Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR LEWIS HOFFACKER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: July 17, 1998

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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 17th of July 1998. This is an interview with Ambassador Lewis Hoffacker. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Let's start off. Can you tell me when and where you were born?

HOFFACKER: I was born in Pennsylvania.

Q: Where?

HOFFACKER: Glenville, Pennsylvania, February 11, 1923.

Q: Can you tell me a bit about your family, your parents?

HOFFACKER: Well, they both were of German extraction, three generations since immigration, in the German part of Pennsylvania. They came together and got married, and I was the first of five. We moved from this little village of Glenville after a few years and went to Hanover, Pennsylvania, which really, I guess, is my hometown. I was raised and went to high school there.

Q: Well, now, what was your father, what was his profession?

HOFFACKER: He wasn't very successful in any respect. He sold vegetables and fruit, flowers and then foodstuffs. This was the depression period, and it wasn't much fun. I was born in a little country hotel, which failed, and then we moved to Hanover. My mother was a schoolteacher, and it's her side of the family that I look back to. The other side was less familiar to me. Then, in my adolescent period, my mother and my father separated. It wasn't a very tranquil family, but other families are that way as well. Normally, you just put up with it. My mother wouldn't divorce, but she allowed the separation to happen. So we were in the poverty category, and my mother finally had to take in washing, just to

keep food on the table because my father was not very good about that sort of thing. Do you want me to continue this?

Q: Yes, yes.

HOFFACKER: I don't want to overemphasize my youth and where I came from.

Q: No, I'll tell you. I think it's important because these are Americans representing the United States, and I feel that we should get the social history so people understand who they are.

HOFFACKER: Fine. Well, I have a lot of social history to take me up from bootstraps. I was determined, as were my siblings, to do well, and looking back in 1998, they have. I graduated from high school. I went to Gettysburg College for my freshman year.

Q: Let's talk about high school and education. What interested you in elementary and high school?

HOFFACKER: What we called "problems of democracy." It was the thing that fascinated me. Of course, the war was coming along. That in itself was fascinating. I just couldn't get enough history, political science, that sort of thing - "current affairs," we called them.

Q: Did you read a lot?

HOFFACKER: I read a lot, and I was active in the local symphony.

Q: What did you play?

HOFFACKER: I played the flute, for no particular reason, but I liked music. I wanted to get away from this little town. And college was a good thing. I went to Gettysburg College for my freshman year. I had no money, but I went anyway, and lived with a great aunt. I saw the war coming, so I moved to Washington and worked for the Office of Civilian Defense for a semester and went to George Washington University night school.

Q: This is about when?

HOFFACKER: '42, '43.

Q: So the war was on by that time.

HOFFACKER: Yes. And then I was drafted. I wanted to get into the air force or navy, but I ended up with the army because my eyes were too bad. Funny thing, I was shot on Okinawa some years later, and when I came back to the hospital they said my eyes were too bad, I should never have gone overseas. Anyway, that's a little nothing. So there it was. Despite the infantry, where I started, I benefited a lot from the army. I grew up, as a

matter of fact. If you do three and one-half years of that...

Q: What, you ended up in the infantry?

HOFFACKER: I tried to get out of the infantry for those three and one-half years, but I didn't succeed. Do you remember the Army Specialized Training Program?

Q: Yes.

HOFFACKER: During basic training, which was in Camp Swift near Austin, Texas. I didn't like basic training at all and applied for the Army Specialized Training Program in French - for no particular reason, but I qualified for that. I was motivated, I got a very high grade, so I shipped off to Michigan State for nine months of immersion in French prior to planning to go to France as a military occupation officer. But DeGaulle would not agree that France was an occupied country, so the program was disbanded after nine months, and I was thrown back to the infantry. And then once again I looked for some way to get out of at least the trenches. I went to Officer Training School at Fort Benning. I couldn't get into any other branch. And I was made a lieutenant in 90 days. Then MacArthur asked for all of us, all 200 of us, for Okinawa, so we all went out there and were properly demolished. Most were killed.

Q: Were you with a division?

HOFFACKER: The 77th Infantry, which went in a week ahead of the main invasion of Okinawa. It wasn't publicized, but we went in and cleaned out the naval anchorage for virtually the whole navy. We were lucky because we weren't challenged greatly. And then we moved up to what is called Ie Shima (not Iwo) which is the volcanic island where Ernie Pyle was killed. He was just over the hill from where I was with my platoon. I had a heavy weapons platoon. We were shot up badly, but we conquered the volcano. And then we were sent over to the main island and marched south and in a Pickett's charge type movement, because that's the way we had to fight in Okinawa. I was shot fairly soon - about six weeks, I think - and I was the lucky one, because most of my classmates were killed. I got back to the States and I had six months or more of recuperation from serious chest and arm injuries. They put me back in the line again, preparing to go to Europe. With the European war winding down, I was released and then I went back to George Washington University, where I got my bachelor's in history and political science.

Q: Were you pointed towards anything while you were doing this?

HOFFACKER: Oh yes, the Foreign Service.

Q: When did you first hear about the Foreign Service?

HOFFACKER: I guess when I was at college. I could have been a teacher, but I liked the idea of diplomacy because this business of going to war was distasteful. I'd been through

one and thought, well, there must be some way to do better than to just have wars every generation. I was to the point of almost being a pacifist - but a good pacifist, you know, a person who believed that diplomacy was not being fully utilized and we went to war too early in the game. That was my theory and hope and instinct. So I got my bachelor's degree and I took the Foreign Service Exam; I failed it. And then I went to the Fletcher School and got a master's there.

Q: That's at Tufts University -

HOFFACKER: Yes.

Q: When did you get your master's?

HOFFACKER: In '49. In '48 I got my bachelor's. In those days you could get a master's in a year. Now I think it takes a little longer. But it was a good year. Fletcher is a good school - good classmates, good professors, good library. And we were associated with Harvard, so we had that advantage. I had an offer of an International Institute of Education scholarship to Oxford University, which interested me, but I had no extra money. I had enough education, I thought, and besides that, I had taken the Foreign Service exam again and I passed it, so I passed up Oxford. I got there later; I'll tell you about it later in my recitation.

Q: You took the written exam. Did you take the oral exam?

HOFFACKER: Yes.

Q: Do you recall, when did you take the oral exam?

HOFFACKER: In '50.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions?

HOFFACKER: I thought I had failed it. I felt very dumb, because they asked very difficult questions: things like, "If you had this hand in bridge, how would you play it?" (I didn't play bridge) and "Tell us about the movement of the two armies at Gettysburg." You know, things like that. It was very embarrassing, so I thought when I'd left the room that I'd had it, but I passed it. Remember Ambassador Joe Green? I got to know him afterwards. It was a tough exam, but I was just determined to get in, by hook or crook. I did take a job, after I left Fletcher, waiting for the oral. In those days, you waited a year and a half, but I was lucky. A fellow who was my boss in the old OCD before the war was executive officer of NEA in the department, and he gave me a P-4 job.

Q: A low civil service job.

HOFFACKER: A wonderful job, on the Greek desk. I handled Cyprus affairs from the

first day, and Cyprus was up in flames. I was dazzled by all of this diplomacy. It was just the way I thought it would be. And all the great guys I was working for - Jack Jernegan and Bill Rountree were in NEA at the time. I learned an awful lot by just watching them.

Q: This was the time when Enosis was brewing in Cyprus.

HOFFACKER: The Greek-Turkish aid program also. So there was really a lot going on over there. And the commies, of course, were under every bed. So I had a great year, and then I got my assignment following the training program with a good class of friends. And my first assignment was Teheran, which was not dull. I look back on it with great fondness, because I was sent out there as third secretary. I was married the week before we left to a daughter of an ambassador who had died the previous year, Paul Alling. We took one of these American Export ships. That's the way we went to work. We went from New York to Beirut with our old Ford and drove the Ford across the Syrian Desert and up over the Persian hills to Teheran. Henry Grady was ambassador.

Q: You were in Teheran from -

HOFFACKER: '51 to '53.

Q: And you were third secretary.

HOFFACKER: The only third secretary. And that's where I met John Stutesman. I replaced him.

Q: What was the situation as you saw it in Iran at that particular time?

HOFFACKER: Well the Shah was on the throne. It was rather shaky because Mossadegh, the Prime Minister, was hanky-panking with the commies. And we, Uncle Sam, could not tolerate any of that. Iran was too important. And Mossadegh was vulnerable. He thought he could contain the communists, but they were all over the place. So our goal was to support the Shah and to try to contain Mossadegh, who had certain crazy qualities, or what some people would call crazy qualities. He was unbalanced, to say the least. Loy Henderson, who succeeded Grady, was the greatest ambassador. So I was lucky working under him. It came to the point where the CIA became very prominent in the process of supporting the Shah and of containing Mossadegh. Mossadegh exiled the Shah and the Shah had to come back.

Q: You were there at the time.

HOFFACKER: Not at that particular time. I left just before the Shah, but I had two years there watching all this ferment and the riots and the Iranian court and all the other things that were happening.

Q: What were you doing?

HOFFACKER: Well, I had a traditional job. In those days we rotated from one specialty to another in the training process. I don't know whether that's the case now, but it was a good idea. I started out as a consular officer, and I was given in addition the protocol job. I did that for a year, and then I moved over to the political section, continuing my protocol work. So I was political and consular in my first assignment, and my next assignment was economic, which made sense. That was Istanbul. We were able to travel a little in Iran, and we were able to see many of the Teheran leaders. There weren't many mullahs around; in fact, I don't know whether I ever met a mullah. But I guess the mullahs were busy. And the Shah was a gentle man, very gentle. We called him a "weak reed" because he needed a lot of guidance.

Q: He was pretty young, too, at that time, wasn't he?

HOFFACKER: He was my age, which would have been - maybe 30? Thereabouts. And he needed a lot of help, and we helped him, gladly. Of course, he changed to something different later on, and that was a problem, in a way. He was talking about creating a "white revolution," trying to bring Iran into the 20th century with heavy foreign aid. And we were heavy in foreign aid and heavy in military aid. I thoroughly enjoyed those two years.

Q: Were you, while you were there, aware of the work of the CIA. For example, was Archie Roosevelt there at the time?

HOFFACKER: Yes, he was there, in his own way, but he wasn't stationed there. He was working out of Langley, or whatever it was. But he was very prominent in the planning and the operation. He was a big factor in the game that was being played. But as a third secretary I wasn't in on all of that sort of thing. In those days, in the early '50s, we as a government were able to do these things without any problem. There was no problem with the CIA trying to bring down a government or bringing in a government. We did that more or less routinely; this was the pattern in Iran. And it was easy to justify, because you couldn't give Iran to the commies, who were there already. The British were kicked out, and we were filling that gap. I was there when the British were kicked out. It was during that great petroleum crisis.

Q: This was when Mossadegh nationalized oil.

HOFFACKER: Yes, he nationalized oil, and we were caught in the middle of that. Averell Harriman came out, and everybody was trying to set up the consortium and so forth. So that was fun to watch. I was still a young third secretary.

Q: What was the feeling among the people you were talking to in the Political Section about Mossadegh?

HOFFACKER: Well, there was sort of a joke: we said he was a *personne alitée*, a 'person

in bed'; he sometimes received the Ambassador and other ambassadors lying in bed in his pajamas. And he had other peculiar characteristics. He risked Iranian security. We knew best; we knew the commies better than he did. We had to put our foot down. And he wasn't very easy to deal with in that respect. The Shah, of course, was amenable to all these things we had to say, and so the Shah was our man, and Mossadegh was counter to the sort of Iran we were trying to save.

Q: How did Henry Grady operate from your perspective?

HOFFACKER: He was a political appointee. I should say at the outset, I have nothing against political appointees. They don't have the background of a Loy Henderson, for example. Henry Grady had been a decent ambassador to India, and I think he was in Greece, too.

Q: He went to Greece later maybe?

HOFFACKER: Or was it before?

Q: He was there before, during the Civil War.

HOFFACKER: He was really quite good, but I was there just a short time with him. Arthur Richards was the DCM and I worked most closely with him.

Q: Important places, and those were important times.

HOFFACKER: Grady was a big man, steady, knowledgeable, and so forth. He had a dynamic wife, who added a lot of glitter to the Embassy. And then Loy Henderson also had a wife who added her unique personality to the scene.

Q: She was very difficult, wasn't she? Or at least I heard so.

HOFFACKER: Well, yes, she was regarded as difficult by most people, and I, as protocol officer, had to work with her. You can't dislike a person you're working for; you'll adapt to her. But she had ideas which bothered some women in the embassy - and some men, too. She was very authoritarian with regard to what the wives were supposed to do. That's not the pattern now, but in the old days, wives were working for the Ambassador's wife. Women's lib has put an end to that. But she had her own personality problems, to the point where it was sometimes awkward. But we were working for Loy Henderson and we were very glad to be working for Loy Henderson - put it that way.

Q: How did he operate?

HOFFACKER: Very smooth. Old School. He'd had a lot of experience on the Russian side, the communist side. He'd served in that part of the world. So he was very knowledgeable as to what the threat was, and he was able to interpret the threat to

Washington in an articulate way, so that he wasn't just trying to alarm Washington. He was logical, you might say.

Q: The Shah had not been bounced out while you were there.

HOFFACKER: Just after we left.

Q: Was the embassy seeing Mossadegh and the Shah sort of running on a collision course at that time?

HOFFACKER: Yes. There weren't many secrets. A republic could have happened any day if Mossadegh had insisted on it - not an Islamic republic, but a republic. By the way there was a seminar down at the University of Texas some years ago with an expert on Iran who ran a scenario on what if Mossadegh had prevailed in that situation, what would Iran look like? It was a very good exercise. But we, Uncle Sam, were not willing to take that chance. I can't argue with that, in the light of the commies coming down there, heading for the Persian Gulf.

Q: It was less than ten years before when you arrived there, certainly, and it's only been less than six years before that the Soviets occupied the upper half of Iran.

HOFFACKER: And the Azerbaijan crisis was a very serious one.

Q: And they didn't leave gracefully.

HOFFACKER: I think the atomic bomb had something to do with our clout. I admire the way Harry Truman and the others decided to draw a line in the sand: Greece, Turkey, and Iran would hold. And all three were threatened. Greece was wobbly; Iran was wobbly; and Turks are never wobbly but they were certainly exposed. [*Laughter*]

Q: How did your wife like it there?

HOFFACKER: She was born in Beirut when her father was consul there.

Q: She was a Foreign Service brat.

HOFFACKER: Yes, he died when he was ambassador to Pakistan. I never knew him. That was in '49 or so. So she knew the Service, and she adapted quite well. It wasn't quite as hard for her. It was a continuum with a husband.

Q: In 1953, you left Teheran. Where did you go?

HOFFACKER: They assigned me to the Arab affairs seminar in the American University in Beirut, which was wonderful annual affair where we sent a batch of our young officers who were interested in the Middle East for training for several months. We were based in

Beirut - we studied there, and we traveled.

Q: Did you study Arabic?

HOFFACKER: We didn't take Arabic, no, because Arabic is really a full-time thing. We had Arabic language schools elsewhere - Tangier, maybe even Beirut, I'm not sure. No, we studied politics. We traveled around places other than Israel because we couldn't get into Israel. In those days you didn't go back and forth. But we went to Jordan, Syria, and then Lebanon. We didn't get down to Saudi Arabia. That was a very good three months.

Q: It was still '53?

HOFFACKER: The summer of '53. Then I was assigned to Istanbul as vice-consul in the Economic Section.

Q: So you were in Istanbul -

HOFFACKER: From '53 to '55, in the Economic Section, dealing with labor affairs and other economic matters.

Q: Again, from your viewpoint in '53 from Istanbul, how did you see the Turkish situation at that time?

HOFFACKER: It wasn't as if I'd been in the capital, Ankara. I looked at it from an economic point of view and a regional point of view, because we didn't try to cover the whole country. We just covered the Istanbul end, which was largely commercial and economic. But of course, it was a listening point there for Eastern Europe. Very much so. There were CIA people there watching the commies. It was quite a change from being in a glamorous capital like Teheran. It was a pleasant historic, cultural city, with emphasis on the economic. Those two years came and went, and we had our first baby there. Then we moved on.

Q: Who was consul general while you were there?

HOFFACKER: Bob McAfee was consul general. He has since died. He ran a very low-key operation there. I got along with him quite well. Kay Bracken was the number two. She was a Foreign Service officer who did great work. She was a linguist, Persian, Turkish and so forth. Those were the top two during that period. And then I moved on from there back to Washington, in '55.

Q: What about the economics from Istanbul's perspective?

HOFFACKER: Heavy inflation, and trying to accelerate development, because Turkey was still a largely agricultural country, and most of it was primitive. And we were trying to beef it up across the board. Militarily we were very powerful. The Turks accepted all

this. We didn't have the communist problem there we had in Iran. They weren't around us; the Turks took care of them in their own way. Thank goodness for Turkey. Turkey is a keystone there. We'd better take care of Turkey. They took care of us, and let's take care of them. It would be a pity to see Turkey influenced by the sickness of Iran or other Islamic fundamentalism. With their revolution under Ataturk, Turkey was supposed to be secular from here on. The military are pretty tough on human rights and as far as democracy is concerned; they have their own ideas about that. We are right to give Turkey priority.

Q: You are an economic reporter. Did you rely pretty much on your Turkish staff to help you?

HOFFACKER: Yes. We had a good Turkish staff. We picked up some stuff on our own. We traveled around that part of the country and talked to the locals and the labor people. The Turks are well educated. You could talk to them. There was no suspicion of us that I was aware of. We had a good Turkish staff, some of whom were Armenian, or Greek - Istanbul is that sort of a place - and I was very pleased to have my economic training there.

Q: Were all of you watching the ships that went through the Bosporus, trying to figure out what was what?

HOFFACKER: Yes, that was exciting. I used to go out on the Bosporus every now and then on commercial fishing boats. That was fun. Up into the Black Sea, and eating all that wonderful fish. Now the city has grown. It doesn't have the same charm as it did back in '53.

Q: Was there any concern about Greece from the perspective of Istanbul?

HOFFACKER: All the time. It was endemic. The prejudice against Byzantium and against the Greeks was there. We had riots. Greek shops were burned. And then over in Cyprus we had problems between Greeks and Turks.

Q: Yes. Were the Turks talking about attacking the Greeks, the military, or did you find that the concern was more with the Soviets?

HOFFACKER: They had the right idea about the Soviet Union. They were a stalwart defense against the Soviet. I don't know if they wanted to invade the Soviet Union - I never heard that - but they were very glad to cooperate with us. The Greeks and Turks could never agree on where the boundaries were on Cyprus; that is just a running sore - deep, deep enmity. The Greeks, of course, in Istanbul resent the Ottomans' having taken over. They can't forgive them.

Q: You left there in '55. Where did you go then?

HOFFACKER: I went to the Egyptian desk in Washington.

Q: The Egyptian desk?

HOFFACKER: Yes. To '57.

Q: From approximately '55 to '57.

HOFFACKER: Egyptian desk. Egyptian-Sudanese affairs. Sudan had just come into independence, so I handled Sudanese affairs primarily.

Q: You were now a full-fledged Near-Eastern hand.

HOFFACKER: Not quite. I had that idea, but the Egyptian desk was very sobering. It was during the Suez crisis. With Foster Dulles and our policy in the Middle East on the Arab-Israeli question, there was a certain amount of disenchantment building up in me. I was loyal to our policy, but I wished I could have influenced it. I foresaw that I would not live to see a settlement, and that bothered me. We all talked about peace in the Middle East...

Q: We're talking about between Israel and the Arabs -

HOFFACKER: Arab-Israeli peace. We're still talking about it. I was right. I will not live to see the settlement. Our policy was not even-handed, and I knew the domestic factors involved in that and accepted them. But I saw that the domestic factor in that equation was not going to change, and on the other side, periodic wars. We had the Suez Crisis and evacuation. I said, "Well, I really think I'll look elsewhere." Africa was coming into its own at that time. That was very exciting to me. There happened to be an African seminar, which was put together with Ford Foundation money for Foreign Service officers, who were sent around Africa to 13 countries in the summer of '58. I am getting ahead of my story.

Q: Yes. I'd like to come back. Why don't we talk first about Egypt, '55 to '57? When you arrived in '55 you were dealing with Sudanese affairs, but obviously you were keeping up with Egyptian affairs. Prior to the nationalization - you got there just a short time before Nasser did it - were you thinking that Nasser might nationalize things, or did this come as a surprise?

HOFFACKER: It shouldn't have, because he kept saying he would, and it happened. We developed a strong feeling toward Nasser. We were not able to work out any kind of a deal with him, because we said no way can we have a deal. Well, I was one of those who thought you could. Because we had a lot of clout back then, I think we could have. I don't say we should have built the Aswan Dam. But we had nothing but money in those days. We could have found some way to buy him - or rent him, put it that way. But I didn't see that sort of attitude. Putting him down was really, I think, what we had in mind.

Q: There seemed to be an almost visceral dislike of Nasser by Dulles. Did that permeate down to the Desk?

HOFFACKER: Yes, it was personal, and I had to write rhetoric in my drafting on nationalization saying otherwise. I was not happy explaining our Egyptian policy, and it was at that time that I said, "Well, I think I need a change." I decided that I wasn't going to see anything different in the Middle East and I wanted to see a settlement. So I moved on briefly to the Sri Lanka desk, Ceylon, for a short period. That wasn't my choice; I just wanted a change from the Middle East. It didn't amount to much because I was shortly thereafter assigned to Paris.

Q: But still on the Egyptian-Sudanese Desk, you say that the other Foreign Service officers you met basically had a more balanced view toward Nasser, or was the area pretty well caught up in the Dulles attitude, the if-you're-not-for-us-you're-against-us type of thing?

HOFFACKER: Well, we couldn't ever...

Q: You're saying that in those days...

HOFFACKER: Dissent wasn't an easy thing. Now we have the dissent channels, which do facilitate contrary views, but I never had the feeling that Dulles cared for contrary views. Nor did I think that he had a good attitude toward us as a Service. Perhaps I should have got used to the idea of the Secretary of State expecting loyalty but not necessarily reciprocating. I'm old-fashioned. I always rather liked the idea of mutual support, mutual loyalties. But with Dulles, he didn't protect the Foreign Service the way I thought he should have. With the China hands, McCarthy, and all that business, I didn't feel he was a good boss. On his policy in the Middle East, I wasn't comfortable. And so I felt I would be frustrated working in that environment for the rest of my career. And so I said I'd like a change.

Q: Were you able to go on this African seminar?

HOFFACKER: I did. I went. That must have been the summer of '58. That was a great experience. I was so right. Africa was a great place to be at that particular time, because many countries were coming into independence. We went to 13 of them, flew around on this little old plane, and talked to whatever governments there were. Some were colonial, but you could see the dynamism of these emerging Africans, great hopes, unrealistic expectations, all that sort of thing. It was a much simpler and much more hopeful environment than I had had in the Middle East, and I rather liked working in Africa. I've always liked working in Africa since then.

Q: Was it something like you were going to be part of something which was going to be sort of a new service and you weren't up against the old hands who had been there

forever?

HOFFACKER: That's right, because Loy Henderson had decided we were going to have embassies in every one of these new countries. He'd made that decision, and then he said now we have to staff them. We were part of that process.

Q: As you went around did you pick out any places where you wanted to be?

HOFFACKER: Yes - not that you ever get what you prefer.

Q: What particularly interested you?

HOFFACKER: Uganda was probably the most attractive place, an idyllic place. Of course, it's fallen apart since then. West Africa and Central Africa were not appealing, except Dakar. But as it turned out I spent my Africa years on the west side; Congo and Cameroon.

Q: Can you think, who were some of the people who went on that trip with you who wound up in Africa?

HOFFACKER: Well, Art Woodruff, Chris Chapman, and Herb Goodman. Fred Hadsel was the leader. It was a good group. They chose well, and most of us ended up in Africa.

Q: You say this was '58, and you'd been on the Ceylon Desk for a while -

HOFFACKER: Just a brief period.

Q: And then what did they do with you?

HOFFACKER: I went to Paris.

Q: You went to Paris from when to when?

HOFFACKER: '58 to '60. Political-Military Affairs. I don't know how that happened, but it happened, and I was glad to see Paris. That was a great period to go. Political and Military Affairs was fun. The Algerian and NATO crises kept bubbling over.

Q: In Paris in 1958, when you arrived there, had DeGaulle made his announcement? He hadn't made his announcement yet -

HOFFACKER: No, I guess he withdrew...

Q: Because he withdrew in the '60s, under Johnson.

HOFFACKER: I was there when he withdrew the fleet, but I spent most of my time there

dealing with our bases. We had bases all over, which bothered DeGaulle, of course. And we had to keep some sort of working relationship with the French authorities. And so I dealt with that side primarily. Bill Connett was my boss, a regular guy. He handled the big stuff. I had a feeling at the time, although I enjoyed Paris and France very much - how could you not like those things? - that I wasn't really cut out for EUR. I was more the Third World type, by instinct. European diplomacy was glacial and very complex and so forth, and I'm not glacial or complex. I'm simple and I like to move around a little bit. Africa coming into its own was exciting. It so happened that while I was in Paris the Department remembered that when I left the African seminar I said I'd like to work in Africa. They took me up on that and sent me to Oxford. I studied African affairs there with one other Foreign Service officer, Bob Hennemeyer.

Q: I've interviewed Bob, too. Let's still talk about Paris, '58-'60. Were you dealing with the Quai d'Orsay?

HOFFACKER: Yes.

Q: How did that fit? I mean, were they difficult to deal with?

HOFFACKER: Yes, but the French are often difficult, and not just because DeGaulle was their boss. It takes a while to get used to them. I got used to them. I spent most of my career working with the French, in Africa certainly, then in Paris. They are by definition tedious and they have a chip on their shoulder as their international clout is diminished. Uncle Sam is something of a threat politically; this fear was manifested in a lot of ways. In their negotiations on base agreements and on incidents, they were a hassle. They were very hard to get into an easy relationship; but that was the job, to have a relationship with them, and we didn't throw up our hands.

Q: While you were there in this '58-'60 period (I think it was around that time or a little before), Senator Kennedy had talked about "the Algerians like independence" and all. Did that happen on your watch?

HOFFACKER: No, I wasn't there at that particular time. I know what you're referring to, and when we get to Algeria I will refer to Teddy Kennedy in that same context.

Q: How about this '58-60 period? Did you find there was rather solid leftist - I think you have universities, intellectuals and all - dislike of the United States?

HOFFACKER: Oh yes, naturally. Not just the commies, but others who didn't like our capitalism, didn't like our heavy weight. And then of course you had the Gaullist prejudice against us, so you had a lot of strong feelings which were not friendly. That's all right. You're not out there to have "localitis," to flip because they want you to flip. You protect your interests, and you hope you can agree with them, but if not, you have to disagree if your interests are not preserved.

Q: Did you find the Embassy at all split in Paris - it was apparent at other times, and I don't know about this period - between those that were sort of almost pro-DeGaulle, by saying that all right, he may be a tough guy, but by God he's holding France together, and those who couldn't stand him?

HOFFACKER: Well, I didn't see anything that sharp. We all accepted, I think, without exception that DeGaulle was good for France. They had so much instability, at least he provided stability, in his own way. He's a rough customer to work with, but at least he was *our* S.O.B. And in the crunch the feeling was that he would be with us, and it was proven later that he lived up to his word on Cuba. In the Cuba crisis, he was with us. In the big crises, he was with us. That means a great deal because you could count on him. All you have to do is read his speeches. All this was there. If you didn't like his speeches, that's another thing, but you had to read them, and there it was. He was very predictable. So I didn't see any split. In every embassy you have people with localitis, and I hope I never had it, because I fought it all the time. That's a good reason to move people. I never fought that policy of ours of frequent transfers.

Q: You were there from '58 to '60. Who was the ambassador?

HOFFACKER: He was from the Corning Glass Company family. Political ambassador. Why can't I remember?

Q: Well, don't worry about it.

HOFFACKER: But number two was Cecil Lyon. He ran the Embassy.

Q: Yes, I was going to say that Cecil Lyon was a son-in-law of Joseph Drew. He had been an ambassador down in Latin America somewhere.

HOFFACKER: Yes, he was old school. And that's what DCM's in London, Paris and Rome were designed for - to run the embassy while the ambassador did his thing.

Q: So in 1960 you were sent off to Oxford.

HOFFACKER: Yes, they remembered that I'd said I'd be glad to work in Africa, so they said go to Oxford for a year and learn the theory. I had a great year there. That was the last year. Maybe Bob Hennemeyer told you. He and I were the last two. After that we had our own Africa studies in this country.

Q: Can you give a feel of the thrust of the Oxford African training?

HOFFACKER: Well, it was something unique and very rewarding. It was the Commonwealth Relations Office that put together this program, and they had their own people, CRO, Foreign Office, and a lot of Africans and Asians coming into their own, new administrators coming up through the ranks. We were all pitched in together, with

two Americans thrown in. We were assigned to individual colleges. I was at St. Antony's; I had a tutor and tutorials and took courses around the university dealing with Africa. Very little discipline on us. We had somebody at Rhodes House monitoring all this, but we were more or less on our own. We weren't running for any certificate or anything. It was just like being a butterfly in a garden. And I had a great time studying what I wanted to study. It had to relate to Africa. That was the only restriction. So I had nine months of that, took my family, in my little Peugeot (two daughters by that time) and the *au pair* and tootled off from Paris to Oxford. I was assigned to Katanga while I was at Oxford.

Q: Was there an outlook that you were getting at Oxford and learning by the British that in retrospect was a different way of looking at Africa than the Americans had?

HOFFACKER: Yes, I expected it. At Oxford you looked at Africa through British eyes. They were winding down their Empire. There wasn't the jealousy of us that I expected, although there was some arrogance every now and then. I found that with the English, particularly at the university, where they feel superior intellectually and they are there in their own environment. Oxford is the greatest thing in the world as far as the British are concerned - at least half the British think that. These two Americans in there felt that condescension: we didn't know much about Africa. We were new in Africa. Margery Perham, an expert on Lugard, was my favorite don. My tutor was a race relations man from South Africa, Kenneth Kirkwood. They were people who knew their subjects, and I picked up an awful lot from them. When I was assigned as consul in Katanga, while I was at Oxford, I shifted my research to the Congo and Katanga. There were great libraries to work with this connection.

Q: You were told you were going to Katanga before you went.

HOFFACKER: Not before I went but while I was at Oxford.

Q: This of course was a very interesting time. What were you gathering about the Congo from the Oxford perspective?

HOFFACKER: Well, the overall politics, you know, the secession of Katanga from Léopoldville.

Q: That started right from the beginning?

HOFFACKER: Oh, yes. I was there (at Oxford) in '60/'61, and this blew up in '61. Actually it was during '60 that it started blowing up, when the Belgians were scrambling to get out. So I had all that period. I spent a lot of time studying Tshombé...

Q: Moïse Tshombé.

HOFFACKER: Because he was the leader of Katanga and understanding him was what it was all about if you were going to be consul in Katanga.

Q: Who later wrote the book, The Making of a Quagmire*, which included...*

HOFFACKER: I don't think I read that.

Q: Oh, you should.

HOFFACKER: Was that on the Congo story?

Q: On the Congo and moving on to Vietnam. He talked about, I recall, how all the correspondents and the Foreign Service officers would gather about the bar and worry about the future of the Congo, while the Congolese leaders were usually off drinking and wenching.

HOFFACKER: I'll have to read that. I enjoyed his company (Connor Cruise O'Brien?). He gave the UN a hard time - which is his nature. He's a very punchy correspondent. The UN bridled over some of his criticism. My consulate was open to journalists. I loaned Dave Halberstam my Oxford paper on Tshombé, and he liked it very much. Journalists and diplomats see these situations pretty much the same if their heads are screwed on right, if they don't have much ideology. And then the funniest thing happened.

Q: You were there -

HOFFACKER: From '61 to '62 in Katanga and then from '62 to '63 in Léopoldville, which is Kinshasa now. But I remember when Halberstam came to see me in the consulate because I couldn't get out - I was put under house arrest - and he was shot at. He was very shaken and scared. He said, "I don't mind dying; I'd just rather not die here, if you don't mind." That's the way I felt too. I want to die back here. I had a good year there, but it was very painful in a lot of respects, particularly on the security side. My family was evacuated shortly after I arrived. But maybe I should start at the beginning.

Q: Yes, because we want to cover this rather thoroughly.

HOFFACKER: Okay, I was assigned to be consul in Katanga. I went to Léopoldville. Ed Gullion was the ambassador there. I spent a week with him. Hammarskjold went down in Northern Rhodesia.

Q: He was killed.

HOFFACKER: Yes, the plane went down and he was killed, and it was a mystery at the time about how it had happened. And so after about a week in Leopoldville, it was time to go down and take my post. I went down on Air America, I think it was called, one of those planes contracted to carry supplies. It was full of bullet-holes. We were flying very low because the Fouga plane that the Katangese rebels had was in the air and was trying to bring down our planes. I landed, and I was surprised when I arrived at the consulate.

Nobody had told me that the consulate was occupied by Indian troops, who had moved in there after the last round of fighting. There were sandbags in the windows and in the garden. It took me a week to get rid of them. You can't run consulate with UN troops - any troops. It was contrary to *my* way of business. The Katanga president's house was just across the street, and here we were with machine guns out the windows of the consulate trained on the president's house. That's no way to have a dialogue, and I wanted to have a dialogue.

Q: The president being Tshombé at that time.

HOFFACKER: Yes, and I developed a relationship that was workable.

Q: Could you explain what was the situation just before you arrived? Why were there UN troops in the Congo? What was the problem?

HOFFACKER: They were there after the first round of fighting. The UN troops moved in on the town and secured a line between the Katangese "g*endarmerie,*" and the mercenaries on the Katangan side, and the UN. A cease-fire stopped them in those positions, but incidents continued - firing on each other, kidnaping, that sort of thing. It was explosive. I got the troops out and then I started my diplomacy - you know, bring the two sides together. And I was very determined not to have any more fighting. But the fighting continued, and I was standing out on the ramparts there between the two telling them not to fight. I had no instructions for that; I just didn't want to sit in a foxhole. There must be some way to keep them from shooting again, because when they shoot they kill a whole lot of people, civilians in particular.

Anyway, the second round of fighting began, and it was bad all over town, and I told the UN I was worried about my missionaries and other noncombatant Americans, and they said, "Well, we can give you a couple of armored personnel carriers to get them out of here, but you have to do it now because we can't hold off." So I sent word around the American community and said, "You have five minutes to go, and only five minutes." So they all came, all our women and children and the missionaries. We sent them out, and then all hell broke loose. More of the same, and a lot of civilians killed. Some UN killed. I guess before that, though, I should tell you about Senator Dodd, before it all blew up. I'll backtrack a bit.

Senator Dodd from Connecticut was a so-called senator from Katanga. He was subject to a lobby group that wanted us to support the independence of Katanga, which was contrary to Washington policy. And we wanted Katanga to be reintegrated into the Congo. We didn't recognize the secession of Katanga. Ambassador Gullion came down and tried to work out a deal with Tshombé, but it fell through. Tshombé reneged. Senator Dodd came to town, and we had a reception at the consulate, which we usually do for a senator. I brought in the government of the Katanga régime and UN people. It was the first time they had been together, so I thought I had accomplished something. We went to dinner afterwards at the home of the Mobil oilman, and the Senator and his wife and my wife

and I arrived there, and we saw three European people being dragged out of the house. I grabbed two of them and put them into the limo, and the third one I couldn't see because it was dark. We had to get out, and besides these Katanga rebels, "gendarmes," who were doing the kidnaping and terror were aiming their weapons at us, and I thought it was about time to get out. We raced back to the consulate, and all night long I negotiated with the government, the president's office, for the release of Urquhart, the UN representative.

Q: He was the other person.

HOFFACKER: Right, Brian Urquhart. We could see he had been hit in the face and was being dragged off into a dark... Finally two of the ministers of the government brought him in after several hours. Senator and Mrs. Dodd were sitting there watching all this; we had a successful conclusion. Urquhart was badly hurt, having had his nose bashed in by a rifle butt and having been threatened with his life. He handled himself very well. One problem was that the Indian brigade wanted to move on the palace to get the UN representative, but I said, "No, we can't have that. We're negotiating." There was great rejoicing when Urquhart was brought in. The other two people were the information officer of the UN and a Belgian banker. The next day, Dodd still wanted to see Kolwezi and the mines, the copper mines, so he and I and others went out to look at them. I put my family with some missionaries to protect them, because an Indian officer was murdered that night in front of the consulate. It was that sort of explosive situation. Dodd went away, and the missionaries and our families soon went away because of the deteriorating security situation. They were flown out to Rhodesia, where they stayed for a certain time.

Q: What was in it for Dodd? Why was he pushing for Katanga?

HOFFACKER: It is alleged that he was a pawn of Belgian mining interests. The Belgian mining interests were staunchly behind Tshombé. The Belgian commercial lobby was very strong in this country, and Dodd was part of that.

Q: How did he react to seeing this brutality on the part of the secessionists? Did that have any effect on him?

HOFFACKER: Not really. That little incident did not change him. In fact, he said to me as he left, "I want to talk to President Kennedy, because I think you did a great job." I said, "Senator, would you mind not overdoing it, because I have enough problems keeping the consulate open." There were some people who thought we didn't need a consulate there. They thought my reporting all this stuff coming out of Katanga was not necessary, that they could figure it out from Léopoldville. I never had any problem with my ambassador. He never called me pro-Katangan, and of course I wasn't.

The funny thing was that Douglas MacArthur III, our ambassador in Brussels, was usually agreeing with me. I said, it's very interesting: here's this little consulate (I was a second secretary when I was there), and I reported directly to Washington, the UN, Brussels, Léopoldville, and others, not going through the Embassy. So the stuff I wrote was

sometimes dynamite.

Q: The world was really focused on this problem at that time.

HOFFACKER: I sensed - and I was right - that Washington hadn't made up its mind how they were going to play it. Are they going to let the UN play it their way, or are we going to play it our way, or are we going to have a secession? Dodd was very close to the President. So I will tell you now, and this is something that has come out in other forms, so I can tell you. I didn't think it would ever come out, but it has. You know Freedom of Information has uncovered things that I didn't think would ever come out.

President Kennedy, at the behest of somebody in the department - I think it was George Ball, who was undersecretary - decided he wanted to talk to me. He had been reading some of my stuff; he was that sort of a president. He was reading all these Katanga cables. He shouldn't have been doing that, but he was. And so he said, "I want to talk to you. Come home and don't tell anybody." Well, I don't go back to Washington without telling somebody, so when I arrived in Washington I went by way of some places other than Leopoldville, and I did tell the Department that I was going over to see the President. I reported back what had transpired. Kennedy just wanted to know my views, and I repeated what I had already said. And he said, "Would you now go up and see Senator Dodd and carry a letter back from Dodd to Tshombe urging reintegration into the Congo." I said, "Well, of course, I'd be glad to" I went back and it resulted in another round of talks. George McGhee and Wayne Fredericks, who was an aide to Soapy Williams in African Affairs at the time, and I sat down with Tshombé around the table and talked. Tshombé said "Of course, of course" to everything we said. Of course, he didn't mean what he said, so we had to have another round of talks. At that time I had been moved from Elisabethville to Léopoldville, the embassy, to be head of the Political Section there, and we brought in new man as consul.

Q: I'd like to talk about this meeting with President Kennedy. How well informed did you find him?

HOFFACKER: Well informed. He said, "Do you really mean that?" about these things I had reported. He said, "Do you think there's hope?" I said, "There's always hope." I believe you should negotiate until there's nothing to negotiate. "Can you trust him?" I said, "Well, I'm not sure you can trust him." Of course, we found out later we couldn't trust him. If you get something in writing, it's better than nothing.

At that time we were living in Léopoldville, and my wife got deathly ill, and I had to go off to Paris with her. During that time there was a third round of fighting with the UN and then it was over. The UN moved out and did not stop, as they had done the two previous times, with cease-fires. This time they didn't stop; they took over Katanga and that was the end of the secession.

Q: One of my interviews, which is an ongoing one, is with Jonathan Dean, and he was

there at the time and said at one point the Indian Brigade commander said, "What do you think I should do? Should I stop?" And Dean said, "Well, its up to you, but it makes sense to keep going." Later on, at the same time, whoever was secretary general of the UN, U Nu, was saying they wouldn't go on. But the Indians went on, took it over, and Ralph Bunche came out and with a smile on his face said, "You know you really shouldn't have done that."

HOFFACKER: Communications broke down. The restraint on the UN troops just didn't reach them. I think maybe we were handling their communications. I wasn't there, so I don't know precisely.

Q: Sometimes it's handy to have communications break down.

HOFFACKER: That was the explanation I got. I was in Paris at the time with my wife. Anyway, it was done, and secession was over.

Q: Were you the only American there?

HOFFACKER: Oh, no. Terry McNamara was the vice-consul.

Q: I have a long interview with him.

HOFFACKER: You'll enjoy that. He was heroic; he was just wonderful.

Q: I knew Terry even before he went out there, and Terry is kind of a very quiet "war lover." He kind of likes that. I knew him in Danang.

HOFFACKER: Ask him specifically, because he may not tell you. How did he rescue the missionaries from the UN? I'll tell you and you can verify it with him. He was vice-consul. He was always out there drinking beer with the mercenaries, with the bad guys, anybody who was down there at the Léo II Hotel. He was doing his job, sniffing around, so he knew the mercenaries, and one day the UN fired on the compound of the American missionaries. They called me and said, "Get the UN to stop." And the UN said, "But there are mercenaries among the missionaries. They're firing at us, and we're firing back at the mercenaries among the missionaries." Terry got in touch with the mercenaries to tell them to stop firing from the compound, and so he saved some American lives. Of course, the missionaries were sympathetic towards Tshombé. They were Katangans for all practical purposes. Terry was a godsend in situations like that.

Q: What sort of instructions were you getting from Léopoldville.

HOFFACKER: Not very many. When I went to Katanga I was surprised. I was given no instructions. So I went. I've been other places where I didn't have instructions. I looked over the situation and reported. I guess that was what I was supposed to do - report, but not add any legitimacy to that régime, because it was not a government; it was a

secessionist régime. So I was careful about that. I developed good communications with anybody I wanted in that régime.

Q: Was there anything resembling a central government representative in the area?

HOFFACKER: No.

Q: So we are trying to restore a régime that really couldn't project its power even within the area. Well, in other words, we're talking about...

HOFFACKER: Kasavubu and Adoula, the president and prime minister, could not project their power in Katanga. They and that rabble army under Mobutu could not prevail against the Katanga mercenaries and rebels who were trained by Belgian officers and other officers and were reinforced with mercenaries, who were purely European. That was an effective military force which the Congolese army couldn't beat. But superimposed on that was the UN, which had Indian, Ethiopian, Irish - you name it. They did have the overwhelming force; they just had to be unleashed. And when they were unleashed, the third time around, they took over and cleaned up.

Q: I think Jonathan Dean said something about "Well, for some reason," with a twinkle in his eye, "we didn't have communication with anyone else." So I think they probably pulled a switch so they could -

HOFFACKER: I wasn't there at the time. But we were very much part of the UN. Our military attaches were big offices. Our CIA was immense. And we were integrated, for all practical purposes, in the UN.

Q: What about the CIA at that time? I would have thought that the CIA being particularly accident-prone in the '60s would have almost brushed you aside and taken over.

HOFFACKER: No, they were there. I didn't pretend to know everything they did, but they were not a problem there; and moreover, they provided our communications. We didn't have our own. They were there and they did their little collection of intelligence. But in Léopoldville, where I was so-called chief of the Political Section, it was a different ball game. There CIA was very big and conspicuous. They were everywhere: in the government, in the military, and in the embassy. Everybody knew who they were; they were the backbone of the central government.

Q: The Congolese government.

HOFFACKER: Yes, to the extent that they even brought in public relations people to make the government look good.

Q: It was a time when the CIA worked very hard and in a way it was the high point of...

HOFFACKER: Also they had good Cuban pilots. You know the good Cubans. I forget where they were from, maybe Miami. They had Cuban pilots there running their contract airplanes.

Q: In Vietnam it was called Air America

HOFFACKER: Maybe it was called Air America there, too. Anyway, it worked. I had a year in Léopoldville watching Ambassador Gullion, who was a remarkable operator. I learned an awful lot from him.

Q: When you were in Léopoldville from '62 to '63 as chief of the Political Section, could you describe first how Ed Gillian operated.

HOFFACKER: He was very impressive. He had had a lot of experience. I think he knew Kennedy somewhere along the way.

Q: Yes, he was Kennedy's person put there inside.

HOFFACKER: I think so, and that made a difference. He had a good connection. But he was very professional in all respects and put together a good staff and ran a tight ship. We had a good relationship, and it surprised me that he never held Katanga against me.

Q: Why would he hold it against you?

HOFFACKER: Well, the fact that I was every day sending messages quoting Tshombé and all that sort of thing. Some people had the impression that I was pro-Tshombé. I just said give him a little more time to try to work something out with him. That's always my rule of thumb. Some people said, no, it's not worth bothering with him. I said it is worth bothering with him, just to see where it goes. And of course, it didn't go where we wanted it to go, so he had to go. Of course, he came back later as prime minister of the Congo.

A funny thing happened. He was then kidnapped on the way to Spain, I think, and incarcerated in Algeria, and I was there at the time as chief of the U.S. Interests Section. I said to "my" ambassador, the Swiss Ganz, that I have this problem with Tshombé there in jail. If he breaks out he'll probably come over here to my office and want asylum. I said I'll be calling him because I don't know what I'm going to do if that's the situation. I was under the Swiss flag. But of course he died there, which simplified things.

But to get back to Gullion. He saw the communist threat very clearly and he convinced Washington that Gizenga and those other guys who were flirting with the commies out in Stanleyville and elsewhere had to be put down, not necessarily physically. And Lumumba was regarded as vulnerable. We had nothing to do with his demise; I'm satisfied with that. He did meet his end in Katanga, in September before I arrived. But Gullion presented a case for keeping a unified Congo, that is, with Katanga, which had the biggest resources of the Congo, and the UN prevailing as opposed to the Soviets and the other bad ones, in

those days Ghana and India, who were footsying with Gizenga and his little crowd wanting to balkanize the Congo, which was a no-no in Washington. You hold it together, for better or for worse. Gullion prevailed, and I liked the way he handled that. Washington was wavering; they were under pressure, not just from Dodd but from others, and the Gullion thesis prevailed. That was something impressive to watch.

Q: Looking back on it, and seeing what the Congolese central government did - they basically took a rather thriving industry and area of Katanga and ran it into the ground - it might have been better to have Balkanized it, considering what happened to all of the Congo.

HOFFACKER: Well, I should put in a word against Mobutu. I didn't like him from the first day. He came to have lunch with me in Léopoldville and all that, but he was a lazy lout. He was head of the army, which was a rabble. Rape and pillage was their first priority. They did not provide any security for the Congolese. They were just corrupt, ineffective and he was likewise, from the very beginning, just taking care of himself, and no great patriotism. And then he became prime minister and president and God almighty - whatever his title was - and we stuck with him until almost the end. He was a misfortune for the Congo, and it's a pity we were stuck with him. I think there must have been some way we could have found some other people. Little things keep coming back.

Q: I want to hear them.

HOFFACKER: This is a footnote. Let's go back to Katanga, where there was that régime, that government. The foreign minister - I liked him very much - Everest Kimba, who was eventually hanged, and hanged badly. He and I were talking about Lumumba, who had just been killed. And here's this secessionist foreign minister saying to me that there was only one person he knew who could hold the Congo together, and that was Lumumba, who was a sworn enemy of Katanga, who was killed in Katanga by Katangans. He didn't say Tshombé could hold the Congo together; he said Lumumba. Lumumba did have some charismatic and other qualities which were pluses. But he had the vulnerability which could have been for Soviet purposes and which could have been used against our interests. I wish we had been able to find some way to work with him. But anyway, it was too late. He had to go. But Mobutu was a big mistake all around.

Q: By the way, you did mention, when you were in Elisabethville, that you were at one point under house arrest. What was that?

HOFFACKER: One day the UN Swedish planes bombed a beer factory in Katanga. That's pretty serious business because the Katanga gendarmes didn't fight without beer, and Katangans didn't live without beer. Here's this only beer factory. And they held me responsible for that. I wasn't running the UN or the Swedish planes, and I wasn't bombing anyone, but they thought they'd put me under house arrest. This was when Tshombé was out of town. I don't think it would have happened if he'd been there. Anyway, Munongo, the interior minister - dreadful man - put me under house arrest. So I was there, doing my

business, but people had to come to me. I didn't even tell my family because they would have worried. But one day the French consul, Joe Lambroschini, said we had enough of this house arrest. Why don't you come with me, we'll go over to see the president? We did that. We had a talk with the president, and that was the end of that house arrest.

Q: Being the chief of the Political Section in Léopoldville, you were dealing with a chaotic mess, weren't you?

HOFFACKER: It was sort of strange because CIA was running most of the show and I didn't expect to know what CIA was doing. So I had my little section, Tom Cassilly and a couple of others doing the usual biographical and minor stuff - and Ambassador Gullion doing most of the political reporting, and the CIA doing their thing. But the funny thing - do you want a funny one?

Q: I'd love it.

HOFFACKER: Well, you know the hierarchy in the State Department. When the ambassador is away and the DCM is away, then the next ranking Foreign Service officer is the chargé, despite the fact that the AID chief and the military chief were all big guys, but they're not FSOs - we had a lot of FSSs and FSRs. So one day I found myself, a second secretary, chargé d'affaires of this great big apparatus. So Senator Ellender of Louisiana came to town. He was an enemy of the Foreign Service. He said, "We're coming down there to have a hearing on your aid program." So he came down and had a hearing, and I was sitting there with all these great barons sitting around, and I did the right thing by letting him talk. He had prejudged the situation anyway.

Q: In diplomatic terms he was kind of a horse's ass who was mainly interested in traveling around throwing his weight around.

HOFFACKER: Yes, he was. I didn't tell him that, though. I learned on that occasion to let him talk. We made our little speeches, but we didn't try to teach him anything. This is a rule I remember. Don't try to tell a guy like that anything that he doesn't want to hear. Then he said, "I don't want to meet any of these Congolese. I want to stay with American families. I want to eat American food, and then I'll go away." Which he did for three days. And we entertained him, and he bored us to death with things like his life and his gumbo, which is the best gumbo that has ever been manufactured, according to him.

Q: It's a soup.

HOFFACKER: It's a soup. We had to listen to that and about himself and himself and himself. We survived. And he went off to (Ian Smith's) Rhodesia because that's where he'd feel more at home. He made a speech on arrival: These Congolese are savage, barbarian, or something like that. And the Congolese heard this statement, and they said, "If he wants to come here, we're not going to let him." We said, "Sorry, he's just been here." The moral of the story is: make them feel comfortable. You can talk to some but

not all. The best person I escorted was John Kennedy, when he was a congressman. He came out to Iran, and I was the control officer, and I had him for three days. He was intelligent, curious, no problem. We had a good time. And he went away with something that he hadn't brought. And he was the only one I recall who ever sent a thank-you note. I remember a longhand note from the Raffles Hotel in Singapore to me in Teheran. Of course, it burned up when the files were burned. I didn't carry any files with me. I didn't take any correspondence or anything with me when I retired.

Q: Was your impression that the CIA knew what it was doing or was it, as the term has been used before, a bunch of cowboys running around operating

HOFFACKER: I knew the station chief, and I got along very well with him. But he didn't tell me anything. What evidence I saw of their activities left me with the impression that they knew what they were doing. They weren't just cowboys; they were professionals in their own way. In those days, you did that. The press were not going to give you a hard time. That's the way you dealt with the commies.

Q: Of course, the secret weapon of the CIA was money. I would think the Congo was wide open. Probably for a pretty inexpensive price you could get certainly a minister and maybe a prime minister.

HOFFACKER: We had virtually unlimited money. We were running the world, as we were in Iran. In those days you did just that. Now we don't have the money.

Q: What was your personal feeling towards Adoula and Kasavubu?

HOFFACKER: They were nice people, but they weren't effective. Let’s face it, on their own they couldn't have survived. They had to be supported by us. There was no way they could have prevailed on their own, even with our money. If we gave them money the money itself would not have been enough. We had to show them how to use the money. I don't know what's going on in the Congo now, but it's so sad that there's this new guy who has an opportunity to do better and he's not doing so.

Q: It seems a repetition of before. It's tribal. It's personal accumulation of wealth, and the country is just going down, down, down.

HOFFACKER: The Congolese are like the rest of us: they're good people, but they're badly led and abused.

Q: During this '63-'63 period, the media's attention moved away from the Congo. There was a time when Halberstam and others were sitting there, and then they began to leave.

HOFFACKER: The secession was over. There were little rebellions, which were endemic in the Congo. I was away, so I recall they were just rebellions.

Q: There's an interesting book - it's been a long time since I read it - by Madeleine Kalb called The Congo Cables...

HOFFACKER: It's pretty good.

Q: ...which gives somewhat of a flavor of the period, from the American perspective, records.

HOFFACKER: There's never been a good one on the Congo, on Katanga. At one time, I thought that possibly I would do something on that, but I would have to go into the Flemish files, and to know Katanga from Belgian archives. That's not easy. I'm not that much of a scholar. And I don't like to work with secondary sources. There's not been a proper book on Katanga. Now Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote one, which is fascinating, but from the point of view of Conor Cruise O'Brien - you know, the Irishman who was the UN representative. I saw him there just before Urquhart took over. O'Brien wrote *Katanga and Back*, I think it was. He had the overall Congolese perspective, but there really isn't another one that focuses on the province of Katanga. That's what I thought I might do some day, from the Bantu up to the present, but I don't have the materials or the motivation.

Q: It was a little bit later, wasn't it, not '62-'63, that Stanleyville blew up, Simba?

HOFFACKER: Mike Hoyt was the consul there. It so happened I was back in Washington at that time running the Operations Center. After I left the Congo I went to the War College for a year, and then I was director of the Operations Center. During that period, whenever it was, '64-65, Mike Hoyt was seized, along with other Europeans and Americans - the bad guys had taken them and they were held hostage.

Q: We have a long interview that was done with him.

HOFFACKER: Then you have the story. I guess he's back in New Mexico. I wanted to look him up. But we looked at it from a rescue point of view at the Operations Center.

Q: Yes, Operation Dragon Rouge *and that whole business. Is there anything else? What was life like in Léopoldville during '62 to '63?*

HOFFACKER: Local security was poor. It was not as bad as now, but you had guards at your house, and so forth. Frank Carlucci will tell you how bad it was.

Q: I've interviewed Frank, too.

HOFFACKER: You know how they cut the shoestrings off his shoes, that sort of stuff. Well, anyway, we had enough food, but it was terrible for the family. They couldn't go out, couldn't go anywhere.

Q: Was it the option to have the families go home or something?

HOFFACKER: No, it wasn't that bad. We sent families out of Katanga because of the shooting, but in Léopoldville it was just other things. My wife got hepatitis, which was misdiagnosed and misprescribed, and she went into "irreversible shock." Anyway, she somehow got out alive. You didn't have adequate anything there - adequate food, medicine. It was very rough on the families. We men coped; it was our job. But we worried about our families all the time.

Q: Was Alison Palmer there at the time?

HOFFACKER: Yes, I think she was.

Q: Did she work for you, or was she a consular officer maybe?

HOFFACKER: I did meet Alison. I think it was there, or was it back in Washington? She wanted to come to Equatorial Guinea, but that's later on. I don't think she ever forgave me for not supporting her request. That's where we lost our chargé d'affaires.

Q: Where?

HOFFACKER: In Equatorial Guinea. That's the Erdos case. She wanted to be an Erdos. She wanted to have that job.

Q: You left there in 1963, I take it with a certain amount of relief.

HOFFACKER: That's right. I didn't enjoy it the way I like to enjoy a post. There were so many negative factors there.

Q: Of course, there is the one plus factor. There's a lot of action going on, a lot of attention, crises, and the Foreign Service officer gets to prance a bit when you get that.

HOFFACKER: I didn't prance, but there was more publicity than I needed.

Q: When you were in Léopoldville, did you have much contact with the American press?

HOFFACKER: Oh, yes.

Q: Did they seem very informed?

HOFFACKER: Yes. There were some very good people. I'm trying to think of their names - Henry Tanner - all the biggies were out there. The guy who committed suicide in Boston a couple of years ago, who wrote a couple of books. They were very impressive,

some of those guys. And I was very generous with information, everything but Confidential. And I learned from them. It was an exchange. They were looking for much the same as I was. We'd do a lot of drinking and eating together.

Q: You came back in '63 and you were at the War College from '63 to '64.

HOFFACKER: A good episode.

Q: Tell me, what did you get out of the War College?

HOFFACKER: I appreciated the other services, including the military. I think it is a good idea to have these people come together for a war game and so forth. We traveled to part of the Pacific on that occasion. I think it's a very good professional school, and I benefited from it.

Q: Did you run across any of your classmates later on?

HOFFACKER: State Department types - Christian Chapman, and others. But not the military that I recall. But I'm glad to be exposed to the military mind to that extent. It's very good to know how they think. It's somewhat different from the way we think - not necessarily, but sometimes. We're less disciplined in our thought process, although we're orderly in our own way.

Q: Then you went to the Operations Center. You were there from when to when?

HOFFACKER: '64 to '65.

Q: You were at the War College during the Cuban Missile Crisis. No, that would have been earlier. You were in the Congo. In the Op Center from '64 to '65, could you describe a bit how it was run and what you were doing?

HOFFACKER: As you know that's where the communications to the Secretary come in, not just official communications, but the press and the poop from the White House, Pentagon and the CIA. You don't want the Secretary to be surprised. It was worthwhile. We'd get stuff over to him and the other principals so that they knew, not necessarily ahead of the news, but they would know before the President knew. May I tell you about the funny thing? This was during the LBJ period. He wanted to come over and see the operations center. He came in and I showed him around. "What's that?" He pointed to one of the tickers. I said it was an FBIS ticker. "What is it?" I told him what it was. He said, "I want one." So he had one put in the White House. He didn't need an FBIS ticker with that raw intelligence. But he had it. That was the one thing that interested him in the briefing.

Q: Were there any major crises during that time?

HOFFACKER: Well there was the rescue of the hostages in Stanleyville. I'm trying to

think because I'm confusing it with my period as Special Assistant on Counterterrorism, because I spent a lot of time up there. But we did have hijackings, lots of them. Task forces were set up immediately after a hijacking. Sometimes we had three hijackings or three terrorist happenings going at once. That was very rewarding. We had all that stuff right there behind the closed door. And Mike Hoyt, when he was rescued, came back and was one of the watch officers. I don't think he particularly liked it, but I was glad to see him there again.

Q: How about Vietnam? Does that rank very high?

HOFFACKER: Yes, because at the same time as I was Director of the Operations Center, I was also Deputy Executive Secretary of the Department under Ben Read. He had two or three deputies, and I was one of them. So I would sit up there some times to fill in, and when I did that I got very much involved in Vietnam. Because there was a lot going on in Vietnam that was not down at the Operations Center - Califano, George Ball, Ben Read. So I saw the way George Ball operated. I was very impressed with him, in that and other respects. I was glad to see that Johnson tolerated him as he did. He used him as a devil's advocate. It's very good if a president can accept that sort of person around, to challenge the prevailing view, which George Ball did almost automatically on the Congo, on Vietnam, on the Middle East.

Q: Do you recall where George Ball was coming out on the Congo?

HOFFACKER: He believed what I was reporting. He thought that it was worth my being there and reporting as I did, that we still should try to work something out with Tshombé, something diplomatic, at the same time maintaining a military pressure on him. It was he who was behind my coming back to see the President. An interesting book is the biography of George Ball. Have you read it? It came out within recent years. James Bill is the author.

Q: I think so.

HOFFACKER: Good book, because Bill was given the papers of George Ball by the Ball family and has put together a very good book, not just on these issues I've mentioned, but starting way back when he was one of the big boys in the economic rebuilding of Europe, with Jean Monet and all that. He's a very impressive man, in my way of thinking. But he couldn't be Secretary of State because he was too controversial.

Q: In '65 you moved on. Whither?

HOFFACKER: Algiers.

Q: You were in Algiers from –

HOFFACKER: '65 to '69. Under Jack Jernegan, our ambassador there, under whom I

worked back in the early GTI days. He asked for me, and I was glad to go because I always wanted to be a DCM.

Q: Number two, deputy chief of mission.

HOFFACKER: And was working for someone who was compatible. So Jack asked for me. Our relations were terrible with Algeria. In '65 to '67 they went downhill, and the '67 War happened, and they broke relations with us.

Q: In '65, when you went out there, what was the situation in Algiers?

HOFFACKER: Ben Bella had just been gotten out of the way, and Boumedienne moved in. I was there during the Boumedienne period. The Algerians were traditionally among the more militant of the Arabs, hardheaded, and they didn't like our policies on the Middle East. When the '67 war happened, they had no choice but to break relations with us, which they did. We had anticipated it, and we had alerted the Swiss to the possibility of our being under their flag. That was done, but then Jernegan, the ambassador, had to go along with two-thirds of our staff. The rest of us stayed on for another two years, during which time relations improved gradually. We (the Algerians and me) didn't have to pretend we had mutual respect for each other. Economic business was better than it had been before because Algerian oil and gas attracted American business, and that boomed. So when I left there, it was nice to be leaving when they weren't trying to burn down the embassy, as was threatened during the Six Day War.

Q: Going back to the '65 period, what were the disputes?

HOFFACKER: Our policy on the Middle East, for one thing.

Q: We are talking about with Israel.

HOFFACKER: Yes, our policy *vis-à-vis* Israel. There were radical Arabs who didn't like our policy, and the Algerians were among the most radical. When the '67 War happened our embassies in other places were attacked. They tore down our flag. We had to burn our files, and we had to evacuate two-thirds of our people and a lot of our non-embassy citizens. The Foreign Office said to me, "We can no longer assure the protection of your people." Governments shouldn't talk that way, because they are always responsible for the protection of foreigners, including embassies. We had to decide whether we were going to take that seriously or not, and we chose not to lose any Americans and to go. It was a good thing, because some other embassies down the way were burned. We saw that it could be bad. If we hadn't done that, they would have come after us. But once we put up that Swiss flag it was quiet. The Algerians were very difficult people. They still are.

Q: They have no sense of humor, of course.

HOFFACKER: No and they were sort of pirates, in a way. They take things that don't

belong to them, like the houses we lived in. They would take them from us and not compensate us adequately. Politically we couldn't satisfy them. We had to evacuate our families, as I mentioned before, so that was unpleasant. We had to close down our two consulates, in Constantine and Oran. Algeria was a difficult place to work. Now they have other problems. I wouldn't want to be there now. While I was there, I was really surprised at this cable from Washington asking if I would accept the ambassadorship to Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. I was glad to accept and I moved on.

Q: Still going back to the '65 to '67 when John Jernegan was the ambassador, how did he operate?

HOFFACKER: He was very good. He was an old pro. He'd been ambassador in Baghdad. He was one of the prime officers who erected the Greek-Turkish aid program. Back there in the old days when Harry Truman wanted that. I knew him very well. He was a journalist before he became a Foreign Service officer. He was very easy-going, but it really taxed him to work with the Algerians because they were always hitting him on the nose, saying things they shouldn't have said. But he handled himself very well.

During that period, '65 to '67, Senator Teddy Kennedy came to town. He wanted to make a speech to students in Algiers. We think it may have been related to the speech that John Kennedy made earlier on Algeria. The Algerian government could not accept the idea of this American senator coming and talking to students, whom they wanted to keep under their heel, and telling them things that might stir them up. We tried to change the government's mind, but they wouldn't yield on that. I don't think Kennedy forgave our ambassador, thinking he was ineffective. But you know, there are some things governments say no to, and even though you are a nice guy, you don't get them changed.

Teddy Kennedy was a very difficult person to deal with in that respect and others. I was very glad when he left. He was ungrateful for just about everything we did. You couldn't satisfy him.

Q: During the '65 to '67 period, did you get out and travel around?

HOFFACKER: Very little. We had to have permission to go anywhere outside of town. We didn't really have any freedom of movement. I used to take trips, but I had to tell them the itinerary and all details. We were being watched. I didn't worry about my security in Algeria, as I would now, because they were always watching us, in that crypto-commie sort of way. They were listening in on the phones; they were watching where we were. We were secure in that sense.

Q: Going back to Roman times, it had been a prosperous area, and when the French were there, for the approximately 130 years they were there, it was a rich agricultural country.

HOFFACKER: It was in effect a colony.

Q: Yes, but it was a fairly prosperous one. What was the embassy doing?

HOFFACKER: We were busy reporting on the obstreperous nature of the Algerian government, with its harsh pronouncements. They were, as we called them, "*très complexés*." They still hadn't really gotten over their revolution. They were anti-French. There was internal strife among the Algerians. They didn't like Americans or American "imperialism." They loved working with Moscow and Peking. They were very radical people, and that was worth reporting. At the same time they were glad to work with American companies, and that business went on and on. So we had more than enough to report.

Q: What was the key to this government infatuation with the Soviet model?

HOFFACKER: As Bandung types, they were very non-aligned. They didn't like us, except for our material side, and they liked the Soviets for ideological reasons. Socialism, they called it. And they didn't think they were going to become communist. The Algerians had enough intelligence to know that we had the technology they needed.

Q: How did it work? Americans could go there and work without a problem?

HOFFACKER: The businessmen who were wanted had no problems. There were no missionaries to speak of. We didn't have a Peace Corps. We had no AID program either. We had the USIS. We didn't have any other programs. CARE had a little program. We had no military program, of course. That simplified things in a way. There was no close relationship with any individual Algerian official. Talking with Algerians was not easy because the government was watching, and they didn't want fraternization to that extent. We could talk to the government, but it wouldn't get you very far. In places like that you have to use other sources, and I always made a point, wherever I was in the former French territory, to be on good terms with the French. Sometimes they'd tell you things. That's a source. Then there are the diplomats you could talk to; they had their own sources and weren't as suspect as we were. We didn't have a lot of good Algerian sources, I've got to confess, except public things. The CIA, of course, had its activities there throughout the whole period, before the break in relations and afterwards. They handled themselves discreetly, and that's fair enough.

Q: Were you seeing any indications of the rise of the radical Islamic side? This became and remains a major concern.

HOFFACKER: No, it wasn't a problem then; it was the FLN and the military who were running the government. They weren't fighting with the Islamists at that time; that was later. Of course, these Islamic types are not always mullahs or highly religious people. The Islamic fundamentalists or the Islamic political types use that handle to try to bring down the incumbents. It's an anti-government, anti-incumbent device in the name of Islam. We see it in different forms in different countries. I think that's the pattern in

Algeria. And, of course, it's the same thing in Egypt, and you might say it was the same thing in Iran. Not everybody is a cleric or a scholar. They are anti-incumbent, and then they'll set up their Islamic republic, and it will either be Islamic or quasi-Islamic.

Q: Other than the promotion of American oil interests, were there any other American interests there?

HOFFACKER: No, that's all there was.

Q: Then you got this assignment in '69.

HOFFACKER: From '69 to '72, in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, jointly.

Q: Did you have any problem getting confirmed on this?

HOFFACKER: No.

Q: Nobody was interested, eh?

HOFFACKER: You had to show them where it was on the map. No, it was a breeze.

Q: Normally we have this policy of recognizing every state and having a separate ambassador. How come you have two posts, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea.

HOFFACKER: Equatorial Guinea accepted that. Some countries wouldn't like it. And we weren't the only one which had one ambassador serving two or three countries down there. Resident Western ambassadors at the time I was in Equatorial Guinea were French and Spanish, who had important roles to play, and then the commies, who had big Soviet, Chinese, East German, and North Korean embassies there, and they had big resident staffs and mischief.

Q: What did they do?

HOFFACKER: Intrigue.

Q: What?

HOFFACKER: *Intrigue*--you know, intrigue.

Q: I would think they'd be intriguing against each other almost.

HOFFACKER: They wanted to defame us, of course, give false information about us. That takes a certain amount of time. They had little programs. They'd put in a road or two or fishing boats. But their goals were primarily political. They wanted to get a foothold there. I had a problem with Washington. Washington was always wanting to close down

the embassy. But I said, no, there are too many commies over here. They've got to be watched. And we had no CIA. Normally the CIA would watch them, but no, they were scared of the place. As it turned out, our embassy was closed because of this Erdos case. When Chargé Erdos murdered his assistant, Donald Leahy, I went over and did my business and so I didn't have anybody on the ground. My successor did the same. But then the next ambassador, Herbert Spiro, came over there and he was declared *persona non grata* for no reason. And so we suspended relations with them. We didn't have any relations.

Q: Good.

HOFFACKER: Where do you want to start? They're two different kettles of fish.

Q: Why don't we talk about the Cameroon first?

HOFFACKER: That's a pleasure.

Q: Could you give me a little background about it? What's the situation from '69 to '72?

HOFFACKER: We had good relations with Cameroon from the time of independence, until recently - not at the present time, but until recently. We supported the idea of independence as the British and French were withdrawing from their trusteeships. We were generous with aid programs and so forth. The president, Ahidjo, with whom I had very good relations, said to me, when the French used to complain to him about the American activities there, "But I want *diversification*," which meant that he wanted something besides the French, who regarded Algeria as their *chasse gardée.* They thought it was their territory. But he said, no, we want you also in these various areas, including oil. So we did increasingly well economically. When I became consultant with Shell Oil Company, we as a company did move in there, worked with a French company, found oil, and produced oil, and that was fine. The Cameroonese are good people, and their government liked us as a government, and so it was just fine. We did a lot of good things. We had a modest AID program.

Q: Peace Corps?

HOFFACKER: We had an excellent Peace Corps. We had a good USIA. We had a consulate in Douala, which was useful. We had the AID headquarters for the whole of Central Africa there. It was a good place to work, and relations were easy.

Q: No great crises in the government?

HOFFACKER: After I left, not while I was there. Later on things happened, but we don't have to go into them.

Q: No, we might as well just stick to -

HOFFACKER: –stick to that period. It was sweetness and light.

Q: Did you travel around?

HOFFACKER: All the time, anywhere, anytime, and I could talk to anybody. I had great pleasure there.

Q: How did you get along with the French?

HOFFACKER: The way I always did. I wanted to be friendly. Most of them wished we hadn't been there. But we weren't there for the French; we were there responding to the Cameroonians, who were pleased to have us there. That's the way we played it. I got on with the French if I had to. I refer once again to that Shell Oil collaboration with Elf, the French oil company, that brought in the first oil. There is something to be said for that: if you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

Q: The ruler was who now?

HOFFACKER: Ahmadou Ahidjo.

Q: He was there for how long?

HOFFACKER: From the beginning - whenever that was, the time of independence, and after I left - let's see, how many years later, I'm trying to think? - he was induced to leave by the prime minister in the belief that he was not well. So he left, and then he became well again and he wanted to come back and he intrigued with some military who did not succeed in bringing him back. He was convicted, given the death sentence *in absentia*. He died overseas.

Q: I assume UN votes came up all the time. How did that work?

HOFFACKER: In Cameroon? They were usually pretty good. We had problems of course in Algeria. They usually voted against us. We had no aid program. In Cameroon I don't recall any problem. I used to go in and talk to them about certain UN issues. We did bicker over things like North and South Korea, China and Taiwan, but I made my representations and they did what they wanted to do. It didn't affect relations appreciably. President Ahidjo came to see virtually American president during his tenure. It confirmed our relationship.

Q: Were there any problems with the Central African Republic, Chad or Nigeria?

HOFFACKER: Always with Nigeria - border problems. Some of the boundaries are still not confirmed; there's oil on the maritime boundary.

Q: Did we ever get involved in those?

HOFFACKER: No, we just watched them.

Q: How about in the Cameroon? Was there much communist representation? You were talking about Equatorial Guinea.

HOFFACKER: They didn't like communism. They allowed a Soviet embassy; they allowed a Chinese embassy. Both Koreas were there. I don't know how that worked out. It's unusual to have both Koreas. But we didn't have Taiwan and China. They finally asked Taiwan to leave. It wasn't a major problem. The Cameroonians didn't like communists, and so they watched them. I had to go to Ahidjo on one occasion because we didn't have marines, and it was a big nuisance to have to sleep in the embassy to watch the embassy. We on the embassy staff had to do that. I went to him one day and I said, "We're not afraid of you the Cameroonians, but we know that the communists would like to bug us, and we can't have that. I'd like to have five marines." He said, "Fine." That's the sort of relationship we had, matter of fact. Not contentious.

Q: How did the Peace Corps get along?

HOFFACKER: They were great. Everybody liked them. They did good things. I was always glad to visit them or have them visit me.

Q: Was there much in the way of trade promotion?

HOFFACKER: We tried. Not much was accomplished. The oil companies took care of themselves. They knew where the oil was, and they came and handled it in their own way.

Q: I suppose most trade was with the French.

HOFFACKER: Yes. The French had it sewed it up.

Q: Moving over to Equatorial Guinea -

HOFFACKER: –the armpit -

Q: – the armpit. You've written a long report on the Erdos case, which we have in our records, so anybody who wants that can have that. But what about relations with the government per se?

HOFFACKER: We had a chargé there from the beginning of independence, three years before Erdos. It must have been '67, thereabouts; we had a chargé d'affaires and his wife. They were the two embassy people. And I was ambassador over there. And they did a great job, but I thought at the time that it would be a good idea to move them because the place was very difficult.

The president, Macias, was mad - let's put it bluntly. He was as bad as Idi Amin, if not worse. He terrorized his people. One-third or one-quarter of the people were refugees. Political opposition was physically eliminated. The treasury was raided. The Spanish had left a good package for them. The government of Macias was anti-Spanish, anti-white, anti-American and was vulnerable to the commies, because they were always looking for the little chinks in the armor. The economy had gone to pieces. There were virtually no Spanish left because they had been driven out.

Most importantly, the economy, which is based primarily on cocoa, had fallen completely because the Spanish cocoa farmers and the Nigerian laborers who were brought in to do the farming had all gone. Spaniards kept bringing in a little aid, not much. The French started aid after I left. The French brought them into their franc-zone and also developed other relations. When I was there, we had a CDC measles program; that was our only program.

Q: The Center for Communicable Diseases.

HOFFACKER: We were doing very well on eradicating measles, which is a serious thing in tropical Africa, but that ran out, too, because they were very difficult to work with.

I asked to have Al Williams replaced by another guy, after two and a half years. That's more than enough. Alison Palmer wanted the job. She was very African-oriented. I didn't think that was appropriate, and I don't think she's forgiven me. It wouldn't have worked. Williams' successor, Al Erdos, a good stuffy Foreign Service officer, looked stable to me. I asked him and his wife to come down from Niamey and look at the place before we decided to replace Williams. He decided he could cope, and I decided he could cope. He couldn't cope, of course, and that's the story that you have in a separate file. After not many months he put a scissors into his American assistant, so all hell broke at that stage. But that's another story. It gives you some idea, though, of the environment in which people worked. Some of us thought that Erdos did this because he went crazy because of the terror and tension. But the federal jury in Alexandria, Virginia, which tried him felt otherwise. We don't have to get into that painful subject here; the separate file attempts to describe the case.

I was very pleased that we got out of that mess as we did, because I thought that they might get into the files, seize the Embassy, seize the body of the victim, and seize the chargé who did the murdering. We got all those things straightened out and then I was able to go in and kiss the president and continue business, such as there was.

Q: I still keep coming back to these very large Soviet bloc embassies. Why so many? I wouldn't think that there would be room. I think they'd be intriguing all over each other.

HOFFACKER: Well, they were numerous, living in their compounds. Likewise in Cameroon. And they were running a very cold-war pattern. Their people were kept in the

compound, and they were very nasty when we would meet them. They were Bolsheviks; they weren't friendly. You know, diplomats are supposed to be gentlemen, but these characters were not. We didn't try to subvert them, nor were they trying to subvert us, but they were not good to have around. They had little projects, and they obviously had money. They had grants for visitors. They'd love to take people off and train them in Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. They had a big plan for Africa, and all these embassies were part of that.

The Cold War ended, and my understanding is that there is not that subversion going on. But there are communist or former communist embassies still around there, hopefully doing traditional embassy work. The Africans, I am convinced, are sufficiently nationalistic and sufficiently African to avoid communism. Communism is not compatible to their way of thinking. They love the West; they just wish they could be like us. I don't know any African who wants to be like them.

Q: Those that go to Moscow don't come back converted.

HOFFACKER: Africans are automatically oriented toward us unless their leaders start playing games. And Macias, of course, met an ugly end. His nephew murdered him, and his nephew is now president and runs a tight dictatorship. I gather that state terrorism has largely disappeared. Corruption is still the pattern, I am told, and the discovery of oil has inspired corruption in the obvious ways.

Q: You left there in '72. Where did you go?

HOFFACKER: I went to Norfolk, Virginia as political advisor to SACLANT, Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic - that's a NATO command - and CINCLANT, Commander-in-Chief Atlantic, a US Command. I had a good year there.

Q: What does the political advisor do in a place like that?

HOFFACKER: Well, you sit there with the admiral in charge - there's one admiral with two hats - and you deal with the political affairs in those countries which the navy touches, the NATO countries and the Caribbean and Atlantic countries. I used to travel with the admiral all the time. It’s somewhat like political aide.

Q: I would think that that area would not be as diverse and a problem as the Pacific and some other places where you have a great variety of nations.

HOFFACKER: You have NATO.

Q: Where you have NATO they're already part of NATO, and the Caribbean is something we grow up knowing.

HOFFACKER: It wasn't very challenging; it was very pleasant. And I was glad to learn

about the navy, because they're doing good things.

Q: You did that from '72 to '73.

HOFFACKER: I got a call from Washington asking me - this was during the tenure of Secretary of State Rogers - asking me to come be a special assistant and coordinator for combating terrorism.

Q: And you did this when?

HOFFACKER: From '73 till retirement in '75. That was under Rogers and Kissinger, mostly Kissinger. The origin of that was Nixon's declaring to the Secretary of State - I think it was Rogers - that we need to combat terrorism at home and abroad. He asked the Secretary of State to do that. And he set up a cabinet committee which had 20 agencies coming in to sit with the coordinator to combat terrorism. "At home and abroad," meant that we had FBI, CIA and 18 others dealing not just with hijackings and kidnappings and hostage takings but the diplomacy and the intelligence which hopefully would preclude those terrorist actions. The latter was the fun part, dealing with other governments, trying to get them to be as staunch as we in apprehending, convicting and holding terrorists. Easier said than done.

Q: Both Nixon and Kissinger talked very tough on this. As a matter of fact, there is some concern that they talked so tough that our people in Khartoum were killed. Rather than just keeping their mouths shut it would have been better, it's better to talk than to shoot.

HOFFACKER: The Khartoum incident was before I took over, but I learned from all our incidents. I spoke carefully but forthrightly about the danger of statements by the President or Secretary or other principals which had not been refined. Example: when Golda Meir was going to see the President, Secretary Kissinger would come out and try to be tougher than she. Well she ran a different shop from ours. The rule of law in Israel was not quite the same as ours. We had to be very careful. We're the United States; we're not Israel. It's a different ball game. So I tried to keep these statements to a minimum. We should speak very little, and carry a big stick. I did not argue with the basic principles of not paying ransom, not negotiating; but that being said, it was imperative in all those cases of kidnappings and hijackings to be able to communicate with the terrorists. Now that's not negotiating. You have to be in touch with the bad guys in order to size them up and to know what their vulnerabilities are, and to zap them. You can't do that by not talking. Do not negotiate, but do talk, carefully and quietly. And throw them a couple of crumbs. If they want to make publicity, which is sometimes all they wanted, let them make their silly statements. Let them get on the radio and make their statements. Okay, and then wear them down. Let them get tired. Our hostages were pretty durable people. They can be held for long periods - as long as they don't get thrown out the window or killed - but then we have to move in in a different way. Hostages are tough, like the rest of us, and you can just take time. If you can size up the kidnapers, for example, if you can figure out that there are so many kidnapers, or after the third day or the fourth day and

deadlines come and pass. That's the important thing, that they pass, that indicates they're probably not suicidal. If they're suicidal then you're dealing with probably a tougher customer. Then you'll try to wear them down in other ways. Find chinks in their armor or wait till they fall asleep or something. Or you slip in some sandwiches with trans -

Q: –tranquilizers?

HOFFACKER: Well, transmitters or whatever the other little tricks there are with sandwiches - little radios and that sort of thing. And work with other governments, if we can't work directly. So the diplomacy of those things and the intelligence which we had - those were things that made the job more interesting than just rescuing beleaguered victims - which had to be done. That was the mandate: you will save the lives and not risk them. Golda Meir might shoot out more than we. We were hesitant to go shooting in there - sometimes you do - but she wasn't.

Q: I was just wondering, did you have any major hostage problems?

HOFFACKER: Yes, many. This is amazing - I can't remember any specifically, but we had sometimes three at a time. But I recall in those two and one-half years we did not lose anybody. I felt very good about that. By hook or crook our people came out. I'm talking about official people. We couldn't do anything about it when the Red Guards were out there doing their thing with Germans. It was really more rewarding than I expected. We can't just ignore terrorism. We have to deal with it.

Q: Did you have a trained team of State Department negotiators?

HOFFACKER: No, it was all *ad hoc*.

Q: In Kuala Lumpur, where the Chinese Red Army took over the embassy?

HOFFACKER: There we dealt with the Malaysian government. That's what you do, or with the remaining embassy personnel. And the bureaus in the Department - Far East, e.g. And then, of course, CIA, Defense, and all these other who had resources. And then the FBI in this country. It was interesting to see how they interacted - or didn't interact. When I was there it was not a very refined relationship (between CIA and FBI). It went back to J. Edgar Hoover, and that was unfortunate to see. They didn't talk to each other and share as they should have.

Q: This was during the Watergate period. Did that intrude at all?

HOFFACKER: It was very interesting. When this Watergate thing was full-blown, Kissinger called in all his senior officers, not just me, and said, "You know, the Watergate thing is working itself out over there, and I don't want it to affect our business. Just continue to do as we had before." I think that, somehow, U.S. foreign policy went on pretty much as before. Likewise, I developed a respect for Alex Haig doing the same

thing over at the White House. The business of the White House, the Executive Branch continued, no matter how it worked out at the top. I had confidence in the institutions working out, which they did. We lost a president in the process, but the ship of state moved on.

Q: Then did you decide to retire?

HOFFACKER: Yes, it was my decision.

Q: Why?

HOFFACKER: Twenty-five years.

Q: Enough was enough?

HOFFACKER: Yes. I wanted to stay home. I had family problems. Divorce was a possibility. The marriage was not in good shape, and I thought, as Americans do, I could fix anything. I thought I'd stay home and fix it. Our younger daughter's education was difficult. The elder daughter was managing, but she'd been in 14 schools and was just getting used to college back here. The little one had major problems preparing for high school, so here is where I wanted to be, and I had always thought in terms of a second career. So I tried to for a year and a half, more or less, to get a teaching job. I thought I could teach. I couldn't get a job. I had only a masters', and at that time campuses were not hiring masters' or Foreign Service officers very often. Then I started looking everywhere, and the placement office in the Department - I forget what it was called - was instrumental in putting me in touch with Shell.

Q: It's now Career Transitions. I don't know what it was called then.

HOFFACKER: They put me in touch with Shell. Shell was looking for somebody. I went down to Houston for this interview, along with half dozen other FSOs, and I got the job. I was very pleased with my 13 years there. It was a new job. Shell Oil, which then was and still is a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell, was beginning its overseas activities, so they needed somebody, they thought, who could advise them on political risk, that sort of thing. So I had 13 good years, doing much as I did before.

Q: Well, Lew, we might end at this point, I think. And I want to thank you very much.

HOFFACKER: You're welcome. Did it make any sense?

End of interview