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

PARKER WYMAN

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INTERVIEW

Q: Parker, to begin with, tell me something about your background, your education, your military service, and how you got interested in the Foreign Service.

WYMAN: Thank you Tom. I grew up in Lake Forest, Illinois and went to high school there. It was while I was in high school that I became interested in the Foreign Service. In those days we were seeing so much news on the front pages about crises and the approach of war in Europe. That had started even earlier, with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. I was upset and indignant about that and began to pay attention to what was going on with Hitler and Mussolini.

Then, in my sophomore year in high school, I happened to read in my English class the war message that Woodrow Wilson had delivered to Congress in 1917. I found it fascinating and began reading more about Wilson and what he had to say. With the specter of world war again looming on the horizon, his views on the great need for the League of Nations and strong American participation in it appeared farsighted and persuasive. Reading his speeches intensified my interest in foreign affairs and I developed a strong belief that the United States should take a much larger role in international affairs than it had since the World War. I became totally opposed to the isolationist opinions that were so dominant in the Middle West at that time and I wrote many editorials along those lines in our high school newspaper.

While in that frame of mind I first read about the Foreign Service. Right away it struck me that this was what I would like to do in the future because it would be the means of getting personally involved in these matters that I felt so strongly about. So I decided while I was in high school that the Foreign Service was definitely what I wanted to do. Then I went to Harvard and majored in Government and International Relations, taking most courses with a view to getting the best possible preparation for a Foreign Service career. Pearl Harbor came along and even though I went to summer school that following summer, I had not yet graduated by the time I went into the Army Air Corps. That was in February of 1943.

I was in the Air Corps for several months, but it was finally determined that my eyes were not good enough for flying. After some transitional stages I wound up in Field Artillery. We trained in Texas and did not go overseas until February of 1945, our only action being the shelling of Duesseldorf. We did that for a week and after a few more weeks the war in Europe came to an end. While still in Germany that summer I heard that written and oral exams for the Foreign Service would soon be given over there. I sent in an application right away and then tried to do some suitable preparatory work for the exams. I chose to read some books on foreign relations and wrote a number of "think

pieces" about the postwar situation. That would prove to be very helpful when I later reached the oral examinations. I took the written exams for the Foreign Service in November of 1945 and at the beginning of 1946 I moved to Berlin as a member of the Economic Section of the U.S. Group Control Council.

Q: You were still in the Army at that time?

WYMAN: Yes. But I discovered that as soon as I was discharged I could get a temporary job as an Auxiliary Vice Consul with our Consulate General in Berlin. That sounded good to me, as I knew that I couldn't take the oral exam for a permanent FSO appointment until the summer of '46, so I took my discharge in Berlin in February of '46 and started in three days later as a Vice Consul there.

Q: *What was your impression of Berlin at that time? You saw it at its worst, obviously*.

WYMAN: Well, Berlin was in an extraordinarily battered state, or at least the whole center of the city was. Berlin covers an unusually large area and I was astonished to discover that, despite the incredible tonnage of bombs which had been dropped on Berlin, some of the suburbs out there where we Americans were located were relatively undamaged. Of course there were plenty of signs around of war damage, but suburbs such as Dahlem and Zehlendorf were still attractive areas, by and large. But living conditions were absolutely miserable in Berlin for the Germans at that time and for the next two and a half years at least. Housing was of course terribly short and a great deal of damage had been done to what was still being used. Electricity and heat were in very short supply and food was at a minimum level. German money was almost worthless and unemployment was rampant. Conditions seemed about as bad as they could be and still have the city livable.

One surprising element of the scene at that time which absolutely astounded all of us was that the operas and the concerts were kept going. The Germans had to work awfully hard to make that possible, but they gave it a very high priority. They figured, I suppose, that with everything else smashed up, this was about the only thing left that could sustain morale. And I think it did. That people could still go and enjoy first-rate cultural entertainment did a great deal for Berliners' morale at that time.

Q: *I remember well going to a play with you on a cold winter day where we sat in the audience with our overcoats on because of the situation.*

WYMAN: Yes, that was absolutely typical. I had never appreciated classical music before but in Berlin I acquired a taste for it which I have never lost.

Q: Tell me, at the Consulate General, what did you do as a Vice Consul?

WYMAN: Well, I was working on citizenship cases, considering passport applications from people who had lived in Germany during the war but were now claiming to be American citizens.

Q: Now, these were Berliners, or people from the East Zone, or…

WYMAN: Both. The smaller number were those who resided in Berlin. Most of the applicants, however, were living in what was then still called the Soviet Zone of Occupation, later East Germany. This passport work was far more interesting than it would normally be because we were dealing with such extraordinary circumstances. Just the fact that these people were now claiming that they had a right to go back to the United States, as Americans, as contrasted to their presence in Nazi Germany during the war, made it a very unusual situation. It was also unusual in that in most of these cases it was very hard to dig out the relevant facts which would determine whether these people still had their citizenship. We couldn't obtain factual information from the new officials in the Soviet Zone as to what they had been doing during the war. You had to rely a great deal on interrogating them. I use the term "interrogated" because you were often trying to uncover an action you suspected they had taken which would have caused the loss of their citizenship. You had to question them very, very thoroughly and you had to assess carefully the plausibility of the stories they told about their wartime activities. Even then it was often really impossible to be sure whether or not they had done one of the things that would have caused a loss of citizenship.

Q: Such as joining the Nazi party?

WYMAN: Yes, taking an oath of allegiance to Hitler was one of the specific grounds for loss of citizenship at that time. Another was voting in a foreign election, and I'll come back to that later. Some of the cases were fairly clear one way or the other, but you ran into a lot of cases where you suspected that one of these actions had taken place, but the person denied it. Dan Montenegro and I were the ones who handled most of these cases and we found that when we went back to the Department with some of these difficult situations, they put it right back in our laps. They were willing to give us advice if we asked about the precise meaning of some legal provision. But whenever we gave them one of these situations where we said, "Well, it rather looks this way, but I can't be sure. What should I do," they'd come back right away and say "It's up to you; we'll back you up whatever you do." This was a fairly stressful experience for us because our decisions on whether to issue passports meant so much to the future of these people. Nobody knew how soon the miserable conditions in the Soviet Zone would improve, if ever, or how long the Soviets would be there. These people thought they had an absolutely miserable existence ahead of them for a long time if they had to stay in the Soviet Zone, whereas everything would be great if they could get to America. Here we were, trying to decide these cases according to law but knowing perfectly well we couldn't be sure of its applicability in most cases. I would often insist that these people come back again and again to talk to me, even though I knew it involved considerable hardship for them to do that.

Q: Could you estimate, Parker, what percentage of those were found to be bona-fide and which were found to be fraudulent? Was it half or more?

WYMAN: Well, far more than half in that group between those who had obviously

retained their citizenship and those who had lost it were eventually given passports. In cases where I was not able after many interviews to come up with a strong circumstantial case that the person must have committed one of the acts which caused the loss of citizenship, I would give the person the benefit of the doubt and issue the passport.

Q: Who was your supervisor then?

WYMAN: First Carlos Warner, the Consul General, later Marshall Vance. Neither one of them got into these cases in any detail. Firstly, neither one really had had extensive experience with citizenship cases, and certainly not with difficult ones. Secondly, this was the kind of situation where a supervisor couldn't help much anyway. You couldn't prove the case one way or another and you had to rely almost entirely on a series of helpful but inconclusive conversations you had had over many hours with the individual. Your boss couldn't really give you sound advice in a case like that, and you didn't really want him to try, because you didn't feel that he was in a better position to judge than you were.

Q: Did all of these claimants to American citizenship speak English, or did some of your interviews have to be in German?

WYMAN: Many of the interviews had to be in German. I spoke some German at that time but in a difficult case I usually asked one of the German members of our own staff to assist me in the interview.

Q: Well, anything else you'd like to say about your time in Berlin?

WYMAN: Well, I have two things that I think are of special interest. Firstly, one type of citizenship case we ran into that I was very concerned about involved losing citizenship by voting in an election. The Soviets organized an election in their zone in 1946 and many of these claimants to citizenship voted at that time because they also had German citizenship. As a matter of fact, we suspected that virtually everyone who was still there at that time voted. They had no idea, those people, that our law specified that that would cause a loss of citizenship. Well then, you might have a woman who had clearly retained her American citizenship but then when the election came along seized the opportunity to vote for the non-communist party which was on the ballot. She also knew that the communist regime wanted everyone to vote and that she might get into trouble if she didn't show up to vote. So she had very good reason to vote. However if she came to our office and told one of our German staff members in the preliminary interview, when asked whether she had ever voted in an election, "Oh, yes, I was glad to vote against the communists," it was my job to inform her that this had cost her her American citizenship! That bothered me a lot and I protested vigorously to Washington about the whole principle involved. It seemed unconstitutional to me and I argued that if any country would permit an American to vote there because of his dual citizenship and he could vote against the communists in that election, it was right in every sense for him to do so.

Well, to make a long story short, a case involving loss of citizenship by voting in a foreign election eventually reached the Supreme Court and it voted 5 to 4 that the law

which included that provision was constitutional. Still later, one judge retired and in a subsequent case that came from Italy the Supreme Court reversed itself on a 5 to 4 vote once more. That was the end of losing American citizenship by voting in a foreign election.

Q: But it bothered you while you were in Berlin.

WYMAN: Yes, it certainly did because to take American citizenship away from someone who had in all probability used the vote offered him or her in order to vote against a communist regime was incredibly unjust in my opinion.

I also want to say something about the historical importance of that period in Berlin when the Americans, the British and the French were trying to work together with the Soviet Union to lay the foundation for a new Germany which would never again start a war. Most of us Americans there realized from the start that Soviet-American relations were going to be of supreme importance in the postwar years and that the daily negotiations with the Soviets in Berlin would be a crucial test case that would show whether that relationship would prove to be a friendly or a hostile one. That made working in Berlin an exciting experience indeed. As time went on, however, and we watched Soviet behavior at first hand, we became increasingly pessimistic about the future role of the Soviet Union in international affairs.

In the winter of 1947-1948 I went to Paris on leave and was shocked to find such strong feeling among people who were totally anti-communist that the chances of keeping Western Europe out of communist hands were quite poor. There were large groups of communist deputies in both France and Italy that were growing in each election, the economies of Western European countries were still in miserable condition, and people despaired of the future. These Parisians said, "We all know that the American soldiers are going to be leaving Europe shortly and going home, as they did after the first World War. On the other hand we'll all be looking at that enormous Soviet army to the east, with its millions and millions of soldiers. We will have no defense against that, so either through parliamentary majorities or military might or a combination of both, the communists are going to take over pretty soon."

I was appalled to find how much of that sentiment there was. I think in that respect that the Soviet Blockade of Berlin, which began just as I was starting home, was a crucial turning point. Now of course the Marshall Plan and NATO would be very important to morale in Western Europe, too. But I think that the first thing that really convinced a lot of Europeans that the United States was prepared to stand firm and help them prevent the Communists from taking over was the determination with which we successfully withstood the Berlin Blockade by mounting and maintaining the Airlift, together with the British and French.

Q: Absolutely.

WYMAN: I have also felt that because Berlin thereby became the most prominent

symbol of the struggle to contain the Soviet Union that the preservation of a free Berlin was of the utmost importance for the defense of Western Europe during subsequent postwar history.

Q: In 1948, your tour was up in Berlin. You moved on and went to Cairo. How did that come about?

WYMAN: In the meantime, I went back for home leave. I met Pat Howland in June at a dinner dance in my home town, fell in love, and we were married in October. I also went to the Foreign Service Institute for the basic training course. When I had started as a temporary Vice Consul in Berlin, I had been told that as soon as my permanent appointment came through, I would immediately be sent back to the States because one always had to start out with the basic training course. However, after I passed the oral exams and my permanent appointment came through, the word came in from Washington that I should serve out a regular tour in Berlin before coming back. So I didn't come back until the spring of 1948. Perhaps MacArthur was the only soldier who came back from World War II later than I did!

Q: At least you were a veteran in the Institute in the sense that you had been through a tour in the field.

WYMAN: That's right. We had some fun with that. I remember that the woman who gave the consular part of the course used me on the day we were working on citizenship cases. She had me play the role of a passport applicant who tried various tricks to test out the trainees who were trying to determine whether he was entitled to a passport. I had a lot of fun taking the other side of the situation for a change and I gave the trainees some tough problems to deal with!

As for the assignment to Cairo, that just came out of the blue. One day, somebody arrived with the assignments for all of us in the training class. He or she just went right down the list as to who got what. That was that. Mine was Cairo and I was pleased. On the other hand, I knew that Cairo would probably sound far, far out to Pat and I wasn't sure that she would find life there as pleasant as a European assignment. That was one reason why we went to Europe on our honeymoon en route to Cairo, so that she could see some of the beautiful places we might have a chance to revisit in later years. My car had been flown out of Berlin to Frankfurt during the Airlift, so we were able to pick that up and drive south to Naples via Basel, the St. Gothard, Lugano, Milan, Florence, Pisa, and Rome. Even the best hotels were not expensive in terms of American dollars in those days, so we took full advantage of that.

Q: When you got to Cairo, what did you do?

WYMAN: Phil Halla and I were the junior officers in the Political Section. Phil Ireland was head of that section. The political work proved to be very interesting and Cairo was a fascinating place to live. It was a very cosmopolitan place and virtually all countries had embassies there. King Farouk had encouraged exiles to come there and we encountered

quite a range of them, from King Zog of Albania to Nicky Romanov and the leader of the Algerian rebels. There were a lot of diplomatic parties of different kinds. We joined the beautiful and quite amazing Gezira Sporting Club, which had not only a golf course, tennis courts and a fine swimming pool, but also a polo field, a racetrack for horse racing, and bowling greens. We also belonged to the yachting club on the Nile and used to go sailboat racing three times a week. That was possible because the office hours at the embassy were absolutely delightful. We would come in six days a week from eight o'clock in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon, without having had lunch. That was six hours of work. Then we came back one day from four to eight. But then for five out of those six working days, we were all finished at two o'clock. Lots of time was left for tennis, golf, sailing, or what have you. It almost seemed like a half holiday every day, even though we were putting in our forty hours a week. Of course I put in a certain number of extra hours anyway.

Q: We call that "flex time."

WYMAN: Yes. It was a great system, particularly because the sailing races would start at 2:30 and there was just time to get over there, jump in a boat, and take off.

Q: What was the state of our relations when you arrived?

WYMAN: They were very strained at that time. This was shortly after war had broken out between the brand-new Israel and the Arab states. Egypt was very much involved in that. There were even air raid alarms from time to time, though we never heard any planes. About six weeks before we arrived, an American couple had been stoned to death in the Mouski part of Cairo. So there was considerable concern about our physical safety. Of course official relations were also strained.

Q: What was the British influence then?

WYMAN: The British had some influence but not nearly as much as a few years previously. They were still thought by a lot of Egyptians to be maneuvering a great many things behind the scenes and influencing a lot of developments. I don't really think that they did have much influence in Egypt by that time. They were of course unpopular with the general public because of their past record as a colonial power and because they had used their military strength during World War II to force King Farouk to comply with their wishes. That was well known. So there wasn't much love lost between Egyptians and the British generally, even though many personal friendships between them existed. The British knew Egypt and all the Egyptian political figures better than anybody else. That gave them a certain advantage, but they were rarely able to get the government to do what they wanted.

Q: We were supplying military aid to the Egyptian government at that time?

WYMAN: No, not at that time.

Q: What was the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in those days? We used to hear a great deal about that and possible terrorism.

WYMAN: There were similarities between the situation then and now as far as the Muslim Brotherhood is concerned. One of their members assassinated the Egyptian Prime Minister, Nokrashi Pasha, while we were there. The group as a whole was not devoted to terrorism but their leader appeared to countenance it and many of their members inclined that way.

Q: Do you think our intelligence people had any links with them or were able to meet with them, talk to them, in any way?

WYMAN: I wasn't aware of information acquired that way, but of course there may have been contacts going on that I didn't know about. At those early posts of mine I really had no knowledge of what the CIA was doing in those various countries. I believe some of the best insights we were getting into what was going on in Egypt under the surface were coming from the chap who was my best Egyptian friend there, Mohammed Hassanein Heikal.

Q: Was he the later editor?

WYMAN: Yes. At that time he was an assistant editor with a weekly paper, "Akhbar al Yom."

Q: He wrote a famous book about this.

WYMAN: He's written a number of books about Egypt's foreign relations while Nasser was Egypt's head of state. He was a close friend and adviser of Nasser's. I had been introduced to Heikal early in our stay in Cairo by our military attache. Mohammed was even younger than I was but was a remarkably intelligent and well-informed person. He also became a very good friend and we saw a good deal of each other. He gave me a lot of excellent information about what was going on that I was not able to pick up from other sources. In particular, he had a lot to say about the various scandals in which the king was involved and the reasons for the discontent and hatred which were building up among many army officers. However he knew that I would be passing this kind of information on to Washington and that those officers would be in mortal danger if such reports containing their names ever leaked out somehow and came to the attention of the king. So he never mentioned a single name to me in that connection. I realized why he wasn't doing so and I never asked him for names. But I learned enough from him to send in many useful reports to Washington. In later years I realized that it was because of his closeness to Nasser, when Nasser had been one of those highly discontented officers, which had given him access to so much of the information on the Army's grievances against Farouk.

Pat and I also had a lot of fun with Heikal. We took him out sailing one time, for example. He had never been in a small sailboat on the Nile. There was a good wind

blowing that day and he was obviously distressed when the boat heeled over quite a ways. However he was able to appreciate the experience once we were safely back on land!

Q: Better on a camel than on a boat in the Nile.

WYMAN: Right. Long after we had left Cairo, Mohammed remained in contact with the embassy. When the military overthrew King Farouk, he became an important initial link between the new government and our embassy and helped a lot to convey information back and forth.

Q: What was the role of King Farouk, if any, in those days?

WYMAN: He still had some real power, but he was heartily disliked by that time by most Egyptians. That's an understatement. A lot of them really hated him. They felt that he had no real concern for Egypt or its people. He had a reputation as a playboy who spent a lot of his time in nightclubs and casinos. Of course that offended many Egyptians, particularly devout ones. About six months or so before I left, Farouk appointed Karim Tabet Pasha to be the Royal Press Counselor. Farouk was the most unpopular person in the country and Karim Tabet Pasha was probably the second most unpopular, even before he was appointed Royal Press Counselor, where his job was to help improve the image of the King. That appointment showed again that, although Farouk did have considerable intelligence, there were many times when he behaved as though he had none at all.

On the other hand Farouk was reputed to have made the famous remark that he expected that it wouldn't be too many years before there would be only five kings left in the world: the King of England and the kings of spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs. Whether that story is true or not, I don't know. But I do know that he was concerned enough about the possibility of eventually having to flee from some kind of revolt that he always had steam kept up on the royal yacht. Sure enough, when the military coup d'etat against him eventually took place, that is how Farouk left Egypt. The rebel officers had him in their power and they let him sail away on his yacht. He had been able to foresee the strong possibility of what was coming, and yet when you watched his policies and the way he handled himself, things like this appointment of the Royal Press Counselor, he seemed to do everything he could to make it inevitable that he would be thrown out some day.
Q: What was the influence of the Soviet Union in those days in Cairo?

WYMAN: I would say it was negligible at that time. In those days when King Farouk and a conservative government were in power, the Soviet Union had no influence. That problem came later on after Nasser had taken over.

A couple of other subjects occur to me that I think are interesting. I had my first experience in Cairo with the kind of problems that can be created by visiting American congressmen. We had one chap come out, I think as part of a group, who had been warned about the Egyptian sensitivity at that time concerning all kinds of military areas of significance as they defined them, including the bridges across the Nile at Cairo. This

congressman decided, however, that it would be nice to go out in the middle of one such bridge and take pictures in both directions. He was promptly arrested by policemen and taken off somewhere. After a while we heard about it. It was hard to convince the Egyptians that this was all a purely innocent mistake and had nothing to do with Israeli plans to bomb the bridge, or something like that.

Another congressional visit that I remember, although we didn't have too many of them, included Senator Pat Malone from Nevada. It was just at the time when there was beginning to be discussion of the Marshall Plan. The Egyptians had heard about this Marshall Plan. Of course we were telling them, as we were telling the whole world, that this was going to be a great thing for Western Europe. Pat Malone was a rabid opponent of the Marshall Plan. At a luncheon attended by many prominent Egyptians, he was invited to speak and spent most of his time attacking the Marshall Plan. He claimed, for example, that those behind the Marshall Plan were hoping to use it as a tool to obtain American control over Western Europe. We embassy officers who attended the luncheon were disgusted with his performance.

Another incident that comes to my mind in terms of troublemakers concerned an American newspaperman. Jefferson Caffery was the new American ambassador who had replaced Stanton Griffiths. There had been a lot of publicity about Caffery's coming before he arrived. The Egyptians, and particularly the newspapermen who were coming to this press conference that he was to hold, knew that he had been our ambassador in Paris before and that he had a great deal of diplomatic experience behind him. They were very pleased that the most senior of our diplomats had been assigned to Egypt. They were therefore disposed to welcome him in a friendly fashion when he gave a press conference soon after he arrived. It was attended by many Egyptian correspondents and a couple of American correspondents.

Caffery made a short statement and then the Egyptians asked him questions. They were polite questions and he gave excellent answers. You could tell that the group was impressed. It came to the point where the meeting was clearly about to break up. I was just thinking, "What a great start he's getting with the press here in Cairo." Then one of the American correspondents put his hand up and said, "Mr. Ambassador, this all sounds very fine, but I want to ask you a more specific question." He read a couple of pro-Israeli remarks which had been made a few weeks back by President Truman and then asked Caffery, "Now, is this part of the foreign policy that you have come here to carry out?" Caffery handled the question as well as anybody could, but the exchange curdled the whole impression left by that press conference. That gave me a vivid appreciation of the kinds of problems that American newspapermen can sometimes cause for Foreign Service officers.

Q: I'm sure they were not invited too frequently to the Residence after that. Were American businesses in Cairo at the time?

WYMAN: I was in the Political Section and was thoroughly involved there. I don't really have enough knowledge to answer that question very well. I don't recall any major

American company that was active in Cairo except for Coca Cola, which I was told was selling coke in every village in Egypt. The very low standard of living in Egypt meant that the market for most American products was very small.

Your question reminds me of a striking aspect of the whole environment in Egypt at that time which I would like to mention. If, for example, you had spoken to almost any Egyptian at that time and said something like "How do you see Egypt's economic development in the future," the person you were talking to would hardly have understood what you were talking about. Not only the word “development” but the whole concept behind it was practically non-existent in Egypt at that time. If you spoke of the possibility of substantial improvements in the future, the Egyptian you were talking to would normally say "That would certainly be nice, but it won’t happen. Egypt has always been this way and Egypt always will be this way." That was “the conventional wisdom” and of course it tended to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Q: Rather fatalistic.

WYMAN: Yes, but not surprising in relation to Egyptian history. Before going out to Cairo, I had asked somebody who knew Egypt quite well, "What would be the best book that I could read about Egypt?" He recommended a book entitled, "The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians," if I remember correctly. I said, "Oh, that sounds marvelous. That's just what I would like to read so as to get an up-to-date picture of the situation. I've read about ancient Egypt but I know nothing at all about modern Egypt. When was this book written?" He said, "1840." I was shocked, but he was right. The book wasn't up-to-date on the political situation, of course, but on the way the common people lived and their beliefs and customs, it was splendid. It was still a few years away before people in so many poverty-stricken countries, including Egypt, began to think and talk a lot about the possibility of development and progress.

Q: You were there for the last years of the old Egypt.

WYMAN: We left a year and a half ahead of the military coup that Nasser engineered. He and his group were determined not only to totally change the political structure of the country but also to socialize Egypt and initiate its rapid economic development. So yes, his coup marked the beginning of a new era for Egypt. No matter how many problems he later caused us in terms of foreign policy, I never lost my admiration for his courage in leading the revolt against Farouk and for his sincere determination to improve the lot of Egyptians.

Q: In that connection, when you left Egypt, did you foresee change coming in that regard, a revolution?

WYMAN: I remember writing in some of my reports towards the end of my tour that there was far more discontent and desire for radical change within the military than was apparent on the surface or that was openly discussed. There was a potential there for drastic developments in the future. However I didn’t predict that there would necessarily

be a revolution or a coup d'etat.

Q: Did the embassy have any Arab language officers while you were there?

WYMAN: Yes, we did have at least one; he was in the Economic Section. People were talking about the need to have more officers who spoke Arabic fluently. It was something that I considered. But, at the same time, it was mentioned to me that the people who were Arab specialists had been spending, and probably would be spending, virtually their entire careers in the Arab-speaking world. That seemed to me like much too much of a good thing. I was quite convinced, too, that not all parts of the Middle East would be as interesting as Cairo nor as pleasant a place for an American family to live. So I passed on that. Another reason is that everybody I had contact with could speak English anyway. Educated Egyptians could all speak English.

Q: Any further thoughts on your time in Cairo before we move on?

WYMAN: I think that covers the principal things that I would like to mention.

Q: Your next move was back to school, into German specialization. Had you applied for that before?

WYMAN: The next move, which I remember so well, was the trip back from Alexandria to New York. This was in January of 1951. We went back on a relatively small ship, one of the American Export Line's "Four Aces." It made some stops in the Mediterranean along the way. We were 22 days on this trip back from Alexandria. It was supposed to be 21, but for one full day the ship just stood still in the middle of the Atlantic, headed into the wind in the best position not to get to our destination but to weather out the storm. January is not the best time of year to cross the Atlantic, particularly in one of the smaller ships. We had our two baby daughters with us who had been born in Cairo and they were seasick most of the time. We were sick almost as often with all that lurching around. It was an unforgettable experience. Very much in contrast with our later crossings of the Atlantic by ship, which we enjoyed very much and were so much more fun than flying. This was the one we would gladly have passed up.

Q: Three weeks!

WYMAN: Anyway, we got back home and had a nice home leave. I had been scheduled originally to go next to Berlin. That assignment fell through, for some reason, and I was asked if I would like to go to Harvard for a year of German language and history specialization. I had never applied for that but liked the idea very much and immediately accepted.

Q: Would you like to comment upon your year at Harvard and tell us a little bit about what that entailed?

WYMAN: I thoroughly enjoyed that year. I took several courses, all in the area of

German history and culture. The most interesting project of the year was a lengthy paper I wrote on the resistance to Hitler which emerged from the Protestant churches of Germany. My student tutor, whose name I believe was Fritz Gleissner, was the son of the Austrian Prime Minister. A very nice guy. We would just meet and chat very informally but we often discussed political subjects and it was a good way to pick up the type of German I would later need. I always felt afterwards that those nine months devoted to German language, culture and history put me in a better position to evaluate developments in Germany.

Q: At the conclusion of that experience you were sent back to Germany, this time to Duesseldorf in 1952. When had that post been opened?

WYMAN: It hadn't been open very long. Duesseldorf was in the British Occupation Zone, and for some time after the war we simply had what was called a Land Observer there. Joe Darling, whom Pat and I had both known earlier, but separately, occupied that position. But then a Consulate General was established there, with LaVerne Baldwin in charge.

Q: And you were the political officer.

WYMAN: Well, I was the junior of two political officers there.

I might mention that going back to Duesseldorf seemed quite strange to me at first. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, my artillery battalion had fired on Duesseldorf during the war. All the time I was in Duesseldorf, I felt I should avoid that subject. Occasionally, for one reason or another, a German I was talking to would say, "What did you do during the war?" I used to dance around that one!

This again was an unusual political environment and a particularly interesting one. We were carefully watching to see how well the Germans were doing in trying out their new democracy. We kept a particularly close eye on the people who had Nazi backgrounds and were trying to come back into politics. We also kept a wary eye on the communists, whose political party was legal at that time. I remember going with Bob Stevenson to attend one of their large outdoor rallies and doing everything possible to conceal our identities as Americans. It was a fascinating experience but we were a little nervous to be in the middle of that crowd. Finally we noticed that there was one chap next to us who seemed to be staring at our feet, and we noticed that our American shoes were quite different from what the Germans were wearing. So we decided that we had heard enough by that time and departed without delay!

I met a number of German politicians in our consular district who would go a long way up in their careers. Walter Scheel, for example, who later became President of the Federal Republic of Germany for some years, was a good friend of mine. We sent Heinrich Luebke, another future President, to the United States on a “leader grant.” I had a long meeting with Gustav Heinemann, who was head of a neutralist party at that time but later became President of the FRG.

Q: How large was your consular district?

WYMAN: It covered North Rhine-Westphalia, one of the largest and most populous German states. The Ruhr valley was the most important of its industrialized areas but it contained a large rural area as well.

That reminds me that there was a striking correlation between the election result statistics on the SPD (Socialist Party) and the CDU (Christian Democratic Party), as compared with the statistics showing whether each district in North Rhine-Westphalia was predominantly urban or agricultural. I made a chart of that at one time which was quite astonishing. In the elections at that time, you could confidently predict whether a particular "Bezirk" (district) would produce a CDU or SPD majority by noting whether it was predominantly urban or agricultural.

Q: Socialist being urban and the country people being Christian Democrat?

WYMAN: Right. There was also another set of statistics which correlated with those two sets. Rural districts were predominantly Catholic and consistently produced CDU majorities. Urban districts were predominantly Protestant and consistently produced SPD majorities, though of course the percentages would vary somewhat from one election to another.

About seven or eight months before the end of my three-year tour, the Consul General called me in one day and said that my experiences in Cairo and Duesseldorf had been entirely on the political side and he thought that it would be good for my future career to get some experience on the economic side. He therefore wanted to move me into the Economic Section for those last eight months. I wasn't at all enthusiastic about it, for the political affairs side of the Foreign Service had always appealed most to me, but I really had no choice but to start working in the Economic Section.

Much of my work from then on involved going out and visiting different plants, talking to the managers, and finding out how things were going. This was at the time of the so-called "German economic miracle" which had begun with the currency reform in 1948. It was indeed an extraordinary period and one of those plant visits has always stuck in my memory as a vivid illustration of it. At the very end of the visit I said to the manager, "Well, Mr. Bauer (or whatever his name was), usually at the end of a discussion like this I ask the manager I'm talking to what the biggest problem is that his company is facing at the present time. However everything is going so marvelously at your company these days, it doesn't really seem to me as though you have any major problem at all."

He said, "Oh, Mr. Wyman, we have a terrible problem." I was astonished and asked what it could possibly be. Then he said, "There are some companies which have been wonderful customers of ours for many, many years. Loyal customers, the kind we really need for the future of the company. One of those customers called me up day before yesterday. He said he wanted to place a large order for some of our most expensive

products, to be delivered as soon as possible. I had to tell him that we would do our best but that we are so busy with orders already placed with us that it will be well over a year before we could start working on his order. Mr. Wyman, can't you see what a terrible problem that is?" I said, "Yes, Mr. Bauer, I can see it's a problem, but on the other hand I can't think of a nicer problem for any company to have!"

Q: Did you have a Commercial Officer or a Labor Officer at the Consulate General to help you in the Economic Section?

WYMAN: We had a separate Labor Officer who operated quite independently.

Q: Labor was quite important in your area.

WYMAN: It was indeed, and he was a full-time Labor Officer, but I didn't get involved in that area at all. As for commercial work, that was shared among the officers in the Economic Section. I did a certain amount of that but we didn't have many American businessmen coming to us at that time.

On the other hand I carried out a number of anti-dumping investigations. I would visit manufacturing plants and go over a long list of questions with their managers designed to establish whether or not they had been selling their products below cost in the United States. I remember doing more of that than straight commercial work. Much of the standard work on World Trade Directory Reports (WTDs) was done almost entirely by our German staff.

Q: In regard to Duesseldorf, which is not too far from Bonn, where we had our High Commission (later embassy), did your reporting go directly to Washington? Did it go through the embassy? Did it go to both?

WYMAN: Our reporting, both political and economic, went to both. It did not go through the embassy. We sent our reports straight to Washington but we always sent copies to Bonn. That was not a problem.

Q: Was there any bitterness in your area about the reparations and the restitution questions whereby the dismantling of some of the industries took place?

WYMAN: By 1952-1955, that stage was really well behind us. German businessmen were well aware by then of the assistance that the Marshall Plan had given them. I was impressed by the appreciation they frequently expressed for the Marshall Plan. In many countries people seemed to forget very quickly the assistance they had received from the United States. In Western Germany and in Berlin, people were openly grateful at that time and for a long time thereafter.

Q: They always have been. Did you or the Consulate General have close relations with the British occupying authorities there?

WYMAN: Definitely. We had close relations with them and exchanged a lot of political information with them. I even participated in one of the training programs they had established for German politicians. They had set up a two week course at Wilton Park, a beautiful country estate near Brighton in England, to which they invited selected German politicians to attend classes and lectures on how the British government operates at the national and local levels. The purpose of course was to provide some detailed understanding of how a successful democracy works. They invited me to visit Wilton Park for a week to observe what they were doing and make any suggestions I might have to offer. So I attended and was impressed. I thought the British did it very well, and it was well received by the Germans. Of course we Americans were selecting and sending a lot of Germans for similar purposes to the United States in those days, mostly on what were called "leader grants."

Q: Any other comments about your days in Duesseldorf?

WYMAN: By and large, those years in Duesseldorf when I was intently watching the political scene, not only within our own consular district but also throughout West Germany, gave me a feeling that the Germans were finally developing a sound foundation for a democratic future. I have always believed that the policies which we and the British and the French pursued towards West Germany and Berlin in the postwar period made a helpful contribution to that development.

I am convinced that the switch from the vindictive policy towards Germany which had originally been planned by the Allies, to the surprisingly generous and cooperative policy which gradually developed, was very important in that respect. One could certainly argue that we treated the Germans better than they "deserved," but the results were extraordinarily good in my opinion.

Q: Then you went on transfer to Milan in 1955. Was this a transfer you had requested or not?

WYMAN: No. I was first assigned to Strasbourg at that point. Then Pat and I drove to Strasbourg to look the situation over in advance before going on home leave. The consul general there was very frank and said right away that he had been surprised that I had been assigned there because the appropriate rank for the position I had been assigned to was one step below the rank I had just been promoted to. Moreover, when he told me what the duties of the job would be, I didn't think I would enjoy it anyway. I can't remember the details now. So it was not hard to reach agreement very soon that we would both try to break the assignment. We were able to do that with little difficulty, so that problem disappeared.

Then, while on home leave, I received the assignment to Milan and we lived there from 1955 to 1958. During the first year there I was investigating the delivery of certain strategic American products to that part of Italy to see that none of those products had been diverted to destinations behind the Iron Curtain. Our government maintained a black list at that time of firms that American firms were not allowed to export to because they

had diverted items to the Soviet Union. I was supposed to uncover any firms which should be added to that list. This usually meant going to different factories in the area, asking a lot of questions, and checking on the arrival of certain shipments.

Q: This was part of the CoCom Program. Who was the consul general in Milan?

WYMAN: Bill Boswell, a very energetic and capable officer. He had come from Rome and arrived in Milan at almost the same time we did.

Q: Did you have commercial or labor officers there in Milan?

WYMAN: We had no labor officer. No one was designated as a commercial officer but that kind of work was carried out by the officers in the Economic Section.

Eventually, after I had done a year or so of this CoCom work, I was moved up to take the place of the departing chief of the Economic Section. That position involved both economic reporting and commercial work. Quite a few American businessmen came in to visit us and get help, so we did a fairly brisk business on the commercial side. But I also went to Montecatini, Pirelli, and other large Italian manufacturers to collect information for reports on Italian industries.

Q: How did the Italians in that part of the country think about the European Economic Community? Were they excited by it or relaxed?

WYMAN: I would say they supported it and thought it would work well for Italy. Northern Italy had done very well in its post-war recovery by that time. The most obvious sign of the transition was that everyone who had been riding around in those little Vespa scooters a few years ago was now riding around in the little Fiat cars. The Milanese business community had acquired a lot of confidence in its ability to compete with other areas and thought that the broader market which would open up with establishment of the Common Market would provide them with some fine opportunities.

Q: What were your relations with the embassy in Rome? Were they close? Did people visit you frequently or did you get to Rome?

WYMAN: I went to Rome a couple of times and an economic officer from the embassy visited us a couple of times. Those sessions were useful but they weren't a major part of the total experience.

Q: You were at the heart of economic Italy in a sense.

WYMAN: Right. There again, we sent all our reports straight back to Washington, with copies to the embassy.

Q: Did Ambassador Luce visit you there?

WYMAN: She did, and also her successor, Ambassador Zellerbach. Each of them came from Rome once while I was there. However I had a little problem with Zellerbach at the very outset. When he was arriving in Italy as the new ambassador, his plane came first to Milan for a refueling stop of about an hour en route to Rome. At that time Bill Boswell was back in the United States, so I was in charge of the Consulate General. I had foreseen that there would be some press interest in Zellerbach while he was there in Milan, but it had seemed to me that he would want to hold off any "arrival remarks" until he arrived in the capital where he was going to live and work. So I made arrangements at the airport so that he would not have any contact with the press there. I should have been more prudent and checked back with the Department to confirm that that's really what he wanted. When he arrived, he was quite surprised and clearly somewhat disappointed that the press wasn't all over him to find out what he had to say. I had to explain to him why the press wasn't there.

Q: There are times when you can't win and that's all.

WYMAN: Well, the moral of that story is: with new ambassadors whom you don't know, don't make any assumptions. Check first!

Q: What was the communist strength and influence in your region up there?

WYMAN: It was considerable. There was a lot of it. There were a number of cities that had communist mayors and the communists held sizable rallies from time to time. They were really a force to be reckoned with. As a matter of fact, the big political question the whole time I was there was whether there would be an "opening to the left" in the national coalition government which would enable the communists to exert far more influence.

Q: As I recall, that was the period when Mr. Togliatti, the Italian communist leader, broke with the Soviets. That apparently had a great deal of influence in Western Europe. Did the changes in the Italian government have any effect in your region?

WYMAN: No, I wouldn't say so.

Q: They did change rapidly in those years.

WYMAN: Yes, but the changes in prime ministers did not involve differences in basic policies. I don't recall any correlation between those changes and what was happening economically.

Q: Looking back on it, what were your principal problems in Milan?

WYMAN: In the year when I was doing CoCom work, the principal problem was that it was really very difficult to dig out the facts and know whether there had been any diversion of products. I don't claim to have found the answer to that. It was an awfully hard thing to do and I'm sure that a lot of strategic material did actually slip through. We

did the best we could, but without putting vastly greater resources into it, we couldn't really have been much more effective in preventing that kind of thing.

Other than that, there weren't any major problems in our work. We had excellent relations with the Italians and life in Milan was enjoyable. We used to say that we were bounded on the north by St. Moritz, on the east by Venice, on the south by Florence, and on the west by the Italian Riviera. In Milan itself, Maria Callas was singing at La Scala! However we were not happy with the school situation. We had four children by the end of our tour, the two girls born in Cairo, a son born in Bonn, and a baby daughter born in Milan. Bob went to a German-speaking kindergarten but the available Italian school was disappointing and Pat used the Calvert System for home teaching during our last year there.

Q: After those years abroad, you came back to the Department in 1958 into the Bureau of Economic Affairs and worked on commercial policy.

WYMAN: Our division was devoted mainly to the implementation of the GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) and the resolution of other trade policy issues, particularly ones involving the European Common Market. It worked hard to maintain conditions as close as possible to free trade, and I will never forget how most people in this part of the Department believed so strongly in free trade principles that it seemed almost like a religion for them. They felt that they were battling for a really great cause, and morale for that reason was high. That surprised me somewhat at first because the work was so technical and often involved mind-boggling details. Nevertheless, these people had a fundamental conviction, which I came to share, that what had already been done with the help of GATT to ensure freer trade between nations after the war had contributed a great deal to economic growth around the world, had helped to avoid depressions, and would continue to be extremely important for the economic future of all countries. They felt with considerable justification that they were making a big contribution to something which was very important to everybody.

Q: This was before we had set up the Special Trade Representative. More of the action was right in the Department.

WYMAN: Yes.

Q: Did they have regular meetings with Commerce, Defense, Agriculture, and Treasury?

WYMAN: A great many, particularly in what was called "The Trade Agreements Committee," and there were some fierce battles. Those other departments were not nearly as devoted to free trade principles, to put it mildly. I was not in the interdepartmental committees which met on a regular basis but I remember one time when I was arguing with some chap in the Department of Commerce and commented that the position I advocated was clearly in the total national interest. He responded bluntly and with unusual frankness, "Mr. Wyman, my job is not to defend the 'national interest.' It's to defend the interests of these lumber companies up there in the Northwest!"

Q: But State had some clout then on this subject. I suppose the top man at the Department, Mr. Dillon, was interested in those things. He was Under Secretary, was he not?

WYMAN: Yes.

Q: He came in about 1956. Then he became number two in the Department when Herter became Secretary in 1959. He was in Economic Affairs.

WYMAN: Yes, I remember noticing that he frequently entered the picture when issues involving the European Common Marker were concerned. Tom Mann and later Phil Trezise were the Assistant Secretaries for Economic Affairs during my time in the E Bureau. There was plenty of action down at our level, particularly with those other departments. My own specialty became what was called East-West trade work because I had had considerable experience in that area while I had been in Milan. I had to coordinate with other parts of the Department and to some extent with other departments too in handling policy issues regarding trade with the Soviet Union and other countries behind the Iron Curtain.

One of the most interesting experiences I had in that area came when I was sent up to New York to attend a meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Soviet Union had previously circulated for ECOSOC's consideration a draft resolution proposing certain principles to be followed in international economic relations. Of course this resolution was full of everything which would benefit the Soviet Union and very few principles with which we would agree. I was given the Soviet draft to see what I thought we should do about it. I decided that the best thing to do was to come up with a counter-draft of our own instead of seeking to amend their draft. So I did a lot of research and consulted a lot of people in order to come up with a good draft of our own.

I was thinking very much about the need to include in our draft not just principles that we strongly believed in, but also of the need to win support for our draft resolution from the colonial areas which had recently become independent and had joined the United Nations. This was in 1961 and not too many of those countries were already in the UN, but the flood had begun and some of them were represented in ECOSOC. After writing up the principles that would be particularly important from our own standpoint, I had inserted a number of principles that I knew would be very popular with these new countries. This draft resolution was approved on the American side with very little change and I went off to the ECOSOC meeting in New York confident that our counter-draft would appeal more than the Soviet draft to new countries who were members of ECOSOC.

When this issue came up at the ECOSOC meeting, the representatives of a couple of European countries spoke up and said they liked our draft much better than the Soviet draft. Then the representative of one of the new countries spoke up. After praising a

couple of paragraphs in the Soviet draft and several in our draft, he went on something like this: "There are, however, a lot of principles we favor which we do not find in either of these drafts." Then he came up with 20 or 25 principles which would, if actually put into practice, drastically revise current practice so as to benefit the under-developed countries, as they were then called, at the expense of the industrialized countries. I realized then that, while I had taken some account of the under-developed countries in our resolution, I had still made the basic mistake of thinking that the controversy at ECOSOC was going to be essentially between ourselves and the Soviet Union. That clearly would not be the case. Our basic problem would be to cope with the demands of the under-developed countries, who were really starting to throw their weight around in the General Assembly and in ECOSOC. That experience was an eye-opener to me as to the direction in which the United Nations was rapidly moving at that time.

Q: You mentioned being there in 1961. That was when we had the great changeover from the Eisenhower to the Kennedy administration. Did that affect what you were doing at all? Did new guidelines come from the White House?

WYMAN: No, I didn't see significant change in terms of international trade policy. We kept on along the basic lines we had been pursuing since the end of the war. The GATT principles were solidly backed by both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations.

Q: Did you have to wrestle much with the geographic bureaus on issues of East-West trade or were you able to get your way?

WYMAN: No, we didn't have too much of a problem with that. Most of the wrestling within our Department on commercial policy questions involved some of the issues between ourselves and the European Economic Community, where EUR would sometimes strongly disagree with us.

Q: Do you have anything else to say about that period in the Department?

WYMAN: One other memory that comes to mind is that of a couple of delightful trips to Geneva for international economic conferences of the GATT members and of the Economic Commission for Europe, the ECE. These meetings took place in Geneva, which is a very attractive city, and they were in the spring, when Geneva is at its best. It is also a city which has such marvelous restaurants that you can walk into any one of them and be sure of having a fine meal. I sometimes wonder whether international conferences would last as long as they do in Geneva if staying there were not so pleasant!

Q: At the end of that assignment in the Bureau of Economic Affairs, you went to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) for a year. Would you like to say anything about that year?

WYMAN: It was an enjoyable year. I think the most impressive part of it was the great number of really splendid speakers who addressed us on a great variety of topics. ICAF had had a lot of experience with different speakers over the years and knew the ones that

gave the most stimulating presentations.

I also remember well our trip to India and Pakistan. An international trip of two weeks was part of the curriculum and there were a number of trips to different parts of the world from which we could choose. I chose India and Pakistan because I thought I could obtain an excellent insight there into the economic development programs that were now going on all over the world with a lot of assistance from the industrialized countries, particularly the United States. I was much impressed on that trip by the widespread determination to carry out successful development programs despite the tremendous difficulties involved. This was in marked contrast to the attitude which I had earlier encountered in Egypt and which I mentioned to you a while ago. Of course it was also fascinating just to see those countries, which I had not seen before.

Q: At the end of that year at ICAF, you went back to Berlin in 1963. You went back first as an economic officer?

WYMAN: Yes, that's right. We arrived in 1963 and were there for five years altogether. The first year I was in the Economic Section and then the head of the section left and I was chief of the Economic Section for two years. Then Arch Calhoun, who was our Minister there at that time, asked me to move up to the position of Political Advisor, which was really a DCM position. That was a big jump in responsibility for me and I particularly enjoyed the last two years there.

Q: It was a different Berlin.
WYMAN: Yes, it was. The Wall had been constructed between East and West Berlin in 1961 and there were still many tragedies as people desperately tried to escape to the West by some ingenious new method. We had the same feeling as in 1948 of being politically in the center of the world, in a spot which was crucial from the standpoint of the Cold War. So often since 1945 there had been a tug of war over Berlin and this was still the case between 1963 and 1968. That was rather exciting. Moreover West Berlin had undergone a transformation since the end of the war and was now a very pleasant place to live. We had the cultural advantages of splendid symphonies, operas, and plays. It was also a wonderful area to play in, with its beautiful lakes, sailing, golf course, and forests. West Berlin was really quite beautiful. The Berliners couldn't possibly have been friendlier. We saw a lot of them and enjoyed their company. We never really felt isolated there, even though we could not travel in East Germany at all and could only drive to West Germany on the Helmstedt Autobahn --- just as had been the case during my first tour in Berlin. Our family seldom traveled out of Berlin because there were so many interesting things to do right there.

Q: Did the Mission handle the German Democratic Republic? Were we responsible for reporting on that?

WYMAN: Yes, we had an Eastern Affairs Section which was responsible for reporting on East Germany. This was years before we recognized the German Democratic Republic and established an embassy in East Berlin.

Q: Did you report directly to Washington again, to Bonn, or to both?

WYMAN: Our reports went straight to Washington, with copies to the embassy in Bonn. On very sensitive issues which we were disputing with the Soviets, we always had to send copies to our embassies in London, Paris, and Moscow and to the NATO and American military headquarters as well. Our Commandant's office often sent their own messages on those issues, too. Of course the structure of command for the Berlin Mission was a complicated and unique one. The ambassador was really the Chief of Mission.

Q: But he lived in Bonn.

WYMAN: Yes but he visited Berlin for a couple of days each month. The person who was technically second in command of the Mission was the American Commandant in Berlin, a two star general. Then came the Minister. He was theoretically responsible to the Commandant, but actually much more in practice to our ambassador in Bonn. Then came the so-called "Political Advisor," who was the Minister's deputy and had the same responsibilities as a Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) in an embassy.

Q: Because since it wasn't an embassy, it didn't have a DCM.

WYMAN: That's right. The unusual title of "Political Adviser" went back to the early postwar period when Ambassador Murphy had been the Political Adviser to General Clay. The relationships between the military commandants and the missions (British, French, and American) were rather complicated, too. I remember an incident which I was involved in that illustrated this. The British, American, and French commandants had responsibility for their own sectors of Berlin and jointly had responsibility for West Berlin. There was also a Chairman Commandant, a position which rotated among the commandants every month. If the American Chairman Commandant was out of town at some point, his authority did not pass down on the military side but over to our minister, Arch Calhoun. Now on one day our chairman commandant and Arch Calhoun were both out of town. So, even though the French and British commandants were in town, as well as the French and British ministers, I was actually the Acting Chairman Commandant.

Suddenly word came to us that day that propaganda posters obviously designed by the East Germans had just appeared in some U-Bahn (subway) stations in West Berlin. The U-Bahn trains were run by railway personnel from the East and they were normally not interfered with by any West Berlin authorities. But this was the first time they had ever put up propaganda posters like this. So I immediately contacted the British and French missions in Berlin by phone and argued that this was such a flagrant violation of previous practice that we should put a stop to it immediately, without delaying matters by consulting our embassies and capitals. The British and French agreed and so within two hours or so we had the posters ripped down. The East Germans must have been impressed because they never tried that game again. Neither our embassy in Bonn nor the Department complained that they should have been consulted in advance. I was very pleased with how well the incident worked out.

That same incident illustrates a basic aspect of our whole situation in Berlin. Both the Russians and the East Germans consistently tried to increase their influence on Berlin by what we called "salami tactics," the process of slicing off very slight gains in order to obtain a significant advantage after a series of such gains. They would try to make a slight change in an operating procedure of some type which would benefit their interests at the expense of ours and hope that it would be so slight that we would overlook it. From then on they would follow this new procedure and assert that it was an established custom which could not be challenged. Since the three Western Allies did not want the Soviets and East Germans to interfere with some of their own established practices regarding Berlin, they were reluctant to challenge that kind of argument. In the early postwar history of Berlin there had been cases where the Russians had achieved gains of some importance by using tactics of that kind. So we knew we had to watch out for that. This incident that I just talked about was a good example of an attempt to slice off some salami. It was something the East Germans would certainly have repeated and expanded in the future, on the grounds that the subway system was under their jurisdiction and that putting up posters was a normal part of their activity in subway stations, if we had not nipped it in the bud. The faster and more firmly we could quash the first move, the better off we would be.

Q: Were you there for President Kennedy's visit?

WYMAN: No, he had come to Berlin and given his famous speech several months before we arrived. He made an enormous hit with the Berliners. One of the most unforgettable incidents of my whole lifetime happened in that connection. When Kennedy was assassinated Pat and I were attending a three act opera. After the second act, the intermission became unusually long. Finally a man walked out on the stage and said that he had the sad duty of informing the audience that President Kennedy had been assassinated, and that the remainder of the opera was canceled. There was a kind of moan from the crowd and everybody then quietly left. The astonishing thing is that it not only happened that way at the opera, but that similar closings occurred at almost all public places in West Berlin that night. As we drove home we were amazed by the number of candles already burning in windows, even in make-shift shacks, for Kennedy.

The next morning, when we came out of our house and walked some distance, several people who were strangers but knew we were Americans came up and told us, in tears, how much they had admired Kennedy. Then, that night, we were astounded again as we saw that virtually every apartment and house in West Berlin had candles in its windows for him. It was just extraordinary.

Q: That was quite a token of their feeling for him.

Going back to other things, was this the period when the Soviets were holding up convoys coming into Berlin?

WYMAN: Yes, it was. We had to spend a lot of time on that. Again, this was a question

of salami tactics. The Soviets created various difficulties in trying to change the procedures so as to gain a little control over our military convoys coming to Berlin on the Autobahn. The East Germans also harassed the German traffic between Berlin and West Germany from time to time. The Soviets occasionally tried to intimidate the people in West Berlin during these mini-crises by using their fighter planes to "buzz" the city in a manner which sounded as though bombs were being dropped.
Soviet harassments of our military vehicles occurred from time to time and the Allies resisted all of them. These mini-crises were usually the result of arguments over little details. One of the big controversies of that time that I remember was called "the tailgate issue." The Soviets suddenly maintained that when their soldiers at the checkpoint in Helmstedt on the autobahn to Berlin looked into the Allied military trucks in order to count the number of soldiers there, they couldn't see just how many were there unless the tailgates of the trucks were lowered for that purpose. They started holding up convoys because the convoy commanders, following their orders, refused to put the tailgates down. Another time the Soviets tried to change the long-standing practice as to where the Allied military vehicles would park while Soviet soldiers were looking into them to make sure that only Allied soldiers were inside. They wanted to do it somewhat differently, in a manner more convenient for them and less convenient for us.

Disagreements on issues of this kind usually caused the Soviets to block off Allied military convoys so that they could not proceed to Berlin. The Allies consulted immediately and continuously during such crises, which required extensive coordination between the three missions in Berlin, the three embassies in Bonn, several military headquarters, and the three capitals. Everybody was agreed that we couldn't let the Soviets get away with salami tactics. On the other hand, one had to wonder if there wasn't some point where the change being sought was so trivial that it wasn't worth permitting a crisis to build up over it. Do you really have to follow the principle that no procedure of this type can be changed no matter how trivial the change appears to be?

Q: Years go by, things change.

WYMAN: When you put the issue that way, you begin to see why it was not easy to achieve agreement between the Americans, the British, and the French at the various levels involved in these issues. Yet in all, or possibly all but one of those cases during this period, we held to the firm line and refused to back off the earlier procedures even though this meant ordering our convoys to stay in place at the checkpoint until the dispute had been settled.
Q: They'd have to sleep in their trucks and things like that. They also squeezed us on the barge traffic, as I recall. So many of the goods coming into Berlin used to come by barge up the river.

What about the question of Christmas passes to allow the West Berliners to go visit relatives? Was that negotiated during your period there?

WYMAN: Yes, that was done by the Germans. The Allies stood on the sidelines and watched. We were concerned that the western side (that is, Bonn and the West Berlin city

government) might give away something of importance in return for concessions regarding these visits. We followed it all very closely in that regard. However I don't recall that we had objections to the agreements that were eventually reached.

Q: Did you have any dealings with the Soviets while you were there?

WYMAN: No, I didn't. Ambassador McGhee did meet with the Soviet ambassador, Abrasimov, several times in Berlin. While I was there, nothing much appeared to come out of that. However those meetings did initiate discussions with the Soviets which eventually led to a basic agreement with the Soviets in 1971 on access to Berlin. The Soviets lived up to that agreement and there were no more crises over Berlin. The conclusion of that agreement showed that the Soviets had finally come to realize that exerting constant pressure on Berlin was really inconsistent with their other goals. What they wanted most of all was for the United States and the Western European governments to relax, particularly from a military standpoint, reduce their military forces, and thus provide more leeway for the exercise of Soviet power. But as long as they kept on pushing Berlin and trying to force the Allies out, they were keeping ourselves and Western European governments constantly stirred up about this issue. That increased their willingness to put up with expenditures on military defense.

When the Soviets signed the access agreement in 1971, I felt confident they had finally recognized these facts. It was hard for them to give up their blustering and aggressive tactics, but they could see that it would be in their interest to honor this agreement. The Soviets would have lost all that gain if they had again started to make trouble about Berlin. So I think it was a very logical development that this agreement finally came about. It still surprises me that it took the Soviets so long to realize that all that constant pressure on Berlin had really proven counter to their interests. The explanation must be that only many, many years of disappointing experiences could finally convince them that the Allies were simply not going to give way in Berlin no matter how much pressure the Soviets put on.

Q: And no matter what the administration was in Washington, the policy was going to remain the same, and that the British and French were pretty firm, too, in that regard.

WYMAN: Right.

Another memorable event during our last two years in Berlin was the visit of the Shah of Iran. Suddenly a street demonstration materialized against him, led by Iranian students who were at the University of Berlin. I hadn't realized there were so many of them in Berlin. Of course they were supported by many of the other university students, who were inclined to do a lot of protesting in those days for a number of reasons, including Vietnam.

Q: I was going to ask you whether there were any anti-Vietnam demonstrations.

WYMAN: Yes there were. On one occasion some students tried to damage and invade

the “America House” while Pat and I were among the people inside, but the West Berlin police prevented that. However those anti-Vietnam demonstrations were not as large and dangerous as the one against the Shah. I had not realized that there was so much anti-Shah feeling among young Iranians. They pelted with ripe tomatoes the motorcade, which included the car in which Pat and I were driving, and created an uproar. Later in the evening one of the protesting students, whose name was Ohnesorg, was shot by a policeman. That infuriated the students and provided the cause for a good many additional demonstrations by University students in the following weeks, leading eventually to the resignation of the mayor of West Berlin. That night also marked the origin of the notorious Bader-Meinhoff gang which later carried out many terrorist actions in West Germany.

Q: When you say "University of Berlin," do you mean the Free University, or both the Humboldt and the Free?

WYMAN: I mean the Free University in West Berlin. Students in East Berlin were on the other side of the Wall and couldn’t come to West Berlin under any circumstances. The anti-Vietnam demonstrations put on by the Free University students were not a reflection of the views of West Berliners. The West Berliners didn’t all necessarily approve of our policy in Vietnam, but they certainly were not inclined to go out and participate in demonstrations about it. The youngsters in the Free University were a different story entirely. Many of them had become keen on organizing demonstrations and had put on lots of them for other reasons, too, including the regulations of the University. Of course that had considerable similarity to the situation back in our own country.

Q: Any other comments about those five years in Berlin?

WYMAN: I’d only add that this was really my favorite assignment of all that we had.

Q: You had a complete change of pace when you left there in 1968 by going as a Diplomat in Residence to the University of North Dakota. What were your duties there?

WYMAN: I met with the president of the university, George Starcher, shortly after arriving. He said, "Mr. Wyman, we're delighted to have you here. We're sure you're going to make an important contribution to the university. We think you can do that best by deciding for yourself what you will do while you're here." It was a novel and delightful situation for me to have that much freedom of action.
I conducted a seminar on American foreign relations. At the outset I asked each student to pick out some current foreign relations problem, research it, give an oral report on it to the class, and then write a paper with recommendations as to what the United States ought to do. In the first few sessions, while the students were doing their initial research, I talked to them about the structure of the foreign relations community, the way it operated, the typical problems we encountered, and so forth. It was fascinating to see the conclusions they arrived at and how some of them changed their minds when they researched the problems they had selected. I remember, for example, a young woman who chose as her subject American policy towards Nigeria and Biafra, which was then

fighting to become independent of Nigeria. The prevailing sentiment among students and demonstrating groups around the United States at that time was strongly in favor of Biafra. They felt that because Biafra wanted independence, their cause must deserve support. As this student went deeper and deeper into the problem and found, for example, that all the African states were opposed to Biafran independence, she completely changed her views on the subject. I think those seminar students developed some understanding of the complexity of the foreign policy problems which the United States faces at any time.

While the conduct of this seminar was my major activity within the university itself, I spent a great deal of time traveling around the whole state and talking to various groups about different foreign policy subjects. Some of the topics I discussed were Berlin, our major foreign policies since 1945, and the Foreign Service as a career. I found many groups around the state that were interested in hearing about subjects of that nature.

Q: We don't normally think of that part of the country as being deeply involved in foreign affairs.

WYMAN: No, you're quite right. But I think a talk on this type of subject appealed to a lot of these organizations precisely because of its novelty. By this time, the long established Rotary Clubs, for example, had listened to people who represented almost every occupation except that of Foreign Service Officer. So, when they heard about my availability (as I made sure they did!), they were intrigued.

I spoke to 125 different organizations in the course of that school year, including lots of organizations I never before knew existed. I drove all over North Dakota for those meetings and even went into Montana and Minnesota a few times. With all that practice, I came to enjoy public speaking for the first time in my life. Moreover I felt useful in representing and discussing the Foreign Service, with which my audiences were not at all familiar. The question and answer periods were always the most interesting aspect from my standpoint. It was particularly stimulating to encounter some questions to which I hadn't previously given much thought and then have to come up with answers right away. Sometimes I would come home afterwards and say to Pat, "I was so pleased to find out tonight what I think about..." I had never focused on that subject before. I knew what was going on and I was aware of the issue, but I had never consciously tried to form an opinion about it. Then someone in the audience would ask what I thought about it and I had to make up my mind in a real hurry!

Q: When that fascinating year was over, you came to Washington and went to the Pentagon in 1969. I understand you worked in the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff there. Can you say a little bit about that?

WYMAN: My position was called "State Department Advisor to the J-5," the J-5 being Chief of the Policy Planning part of the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I made a big mistake in not talking to the Foreign Service Officer who had preceded me in that position before taking it on myself. If I had talked to him, I think I would have realized that it was not something I wanted and could then have found a better assignment. What I

discovered when I got into the job was simply that it was a fifth wheel experience. I think that when State Department advisors had first been assigned to the Pentagon, there had been a real need for them. But a lot had happened since then. Most important, Henry Kissinger as National Security Adviser, with his system of assigning options papers on major security issues to the State and Defense departments for the preparation of exhaustive joint replies from them, had brought a lot of the top people in State and Defense much more closely together. As a result, when I found an issue that I might have wanted to dig into and see if I could provide useful advice, I learned that it was already being thoroughly discussed between the top levels in the Joint Chiefs and the Assistant Secretary of that area in our Department. I think there had been times a few years before when on some issues the two Departments were hardly talking to each other and when it would have been very useful to have a State Department Advisor to J-5. Under the conditions now existing, however, I really could not find a proper role for myself.

I wondered sometimes if I was overlooking some big opportunity, so I was very interested by what happened to my successor. When I was preparing to leave the Pentagon, the guy who was going to succeed me took the initiative to look me up. I told him I thought it was not a good job for a Foreign Service Officer to take on and I told him why, the same reason I've expressed to you. He listened politely but he did go ahead and take the job anyway. Well, it just so happened that a couple of years later, I ran into this guy again after he had left that job. I said to him, "I'd love to hear what your experiences were in that job. What did you think about it?" He looked at me with a painful grin and said, "That job was all you said it was --- and less!"

So I don't have much more to say about that period except that the people I worked with there in the Pentagon were cordial and friendly. It was to be a two-year assignment but I was really fed up with it after nine months and wanted to move on to something else. I got in touch with the personnel people in our Department and said, "I'd like to get out of this job. What can I do?" They said, "Ordinarily, it would not be possible at all, but it happens that we are desperately looking for volunteers for Vietnam assignments. If you are willing to go to Vietnam, we will get you out of this assignment right away."

I thought it over for a while, discussed it with Pat, and finally decided to do it. Since I would have to leave Pat and the children behind if I took the assignment, it was a very tough decision. However I wanted very much to leave a job in which I felt I could not accomplish anything useful. In contrast, I felt that Vietnam was the biggest problem facing our country at the time, and I knew that senior Foreign Service officers were badly needed there. Moreover I was one of those who had been backing our policy in Vietnam and it seemed right that I should become personally involved in our efforts there. So, I went over there to take up a position called "Province Senior Advisor."

Q: This was in 1970.

WYMAN: Yes. The war was going on at full pitch at that point. The phased withdrawal of American troops was just getting started.

I was stationed in Tay Ninh City, the capital of Tay Ninh Province, one of the provinces along the Cambodian border, and a day's drive from Saigon. I was head of a hundred man combined military-civilian team that provided advice not only to the Province Chief but also to the district chiefs within the province. The bulk of our team was military and it dealt with military issues, but the civilian side of the team dealt with economic development, refugees, education, police work, even nursing in the hospitals, and other civil subjects.

It was certainly a unique experience to be with a combined military-civilian team like that. In half of the provinces, the leaders of these CORDS teams were full colonels. In the other half, the leaders were Foreign Service Officers. My deputy was a colonel.

Of course the experiences I had out there during that assignment were very different from other Foreign Service assignments. One fundamental difference was that instead of being on the sidelines with regard to what is going on in the country where one is assigned, as you normally are in an embassy, in this case we were right in the thick of the action and working hard as part of the foreign government's team. A second major difference of course was living in a wartime environment and being exposed to the dangers that involved.

I'll mention one incident that I think is significant. We practically never had American newspaper men come to our province, but on one occasion a sizable force of regular North Vietnamese troops crossed our border with Cambodia and launched a conventional type of attack, moving towards Tay Ninh City. They were making good progress. American newspapermen heard of this right away and several of them came rushing up to Tay Ninh. They filed stories about this great new threat to South Vietnam and the important battle that was starting.

Well, the South Vietnamese forces fought well. This was one of the very few confrontations between large numbers of North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese forces out in the open, and the South Vietnamese won. The Northern forces retreated and vanished. Those newspaper men that had touted the upcoming battle promptly disappeared and wrote almost nothing about the outcome.

Q: In other words, they didn't want to hear that the South Vietnamese had won.

WYMAN: They didn't want to report it; they didn't want to publicize it. It wasn't fashionable. It didn't fit in with the line they were taking. This was true of the whole gang of them.

Q: Depressing.

WYMAN: Yes. When you're on the spot and you admire so much what the South Vietnamese were able to accomplish in that case and you know how difficult it was, and then have it treated that way, you don't forget it.

Another unforgettable thing which happened in Tay Ninh while I was there was a major blow to South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese regular army had one general, General Do Cao Tri, who had performed extremely well when in command and had acquired a unique reputation. He was small even by Vietnamese standards, not much taller than five feet I would think. But he had in his appearance and manner a genuine charisma, and his reputation was such that his presence appeared to help the ARVN troops perform better. He came to Tay Ninh at this time for a conference with some Cambodian military officers and then took off in a helicopter on his way back to his headquarters. The helicopter rose about 200 feet above the runway when suddenly the power failed and it crashed. Everyone on board was killed instantly. We never knew whether it was an accident, which it could have been, or sabotage, which it could have been. There were very, very few accidents like that. I was up in those helicopters a lot myself. Helicopter accidents were extremely rare. So we all suspected that this was sabotage, but it was never proven against anyone. In any case he was gone, the best general in the army and the best hope for competent military leadership in the future.

Q: To whom did you report? Was there someone in the embassy who coordinated your reports?

WYMAN: No, not in the embassy. A Foreign Service Officer was in charge of all the Province Senior Advisers (PSAs) in the Third Military Region, as that part of South Vietnam was called. That was Charlie Whitehouse when I first arrived and later Dick Funkhouser. He was located in Bien Hoa, a city quite close to Saigon. He frequently visited the provinces in the region to discuss with PSAs how things were going. There were also monthly conferences of all of these PSAs at his headquarters to compare notes, make recommendations, and so forth. Much more importance was placed on these face-to-face meetings than on written reports.

Bill Colby, who would later become Director of the CIA, was the head of the whole CORDS program at that time. I remember him coming out to visit Tay Ninh one time and staying overnight. He was impressive and very well informed.

Our team did very little political reporting and I don't remember whether those reports went only to Bien Hoa or also to the embassy. An officer from the embassy's Political Section visited us from time to time. However most of the political reporting was sent from Bien Hoa or CORDS Headquarters to the embassy, for they were in a much better position to do so than the teams like ours which were limited to one province in their observations. The embassy would have been deluged in paper if each CORDS team had sent numerous political reports to it.

Q: Did your previous tours in Berlin and the Pentagon have an effect in that you encountered military officers in Vietnam whom you had known previously?

WYMAN: No, actually that didn't happen while I was in Vietnam. On the other hand those two tours plus my year with so many military officers at ICAF made me more comfortable working with the military than would otherwise have been the case.

Q: I think the important thing is the fact that it enabled you to work with them with ease. When you left Vietnam in 1972, did you feel that the end was near, that we would be able to stave off a communist takeover, or not?

WYMAN: I felt uncertain which way it would go, but if I had had to bet on it I would probably have bet that South Vietnam would survive. There were a lot of encouraging signs at that time. For example, the withdrawal of 95% of our troops that had been there when I had arrived had not seemed to change the situation for the worse. In some areas there had been noticeable improvement. On the other hand, I knew there was still great danger ahead and that all might yet be lost. I still wonder, frankly, if South Vietnam might have survived if Congress had not later thrown in the towel the way it did and refused to continue providing material aid as requested by the White House. Perhaps not, because the North Vietnamese leaders had incredible tenacity, but we will never know for sure.

I would like to discuss here my view as to why American troops were sent to fight in Vietnam, because I think people who look at that issue today rarely take into account the preceding history of our policies in the Far East. In the case of China, there had been great controversy in the late 1940s as to how much aid America should provide Chiang Kai-shek in his struggle with the communists for control of China. After the communists won that struggle, our Republican party derived great political advantage with the argument that Chiang Kai-Shek would have prevailed if the Democrats had provided his government with more assistance. “Truman lost China,” they argued, and a lot of Americans believed them.

When North Korea attacked South Korea in 1950, Truman had to make a decision right away as to whether to try and defend South Korea with American forces. He and his party were still suffering from those charges about losing China and the last thing he wanted was to be accused now of losing South Korea in addition. I think that was a big factor in the promptness with which he made what I think was absolutely the right decision, to fight back in South Korea. But then the Korean War went on a lot longer than it was expected to, because of the Chinese intervention, and many American lives were lost. The Republicans did not argue that Truman had made the wrong decision when he sent American troops into Korea. Many of them maintained, however, that if Secretary of State Acheson hadn't given an indirect indication several months before the North Korean attack that South Korea was outside the American defense perimeter, the North Korean would never have dared to carry out that attack. They said that the war could have been entirely avoided if the administration had made clear that we were prepared to defend South Korea. This argument too impressed many Americans.

Several years later, the Vietnam problem began to loom large. For someone with the recent Korean experience very much in mind, it seemed logical to make crystal clear to the North Vietnamese and everyone else that America would not stand aside and permit South Vietnam, which included so many refugees who had fled from their homes in North Vietnam to escape communist rule there, to be taken over by the North

Vietnamese. So Eisenhower publicly made that kind of promise again and again. When Kennedy followed Eisenhower, he continued to make the same kind of commitment, and so did Johnson after he took over. So for a good many years we had been telling all the world that we were going to make damn sure that South Vietnam was not overrun. Eventually, in 1965, the situation had come to the point where South Vietnam obviously was going to go down the drain unless it could be saved by sending in American forces. So, what were you going to do? You knew that if you didn't go in, you certainly would be considered by people all over the world to have broken our solemn and repeated promises as a nation, and to have betrayed an ally. That was bad enough. In addition, what would that repudiation of previous promises have meant in terms of our military commitments to NATO, Berlin and other areas where we had said that we stood ready to help? Wouldn't they now be regarded by friend and foe alike as worthless?

If one takes that background into account, I think one can understand a lot better the pressure that was on Johnson to do what he did. When he first sent the American troops into South Vietnam and was asked by the press why he had done so, his basic answer was simply that we had solemnly and publicly promised not to permit the defeat of South Vietnam.

Q: That's a very interesting hypothesis. I think it's one that people seldom look at today: the disasters and problems we had had before in other parts of the Far East and how they built up to Vietnam.

At the end of your time in Vietnam, in 1972, you went to Addis Ababa as Deputy Chief of Mission. Had you asked for this assignment?

WYMAN: No. I was not in the habit of seeking out a particular position for my next assignment. A lot of colleagues did, but I just didn't feel like doing that. I preferred to concentrate on the job that I was doing and then make the best of the assignment that came up.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you arrived in Addis?

WYMAN: He was Ross Adair, a former Congressman who had been appointed to that position as a reward for his long, faithful service in Congress. He was a very pleasant person to work for. Moreover, working for a non-career ambassador proved to be a very different experience from working for a career officer. There were many subjects he did not get into that a career ambassador would have gone into. This was fine with me because it gave me, as his DCM, more scope and authority. Our Mission in Addis Ababa was quite a challenge in that regard because in addition to the Embassy it included the AID, MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group), USIS, Peace Corps, and NAMRU (Naval Medical Research Unit) offices.

That tour in Ethiopia was to be an amazing experience. I thought when I went there from Vietnam that Addis Ababa would be a quiet post. After all, Ethiopian emperors had been running things there for a couple of thousand years.

Q: But you brought the excitement with you, didn't you?

WYMAN: Not right away! However, after some months the terrible drought started in. That was an awful situation. What made it even worse than it would have been anyway was the fact that the Ethiopian government kept us off at arm's length for quite a while as far as drought assistance was concerned. They really did not want to have any publicity about the need for foreign assistance to cope with the drought. They thought it would reflect badly on the government, so they tried to minimize the situation and said that they would be able to cope with it. If there was to be any outside assistance, they wanted it kept at very modest levels. Well, that was a tough situation to deal with. It was hard to bring in relief that they said they didn't need and it was difficult for us to judge at first how much they would be able to do for themselves. The long and short of it is that our aid, and that of other countries as well, arrived later than it should have. I am sure that some people died as a result. We all felt very badly when we eventually realized that.

Q: How about the security situation with regard to Somalia and Eritrea at that time? Were they having problems there?

WYMAN: Yes, but let me say one more thing about the drought. I came to the conclusion that we were poorly organized in Washington to deal with this kind of situation. There had been natural catastrophes at various recent times in different areas around the world where some American assistance had been provided. Nevertheless, when it came to relief for the drought in Ethiopia, we seemed to be dealing with people in Washington who had never had anything to do with droughts before. There didn't seem to be any knowledge as to how best to go about it, and no requests to us for the type of information that would be most helpful to them in organizing drought relief. Everything had to be figured out from scratch. I discovered later on that this in fact had been more or less the case. There hadn't really been an attempt to establish a central repository of information about the best methods to tackle this kind of problem, nor were people assigned to deal with it who had had previous experience of that type. AID did move to remedy that problem, but only later. I couldn't give you an exact year. They set up an Office of Emergency Assistance, if I remember the name correctly, to deal with problems of that type which might arise anywhere in the world.

Q: As a result, I think, of the Ethiopian tragedy.

WYMAN: I believe so, and I think they were able to do a better job after that. They had a much better knowledge then of what the problems were likely to be and how best to cope with them. I wish that office had existed when the drought in Ethiopia first started.

Q: You did have an AID mission in Addis?

WYMAN: Yes, but its personnel hadn't had experience with drought conditions before either.

Q: Did you have an Agricultural Attache?

WYMAN: No, we didn't have such a person, but AID covered agricultural matters.

You mentioned Eritrea and Somalia. Just very briefly on that, the Eritrean civil war had been going on for years by the time I arrived in Addis. That was a continuing major problem for the government.

Q: Did we still have a post up in Asmara?

WYMAN: Oh yes, we had a Consulate General there and the Navy had Kagnew Station. It was collecting electronic information which had been picked up at vast distances from there. That information had been very important from a military standpoint in the past. Later on it became less important technologically and towards the end of my tour Washington decided to terminate Kagnew entirely. However it was still considered important when I first arrived.

Somalia was a serious threat to Ethiopia during my entire tour. Its government loudly proclaimed its historical right to the Ogaden, a huge area of southeastern Ethiopia which was mostly desert. The Somalis made it quite clear that they intended to recover this area soon by any possible means. Moreover the Somalis were obtaining a lot of military equipment from the Soviets at that time.

The Somali threat in turn put great strain on our relations with Ethiopia because its government kept pressing us for a very large increase in military assistance. We had been providing military assistance to Ethiopia for many years, partly on a grant and partly on a loan basis. It had been at modest levels of seven or eight million dollars annually. Now they wanted to increase that level a great deal, pointing to the huge amounts of equipment that the Soviets were providing to Somalia. In response to our recommendations, the Department did obtain from Congress an increase of three million dollars or so, but it pointed out to us that that was the limit because Congress by the end of the Vietnam War was in no mood to provide increased military assistance to anybody.

We in the embassy could certainly understand that problem. But it was something quite different to bring the Ethiopian government to understand why their long-time friend and virtual ally couldn't provide them with a lot more assistance when they were obviously for the first time coming under a major military threat. Even in the first half of my tour when a normal civilian government was in power and Haile Selassie was in control, the Ethiopian government was very unhappy with us for this reason.

Q: You mentioned the Emperor, Haile Selassie. Was there much discontent in those years with his rule? Could you see trouble coming for him?

WYMAN: There was a great deal of discontent because Ethiopia was one of the very least developed countries in the world. It was very hard, however, to figure out whether anything would soon result from that discontent, what form it would take, who would

carry it out, and so forth. It was the conventional wisdom (and by that I mean the view held by everybody I talked to out there, including lots of Ethiopians as well as people in other embassies) that there would be no serious threat to the existing regime as long as the aging emperor was still in place. When he died, that would be a new ball game. Who could tell what would happen then?

This conclusion seemed reasonable. There had been an attempt back in 1960 to carry out a coup d'etat while the Emperor was out of the country, but he had rushed back and quickly snuffed it out. Since then, the situation had been quiet.

That brings us to how the situation changed so radically. Midway in my three year assignment in Addis, Ambassador Adair retired for health reasons and went home. I became Charge d'Affaires for a period which turned out, surprisingly, to be thirteen months. Four days after the ambassador left, the Ethiopian Revolution started. Its origin was hidden from public view, however. Apparently there had been a severe shortage of water at one of the Ethiopian outposts in the Ogaden Desert. The army had a number of these outposts there so they could quickly detect any Somali attempt to invade that area surreptitiously. There were perhaps 30 or 40 enlisted men and three or four officers at this particular outpost. When the water shortage occurred, the officers insisted on taking most of the water for their own use. The enlisted men decided they just couldn't live on their meager daily ration of water and mutinied. They tied up the officers and said they wouldn't let them loose until their own water ration was increased and the officers swore not to try and have them punished later. Eventually the officers, who had no choice, agreed to that.

You might have thought that would be the end of it, but the amazing thing is that the enlisted men who had done this then broadcast on the military radio network what had happened. Probably they thought that they were less likely to be punished if enlisted men in other Army units knew what they had done. Soon after their broadcast had been heard, enlisted men at a couple of other military outfits presented other kinds of demands to their own officers. They too were successful. Then the newspapers began to pick this up and report these incidents. The next day, instead of two incidents, you'd read about four incidents. As some civilian groups such as teachers and taxicab drivers read about this, they decided that this might be a good time for them to see if they couldn't win some advantage. So they presented their demands and the crisis continued to grow like the traditional snowball that turned into an avalanche. Then all military units sent representatives to Addis to present their combined grievances to the central government. The ones sent were either junior officers or non-commissioned officers, and tended to be the most radical and vociferous in their units. Those representatives then formed a committee in Addis which was called the "Derg," a word which simply means "committee." One of those men was Major Mengistu, who would gradually come to dominate the entire group by methods which included murdering his rivals.

Meanwhile the incidents, strikes, and mutinies continued to grow in scope. The Prime Minister was replaced, the government's authority looked increasingly weak, and the influence of the Derg was obviously growing. The military rebels appeared to be the most

dangerous threat from the beginning and our reports to the Department sometimes referred to the ongoing developments as a "creeping coup." The reason we used that expression was that there had been many military coups d'etat in various African states, but they had all been very rapid. Soldiers would come in the middle of the night and shoot the president and take over the palace, or something like that, and then announce a new government the next morning. This wasn't like that.

Q: It was slowly, slowly building up.
WYMAN: Yes. It seemed so unusual. Well, it certainly was unusual by the standards of those other coups in Africa. On the other hand, if you recall the French Revolution, that too proceeded in stages over months and years before you came to the execution of the king and the "Reign of Terror."

Gradually we began to see the collapse of the entire previously existing power structure. It became obvious that the new civilian government was being manipulated by the Derg, and we heard more and more of Mengistu's influence in the Derg. Its members had gone way beyond the role of presenting grievances and were calling the shots themselves even though Haile Selassie was still emperor and there was still a civilian government. By this time many of the most influential people in the country had been arrested and thrown into the same prison in Addis. Finally the military arrested the emperor, put him under house arrest, and installed General Aman Andom as the new Head of Government.

The next day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs telephoned me and asked me to call on General Andom three hours later. After a few seconds of hesitation I agreed to do so. When I arrived, I found that television cameras had been assigned to record this call, and later the calls of the British and French ambassadors, as proof that foreign countries recognized the new government. The Department subsequently agreed with the decision I had made.

From the standpoint of American policy, the major issue continued to be that of military assistance. Aman Andom's government believed, just as the previous civilian governments had, that there was great danger that Somalia might soon attack Ethiopia, with Soviet support, and try to seize a huge chunk of the country. So they wanted a great increase in military assistance from the United States. I did my best to explain our position to General Aman Andom.

In that regard, there was a very tough and personal issue that arose for me. The telegrams from the Department on this subject said that it wasn't possible to obtain Congressional approval for any further military assistance beyond the additional three million dollars we had previously managed to obtain from Congress and that, in explaining our refusal to provide additional aid, I should emphasize that we did not take nearly as serious a view of the Somali threat as their government did. Our government thought they were much too alarmed on this score. It wasn't likely, in their opinion, that Somalia would attack Ethiopia.

When I received those instructions, I realized that there were two possibilities in trying to

explain the situation to this new government. One was to take the line the Department was calling for, to tell them that the Somali threat was overblown, a line which I myself did not believe for a minute. I knew that the Ethiopians would not believe it for a minute either. I knew their reaction would be, "Those Americans are idiots. The people in Washington and their Charge d'Affaires here, they're all idiots! What can we hope from a bunch like that if they can't see all the evidence in Somalia? Why do they think the Somalis are getting all this military equipment from the Soviets?" I certainly did not want to invite that reaction and completely destroy our credibility with the military government.

The alternative was to explain frankly to the Ethiopians what I knew to be the primary cause for the Department's position, namely the unwillingness of Congress to increase military assistance to any country at that time because they were so upset about the results of all the military assistance which had been provided to South Vietnam. The Department wasn't willing to authorize, in a telegram which would be on the official record, a frank statement like that, putting the responsibility on Congress, for transmission to the Ethiopians. However I did not feel the same inhibitions in that regard, particularly since the statement I made would be an oral one. I didn't like to explain the situation that way, but it would be more truthful and I felt sure it would lead to a somewhat better reaction on the Ethiopian side. Such an explanation would cause them to realize that our Congress had little interest in Ethiopia, but at least they wouldn't think that all of us in the foreign policy area were just idiots, since the Somali threat was about as obvious as anything could be.

So, quite frankly, for the only time in my life I ignored the Department's instructions and presented the matter as seemed best to me. I put the emphasis on the decisive role of Congress concerning appropriations for military assistance, and on the overwhelming impact of the Vietnam experience on Congress in that regard. I mentioned that not everybody in Washington thought the Somali threat was as large as they did, but I only mentioned that in a very minor key. Furthermore, in my reporting back to the Department, I went over that part of the discussion very briefly. I simply said that I had dealt with the question of the severity of the Somali threat and had also mentioned that Congress was presently very unhappy with military assistance programs in general. I felt uncomfortable in doing that but I knew I couldn't persuade the Department to come around to the type of explanation to the Ethiopians which I felt sure was far more sensible and actually more truthful.

Looking at subsequent events, I feel they proved that I had been right. Later on, Somalia did attack with the help of all that Soviet equipment and gave the Ethiopians a terrific battle. The only thing that saved the Ethiopians was the fact that, by that time, the Soviets had switched to the Ethiopian side, which was an incredible story in itself. The Somalis, seeing that switch occur, had obviously decided that they had better attack before Soviet aid began to strengthen the Ethiopians. All that shows that it made sense for me to avoid telling the Ethiopians we wouldn't provide additional aid because the Somali threat was much exaggerated.

Q: Exactly. I don't see how you could be blamed for that.

WYMAN: I wasn't blamed for it. I'm sure they never realized in the Department what I had done.

Q: Did you as Charge at that time feel that Secretary Kissinger was taking an interest in the situation in Addis, which had grown very serious?

WYMAN: I have been told that the Secretaries of State and Defense, as well as the National Security Council, were all involved in it for a short time. Certainly our Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Joe Sisco, did get into the picture for a while. I had a nasty experience in that regard. One night about three months after General Aman Andom had taken over, the Derg killed him at his home and, without the pretense of a trial, executed about sixty of the most prominent people who were being held in one prison in Addis. These included a former prime minister, a prince of the royal family, and some of the highest ranking generals.

Q: The night of the long knives, in other words.

WYMAN: That's right. A day or two after we reported those executions, a telegram came back from the Department saying that, because of that event, our government was now suspending all arms deliveries to the Ethiopian government while it took the arms assistance program under review. We sent back a telegram in which we expressed agreement with this action, but we also urged the Department not to take certain logistical actions it had planned which would in our view have convinced the Ethiopians that we were definitely terminating our arms assistance to them. In that case they might immediately turn to the Soviets or the Chinese for arms assistance.

The Department did in fact accept and carry out our recommendation on this point. However, a day or two after our response went out, I got a telephone call from Sisco on the secure telephone line to the Department, which I had never before used. Referring to our telegram, he objected vigorously to one use in our telegram of the word "cutoff" instead of "suspension." He asserted in strong and intemperate language that I obviously did not understand the situation, that he did not know me personally, and that he had no confidence in my judgment. He went on to instruct me that I was not to make a move of any importance in relation to the Ethiopian government without prior authorization from the Department. I tried to assure him that we fully understood the importance and purpose of making clear to the Ethiopians that we were implementing a suspension, but not a permanent cutoff of our assistance, because of the barbaric executions they had carried out. The whole point of our response had been to make sure that the Ethiopians understood this important distinction and we had only used "cutoff" rather than "suspension" at one point in our telegram because we were speaking of the interpretation which the Ethiopian government might first have put on our action. However Sisco only became louder and angrier and made the same remarks all over again. I'm not exaggerating that conversation. I didn't trust myself towards the end to say more than that I understood what he had said.

Q: Not what you wanted to say.

WYMAN: No. It was a very unpleasant experience and unlike any other one I had in my entire career.

Q: During this period of great trouble, were there demonstrations against our embassy or against you personally as Charge?

WYMAN: No, there were not, with the exception of a sizable rock that one of the students at the University threw at the ambassadorial car when I was riding in it with the flag flying. It came right through the windshield and almost hit the driver. That was really the only violent action directed against an American that materialized in this whole period. The military leaders weren't trying at that time to stir up anti-American sentiment even though they were angry about the lack of military assistance from us and their domestic policies were turning more communist all the time.

Many of the students now distrusted the United States. These students thought that a revolution was needed in Ethiopia and they knew that our government had long had friendly relations with the emperor. But there were certainly no anti-American demonstrations at that time, and no government attempt to stir up such demonstrations. We could not be sure that this would continue to be the case, however, and we were also deeply concerned by the possibility of anarchy and a complete breakdown of law and order, in which case only Heaven knew what would happen. Moreover terrorists attacked our embassy in Khartoum during this period and killed our ambassador there. So there was a serious question of whether we ought to evacuate American dependents from Addis. We gave that a lot of thought. I felt it wasn't needed and told the Department that when they asked about it. Then I had a meeting with all the wives and explained to them that the question would be kept under constant review but that it was our best judgment in the embassy that such an evacuation was not needed at that time in Addis. I don't think any of the dependents left and I know that no harm subsequently came to them during this period.

The situation was quite different in Asmara when the civil war in Eritrea intensified after the execution of General Aman Andom. I recommended the immediate evacuation of dependents from our Consulate General in Asmara and the Department agreed. That was carried out in the course of one day.

Q: American business interests suffered. Wasn't there a nationalization of various properties out there that affected us?

WYMAN: Not really. The nationalization actions had little effect upon Americans because of the very limited extent of American business interests in Ethiopia. The major American investment there was Tenneco's search for oil, which continued without interruption. Several American employees of Tenneco were kidnaped for several months, but that was carried out by the Eritrean rebels. We took an active role in the lengthy but

successful negotiations for their release, and the Department later sent the Mission a formal commendation for its handling of the case.

In this connection I remember being asked by several visiting American businessmen for my prediction of what might happen in Ethiopia in the future. I frequently discussed that with our Political Counselor, Peter Sebastian. We agreed that the Derg as a collective body would not continue to exercise supreme power very long. Sooner or later, and more likely sooner, one person was going to emerge who would dominate the government. The history of many, many countries pointed to the virtual inevitability of such a development in the aftermath of revolution.

Beyond that, about all one could predict with confidence was that there was going to be a prolonged period of instability and uncertainty in Ethiopia. No matter what happened, nothing was going to be firmly established so that you could be confident it would survive for many years. No one could tell when or how the situation would eventually stabilize. Looking back, I think these predictions were accurate.

Q: What about the role of the Soviets?

WYMAN: I don't feel that I know a great deal about that. We knew that throughout this early period of the revolution, while I was there, the Soviets were pumping military equipment into Somalia. We knew that this put them into an increasingly awkward position in regard to Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government was now advocating and implementing a lot of policies which looked like some form of communism, and yet their major concern was an attack from Somalia based on Soviet backing for Somalia. I still don't know what the Soviet ambassador was saying in his conversations with the Ethiopian government at that time, but of course the Soviets eventually transferred their support to the Ethiopian side. How long that switch had been cooking, I don't know.

I had a good many discussions with the Soviet ambassador and their DCM about the developing situation. It was always interesting to see whether they would express approval of the radical policies being pursued by the Ethiopian government. One time, we had the Soviet ambassador over for dinner at our house. It was near Christmas. Pat had placed on a side table in our dining room one of those little candleholders with angels on it which spun around and tinkled as the heat from the candles below rose up to them from below. The ambassador was fascinated with it and said he had never seen anything like that in his life. We knew we could easily order another one like it so we presented it to him as he left. He was very pleased and thanked us.

In a few days, the ambassador sent us a present in return --- a small wooden bear clutching a honey pot in front of him, with some Russian writing on the front. It was decorative and unusual so we put it on a table in our living room. A day or two later our security officer happened to see it and immediately expressed concern that there might be a listening device inside the honey pot. Well, I confess that I had not thought of that. So, he took it away with him to have it examined. I was not too worried but still felt relieved when he came back with it in a day or two and said there was no problem.

Q: Did the United Nations play any role in all of this trouble? What about the Organization for African Unity (OAU)?

WYMAN: No, because the revolution was strictly an internal question neither of those organizations got into it.

Q: The OAU meets in Addis, doesn't it?

WYMAN: Yes, it does, and it has its headquarters there. One of my first experiences in Addis was going to a major OAU meeting that was opened by the emperor. He was to give the first speech, as usual. I had not seen the emperor before. I was up in the balcony and was waiting with great curiosity to see this legendary person. He was late in arriving, as he usually was. Finally, I heard a door open down below and I knew that the emperor was about to enter. From under the balcony then emerged, to my great surprise, a little chihuahua! About twenty feet behind came the emperor, looking very regal despite his small stature. Haile Selassie took that chihuahua with him just about every place he went. On another occasion, when Pat and I escorted some Project Hope people to meet the emperor in his palace, the chihuahua climbed into Pat's lap! Haile Selassie looked rather amused by that but didn't say anything about it.

Q: Did you ever get to meet with Mengistu?

WYMAN: No, although he was right next to General Taferi Banti, the new Head of State appointed by the Derg after the execution of General Aman Andom, when I called on him. During that period I usually met with the Foreign Minister.

I have always remembered the last meeting I had with the emperor, not long before he was arrested. I had to tell him about the impending closure of the Kagnew base in Asmara. He knew that Kagnew had been one of the principal reasons for American interest in Ethiopia, so he was sorry to hear that news. Also, this was after the revolution was well under way and his own position had obviously become precarious. I remember him shaking his head and saying sadly, just before I left, "Times are changing very rapidly these days." Ostensibly, he said this in relation to Kagnew, but I felt sure from the tone of his voice and the look on his face that he was also thinking of the traditional Ethiopian political and economic structure which was collapsing around him.

Q: That was certainly an exciting period you lived through. Any final comments on those days in Ethiopia?

WYMAN: I think I've mentioned what I would like to say. After my having been Charge d'Affaires for thirteen months, a new ambassador, Art Hummel, arrived. Pat and I left Addis several months after that.

Q: After that period of being under fire, you came back to Washington and went to the Bureau for International Organizations in 1975. You were an economic officer in that

assignment. Was this something you found congenial or not?

WYMAN: No, definitely not. I made a mistake in accepting that assignment. I did have a choice. When I first received the offer while I was in Addis Ababa, I turned it down. I was hoping to be offered an ambassadorial position. However I soon had second thoughts. An ambassadorial assignment did not seem to be in the wind and the position offered was an Office Director job, one considerably higher up than any position I had previously held in the Department. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that, after my lonely tour in Vietnam and the three years in Addis Ababa, I wanted to have a stateside assignment at this point rather than another one overseas. Our children were now too old to be living with us abroad, and Pat spent summers and Christmas at home now in order to be with them.

So, after pondering all this for a few nights, I sent back another telegram and said, "I've reconsidered and would like to take that job after all." Once I started in on the job, however, I found it unsatisfying. It was the responsibility of my office to prepare the positions that the U.S. would take in the various economic forums and components of the United Nations. The basic problem we faced was that at this time the “developing” (i.e., underdeveloped) countries were all working together in a group called the “G-77” because there had been 77 of them when the group was first formed. The G-77 were exerting all their strength on every occasion within the U.N. organizations to bring about significant changes in many of the existing practices in international economic relations. They wanted big increases in the amount of international assistance provided directly to those countries, and they also wanted all kinds of other modifications which would benefit them. All these changes added up to what they liked to call “ The New International Economic Order.”

The economists in our government considered most of these proposed changes contrary to American interests and thought that many of them would not improve standards of living around the world. So we were strongly opposed to these changes favored by the G-77. However we were anxious to present as good an appearance as we could in these UN forums. We therefore tried again and again to find language which would appear to be closer to what these developing countries were asking for, but which we knew would not be harmful to American interests. I found this a very frustrating exercise because it appeared that, despite endless arguments, nothing of importance would actually come out of all this. Basically, along with the Western European countries and Japan, the U.S. was opposed on these issues to a large majority in the United Nations that could override us on any single vote. We could see no way of providing them with real satisfaction.

Q: I can see the reason for that. Did you get to New York often?

WYMAN: No, I didn't go there often. I did go a couple of times but didn’t feel that it really was helpful. It was easy enough to understand the basics of the situation from Washington and we were already in close touch with our Mission in New York regarding tactics in dealing with resolutions, a subject on which they were highly expert from long experience.

Q: Did you have to work with the geographic bureaus and particularly the E area?

WYMAN: Yes, not so much with the geographic bureaus but a great deal with the Economic Bureau of the Department. In a typical situation we would look very hard at the latest set of proposals from the G-77. After doing that for some time, we might say, "Maybe we could come up with some language which would be not too different from this particular proposal of theirs but wouldn't damage American interests." We would draft something along those lines and then try it out on the E Bureau. They would almost always argue that the new language still damaged American interests and that they couldn't accept it. We couldn't really blame them. They were doing their job, but we were back to zero again.

Q: Was there any noticeable effect of the changeover from President Ford's administration to that of President Carter in that period, any change in emphasis?

WYMAN: I don't remember that there was significant change with regard to these economic issues I have been talking about.

Q: Andrew Young came in as our UN representative at that time.

WYMAN: Yes. He was highly thought of by the developing countries and also the Carter administration was willing to accept language referring to "The New International Economic Order." However this was really window dressing, without a significant change behind it.
Q: At the end of that period, in 1977, you received an assignment as DCM again to Africa, this time to Lagos, Nigeria.

WYMAN: Yes. This was one time I did go out and actively seek a particular assignment. I had met Don Easum and he had impressed me very much. Also, I had heard people talk about Don and what a great opinion they had of him. He was the new ambassador to Nigeria and I heard that he was looking for a DCM, so I went to see him and told him of my interest. He was already familiar with my work because he had been the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs for much of the time when I had been the Charge in Addis. In due time I was assigned as the DCM in Lagos. My assignment there was from 1977 to 1980.

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

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

Q: Did we have subordinate posts in Nigeria at that time?

WYMAN: Yes, we did. We had a consulate in Ibadan, not far from Lagos. That was phased out while I was there. I believe that issue hadn't been decided when I arrived in Lagos, and I did what I could to encourage the closure. I didn't think it was worthwhile to have a consulate that close to Lagos, only about an hour and a half drive away. We already had, and retained, a consulate in Kaduna, which was much farther away and was relatively isolated. Then the question came up in the latter part of my Nigerian tour of whether we ought to have a consulate in Port Harcourt, which was quite some distance to the south of Lagos, on the coast. After what I had seen of the operations of these other two consulates in Nigeria, and all the morale problems that our personnel had to cope with there, I did my best to discourage the establishment of a new consulate in Port Harcourt. I'm glad we never established one. Nigeria is a difficult country for Americans to live in. The situation is somewhat better in Lagos, where the embassy is a large one and we have a lot of resources for supporting the needs of the embassy staff. But you get out in the small consulates and it's very tough going. I felt that we ought to minimize the number of our people that we were subjecting to that kind of stress.

Q: Was there any hangover from the Biafran war when you were there or had that been forgotten?

WYMAN: Very little hangover. That is something for which Nigeria deserves a lot of credit. The Nigerian government treated the Ibos, who had fought for Biafran independence, not only far, far better than the Ibos had expected, but treated them quite well even by more objective standards. While there was still some discrimination against them, it was pretty limited in scope.
I think the Nigerian record compared favorably with the treatment which the South suffered in the years immediately following our own Civil War.

Q: You were there when President Carter made a state visit.

WYMAN: Yes.

Q: Tell us a little about that.

WYMAN: It was the only experience I had ever had of a presidential visit and so it was quite unforgettable. One thing I remember vividly, because I was so much involved in it, was the joint press communique which was to be put out at the end of the visit. During our preparatory work, word came from the Department that the embassy should prepare a draft of such a communique. I decided that I should really tackle that job myself instead of assigning it to someone else in the embassy. However, when I started to work on it, my first thought was, "How can I possibly imagine just what course these conversations are going to take and how they're going to come out? It's an impossible task." Then, after a while, the answer to that suddenly came to me. It was a rather simple one. It was indeed impossible to foresee just how the discussion between President Carter and General Obasanjo would go, but that wasn't really necessary. What was essential was to figure out what our government would want to say to the world about the visit, and what the Nigerians would want to say. I knew enough about the views of both governments so that this would not be too difficult. So I started drafting a communique along those lines.

While I found it not too hard to find language that both sides could agree to on other issues, this was not possible with regard to South Africa. On that subject I decided it would be necessary to have two paragraphs, one expressing the view of the Nigerian government and one expressing our viewpoint. Normally, you try not to describe differences of opinion in a joint communique, but something had to be said about South Africa and it would certainly come as no surprise to anyone to see that the opinions of the two governments differed on that subject.
Q: It would have shocked readers if the communique had said that the two governments had the same position on South Africa.

WYMAN: Yes indeed. So I had the other paragraphs begin by saying the two sides agreed, but on South Africa one paragraph said that President Carter said such and such and the following paragraph that General Obasanjo said something quite different. Then I took the draft to the Nigerians and started discussing it with them. The idea was that we would get basic agreement on the text beforehand and then, in the course of the visit itself, the two sides could take a last minute look at it and see if they wanted to add or modify. That worked out very nicely. We didn't have much difficulty in reaching agreement beforehand. It was helpful that we had a complete draft of our own to present. The Nigerians had not come with a complete draft. I think it is always helpful in any diplomatic negotiation regarding a text if we can have our own draft accepted as the starting point for the following discussion. In this case, we accepted some changes that the Nigerians wanted in our draft, but these were not numerous. At the meeting of the two heads of state the changes made in the communique were only minor ones.

Q: How did the conversations end?

WYMAN: In a friendly fashion. The only friction between Nigerians and Americans that I saw had come when some members of the White House staff arrived a few days in advance of the visit to assist in the final preparations. We went with them to the Protocol Chief of the Nigerian government to discuss precise details as to how the events during the visit would proceed. I felt then that the White House staffers were really being unreasonable about some things. They wanted everything to run exactly the way they would prefer it, whether the Nigerians liked it or not. This was exasperating. Even the reason they gave was incredible. Their head man would say to the Nigerian Chief of Protocol in defending his insistence on some particular point, "I would be embarrassed to go back to President Carter and tell him that it was going to work out this way." Another issue would come up and he would say, "It would really embarrass me if I had to say to the President..." The Nigerian kept his temper and didn't say, "Look, there are more important things in this world to Nigerians and to me personally than whether or not you will be embarrassed about something!" I was almost sorry he didn't say that!

Q: I think there are many FSOs around the world who would say, "Hear! Hear!"

WYMAN: But the visit did go well. The Nigerians were very pleased that President Carter had made a visit to their country.

Q: It was the first visit of an American president.

WYMAN: Right. They were just delighted. Andrew Young, then our ambassador to the United Nations, took part in that visit and the Nigerians were already enthusiastic about him.

Q: At that time, was there still a civilian government?

WYMAN: No, there had been a military government for quite a few years by then and General Obasanjo headed it up at that time. Later, before the end of my tour, a civilian government came in at the scheduled time as a result of reasonably fair elections and seemed to be getting off to a pretty good start. However it would later become very unpopular and would be thrown out by the military.

Q: When you left in 1980, I take it that you were fairly optimistic about Nigeria's future?

WYMAN: I thought civilian government might prevail after that, but it turned out that I was too optimistic. It never looked like a sure thing or an easy thing, but I thought the Nigerians had had enough unpleasant experiences with military government by then so that they would be willing to give a fairly lengthy try to a democratic system. The constitution they had drawn up was modeled after the American Constitution. That part was fine. What brought the civilian government down later was apparently the familiar problem of massive corruption. There was just so much of it going on that it brought the government into disrepute, as had been the case with the previous military government. So the demand for change built up and you had another military coup d'etat. This is hardly surprising, of course. History has shown again and again that it usually takes a

very long time in any country for democracy to become firmly embedded.

Q: Any further comments about your tour in Nigeria?

WYMAN: No.

Q: In 1980, you returned to Washington and were assigned as International Affairs Adviser of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, your old alma mater, in a sense. Did you teach or were you used as a counselor for students?

WYMAN: I did some teaching in seminars on Sub-Saharan Africa, both there and at the adjacent National War College. I also had miscellaneous duties such as selecting and scheduling appropriate speakers from the State Department, participating in curriculum development regarding foreign affairs, reviewing and grading papers on different subjects written by the students, and rating the other two Foreign Service Officers on the faculty. There were a variety of duties, but the central one was that of conducting seminars. It was interesting but by no means as interesting as mainline Foreign Service assignments had been.

I did enjoy teaching but not as much as normal Foreign Service work. Until then I had been thinking of going into teaching after I retired, but I gradually lost interest in that while I was at ICAF. On the other hand, I had followed up on a suggestion from my son Bob and was going just for fun to the University of Maryland and taking night courses there in computer programming and systems analysis. Those subjects were interesting because they were so obviously part of "the wave of the future" and also I found that I enjoyed the type of work involved. As time went on I began to think more and more about the possibilities of working on the development of software programs as a second career after I retired from the Foreign Service.
I increasingly felt that teaching foreign relations in some form would always seem only second best to the actual experience of working directly in that field, whereas I might be happier tackling an entirely different type of work which was intellectually challenging. Looking back, I think I was right.

So, when I reached the end of my tour at ICAF in 1982 and was approaching the time when I expected to retire, I went to the Bureau of Information Management and lined up a job there. This was a totally different type of work than I had ever done before in the Foreign Service, but one for which I had suitable preparation because of those night courses I had taken.

I started in with various activities related to computer programs that were being used in the Foreign Service. Over time I spent more and more of my time on a program for managing property at our overseas posts. This was not real estate but what was called "non-expendable property," such as computers, air conditioners, and all government-owned property items in our living quarters overseas. The Department had a miserable record at that time in trying to keep track of that stuff. Occasionally it would get a blast from Congress about that. The only solution was obviously going to be to develop a

computer program that could efficiently track this type of property.

I found it challenging to be in charge of the work on improving our computer programs in this area. It went slowly at first because the resources weren't there for programming. Then my retirement came up in 1984. I had originally thought that I probably would then go to some large corporation and start work there in the area of systems analysis. However I felt by now that I had a real stake in the future of computer programs for Foreign Service posts. I went to my boss and asked if he would be interested in keeping me on after retirement. When I said that I would be willing to work on a full-time basis, he said, "Yes, we would be delighted. We'll give you a contract."

So I started in on that basis. I found that I enjoyed it very much, particularly when we received more funding. A congressional committee gave the Department's Administrative Bureau a real dressing down at one point and that caused the Department to shake loose increased funding for the property-tracking program in which I was primarily interested. I was able to stay in touch with a lot of friends, particularly when they came back to Washington and I would encounter them in the cafeteria. I also met some of them overseas, for I visited many of our posts in order to train them on how to use the property control programs. Because I never dealt with classified material any more, I didn't need to lock up my papers at night or worry about the possibility of a security violation. What a delightful change that was!

The visits to overseas posts were always interesting, particularly when I went to a post that I had never been to before. I had briefly visited one Latin American post previously, but now I had opportunities to visit a number of Latin American posts. I also went to Taipei, Tokyo, Vienna and other places for the first time.

I continued doing this work for eleven years after my retirement from the Foreign Service. The contracts were for one year at first, then two years, and the last one was for five years. I had to win out over any competitors for the job each time, but my previous experience helped in that regard. I worked primarily on the NEPA (Non-Expendable Property Application) program until I finally retired, for a second time, in the fall of 1995. That marked the end of fifty-two and a half years of working for the federal government!

Q: I don't know anybody I've talked to who slid into retirement more gracefully than you did, moving into something you were interested in and something yet related to your former Foreign Service career. That was very useful.

WYMAN: It worked out nicely and I was very satisfied with it. One development that made it better all the time was that it gradually became technically possible to exchange messages with post personnel by fax or by instant on-line computer message, without the need of obtaining approval from anyone. To have that instantaneous communication made it far easier to solve any problems in the use of NEPA which arose at posts. Problems did come up and always will come up from time to time when you have so many posts all around the world using the program. NEPA was used by all of our posts

which had more than three or four people in them. Of course all parts of the Department have it, too. It meant a lot to me when I took that second retirement to know that "part of me" in a sense remained in the Foreign Service even after that, since the program I had developed would remain in use throughout the Foreign Service and the Department.

Q: Looking back on your long and eventful career, do you have any final thoughts? Would you recommend the Foreign Service to people as a career in 1997?

WYMAN: For some people I certainly would. However, I would at the same time emphasize that it's not everybody's cup of tea by any means. First of all, one has to be intensely interested in our foreign relations and in getting to know other parts of the world and other peoples. The whole foreign environment has to have a real fascination for you. That's part of it. Perhaps even more important, the concept of serving one's country and helping it to improve conditions throughout the world has to have great appeal to one. That in the last analysis is probably the greatest satisfaction that most FSOs get out of the whole experience. From a financial standpoint, it's not an attractive career. From the standpoint of one's family, there are all too many unusual problems the whole family will have to cope with. There is obviously much to be said against a Foreign Service career. For me, however, it was enormously satisfying and sustaining to know that I was devoting my career to something so meaningful. During that career many aspects of life in the Foreign Service changed drastically. To name just a few, FSOs now travel economy class by plane instead of first class by ship; they live in government-furnished housing overseas instead of in places they have located and furnished themselves; their efficiency reports are now open to them and can be challenged by them; messages they send can reach the Department instantly whereas some which were still sent by "dispatch" when I entered the Service were weeks on the high seas; women and minorities are represented to a far greater degree among FSOs today; and wives now frequently find some kind of employment within our posts, some of them even as FSOs themselves. Yet the fundamental meaning of this career has not changed in my opinion. American foreign relations are tremendously important to the whole world, and participation in that activity is therefore a fulfilling experience.

Q: Thank you very much, Parker.

End of interview