INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: Joseph Palmer

INTERVIEWER: Paige Mulhollan

PLACE Mr. Palmer's office, Department of State, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

M: Let's begin, Mr. Palmer, by just identifying you briefly. You are Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and you've been in this position since 1966.

P: Since April 1, 1966.

M: And Prior to that you were Director General of the Foreign Service for a couple of years, and immediately prior to that you were Ambassador to Nigeria.

P: That's right.

M: Did you, in any of your experiences prior to your current position, have occasion to come in contact with President Johnson?

P: Only on one occasion before I came back here in 1964. In 1961 I returned to Washington from Lagos for an official visit of the Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Mr. Johnson, as the Majority Leader of the Senate, gave a luncheon for him on the Hill, with a large number of Senators and Congressmen participating. And that was the first time I'd ever met President Johnson.

M: When you were appointed to this present position then, it was a matter of professional service appoint? He didn't have anything to do from a political nature? You're a career--

P: I'm a career officer, that's right. I did meet the President several times subsequently when I was Director General of the Foreign Service, mostly on social occasions over at the White House--diplomatic receptions and so forth. But the first real contact I had with him really was in March 1966 just before I was appointed to this position. He interviewed me, I'm sure along with other people whom he considered for this position.

M: The press frequently comments on some of Mr. Johnson's unusual customs in regard to making and announcing appointments. Were there any unusual circumstances in connection with yours?

P: No, I don't think there was any--

M: No midnight rides or anything?

P: No midnight rides or anything of that kind. He did have me over. I had about half-an-hour with him. He talked to me about his great interest in Africa. I think he was already aware of my background--well aware of it as a matter of fact. As I think you're aware, I've been associated with the Continent for--well, let's see, I went out in 1941, twenty-eight years now. He was, of course, extremely anxious to know all about my views of the Continent, how I saw our relationships, and, of course, made clear his own very forward-looking thinking with respect to it. I found him very knowledgeable, very

sensitive to the problems of the Continent, very anxious to try to find ways and means of building a strong and viable relationship. I was greatly heartened by what he had to say about his own outlook, about his own attitude about it.

M: Once you were appointed, did he give you any specific instructions of the kind normally associated with diplomatic activity; I mean, any charge as to what he thought your Bureau should be trying to do specifically?

P: Yes. I think that he was very anxious for us to try to find ways and means of being responsive to the challenge of development in Africa, and to have a good hard look at our aid programs, see whether they were responsive, to what extent they were responsive, and in what ways they could be improved--new approaches tried to try to make them more effective.

M: Some of the critics of Mr. Johnson's foreign policy at the time you were appointed said that your appointment was a victory over those more active advocates of African nationalism. Do you think that was a fair statement or not?

P: I don't think it's a fair statement. I think that during the years that I've been associated with Africa, I think I've been known as somebody who is understanding of what it is the Africans try to achieve. I think it has to be looked at within the confines of realism, but nevertheless, I think that certainly I've tried during all of my association with it to take a liberal outlook toward it,

just as I think the President has. As a matter of fact, the London Economist came out here with a statement just a short time ago saying that at the time I came in everyone thought that this would be a setback for liberal approaches to Africa. It went on to say that to everyone's surprise, I had in some respects, out-soapied Soapy Williams.

M: That's about as far as anyone would expect, I'm sure.

P: I'm not sure that's the case, but I think Soapy and I have seen problems very much the same. He left me a wonderful heritage. I have tried to keep that heritage alive and to continue it on into the future.

M: There are all the stories that go around too about Mr. Johnson's habit of calling up officials at various levels of government--Assistant Secretary levels particularly. Did that happen to you?

P: That has happened to me.

M: He calls you directly up?

P: Yes. It happened the third day I came in. I picked up the phone--it was early in the morning. It was before my secretary got in. Fortunately, I was at my desk, so I answered it myself, and it was the President at the other end of the line.

M: That's a good way to wake up in the morning. What kind of matter did this involve--do you recall?

P: He wanted partly to wish me luck and to find out how I was getting along and let me know he was behind me.

M: That's a heartening thing too, I'd think, to know that he's paying attention. Does he ever call you about policy matters directly?

P: He has on one or two occasions. He called me once during the period, as I recall it, when we were developing the speech that he gave on the occasion of the third anniversary of the Organization of African Unity in May. He just wanted to make sure that we had taken some good forward-looking positions in connection with that speech.

M: Did your Bureau have a major role to play in producing that speech?

P: Yes, we did. We did a great deal of work on that speech. It's, again, something that really grew out of some initiatives of my predecessor. He and the President had discussed the same range of things that I've been talking about--how can we show a greater degree of responsiveness to these very important fast-moving developments in Africa.

Among other measures that were considered was the possibility of a major speech. There has never been a really major speech, until this one, by an American President on Africa. The idea really got developed before Soapy Williams left. It was picked up again when I came in. As you can see, between the first of April and the 26th of May, we had quite a major job to do because we wanted to make sure that we came up with ideas and concepts in that speech that we could build on. Among those ideas and concepts, of course, was this idea of trying to build on regional development and encouraging cooperation and cooperative arrangements among African states. This was not the only thrust in the speech, because of course the

President very effectively on that occasion restated and expanded upon our very deep support for principles that are dear to our own tradition--self-determination, majority rule. And he made it very clear that we weren't going to pursue policies overseas that were contrary to policies that we were pursuing domestically here. So it was a very strong restatement of our support for these principles and our identification with African aspirations.

M: You mentioned that that was the first Presidential address devoted to African affairs. You're in a very good position, having been connected with this one specialty over a long length of time, to compare Administrations. How, for example, does the Johnson Administration compare on African affairs to its predecessor, the Kennedy Administration?

P: I think they've both been very forward-looking Administrations, very sympathetic and sensitive to African aspirations. I would say that you can't make a great deal of differentiation.

M: You were in Nigeria, I guess, when the transition occurred.

P: I was in Nigeria when the transition occurred, but I was really there only a very short period of time under President Johnson because I left in February 1964. But I think there has been a really great deal of continuity between the two Administrations in their approaches to problems. There has been a problem of resources. Foreign aid was rather more plentiful during the Kennedy Administration when there were fewer countries than there have been under President Johnson's Administration. But this has nothing to do at all with his attitude

because nobody has tried harder on foreign aid than he has to get the necessary appropriations through the Congress.

M: that's connected to one of the things you mentioned in his speech--the advocating regionalism, and I think he has done this in AID fields and self-defense fields and various fields. What about the success of that during his Administration? Have we been able to multilateralize our efforts in the African continent successfully?

P: Yes, I think we have made a great deal of progress in this respect. It's really responsive to something that the Africans want themselves. The Africans realize perfectly well that they were divided up artificially. They didn't create these boundaries and these small entities. These weren't drawn in Africa; they were drawn in Europe by Europeans and for European reasons. This is something the Africans have inherited, and they've had to live with it. To my mind the really remarkable thing about Africa is that they have respected these boundaries by and large, because they know perfectly well if they try to change them by force, extra-legal means, it just opens up Pandora's Box for everybody else. But within that sort of a framework, I think there is a growing realization that transportation routes in Africa, for example, don't always go the most logical way. The Francophone areas run them through Francophone Africa, whereas in many respects, much more rational boundaries would be if they ran them through Anglophone areas and vice versa. Only a few years ago if you wanted to call from Lagos in Nigeria to Contonou in Dahomby less than a hundred miles away, you had to telephone London,

London-Paris, and Paris back down to Cotonou. Now they've got the opportunity themselves to open up these direct links.

I think almost all of them realize--as the East African community does--that small entities with markets of only a million to four or five million don't really provide much of an attraction to locating industry there, but that if you can build a large cooperative arrangement like the East African Common Market, then you begin to get an economy on a scale that will attract it. So these understandings are there. The Economic Commission for Africa, which is located at Addis Ababa has done a great deal of very patient planning and educational work in helping governments to understand this. So there has really been a sort of a ferment in a fertile ground here to build on this concept of regionalism. When we talk about it, we've tried to avoid being inflexible. We're not talking only about funneling aid through regional institutions because the institutional development oftentimes takes some time to work out. What we are talking about are pragmatic arrangements.

A regional project, we say, is anything that benefits more than one state. Maybe a scholarship program for some country that doesn't have a university to send its students to other universities in an area utilizing that, and trying to build that up as a center of excellence rather than proliferating a lot of second or third-rate universities. Or it may evolve, as another project that we have at the present time, a road, for example Zambia, which has had to reorient its means of importing and evacuating produce because of

the Rhodesian situation, is developing its communications through Tanzania. One fairly major project we have is rebuilding a very large section of road in Tanzania. The section of the road is all in Tanzania, but it connects with the one in Zambia and benefits Zambia, and therefore we regard it as a regional project.

M: All these you're talking about are physical or economic. What about on the political level? I guess the Organization of African Unity is the political manifestation of this same type of thing that you're doing or trying to help do on the other level.

P: Yes.

M: Has it become an effective organization?

P: Yes. Like any organization of its kind, it has its successes and its failures. It played a very useful role in the Congo in connection with the liquidation of the mercenary problem. It also has tried to play a role in Nigeria, thus far unsuccessfully. It has played a very useful role in the border dispute between Algeria and Morocco which broke out into open clashes in 1964, and since then it has set up machinery that has kept the temperature down in that area. They've also played a very useful role in some of the developments in the Horn of Africa between Ethiopia and Somalia and Kenya, where only a year-and-a-half or so ago there were open border clashes in connection with the Somalis' efforts to unify their populations in all of those territories. The OAU, particularly with Dr. Kaunda, has been very active in this and has helped a great deal in bringing about a situation of detente between Ethiopia and Kenya which has

really gone the furthest--that situation has very much improved--and has also been a helpful element in the improvement of relations between Ethiopia and Somalia. All of this has had of course our very strong support and encouragement.

M: How do we support something like the OAU in their efforts of this kind?

P: We do it in various ways. We do it by quiet diplomacy with the participants. This oftentimes becomes something of a delicate operation. But in the detente on the Horn of Africa, I think both of them have welcomed our support in this. We've done it in various other ways. The Nigerian situation when the President sent messages to the Emperor making clear our hope that the Consultative Committee of the OAU which has been active in this would be successful, and that it has the support of the United States. This is understood and accepted. It's not resented at all. They want our understanding and our support.

M: What about the African Development Bank? I know Mr. Johnson has been personally very interested in Asian Development Bank. Has he been personally interested in African Development Bank?

P: Yes, he had been personally interested in the African Development Bank. The support for this institution is one of the recommendations that came out of this restudy of our aid policies that I've been talking about. And we have made a qualified commitment to the bank. I say qualified, because it necessarily has to be because you've got to get the funds out of the Congress. It's a matching formula that

says what we will do proportionally to what they're able to get others to do. I think the bank has found it useful with trying to get support from other potential donors, but it moves slowly. And we've been much more forthcoming thus far than other countries have, but we continue to hope that this one is going to develop because we feel this bank can play a very big role in Africa.

M: What about the private sector in something like that? Has the American private sector been encouraged successfully to participate in programs that are considered to be necessary development programs in the rest of those countries?

P: Yes. AID has been very active in this. And there is an increasing amount of private investment going in. Most of it goes into the extractive industries of course. Those are the most attractive.

M: And the least developmental.

P: And the least developmental. Of course, there have been enormous amounts that have gone into Libya. Our investment there is now well over a billion dollars--probably getting up toward a billion-and-a-half in petroleum development--several hundred million dollars in Nigeria which has been a tremendous development. There have been other changes of this kind. But on the industrial side, yes, there has been quite a bit of investment going into the Ivory Coast, going into Kenya, going into Nigeria, a great deal of it has gone in there. Ghana is now picking up again as stability has been restored. And the government has taken hold of things and gotten their financial

situations straightened out. There are other types of development beginning to go in there, including the possibility of farming enterprises and so forth.

The Congo is another country that now seems to be settling down. Again private industry is beginning to take a greater interest there as well. So that it's moving all over the Continent about as fast as a lot of us would like to see it. But I think we have to realize that this was a closed preserve which excluded us for many, many years. American businessmen didn't know too much about how to do business in Africa. They still run into a lot of problems the way the specifications are drawn up, and it's not always easy to meet specifications which are stated in terms more familiar to the former colonial powers. But private investment is moving, and I think it has moved a lot under this Administration.

M: The critics of our policy in Africa pick on several things. One of them is what they always say is the growing number of military-based governments--which they can usually count up as being so many more one year than there was the year before and so on. What does the State Department do about this problem? What have they done during the Johnson Administration?

P: Obviously, we prefer civilian regimes. At the same time, I think we have to understand that these countries just have tremendous problems. In many cases the period of self-government before independence was very short. They didn't have the trained personnel that was required in sufficient quantities. The institutions that

they emerged with into independence were not necessarily African institutions. Many of them were much too European in their form and in their substance. It has been necessary to undergo a process of Africanization of these institutions to make them responsive to the societies which are being built. The resources at their command were very, very meager in most cases with a few exceptions to this. They've been highly dependent upon outside assistance. The U.S. hasn't really done all it should--we're a minority aid donor in Africa.

M: As compared to the total, you mean?

P: As compared to the total. The volume of aid that we put in there is below the French, below the international institutions and below the British. I think we're in fourth place in the volume of resources that are going into Africa. And we're not talking about situations in any event that we can or we should control.

So with all this melange of problems things are going to happen. And they have happened for a variety of reasons. Some of the military coups have come about through personal ambitions, but more often than not they've come about just because people are dissatisfied with the pace of development, expectations haven't been realized; in some cases there was corruption as a factor. In some cases it was a matter of tyrannical regimes. Ghana was very much a case in point. There really weren't any alternatives.

So it's very difficult to generalize on this question of military coups. And I think it's all part of a learning process too. Because,

you know, a military coup may look very attractive; disciplined armies are usually organized and people think, well, they'll get the country organized. But I think the experience has been that once they get in, they've got no better answers than anybody else. This I think is resulting in something of a turnabout. The number of coups are dropping. There's no doubt about it. We had one the other day. But nevertheless the trend is in the other direction.

And the other thing that's interesting that's happening is that there are a number of movements now on the part of military regimes to try to move back toward civilian rule. The Sudan moved back some years ago. Sierra Leone has recently moved back to civilian rule. Dahmoney has moved back. Ghana is in the process now of moving back. And, in many cases, although the military is still in power, the regimes have been civilianized to a very great extent like the Congo.

M: This is a point on which the critics generalize. Has the President ever wondered why you people over here can't do something about this problem?

P: I think he understands that it's all part of a process. No, he hasn't.

M: He hasn't turned the critics' argument on you and said, "Why don't you answer them; why don't you do something about it?"

P: I think most of the critics--you know, we do answer it. We get hit on things about Africa, but I think we get hit less probably on this than a lot of other things we get hit on.

M: On crisis management, since you have been in I'm sure you're aware of a recurring number of them, does that kind of thing--let's take an example of the Congo '67 mercenary crisis where we ultimately send some aircraft for the support of the central government. Does that kind of crisis get up to the White House in any way?

P: Oh yes, it sure does.

M: Taking that one as an example, how does the--?

P: That one, of course, broke very suddenly. You know all of the crises that the Congo has been through the first seven years of its existence, attempted secession in Kantanga and then the Simba revolt in '65-'66. And things seemed to be settling down until this mercenary revolt broke out very, very suddenly in early July '67. And this immediately of course provoked very strong reactions within the Congo and stood in very great danger of becoming a real racial issue. Two things that disturbed us about it. One was the threat to the central government posed by this undisciplined revolting non-Congolese force. And secondly, the psychological impact this had of white mercenaries acting against a black government. This provoked a lot of reactions against other whites in the Congo. We felt that it was very necessary for us to respond promptly and to try to destroy that sort of an image to make it clear to the Congolese request for logistic support, to make it clear to the rest of Africa, that this wasn't a racial issue, that there are white people on the side of the legitimate government of the Congo. It was for this reason that our Ambassador there, Bob McBride, urged that we send these C-130's to

the Congo to provide logistic support for the Congolese Army in dealing with this rebellion. This was on the 6th, I think, of July. This recommendation which we immediately relayed to the White House with the Department support, of course, engaged the President very much in this problem. He had been kept informed even before that of the developing situation. And by golly, he acted on it awfully quickly because the 8th of July we had our decision and got the planes on the way.

M: Were there meetings which involved the President in regard to that crisis at the White House?

P: The Secretary saw him. I was not there. There were meetings that involved the President.

M: But in a case like that the Secretary goes over and deals with the President?

P: He did in this case.

M: Is that the general practice?

P: I think it is the general practice. There were, also, of course meetings with Walt Rostow and others on the White House staff. Ed Hamilton was in very close touch with this. Lots of liaison between the White House and--

M: Does Rostow's shop deal directly with your Bureau here?

P: Yes.

M: There has been a lot of comment, I think more in the Kennedy time than in the Johnson times regarding the nature of that operation. Is that a helpful kind of staff operation?

P: Yes. We have not found the White House in any sense preempting any responsibilities for anything that we are responsible for. What it does do is to provide a very convenient mechanism to help the flow of information to the President, which we try to keep going all the time anyway. We send over items for his evening reading all the time so that when he has to make a decision, he has got the background for it. And the mechanism is also effective from the point of view of getting decisions over there.

M: They do an adequate job of staffing him for a crisis when it comes up suddenly like this so that he does have a background knowledge without you having to provide it on a crisis basis?

P: That's right. We have to do that, too. We have to provide it on a crisis basis too, but you don't have to go into nearly as much detail as he does have a continuing exposure to it.

M: What is the recent book on the State Department--Liococo's Fires in the In-Basket, makes a comment at one point that the African Bureau rates lowest on the priority. Does that make it hard for you to get your story told through the White House section?

P: I don't know. People have been saying we rate lowest on priorities--I never quite know what it means. If we've got a crisis, we get as much attention as anybody else. And when we don't have a crisis, I think we get--it's hard to compare with others, but I think we get our fair share of attention.

M: You don't find difficulty having your story told to the people that need to hear it.

P: No. I don't know what they mean. People keep saying this, that we're the lowest priority, I don't quite know what it means. If it's measured in terms of foreign aid, yes, it is.

M: Measured in dollars, that's how to do it.

P: A lot of that problem derives from the Hill, of course.

M: What about the general problem that you encountered in connection with our policies toward Southern Rhodesia and South Africa? Here's the source of a lot of political sniping at home also. Have domestic political considerations been extremely important in determining policy in those areas as is sometimes charged?

P: No. I think a lot of things that are charged are charged on both sides. It's also charged that we are automatically following the British lead, and so forth and so on. In my experience we take these decisions for our own reasons and for reasons that we think are right. You're always going to get some criticism on any foreign policy decision of any consequence that you make.

Despite the criticism that we got with respect to the C-130's to the Congo, we held firm on the decision. We continued to keep those planes there. They flew for six months, and they did the job. God knows, what the Congo would look like now if that decision hadn't been taken and persevered in despite the criticism.

The same thing I think is true with respect to Rhodesia. The President has stood very firmly on this. This was before my time, but of course when the Rhodesia declaration of independence was made

on November 11, '65, the Secretary at that time, on the President's behalf made very clear that we refused to recognize the regime. We recalled our Consul General there at the time. That set in motion a number of measures leading to the program of voluntary sanctions which we introduced against Rhodesia. Since then, as the effort to bring the rebellion to an end has not been successful, increasingly strong measures have been taken in the way of sanctions. First, the selective sanctions program, and then the mandatory sanctions program. We've been in the forefront of those calling for such methods in an effort to reverse the direction in Rhodesia and bring about the objective of majority rule. It hasn't worked yet, and I don't think anyone can yet tell whether it is going to work. But the reason we've done it is because we've thought it's the right thing to do. As the President said in his May 26 speech--again, this is a reflection of what he feels very strong about and I think most Americans feel strongly about--we can't stand up for assuring the rights of all our citizens here in this country and ignore a situation in which they're being denied on a basis of race and color in other countries.

M: That brings to mind the idea of our domestic racial situation. How important are racial crises in the United States in influencing our relations with African states?

P: Obviously, they are an important factor. I think that one of the great strengths that we've had in Africa during the last few years has been the progress that we have made in the United States on race relations. The Africans for the most part, I think, are convinced

that the government and the law is on the side of the minority here in the United States; that the programs that have been launched, steps that have been taken to assure equal opportunity, to assure equality of treatment, to assure the full realization of the rights as citizens of minority elements in our population, that the federal government is doing its utmost to try to assure these. So I think that generally speaking there has been a great deal of understanding. Obviously, riots in our cities and the tragic assassination of Martin Luther King, and so forth, do cause problems. It causes concern, just as it does here in this country. It's natural.

M: But you think the leadership in the African states pretty well realize the commitment of the government here?

P: That is correct--and the President's own personal commitment to this, which has been a very important factor.

M: On the other side of the pressure group fence there are a lot of groups in the United States using various names supporting the current Smith regime in Rhodesia. Are these groups significant in influencing, say, legislative opinion to put pressure on the Bureau or not? Do they enlist significant support in the United States?

P: I don't think they enlist significant support in the United States at all. There are a number of people in the Congress who do take very critical attitudes of our policy with respect to Rhodesia--very pro-Rhodesian stances. But last year I remember at the beginning of Congress there were about eight or ten of these, I think who introduced critical resolutions in the Congress. There were some seventy

who introduced resolutions supporting the Administration for the position that it has taken. I wouldn't care to project those figures to the country as a whole, but I think those who are critical are a relative minority. I think the positions we have taken on Rhodesia generally command pretty widespread support.

M: How about South Africa? We have been taking some steps recently, I guess through the United Nations, regarding the Southwest Africa problem. Has the President been interested in that at all?

P: Yes, he has been.

M: In what way has that been progressing?

P: His interest in this goes back to just a short time after I came in--I'd say very early '67 when we were looking forward to the decision of the Court of International Justice which was seized with this whole question of the status of Southwest Africa. We thought at that time, as a great many people thought, that in all probability it was going to render a favorable judgment.

M: Favorable meaning to--

P: Favorable meaning to find that South Africa had obligations to the United Nations in the discharge of its mandate, which South Africa has denied it has. What we were talking about at that time were ways and means of getting South Africa, in that sort of a situation, to carry out its responsibilities if the decision came out that way. This problem was considered, as a matter of fact, at the NSC. I was there for that particular meeting, and the President was very deeply interested in the subject. We did set up, as a result of

that, a working group to come up with ideas, ways and means, initiatives that should be taken to assure there was compliance with the Courts' decision. All this was rather knocked on the head, however, by the fact that the court came up with what in essence was a non-decision. It found that Liberia and Ethiopia, which were the two plaintiffs in the case, did not really have standing in this particular case. So the decision left the merits of the dispute very much up in the air again.

M: Was that a diplomatic decision of the court rather than a legal decision?

P: I wouldn't care to go into that. I don't think anyone could really examine what went into the decision the courts called. I wouldn't want to derogate from the ICJ. I can only say the American Justice voted the other way, and with a very, very wise, thoughtful opinion.

So this left us with a situation of where we went next. Of course where we ultimately came out on this was to fall back on the advisory opinions that the Court had rendered earlier which made it very clear on the merits that South Africa had clear responsibilities to the UN for its administration of this international territory. As a result of this, the dispute then moved into a U.N. phase of the problem, and the decision was taken in October of '67--I'm sorry, I'm a year off--'66.

M: Let's see. The decision was rendered in '66 so--

P: Yes, that's right. October.

M: So this would be October '67 then.

P: It was July--

M: ICJ in December '66--is that the right date for it?

P: '66. The ICJ decision was in July '66. The General Assembly action was in October, '66. The decision was taken that South Africa had failed to carry out the terms of its mandate and therefore it had forfeited its rights to Southwest Africa. The responsibility for leading Southwest Africa independence was lodged with the United Nations. Of course, as I say, we were among the foremost in taking this decision. That decision of course remains valid. A Council has been set up for Southwest Africa, but a large part of the problem still remains as to how you give effect to the decision.

M: What really can--realistically can any nation--the United States or anybody else--do to--?

P: A lot of people have criticized the United Nations for taking a decision which obviously presents great difficulty in implementation, short of use of force which nobody's really prepared to use--nobody, that is, who has the force--at least at this stage. But what is the alternative? The alternative is to concede to the South African position and in effect abandon a very important responsibility involving the lives and the future of an awful lot of people. I think we're all aware of the fact that what may appear to be an impossible problem to solve today may become more manageable tomorrow, or a

year from tomorrow, or ten years from tomorrow. So I myself would very vigorously defend the wisdom of the action that was taken.

I think there is such a thing as international morality and force of public opinion. As I say, a lot of people would have thought twenty-five years ago that we wouldn't see many of the changes we've seen in Eastern Europe. It looked much more monolithic at that time. Few people would have anticipated the sort of developments that we've seen in Czechoslovakia. Maybe they've had setbacks, but it's apparent that there's something there. Sparks of liberty do live in people and things change.

M: And might in this particular case as well, I suppose. We currently have no diplomatic relations with Congo-Brazzaville. I believe that there are several small diplomatic posts that are vacant for one reason or another. Is there some reason for this? Does this indicate a lack of interest on our part in filling some of these smaller vacancies?

P: In the case of Congo-Brazzaville, of course, this was an issue that arose under the previous government as the result of maltreatment of our Embassy personnel and refusal to protect personnel and respect the right of legation. We did not break diplomatic relations. We merely withdrew our personnel, and they withdrew theirs from here. At such time as we do get assurances that our right of legation will be respected, I hope very much relations will resume.

Then, of course, we do not presently have relations at the present time with Mauritania, Algeria or the Sudan, all of which

broke with us as a result of the last outbreak of fighting in the Middle East. In the case of Algeria and Sudan, we do maintain still American interest sections there under charge d'affaires. In the case of Mauritania, we don't because they asked us to withdraw all of our personnel. Here again, I'm hopeful that events may develop in a way that will enable us to resume relationships.

In the cases of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, we have charge d'affaires instead of full ambassadors. This reflects a concern in the Senate with what it regards as a proliferation of ambassadors everywhere. This is a matter we've got to sort out with them. I feel very strongly that we should have full-fledged Ambassadors in all three of these nations, but thus far, we have not been able to engage the Senate in a dialogue on this subject. It's very high in our agenda.

There are a few other cases where we've combined representation. For example, our Ambassador in Dakar is also accredited to Gambia which, as you know, is an independent enclave surrounded on its land borders by Senegal. Our Ambassador in Togo is also accredited to the new country of Equatorial Guinea. Our Ambassador in Malagasy Republic is also accredited to Mauritius. We have tried in some cases to combine representation in this way.

M: Does the absence of Chiefs of Mission in places like Algeria and Congo-Brazzaville and others seriously hamper the conduct of our continental policy?

P: I wouldn't say it seriously handicaps it in a continental sense at all, no. In the case of Algeria and the Sudan, as things have

developed and tempers and emotions have quieted down and so forth, our people there are able to do a great deal of day-to-day business. It has not been a real handicap. The Swiss represent us in Algeria, and our American interests section there is theoretically a part of their Embassy, although in practice we're still in the same chancellery building and still do day-to-day business with the Government. In the case of the Sudan, we have the same arrangement through the Dutch who represent us there. In Mauritania, we have informal contacts through our Embassy in Dakar, which is able to handle our interests there. In Congo-Brazzaville, we have informal contacts through our Embassy in Kinshasa. I don't like it. I prefer to have full relationships with countries, but these things happen.

M: But in all these cases, it's the country involved at the current time that is the holdup for reestablishing normal relations. In other words, we are willing to send our people back?

P: Yes. The situation that bothers me the most really is Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland where there's no good reason really why we shouldn't have Ambassadors.

M: It's a matter of prestige for them.

P: That's right. And they like to feel that they have their own direct representation. Now we tried to work out at one point an arrangement whereby we'd have one Chief of Mission accredited to all three. They all said, "Well, if he resides here, that's great! And we're sure our other two neighboring states would fully agree that he should be here in this country."

M: We gave that up in Central America sixty or seventy years ago, I think, for the same reasons. They wanted a man to live there.

P: Of course! Congressmen argue the expense of this. But it's not a valid argument because we've got posts in all three. We just have them under a Charge d'Affaire. It isn't going to cost very much more money a year--I think we figured about a thousand dollars a year--to have an Ambassador there instead of a Charge d'Affaires. And if you take into account the traveling an Ambassador would have to do to go from one country to another, it would eat that thousand dollars up pretty quickly.

M: The current spot--crisis--is Nigeria, which you have more recent experience in than just about anywhere. What is the Bureau currently doing--the Johnson Administration--on that, and has Mr. Johnson been personally involved in this at all?

P: Yes, he has been personally involved. He has made quite a few statements on the subject, statements appealing to both parties to agree on effective relief measures in a situation where almost any sort of proposal that's acceptable to one side is almost automatically rejected by the other side. The President has made various appeals to try to separate relief--humanitarian measures--from politics. He has also encouraged the Emperor of Ethiopia very much in his efforts to deal with both the political and the humanitarian aspects of the problems through the Consultative Committee of the OAU. He sent a message to the OAU heads of state in Algiera last September, appealing to them

to use their good offices to try to bring about an end to the conflict and effective relief measures. He has been very responsive, very anxious that we be responsive in every possible way in connection with making surplus food available both to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UNICEF and to the other voluntary agencies that are assisting in the relief efforts there. Also with respect to money, we have made substantial amounts of money available to the ICRC. He also approved the most recent action that we've taken to release some C-97G Stratofreighters which are surplus to Air Force requirements and to make them available at very nominal purchase prices to the ICRC and to the other relief agencies, and has been extremely anxious of course to be kept very currently informed. We have set up--set up last July as a matter of fact--a task force here in the State Department. One of the NSC staff members serves as a member of that task force. So there is a continuing flow of information.

M: You were there when--in October of '68?

P: Yes. I was last there in October.

M: Did he talk to you on your return, for example, in that instance? Or did you brief him on your trip?

P: No. Not in person but my trip was of course summarized and made available to him. He was aware of all of my activities.

M: Had there been serious consideration of opening land access for relief purposes?

P: We've been trying our best to get a land corridor open, to get daylight air flights going in. The great problem is that solutions of this kind cannot be effectuated without the cooperation of the parties. As I say, almost anything that's acceptable to one is almost automatically rejected by the other. The federal government has long been in favor of a land corridor. The "Biafrans" generally oppose land corridors. They maintain that any food that reaches them through federally-held territory is liable to be poisoned, and secondly, they profess concern that the federal government would some way or other take advantage of any neutralized areas of this kind in ways that would permit them to infiltrate to "Biafra's" military disadvantage.

Although both say they agree in principle to daytime air flights as a means of expanding relief operation, the whole problem always bogs down on the modalities. The "Biafrans" have only one air field, which they use for both relief flights and arms flights at night. The Nigerians went to restrict relief flights to daytime operations at that air field. The "Biafrans" don't want give up night relief flights, because the inter-mingling of relief and arms flights a degree of protection to the latter. So this is a problem.

M: How bad does a moral problem like the relief portion of this become before someone has to do something on the outside to impose a settlement?

P: The question is, who imposes it? Can you really impose it, and how

do you impose it? Both sides feel very strongly about the respective merits of their causes in this particular case. A settlement--and its nature--is also a matter that's of importance to the rest of Africa. There are only four countries in Africa out of the forty-one that have recognized "Biafra." And there's very widespread concern in the rest of Africa that, if the secession is successful, this will have far-reaching implications on secessionist on tribal lines in other countries. There are two hundred and fifty tribes in Nigeria and two thousand tribes in Africa as a whole, roughly speaking. Consequently, it is not suprising that the OAU has taken a very strong stand against secession. So when you're talking about intervention in a situation which they're trying to deal with, you're talking about something that has very grave repercussions not only with respect to Nigeria itself but also with respect to a lot of strongly held attitudes by the rest of Africa. And finally, I don't think the people or the governments of the Western democracies would possibly support such an intervention; nor, I think, would the Eastern bloc be foolhardy enough to try.

M: Which really leaves you in a position of wanting something without having much means to--

P: I hate to see people die under any circumstances. This country hates to see them die under any circumstances. But how do you save people who aren't cooperating in saving themselves?

M: Has the fact that we've been bogged down in Viet Nam in the case of intervention--helping people--been an important presence in

considering what to do with respect to Biafra and Nigeria?

P: No, I don't think so.

M: The case can still be considered on its merits without a--

P: I think every case has to be considered on its merits. I don't think anyone ought to feel any automatic restraints because what happens in one place may happen in another. This is what people were arguing in the Congo--that putting three C-130's in there was going to get us involved in another Viet Nam. It didn't. We went in; we did what we said we were going to do. It was not a combatant role. It never involved direct military operations; it was logistic support. It was a limited type of involvement. It wasn't even an intervention because we went in at the request of the legal Congolese government. It was a limited type of support. It didn't get us involved in direct combat. So as I say, I think you have to look at each one of these on its merits. But what do you do with this one? You've got two sides actively fighting. Short of going in with force, you can't assure the delivery of relief supplies. I don't think this is something--

M: The sort of non-combatant intervention that was possible in the Congo is probably not possible here?

P: That's right. And you're dealing with a different kind of a problem here because the only U.S. interest involved is the humanitarian one.

M: There are obviously a lot of crises that have involved the Bureau since you've been here that we haven't talked about, but I can't stop without asking you, are there any that are particularly

important, or that the President has indicated particular interest in that we haven't mentioned? Don't let me get away without giving you an open-ended chance to say anything that you think would be important to say here.

P: Well, I think that the thing that I have felt is the most precious commodity I've had to deal with here is the fact that I've felt that I've worked for a President who understood and who had a very open mind about approaches to these problems. I think one of the most remarkable developments really--we have had other crises. We had a bad crises with Guinea a little over two years ago, two-and-a-half years ago, when as you may recall the Guineans reacted against our Ambassador and placed him under house arrest in Conakry because of an incident involving a commercial U.S. plane that was carrying the Guinean Foreign Minister. They ejected the Peace Corps at that time, and we had a very, very strained situation. A lot of calls were received at that time calling on us to break off diplomatic relations and to pull our Embassy personnel and so forth, but we felt that this would not be in our longer term interests. We were about the only Western presence in Guinea at that particular time. If we'd withdrawn, it would have left only the Communists there. We thought this was over-reaction quite naturally on their part, but we felt that it was in our interests and general Western interests, Guinean interests, that we stay on there. We did. The Secretary was understanding of this; the President was understanding of this. That situation has almost

completely reversed. As of this moment, we have a good, frank relationship with Guinea. One thing we both have learned is that when clouds appear in the relationship; we talk to one another, we talk promptly and we talk frankly. This technique has worked. There have been a few other things that have come up since then we've been able to solve. We've now got, as I say, a good relationship there and a very major investment in the offing. It's going to be the largest aluminum development in the world--a good deal of it made possible with funds provided by the World Bank, but also with substantial funds provided by the U. S. in the way of counterpart funds. And the situation has so improved that President Sekou Toure has invited the Peace Corps back in again. They're about to go back in again. It's the only case world-wide where they have been rejected and asked back.

M: And President Johnson supported the professional advice here against some pressure to do otherwise at the time of the crisis?

P: That's right. I don't know how much pressure he was under, but I know that pressures were widespread at that time. And, you know, there are many other things that this President has done. I havent' got the exact figures to compare with previous Administrations, but the period that I've been here there have been some fifteen visits by African chiefs of state and heads of government. He has kept up a very, very active program on this.

M: What kind of personal diplomat is he?

P: He's damned good.

M: Did you have occasion to know through the African Chiefs of State that Mr. Johnson has been effective?

P: I've been there on a great many of these sessions with him, and I've been over there on probably thirty occasions, I guess, when African ambassadors have gone over to present their credentials and he sat down with them. A couple of times he has taken groups of them out on the river in the boat and had an opportunity to meet with them and talk to them and see what was on their minds.

The White House has had a series of luncheons over there, which sometimes Walt Rostow or Ernie Goldstein or occasionally the Vice President has hosted them. Then at the end of the President comes in and joins the conversation--the last fifteen-thirty minutes, something of this kind. He relates well to Africans, relates very quickly. I remember one of the luncheons we had last year hosted by the Vice President. At the end, as we were breaking up, the President asked, "Now, have any of you got anything on your minds, any problems that we could be helpful with?"

The Ambassador of Lesotho spoke up and said, "Yes, we'd like you to send the Vice President to Africa."

The President turned to the Vice President and said, "Hubert, you're going to Africa." And he did. This was in October, as I recall, and the Vice President went out in December.

M: There have been a lot of important travelers. I think Undersecretary Katzenbach made a major tour. Has this kind of thing helped a lot?

P: It has. And I've made five trips to Africa in the period that I've

been onboard. I've visited every country except one which means forty countries. The one I haven't visited is Mauritania which I can't go to right now because of the break in diplomatic relations.

M: Maybe we can get relations established with them before--

P: But it helps tremendously. Nick Katzenbach's trip was great. The Vice President's was phenomenal. Even the little ones I've made, you know, they really turn out for you. They knock themselves out. Guinea--I was there four days. Three days of it Sekou Toure drove me all around the country himself in his own automobile, and really turned the countryside out. You have an opportunity to make an impact. I later figured out that in those three days, I spoke something like twenty times, radio, groups, and so forth. It gives you a real opportunity to get a message across.

M: You've been very cooperative to sit here this long, and I certainly do thank you. I feel that your remarks will be appreciated. We'll get you a transcript when we can get to it.

[Eend of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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