, Kentucky, and other places. I took my undergraduate degree in Political Science at the University of Illinois. Was out for two years and then went back and got my Law Degree there in 1946, and was admitted to practice law and the bar in December 1946.

Q: When you graduated in 1943, I assume the military got hold of you?

MCDONALD: No. I had had when I was eight years old something called osteomyelitis, which is a bone disease. I was declared 4-F because the law said anybody with osteomyelitis was exempt, so I was very frustrated by that because I had wanted to follow in my father's footsteps, actually. I had taken ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] in high school, I had taken it in college, and I thought I could talk my way into it, but it didn't work.

So I left school and went to work in Chicago in the summer of 1943 at a defense plant, making bullets for the armed forces. I became a member of the Machinists Union, while I was there. Then the plant shut down in '44, a year or so later, and a doctor said I was anemic and needed an outdoor job so I became a laundry truck driver on the South side and the West side of Chicago. I did that for about a year, a year and a half. That was fascinating, actually, because it turns out we were the only non-union laundry in Chicago. The Teamsters decided to change that while I was there, so everything bad you've ever heard about the Teamsters is true. I lived through it.

Two thirds of my route was Black, and one third was Polish and it was a 100 percent paid by how much business you brought in. Actually, I did very well because I was fortunate in that I really didn't have racial prejudices, having gone to school in El Paso, Texas, and then in Hawaii, so I didn't have the prejudices my fellow truck drivers had. So my access to the Black community was dramatic and I did very well and save up enough money to go back to law school.

Q: Well, why did you turn to law school?

MCDONALD: Well, I decided when I was, I guess, a sophomore in high school that I wanted to be a diplomat. There was never any question in my mind that that was my goal and that was where I was directed. When I got out from undergraduate school access to the Foreign Service was zero, because they weren't taking any people in during those six or more years during the war period. So I decided the best thing to do was to get an advanced degree, which would make me more eligible, I hoped, for access to the Foreign Service. So that was my driving force.

I wasn't particularly interested in practicing law; I just wanted to have that as another tool for my diplomatic career.

Q: What caused you to focus on diplomacy?

MCDONALD: It's amazing how one talk can make a difference in a life. While we were in El Paso, our high school was visited by a young Vice Consul from Juarez. He came over and made a presentation on the Foreign Service. Of course my father was always international, and I thought that way even at a young age, and so I thought this sounded terrific and what I would

like to do. I don't even know who it was today, but that young man triggered my desire and I went down that path.

Let me tell you something else about that early period of my life that really had a major impact on my whole career. I learned the ability to be able to talk to anybody at any level in society. I think that started out at an early age in my life. When I was 15, that was the first time you could get a social security card in those days. I was living in the Hawaiian Islands and I went down and got a job for the summer at the Dole pineapple cannery in Hawaii. I was the only blue-eyed blond in a gang of 200. That in itself was a great experience. Between that and my entrance to the bar in 1946, I held jobs as a day laborer, as a ditch digger, as a warehouse man, a pea-picker, department store salesman, magazine salesman, carpenter's helper, electrician's helper, labor foreman, taxi driver, law librarian, and editor of a county courthouse information bulletin.

So I learned how to interact with anybody.

Q: This is a wonderful experience because in diplomacy, it is not just sitting at the upper levels of society. One's target is how a whole society functions, which often is overlooked and very difficult, I think, for some people coming in. What was your impression in '46 of the law profession?

MCDONALD: Well, I had put all my eggs in one basket, as a matter of fact. By that time I had finished law school, I was married and had a small son, a small daughter, and it turned out there was a six month time period between the time I graduated and the time the bar exam was given in the State of Illinois. In those days the average pass rate for the first time taking the bar in Illinois was about 30 percent. My problem was that I had to support a family over that six months period.

The law was not very kind to me at that point. I was pretty proud of myself, having gotten my law degree, an undergraduate degree, and I was ready to go. So I went job hunting in Chicago and all over the State, trying to find a law firms that might be interested in hiring me at some modest wage. Nobody was interested, because I had not passed the bar, had not been admitted to practice.

I remember visiting an old judge down in the southern part of the State of Illinois. I told him my aspirations and he said, "Boy, you come work with me and after a year or so, if you are any good, I'll start paying you." So that was the general attitude. And I said, "Judge, I can't do that." So I went back to Champaign-Urbana, where I was living, and that is when I started to work in a cement factory as a day laborer. With two degrees, here I was loading and unloading cement bags from freight cars where it was 120 degrees inside them. It is a very leveling experience. I did that for a couple of months, and then a friend of mine said he knew a man who was building houses and I might be able to get a job there for a little more money. So I was able to sign on as a carpenter's helper. After about six weeks of that, the foreman came up to me and said, "You know, you seem a little brighter than some of these other fellows, I'm going to make you an electrician's helper." It was ten cents an hour more. So I really moved up the ladder rather dramatically.

At the end of that summer I took a cram course, and was able to pass the bar on the first occasion. I mention this story only because it gave me skills for my later life as a diplomat, that is carpentry and electrician. Because whatever house you go to around the world you would have to have those skills. But it also cooled my ardor a bit for the law, because they really had not welcomed me. However, then the Supreme Court of Illinois, when they heard that I was going to work for the U.S. Government, held a special session for me and I was brought in to the practice just by myself, which was nice. It tempted me for a while, but I moved back on my long-term track.

Q: How did you move into Government?

MCDONALD: Well, in a very strange way, as a matter of fact. You may remember from those days something called the Morgenthau Plan? Well, the Morgenthau Plan was designed to rule occupied Germany for 25 years, and keep them as an agricultural state. To totally destroy their industrial capacity. Secretary of Treasury Morgenthau, who was then running the State Department, had that plan and it was actually institutionalized at one point, for a while.

Well, there was an ad in the newspaper. I tried to get [into the Foreign Service] through the normal channels and the doors were still closed. This was in 1946. The ad said they were going to create a career service for occupied Germany. So, I applied. I was accepted and then they wanted me to come right away in 1946, but I said no, that I had to finish the bar exam, if I didn't do it now I'd never do it. This was very critical for me. So they agreed to delay. I signed up in 1946, to go to Berlin as a part of the Occupying Forces working for General Clay.

I arrived in Berlin on January 15, 1947. That was a remarkable experience because the program had changed a bit and we were to now be Interns. We were told in Washington that we were going to an Intern Program and would be moving around for the first year to various parts of the Berlin Sector, and then go down to the Zone and various levels.

Q: To get perspective, at that point, while you were doing this, they were really talking about the Occupation lasting sort of forever.

MCDONALD: 25 years.

Q: 25 years. This was really a career of occupying Germany, rather than what actually happened?

MCDONALD: That's right. I worked for OMGUS, the Office of Military Government- United States in Berlin. What had happened during that time between when I had seen the ad and when I actually went over seas was the Morgenthau Plan was basically killed, by McCloy and Clay and a few others. They shifted the concept, which ended up rather dramatically in Marshall's speech in June of '47, and then the Marshall Plan and so forth. But when I signed on, it was to be a career occupation, because I just wanted to get overseas and feel that I was making a contribution internationally.

Q: So you arrived out there, then, when?

MCDONALD: January 15, 1947. And to show you how bureaucracy always has its problems, even back in those days, it turned out I was a part of the first group of Interns, as they were called, and about 18 of us, all men, were lined up at the Chief of Personnel's office in Berlin. He was a full Colonel. He came out and we were all standing in the line and waiting for this critical moment in our history, and the Colonel said, "Who in the hell are you and what are you doing in Berlin on my territory?" Washington had never bothered to tell the Colonel about the program. Literally. He had never heard of it.

We were supposed to have this all programmed, instructions, going different places at different times. He'd never heard word one, and he was furious. I'd love to have seen the message he sent back to Washington on that one. We said we didn't know, we'd gone through the process in Washington and signed the papers and got the transport and here we are! Well, he couldn't get over that. So what happened. I lucked out. I was the only lawyer in the group and so they sent me to the Law Division. I was a part of the Secretariat, then, of the Allied Control Council, which was the best place to be because it was four power, it was Quadripartite - the Soviets, French, British and Americans. So I was Deputy U.S. Secretary to the Law Committee of the Allied Control Council.

Q: Can you talk a bit about how you saw Berlin, how you saw Germany, at that time? How things looked and worked at that time?
MCDONALD: It was brutal. This was in the middle of the coldest winter in a hundred years. Berlin was basically rubble in most parts of the city. The only part that was really not touched was the Western part, which was the U.S. Sector. That is where OMGUS Headquarters is located and that is where I had a house, with two housemates. It was very lovely where we were. But much of it was literally rubble, and the people were having a very difficult time surviving the winter.

Basic things, food, soap, clothing, and heat were all difficult to obtain on the part of the Germans themselves. We, of course, had it very comfortably. That was a major impact that I have never forgotten, of course, as you would expect. Coming from the plains of Central Illinois, to the rubble of one of the great cities of the world was a real shock.

I was surprised at how quickly one became adjusted to that situation; you would sort of walk through it and basically ignore. We were not allowed in those days to even talk to Germans. We were not allowed to fraternize, was the word. I didn't agree with that and I ignored it, but that was the rule.

It was also the time of a cigarette economy. The Reichsmark was worthless. It was a barter economy and cigarettes were what you bartered. A very strange situation to move into.

Q: Could you talk about, what is it, the Control Commission?

MCDONALD: Yes, Allied Control Council.

Q: The Allied Control Council, here in early '47, how it was constituted and what it did, and

what your job was?

MCDONALD: Well, each power, Soviet, French, British, and American, was represented. It ruled Germany. Each of those four powers had a zone, the U.S. zone, French, British, Soviet zone. That was the hinterland, and Berlin had four sectors, the city was divided into four parts and each of the occupying powers had a sector of that city.

The Control Council governed the whole country and it had a side group that did the day to day operation with regard to the city itself but would report back to the ACC. So everything that was required to run a nation in occupation form was done through them. The Law Committee drafted and adopted all the laws that dealt with the Occupation. So when the ACC passed a law it became automatic in all four zones. There was no local government whatsoever. There was no German Government per se, because we were the Government of Germany.

Q: What was your impression of how this operated, from your perspective?

MCDONALD: In those days it was quite efficient. We were still friends, more or less, with the Soviets and I thought with any four countries getting together, there are natural differences because of cultures and national objectives and so forth, but it worked. The city worked and the country worked. So I felt it was a useful mechanism.

Q: What was your job?

MCDONALD: I was responsible for attending every meeting of the Law Committee, taking the minutes of the meeting. We met two or three times a week. Then, with my boss, we would then negotiate with the other three Secretariats' members, from the Soviet, French and British. Negotiate the minutes. So my first job, actually, in the government was multilateral diplomacy, which [occupied] much of my career. So we would reach agreement on what had actually happened and then this would be translated into the languages of the respective parties and passed up to the ACC for information purposes. Sometimes we sent a law up and they would officially rubber-stamp it. But if the Law Committee passed something, basically the full Council adopted it.

Q: Here you had Soviet law, you had Code Napoleonic law, and you had British law and then American law.

MCDONALD: And you also had four different philosophies. For example, the Soviets wanted to follow the Morgenthau Plan. They wanted to keep Germany down and to get as much equipment out of Germany as they could. So did the French. Both the French and the Soviets usually sided together on many issues, and they wanted to follow the tenets of the Morgenthau Plan, basically. They wanted to try to take the Germans' equipment to try to rebuild their own destroyed industries.

The British and the French were more generous in that sense, more concerned about the people.

Q: You mean the British and Americans.

MCDONALD: I'm sorry, the British and the Americans were more concerned about the people who they were occupying. They were concerned about food supplies, how were they going to survive the winter, how could we help build the housing - they were more people-oriented, I would say.

Q: During this winter, were there any extraordinary efforts made by the occupying powers to do something about making sure you didn't have a dying population?

MCDONALD: Well, I'm not aware of any shipments from any of the four countries. What they did do was to reallocate some of their military equipment, like blankets and canned food and that sort of thing to the worst cases. But there were no shipments from capitals, for example.

The CARE Program, which was one of the first programs, didn't start until 1949, '48 - maybe some of the first packages came in '47. But that was after the winter. So this was still a government dominated country.

Q: Sometimes the new person on the block, coming in as you were when you first arrived, can see things in a clearer way than if you become involved in the process over a period of time. Did you see any sort of cracks in the Alliance, from your perspective, because we're not far from the Cold War?

MCDONALD: That's right. No, no, I really didn't. Of course, I had very little experience as a basis of comparison at that point, but there was certainly nothing particularly evident. I was friends with the colleagues that I was working with. In fact I have one story about that period which is kind of fun.

I got to know a young Soviet lawyer in Berlin, who was also on the Secretariat of the Law Committee. It turned out he had developed a very strong liking for American coffee, which was totally unavailable on the Soviet side. And I had developed a very strong liking for Russian caviar. So we decided maybe we had something we could talk about and maybe do a little negotiation on the side.

So, I invited him over one evening to my house. I set the scene by having the coffee brewing in the kitchen already, so the aroma sort of drifted out into the living room. We sat around and we talked for awhile and we finally reached an agreement. Each month in exchange for one pound of American coffee, which I could buy for about a dollar a pound at the local Army Post Exchange, I would receive one pound of Russian caviar. I thought that was a pretty good exchange.

In fact I told that story to George Meany once, the head of the AFL-CIO, much later on, and he said he loved that story, that that was the ratio that we should continue to interact with the Soviets.

Q: As things moved on, what was sort of the attitude of the military, and the people you were working with towards the Marshall Plan?

MCDONALD: Well, that was another leap that was a little bit later.

Q: Okay, well you fill in the time up to then.

MCDONALD: This program that I was involved in finally moved into gear, this Intern Program. So I was taken out of that job after about six months and I spent some time in the Berlin Sector and then I was taken down to the Zone, the U.S. Zone, based in Frankfurt.

Q: The U.S. Zone was approximately what?

MCDONALD: It was the southern half of West Germany. Of course, when the Cold War really hit and things happened, why the Soviet Zone became East Germany. So those were the markers.

I went to a Kreis, or county headquarters in Bad Hamburg for several months. Then I was sent to Oberammergau where they had a training center for civilian/military government people who work in the field. I went through that. Then, out of the blue, totally unexpectedly, I was invited - my second job, I guess, to Frankfurt, Germany, and I was asked to be District Attorney of the city of Frankfurt, Germany. This was November 1947.

I couldn't figure that one out for awhile, but what happened was that the U.S. decided to create a court system because Germany courts were not operating, still an Occupation situation. And so they created a court system. We had jurisdiction over all allied civilians; over all displaced persons, which were in the millions; over all Germans who violated Occupation law. So, it was quite an agenda.

What happened was, when they decided to create a court system they moved fairly quickly. All of the people who had experience who were lawyers, wanted to be judges because it was more money, more prestige. I could certainly understand that. So they appointed all these people judges all over the U.S. Zone, and then they looked around and who was going to do the work? Who was going to be the District Attorney? So at the age of 25, I was District Attorney for the city of Frankfurt, Germany. This was a remarkable experience.

I was there for almost three years, and I was in Court every day for almost three years.

Q: So this would have been '47 to '50? Can you talk about the state of the city of Frankfurt in November 1947, and how you saw it?

MCDONALD: It was just as grim as Berlin. It was also at its center totally destroyed, rubble everywhere. Actually the U.S. occupiers worked and lived behind a 25-foot barbed wire fence.

Q: 25 foot.

MCDONALD: That's a lot of barbed wire. An enormous structure that went on for miles around the place. Because Frankfurt was the head quarters for the Zone, the I.G. Farben building was in the center of that. All of that area where we lived, the Post Exchange and so forth was behind

these barbed wire entanglements that, literally, were 25 feet high. So we were totally separated from the community.

In my work I dealt with the people, so my offices were outside of that compound. So I had the daily task of moving back and forth, into the real world and as lived behind the barbed wire screen which was a dramatic shift, shall we say.

The city, by that time, had a little more life in it. We did have electricity, there was water.

Let me tell you a story about Berlin shortly after I arrived, to give you an idea of the ability of the Germans to survive. My dad and my mother were in Bad Hamburg, Germany, they had been posted there. I decided to telephone them in January of 1947, when I arrived. They were in a house in a small town, and I was in Berlin. I dialed ten numbers on my telephone, and got their telephone. No operators. Direct ten digit dials. It took us 20 years, 25 years in the United States, later, to achieve that across the whole country. So here in a destroyed economy, in a destroyed nation, yet they were so far ahead of us in the field of telecommunications that at the personal level it took 20, 25 years to catch up. That is a dramatic lesson, it seems to me.

Frankfurt was difficult. Then, of course, the political scene began to change fairly rapidly. You might remember that in June of 1948 they had a currency reform.

Q: Yes. This was the thing that triggered all sorts of things.

MCDONALD: Exactly.

Q: It was the wirtschaftswunde (economic miracle) and also the Soviet living. Could you explain about the currency reform, because this is a very critical thing and how did it affect you?
MCDONALD: Remember I said before that the Reichsmark was worthless, and that this was a barter cigarette economy. That continued until 1948. In spite of the Marshall Plan speech, and beginnings of preparations, things had not really started to arrive at all.

The U.S. had long planned for a currency reform. The Soviets had opposed it. Finally the U.S. insisted. The U.S. had printed all of the bank notes in Deutschmark in the United States, and it was a major operation to get this money all across all of Germany simultaneously. The Soviets decided they did not want to participate and they developed and had their own currency. But that triggered the breakup of the Occupation and triggered the conflict over Berlin and triggered the withdrawal of the Soviets from the ACC and the creating of East Germany. It was a very dramatic point in time.

Nobody really expected that at the moment. But it transformed the German economy. They converted the Reichsmarks to Deutschmarks at 10 to one, but everybody started out - and this is something very few people recognize - everybody in West Germany, it was now West Germany, June 1948, was given 40 Deutschmarks, that's all. Regardless of how many Reichsmarks they had, how much insurance, it was all converted and they only got 40 marks. So everybody on that day had exactly the same sum of money to start with. That is pretty dramatic, pretty dramatic. And it worked.

Q: When you were in Frankfurt during this currency reform was there concern that the Soviets might do something to begin with?

MCDONALD: No, there was not. I don't think anybody anticipated that they were going to blockade Berlin and that over this issue it would get so destructive. Of course this was sort of a culmination of things and this was, I guess, the straw that broke the camel's back in that sense. But then they moved into the blockade of Berlin. Of course, one of the great efforts in history, I believe, is the Berlin airlift, which was the support of a city the size of Berlin for over a year, including coal and everything that was eaten by them was flown in by aircraft.

I flew the Berlin airlift once, just because I had to do it as an experience. Flew in and out of Tempelhof and watched the whole process. A lot of heroes out there to bring that city along.

Q: When the blockade started, what was your impression in your American, basically military, community in Frankfurt? Was there a change in beginning to look at the Soviets as the enemy?

MCDONALD: Well, nobody could believe that they were so stupid. Actually, that was the first thought, why were they doing this, they were just going to destroy the thing that they had worked together to create. I guess it was the first real signal it was the beginning of the Cold War.

There is an earlier signal. One of your colleagues may have told this story. One of our diplomats was in Tabriz in 1946. Do you know that story?

Q: I'm not sure.

MCDONALD: Well, he was Vice Consul in Tabriz, his first post, I think. This was mid-1946. He woke up one morning, looked out the window and saw some Russian tanks going by Tabriz. He couldn't believe it, because this wasn't supposed to happen. So he went out and started counting them, and there were about 50 of them. Then he contacted his British Vice Consul friend, and they'd both counted the same thing and so they sent a dispatch to their respective headquarters in Teheran. The reaction, I gather, in Teheran was that the young man was on hashish, because this obviously couldn't happen. And so they ignored it.

The troops began to pile up there and the tanks got bigger and bigger and bigger and over a period of several weeks this went on. Finally the U.S. Embassy contacted London and asked them to contact their man, and he was reporting the same thing. So at that point the U.S. decided, I guess, it was true and so they sent confirmation out there and eventually it got to the U.S. Security Council

This was the first overt Soviet action that the Security Council had to deal with, at the end of '46. They forced the troops to withdraw. To me that is technically the start of the Cold War, but we didn't realize it at that time. But I never will forget my friend being accused of being on hashish. They didn't have communications like they do today.

Q: Can you talk about some of the cases and types of things that you were dealing with in

this '47 to '50 period as District Attorney for Frankfurt?

MCDONALD: Sure. There was a lot of black marketing. A lot of importation, illegally, of cigarettes because that was the barter instrument. There was a lot of falsifying of questionnaires, of Fragebogen.

Q: These are questionnaires that every German had to fill out as part of the de- Nazification process?

MCDONALD: That's correct. To get a job with the U.S., or sometimes other places, you had to be viewed as at least not a member of the Nazi Party, and maybe even anti-Hitler, or whatever. Anyway it was a very complicated questionnaire, and a lot of Nazis filled them out incorrectly. The question was what did you do about it, and how was that discovered? Well, in their normally efficient way, the Germans and the Nazi Party left all of their files intact in Berlin, it became known as the Berlin Document Center. Every scrap of paper that any Nazi had signed or was a part of was carefully stored away in those files. So when we would get a case where somebody felt that this person might have falsified their questionnaire, their Fragebogen, we would ask for the file from Berlin and sometimes get back a foot of paper about what this particular person did and how he was in the hierarchy. Then we would take those to court and charge them with perjury and put them in prison.

So those are two elements, the black-market and the Fragebogen questionnaire. Then there was violence and burglary and break-ins, because the Americans had the things that some people wanted. A lot of displaced persons were also doing the same thing. These were people from the East who had been sent back, or came back into the West. Some of them were being processed to go to other places but there was a camp outside of Frankfurt called Zeilsheim. They must have had 20 to 30,000 people there, and they were in constant turmoil. So I had problems with them.

One of the other areas was counterfeit currency. This went on throughout the whole time. The counterfeiting cases would vary, depending on the best military script or this, that or the other thing, or the Deutschmark. But we also had U.S. dollars, greenbacks, that were being counterfeited. I became somewhat of a counterfeiting expert, because I had a number of different big cases in that regard.

I remember one in particular that would be amusing to you. The police had captured a ring of 18 people. The Number One person was a Pole named Polansky, a displaced person. He had done a brilliant job of making these plates for fifty-dollar U.S. greenbacks. We caught him and a hundred thousand dollars in counterfeit currency, and the presses and the plates and the ink - everything you could possibly ask for. He also had a U.S. Army uniform. He had an ID card and an Army 45-pistol and a PX card. The whole bit. So, I thought this was great.

We were about to go to trial with the whole group of them when I was visited one day by a Major, who came into the office. When we met he said, "I'm Overt" and he flashed something in my face. Those were his first words, "I'm Overt." And I said, "Major Overt, it's a pleasure to meet you." And he said, "No, you don't understand. Overt as opposed to Covert." I said, "Oh, well tell me about it. Who are you?" And he announced very proudly, "I'm a member of the CIA

[Central Intelligence Agency].” It had just been formed a few months before. He had been OSS [Office of Strategic Services] before. I said, “Well, nice to meet a new member of the CIA, what can I do for you?”

He said, “You have this Pole in prison, named Polansky.” I said, yes, it was a great case, and I explained some of the evidence and so forth. Well, he said, “He’s one of us.” I said, “What do you mean, one of us?” He said, “Well, he’s on our payroll. He’s part of the CIA.” I said, “Since when does the CIA employ counterfeiters of U.S. dollars?” “Oh” he said, “No, no, no. He did that on his own time.” I said, “So it doesn’t count, is that right?” He said, “Well, yes, it doesn’t count. He is our best maker of documents, passports and all kinds of things like that that we use for going Eastward.” And I said, “Well, that’s fine, but he has still committed a crime and I couldn’t care less about who he is working for. And I showed him the door.

The next day a Colonel came to see me about the same case and we had exactly the same discussion. I was unimpressed.

Two days after that a Major General came to see me. Now that is a lot of brass in those days. A Major General came to see me. It was very serious, I could see that. But he was smarter than the other two, he said, “As you know by now, this man worked for us. We are the ones who gave him the uniform, and the 45 and all the ID cards and so forth. I would very much appreciate it if you would drop those charges, so that we will not be publicly embarrassed if he testified [to our connection].” So he left. I went on and a week or so later went to trial and of course got [a conviction sentence of] the maximum of ten years, which was the maximum under German law for counterfeiting.

But I’ve never forgotten Major Overt. My first encounter with the CIA was not a very auspicious one.

Q: Well now, how would the court system work? You’re a District Attorney in Frankfurt, there is the German legal system, which is really sort of Code Napoleonic, with German overtones, and then there is the American, I mean, how would this man be tried?

MCDONALD: Well, that’s a very, very good question. Actually we used the German criminal code as the basis for the law. It was a very good criminal code, very solid. We took out the Nazi stuff that had been put in, super-imposed. It was a very solid piece of criminal code work. And we used American criminal procedure, which was quite different, as you just indicated, from German criminal procedure. Under German law a person is assumed guilty. Basically the role of the Attorney is to plead a reduction of sentence.

I had to hold classes for the German defense counsels to teach them the art of cross-examination so they could appear in my court, against me, to cross-examine my witnesses. Early on I got into teaching people.

Q: Who were the judges?

MCDONALD: All these Americans who had volunteered before.

Q: And juries?

MCDONALD: There were no juries. There was a judge, the defense counsel, the accused, witnesses, and myself. Everything was interpreted into whatever language was needed. Most of them were German. That is basically where I learned my German, in the courtroom.

Then they created a Court of Appeals and Judge Clark was the Chief Justice. He had been an esteemed member of the judiciary in the United States.

Q: Tom Clark.

MCDONALD: That's right. And so there was even an appeal structure. The remnant of that court came up five or six years ago in Berlin, where somebody who was in Berlin was accused of murder. The thing had never been officially abolished, so they actually had a trial, which was rather unique.

Q: Was there any German input, other than the defense attorneys?

MCDONALD: No.

Q: Who was making the arrests?

MCDONALD: The German criminal police, the American CIC [Counterintelligence Corps], the American forces had various military police units and they would jointly investigate or whoever had the initial power would investigate. Then they would testify as witnesses, as would other individuals. So it was like a DA in the United States, in that sense.

Q: Was there any concern on your part, I mean, first place is the job and once you are the District Attorney you want to get your convictions. But at the same time, you are dealing with a Germany that one hopes will move into a democracy, which at that time was rather uncertain. With an American judge sitting on this thing maybe we were looking too much like what we were, an army of occupation.

MCDONALD: We were an Army of Occupation.

Q: At the same time there must have been a sort of looking beyond. What was the philosophy there, from your perspective?

MCDONALD: There was not much looking beyond. As a matter of fact, in 1949 I was transferred automatically from OMGUS to the Department of State because that is when the Pentagon passed on authority to the State Department who was not equipped to do it. And so, I did exactly the same thing, had the same desk, the same telephone, just had a different label on me somewhere in the files, and still got my paycheck. But that is when I became a member of the State Department.

I then became a Temporary FSS [Foreign Service Staff], as they called it. Before I had started out as a P-1, risen to P-4 in the government, but then was switched over by paper transfer when State officially took over.

There was not much thinking ahead. I was very proud of my conviction rate, as a matter of fact, it was over 98 percent. But I also was very careful about who I took to court. When I first arrived in November of '47 to take over there were about a thousand people in prison, all waiting for trial in this new system that was about to take place. Much to the chagrin of the police in the various parts of the city, I reviewed all the files and I released about 700 people. They were in for such minor offenses as stealing apples off of a tree and things like that, and they had already been in jail, sometimes for months. So I exercised my authority immediately and also set a pattern for them, the police, that they had to be careful about the fact they were now working with a different system.

They would arrest a man walking down a path with apples in his bag, assuming that he had stolen them. And he probably had, but that wasn't our system. So the very fact he had apples was proof in their mind that he was guilty. So this was an educational process.

Q: The reason I ask this, I came to Frankfurt as a Vice Consul in 1955, and dealing with the Refugee Relief program. And there we were running across some of the consequences of this justice system as regards Poles and others. We would find people convicted of two felonies, which would be having stolen two sticks of wood at the same time. This would make them excludable from the United States, and there wasn't much we could do about it. Obviously they hadn't gone through your court.

MCDONALD: Well, that was the purpose of the court, actually, because - and this was all over the Zone - there is probably a date in there someplace, because these kinds of offenses were taking place and nobody was doing anything about it. There was total disregard for human rights, as we would say today. That was the kind of case that I would dismiss. When I first reviewed them all I said, "This is ridiculous. This is absurd." And that's why hundreds of people were released immediately.

Q: It also struck me that the German police, with maybe some justification, were not unhappy to find displaced people, who were still sort of the under man, "untermensch." They hit them very hard, and than we were trying to translate this Draconian law and enforcement of the law, into our terms and it usually meant exclusion. We eventually worked around most of this but it was a hell of a problem."

MCDONALD: No, you are absolutely right. I think it is a very valid point. We tend to forget that we were operating with two different legal systems and two different mind sets on the part of the police. They were brought up totally differently than our police, or our military police and so forth, and that was one of the problems, too. Two cultures were clashing and the German police than had more power than they had had for awhile, so they were enjoying that. There is no question about it.

Q: Were you seeing a growth within Germany during this '47 to '50 period of a change, you might see, a growth of civil government and a development of a different spirit?

MCDONALD: Very dramatic. I would say one of the groups I was most familiar with were the defense attorneys that I trained. We got to know each other socially. I would bring them over for dinner and we'd have drinks together and they were very impressive people. They were highly trained, very bright, and very able. They had adjusted quickly to this new approach. In fact they enjoyed it, because they had been rather turned off by their fairly negative role in the past. Now they were involved and they were trying to save their client. So they became very tied into this idea of democracy very quickly.

Yes, I would say at all levels a whole new world was beginning to bloom. And then after the currency reform, they then began to get their act together economically. So that combined and made it easier for them to cope on the democracy side. It's pretty hard to be democratic when you're starving.

Q: What about in Frankfurt, was there the beginning of a German Frankfurt Government?

MCDONALD: Yes they were trying to get started at the very local level. They started first of all in the villages, and then came to the larger cities, and then began to grow from there. My next assignment got more involved in that particular issue.

Q: What about Government duties when the Army left. State Department was really there as an interim measure before the Germans were to take over, to go from Army rule to immediate rule.

MCDONALD: It was a transition.

Q: You had a transition. You said things really didn't change for you, but did you see any changes within the system that you were looking at as the State Department took it over for a couple years?

MCDONALD: No, the State Department didn't change anything as far as my work was concerned. They left me totally alone and I just did what I had been doing before. I was, of course, fascinated by what was going on at various levels and watching the gradual creation of a new nation and the rise of Adenauer and his concerns and so forth. That part was very exciting.

Q: What was your impression of the judges who had been created? These were Americans and of course one of the things that always happens with judges is that pretty soon they begin to feel they are infallible. This was taking the human material that was available at the time and turning them into judges, so you must have gotten a pretty mixed bag. What was your impression of the caliber and types of decisions and all that you were getting?

MCDONALD: I was impressed, basically, with the caliber of the people I worked with and for. There is another element that is interesting, looking back on it especially. Most of the judges were of the Jewish faith. They had come into the Occupation and had been lawyers or attorneys and so forth, and they volunteered for this role. I think in some cases, this got pretty difficult for some of them personally. But I worked with four or five judges regularly and they were very fair, in my experience, and prejudice did not become a factor that I could really see in their

decision-making process. They set high standards and you really had to work and convince them of the fact that you had the proof to convict someone.

Q: Did you find the judges sometimes understanding the role of developing a solid legal system within Germany, and particularly the role of Defense Attorney, which of course had been wiped out pretty much in Nazi Germany. Talk about sort of kangaroo courts, I mean, the Nazi courts were notorious. But did you sometimes find the judges saying the equivalent to a Defense Attorney that he forgot to ask this or that or something of this nature?

MCDONALD: Well, they were pretty good, but I see what you are saying. They were helpful in that regard as well. And also, I would get a little cocky after awhile and they would put me down, repeatedly, and force me to prove the case. Of course, when I was not successful I was interested in appealing and to seeing whether I could get them overruled. So there was that tension there, which I think was probably useful.

Q: Was the 25-foot fence coming down?

MCDONALD: Yes, it came down about, I would say, 1949. Maybe it was part of the State Department takeover, but it did finally come down, with a huge sigh of relief from both sides of that fence. The barriers were physically and symbolically removed, as well. So that was useful.

Q: What was sort of the feeling you were getting from the military during the Berlin airlift?

MCDONALD: Well, everybody was proud of what they had accomplished, very proud. The world was focused on Berlin and that whole effort. I think it is really unique in history and something we should all be proud of. And, of course, the Germans were unbelievable, they couldn't believe at first that this was happening. Here the occupying powers from the West were saving the people; they had bombed Berlin and now they were feeding Berlin.

I think it was a very powerful change agent impacting on the thinking of Germans, to see that this was in a sense, I would say today, an act of forgiveness on our part. It wasn't done for that particular reason, of course, but I think it certainly was a part of the larger picture. So that made a powerful impression on the German public outside of Berlin, aside from the people in Berlin.

Q: Did you see a change during the Berlin Airlift and after from being sort of the occupiers to being somebody with whom to work?

MCDONALD: I would say yes. In fact, they were considered as heroes. When their plane crashed and so forth there would be public statements of sadness and that sort of thing. It was really a help to be a change agent, I would say. That coupled with the fact that the Marshall Plan equipment and food was beginning to flow in by this time, why the whole atmosphere began to change.

Then we had bi-zonal connections with the British, and then we had tri-zonal, and then there was, formally, the split and the creation of the Allied High Commission.

Q: When did that happen?

MCDONALD: Well, I was assigned, in the State Department, to Bonn in early 1950. In fact, I think I was the fifteenth American in Bonn. I was a part of the Allied High Commission Secretariat. I worked in the Petersburg [Hotel]. This was before there was an Embassy. Before there was a little mission based in Bonn, [and] the International Secretariat supported the three High Commissioners, the French, the British and the Americans. John J. McCloy was the U.S. High Commissioner.

I lived in the little town of Bad Godesberg and used to take the ferry across the Rhine every morning and drive up to the Petersburg which was a lovely former hotel which became the seat of the Allied High Commission. There were secretaries from all three countries there, and I was again the Secretary for the Law Committee.

Q: I'd like to pin this down at the beginning. You were doing it in Bonn from '50 until when?

MCDONALD: 1952.

Q: What was the Law Committee trying to do in this '50 to '52 period?

MCDONALD: It also had the same powers as the Allied Control Council. It was the only law making body in the country. The three High Commissioners got together several times a week. They had half a dozen committees that looked at various aspects of the de-Nazification and other areas, and law was one of them. We would develop, draft and pass laws that would impact on the three countries, the three zones together, which was then Western Germany as opposed to Eastern Germany.

So the role and the mandate and the power was basically the same as in the four-power body.

Q: We had the takeover by the Communists of Czechoslovakia in 1948, and I guess you were getting close to the invasion by North Korea into South Korea, the Cold War was really being encased in concrete. Germany was looked at more as an ally now. Did you sense a turn around when West Germany was more considered with us, rather than somebody to be stepped on?

MCDONALD: I would say that probably 1950, for me, would be the turning year. There was movement in Bonn. Adenauer was taking a role, trying to create some kind of a government there in '51, '52. He would come up to the Hill, as we would say, up to the Petersburg from time to time, meet with the Allied High Commissioner. There was more interaction between Bonn and the Petersburg from month to month. Also, you have to remember this was the time when the first conversations were taking place, in early 1950, creating the coal and steel community. They were just about fifty miles down the river. Everybody was watching that with great interest and trying to encourage this.

Q: The big thing, of course, was to get France and Germany to sort of bury the hatchet and start working together. This was the seed for the European Community of today.

MCDONALD: Exactly. Exactly. I watched that evolve. Sometimes they would even hold some meetings in the Petersburg. You could see that this movement was beginning to take place, and then they finally created the coal and steel community formally, and then it began to take off. But those years, '50 to '52, were very formative in the whole structure.

Q: Well, here you are, you know you no longer have the Soviets to worry about for your particular thing, you have the French, British and Americans. You are coming up with laws for this tri-zonal area and these are laws for the Germans, who basically work under a different system and weren't really close to the French, the Americans or British. Here you have foreigners making laws for people who have their own distinct culture and long history and certainly as solid a one as any one could have. Did you have German input or someone saying so and so was fine but under the German context this wouldn't work? I would think by this time you would have German lawyers or somebody in there, you see what I'm getting at?

MCDONALD: Certainly there were some people on the German side, especially, who wanted to speed up the process, and wanted it to move along more quickly. The French were always against that. The French had a very different agenda still; as they had in Berlin they had at the Petersburg. They wanted to slow down and make sure they got their dues. There were differences in that sense of the world. Throughout that period, as before, starting with this bi-zonal concept of trade between the two zones, the U.S. and British were closer together than either was with the French.

Q: What about German advisors. If you are making laws it's a good idea, particularly at this point, to have somebody who knows….

MCDONALD: I never saw a German advisor.

Q: I find that remarkable because as we move into this transition phase making laws for a foreign people is fine, but we have enough trouble in our federal system when the central government makes a speed law that doesn't make sense in Montana, for example.

MCDONALD: Well, I'm sure by this time the Political Section in Bonn had grown. The High Commissioner's office had expanded and a lot of Americans were there, and I'm sure they had contacts with their German counterparts and they would have had a role in doing some drafting, but I literally never met a German advisor.

Q: You didn't have German staff or anything like that?

MCDONALD: No. No. No German staff.

Q: Tell me about, from you perspective, the relations with the French. I just finished an interview with somebody who was about Number Two or Three in the NATO staff who spent four years in Brussels, and we are talking about the late 1980s. His children didn't know there was such a thing as the French. They thought it was the "God damn French," because he would come home steaming from the office, talking about the God damn French. What about this?

MCDONALD: I got along personally very well because we were together every day, members of the Secretariat of the Law Committee, so we had to get along. That was no problem for me. They had some very talented and very skilled members of their professional Secretariat, as the British did as well. So on the personal level, as opposed to your NATO friend, I never had any difficulty on that score. We worked well together, we liked each other personally, we'd see each other socially, and so it was very amicable.

In attending the Allied Control Council sessions, you could see the differences at the political level between the French approach and the British-U.S. approach.

Q: By '52 were we getting close to letting go?

MCDONALD: Yes, yes.

Q: By the time you came back to the Committee and all, in '50, was it the general idea of everyone there that this was a temporary thing, that the Germans were going to take over, except for maybe the French. That we were moving rather rapidly toward having at least some sort of a German Government?

MCDONALD: I agree with that, and people were even beginning to informally talk about when it was going to come to an end and when would there be a shift and some were worrying about their jobs and what was going to happen to them. It was in the air by 1952, and that is, of course, what eventually transpired.

Q: What happened in '52 to you?

MCDONALD: A new institutional framework was created in Paris as a result of the Marshall Plan. It was called the SRE, Office of the Special Representative for Europe. Bill Draper, who had been General Bill Draper, became Ambassador William Draper. It was the U.S. first effort at regional structures in the bureaucracy in the sense that he, in setting up this new office in central Paris, next to the U.S. Embassy, had more power than anybody else in Europe did. More power than anybody outside of Washington and much more power than most people in Washington.

He was the U.S. Ambassador to NATO. He was the U.S. Ambassador to the OEEC, Organization for European Economic Cooperation, which was created at the request of General Marshall to be basically the structure that the Marshall funds would flow into, and he was responsible for all Marshall Plan money and the allocation of it. There were aid missions in Western Europe and embassies in Western Europe but all the money went to him, all the power resided in him. It was rather a unique structure.

My boss in Bonn was asked by General Draper to be his Executive Secretary for this new institution and my boss took me along with him. So I moved to Paris for two and a half years.

Q: This would be '52 to '54?

MCDONALD: Yes.

Q: And Draper's organization was called?

MCDONALD: SRE, Special Representative in Europe.

That eventually, a year and a half or so later, became something called USRO, which is the U.S. Regional Organization. The membership in NATO and the OEEC remained with that office. Draper left, but the regional responsibility for the money was passed to the missions. That was just too much for Washington to stand, they just couldn't stand adding that to the missions, to have all this power in one man. Draper had two people working for him at the ambassadorial level, Livingston Merchant, a famed American diplomat, and Ed Martin, I think, was the other Ambassador.

So there were three Ambassadors in one office, which is structurally rather unique, aside from the U.S. Ambassador to France. So there was a lot of power there.

I was a part of Draper's office, basically, as a Staff Secretary.

Q: You were Staff Secretary to him? Let's talk about this time. Draper was there, what, for about two years?

MCDONALD: Less than two years.

Q: Well, '52 to '53, probably?

MCDONALD: Something like that.

Q: Can you describe your impression of Draper and how he operated?

MCDONALD: He was a fabulous guy. I was a great admirer of his, a great admirer. It was a real privilege and honor to be working for him, and this was of course a very exciting period. These new institutions were just beginning to come on line and the Marshall funds were flowing. Just put this in perspective. In 1952, 3.25 percent of our Gross National Product went to the Marshall Plan. Now just think about that, 3.25 percent to Europe. Today, it is one percent for the world. So, I mean, that was a major U.S. commitment to Western Europe.

His office, basically, was responsible initially for the allocation of those monies with the governments, and so forth. He was visited by everybody in Europe to plead their particular case about their particular needs. So it was a very action oriented office because he had the power in his own hands. He didn't have to go back to Washington for everything. That is the key difference than in later structures. He had the authority, he had the ear of the President, and he did it.

Q: Did you see how he distributed the funds? Was there something liked 30 percent to Great Britain, 30 percent here….

MCDONALD: No. It was needs based. In other words, people would come in and make a plea, we'd look for facts and figures, the staff would gather together a lot of information on their own. I was not a part of that process; I was paper shuffling with papers passing through and that sort of thing. But his staff came up with recommendations based on many interactions and contacts, and then a decision would be made, and it was non-appealable. It was just done. So it was a lot of power in one office. I think that is why it didn't last that long.

I thought it was extraordinarily efficient. There was never any whisper of fraud or misuse or diversion of funds. None of that existed. It was a very clean and a very pure operation as far as I was concerned.

Q: Did you have any contact with, say, our Embassy in Paris?

MCDONALD: No, none. This was regional. We had a regional viewpoint; we were working with regional organizations.

Q: '52, of course, was an election year and Eisenhower came in, who had been the first head of NATO.

MCDONALD: That is probably why Draper got the job, I would guess there may be some correlation there, because they were friends.
Q: Was there any concern about senatorial oversight and that sort of thing?

MCDONALD: Nope, nope. Now during that process something else happened, which one doesn't usually talk about. The agency changed. Mr. Stassen came in. He became head of, what was it, the Mutual Security Administration? And the verb "stassenation" came into being.

I was in Paris, this was in '52 under the McCarthy period, '53, when Cohn and Schine came to Paris.

Q: You might explain who Cohn and Schine were.

MCDONALD: They were two cohorts and hatchet men for Senator McCarthy.

Q: They were very young.

MCDONALD: Very inexperienced.

Q: Very inexperienced.

MCDONALD: And vicious.

Everybody in Paris was a Communist. They started out with that mindset. Everybody working for the U.S. Government in Paris, in USRO, was a Communist, and you had to prove you weren't. But they came through, and they made recommendations.

Then the Congress did a remarkable thing. Congress passed a law that said Mr. Stassen, personally, had a 30-day window in which he could fire anybody in this organization without appeal, and without giving a reason for that firing. Now that has never happened before in our democratic history, total power over everybody on his staff. And the word was, and I'm sure that it is correct, that every night he would take home a bunch of files, read through them, and come back the next day with red checkmarks and pass the word, "Out." No explanation to anybody, just "Out." I was there in Paris during that period. And my boss, the man who brought me to Paris for Draper, was on that list. His principal deputy, who was my next boss, who was responsible for implementing all this, on the 30th day, got axed.

Q: Do you have any knowledge, were there any rumors, of why these people ended up on that list?

MCDONALD: Well, in the case of both of these men I commiserated with, because I was very close to them, one, it turned out, had gone to UC-Berkeley, and had attended a couple of rallies in the late '30s or early '40s, that had some Communists in attendance. That was the only thing he could figure out, that somehow that had appeared on his record and that was enough.

The other man didn't have a clue. He had been District Attorney in New York City, had a very distinguished career, and he still, to his death, couldn't figure it out. It was pretty terrible.

Q: It really is incredible. And Stassen was supposed to have come from the more liberal side. What was he, Governor of Minnesota, or something, he was part of that, you might say, liberal North Central movement there.

MCDONALD: And nobody has ever, before or since to my knowledge, been given that kind of power for where all Government rules and regulations were out the window, no appeal, no nothing. They just destroyed them. Out.

Q: What did that do to the morale of your organization?

MCDONALD: It was terrible, it was terrible. And Draper, personally, fought for both of these men. Went to the President, went to the Secretary of State, no appeal, nothing. Not one was ever changed. So that is pretty sad.

Q: With the Cohn and Schine episode, did you get any feel for how that was viewed by other parties, I mean, non-Americans?

MCDONALD: They thought we were crazy, absolutely crazy, they couldn't understand what in the hell was going on, in Paris or in Washington. And you know the double irony is, that you may have followed with Mr. Cohn, it turns out that before he died a couple of years ago, it turns out he was a homosexual.

Q: Well, actually, Schine was, too. It was pretty apparent at the time and these were considered, at that time, to be supreme risks for the McCarthy period and all that. And yet their behavior was almost flaunting their proclivities. I mean, looking at it.

MCDONALD: So it was really bizarre in that sense of the word. He didn't seem to be aware of it, so that was that.

Q: Did you have any impression of France at the time, or were you pretty well tied up in your office?

MCDONALD: Well, one story comes to mind. When I returned to Washington at the end of November '54, after eight years in Europe, I was given a new security examination, investigation. The McCarthy shadow was still there and one of the crimes I had committed that they unearthed was that when I was in Paris, I was living in the Communist sector. Now it turns out that the Communist sector of Paris is more than half of Paris, at that particular point in time. But I was living in an apartment that the Embassy, or the SRE had assigned to me. The Labor Attaché had formerly occupied it at the Embassy. It just happened to be opened when my family and I arrived, so they sent me there. I had no choice, I just went there. I said it was ridiculous, that the Government had put me in that apartment and they could not now accuse me of being a Communist because I happened to go where the Government sent me. But that is the level of concern they had in this security investigation.

So that is again the shadow of the kind of mentality that was taking place and this was in early 1955 at the State Department in Washington, DC.

Q: You came back in late '54?

MCDONALD: I was assigned to Mr. Dulles' S/S, to his Secretariat.

Q: And you served in S/S?

MCDONALD: For a year. I was a global briefing officer, a job that I created and really enjoyed. I did normal S/S-S for a year. I was then invited by the then Executive Secretary to Mr. Dulles, who was then switched over and became the Deputy Director for Management of ICA, the International Cooperation Agency, and the AID agency.

Q: Let's talk about the S/S-S period in the Secretariat. This always changes, what was S/S at that time? What did it do?

MCDONALD: Well, of course it processed all the papers that went to the Secretary and to the seventh floor, actually. I did the morning cable summary. Communications were not nearly as sophisticated as they are now. It did briefings for people who came into the building and wanted at the top level to hear what was going on. All correspondence, all papers, all interactions with the rest of the Department, so in that sense it hasn't changed that much. It still pushes paper.

Q: What was your job?

MCDONALD: Well, I was the Staff Secretary. I did myself and then oversaw the preparation of the morning cable summary. You'd get up at 4 o'clock in the morning and come in and

summarize the stuff and get it out.

I did something rather unique, actually, during that time period. Mr. Herbert Hoover, Jr., was the Deputy Secretary. It soon became evident that Mr. Hoover was not that knowledgeable, shall we say, about foreign affairs. And so my boss, the one who took me over with him to ICA later, Kenny Scott, called me in one day and spoke very frankly about Mr. Hoover's limitations and said he wanted me to be responsible for educating him. That was my knowledge. Well, I really had to think about that. I finally came up with an idea that he fully supported and which eventually, well actually immediately, Mr. Hoover fell in love with. Because of my role as a global briefing officer, I was always thinking in those terms and had access to all the cable traffic and so forth. So I came up with the idea of giving a six month prediction as to where a crisis would blow up, I mean what part of the world would blow up in six months, or what part of the world become a problem or how would a current problem begin to have to get the attention of the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary.

And so I had a special little green leather folder made with twenty pages in it, and I had one page per crisis. So I summarized the world in one page each. That is an art form in itself, which I had learned under John J. McCloy. He wouldn't read anything beyond one page. And so to put the law on one page and why it should be passed and all that sort of thing was a real challenge, but I learned how to put the Bible on one page. That is something that has stood me in good stead throughout my career. So I could put anything at that time on one page and I did and with a statement of the problem and a loose format.

Well, the first issue, with fear and trepidation, I gave to Mr. Hoover. And he fell in love with it. And I did it every week, a weekly update. He liked it so much that soon everybody on the seventh floor, all the principals, were getting it. That was one contribution. I didn't clear it with anybody, I just did it. That was great.

Q: What was your impression of John Foster Dulles and how he operated?

MCDONALD: He was a tyrant, an extraordinarily difficult man to work for. He had no recognition of time and expected his entire staff to be at his beck and call at any hour of the day or night. He was merciless when it came to things he didn't like. He'd just move people, ship them out. It was a very delicate thing shall we say, to work for him. He was a tough taskmaster.

One of things, when I went to the National War College much later I did a paper on Dulles and the whole period of the Aswan Dam and Nasser, and so forth. What I basically came out with [after] looking at documentation and so forth, was that Dulles, the supposedly greatest anti-Communist in that Administration, was singularly and singly responsible for bringing the Soviets into the Middle East. I always thought that was the dichotomy that very few Americans really understood.

Q: He seemed to have a visceral reaction to Nasser.

MCDONALD: Absolutely. Totally. You are absolutely on target. It was personal.

Q: It was personal.

MCDONALD: Absolutely personal. You see, Nasser had asked for arms in the U.S. three or four times, and each time Dulles had personally turned it down, because he didn't trust "the s.o.b.," that is basically what it was. He thought Nasser was bluffing when he said he was going to go to the Soviets. He thought Nasser was bluffing. Nasser went to the Soviets, and he wasn't bluffing. So the whole course of history changed over that issue.

The money for the Aswan High Dam had been allocated by the World Bank, four hundred million dollars. It was a U.S. design for the Aswan High Dam. All that was discarded when the Soviets said they would build it for him, because they didn't know how to build those kinds of dams. They had a disaster for a dam, and of course were invited into the Middle East. That of course was a tragedy at a global level and I don't think the U.S. public is even aware of it.

Q: What did you do as a global information officer? This was reading all the telegrams - did you have anybody else reading them for you, or sorting them?

MCDONALD: No. No. I was sort of at that point graduated from the 4 o'clock in the morning business and had moved up the ladder. I would work on a lot of things but my main responsibility was to be available at an instant's notice to give a briefing to some visitor who had come to the seventh floor and wanted insight into this conflict or that problem or something else. I would just be called in. There was a little briefing room there and I'd talk. So I had to be literally up to date on a daily basis, and I enjoyed that.

Q: During this '54 to '55 period where was the major focus, as you saw it, on American foreign policy?

MCDONALD: Well, a lot of it was actually, perceptively, had to do with Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and a lot of time and effort.

Q: This was Dien Bien Phu and that whole period.

MCDONALD: Exactly. Absolutely. That was certainly one area, and then the Middle East, the Suez potential, of course, was another trouble spot, Central America because something was always bubbling up there. Africa was not that much on the map, we were not that concerned about it. A lot of time was spent on those other areas.

Q: In 1955, you went to ICA?

MCDONALD: Yes, the predecessor to AID.

Q: And what were you doing? You were there from 1955 to when?

MCDONALD: To January 1959.

Q: Where was this?

MCDONALD: This was in Washington, DC. This was at the Headquarters. I was called the Exec Sec or the Executive Secretary to the Administrator, at that time Mr. John Hollister was the Administrator. I was with him for several years and then he departed and Mr. Jimmy Smith became the Administrator.

I was in the same role, basically, as the Executive Secretary in the State Department, sort of a personal assistant. I had a staff of 35 people and we managed paper going to the Administrator and his top staff and worried about briefing papers, reviewed material before it got to his desk, that sort of thing. I was there for three and a half years.

Q: Where did ICA fit within the Washington system? Was it under the Secretary of State?
MCDONALD: That has always been an ambivalent question and it is, of course, a key issue today with Senator Helms as to where that fits.

Q: Senator Helms.

MCDONALD: It has moved back and forth, but basically throughout its history, by my interpretation, it is acknowledged whether it was reporting to the Secretary of State or not that it took its political foreign policy guidance from the Department of State and the Secretary of State. In this instance, when I was there at ICA, it was in one of its independent phases. Any new position was appointed by the President and approved by the Senate with testimony and that sort of thing.

It was like a separate agency, but it was a junior partner to the State Department. It was responsible for all the development assistance and military assistance money outside of the Pentagon budget. It had its own separate legislation, it had its own separate committees on the Hill and it had to go up and testify every year for funding for its next year's programs.

Q: Where in this '55 to '59 period, from your perspective, was the principal focus of ICA?

MCDONALD: It was beginning to move away from the implementation of the Marshall Plan into a global development assistance agency. And as I mentioned the other day, this was a bit traumatic because new people on the staff had no real experience in the developing world.

One of its first major programs was South Korea, which at that time was described and acknowledged, in the mid-'50s, as a basket case. The economists of the world said that it would never survive, that it was going to become a non-State and had no hope, whatsoever, for it. You may remember that period yourself.

Q: Well, I was there in '52, and it was, obviously, the middle of a war and you never knew what was going to come out of a war. But it certainly was considered a pretty miserable place.

MCDONALD: I really believe that ICA, and later AID, can take an enormous amount of credit for the recreation and restructuring of Korea. That also began the focus of attention on other areas in that part of the world, which were also destitute, Taiwan being another clear example. In

the Middle East there was a great deal of focus on Iran for various reasons. Brazil and Latin America were another focus. The thrust over that period was to move out of Western Europe and focus on the developing world.

Q: From what you were absorbing from what we were doing, why were we doing this, in the thought of the time?

MCDONALD: Well, that's a controversial question, actually. In my own mind I think one of the basic reasons was humanitarian. I still believe that the focus of the Marshall Plan was humanitarian-based, and then other things were added to it. The idea of selling our extra food grain was, of course, an element too. Public Law 480, PL-480, was in being and this was an important area for our farmers, but it was also an important area for our countries we were going into who were not able to feed themselves. So it was probably a combination.

I think basically the people involved in those programs, the people I knew and worked with and myself as well, felt we were making a major humanitarian commitment to helping the third world, the developing world, find its way and move gradually into the more developed portion of the economy and the world.

Q: John Hollister was the person you were with most of the time, is that right?

MCDONALD: Yes, and he was a Republic lawyer from Ohio appointed by President Eisenhower.

Actually, I got the job in a rather interesting way. I was the global briefing officer, you may remember, when I was with Mr. Dulles' S/S. On only a few hours' notice I was asked to give Hollister a world briefing. So we had half a day together and he must have liked what he saw. A few weeks after that he asked my boss, Kenny Scott, who was the Executive Secretary at the time, to come over and be his Deputy for Management of the whole agency. Scott accepted and took me with him, and Hollister knew me and agreed with the designation. So I was basically promoted from in the GS rankings of the equivalent of about a GS-12 to a GS-17 position, which was sudden and rather dramatic, that leap, that we say, in the career system.

I, by the way, was the first Foreign Service Officer ever assigned to ICA. That is a little historic footnote. There was, even in those early days, there was a little suspicion, there was already hierarchy and a looking down on the part of the FSOs on everybody else. You could even see it way back in the mid-'50s.

Q: Was there any chance of ICA tapping into the resources of the Department of State for area expertise? We had at least something in Africa, not a hell of a lot, but certainly in Latin America we had a lot and in the Far East.

MCDONALD: Actually there was very little effort and very little interest, I think, on either part. In the first place, the FSOs felt superior and they didn't want to get involved. This was economic stuff, economic development, and they were interested in the political track. So it happened very seldom.

When I was Executive Secretary, I actually brought in several young FSOs to work for me. I remember Bob Brewster, who worked for me, and later became not only Ambassador but also Chief of Personnel and so forth at State. Bob Feeley, again a future Ambassador; Roger Kirk, all of them were young FSOs who I identified and brought in to ICA to expand their horizon and they loved it. It was practical, hands-on stuff. They learned enormously and went back on what they were doing and had beautiful careers.

Q: What type of work were they doing?

MCDONALD: They learned how to manage staff, they learned how to interact with top bureaucracy. Here was a junior FSO who was briefing the Administrator on particular issues, or the Deputy Administrator, on areas of their own expertise. I tried to get some area skill to the Secretariat so they could handle Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It was a great opportunity and they loved it. They were much more open to new ideas than was the case in the regular State Department positions.

Q: What were some of the problems within the, you might say, the bureaucratic struggle, for ICA? I'm thinking of including Congress in this '55 to '59 period for ICA, because that's, I'm sure, where Mr. Hollister and others were. That's what they dealt with.

MCDONALD: Well, it's interesting because Hollister came in and his intention was basically to abolish the agency. That is what he thought he would do.

Q: You mean because the Marshall Plan was over?

MCDONALD: That's right, and this other stuff is really not important. Remember this was 1955. He became within six months the biggest covert that I've ever met. Total reversal. He was a Conservative, Right Wing Republican. That is why he got the job.

One of the first things I did was to help in his education, having remembered Herbert Hoover, Jr. was also in that same category. I had helped him broaden his horizons. One of the first things I did was to get Hollister out in the field, to see things that he had never seen before. And so we arranged, and I went with him, on several trips to Africa, to Asia, and Latin America. He just came back a total convert. Took his wife with him, took senior people from each of the Bureaus, and it was a mind-boggling experience for him. And so he became on the Hill the greatest defender of the institution and was actually able to increase its budget.

Q: What sort of emanations was coming out of Congress at this time?

MCDONALD: Well, I think they were also a little surprised at Hollister's conversion. He had been an old-time Ohio Republican. He knew people all over the system. He was then, I would say, in his mid to late sixties. He had had his career as a successful lawyer and politician and they listened to him. And he also, with my encouragement, took several members of the Congress along with him from time to time. So he really was a real convert, and he got his money.

Q: Let's talk a little bit case specific. Let's talk about South Korea. At the time when Hollister came on board, what were we doing in South Korea?

MCDONALD: A man named C. Tyler Wood was the mission director and then he came back and headed Policy Planning. Tyler Wood had been a major focus in the Marshall Plan days. Then a man named Warren was then Mission director. Their focus was basic infrastructure rebuilding. That had all been destroyed.

They recognized that until you had the dams, until you had the fertilizer plants and the power, that nothing was going to happen there. They also were feeding people at the same time, but they were [really in need of] basic infrastructure. That laid the basis for the explosive growth in the later decades. It was a very well designed program, from my perspective. These were top people in the agency, who were leading the way in those country programs.

Q: What about a place like Brazil? I mean, after all, Brazil has been independent a long, time, it wasn't devastated by war, and it has a hell of a lot of resources. What were we doing there?

MCDONALD: Doing also some of the basic power dam construction, hydroelectric power and that sort of thing. Also there was very early on a focus on water, drinking water and sanitation, health issues and education. There were abysmal levels of education and health. So that was also an important front for that program.

Remember the Point Four was started in Latin America under Mr. Truman. That was back in the forties. So they had a long history. They were modest programs but then as the Marshall Plan began to reshape its focus, more money would move in to Point Four programs and they'd expand beyond technical assistance into some major construction programs.

Q: Particularly in Latin America, there must have been a concern about the fact that most of the countries in Latin America were under military dictatorship which really didn't add much to the wealth of the country.

MCDONALD: Right. I would say that the whole question of human rights and democratization was rarely discussed. Those were issues that were for later. So that was not a part of the process.

Q: How much was anti-Communism the driving force, or the excuse?

MCDONALD: I would say it was the driving force. I would say that over that 45-year period from 1946 until the collapse of the Soviet Empire in 1991, the driving force in our foreign policy was anti-Communism. If you were an anti-Communist, whoever you are, you are okay; so we support you, if you are for us or against us. That is pretty simplistic but when you get right down to basics I believe, having lived through that entire period, that is how I would describe and have described our foreign policy, in gross terms.

So we were supporting Paraguay, for example, who had one of the eminent dictators in the world. It didn't bother us at all. That is merely an example of the kind of thing we are talking about. By

God, he was anti-Communist, therefore we were for him. We didn't broach any opposition; we just went along with him because that is what he said. It was the same across the world, he is just one out of many. And of course we have been criticized for that in recent years.

That was it, we wanted everything directed toward [being] anti-Communist.

Q: Well now, '55 to '59 was a period when particularly toward the end, Africa was changing. The de-colonization process really picked up, really on your watch. One, were we getting ready for it? And, two, what was sort of the bureaucratic response, you might say in planning, or did it just kind of happen or what?

MCDONALD: You know, you are asking very good questions? I haven't thought about these things for long.

Q: That's why the one-on-one thing works very well.

MCDONALD: The first trip that I organized for Hollister was in 1956, and it was to Africa, for the very reason that you are talking about. We were beginning to be asked, because the British Empire was collapsing in front of our eyes, and the French Empire also. We visited Ghana, Nigeria on that trip, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan. That was a nice cross-section in terms of different thrusts. Of course, much of that was the collapsed British Empire.

Q: This was basically British cum Ethiopia?

MCDONALD: Right. In several of those places we dined with the British Governor, or High Commissioner, or whatever you called it at that point in time, just before the thing was being handed over to the respective Government. That was an exciting period in history, actually, to see a collapsing empire, and everybody knew it was collapsing in a matter of months or a few years. The British were eager for us to pick up some of the slack, not all of it if they could get away with it.

The countries themselves were very welcoming, all of those places because they saw that here we were, they had seen what had happened in Europe with the Marshall Plan, they wanted help, they needed help and wanted help in the transition period. And so we were really welcomed on all sides. Out of that personal experience that Hollister had, he was able to come back and tell the Congress about the need, to get a staff working on the need, and begin to develop projects and programs for those countries.

Q: How about developing a corps of African experts. Even the Foreign Service did not have this type of thing. We had a few outposts. It's a complicated area, what was being done?

MCDONALD: Well, a lot of effort was going in to doing just that. To try to find experts in the United States with the universities, with the campus faculties. We went to various groups already working there and gradually over time a very strong cadre was developed. I think that even today AID has the finest collection of African experts you can find anywhere in the world. People who spent most of their lives there, starting back in those days. I've known people with 30 years of

African experience and that is when they got launched, in those days.

Again, you may remember I said earlier there is a basic transition. You had Western Europe and the model there that was designed to rebuild the structure because the trained personnel were there, and just to feed them and go with it. And of course the mind-boggling lesson here in Africa was that nobody was trained and there was no infrastructure. So we had to rethink the entire development process. Aside from finding skilled staff you had to think through the policy that you wanted to push. Because collapsing empires, I must confess in my opinion, did a pretty poor job in their effort to hand over for independence and there were several countries there where the Pell graduates you could number on one hand.

Q: Including the Congo, the Belgian Congo.

MCDONALD: Exactly. I think the Belgians were probably the worst of all. The Portuguese couldn't care less about what they left behind. So the job was incredibly difficult because of this failure to prepare the collapsed colonies for the next phase of their existence.

Q: What was the attitude toward the French colonies that were becoming independent. I mean here was France, who had been a recipient of our aid, as had England, so it was not in a position to do a hell of a lot. Yet they were extremely, and I don't think it is an extreme word to say, extremely, jealous of their position in these places. How did we deal with them?

MCDONALD: Well, you know, they still are jealous, even though their empire has long collapsed, they are still jealous. There was a great deal of tension. You notice that the countries we went to were basically a part of the British Empire. That is where we moved in first. Also Liberia, we also went to Liberia on that first visit, which of course has strong U.S. ties.

Our effort in Francophone Africa was late and limited because of the very issue that you are talking about. We moved into the Belgians and Portuguese because they were so desperate. But the French were not welcoming at all. They didn't want us walking around. They'd take our money but they didn't want people in the countries, and they didn't want AID missions and that. They were very, very standoffish on that. So the major thrust in those beginning years was with the collapsed British Empire.

Q: During this time when we are looking at Africa, was there an African-American community input into this? Civil rights were just beginning to creep in.

MCDONALD: There was very little interest on the part of the African-American community in those days in Africa. They hadn't thought about their roots yet. There were individuals who were interested in the field, but that was not a criteria for selection. We were looking for expertise. There was not much expertise in that community and so there was no particular push to bring them in. If there was talent there, why they'd be a part of it. But there was not a search for it.

Q: Let's take Ethiopia for example, because Ethiopia had been independent. You get an AID Program and we had had a representation in Ethiopia for considerable time. I think at that point we had a military installation at Cagnew Stadium. Was there much consultation with the

Department of State, the traditional Department of State, on how these things would work?

MCDONALD: Actually there was very little in terms of interaction with the State Department. They were not even interested in sending anybody along with us on these trips.
Q: Incredible.

MCDONALD: No, no interest at all. The Ambassador would meet us because there was a high Republican, but that was it. They left us alone. So there was very little interaction at that point. The fact that I was State, and I would try to bring people in, sometimes would work, but sometimes it didn't.

One of the programs that was launched during that period, which I think has been a major program over the decades is the Land Grant College Program which really started under Hollister and Jimmy Smith. This was a great program because this was getting the land grant colleges in the United States, basically agricultural, which were at the heart of America, the Big Ten in the United States and so forth. They loved this idea of relating to a particular country.

For example, I forget which university it was, but one university was responsible for Ethiopia and I remember going up country with Hollister to visit an agricultural college that was being staffed and funded and supported through AID by a land grant university in the United States. And they were bringing their professors over. There were exchanges of professors in the United States back and forth. They planted these intellectual seeds and quite literally brought new techniques to all of these countries in Africa that were based on agriculture. So the Land Grant College Program was an exceptional idea that was developed and flourished in that period.

Q: I think I heard there was a particularly strong crew in India, too.

MCDONALD: Yes. Absolutely.

Q: India-American relations were up and down, mostly down, but the Land Grant connection remains strong.
MCDONALD: Absolutely. And that was a very innovative way. It is almost like a Fulbright Program, which I think is one of the best in the history of this country, where they were able to exchange professors and scholars and research people and so forth. It really had an enormous impact across the world.

Q: Wherever I was, I was there after the amalgamation of AID-State personnel or after it was no longer an issue, but I heard sort of historically in Korea and Greece and other places that AID had much better allowances than State did, and there was a lot of bitterness. The two almost didn't talk to each other and part of it was funding.

I remember one of my colleagues came into the Foreign Service with me and we were both FSO-6s, and getting a little long in the tooth. I thought, you know, maybe I was on my way out. He went over to AID and became an FSO-3, which was like going from a Captain in the Army to being a Colonel. There were things of this nature around that time. Did you run across this and were there any efforts to try to deal with this?

MCDONALD: You are absolutely correct in what you are saying. A lot of that, I think, got worse in the early '60s and I think that is one of the reasons that President Kennedy finally came up with a Country Team idea, which put the Ambassador for the first time, I would say, clearly in charge and supervised the AID Administrator and Pentagon Representative and so forth.

In some of those countries, Korea was another one, the AID Country Director was the Number One American in the country, because he had the money. The Ministers came to him, they didn't go to the Ambassador. So this was a very definite slip. They were able to attract talent because of this.

Q: From your perspective being sort of an FSO in wolves' clothing or what have you, was there an attempt in AID to essentially outbid and make sure it was a better deal to be in AID?

MCDONALD: I don't think it was necessarily conscious, certainly not on the part of the Administrators and so forth. You have to go back to what I mentioned earlier, and that is that State Department in those days had literally no interest and no talent. There were no economists in the State Department involved in developmental issues. There may have been a few economists reporting on the financial situation in the country they were assigned to, but it just was not part of the scene. They were always dismissive about it, thought it was not important, and these were the years I'm talking about. When I was there and saw it happen.

I was considered really out of my mind to go over and do that. And when I brought these young FSOs, all of whom became Career Ministers by the time they finished, their colleagues told them how stupid they were, but they had more vision. They said that it was experience they would never get where they were in the State Department. That is what AID had to offer. It offered hands-on, practical experience particularly in the field. That was a challenge. A lot of people liked it.

In the '60s, State began to realize that they were losing out on this whole business and they had to start expanding their own horizons. For a long time they denied. They were invited but said no thanks, they were not interested. I know that personally because I kept inviting them.

Q: You left this job in 1959?

MCDONALD: I created and led the first ever governmental regional program in the history of the United States. That is saying a lot. I was the U.S. Economic Coordinator for the Central Treaty Organization, U.S. Coordinator for CENTO [Central Treaty Organization], based in Ankara, Turkey. I arrived there in March 1959. It was the Baghdad Pact created by Mr. Dulles as a shield to prevent the Soviets from marching into the Indian Ocean.

Q: Something happened on July 14, 1958.

MCDONALD: There was a little coup in Baghdad. [CENTO] was originally made of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, the UK and the United States. Then the coup took place and they dropped out and the Secretariat moved to Ankara, Turkey, and I arrived there a few months later.

Q: You were there from '59 to?

MCDONALD: January 1959 to January 1963. Four years exactly.

I was not a part of the International Secretariat. I was the U.S. Coordinator but I worked closely with the CENTO Secretariat. I was accredited to three countries: Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and to three Ambassadors. I worked with three Mission directors. My mandate was regional and was negotiated and approved by the Secretary of State. So I came out of the State Department with that mandate, but I was working with AID money and the mandate was to do what CENTO was trying to do but did not have the funds or direction to do. That was to link Turkey-Iran-Pakistan physically. They were next door neighbors for thousands of years but they had no physical links. So one of my major chores was to build a railroad linking Turkey and Iran, to build a microwave system, to build roads...

Q: You say "microwave system," this is communications?

MCDONALD: Yes, this is a line of sight, 3,000 miles long, the longest in the world, with 103 towers directing microwave systems across the deserts and mountains for 3,000 miles, which is basically a telephone backbone system to link the three countries by telephone. And that is what I did for four years. And again it was a unique opportunity for a U.S. diplomat to have that kind of hands-on work.

When I arrived I had an assistant and a secretary and that was it. Four years later I ended with 35 Americans on my staff with branch offices in Teheran and Karachi, a U.S. contractor of 250 people working on the microwave system and 10,000 Indians, Paks and Turks working on my projects. That was a dramatic growth, shall we say, in management responsibility.

Q: Where did the initial idea come from and what was the rationale for it?

MCDONALD: I guess it would be Mr. Dulles' vision, because when the Baghdad Pact collapsed with Baghdad, this was just proving his point, as far as he was concerned, and he wanted someone to get off their rear end and do something. I think that was basically the drive behind it. Nobody knew quite what to do but they knew something had to be done because he wanted it done. So there was discussion about the idea of a regional office.

Now a regional office had never been done before and for a very important reason, and that is the ambassador, but particularly the Mission director, who had all the money in country, always thought about their country [only]. I saw this all over the world when I traveled with the Administrator. You would go into a Mission director's office and there would be a map for his country, and there wouldn't be any other country on the outside of it. It was just isolated by itself. You wouldn't see which was the North, South, East or West. But that was his country and his total focus was that. Cooperate with a country next door? It never crossed his mind. So when you are trying to connect two countries by rail, or three countries by telephone, you obviously had to talk to each other.

Here I was coming in and telling them to do something they had never dreamed of doing and they didn't want to do. So it was a revolutionary concept. Everybody was totally turf oriented and here I was trying to take some of "their turf" away from them. Well, I wasn't, I was trying to build a broader vision, but I had hours and hours of argument over this very issue with mission directors, particularly, but also with the ambassadors. It was only because my mandate, which I would carry around with me, was signed by the Secretary of State, that I was able to get away with what I did, which was to help them think regionally.

Q: Did you have much tie to the CENTO organization itself?

MCDONALD: Oh, yes, I met with them daily. They were the political cover. All the projects that I did passed through the Economic Committee in CENTO, approved by them. That is the way you got the other governments involved in the whole process. Let me just take the railroad, because that is a classic example.

Ataturk in Turkey, and the Reza Shah in Iran in 1936 signed a treaty in which they said they wanted to link their two capitals, 1,500 miles apart, together by railroad to show a sign of togetherness. So they started in that direction. World War II came along and they stopped, World War II ended and they started up again. They finally got to where there was a 300 mile gap, which was across the mountains and lakes of what is Kurdistan, where the Kurds are in both countries, and nothing happened.

The Number One economic project that the CENTO Economic Committee agreed on was to finish that railroad, link it together. That became my job because I supposedly had the money. That is how that particular project was conceived.

Linking the three countries by telephone. You know you can't operate in today's world, or even the world of 1959, if all your phone calls have to go through London or Paris or somewhere else, always a great problem. So this was a backbone system to link the three countries with the most modern communication that was available.

So that's the kind of thing that I was doing.

Q: I'd like to capture a little of the spirit of CENTO in very early 1959. We mentioned Baghdad. The King had been slaughtered along with his family in a very violent coup on July 14, 1958, which took a very promising country, Iraq, a major country for the area, out of CENTO. What was the spirit of all the sudden losing this linchpin or what have you, at that time?

MCDONALD: There was a great deal of concern. There was fear. Where are we going? What is going to happen? Who is it going to happen to next? A lot of concern, and CENTO was the only regional organization in the area of any kind. So there was interest in making it work, because I believe they felt this was important to their own continuity and their own reputation. So they wanted things to happen and they were cooperative. They didn't have the wherewithal, but they were very responsive to the kinds of things that I was doing. So I had ready access to any Minister in any one of the three countries and would get them personally involved in the kind of projects that we're talking about.

I also started something in the technical assistance field that I think was rather remarkable and I'm very proud of. What I wanted to try to do was to build trust between the three countries, there was a great deal of distrust between the three countries. The Turks didn't like the Iranians and the Paks didn't like the Iranians and didn't know the Turks who were too far away, so there was tension.

What I decided to do was try to bring professionals together in a particular field, from all three countries. I would pick the country that was ahead of the other two in that particular field. The first one I did was on mining. I brought people together in Turkey. Now this was a basic resource that was needed in all three countries.
So I brought mining engineers and government people from Pakistan and Iran to Turkey. We had a ten-day seminar. We had experts from the UK and the United States. And then we toured several mines in Turkey to see how they worked. Then a group of Turkish mining experts went with their Iranian-Pak colleagues to Iran for a week and looked there, on the ground. Then they all went to Pakistan and looked there, to see how they could bring some practical know-how to bear and help at that level without just the U.S. imposing its know-how.

At the end of that first gathering, actually at the very beginning of that first gathering, the head of the Turkish delegation came up to me and said, "You know, I don't trust those Iranians, I don't know why you are really trying to get us together." I said, "Well, I want you to learn about each other." About ten minutes later the head of the Iranian delegation said, "You know, I don't trust those Turks, I'm very skeptical about this meeting." I said, "Well, just stay with it awhile, and see how it evolves."

By the end of not only the week but by the end of the time they finished touring they became friends for life, because they were all professionals, had all spent their life in the mining field, and they bonded and those differences passed. The second one I did was in Pakistan on economic development. They had had a Harvard contract and were really doing a lot of good things and we met in [the mountain resort of] Murree, Pakistan, for ten days and brought economists together and had that same kind of interaction.

The third one was in Iran and was in preventive medicine. We had an expert come out from Johns Hopkins. There were eighteen medical schools in the three countries, and only one of them, in Shiraz, had one course in preventive medicine. None of them had ever even heard about it and had no interest in it. Well, we had a meeting of 150 people there for a week or so, with experts, and in that whole field it was sort of pre-Shiraz and post-Shiraz. Three years later every one of the eighteen institutions not only had courses, they had whole departments of preventive medicine.
So we were able to generate new ideas through this whole process. And that was done even after I left, I think it was done about 25 times and it brought professionals together, the same basic concept. And it really worked beautifully. We would publish after each one of those, so there is a whole library of reports available for people to read and beyond that. So that is the kind of thing that was done.

Q: Did you feel any threat, I mean both from the CENTO side then also internally from what you

were doing with communications and all from the Soviets? Was there a problem from the Communist movement?

MCDONALD: No, nothing direct at all. I was also able to put together an air to ground navigation system which built on our line-of-sight communications link. It turned out that there were very, very few ground to air communication links in those days. This is, again, during the ’59 to ’63 period.

There is a fairly narrow corridor between Russia and Syria. Maybe it is only 60 miles wide, with Turkey and Iran sort of meeting in the Tabriz area. Several aircraft would stray into Yerevan because of the fact that there weren’t any signals. This really pushed CENTO and the U.S. to work in that area. We moved very quickly on an air to ground navigation system throughout the whole area. Pan Am was flying through there in their round the world flights at that point and it was a great boon to air traffic along the way. But that was the only interaction, the Soviets let us alone totally.

Q: I wonder, can we walk through each of the countries a bit to characterize. First, starting with Turkey, how did you find the officials in dealing with the Turks and all?

MCDONALD: Well, Turkey had a very strong, nationalistic feeling. Felt it was obviously superior to Iran and Pakistan because of its links with the West and so forth. So it did have a superior attitude. But it also realized it had a very long way to go when it came to development issues.

I had a family in Ankara for four years, four kids. There were only hotel accommodations available in Ankara, Istanbul, and one or two in Izmir. There was nothing else that was useful or possible in those days. We wanted to see the country so we camped all over Turkey with a tent, because there was no place to stay. You had to carry your own water with you and, of course, you could get your own food but you had to be safe on water. That was a great experience for the kids. In fact, my son and wife and their two kids, my two grandchildren, are going to Turkey in two weeks to go back to the places that he remembers from when he was a kid, which is pretty funny.

It was a very poor, developing country at that point with a great deal of State-ism. The State controlled much of the industry and was very careful about trying to let go. It had a long way to go.

Q: How about dealing with the bureaucrats?

MCDONALD: They are very proud of the fact that CENTO was based in Ankara. That was a plus. Since everything I did was under the CENTO label, I had access to them. I went through a coup with the military there in 1960, but I didn’t have any problem. It is fascinating to me, though, looking back on it that no Turk that I met, really, in the government had ever been East of Ankara. That was another world. A lot likes New Yorkers certainly never going west of the Mississippi, nothing, or even to the Hudson. Even back in ’59, when I would announce to my Turkish friends that I was going to Diavacur or to Van or to Katzvan, they’d almost have a stroke.

They'd ask how I could do that, wasn't I worried about my life, and so on. I worked in that area for four years and never had anything ever happen to me and I was always welcomed wherever I went. I had great relations with the Kurds in Turkey and in Iran. But that was a mindset that they had even in those days, that they wouldn't go east because of what was out there. And of course that is where there were great agricultural expanses that weren't even being utilized appropriately in those days.

Q: In moving to Iran, how did you find Iran? Were there differences in dealing with the Government and how things were done?

MCDONALD: Well, some of my friends who were later from Iran had great difficulty with my saying this, but I knew it and absolutely agree with it to this day. This was the Shah's heyday. He was not only a national hero; he was an international hero. He was moving them out of the poverty of the past and he was innovative, he was trying new ideas, he was welcoming development. He gave power to the women of Iran, which had never been given them before. He encouraged them to take off the veils and to go to college and to wear modern clothes. It was a very exciting time to be there. Very positive. He was a hero.

His Ministers were very well educated, very sophisticated. Many of them, most of them, trained in the West and wanted to rebuild Iran. So all of the things I was doing resonated with them. Whenever I wanted to meet with the Minister of Telecommunications or the Minister of Railroads, it was just a matter of calling up and they'd shift their schedule around and welcome me. We'd talk about any problems I might have.

In all of those [projects] we divided up the tasks, and that took a lot of negotiation. They handled all of the local costs for all of these projects. We [were] only [responsible for] the foreign exchange. They had to provide all the manpower. We would bring in the equipment, the steel and all that sort of thing. But they had to put it together. So this was a major commitment. These were really joint projects. For the manpower, they had to build the access roads to these towers and houses to store them. We just provided the equipment for them. That was still 200 million dollars, but they had major commitments. So this was constantly having to push them to push their own people to do the things that they pledged to do. Very open.

Q: How about corruption? Was there a problem there?

MCDONALD: Not from my point of view, I never saw examples of that. Certainly it was there but they never had any corruption on my watch, on my projects. There is an interesting point, though, about that. In those days, and maybe still to this day, I don't know, but the highest compliment that one Iranian could give to another when they introduced me to them was, "This is an honest man." That was the highest praise that could be given. I am sure there was corruption but they didn't with these international projects, I think, because the esteem with which it was seen, because it was CENTO, it was international, and they had a major part to play in making it happen.

Q: How about bridging that 300-mile gap by the railroad?

MCDONALD: Well, that was a tough one and we were very innovative in our efforts. Part of that 300 mile gap was Lake Lan, which is one, I think, of the third or fourth largest, highest body of water in the world. That was at about 5,000 feet or so and it was ringed by mountains all around. So we built a railroad car ferry across the lake, it is about 120 kilometers long, something like that. That was very innovative and is still going, by the way. You had to bring in the ships piece by piece, put them together so you had to build a little seaport and so there were a lot of challenges for that.

There was a major bridge that had to be built in Iran that took some extra time and some money. The engineers that both the countries provided were fascinated by the challenges. Across the plains of Eastern Turkey we had to build snow barriers right in the middle of nowhere because the wind patterns would pile up snow during the winters. They have very heavy winters and so the working season for building the railroad was restricted.

I went back over that railroad in 1976 with my wife and we had a wonderful time. We crossed onto the ferry and did the whole bit. It was very exciting to see it all having been finished, it wasn't finished in the four years I was there but the funding was finished.

Let me tell you about the funding because this is a very interesting story. You know you can tell by my stories that I learned something about how to manage bureaucracies and this is what you have to do to get innovative ideas through any kind of bureaucratic structure.

By this time ICA had turned into AID. And the AID economists took a look at my railroad because I kept asking for more money. We needed another 20 million dollars to finish the whole thing, to finish the bridge and all that sort of thing. It was going to be a loan, not a grant. The economists in AID did a major study and called me back to Washington and told me that the cost-benefit ratio was unproven. I went ballistic and said this was something that started in 1936 and now they were telling me, when we had maybe fifteen miles to go or something like that, which is where the money had to go, that it was now not cost effective! You know we really tangled on this one and I got nowhere. I went to the Administrator, who was a Mr. Bell by that time and he turned it down. Well, I wasn't going to accept that. To me this was AID looking at it just from an economic development point of view and not seeing the broader military as well as political perspective.

So what did I do? I went back to Turkey and by this time I'd been there awhile and I knew everybody. I met with the Military Committee of CENTO, separately, not collectively or officially. I met with the three-star American General and the three-star Turkish General and the three-star Iranian General. The Iranian and the American were very good friends over the years. I laid out the problem and I said Washington-AID is looking at this from a very [narrow] perspective. They all wanted the railroad completed from a military point of view, because there was no way to carry heavy equipment across that part of the Middle East. So I said what I wanted them to do, if they agreed, was to meet and pass a resolution talking about the importance, from a military point of view, of the completion of that railroad. Then with the British and American and the three regional parties send it back to the Pentagon and then we'd see if the Pentagon couldn't talk to the State Department and then let the State Department talk to AID.

They agreed and that's exactly what happened. The Secretary of State then got the picture and he reversed AID and we got the money and the project was completed. Twenty years later I met Mr. Bell and told him who I was and he said, "Oh, you're the guy." He still remembered. He said, "Do you know you are the only person who ever got me reversed in my four years as Administrator?" I said, "No, I didn't know that…Sir." He never forgot, never forgot. And I had not met him. Anyway, I just thought that would be an interesting story.

It shows you, also, the narrowness of a piece of bureaucracy and where the State Department can have an impact because it has a broader perspective. So this is an important element in the larger picture we are dealing with today.

Q: What about Pakistan? Where did that fit into the equation, was it sort of thrown into CENTO? What was the feeling about Pakistan that you got?

MCDONALD: The U.S. had had a long standing support in Pakistan of major AID programs and so forth, for a long time because there was always friction with India. India was always flirting with the Soviets and they were always an unknown factor in some elements in Washington. Pakistan never had that problem. Pakistan was clearly supportive of the United States and clearly anti-Indian and therefore anti-Russian. Again, they were most welcoming of the kinds of things we were doing.

Because the microwave system and some of the other projects - not the railroad - went through their territory we were dealing at a practical level on a regular basis. As a matter of fact, I had three airplanes assigned to my office because we had long distances to travel and a lot of this for the line-of-sight system was doing it by air to make sure the location was appropriate. I was on the road more than 50 percent of the time traveling so this was a very useful thing to have. They were welcoming wherever I went.

There was one thing they didn't listen to me on, of course, in looking back it's one of those "I told you so," but it is sad that it happened. The whole bureaucracy in Karachi in those days was totally focused on what we call West Pakistan. Again and again, I would try to bring East Pakistan experts into the things that we were doing.

Q: East Pakistan being now Bangladesh.

MCDONALD: Yes. And they just didn't pay attention. It was such an obvious, egregious oversight year in and year out that anybody who looked at that part of the world and looked at any map knew that this was going to happen, except the Pakistanis in West Pakistan, who were in a state of shock when it had. But people told them that repeatedly, many people, and they just didn't do it. You know they were a different religion, basically, and they were different ethnic backgrounds and they were always at the bottom of the list. It was very sad.

Q: Was Pakistan sort of melded, were there any particular projects that were of particular interest?

MCDONALD: Yes, the telephone linkage, the backbone thing, went through all of their country at the Iranian border all the way across and down to Karachi, along the line of sight. They were very interested in improving their air travel and their air capabilities and so they were very interested in both of those key projects. It would directly benefit them, and benefit tourism and benefit business, so they were quite supportive in that sense. They really wanted to become involved in all of the technical assistance exchanges because they saw the benefit. They were all learning from each other and by rotating this I kept the egos of all three countries stabilized. So they were not offended. They got the picture. Whoever was ahead in a particular field would host that particular session. That balance kept them all involved.

Q: What about Afghanistan? Did it come across your radar at all?

MCDONALD: There was a point, several points, during my four years there where it did. There was even talk of trying to bring it into CENTO. There were actual discussions at the political level on how to expand that. People from the CENTO Secretariat went up to Kabul and talked. It was all informal. But they never got their act together to decide they wanted to do that, but there was definite effort. During that period I also went to Kabul myself, but it didn't work. Because the Afghans weren't convinced, if they had said yes I think it would have helped.

Q: What about the Ambassadors in those three countries, obviously during that period you probably had some changes. How did you find they responded?

MCDONALD: They were terrific. They were all wonderful. The first thing I did was to call on them each time I was in the country, tell them what I planned to do while I was there, and kept them all always briefed. We also had newsletters and publications and they always got all of those and they liked it, because they saw things were happening in their country that they could take credit for and would be beneficial.

The only AID mission director that I had real problems with was in Ankara, because it was Lt. Gen. Riley, a former Marine Corps General, who couldn't stand the idea that I was in his building, but not reporting to him. He really had problems with that. He went back every three months to Washington to try to get my mandate changed and was never successful.

But they understood what we were trying to do and finally realized that this was U.S. policy and that they should follow it. Over the long term I think it helped them to see beyond their own country border.

Q: Did India play any role with what you were doing in Pakistan?

MCDONALD: No, none at all. And Iraq had never gotten back in the business either. Now the UK was always supportive, they could put up no money but they would come to all the meetings. They would provide experts for the technical assistance projects that we were involved in, and that was their role, so it wasn't just a U.S. [program], but the U.S. was the one who put up the money.

Q: What was the feeling you were getting from the Turks, the Iranians and the Paks about the

developments in Iraq?

MCDONALD: Hardly even discussed. That was off my plate because that was political, that just never was an issue. I don't even remember having discussions about it, it was just something that happened and was in the past.

Q: Well, then, you left there in early 1963.

MCDONALD: Right, and went to Cairo, direct transfer.

Q: You went to Cairo doing what?

MCDONALD: I was Economic Officer. [In February 1963] I had been promoted to O-2, and so I was the senior Economic Officer.
Q: You were there from '63 until?

MCDONALD: '66, August of '66, four years.

Q: What was the political and economic situation in Egypt, when you arrived?

MCDONALD: Well, of course, Mr. Nasser was in charge during that whole period and it was a fascinating period. The Soviets were obviously ascendant and they were in the middle of building the Aswan High Dam. It turned out that was one of my responsibilities, to report on the Aswan High Dam and its growth. I was also interested in the whole AID Program, particularly the East bloc [economic assistance] program that was going into Egypt.

A very interesting thing happened there that turned out to be rather unusual. At [a] Soviet reception, fairly early in my stay there, I had been there maybe a year, I met a young Soviet economist and it turned out that he was interested in the USAID program, and what was happening. I was interested in his aid programs in Eastern Europe and so forth. So we decided to get together. I invited him over to my office and we had an hour together and I explained how our system worked and what PL-480 was and so forth. A month or so later he invited me over to his embassy and answered all my questions. This relationship continued for two and a half years. I was told later by our friends at the CIA that it was unique. We had developed a close relationship. He told me everything he knew that was unclassified, and vice versa.

We reported back by airgram in those days and it got to the Agency and after a year or so they couldn't believe it, because they would check this guy and everything he said was true. They never caught him in a lie, and of course no one ever caught me in a lie because that is pretty fundamental. So they began, his agencies and my agencies, to send us questions to ask which were outside of our parameters. So I would ask a question and he would laugh and say, "I don't know" and then he'd ask me a question and I would laugh and say, "I don't know." And we went through this song and dance a few times and then stopped doing it, because [our dialogue] was valuable, what we were providing each other. It helped to understand and plan for and so forth and so on, and so it became an invaluable resource.

I got transferred, he was still there, and I tried to pass on the linkage to my successor. It failed totally. After one meeting they never met again. It was a different synergy and different relationship. But I learned when I came back here that it was really quite unique to have that kind of relationship, and it was terrific stuff because they were pouring hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars, into there, and the East Germans had their own program, and the Czechs had their own program, and the whole bit. So that was an unusual thing that I thought would be of interest.

I had a couple of other stories that might be amusing. When I had been there about three years, the International Monetary Fund sent its first ever team to Egypt. There had been a failure of the cotton crop, and Nasser reluctantly asked the IMF for some money. Of course in their eyes he had a poor reputation so they sent this 15 person, all male, team. They stayed at the Hilton, they had a conference room at the Hilton, and I was their first person they invited to come and brief them on the Egyptian economy, and the impact of the Soviets and so forth.

So we sat down at the table and the first thing I said was, "Gentlemen, you should know that this room is bugged." And there were gasps around the table of how could I say this and I said, "I've lived her for over three years and I know this is the case. And by the way, I use this to my advantage for its great access because I tell them what I think, and I know that it gets into the right sources and at least they hear it." And I went on, and this was about three hours of time together, and toward the end someone asked me about the head of the Central Bank, and I said, "Oh, he's an ass." I then went on to something else. And I thought, my God, I'm going to pay for this. The next night the head of the Central Bank invited the team and me and a few others to a reception in their honor. In the receiving line I was totally ignored by the head of the Central Bank. Actually I thought that was pretty good because their system really worked, not only was it taped but it got to him in a timely fashion so that he could cut me quick at the party! So that was kind of fun. But I let the people on the IMF team know about this little story just to prove to them that it was bugged.

We were tailed wherever we went, whenever we had a party the numbers of the license plates were put down and the security was very tight from their side.

But I did get some exciting thing done. I had been there a month when I was elected President of the PTA. I had four kids in school.

Q: That is the Parent-Teachers Association?

MCDONALD: Right. The Cairo American College was the high school, or the school there for kindergarten through 12th grade. There were about 450 kids. Two weeks after that the Chairman of the School Board resigned and they made me Chairman of the School Board. So for three and a half years I was Chairman of the School Board. I raised a million dollars for a new school, helped to hire architects to design it, and now it is probably the best school in the world in the whole system of U.S. funded schools abroad. There are now 2,000 students there.

Buying the land was an interesting part of the whole process. I had to get 15 Ministers of State to sign the deed because it was land from one of King Farouk's daughters that owned it. It was in

Maadi, a suburb, and was a beautiful piece of land. That is where the school is located, so it moved a few blocks over. So that was a challenge and I enjoyed that.
One other little story that you might appreciate. It took me about a year and a half to figure out. I became an amateur archaeologist in Turkey and continued my interest in Egypt, the two great countries in the Middle East in that regard. So I had 8 years in the Middle East and had plenty of opportunity to be an amateur archaeologist and I learned after a year and a half or so that every Minister in Nasser's cabinet considered themselves direct descendant of the Pharaohs. As long as I realized that and treated them accordingly, I had great access. And it worked.

Q: This was a period of very difficult relations with Nasser which culminated in the '67 war against Israel which essentially brought down Nasser over some time. What were relations with the United States, or with our Embassy? You said you had good access to the Ministry.

MCDONALD: Well, during that period as the Economic Officer I negotiated about a billion dollars in PL-480 food agreements. That turned out to be my thing. I was also Acting Agricultural Attaché at one point and Acting Scientific Attaché at another. Those were interesting times. It was very strong.

They couldn't live without our food. They could not raise enough food themselves. We were the breadbasket of the world. The Soviets were importing food also from us. There was no food from the Soviets, so where do they go for food, they had to go to the United States. And that was the balancing factor that kept all doors open because they knew, and Nasser knew, that they needed that food to survive. So that was our entrée and the Ambassador, I'm sure, and the DCM, used that accordingly, but I was just the guy to do it, so I was not involved in that sense in the political issues.

Q: Who was the Ambassador when you were there?

MCDONALD: There were two Ambassadors, Luke Battle was the second Ambassador, and the first was, I can't remember his name at the moment… He, however, had been President of the American University in Cairo. He was an Arabist. He was a non-career person, a political academic, beautiful Arabic, a terrific human being. He was Ambassador for several years and everybody loved him, including the Egyptians, because he knew more about their history and their language than some of them did.

One of the interesting things about this period I don't think many people knew, but King Farouk, while he was still in power after World War II sent two shiploads, I was told, two shiploads, of young, bright people to the United States for educational purposes. They all got their Ph.D. in the United States and then they came back to Egypt and Mr. Nasser. Of the top eight positions in the Ministry of Agriculture, while I was there, six were Ph.D. from the University of California in agriculture. I mean, that's impressive, to have that kind of an intellectual input into a dictatorship as it turned out. But that really paid off, because a vast number of the key people in power, who were the smart ones, had advanced degrees from the United States. So they were supportive of the United States, they never liked the Soviets. I never met an Egyptian who liked the Russians. It was not just because it was me, because this was prevalent throughout society.

Q: It just wasn't a fit?

MCDONALD: It didn't fit at all. It was a totally different culture, there was no synchronization, and they didn't like Egyptians. It was mutual, there was no question about that. But the Egyptians empathized with Americans. This intellectual exposure, I think, had been great and so we were friends. Quite seriously, I had many, many Egyptian friends over the years.

Q: Here you've got Egypt. Which at that time and had been for millennia, a country along a river, essentially a very narrowly cultivated and populated zone. We were trying to do something to help. The Soviet Bloc is trying to do something to help. We are talking about the '63-'66 period. They've got great population explosion and all that. What is your estimate of what the Soviets and the Bloc countries were doing, how effective was it and how was it impacting on the Egyptians?

MCDONALD: I believe that the Soviets particularly, of course they were the lead, had a much broader picture of the Middle East than the State Department did. They saw the future, they saw the oil wells that were there and they saw the weaknesses in our policy and they just moved in. And they moved in during this period. They moved into Egypt, they moved into Syria, they moved into Iraq, they moved into Libya, and they were a major presence in the world in the Middle East. I am sure that their long-term strategy was to eventually take over all of the Middle East. So that part was certainly, I think, a very real threat. Here they had four countries already in their orbit. We didn't see that, I don't believe.

I never saw any [U.S.] policies that were regional in nature. Again we were one country at a time. This is what we did with country X and separately with country Y. I just don't believe that the regional approach was recognized. I give the Soviets great credit for doing things that we did not perceive as a major threat.

Q: But what about the effect on Egypt? Egypt seems to have this population plus living room problem. Do you think that what the Soviets and their satellites were doing was effectively helping Egypt?

MCDONALD: My belief is that all of the Soviet aid and the Eastern Bloc aid to Egypt were politically and militarily oriented. They wanted to supply them with Soviet equipment for long-term purposes. They wanted to equip them to be an ally to do what, I don't know. But they were trying to make political profit by the projects that they took on. And, of course, they flaunted the Aswan High Dam in the face of the United States. As I think we talked about earlier, there was actually a 400 million-dollar World Bank loan which had been approved and Dulles got that reversed. The design for the Aswan High Dam had already been made by American engineers and was thrown in the trash can, unfortunately, and the Soviet model was approved, which was disastrous. So they were interested in making political points much more than they were interested in the economic development aspects. They wanted to control the Government; they were seeking long-term control.

Q: You were monitoring the Aswan Dam, what were you reporting on how this developed?

MCDONALD: Basically on their progress of construction. They had the wrong design but they still did a magnificent job when it came to actually doing it. What they decided to do was basically to build an earth dam to block the Nile with earth. What they had to do then was dig an enormous canal out of the hardest granite in the world, for the Nile to pass through and around the dam itself, as opposed to having sluices through the dam as the U.S. had designed it to do. So what they had to do was to dynamite this enormous gorge which the Nile was going to go through, which was a considerable length. And they found, and this was an anomaly, as you can imagine, at the height of the Cold War, that they needed U.S. equipment.

The Soviet equipment, particularly the trucks, enormous earth moving trucks, and particularly the drilling equipment and the drills. Their drills were not tough enough to get through that granite in which to put [the] explosives. So they had to arrange through us a negotiation to purchase American trucks and American drilling equipment. Which is a great loss of face to the Soviets right in the eyes of the Egyptians, but it just didn't work, their drills would break off because they weren't hardened steel. So that was the kind of thing.

It got pretty hot there. They worked around the clock, seven days a week, all year round. It would get up to 130 degrees in the day and so they wouldn't work in that kind of heat, but they would work nights so they had enormous searchlights all over, which made it like daylight. They had housing problems of all kinds. They had maybe 30,000 people working on that project, and they had to resettle people. It was a very complex, sophisticated project and I would go down there every three months or so and just report on what was happening and how they were getting along and what their problems were.

Q: At one point they were talking that the dam would be a disaster for Egypt because of silting and all that, was that our feeling at the time?

MCDONALD: Yes, and it is happening now. They also had to, because of the backup of Lake Nasser, they had to move Abu Simbel, one of the great monuments of 1400 B.C., that had been build to honor - that's an interesting story, by the way, and I had the chance to see both ends of it. In 1400 B.C., the first peace treaty was signed in history. This was between the Hittites of Turkey, and the Egyptians. They signed it in what is now Syria. They had battled on the plains of Syria and they'd come to a standstill, basically, so they decided to have a peace treaty, in which they both agreed to make peace and go back. It was clear there was no victory on either side.

In my archaeological experience I went to Brazgoy, which was the capitol of the Hittite Empire in 2000 B.C. and beyond. There was an enormous monument, or what was left of it, that had been built to honor the Hittite victory over the Egyptians, in spite of the peace treaty which had been signed. And then in my Cairo experience I got down to Abu Simbel and that was a great monument built by Rameses II to honor the Egyptian victory over the Hittites!

So the first treaty was signed and they went back and built monuments in their respective countries honoring their victory. So that's how peace was determined in those days.

But UNESCO did a magnificent job of cutting up the monument piece by piece and then rebuilding it higher up so that you can still visit it there now after the dammed lake had been

filled. But it has had major ecological difficulties for downstream because the silt has not gone through and the fish…major difficulties, as predicted.

Q: In other matters were you all seeing yourselves as in competition with the Soviets, or was it pretty much a matter of holding the fort and lasting out Nasser, what was the attitude?

MCDONALD: There was a lot of competition between the Soviets and the U.S. We were each pushing the other, trying to outdo the other one way or another. We would talk about our wheat and they would talk about their dam, you know, that sort of thing, on the economic side. We were much more interested in the economic development aspects. We had some important programs there under AID and they did some good work there. But there certainly was a feeling of competition.

I remember the Ford Foundation also did their first ever population project. That was very innovative, remember the years we are talking about were a very long time ago. They were able to buy in and get the support of the midwives. They would pay the midwife 50 piasters, a half a pound, which was nothing, and was what the midwife charged for delivery of a child. They'd pay that same price if the midwife would pass out literature on contraceptives and pills. The midwives thought this was a lot easier than getting up at three o'clock in the morning and giving a birth. So it worked very nicely for quite a while. They had a couple hundred thousand women who were on the pill.

Q: You are talking about the birth control pill.

MCDONALD: That's right. Of course, they were foreign exchange funded. The Ford Foundation thought this was going fine, the Government liked them, the Government was paying for it, and the Ford Foundation backed out of it, they had launched a good program. And suddenly there was some foreign exchange difficulty, and the Government cut off money for contraception pills. Of course as you can imagine the birth rate surged dramatically over the next 18 months in that particular group of women. So there was a lot of face lost in the process.

Even though the U.S. policy on family planning was just getting started, very minuscule, actually, I'll talk about the first project on that in a moment, I was a long time supporter of the concept. I kept pushing the Ford Foundation, talking about it to the Government, and so forth and they actually created a Family Planning Commission during that period. But they just were not as effective and so they still today have population problems.

The first AID project in family planning I think was in 1965 in Turkey after I left. It was a million-dollar grant to buy jeeps. The intent was for the jeeps to take the doctors to the village to hopefully talk about family planning. That's how AID backed in to that socially difficult issue.

Q: Was there a problem at the time in Egypt from the Catholic Church in the United States about family planning and all?

MCDONALD: There didn't seem to be, no. And the Mullahs couldn't find anything in the Koran against it. They just had not seen the correlation, really, between economic development and

family planning. Later of course, when we got more sophisticated, the studies showed the direct correlation, and people began to shift. But in those early days there was not that connection seen by the Government structure.

Q: What were you getting from your Egyptian colleagues about Nasser? Was he riding high at that time?

MCDONALD: He was riding high, there was no opposition. The Moslem Brotherhood was not a factor at all. They liked him because these were Government people and, of course, they worked for him. They got kind of a charge out of the fact that he, Nasser, was a past master at playing the U.S. off against the Soviets and vice versa, and I agree with them. It was absolutely true, you could see it happen month in and month out and that's how, as I mentioned, they got him in in the first place. But he was an extraordinarily skillful politician. I give him great credit for his ability to manipulate the two world powers that were vying for influence and control over his country.

I would say that he was a pretty popular person. The interesting thing was, I remember meeting the Chairman of the Parliament, Mr. Sadat, who was always in the deep shadow of Mr. Nasser. You would meet him at a cocktail party, or something, and shake his hand and move on to talk to somebody important! Out of that, I think, came one of the world's great statesmen. But at the time Mr. Nasser was there he certainly was not seen in that light.

Q: What was the attitude of the Embassy towards Nasser at this particular point?

MCDONALD: Well, I think it was pretty positive. I think they realized, I think both Ambassadors realized, that he was playing the U.S. off against the Soviets and back and forth, so this was part of a game. But he was accessible, and his top people were accessible. Again, to me, this goes back to wheat; this goes back to grain. You know when you negotiate in a three and a half year period, or whatever it was, over a billion dollars in food, that was a lot of money in those days especially. So that was the access that [it] provided and this is an interesting example of how food aid provides access politically, because that really provided access. And so when we had things to complain about, well the Ambassador would call up and get an appointment and go complain about it. So there was access.

Q: Did our relations with Israel play any role during this particular time, did it come up?

MCDONALD: Not in my experience, it didn't come at all. It just was not a factor, certainly in my work. I was there during a fascinating time that was called the linkage with Syria, Egypt and the Yemen.

Q: The United Arab Republic.

MCDONALD: The United Arab Republic, thank you. That was a fascinating period. Just from my perspective. Here we were with three different countries. By the way, all three of whom were controlled by the Soviets, because the Soviets were in the Yemen as well. And here they were all linked by treaty, but not linked physically at all and not linked in any other way, except by treaty,

as far as I could figure out. But the amount of verbiage, the amount of language and PR [public relations], that was given to those of that unique historic experience, and the talk about the Arab Nation and so forth. This was a step toward, you know, world domination or whatever. I mean, the Arab League was based, of course, in Cairo. These were heady days for those people who had that kind of a vision.

It was during that period that I visited the Yemen. I got a ride with the Air Attaché, who would go down there every six months or so. That was exciting, I got to Aden and Sanaa, and all around and to Saudi Arabia as well.

But economically it had zero impact on Egypt or what we were doing, but it was great PR, I must say.

Q: Again, what were you getting from the Political Officers and all at our Embassies? Did they think that this was a flash in the pan, which it turned out to be, or were we taking it seriously?

MCDONALD: No, nobody took it seriously, not even the Egyptians. Because the Egyptians felt so superior as a race and as a people toward both Syria and Yemen, they were just dirt. In fact, when I told some of my Egyptian friends that I was going to the Yemen, they laughed and they said I was going to be in for a surprise, that the Yemen was a nation struggling forward into the fifteenth century. Into the fifteenth century, not the twentieth century and, of course, they were right.

It was with considerable disdain that [the Egyptians] looked upon [the UAR] and, as you say, it was a flash in the pan. But, my God, the number of articles and papers and editorials written upon this was into the thousands.

Q: Well, John, this might be a good time to stop, I think, because it is easier to start on a sort of a new subject, but I'd like to put an end here. In '66 you went where?

MCDONALD: I then went to the National War College. I arrived in the August '66 class.

Q: Well, we could talk about the National War College.

MCDONALD: And then that brings me into State and IO.

Q: You were at the War College from '66 to '67.

MCDONALD: Right. Right.

Q: What was your impression, what did you get out of it?

MCDONALD: Well, I'd say that was the best year I ever had in the U.S. Government. First of all, I got the freedom to think. It was wonderful and my classmates were superb. I really learned how the military thinks and [that] they think differently than we do.

One of my favorite stories about that... Early on, you know, there are about 140 people from all sectors of the military, and maybe about 15 FSOs in the process, and some civilians from other agencies. We were broken up into teams and we had a particular difficult set of problems to work out in a team of maybe 14 or 15 people. It was going to take all morning, we were told, and about 15 minutes into the game we were supposed to resolve an Air Force Colonel said, "I got the answer." I thought, my God this guy must be brilliant, because I was still struggling with the parameters and so forth and so on. So everybody stopped and said, "Well, what is it?" He said, "Nuke 'em [them]."

Now I had never heard the word before. "Nuke 'em." And I said, "You mean, drop the nuclear bomb?" And he said, "Yes, that's what we do in the Air Force." And that was real world his solution to that problem. I was shocked, really deeply shocked, but that was where he came from and that was his belief system. By the end of the year you learned that there were other options, but that to me was a very dramatic example of the mindset the Air Force, at least, had inculcated into this man. That was what he was taught to do and I'm sure he would do a very good job at it. But that was not what the National War College was all about. It did open minds on all sides.

Q: I've heard this from other people, that often the State Department people are used as a resource because the idea is to broaden the military, to get them ready for command responsibility, to get them away from simplistic things. That this is often the resource the State Department members of the class bring. At the same time, State Department people are exposed to the complexity of military solutions to problems.

MCDONALD: Absolutely. It was a leavening experience, I think. We helped greatly and we learned a great deal [in preparation for] our own higher command positions. Obviously the Defense Attaches are a very important part of all key embassies, and this is how that helps the ambassador understand what they are thinking and where they are coming from and vice versa. So I think it is an essential part of advanced training, absolutely essential.

I am just delighted that I was a part of it. It certainly has helped me over the years and I thoroughly enjoyed that interaction. The quality of the people there, I thought, was very high. This was not something [one] just got [assigned an order to get rid of you]. State and all of the military saw this as a real honor, a notch in the way upward. You had to sort of punch that ticket if you wanted to become a general or an ambassador. This was clearly accepted by everybody in that class. So it was a great experience.

Q: In 1967, you are off to where?

MCDONALD: To the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, called IO, in the State Department.

Q: And you were there from '67 until when?

MCDONALD: Well,let me just stand back a little and give a quick overview in terms of dates because actually I was involved with United Nations affairs more than any other person in the history of the Foreign Service, which is quite a statement. I was a Foreign Service Officer not a

civil servant.

I was assigned to IO in August of 1967. From ’67 to ’74, I was Deputy Office Director and then Office Director for the Office of Economic and Social Affairs, so that was seven and a half years. I was responsible for all of the economic and social side of the UN system, which was most of it. From ’74 to ’78, I became an international civil servant and was Number Two, or Deputy Director General at the International Labor Organization in Geneva. From ’78 to ’83, I was back in IO and eventually became a roving U.S. Ambassador, heading U.S. Delegations to UN Conferences. So I was [associated with] UN Affairs from ’67 to ’83.

Q: All right, so now we are setting forth on International Organizations extraordinary. Let’s talk a bit about the assignment, because it became so important in your career. Had you looked much at International Organizations, I mean what was your impression of one, International Organizations per se, and two, as a career place to go to? And this was in ’67.

MCDONALD: Actually it had never crossed my mind. In point of fact, I had spent a lot of time with smaller, regional organizations, starting with Berlin and Paris and for Treaty Organizations and so forth. But I decided, coming out of the War College, that I would let the Personnel System decide where to go. Most of my colleagues were spending a great deal of time politicking for their next assignment. I decided not to do that at all.

I was fortunate in the sense that the head of Personnel Assignments at the time had been my DCM in Cairo. He knew me very well. Bill Boswell. He decided to send me to IO, so I said fine, if that was what the system wants, I’d do it, and that was that. It was a turning point in my own life, because I had been thinking globally since 1955, when I was involved with the AID Organization, so this kept me on a global path.

Q: What was sort of the word of wisdom and all, about IO as the place to be?

MCDONALD: The word of wisdom was that was the last place in the world you wanted to go. Because you would never get to be an Ambassador out of the country in that fashion and it was sort of looked down upon by everybody. People were startled that I had gone there, uncomplainingly. So, no, it was considered as sort of the backwater.

Q: I guess from ’67 to ’74, you were on the economic side of IO, ECOSOC and all that. Was that it?

MCDONALD: Well, ECOSOC is the body in the UN system, the intergovernmental committee, that works on economic and social affairs. I had about 35 officers working for me. In those days an office director really had a lot of clout and we prepared all U.S. policy issues [toward] all of the agencies of the UN system dealing with economic and social affairs. This means all the specialized agencies, like the Food and Agricultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the ILO [International Labor Organization], and within the UN itself, the economic and social aspects.

Even within the IO Bureau, this was the dregs, because anybody who went to IO wanted to be involved in the political side of the UN, which were the Security Council and the sexy stuff. So

what I really enjoyed was that I was basically left alone, and I had a great time.

Q: This, of course, is one of the secrets of the Foreign Service. I was a chief of consular sections and I was left alone and I enjoyed it. I mean, it depends what you want.

This was '67, Lyndon Johnson was the President, we were getting more and more involved in the Vietnam War, what was your impression of the engagement of the Johnson Administration to International Organizations, particularly the United Nations?

MCDONALD: There was no interest in the White House, basically, under his time in what we were doing on the economic and social side. The first real interest that I saw was with Mr. Nixon with regard to environmental issues.

Q: Nixon came in 1969. Well, let's break it up. During the Johnson time what were you doing then, in sort of the last part of the Johnson years?
MCDONALD: One of the things that I wanted to mention, I think this moves into that. I was able to create, to be responsible for the creation, of four UN organizations during that '68 to '72 period. I thought those stories might be of interest because it was a unique opportunity.

Q: Yes, yes. Absolutely.

MCDONALD: It was based on the fact that there was little interest in what was going on there and on the fact that the UN itself was ready to begin to expand its horizons and take up individual issues and focus on them as had not been done before.

The first organization that I feel responsible for creating was something called the UN Population Fund. In 1967 the Danes gave 500,000 dollars to U Thant, the then Secretary General for population purposes. This was a break through way ahead of the U.S. Government and so forth. He didn't know what to do with it, so he put it in the Population Division of the UN which has basically been around since 1946 and was interested in and totally committed to population statistics.

The Danes had other ideas; we had other ideas. We wanted to make it a development issue. I made a speech in 1968 in which I said, with proper clearances, that the U.S. Government would contribute a million dollars to the population idea if the bureaucracy in the United Nations, on its own, would move responsibility [for the issue] from the Population Division on Statistics to the UN Development Program, which was development oriented. That was a real carrot. That was a major challenge bureaucratically, to have people shift from one entity to another because UNDP was quite separate from, but under the umbrella of, the United Nations.

Actually, they did it in five months, which was remarkably fast and so we gave the million dollars to the UNDP, who gave it to the UN Population entity. Then because I had made this move, I was invited, with four other people from Sweden, Denmark and Holland, to be an informal advisory group to Paul Hoffmann, who was then head of the UN Development Program, to create the fund itself, institutionalize it, [dealt] terms of reference, [plan] how to spend the money, [determine] who was to be in charge. And so, out of that came the UNFPA [UN Fund for

Population Activities], as its called, which is the most successful population institution in history. We have now raised over three billion dollars. It is the number one institution in the field.

Q: At that time, the Administration was not very interested in that sort of thing, it had a war on its hands, how did you get it to come up with a million dollars?

MCDONALD: With finagling. Actually I pieced it together with bits and pieces here and there and my bosses said to give it a try, see if I could do it, they didn't think it was going to work. It was a very risky diplomatic ploy. But, we had nothing to lose because if they didn't do it, there was no money on the table. I was very pleased with that bureaucratic shift.

Q: When we are talking about population, getting away from statistics, it sounds like we are talking about population control.

MCDONALD: No, family planning we called it.

Q: Okay, family planning. Now did this run afoul of the abortion issue which became so much of a concern in American political life in the 1980s?

MCDONALD: No. This wasn't even thought of as an issue. No one even mentioned the word. In the UN system that came up at the Second World Population Conference in Mexico City in 1985, or '84. So that was way ahead of that, nobody ever thought about that.
Q: So you didn't have to fight that particular monster?

MCDONALD: No, it was not an issue.

So, that happened in that '68 period, and in 1970 I was the father of the UN Volunteers, UNV it's called, which is still alive and active today. That came about because the word came down from on high that 1970 was the 25th Anniversary of the UN Charter in 1945 in San Francisco, and the U.S. had to do something. You know, come up with some ideas. So I came up with the idea of why don't we take the concepts of the U.S. Peace Corps, which had political limitations as to where it went, in those days it went to about 40 countries, and make it universal. Make it that any country in the world could be involved in the UN Volunteers.

There had been thinking about that within the UN itself and a report or two had been written, but no one took the political leadership to do something about it. So I proposed [the idea] to the powers that be and they said to go for it, if I could do it. The problem was there was another international organization already in existence, a small scale NGO called IVS [International Volunteer Services], which did do some similar type work. But it was very limited in budget, it was non-governmental. What I had to do politically was to help them to abolish themselves. The way I was finally able to do that was to ensure that several of the people who were involved got jobs within the UN system so they could continue their general efforts. We finally [worked out those arrangements] after about a year of negotiations.

Then I went to the Economic and Social Council Meeting in Geneva and pushed through this resolution to create the UN Volunteers. During that debate, I sat next to Congo-Brazzaville,

which was then Soviet dominated. The head of the delegation of Congo-B made a half-hour, violent attack on the United States and on the idea of the UNV. He said that it was like a Peace Corps and he remembered personally seeing U.S. Peace Corps volunteers with sub-machine guns at the ready, walking down the streets of Brazzaville shooting children indiscriminately. That's the kind of speech that he made to this distinguished audience.

I was in a fit as to whether I should intervene, call for a right of reply, stop him on a point of order and so forth. As I was going through this, I noticed a note coming around the table towards me and it turned out it came from my friend, the Kenyan Ambassador to the United Nations. I opened the note and it said, "Would you like me to handle a right of reply for you?" Well, coming from a black ambassador to another black ambassador I could have embraced him on the spot. So I remained quiet and he spoke up and answered every one of the points in the charges, talked about his personal experience, all positive and so forth and so on. It went to a vote and passed with only two abstentions, no negatives. So it was created on the spot.

Q: I'm interested in the politics behind this. We have a Peace Corps, and it has its own constituency. I would think that U.S. Peace Corps devotees would say that this was all very nice, but this was a rival. I would have thought that you would have had to do an awful lot of handholding, fence mending, logrolling, whatever one does. Would you talk about that?

MCDONALD: You are very perceptive. I absolutely had to do that. I also had to do it with some of the European people who also had similar Peace Corps type operations.

Q: The French had something.

MCDONALD: And the Dutch did. That's right. The worst of all was the U.S. Peace Corps, of course. We finally negotiated that they would have control over whatever U.S. person went into the UN Volunteers. So basically if you wanted to get into the UNV you applied to the Peace Corps, got accepted and then said you wanted to become a UN Volunteer. So they act as the processing agent and had control. So they ensured that not too many people went from the United States to the UNV.

The UNV has now upped its requirements. Initially only about five or ten percent were from the developing world, now it's the other way around, 90 percent are from the developing world. They see that it's a higher wage scale than they are used to and they are doctors and lawyers and architects and professors and lawyers. It's a very distinguished group that they now have. There are some 2,000 people in the field now.

Q: When you were working on the idea, were you looking at this as being different from our Peace Corps or being different from the French volunteers, or the Dutch, or the other ones?

MCDONALD: Basically my driving idea behind it was to make it universal. Each of the others had very narrow political restrictions because of the flags that they were flying. I thought it was a terrific idea to go global. So that was the force behind it and that was finally accepted.

Q: What about the Soviet Bloc and all that?

MCDONALD: Well, they abstained with Congo-B on the final vote. They always claimed that it was going to cost more money and so forth. We thought we [were] negative [on budget issues], but they were far worse than we were. But when it got down to the vote, they did not want to be seen as voting against a lot of things. If they tried to bluff their way through, or negotiate their way through, they ended up abstaining, which meant no vote and so it was adopted.

Q: During your time there did the Soviet Bloc group begin to move into the volunteer group?
MCDONALD: No, that really wasn't their thing. They weren't trying to infiltrate the organization.

Q: I'm not even thinking of infiltrating, just having a presence.

MCDONALD: No, they just ignored it.

The next organization was something called the UN Disaster Relief Organization, UNDRO. I helped create this in 1971. This is also an interesting story.

For 25 years, the U.S. Government had prohibited the United Nations from getting involved in disaster relief. Prohibited it. Actively prohibited it.

Q: Why?

MCDONALD: Because it was great political PR for the U.S. Because the [U.S.] had the capability to fly in tents and medicines and blankets and respond quickly, more quickly than anybody else, to a disaster, a flood, an earthquake, whatever. The Pentagon loved it. It did it on the cheap, but it was effective. So they said they didn't want the UN monkeying around.

What began to happen, in the late '60s and early '70s was that other countries, by this time, also had airlift capability, including the Russians and the French and the British. So they thought this was good bilaterally as well. So disaster sights began to get a little crowded and there was nobody coordinating anything. The country with the disaster would up the ante because they saw all these donors coming in and they were trying to get as much money as possible out of it.

I figured the only way I was going to get anybody to look at this as an idea of getting the UN involved was to prove to the bureaucracy, the Pentagon and the State Department that budget-wise it was very inefficient, and therefore we were losing money. When you can get somebody to acknowledge publicly that they are losing money, than there should be a change. So I did the research on three disasters, like an earthquake in Guatemala or a landslide in Peru, that the U.S. had airlifted in a field hospital at the cost of a million dollars, but two other countries had done the same so ours wasn't used. So here we had a million-dollar field hospital on the ground and didn't know what to do with it, and that we were losing credibility through this, and losing money as well. So the Pentagon said, okay, if you think we can get more efficient.

My argument was to get a UN person on the ground, be a traffic cop to guide the whole thing through and make it more efficient. Also, find out what the real needs of the country were. What

they were doing was loading on all kind of development issues and projects that they wanted to attribute to the quake, that really weren't valid. So I had that kind of backing. That was a major shift in bureaucratic thinking in Washington to get the go-ahead.

Q: Was there concern on all of these issue areas about the staffing at the United Nations, because one of the problems I understand, I've never served in it, is that there is a certain amount of political patronage. If you get the wrong person at the head of it, the greatest fear is they might be incompetent and unable to respond. In another case it could become a very political thing to be sure that the left or right, or what have you, political spectrum is overly represented.

MCDONALD: That's absolutely correct. I agree with you and this has happened. Actually it happened in this new position. The UN Disaster Relief Coordinator who was finally appointed was the Turkish Ambassador to the United Nations. Well, they had national disasters in Turkey, but he didn't know quite how to deal with them. So they got off to a difficult start. But, they blossomed and they created a 24-hour, seven-day a week operation center for disaster relief in Geneva. It took them a couple of years to get that off the ground but it is still going and has been very effective.

Q: On these things we are talking about during this particular stage of your career, did you kind of get these things launched and move away, or did you stay around?

MCDONALD: I was around long enough. You see this is what's unique about my career in this regard. I was around for 16, 17 years. You know the normal tour in IO was the two years, and boy am I glad to get out, sort of [attitude]. So I became the guy who knew everything and had the reputation of getting things done, because I knew how to do it. So to me that was a remarkable advantage, because I knew how the system worked.

Q: You mentioned there was another thing?

MCDONALD: [The fourth was] the UN Environment Program, UNEP. Actually I am very proud of this one. It is the one I got the Superior Honor Award for, not by my own Bureau, because they weren't really quite sure what I was doing, but by the Bureau of International Science and Technology, OES. What happened there was that in 1968 the Swedes proposed a new idea for international conferences. This was finally adopted. The idea was instead of having just the General Assembly meeting three months a year, covering 250 items, why not focus on one issue for two weeks. That way we could get the political leaders of the countries involved and the real experts on the subject, to get together for two weeks. Anybody can spare two weeks to focus on that issue.

So this model was tried on the environment. The First World Conference on the Environment was in Stockholm in 1972. That model has continued to this day. There have been over 30 world conferences now on a whole variety of subjects, focusing for a two-week period, and bringing the political clout together. One of the most recent that got publicity was the Fourth Women's Conference on Development in Beijing in '95, or '96. In any event the model was established by that conference.

Now this was a real tough one because the idea of getting a separate institution created in the UN system for the environment with a lot of different agencies doing bits and pieces of it, was a tough one for bureaucracies to accept. That World Conference was a success before it happened, in my opinion, because over 90 countries that attended that conference created special entities within their own national governments to focus on the environment. They had never done this before anywhere in the world. So you had commissions, you had departments, you had agencies around the world in preparation for this World Conference to really support it.

On this one Mr. Nixon was personally involved and was most supportive of the concept. The environment was catching on in the United States, and Greens were coming forward. So politically he thought this was a pretty good thing to go for.

Anyway, I spent a great deal of time working on this, starting 18, 20 months before. First meeting internally within the U.S. Government, Chris Herter, Jr. and I co-chaired it. He was [a political appointee who was Director of the Office of Environmental Affairs]. Our first meeting we had about 80 people in the room representing 65 government agencies. 65 agencies were interested in what was going on in the environmental field. So I thought, in my innocence and ignorance, I thought why don't we find out what the word 'environment' means in this community. So I went around the table, it took a while, and asked each agency rep to define the word 'environment' from their point of view. And we got 65 different definitions of the word, so we saw there that there was going to be a problem getting things launched.

The specific agencies involved in various issues began to work together as a team, began to come up with ideas on the substantive side across the board. Basically I was involved in how to design something within the UN system that would work. So I came up with a four pronged model.
We needed an International Secretariat, which we called the UN Environment Program. We needed a fund, a specialized fund. It had to be a voluntary fund rather than assessed contributions because we didn't have time to get a treaty organized. We needed an intergovernmental mechanism to advise the Secretariat and help to manage the fund. We needed an inter-agency group within the UN system to see the agencies were cooperating without stepping on each other's toes.

Well, it took me quite a while to get that mechanism approved within the U.S. bureaucracy and the White House [finally to get the money appropriated]. I said we needed a hundred million dollars to get this launched and [the approval of] the scientific community. A lot of different scientific regions' environmentalists were concerned about this. So that took a great deal of effort. But finally it was approved within the U.S. Government. We put it forward three months before anybody else as a model, this is what the UN should do to restructure, then I was part of the delegation to Stockholm and negotiated. That was my role, to negotiate that. We got about 98 percent of what we proposed adopted. And that created UNEP, which is alive and well today.

Q: What were the environmental issues as you saw them, and maybe your colleagues saw them, at the time you were doing this, because this keeps shifting?

MCDONALD: Well, air and water pollution were critical, then and now. Then we began to get more involved in seas and in climate and there was also a very difficult paragraph on nuclear issues. This is a very nice little story about Nixon's interest because he was being briefed along the way. During the conference I was secretary to a delegation so it fell on me to try to get these things put together [to get a] consensus at the end, because we all realized that you had to have the world's consensus to make anything happen. Well,this one particular issue on the nuclear subject came up. I was told to get Presidential clearance on what was going forward. So I called the White House from Stockholm, and got the chief of staff at that point, Colonel Haig. He answered the phone and I explained to him the issue and said was it possible to get the President to focus on this and get an answer. He asked what my recommendation was and so I told him and he said, "Just a minute." He came back five minutes later and said, "The President says okay with your position." That's pretty impressive. And we got consensus and the world agreed to that.

Q: While you were doing this environmental thing, which has become an extremely critical issue as time has gone on, more and more the environment has absorbed our concerns, did you run across the sort of the North-South problem which keeps cropping up? And could you explain what the North-South problem is?

MCDONALD: Absolutely and it certainly was there every step of the way. Basically the South, or the developing world, or the Third World, depends on how you call it, felt that the North or the West, particularly the Western European powers, were the polluters, and that they were innocent of anything in so far as that was concerned. So they questioned why they would need this kind of an organization because it was really only our concern. So our basic thrust was to prove to them that they were also polluters, and to sell the idea of one world, environmentally speaking, and show how these things drifted across borders and would impact on them one way or another in any event.

We, with the strong support of Maurice Strong, from Canada, who was the Secretary General of the conference, a UN official who did a brilliant job, [argued this pollution] could be controlled. We ended up, as I say, with about a 40 page document with 50 or 60 recommendations for international and national action which was adopted by consensus.

So those were some things that I was able to do in this environment of letting the UN focus on new subject areas and helping to move them along in that process.

Q: As this goes, I'm just wondering on the bureaucratic side, I would think that you would find your political masters within the IO organization seeing these things, as they got close to being done as, "By God, I want to take credit for this." It's hard for somebody who is a professional to really get anything done without somebody else wanting to get their stamp on it.

MCDONALD: You know, you are absolutely right. This didn't bother me, basically, because I was interested in building new institutions, approaching new problems, and I just felt it was part of the game and if my bosses wanted to take credit, that's great. This is why I mention I was very pleased to have another bureau recommend me for the Superior Honor Award, my own bureau never did. Which is exactly to the point that you are talking about.

Q: During this particular period of, really, '68 to '72 or so when these four things were developed, you must have had several bosses as head of IO, who were they?

MCDONALD: Oh, they were very good. Joe Sisco was the first one, he went on to other things. Sam De Palma, a great guy. These were people who had spent a lot of time on UN Affairs. Joe Sisco was of course a civil servant when he got involved.

Q: The bureaucrat par excellence!

MCDONALD: Absolutely superb. So if he wanted to take credit for anything I did, that was great with me. That didn't bother me at all.

Q: What was the feeling within IO? You were saying you were pretty well left alone?

MCDONALD: Right, as long as I came up with successes, everybody thought it was great.

Q: What about within our United Nations Delegation? How did that work?

MCDONALD: During the General Assembly time, the delegation swelled to] about 120 people in the UN Mission. There again they all dutifully went to the economic and social committees. But they, too, for the most part were in and out and didn't understand what was going on a great deal. Most of their interest was political. Security Council was the place to be and the place to go, and then disarmament issues and Israeli-Palestine political issues. A lot of energy was spent on that and I didn't have any part of that.

Q: Did the Vietnam War intrude on this, sort of as a general poisoner of any well that one was trying to work on?

MCDONALD: It didn't impact on me at all. No.

I got a trip out there, at Joe Sisco's request, in 1968. The other interesting thing, he wanted IO to be seen as doing something for Vietnam, so somebody got a three million dollar line item in there for Vietnam and so I was sent out there to try to figure out how to spend it, in human context. That had never happened to me before. We worked on social issues and got a social center, a couple of centers, established there with that money, which didn't last that long because other things happened.

Q: You were dealing with economic and social issues, what about the role of women in, particularly these early years, that you were there?

MCDONALD: I got very involved in these issues. The First UN Women's Conference was in 1975 in Mexico City. One of the things I was able to do [was better staff the issues]. We had a staff of 35 people or so but these meetings were so constant that we didn't have the knowledge to prepare position papers for every agenda item and so forth. So I chaired a major UN coordinating committee that brought in all the agencies in the U.S. system that had the expertise on a

particular agenda item. We would get together before a major meeting, three or four months before a meeting, and assign agenda items to Commerce, to Agriculture, to Labor, to HEW [Department of Health, Education, and Welfare], whatever, to draft. Then we would use those substantive issues as we put their briefing books together and went up to the Conferences and also would ensure that some members of the delegation included those experts.

The rest of the bureaucracy in Washington saw me as a person who could get them on a delegation, which was kind of exciting. I worked with the Office of International Conferences who technically did that, but they always took my recommendations for these conferences on the economic and social side. So I would basically say if they would do a position paper on a particular complicated issue, I would get them on the delegation to go to Geneva or Rome or New York or wherever to work on this. So we had a very collaborative system going that went extremely well for those eight years or so.

Q: On our delegations often we seem to put figures who are either names or political figures or what have you. How did you find, sort of, the public members of delegations? Was this a problem?

MCDONALD: They were quite varied. Some of them were brilliant, some were outstanding, and some were totally duds. Some went to these conferences for tourism purposes, we never saw them from one day to the next. Some got deeply involved. It was really a cross section.

However something very interesting happened because of this very issue. I began to realize, and did some checking with the Bureau of International Conferences, that it turns out that 25 percent of our delegations each year go to their first conference. Now just think about that for a moment. That is an extraordinary turnover and so many of them just go for one time, or whatever. That can be disastrous because they weren't getting briefed, they were getting them on an airplane and saying, "Go." Some of them even would head delegations on the technical side.

I decided to meet the challenge and I did a book called *How to* Be *a Delegate*, which got published by the Government Printing Office and was and still is very, very popular. In fact in my present position as the Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy, I reprinted the book a couple of years ago and I sold 200 copies to the State Department because it had run out of print in the Government Printing Office. But this became required reading, particularly for political appointees. I remember in the 1985 Nairobi Conference on Women, the Third Women's Conference, where Maureen Reagan, daughter of the President, became head of the delegation. She found out about this, I did briefings of that delegation in advance, and she raised several hundred thousand dollars to bring people together on that delegation in advance, six weeks in advance, to look at the issues. I was one of their main briefers, and that little book, *How to Be a Delegate,* was required reading by every participant.

That's one way I helped them meet the particular problems that you are talking about.

Q: What were some of the pitfalls as you saw them, particularly as they pertained to Americans who come in for the first time to one of these conferences?

MCDONALD: Total innocence, total ignorance and a total lack of knowledge or understanding on cross cultural issues and how they can impact on a delegation.

Later in my career I was at the Foreign Service Institute I set up, and for four years gave, a two-week course on multilateral diplomacy, about twenty people each [class]. They told me at the end of that they were being assigned to various offices involved in this, but that two weeks put them a year ahead of their colleagues because just that kind of exposure and understanding and how it worked made them much more effective. That was the main problem we had, we had to do a lot of handholding with newcomers, and sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. So I consider that a pretty basic weakness of our delegations, to have that high percentage of first-timers.

Q: Can you give me an example or two of the problems of lack of sensitivity in cross- cultural things, the sort of thing you might use as examples?

MCDONALD: I'll have to think about that for a minute. Nothing springs to mind on that.

Q: We can move on and come back to that.

MCDONALD: One area of their total lack of sensitivity was toward the press. A number of them wanted to make their own name, to be seen. We always took advantage of the world conferences, particularly, where we had a number of public members. I would always set up an opportunity with a photographer to have them seated behind the placard that says United States on it. Everybody got their own photograph, sitting behind it, as though they were Number One. This was just a little ego thing, but it was very important.

We had always had, first thing in the morning on every delegation I had anything to do with, a first-hour briefing on what had happened the day before and plans for the next day. So we were educating them all the time as a process. Then we would draft speeches for them which they would then personalize, but sometimes they would go off and not necessarily use what we were talking about and that had to be patched up later and that became more difficult. They were friends of the President, and they were this, that and the other and so there was a lot of ego there. One had to be very delicate about how one handled that.
I think that was one of the issues that was most difficult, because after they had made their speech and all they wanted to meet the press and we had to set up something for them so that they could get their name in the paper.

I have some more stories.

Q: Yes. Let's hear them.

MCDONALD: Why don't I move on, briefly, to that time in the International Labor Organization and then when I came back.

Q: Sure. That was '74 to '78.

MCDONALD: That's right. This was a very exciting assignment that one doesn't normally have in one's career in the Foreign Service.

I became an International Civil Servant. I was seconded, or detailed to the ILO by the U.S. Government. In fact, there is a law controlling this because they were finding that unless you had certain rights, if you didn't have the right of return, so to speak, why you wouldn't return from your appointment. In my detail, I had the right to return to my bureau, and they would have to take care of me in the career structure. So I paid my insurance and so forth to both institutions.

I took an oath of office at the International Labor Organization, as all international civil servants do, saying that I would uphold the Constitution of the ILO, and that I would not take any instructions from any member State, that I was, in other words, independent and above that. That was a surprise to a lot of Americans when they were first faced with that.

The ILO is what we call tripartite; it [had representation from] labor, management, and government. The Treaty of Versailles created it in 1919. So it is one of the oldest institutions in the UN system. It worked very well over the decades, but it was falling behind in terms of its Secretariat and the whole question of modernizing. So I was really charged with modernizing an International Secretariat, 3,200 people, 102 nationalities, working in 120 countries around the world.

The interesting thing was how the Foreign Service reacted to that, because I was still on their books. Every year somebody, an inspector or somebody, would come around, interview me and write up an efficiency rating for me. Now I was managing a two hundred million-dollar a year budget, I had responsibility for program, finance, personnel, administration, and publications - 800 people on my direct responsibility. It was one of the largest jobs that anybody could have in the Foreign Service, but I could never get across to the Inspectors the magnitude of what I was responsible for. Fascinatingly enough, at some point later in my career, Personnel on its own decided that the time that I spent in Geneva would not count toward my time in grade. They recognized that that was not an accurate reflection of what I was doing. That totally surprised me and came out of the blue. In any event, I had a great learning experience there and I have all kinds of stories that I won't bother you with.

Q: Well, I would like to get some of the atmospherics, though, in the high and low. This was still the height of the Cold War, did this intrude?

MCDONALD: Absolutely. In fact let me talk about women. You mentioned women earlier, and this is interesting.

ILO is supposed to take care of the workers of the world. 53 percent of the workers are women, so you would think that there was a balance. Well,I called my first meeting together and 80 people came at the senior level, 79 men and one woman. That was the way the bureaucratic institution had responded, or not responded. This was now the end of 1974. So I decided, and announced at the next meeting, that I was going to change that, and that I was going to create the first woman's bureau in the whole UN system. I was going to have it headed by an Assistant Secretary General, which is the number three level. You have the Secretary General, the Under

Secretary General, which I was, and then the Assistant. That immediately put all the bureaucracy in the ILO on edge, they had private meetings telling me how crazy this was and I was really being very stupid and shouldn't be doing this and etc. etc. Anyway they said I had to convince my boss, the Director General was French and I would never be able to do that.

I got all the papers together. What had to happen was that the DG had to approve this. He could support it and take it to the governing body, which met three times a year, about 400 people. Then it had to go to the annual conference to be approved because it was creating, like, an Assistant Secretary of State, I mean at that level, a whole new creation. So I thought a lot about how to do this. Finally, getting all my papers together, I went to the see the Director General and said, "Mr. Director General, how would you like to be seen as a hero in the eyes of the women of the world?" That got his attention. He said, "What do you mean? Tell me about it." And I told him the facts, 79:1, and I said, "If governments and labor unions and business hear about this, they are going to blow up. What I want to express to you is that you buy into this, recognizing in advance that there has to be a change. Then where you are going to get world visibility is to send your representative to these 1975 Women's Conference in Mexico City. This starts the day after our annual conference ends. I guarantee that when, at the first hour of that first ever meeting, your representative gets up in the podium and announces the creation of the Women's Bureau, the first in the UN system, you will be a hero." And he bought it, and that's exactly what happened.

We created a Women's Bureau and began to focus on women's affairs from that day forward. So that is a structural change that I thought was an important one.
Q: What were the concerns of women then, from the UN perspective?

MCDONALD: Well,that's very interesting because there is a major dichotomy between the U.S. delegation to that conference and the rest of the world. The women in the rest of the world were interested in basic rights of women. They wanted food, they wanted education, they wanted health issues, that's where they were. The U.S. women, feminism was breaking out and they wanted women's rights at a totally different level. Actually, the head of the U.S. delegation in Mexico City was a man. He went home after three days and his deputy, who was a woman, took over, which was very wise. We just had no empathy with the viewpoint of women.

I have a great story about the 1980 Conference in Copenhagen. The Second Women's Conference, five years later. In preparation for that, we learned something. We had a Secretary, and a good Secretariat established and there was a briefing session of non-governmental organization women who were interested. About 800 people showed up at the State Department for briefing. We had a whole day's briefing. At the end of the formal briefing, we got into questions from the audience, the first question out of the box was, "How many slots on the U.S. Delegation to Copenhagen for Lesbian women?" That was 1980. I can tell you the people on the podium had a great trouble with that one, at the State Department. But that's the kind of thing that we were up against and so I give women great credit. In this country and elsewhere they've grown dramatically in their understanding, at Nairobi in '85 and at Beijing in '95.

The UN, I think, has been responsible through these four conferences in launching a major worldwide women's movement of much more sophisticated women who now have common

goals and who are working together for common cause. It is a very important story of what the UN's impact can be on this kind of an issue over time.

Q: How about your relations within the United Nations? What was your impression of the staffing there and the bureaucracy that you dealt with?

MCDONALD: In the ILO or the UN itself?

Q: Well, let's take the ILO first, and then the UN.

MCDONALD: Okay. Well,in the ILO case the major pressure, because there are a lot of missions, in fact almost every nation has a mission in Geneva and they are accredited to the UN and all the agencies there. One of the things the ambassador, whoever he is including the U.S. Ambassador, tries to do is to expand [his country's] presence within the Secretariat of the various agencies involved. This is not nearly as rampant in Geneva as it is in New York City at the UN itself. But it was beginning to grow and the question was how you try to do something about it.

Since I was responsible for personnel issues, among other things, I, with the Director General's approval, sent a letter to all of the missions in Geneva, reminding them that the ILO has very strict substantive requirements for promotions and positions. We have a very important career system and we planned to follow that career path with our appointments. The letter requested them to stop using political pressure on us to try to favor 'A' over 'B.' And that sent a shock wave through the embassies. No one had ever done that before. That really slowed things down, stopped things for about a year and then it began to pick up again. But that is a major problem I agree with you.

Now in the technical agencies, as they are called, it is not nearly as rampant as it is in New York, where it is more general and they actually have allocations by country. We don't have that anywhere else in the UN system, but in New York there are percentage allocations based upon how much your dues are, as to how many slots you can have in the Secretariat, so that lends itself to the kind of pressure that you are actually mentioning.
Q: With ILO, what was the role as you saw and experience it of the AFL-CIO?

MCDONALD: Well, George Meany, the head of the AFL-CIO in those days, who I met with on various occasions, was a rabid anti-Communist and thought that the ILO was a Communist organization. And the reason he thought that was that [foreign] trade unions, and they had trade union representatives, were dominated by the Government. The Government dominated their business representatives. And, of course, their government people were dominated. So he said it was Communist and had to be changed. Well, that's the way the Treaty of Versailles was set up and so there was no way we were going to be able to change that.

We used all kinds of mechanisms within the staff to ensure that the Soviet staff was small and not located in particularly important parts of the Secretariat. So at that point in time the United States about 18 percent of the professional staff were Americans, and two percent were Soviet. We were not being pushed around by them and so I had basic disagreements with that.

Well,I was there when the U.S. pulled out of the ILO. I was the victim of that withdrawal, because my post, after the U.S. did withdraw - and that's another story I'll mention briefly - they abolished my position, the Director General did. After we pulled out our 25 percent we were paying he felt it was not appropriate for an American to have a senior position, so he abolished the post and I returned to Washington.

But I launched a major battle to try to prevent the U.S. from pulling out of the ILO. I had 60 Senators on line, I had the Pope behind us, everybody in the world were telling Carter he shouldn't do it, but at the last second Carter decided to do it with George Meany. There was a private meeting between the two of them and he pulled out. So I say Meany pulled us out of the ILO. Three months after Meany died, Lane Kirkland, who took his place, got us back in. Lane Kirkland never agreed with Meany on any of this. He was the Number Two person. Immediately after [Meany's] death he initiated the process and the U.S. was back in within a few months.

Q: Were there any issues that the ILO was taking that really conflicted with the American labor movement?

MCDONALD: I thought they were all specious myself. I argued mightily about every one of them. They had old lists of [outcomes of the ILO], but when I compared them with any other organization in the UN system, they were not out of line in the slightest. There were problems always when you're working with the whole rest of the world and the U.S. wants to dominate everything. That's always a problem. But I disagreed with them. The same with UNESCO, that was another pullout. But I'd really say Meany took the U.S. out and Kirkland back in, right after Meany died. And there have been smooth relations ever since.

Q: Also, Jay Silverberg was there, a special representative in the AFL-CIO who was an ex-Communist and as such was more holy than the Pope and that sort of thing. He dominated Meany and everyone else, didn't he?

MCDONALD: You are absolutely right and became ideological for no purpose. It was the height of the Cold War and you are absolutely right. He was rabid.

One good thing came out of this within the whole structure process. That is, that a Tripartite Committee was established in Washington, DC, chaired by the Secretary of Labor and with the head of the AFL-CIO, Head of the U.S. Chamber, on that committee. They met quarterly and they had staff support and so forth, to take a look at the ILO and all its work. And that was great, because before [oversight] had been fragmented. So that was positive.
I can tell lots of stories about it, but those are the two issues that are particularly relevant.

Q: How about Henry Kissinger during the Nixon Administration, did you see his influence anywhere in the things you dealt with?

MCDONALD: Well that's interesting that you raise that.

Bill Buffum, who was Assistant Secretary in 1974 for IO, also a great guy, called me in one day

and asked me if I would like to be Deputy Director General of the ILO. I never thought about that, never thought about being an International Civil Servant. My wife and I talked and I came back and said it sounded exciting. He said he would start the wheels moving.

Then the word got out into the other parts of the government. One of the guys that used to work for me in IO on ILO affairs had then moved to the Department of Labor, thought that I was far to the Left for him. So he decided I shouldn't get that job. He got 12 other people to compete for that job. This went on for months because none of them knew anything about the ILO, or they had no overseas experience, or they didn't know anything about the United Nations. I was clearly the person, but he was fighting it all the way to get somebody else.

One of the things I had going for me, that I finally got to George Meany's attention, was that in my earlier days I had been a member of the Teamsters' Union and a member of the Machinists' Union. Here you had a senior diplomat who had been in two trade unions. So, finally, to sort of stop this whole thing, Meany wrote a two line letter, basically, to Kissinger. He said, "Dear Henry, John McDonald is the only man for the job with the ILO" and signed, George. And that's how I got the job. And Kissinger agreed. If George wanted it, boom, that's what happens. So that's [my Kissinger story] insofar as personal intervention was concerned.
Q: How about relations during this time with the Department of Labor?

MCDONALD: Oh, always good, and with the Chamber. I felt we had good relations. Actually in the time of the pullout time, I even went into the trade union movement, you never knew what George Meany's position was. I got five trade union presidents to say we should stay, in writing. Now that's pretty good. I had the U.S. Chamber saying we should stay and I had editorials in 15 newspapers across the United States saying we should stay. So I really pulled out all the stops. It didn't work, but "c'est la vie [French: that's life]," that's what happens sometimes.

Q: Did you run across a difference in attitude? I think particularly of the almost virulent stand of the British Labor Unions where they had lots of strikes, lots of class warfare, the whole thing and I don't know whether this is reflected in Western European labor movements, but in a way they are quite different than ours. Did you see different trends that came up?

MCDONALD: That didn't seem to bother us at all. One of the things also worth mentioning is that the ILO is the strongest human rights organization in the world. And that's something very few people are cognizant of. Just let me spend a moment on that because I think human rights is particularly important in today's world.

Under the structure of the ILO they have now crafted and adopted tripartitely over 170 international treaties. This is, outside of technical assistance, one of their main operations. Where you have labor, management, and government agreeing on human rights issues, the right to organize, trade unions, the rights of women to receive equal compensation, a whole host of environmental treaties, and safety at the work place and so forth. In those treaties it is a requirement, after ratification, that you report back every couple of years to the ILO that you have been following the treaties. Someone can report to the ILO country 'X' has not been following the treaty, they have not allowed this trade union to organize. So they've set up a whole system.

Fifteen experts meet every year for two months' time to review the complaints that have been made by labor, management, government, individuals, or countries. It is the only place in the system where an individual complaint can be heard and acted on. Then the experts decide and make recommendations to the annual meeting of the special committee during the annual conference, which then reviews these and then they vote on these issues. Now should country 'X' be condemned at this level or this level or this level, and they will have various levels of condemnation, interaction, send an investigative team there to see what the facts are. It is public disgrace that is a major element in this process.

In fact, it got so tough on Poland at one point, during the end of the Communist regime that they decided to withdraw from the ILO. It takes two years of notice, but at the very end they changed their minds and stayed. But that is a very active human rights mechanism that the ILO has. It has much more clout than the Human Rights Commission does in the UN system.

Q: This is a time when you had really no labor movement in the Soviet Union and China, you had places like India where you have lots of child labor, it wasn't a very good time for the working man. Was this pretty much sort of Western dominated type organization, or did it have any effect in places such as India, Indonesia, and then moving into the Soviet Union and China and all?

MCDONALD: I think over the long term it had an enormous effect because it stimulated particularly the creation of trade unions around the world. That was one of their key issues. They had also a major technical assistance program, I'd say a third of their whole budget was technical assistance. They had thousands of experts around the world helping in small industry, and helping educate people, helping that jobs be created as machinists and carpenters and electricians and things like that, and helping people get organized.

They planted seeds in the Soviet Union, for example, which I saw grow and develop at the end, from 1990 when I was back in Moscow in a different capacity, as a private citizen. We trained 35 trade union leaders in some of these skills. We insisted that they be representative of the new trade union movement which was just coming on line. There had been a first ever strike in the coal mines a few months before, and we had ten people from the mines who were not part of the old regime as part of this exercise. So the seeds were planted and began to flourish when they had that opportunity. So I'd say over the long term they've had a major impact on this whole field,

Q: Were you able ever to sort of reach out and say to the people of Thailand, for example, that they had to do something about their work force or something like that?

MCDONALD: Exactly. This is what the whole structure that I've described was all about. And the irony of all this was that the AFL-CIO in George Meany never, in the history of the ILO, ever complained about the Soviets or anybody else. They had a whole mechanism here that they never touched, and I've never understood why and they could never explain to me why it had not happened. But it was happening all over the world. In Argentina, for example, there were major claims against that government at that time and as a result of that they created something the

world called The Disappeared. They went after trade unions. Some of my friends were among The Disappeared, were delegates to these conferences. So there was a lot of friction in that. Some governments felt threatened by this process.

Q: You came back from ILO and from '78 to '83 you were, you said, a sort of Roving Ambassador. What did this mean?

MCDONALD: Let me just briefly, and then I have to go in a few moments, unfortunately, but we can have another session.

What happened was that I came back into the system of IO from the International Labor Organization and they really didn't know what to do with me. I was sort of an oddball, because I wasn't in the structure and so forth. So they ended up giving me a secretary and giving me special assignments. And that was fantastic, because I got to move across the whole spectrum and to be head of delegations at this conference, and organize that and so forth, and I was responsible for these two-week world conferences. I was responsible for UN special years; I was responsible for UN decades, ten years of focus on a particular issue, and so forth. To make me acceptable in the eyes of the rest of the world I was dealing with, I was appointed Ambassador twice by Carter, and twice by Reagan, so that I had the title when I went into these special conferences. So it was a great time and I roved around and did even more things.

Q: Could you explain 'Roving Ambassador'? What does this mean? We are a hierarchical organization, diplomacy is, so when you get named a Roving Ambassador, what does this mean, where do you fit and how does this work?

MCDONALD: Well, actually the title 'Roving Ambassador' is my own language, the title of ambassador is legitimate. I have four letters from two Presidents [conferring the rank of ambassador]. Basically the reason for this was that I was seconded or detailed to the International Labor Organization, and in 1974 under Federal Law which says that when you do go to work for an international organization, if you don't retire from the Foreign Service, your Bureau or your Agency has to bring you back at your same level as you were when you left. So I came back four years later and the IO Bureau did not know what to do with me because hardly anybody ever does what I did. Most people, if they get into the UN, resign and get their retirement and then get another salary, and I didn't do that. So there I was, allegedly a resource, but they didn't know quite what to do with me. I didn't have any normal line assignment. What happened is when things came up that they had forgotten about, or didn't have the human resources to work on, or were pressured by the White House to do something about, they threw those strange assignments my way. That's why I [use] the 'Roving' [label].

One of the first things I did, for example, shortly after I returned in mid-'78 was to go to Kenya with a team and evaluate all of the technical assistance projects in Kenya funded bilaterally or multilaterally, since its independence in the early '60s. That was kind of exciting. We had only about a month to do this, we had a four or five person team and this was to take a solid look at whether technical assistance was effective or not. I had to report back to something called the Geneva Group in Geneva, Switzerland, which met a couple of times a year, made up of major donors to the UN system. If you paid one percent or more, then you were part of the Geneva

Group.

They were concerned institutionally about technical assistance in the UN system. That was a special assignment and it [was quickly obvious the Department] didn't know what to do about it, so they asked me to do it.

Q: One of the big questions always has been, and doubts in the minds of many people dealing with American Foreign Policy is the effectiveness of our big aid programs. I'm talking about both UN and United States aid programs as they affect, particularly Africa, where so much has gone in. In 1978, when you went with this group, could you talk about what you saw and the politics of reporting back to Geneva?

MCDONALD: I saw a great deal. In fact, I happened to know the UNDP, UN Development Program representative, was an American and an old friend of mine, and he made a DC-3 airplane available and we got to fly all over the country. We saw a great deal in a short length of time. I was enormously impressed with the impact that the United Nations programs had made.

People don't realize that these major agencies, like the International Labor Organization, the World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, have thousands of people in the field helping farmers and medical institutions and trade unions and so forth at the village level. They have a major impact and I came back with some very impressive statistics that the Geneva Group was very pleased with and it really confirmed my own experience. Perhaps I was prejudiced in that regard, but I felt it was an excellent trip.

Q: Did you find on something like this that there were politics within the observer group?

MCDONALD: No I didn't really find that out to be the case. I did find out, however, that it was difficult for the U.S. Government officials sometimes to interact at the country level with other countries. It turns out that in terms of volume at that point in Kenya we were about Number Four and we had by far the largest staff overlooking these programs. It turned out at that point that the [American] Program Officer knew nothing about the other countries' programs. In fact I had to introduce her to the head of the Swedish, Danish and Dutch programs, which was unfortunate, but I think that was more an individual bias perhaps. But I do find over the years that the U.S. is often viewed as very arrogant in its concerns about development and thinks that we have all the answers, and of course that's not the case.

Let me take a slightly different approach in talking about these conferences and my Roving Ambassadorship. All the efforts that I had carried out in this six-plus year period are what we call multilateral diplomacy. Multilateral diplomacy, I believe, is a separate [entity] from bilateral diplomacy, which is what most U.S. diplomats are involved in. This was brought home most recently to me by a request from the Israeli Foreign Ministry in February of this year, 1997, for me to come to Jerusalem for a week. I was to put on a one-week course for 18 senior Israeli diplomats, who are Ambassadors and Minister Counselors, in the art of multilateral diplomacy.

They acknowledge the irony of this. They said for 50 years they have only focused bilaterally in Israel, with country 'A' and country 'B.' They realized now the world was passing them by a bit

and they had to start learning how to focus regionally and globally on issues. So I taught this with a professor from Hebrew University, and it was a fascinating week and I think we all learned a great deal about that process.
It is different in my experience.

Another [word] for it is 'conference diplomacy.' I ended up doing a little booklet on how to be a delegate to conferences, which had never been done before and became a best seller at the State Department and every political appointee to a conference was given this to learn some of the basics.

One of the things that I learned in this process was that consensus was the only way to go. In my experience over the years with regard to the economic and social side of the UN system, was that whenever you went to a vote, you lost. The reason for that is that every resolution, outside of a few in the Security Council in the UN system and also elsewhere, is basically a resolution that recommends national action, or international action. It does not have the power of law. Whenever there are negative votes in the system it means that nothing is going to happen because most of the negative votes are from the West, and they've got the money and the clout to change policies and do things. So literally when you go to a vote, nothing happens. So consensus building was absolutely critical to making anything happen.

Historically, the U.S. is [often] not that interested in consensus building, I'm sorry to say. So this was trying to change a philosophy a bit and trying to show that consensus building was the way to make the UN multilateral system move. So I became an expert in consensus building. The stories and the things I am going to talk about basically show how one can sustain that process and make things actually happen. Is that a path you'd like me to pursue?

Q: Oh, absolutely, but as much as possible giving us overview, if we can stick to the particulars with examples of how it works in regard to specific cases.

MCDONALD: Let me talk first about, then, the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among developing countries which took place in Buenos Aires in 1978, and was my first ambassadorship.

I was in Vienna when I got a phone call in mid-'78, that this conference was going to take place in six weeks and, would I head the delegation. Well, I was astonished at the shortness of the time because normally it takes a couple of years to prepare for these things and I assumed that the delegation had been selected and work had been done so I said I'd be delighted. Again, since I did not have an ongoing assignment, in that sense of the word, I came back to Washington, found that I had misunderstood, the State Department had basically forgotten about this conference, which had been agreed upon four years earlier, and suddenly there it was on their doorstep. Nothing had been done, no papers, no delegation, no anything. By this time I had about five weeks to put this whole thing together and try to make an impact.

I realized early on that there were a lot of negatives about this conference. The Third World said that the West was not interested in this whole process of technical cooperation among developing countries, that there were no ministers from the West coming, and that there were a hundred

ministers from the Third World coming. This was how I got to be ambassador, because they wanted me to head the delegation and the [Department] felt the least that could happen was that I would become an ambassador, so that was how that actually took place.

Looking around at what might or might not be done, I realized that I should try to change the atmosphere with regard to the United States. So I had an idea, why not get President Carter, who believed in this kind of thing, to make the opening statement. I would read it on his behalf. I looked at our structure. I figured that if I wrote the statement, sent it up to S/S and over to the White House, down to the NSC staff and they approved it, and back and forth, it would probably take four weeks. By that time the conference would be well on its way if not over. So I called a friend of mine, Bob Pastor, who was handling Latin American affairs in the NSC and told him my idea. He said, "Great, why don't you get it over to me tomorrow morning." So I wrote the statement and I walked it over to his office, bypassing all channels, and three days later I got a call from S/S saying there was an urgent request for my approval of a Presidential statement for this conference I was heading up. I had them send it down and Pastor had not changed a comma. So I wrote on the document, "Brilliant, it's approved, let's go for it. It went back up the system and a week later I made the speech in Buenos Aires. It turned the conference around with regard to the United States. It was the only Presidential Statement that was made in that entire global meeting. So that's a little example of how sometimes going outside your channels you can actually achieve something.

This was a very touch and go conference in the sense that many in the Third World were unhappy with what the West was or was not doing, but it's a great example of what I call 'small group dynamics.' You have a two-week conference, you have 159 nations in this case, how do you bring consensus into that kind of a context? The UN helps in the sense that there are five regional groups in the UN with regard to economic and social issues. That is the African Group, the Latin American Group, the Asian Group, and then Eastern Europe, Western Europe and North America. Those three groups, Africa, Asia and Latin America have gotten together and call themselves the Group of '77. They did that in the mid-'60s, and they have of course grown but they keep the title. They have a block of votes whenever they want to, to do whatever they want to do, in a blocking sense. But again that's not positive if you are trying to build consensus. After three days, I met with the Argentinean General who was the head of the conference. I told him we were kind of stuck on things and asked how he'd like to bring together maybe a dozen delegates from these 3,000 people for coffee in his office the next morning to maybe look at some of the issues. The General, who was at this conference for the first time, said he thought it was a great idea but he had no idea who to pick. I pulled out of my pocket a list of 12 people and told him these were the leaders I had identified of the various groups and we should invited them. My belief was that they had the confidence of their respective groups.

So we met the next morning and we met every morning for the rest of that conference. It became a core group around the [conference] president. We began to build a trust relationship and the last 36 hours of that conference we were negotiating for 30 hours together. We came out of that with a consensus on the whole process. So again the press called it the 'miracle of Buenos Aires,' because nobody expected that kind of thing to come out of it.

Q: Would you explain what you were working on, what were the issues?

MCDONALD: Of course, [the Group of 77] wanted more money and they wanted more clout. We didn't have the money and we didn't want to give money. We actually figured out, structurally within the UN, how to meet several of their key complaints. They had realized that their task was to approve a 35-page plan of action and adopt it by consensus. They set up a special committee of 50 people after three days, when they had only finished the first page. I knew that there were going to be a few issues that could not be resolved at that level and so that's why I wanted that core group to actually move. I'll give you one example of the conflict.

The Group of 77 wanted to create a committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations to handle all technical assistance projects. Now, that would have been a political logrolling process in which the whole concept of the UN Development Program, which is voluntarily funded by Congress and other countries, would put that totally at risk. The U.S. Congress would not have given money for development, if they knew that [programs went] into [a committee of] the General Assembly of the United Nations [for approval]. [On the contrary, the current] UN Development Program Council was a group of about 40 people at that point and they always worked by consensus so that there was not this logrolling opportunity.

Q: You might explain to somebody who wouldn't understand what 'logrolling' means.

MCDONALD: I mean that, just like in the U.S. Congress, I support your project if you'll support mine, and it has to do with the politics of the issue, not the substance of the issue.

And so I knew that if this [new idea] went through that the UN Development Program would be dead. This was a reality check that these delegates did not understand because they had not worked sufficiently within the UN system. So at two o'clock in the morning I was giving a lecture on how the UN worked, and what this would do if they went down that path. So they saw the danger, but they asked how they could save face and get out of it.

We recommended the creation of a committee of the whole, which meant that any nation in the United Nations could attend it, but it would report not to the General Assembly but to the UNDP Governing Council. And that body, which was already in existence, had to work by consensus and would have control. And that is what actually happened. So the political threat was not there, we were able to finesse it, and the UNDP Governing Council controlled [programming] so that it did not get out of hand. That is a small example of the kind of thing I'm talking about.

Another example and another instance which again shows consensus building support. L, the Legal Bureau in the State Department, called me. With about a week's notice, they asked me if I would head the U.S. Delegation to a conference here in Washington of INTELSAT, which is not a part of the United Nations but was the first international organization responsible for global satellite launchings. This was in late 1978. I said I didn't know much about it, but they said it was on a question of privileges and immunities and that I knew a lot about conferences and so forth. So I said okay, that I would head the delegation if they gave me some technical support.

They called me on Friday evening and said, "Oh, by the way, you might be elected Chairman of the conference." I asked what they were talking about and they said, "Well, you know, the U.S.

is hosting it and so you may be." I said, "Thanks." So I go to the conference at nine o'clock on Monday morning and by 9:30 I'm in the chair as Chairman of the World Conference, which was quite a surprise to me.

There were about 80 countries and 400 delegates and I decided, early on, that I was going to be a very forceful chairman and I was going to direct the process. In the first half-hour it turned out that several countries wanted to postpone the conference for five years, they didn't want to get on with it. I said we had two weeks to get things done, we were going to negotiate an international treaty that deals with privileges and immunities with the INTELSAT staff. This had been kicking around for three or four years now and they had had plenty of notice, there were lots of suggestions for amendments, we should move on it. And so we started to move.

I set up a process. It turned out we had 200 amendments to consider in two weeks time. People said that was not possible. Well, with a forceful Chairman it was possible. Whenever somebody said they had an amendment, I asked who disagreed with that amendment, and if several other countries spoke up I said for them to go off to a separate room down the corridor and work out the language together. And when they had consensus they should come back and tell the group. We set up that process and we did that about 40 times during the course of the actual two-week conference. We finally ended the conference, exactly on time, and the text was adopted by consensus. All of the 80 participant countries initialed the treaty and then it went on and was adopted.

So, again, giving an example of sort of 'small group dynamics' in that sense. By taking a very forceful role and saying that this was the way it was going to be, and getting away with it, because basically they began to see that if they wanted an end-product, which they did, this was the only way to go.

Q: When you tell two groups of people to come to consensus on an issue, I mean there must be issues that you can't find a consensus.

MCDONALD: Well, this was over particular language in the text of the draft and everybody else didn't have any problem with it. So it was just a small group from whether it was the Left or the Right, or whatever it was, and if they reached agreement, everybody else would. So we put the whole pressure of the conference on them. That was a major moral pressure, to come up with a document that they could reach agreement on. It seemed to work. That was kind of exciting.

I also negotiated another treaty, which was equally dramatic, again in this roving capacity. This was a UN Treaty against the taking of hostages. What happened there was that under international law there was a loophole and the Germans and the U.S. and the French wanted to close that loophole. That was to make it a requirement that any country that had a hostage-taker, that had custody of a person who was a terrorist, would either have the individual tried in that country for taking hostages, or extradited to another country to be tried. So there would be no safe-haven, in other words, in the world.

This was a great idea, the question was my freedom fighter is your terrorist and vice versa, and how do you make this process happen? Well, the UN General Assembly decided in 1976 to set

this up and they created a 36 nation group, including Libya and Iraq and Iran and Syria and the Soviet Union, and a few other people, to take a look at this process, and could they draft a treaty?

The first session they got nowhere, the second session they got nowhere, and in 1977 the third and, I thought finally the last session, was the last hope. Again I was called up by the Legal Department at State and was asked to head the delegation. I asked what the odds were and they said about ten percent. I said those were not very good odds but if that was what they wanted I would take a look at it. So I, by this time, was considered an expert on process, so I looked at what had happened in the previous two conferences and why it had failed. In my opinion it had failed because of the structure of the conference.

It was a three-week conference that took place in Geneva. They had the 36 delegations and 50 observer delegations. It had the press, it had the UN Secretariat, and it had NGO observers, I would guess there were about 800 people at that conference. What happened was that every delegation of the 36, and some of the observers, would get up and make speeches about the subject. These would be reflected back, by the press, to their hometown or home country. All they did for those three weeks, both in those two years, was make speeches. So I figured the way to make something happen was to change the process.

I did a little advance planning and when I got to Geneva with a small delegation I went to the Chair, who was from Africa, and reviewed with him the process. I told him I had an idea if he would buy it. He offered to give it a try because nothing else was working. We convened as a Plenary Session, those same 800 people were there, and we had a couple of opening, welcoming speeches. And then the Chair announced, a half-hour into that three week meeting, that we were going to reconvene as an informal, unofficial working group exclusively to the delegations assigned by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Everybody else should leave.

This was pretty chaotic because the 50 countries who were observes didn't like it, the press didn't like it, the Secretariat didn't like, the NGOs didn't like it. We only had the interpreters in the room. We said we would take our own notes, this was a treaty and we could handle it. It was only going to be a five or six day product. We didn't need anybody else. And that finally happened, much to the consternation of a lot of people. The result was that during that entire three weeks there was not one political speech made, because there was nobody to record it and there was nobody to report back to the home office about it. So everybody got down to business and got to work. There were a lot of ups and downs, but at the end of that three weeks, we had a product, right on schedule. We reconvened in the last half-hour, adopted the draft treaty, forwarded it to the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly and that year it was adopted and became international law.

So it was a process that broke the cycle and built consensus because that was what we had to agree on. We adopted that by consensus at the end of that three-week period.

Q: At this point Iran didn't have the problem that it later had, but I would have thought Libya, which was at the extreme Left on any issue almost, would have a delegate afraid to go home unless he could have stopped this thing from happening.

MCDONALD: Well, that brings up another story. You are very perceptive on this.

The Libyans were going to follow the Soviet lead. They figured that that would save them, [that they could anticipate Soviet obstructionism]. Toward the end of the second week, when we were really making great progress and there was consensus all along the way, the Soviet delegate began to backslide. He began to find reasons to change what he had already agreed upon. This caused great consternation in the Western Group and we met several times a day. Early in the last week we finally reached agreement. I had suggested that I knew the resident Soviet Ambassador in Geneva very well because I had worked with her when I was with the International Labor Organization. I said I had an idea and if I could speak on behalf of the Western Group, or Group B, I would talk with her about what was happening. I asked for their okay on that and they said to give it a try.

I got to see her and explained exactly what was happening, that here her delegate was agreeing with everybody and now suddenly he had reversed himself. I said my guess was that his instructions said that he should not agree to this, under any circumstances. I said this should be changed because this was really the last chance to do something about this and I could just see the headlines in the *New York Times* the day after this conference fell apart, "Soviet Delegate Responsible for Collapse of Talks on Hostage Taking." And then I left. I never saw the head of the Soviet delegation again. He never came back to the conference. Somebody else took his place and reached agreement and we went on and there were good headlines, not bad ones.

So again that was risk taking, but the Libyan went along with the Soviet, because that was the way his instructions read.

Q: I find these stories fascinating, and it also shows how the process works, so if you have any others.

MCDONALD: Well, I have several others, if you don't mind.

Q: I've got time.

MCDONALD: Okay. This is an internal U.S. story. In 1980, the UN had already agreed to two events. 1981 was going to be called the International Year of Disabled Persons, which means that [each country] looked internally at how disability issues are being handled and then you report back to the United Nations. And they also had agreed, at the U.S. Congress' request actually, to a World Conference on Aging to take place in 1982.

Well, the disabled communities in the private sector and the aging communities in the private sector in this country are very strong and very influential. They began beating on the White House to do something about these two events because they were being totally ignored by the State Department and by the rest of the bureaucracy.

My boss came back from a beating up that he had gotten in the White House and called me in and said, "McDonald, since you do these special conferences, and you do these special years, I'm putting you in charge of both of them. Stop whatever you are doing and that's what you

focus on." I said fine, I didn't know about either one of them but I would take them on. So suddenly I was the State Department representative on a White House initiative, first with the disability issue.

I went to the White House for the first meeting and there I found there were two other people who were supposed to co-chair, three people to chair a government-wide approach to disabled issues under the UN umbrella for this UN year. One was the Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, the other was the Assistant Secretary of Education, both had billions of dollars at their disposal for disabled persons around the States, both had enormous staffs, and so forth.

I realized that a three-party chair was not going to work anyway. I had to figure out how I could do something about that. So during the course of this two hour White House meeting, our first get-together, most of the time was spent by these two Assistant Secretaries squabbling with each other over who was doing what to whom and how much credit they were going to get. It was a pure turf battle. I finally spoke up and said, "Look, I know something about the United Nations and how that works, but I don't have any clout, I don't have any money, I don't have any people, I don't have any turf, why don't you make me Chairman? And they thought about that for a moment, thought it was a brilliant idea, and I became Chairman for the whole effort. I gathered together a staff of a dozen people, seconded from their agencies to State Department. I got space, got some money from them and created an inter-agency task force of a hundred people. We had the most successful International Year in the history of the UN system and impacted on tens of thousands of people across the country and laid the groundwork for what later became the Americans for Disabilities Act, which was a Federal law that impacted dramatically on the disabled.

I got so involved in this that when the year ended I felt that more had to be done, so I got myself on the U.S. delegation to the UN General Assembly in 1982 and went back and negotiated a decade, a ten year period, for the disabled person. That was an interesting story, too, because I worked about six weeks on it to get everybody lined up, again with consensus, the most recalcitrant person we had was the head of the British delegation. I couldn't figure out why because Prince Philip had been the head of the IYDP Program in the UK, so I knew there was strong support for the disabled in the United Kingdom.

It turned out that the delegation to New York from the UK didn't believe in the concept of decades. They said it was a waste of time, didn't do anything, and I argued with them that this created an umbrella for those countries to work under during that ten-year period on disability issues and had been very effective in other places. They said they just didn't like decades. So, again, I went outside the system and I called up a friend of mine who was the head of a non-governmental organization on disability who I had worked with closely on the UN Year of the Disabled Person. I said we just had about 72 hours before this thing was going to go to a vote. Would he please call up personally, and have any of his friends call up, any Lord and Lady and Sir, this or that, in the UK and tell them what was happening and see if they could get them to apply pressure on the UK delegation to change its vote.
Well, we went to the vote, three days later, and I absented myself from the room at the time. The head of the British delegation came charging over to the U.S. delegation and said, "What in the hell is going on? We've gotten six calls from the Foreign Office to change our vote on this silly

issue." My delegation didn't know what he was talking about because I had not bothered to tell them what I was doing, so the Foreign Office had given the correct message and it went through without a vote, with consensus. So that's another example of how one builds consensus sometimes.

It worked, that's the lesson to remember.

Q: Are there any examples of things you've come across during this particular period where consensus just wasn't in the cards?

MCDONALD: Yes, there was one example of that and I was also the head of the delegation to that at the Ambassadorial level. It was called the UN Industrial Development Conference, Number 3. It took place in New Delhi in early January or February 1980.

We thought it was going to be a peaceful interaction. UNIDO, the UN Industrial Development Organization, was a part of the UN system designed to help small business get started in the Third World. That was its [mandate]. Again it had been started by the Group of 77, they looked upon it as their institution, just as they looked upon UNCTAD, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, as theirs and it was a confrontational environment normally speaking [for us First World delegations]. Well, this one really began to get out of hand because Mr. Castro, in Cuba, decided that he would hold a pre-conference meeting in Havana and line up all of the Communist and like-minded States to have a plan of action which they developed which created two three-billion dollar funds designed to help the third World. It was extraordinarily confrontational and was called the Havana Declaration.
When I heard about that, it was put together just a month before the conference was to begin, I thought, I knew, we were in deep trouble. But the West stood firm on this. We went there with some expectations that we might have some success.

The conference was started off in a rather unusual way. We had about 3,000 delegates in New Delhi and we all gathered together and waited for the opening ceremony. It was delayed for about an hour. Finally this lonely figure walked out on the stage and said, "My name is Raul, and I've just been named Foreign Minister last night by Mrs. Gandhi." She had just come to office the week before. He said, "I'm your Chairman." He had never been to a UN meeting in his life. He later became Prime Minister of India in recent years. But he was a fast learner and we worked very closely together with him over those three weeks.

We also set up a core group, sort of friends of the President, as we had done in Buenos Aires, and hoped that this model would bring success. We soon found that that was not in the cards. We worked along with our model and our suggestions and made a number of proposals. We thought we were reaching agreement when, at the last minute, just hours before the conference was to close the radicals in the Group of 77 rejected everything that had been agreed upon before. They put forward the Havana Declaration with its two funds of three billion dollars in size and a lot of language we just couldn't agree to. So the West stood firm. We voted up and down, and all of the West stood together and voted against it, [but] it passed, because the G-77 had the votes, [even though] everybody knew [the G-77 victory was hollow]. So at that stage in the process we certainly lost.

When these plan of actions and goal of conferences meet, the plan is then forwarded to the General Assembly that year. In this instance, the UNIDO Board was going to meet in between, because of the timing. When the UNIDO Board met in Vienna, made up again of 50 countries, who were all in attendance, they recognized that this plan of action would destroy the institution, if it were passed. And so they very adroitly and very cleverly, six months after the event when heads were a little clearer, only noted the document and did not support it. It was passed on to the General Assembly, who in turn noted it, and so it was a non-document. It was never discussed in the General Assembly, and it was never really discussed at the Board Meeting, it was just recognized that if this went into action it would be the end of the organization. So in the long term, we prevailed and the institution continued.

Let's see if I have another one that might be of interest.

A lot of the relative success of a conference has to do with the selection of the delegation. And a lot of time and energy goes into the selection of a delegation, particularly at the global conference level, which is very important. I have a story about the World Assembly on Aging, which took place in 1982 in Vienna, which shows how things can get pretty political.

We had 500 applications for the delegation. We wanted a delegation of about 30 people, plus some Senators and some Congressmen. At [major international] meetings we [usually] have two from each [chamber] present on the delegation. Well, the key figure was Claude Pepper, a great Senator, [and Democratic Party] Congressman from Florida, who was the hero of the [senior] community in the United States. He had actually proposed, four years before, that there be a World Conference on Aging, the first in the history of the world. This [idea] was sent to the State Department, it then went to the United Nations and it got organized. So he was an integral part, Chairman of the House Committee on Aging and so forth. He was, of course, one of the four political figures who were on the U.S. delegation. We finally put together 30 people, a good, solid delegation, and sent it to the White House for approval because that was the process [for delegation construction] followed by the State Department.

About ten days before the conference was to begin, or maybe even a week before, I got the list back from the White House. They took a long time with it. There was a big black mark through Claude Pepper's name. I thought that was impossible, he had started the whole thing, how could he not be in the delegation? I went to my boss, the Assistant Secretary, and said I didn't know whether he had noticed it, but Claude Pepper was not on the list and that can't work that way. He said he thought it wasn't a problem and picked up the phone and called and was told it was firm. He came back to me and I said it was not possible, the way we were doing this, because the whole country would be up in arms.

Q: Who was President at the time?

MCDONALD: Mr. Reagan.

I said we had to go back and put some real heat on them, my boss came out of the White House and he had to go back as this was unacceptable and just wouldn't work. He reluctantly went over

and came back and called me into his office just a couple of days before departure and said, "Okay, McDonald, you got your way. But I'm holding you personally responsible for every action of Claude Pepper while he is on that delegation." I had never had that happen before. Of course, Claude Pepper is a perfect gentleman. We went and had a brilliant conference, but that's another story. But everything was fine. We got a consensus and a standing ovation at the end of the conference, and so forth. But I was very intrigued about what really was behind this black mark through the paper, crossing his name out. When I came back and had a little more time, I finally pieced together what had happened.

President Reagan had drawn that line, personally, through Claude Pepper's name. And the reason for it was that three days before he had seen that list, and this was the height of the social security discussion that was going on at that particular time, Reagan had gone up to the capitol. He had an open hearing, an open statement, on the capitol lawn on one side of the capitol, at which about 100 people showed up to hear what he had to say. At the same time, on the other side of the capitol, there were 10,000 people listening to Claude Pepper. He got so ticked off at this that when he saw his name he just struck a line through it.

That's how history is made. Well, that gives you some idea of what I did with my time when I was there.

Q: You were there from '78 to '83, which moves you into the Reagan time. This would have been early Reagan. Ronald Reagan certainly came in from the Right end of the American political spectrum and had made all sorts of statements over the years about the United Nations and all, and here you were in International Organizations. Did you find a changed spirit in the IO office, particularly at this early time?

MCDONALD: Well, our Assistant Secretary at that time was Elliott Abrams, who went on to fame in Latin America in other arenas. He was pretty hard-nosed about the role of the UN Bureau. It was interesting that I was able to get two ambassadorships under Reagan, I guess because people realized that I could get things done although I had some problems in that regard. I'll give you a specific example of that hard line under Mr. Abrams and Mr. Reagan.

A few years before, it had been decided by the General Assembly to have an International Youth Year, [so this came to my desk] because it was an international year. I attended several organizing conferences in 1981 and 1980, so it was under both Carter and Reagan in that [transition] period. [Now] it was clear that the purpose of an international year is to look internally at what's going on in the United States. Well, there were several people then in the U.S. Information Agency [during the Reagan Administration] who wanted to use this as a mechanism to combat Soviet [influence and propaganda directed at the world's youth]. So they wanted to have some international conferences and meetings and so forth under the umbrella of the UN Year, which was contrary to the concept of the year itself, [which asked countries to each address their own youth].

I disagreed and because of that disagreement I was removed, unceremoniously, from my responsibilities on [the International Youth Year] and the process moved from the State Department to the U.S. Information Agency, [which] by law [was] not allowed to do anything

within the United States. So the whole concept of the year blew up and nothing happened internally and the couple of conferences they finally funded, externally, didn't turn out very well either. That was an example of a hard line approach that was totally against the whole concept of what [a] UN year was all about. And Elliott Abrams was the one who removed me, within three minutes, because of pressure and because of his own outlook. But I went on to other things.

Q: When you left there in '83, did you find a more increasing awareness of international organizations? There is usually a learning curve in any administration. They come in with people all motivated, they've got the answer to everything, and then usually end up about the same places other administrations have ended up.

MCDONALD: Well, actually, you are absolutely right. This was pretty hard-nosed and it was difficult to do some of the things I had been able to do in previous incarnations. As a matter of fact, very realistically, the reason that I left the Bureau in 1983, and this is a story in itself, was because I had crossed swords twice with Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, by doing things which she had not learned about. By doing some things which it turned out she didn't like, so she called up Greg Newell, who was then Assistant Secretary, and said, "Get rid of McDonald."

Now I had been there over 16 years, off and on, on account of the ILO experience, and was called in by Mr. Newell and he said, "Your last day is today. You have to leave." No explanation given. But he said he would take care of me and look after me. Well, I didn't believe that for a moment, but that was the reason I left the Bureau. And he took care of me by sending me to the group that looks after bringing young people into the Foreign Service…what is it?

Q: The Board of Examiners.

MCDONALD: Board of Examiners. So I was assigned to the Board of Examiners. I was only there for three weeks, but I certainly learned a lot in that period of time. But that was done because I had come to the attention of Ambassador Kirkpatrick up in New York, and she didn't like it, so she got rid of me. So that's an example of what you're talking about.

Then, I was called back by the same Assistant Secretary a year later saying, "I really need your help and guidance." I sort of laughed at this one, because he had never done a thing for me. What had happened was there was a major UN conference on women in Nairobi in 1985 and the State Department had done some excellent planning for this. They had the Secretariat put together, headed by a White House appointed Republican woman, and they were making good progress on the problems that were being faced at that conference. Then, totally out of the blue, about two and a half months before the conference was to take place, a bombshell landed in the IO Bureau in the nature of a press release to be issued by the White House the next morning. The press release said the U.S. Delegation to the Nairobi Conference, at the end of the Woman's Decade, would be headed by Maureen Reagan, the President's daughter, and the following 35 people had been appointed. Now, [delegation construction], [through] all of history, has been the prerogative of the State Department. The whole Bureau, the whole Department, worries about delegations and so forth. Now all of this entire structure had been ignored. The Secretariat, that had been appointed which a Republican woman headed, had been bypassed. Nobody knew that this had happened.

The Secretary of State office, red-faced, said, "Can we at least issue the press release of the White House delegation?" So the State Department issued the press release without changing a word. Suddenly Madam Reagan took over the whole process. Interesting dynamic.

The first thing she did was fire the entire Secretariat that had been put together by the State Department, including the woman who had been approved by the White House to head the Secretariat. So she really set up her own process. And this is the point where Greg Newell called me up and said, "Can you help? What can we do?" So I went over, and I helped and I worked with them.

Maureen Reagan did something very, very important and very useful and it certainly changed my outlook on what her approach was. She raised about 500,000 dollars and brought together, about six weeks before the conference, her whole delegation for four days of briefing in Washington, DC, at the same hotel. And she created a team out of that group. I spent many hours briefing that group on what it was all about and how to do it, and they all had required reading, my little book on how to be a delegate, which was very useful for them. I was then invited to the White House for lunch where the President and the Vice President feted the whole delegation. Then they flew off on Air Force One to Nairobi. They actually did a terrific job. Maureen was an excellent head of delegation, much to the surprise of a lot of people because she spent an enormous amount of time learning the ropes and learning how to do it. She ended up with a consensus document our of the Third Woman's Conference in Nairobi.

That's another little example of how things change. But I was called back by the guy who had gotten rid of me to give him a helping hand.

Q: So when you were with the Board of Examiners, what happened then?

MCDONALD: It was a learning process but I also decided that I didn't want to end my career there. I saw that Steve Low was trying to set up a Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs at the Foreign Service Institute. I went over and saw him and said I thought he needed me and I certainly needed him and why didn't he let me handle all multilateral relations for the new center and anything else that needs to be done. He said, "Great" and so I started the next day. So that's how I got involved with FSI.

Q: So you did that from when to when?

MCDONALD: From '83 until I retired in '87.

That's another whole chapter. Since I've been telling you little personal things in here, let me go back and give you another story.

Q: Sure.

MCDONALD: It goes way back but is a very intriguing one and has never been recorded anywhere.

In 1971, shortly after I had made FSO-1 at the age of 49, I was called up by Bob Brewster, who is an old friend and was the head of Personnel at that point. Now, how had Bob Brewster and I become friends? Well, you may remember earlier on in my history I was Executive Secretary, in the late '50s, at what was then called ICA, now called AID. I was the first Foreign Service Officer ever to be detailed to that organization. Over the three and a half years I was there I was able to identify three bright, young FSOs, who I brought over on detail to work for me for a year or two.

One of them was Bob Brewster, another one was Roger Kirk, and another was Bob Keeley. All three of them have had great careers in the Foreign Service, and I helped to launch all three of them. I'm very proud of that. I got Bob Brewster a great job, after he worked for me for a couple of years, with Doug Dillon, and he took off from that point. But I had a long-standing relationship with all three of these people.

Well, Bob called me up and said they were setting up, for the first time ever in the Foreign Service, a Board to hear a complaint against the Foreign Service system. I said, "Oh, what's that all about?" He said, "Well, what's happened is we've set up, for the first time, because the complainant, John Harter, has made so much noise that we felt we had to do something about it. So we've set up this panel, he picks one person, then the State Department picks one person, then the two get together and pick a third to chair. I'd like you, McDonald, to be the State Department person on this Board. You were a lawyer, and a District Attorney and I thought that this would be helpful to the Department." I said, "Well, if that's what you'd like, Sir, Chief of Personnel, sure. I would be happy to do it."

Well, the other two persons were Tom Ryner, who was John Harter's person. The chair, which was negotiated, was Herman Barger, who was then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia.

This was a remarkable process because we had been given the authority to swear witnesses under oath to testify before the three; it felt like a three-judge panel, so to speak. It was open and people were in the audience, lots of people were there. We heard evidence for ten days. A very intense process about how Harter contended that he had been shafted by the Service in various ways over a period of years and was requesting a promotion and a few other things.

So we heard all the evidence and then we had about a week to come up with conclusions. Because of travel and so forth and so on it was agreed that I would write the report. So I wrote the report and came up with a number of recommendations for action and then we convened the three of us. Tom and Herman Barger agreed with everything that I had proposed and so we sent the report to the Secretary of State. Well, it really hit the fan. I had recommended, and the other two had agreed, first of all, that he was right, Harder was right, in all of his contentions and that he should get promoted and that the health people should change this and this and Personnel should change this and this. There must have been more than a dozen recommendations for specific action.

I gather later that what finally happened was that Brewster and others were eventually convened by the Secretary and confronted with this and asked if it was true. And they said, basically, yes

and he said to then do it and they did it. Harder was reinstated and promoted and all that sort of thing. And then the system began to operate against the three people who had come to that conclusion.

The first thing they did was to insist that every scrap of paper connected with this process be given back. I was not allowed to keep a copy of the thing, Harder was not given a copy. It was stamped 'Top Secret.' This is serious. The entire process was stamped 'Top Secret.'

Q: This had been an open hearing?

MCDONALD: Correct, absolutely correct. Then they began to move. Herman Barger thought it would be wise for him to resign. Tom Ryner was sent to some God-awful place in the world and he resigned. They went after me. I stood fast. I thought. Until I began to realize I was on a blacklist because this was a time in my career when Ambassadorships were supposed to come along and I had applied for three or four or five and was in the finals and had lost out in every case.

So I went to see Dean Brown who was then Under Secretary of State for Management who I had known for some time and I said, "Dean, what's going on here?" He said, "As long as I'm in a position of authority, you'll never make Ambassador because of what you did." So I was literally blacklisted and that's one of the reasons when the 1974 opportunity came to go to the International Labor Organization I decided this might be a useful time to leave because that was that. This was the real world.

What happened as a result of all this was that they did create a system. Now it still has its problems to this day, but that case forced the State Department to create a whole new system of hearings on grievances. But I was the fall guy.

Q: Why was the system taking this so personally?

MCDONALD: Because they'd never been criticized for 50 years, or 100 years! Nobody had ever challenged them before and Harder had the guts to stand up and do it, and he was right. He was right. And, by the way, I just talked to him yesterday, I told him we were going to have this and could I tell this story and he said, "Absolutely." Because it's Top Secret and nobody knows about it. So I'm telling it right now.

Q: Great. Did you find that the system sort of closed around?

MCDONALD: Absolutely. The wagons circled.

Q: Why would they care so much?

MCDONALD: That I can't understand.

Q: Because you know we're a moving group and times change and we have revolutions, coups.

MCDONALD: But to hear all the evidence in open hearings and then make Top Secret recommendations for action is a pretty bizarre approach to the whole process. I'm an optimist in life, so I look back on that recognizing that this did move me into the ILO, which was a fascinating experience and that it also laid the groundwork for the betterment of the Service.

Q: The Harder hearing was when?

MCDONALD: In '71. 1971.

Q: Well, then, can we talk a bit about the Center at the FSI?

MCDONALD: Sure, sure, let me stop for a cup of coffee.

Q: We're now at the time that you were at the Center, FSI, which was '83 to '85?

MCDONALD: No, '87.

Q: '87. What was the concept?

MCDONALD: Well, it was a terrific idea, actually, and I give Steve Low great credit for it. He wanted to set up, or give an opportunity for a think-tank within the State Department to begin to operate. My feeling, over the decades, had been that the Policy Planning Staff had not really done this, as they were supposed to do. I had been involved with them over the decades and they were focused primarily on the Secretary and his personal needs, whoever that Secretary was.

Steve's idea was to bring together a core staff and then to bring people together who were between assignments, usually at the ambassadorial level, and have them as resident scholars and this whole diplomat-in-residence program was really refined during that period. We also had people who stayed with the Center and did special projects rather than going out to another institution and doing it.

I think it worked very well.

I did a number of things there, it was a great four years as far as I was concerned. Aside from doing a lot of teaching, as I mentioned, on the multilateral program and also teaching Foreign Service Officers how to be negotiators in the one-week program, courses, and so forth, I created a publication program. During the four years that I was there we published over 25 books reflecting on the works of the people who were there. We actually got them printed and published by the Government Printing Office, which is a major accomplishment.

Q: Oh, yes.

MCDONALD: Because it is a record left behind for history. I was also prolific in that regard myself and I was able to get six books out of that process. So I felt it was a very useful contribution to the whole system. Unfortunately, it collapsed a few years later for lack of good management and it became a turf fight between two Assistant Secretaries and unfortunately it

was abolished. I think it was a major loss to the Foreign Service and to the Department.

Back at the time I was there, might I continue with a couple of examples?

Q: Oh, yes.

MCDONALD: I had time to do a lot of thinking myself and that is when I did this first book on how to be a delegate. That was the first one that was published in that series and it became quite popular. I began to realize something I'm sure you have seen yourself that the academic community and the diplomatic community really don't get along very well. In fact, they don't even talk to each other. The way I describe it is that the professional negotiators and professional diplomats don't read, and the academics don't practice. So I set up a process to try to address this issue.

What I did was to put on a whole series of symposia over a three or four year period. The first one resulted in a book called *Perspectives on Negotiation for Case Studies*. That finally came out in 1986. But what happened was I put on four seminars dealing with four negotiations. We looked at the Panama Canal Treaty and how it was negotiated; we looked at the question of Zimbabwe independence; we looked at Cyprus; and we looked at the Falkland Islands dispute. Basically two that had succeeded and two were still on going as crises.

We brought the practitioners to the table, people who had done the actual negotiation. Various countries, but primarily the U.S., to tell what had happened and how they had done it, what worked and what didn't work. I created a core group of professors who were in the Washington community who were academic scholars and had written a lot on conflict and diplomacy and so forth and were quite familiar with the field. They were in every seminar and had an opportunity to answer questions and so forth. Then I met with them separately, the following week after the seminar, for a day and we critiqued the process and they began to think about how it looked from an academic point of view, after having been exposed for the first time in their careers to real practitioners.

Then we put together a book. In that book I just mentioned we had a chapter on each of the four seminars from the practitioners' point of view. Then I asked four of the core group each to write a chapter in which they looked from an academic point of view at all four symposia together. Each came up with different interests and different approaches. And so for the first time there was a marriage of academic and practitioner in the same volume.
That became quite popular. I repeated that process on several more occasions and out of that process came a book called *The U.S.-Soviet Summitry: Roosevelt Through Carter*, which got participants of almost all of those Summits, at least in the last 20 years, together. Then *U.S. Bases Overseas Negotiation* looking at Spain, Greece and the Philippines. And that was, again, the practitioner and the end product. And the final one was *Defining a U.S. Negotiating Style*, where we looked at various aspects. And then I brought in at the end diplomats from five countries who told us what they thought our style was, which is quite different than some of my colleagues thought who often denied there was such a thing as a U.S. negotiating style. So, by bringing the core group into each one of these processes, we stimulated an interaction that just had not happened before, and I was quite excited about that whole process.

The other thing that I did in that regard was to begin to realize, and this has impacted on the rest of my career, the rest of my life, that an awful lot was happening outside of the State Department in the field of foreign affairs by private citizens, that I had never focused on. This came as a real shock to me. I had been 37 years a diplomat and never even considered what might go on outside of the Department. That's how narrow my own thinking was.

The President of American University asked me quite by surprise, to chair a panel on an international conference that was taking place in Washington, DC, at the end of 1983, on citizen diplomacy. I heard for the first time about Peace Brigades in Central America, and I heard about private efforts in the Dominican Republic, and it just opened doors for me, in my own mind and my own experience. I became quite fascinated by this. I learned that every Ambassador had stories about those 'kooks out there' who were trying to tell him how to run his country, and they were always dumped on, whoever they were, whether it was for good or bad. So the whole aura of citizen diplomacy was just something you never talked about, because it was no good. That was the system's approach to it.
Well, I didn't agree with that as I began to explore possibilities. So I put on a seminar, which also ended up in a book called *Conflict Resolution, Track Two Diplomacy*. Track One is government to government interaction, which I had done all those decades, Track Two is non-government to non-government, private citizen interaction, which I found was often risk-taking. It was innovative, it was not hide-bound by firm instructions, and its goal was to try to help Track One in difficult situations. So I pulled together about eight people who could not be dumped upon for inexperience. They had done good work, solid work and they had to be respected for the work that they had done. And we put on that seminar and out of it came that book that I have just mentioned.

Q: Could you give some examples of citizen diplomacy?

MCDONALD: Well, I could give you lots of them. Let me just think for a moment.

A friend of mine, named John Marks, who was head of a non-governmental organization which is now flourishing, but in the mid-'80s it was difficult going for him, decided that he would focus on terrorism. What he would try to do was get the U.S. and the Soviets to do something about terrorism together. Now when he began to explore this he realized that for 50 years there had been no discussion by the two superpowers about this particular word.

The U.S. position was that the Soviets were responsible for every terrorist act in the world over history. The Soviet position was that they were not responsible for any terrorist action throughout history. So you had two diametrically opposed points of view. So John Marks, in 1989 - I'm not sure of that date but in about that time frame - brought ten American private citizens, to Moscow, after arrangements, who were experts in various aspects of anti-terrorism, together with ten Soviets, in Moscow for a week. They all claimed that they were in their capacity as private citizens, of course they weren't, they were all tied in with the Government and they were KGB and this, that and the other. The point is they agreed to sit down and talk to each other.

They talked to each other for the first few days and there was a lot of anger and a lot of venting and certainly no trust whatsoever. Finally, toward the end of that week, one of the Soviets, obviously with permission, said that they were really worried about terrorism. He said that in the previous four years 70 Soviet citizens had been murdered by terrorists, in non-war zones around the world. They had hushed up every one of those so that nobody knew about this, but they were worried and didn't know what to do.
Well, that admission opened the door and they started having a freer exchange.

They decided that they should get together again. So six months later, at the end of 1989, they met at the RAND Corporation in Southern California. Again, ten and ten. This time some of the actors had changed. On the U.S. side they had a former head of the CIA and a deputy head of the CIA, on the Soviet side there were two three-star KGB Generals who had just retired the week before. They started where the other group had left off and they decided they would see what they could do together. At the end of that second week they agreed, on a piece of paper in writing, on 20 different joint actions that could be taken, again, all private citizens. And they all signed that document and said they would go back and see what they could do in this process.

Well, then there was another meeting and some other people were invited. To make a long story short, two years almost to the day later, in 1991, Bush and Gorbachev announced at a Summit meeting in Moscow that the two countries were working together on terrorism. They had just agreed on 20 points on which they were going to work together.

Now to me that's a beautiful example of the power of [track two diplomacy], in this case well connected, but [these personages] were in their private citizen capacity, of coming up and doing the spade work that enabled governments to formally get together and agree on a positive process.

That was done in two years by the initiative of one man. That's a rather remarkable story.

Q: It really is. Are there more of these things?

MCDONALD: There are many more.

Q: Have you noticed any change in the attitude of the system, the Department of State, the White House, CIA towards these?

MCDONALD: Very little. In fact, that's one of my principle complaints. Actually the story of that little book seminar was in 1985 and it took eighteen months to get that publication published because it was viewed as a turf issue. Some people felt it shouldn't be published under the State Department label because it was an acknowledgment that there was another way to do business than the normal State Department way. But it finally got published and was considered a revolutionary document in that context.

We have reprinted it in my own Institute now. It's very popular and the State Department still, I think in parts, considers it a revolutionary document.

But those are the kinds of things that this Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs is able to do. I think it was a great opportunity, certainly wonderful from my point of view, and enabled me to get involved in this multilateral diplomacy I mentioned earlier, and also training.

There is another interesting thing about training that should be recognized. A man named Tom Kolosy who is with the American Arbitration Association, an old friend, he and I would put on together a week of training in negotiation skills. We would advertise through the normal channels and so forth and so on. The course was about 20, 22 people and we did it two or three times a year. What happened was that when the course finally got together, we realized that two of that group were Foreign Service Officers, the other 18 or 20 were from all of the other agencies around town, who knew that they didn't know how to negotiate. So they came to learn. But the FSOs knew that they knew how to negotiate, so they were not to be bothered by this. A senior official in the State Department told me that you couldn't teach negotiations, you either are born with it or you learn it by the seat of your pants! That is quote, unquote, by an Under Secretary of State, and that's unfortunate. I happen to be a firm believer, as I think you are that one can learn at any time in one's life.

Q: It's nice that some people have natural ability, but the system does not seek out those that are natural in anything. I mean, people are assigned as you were. I mean you happened to be free and you are going to do this. This is true in military, government or anything else. Natural ability can get you somewhere, but, one, the selection process doesn't usually put that person there, and that person could probably also learn, too.

MCDONALD: The difference in philosophies within the Pentagon and the military and the Foreign Service is dramatic. I've heard that one third of the military at any one time is in training. You compare that percentage-wise to the State Department and it's infinitesimal. The great thing that the Foreign Service Institute does is languages and those obviously you have to learn. But the military goes way, way beyond that in terms of training.

Q: Well, of course, one has to acknowledge that for the most part the military is sitting around waiting to fight a war and so they've got to get ready for it, whereas the State Department doesn't. We're busy operating embassies. It's partly philosophy but it's also, partly, the practicalities of the matter.
MCDONALD: But I just encourage more training because I think this has been happening more in the last few years.

Q: A question has occurred to me. In your consensus diplomacy, back when you were doing this, could you talk a little bit about the Department of State, Pentagon and other ones, the lawyers. In my experience in doing interviewing, every time we get to, particularly base negotiations or something of this nature, the most difficult negotiation is usually between the Department of State and the Pentagon lawyers. Lawyers often will not take into account national characteristics, problems overseas. They take a very difficult line and it's always hard to fight with them. I would imagine consensus diplomacy would sometimes run across the lawyers sitting back in offices, maybe not just in the United States but elsewhere, who take very legalistic views. Is this a problem?

MCDONALD: Yes it is and as a lawyer and former District Attorney, I can attest, in detail, to what you are actually saying.

Let me give you an example of this that came up in one of the seminars that we had on defining a U.S. negotiating style. I got the people who had been negotiating [between] General Motors and Toyota. I wanted to see how the private sector multi-nationals did this. They did it a great deal like they were both representing their own major governments.

This was over a two billion dollar plant for building automobiles to be located in Southern California, and it was the first time that the two major corporations in the world had ever sat down and talked to each other. It was a major cross-cultural issue, which is interesting from a legal point of view. When they came up finally with their first-draft contract, the U.S. General Motors delegation pushed forward to the center of the table a foot and a half high document. A foot and a half high document which represented the draft-contract that they had worked on. The Japanese pushed forward a quarter-inch, one fourth of an inch, high document, as their draft document. And both sides were absolutely flabbergasted at the other, because the U.S. lawyers in advance tried to tie up every single loose end and dot-an-eye that they could think of, whereas the Japanese negotiating style is to reach principles, and then you work out details later. So that is a dramatic example of the impact of two different sets of lawyers cross-culturally.

It is an example to me of the absolute necessity of understanding cross-cultural issues, which I don't think the State Department does nearly enough of. In fact, I've been told that cultural issues are too loose and not necessary to really understand. I totally disagree with that. I think you have to understand the culture of the people you are interacting with, if you want to be an effective negotiator, or an effective diplomat. But that's a subject of big discussion in various parts of the State Department.

I'll give you a little story about cross-culture that shows how it can even impact at the highest levels of government. This is a true story. It took place in Seattle, Washington, a couple of years ago when the first meeting of APEC, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, were together. Yeltsin and Clinton were at a banquet table there during that session, and people noticed that Clinton was whispering vigorously into Yeltsin's ear and Yeltsin was making copious notes on the paper napkin and so forth. Then they got up and left the table and Yeltsin left his notes behind on the table. An enterprising reporter saw this and went and picked up the notes and had them translated from Russian into English. The headlines in the paper the next day, in both countries, were to the effect that Clinton told Yeltsin not to trust the Japanese, because when they said yes they meant no. Now that is a pretty blatant statement to make and it was, of course, not meant for public distribution but that's what the note said and so it was a big turmoil in Tokyo and Washington as this was sorted out.

What happened was that Clinton had not been briefed on the Japanese culture properly. Whenever you talk to Japanese, as I'm sure you know they are always nodding their heads. They nod all the time, and Clinton thought that meant 'yes' and to the Japanese it means, "I hear you," and is totally neutral. He didn't know that. So here these guys were saying yes all the time and, by golly, they meant no! That's what he told Yeltsin. So that's a pretty good cross-cultural example at the highest level of government.

Q: Could you maybe briefly give me a feel for what was considered by any sort of consensus the American style of negotiation?

MCDONALD: Yes. There are some good points and bad points to which I can bring some more detail later from this book that I did, that finally got published. Actually it came out of the fact that we'd done, Hans Binnendijk, the then Director, had worked on a book and I had helped him, defining national negotiating styles. We looked at six countries. We looked at China, Japan, France, Russia or the Soviets, Mexico and Egypt. So we had all parts of the world covered. And we had asked experts, U.S. experts, from each of those who were privy to this, to ask them to write up their view of the negotiating style of that particular country they were expert in. And this was published. It had six flags on the cover, very dramatic, and it was a terrific book because that had never been done before.

I, then, after I retired, was brought back, as a consultant to finish up a project which was to do this on defining a U.S. negotiating style. And we went through four different seminars and so forth. When we started out many people I talked with said we didn't have a negotiating style. Of course I disagreed with that. What the five or six diplomats who spoke in the last session from five or six countries said, and which I agreed with, were some of the following characteristics. Just as you mentioned.

First of all, we're too legalistic. The lawyers have much too much influence insofar as that was concerned. That was one criticism.

Another is that we are very arrogant as negotiators.

Another is that we are very impatient. We want to get things done right away, we don't have any conscious understanding about time and timing and that sort of thing.

However on the positive side, we are very friendly and warm and outgoing. We are trusting. Sometimes they think that's too naive, but it is a characteristic that is useful.

We're probably the best-organized delegation in any conference. In fact we have so many resources at our disposal we are way better off than anybody else in that regard.

So those are some of the pluses and minuses, but it goes together, I think, and certainly in my experience it held up. I was one of those people who did a little paper just highlighting those attributes and their pluses and minuses. But for us to tell the world that we don't have a style is just a misnomer.

Q: Well, John, maybe to sum up could you explain what you've done with all this accumulated knowledge which is really quite unique in a Foreign Service career because you have not just walked away from international things. You put it to fruitful use. I wonder if you could talk about it a bit.

MCDONALD: I'd like very much to do that. It might take a little longer, if you don't mind, but I

think that's very important.

After I retired in '87 and finished up this last project, I was invited to become a law professor at George Washington University here in Washington, DC, an adjunct professor. I taught a course on international negotiation. So I used the kind of practical material that we've been talking about in that course. I also became very interested in the peace issues in the citizen diplomacy arena. I was very much involved while I was at the Foreign Service Institute. I became the Desk Officer for the U.S. Peace Institute, before it was created. Lots of letters were coming in and they found their way to my desk, somehow, and I responded to them. So I got very involved in the Peace Institute which was finally, officially adopted in 1984, and sort of came on line in about 1987 and '88. That was a very interesting process here in Washington.

I then was invited to become the first President of the Iowa Peace Institute, in Grinnell, Iowa, which was a small, not for profit organization which had been started a year or so before and they wanted to take these ideas nationally and internationally. For three years my wife and I moved out to the lovely town of Grinnell, which is 9,000 people and a lovely environment. While I was there I was also asked if I would become a Professor of Political Science at Grinnell College, which is a fine, fine institution. I said I would like that very much.

A little story about academia. I didn't have time to teach a course because I was traveling a lot, but I would take a couple tutorial students each semester and make a few lectures. So we signed a little agreement of $10,000 a year, which they gave to the Peace Institute. I would do that. So they said they would put me on the Faculty. About six weeks later, the President, who was a good friend by then, called me, and he said, "We have a problem with how we are going to bring you on board." I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "Well, I've researched and in the 150 years of the college's existence, we've never had an adjunct Professor before." And I said, "That's interesting, because 60 percent of the law faculty at Washington University Law School is adjunct." He said, "Well, we still want you but you're going to have to go through all of the steps, as though we were taking you on as a full Professor with tenure." That was quite a few hurdles that I had to jump through with no increase to the $10,000 a year that they gave the Peace Institute. So I did that and I became a Professor there and I enjoyed that interaction very much.

But I took the whole concept of citizen diplomacy there very seriously. I became a fund- raiser and raised a million dollars in the business community to work things out and did work with Northern Ireland, did work with the Soviet Union. In fact, in 1989, we were invited there by the Soviet Academy of Sciences to bring conflict resolution to the Soviet Union. And when we got there, a small group of three, we found that there was no word for conflict resolution in the Russian language. And that was surprising. But when you think back on it, for 800 or a thousand years, they used force to solve their problems and they literally didn't have a word in the language. So we worked with interpreters and came up with a word called 'conflictology' and that was adopted. I don't know any Russian, but put a word in the Russian language. A lot of things came out of that interaction. We went back in March and trained 100 Soviets in conflict resolution skills in four different groups.

While I was in Iowa, I launched a statewide program on what we call 'peer mediation' which is

teaching teachers to teach kids how to solve problems on the playground and in the school non-violently. That was very successful. We trained over 3,500 teachers in that and then we also took that to Moscow and to Warsaw. Institutes were created in 1990 in both of those cities to do that. And I know they are still working, because somebody visited me six months ago just coming from Moscow and said, "You know, the strangest thing happened. I was in a high school in Moscow and there they were teaching peer mediation." And I felt good that what I had started there actually flourished and moved beyond that.

So that was a very useful period in my own career.

Then I came back to Washington in early 1992, and became a Distinguished Visiting Professor at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Dr. Louise Diamond and I, the year before, had done a book on multi-track diplomacy and we decided to create an institute by that name. We did that, officially, in May of 1992. And that's what I have been doing about 60 hours a week for the last five and a half years.

Q: With this institute, what types of things have you been getting involved in?

MCDONALD: Well, we take what we call a 'systems approach to peace.' It's a nine track approach, we expanded Track One and Track Two, including seven other Tracks which includes the business community, religious community, training, education and peace activists and so forth. We are invited into countries and spaces in conflict, because conflict is within national borders these days. We have projects in Cyprus, Israel, Palestine, Liberia, Tanzania, Kenya, now Bosnia, and Cuba and with the Government of Tibet in exile, the Dalai Lama. So we have been working with a variety of situations there.

We've developed a whole new approach to resolving conflict. If you were interested in pursuing this, with another maybe an hour session, I'd be delighted to do that. But that's up to you.

Q: Well, I'm not sure, I think not because I think this is moving into something else.

MCDONALD: Let me say that, institutionally, we've been trying for years to get the State Department to buy into this concept without much luck. However, we've had some breakthroughs in the last few months. After two years of effort, I've gotten the World Bank to buy into what we're doing. We've also been invited by the OECD to come into Bosnia. You know they are the civilian side of the Dayton Accords. We're developing a major project there, having trained 70 people already. We've been working with CARE International. We just reached agreement with them to work with their staff.

What we're trying to do is to help institutions like CARE to bridge the gap that AID is now struggling with. One part of AID only deals with humanitarian assistance, the other side of AID deals with development. They are two separate - they call them stovepipe approaches. They don't talk to each other in between. They are funded under two separate line items in the budget, and the bridge between humanitarian assistance and development is unfortunately growing these days. So we are trying to work with people like that.

We've got support from the Dutch Government for what we've done. We are now getting support from the Canadian Government for what we're doing. But it is very difficult. We get individuals in the U.S. bureaucracy, but not institutions, to support what we are doing. But I think it's going to come because what has happened in the last five to seven years is that all conflict today is within national borders. Last year there were no wars, there were no cross-border violations, one nation invading another like Iraq invading Kuwait, but there were 30 ethnic conflicts within national boundaries. Institutionally there is nobody out there that has the authority to go in to help because national sovereignty is supreme. And so, nothing happens. So structures like the U.S. Government don't know how to cope with those kinds of conflicts. There is the rare case where you go to the Security Council under Chapter 7 and get them to do something, but that only happens in one or two cases a year. All of these other conflicts keep bubbling along.

The reason is that there is nobody out there that has the power and the influence to impact on those. So we, as a non-threatening, non-governmental organization can go in, being invited, talk with the government, say we are not there to solve the political problems of the issue, that's their job, so we don't threaten them. We are trying to build skills into the civilian community so that whenever a peace treaty is signed and violence breaks out again, they can help to stop the cycle of violence from repeating itself. That is basically the heart of what we're about.

It's challenge, but gradually things are beginning to come together. I just wish that the State Department would recognize that there is a lot out there that they can be helped with.

So that's a mouthful in a very short period of time.

Q: That really is. John, why don't we stop it at this point?

MCDONALD: Okay.

End of interview