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

AMBASSADOR THOMAS P. MELADY

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INTERVIEW

Q: This is an interview with Ambassador Thomas P. Melady, and this is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Mr. Ambassador, could we start with your background, when and where you were born, and a bit about your family.

MELADY: I was born in Norwich, Connecticut. My father was a first generation Irishman, my mother a first generation French-Canadian. They were working class people. I was one of four children, went to local schools, never left the state of Connecticut until I was 17, and then a senior in high school and went to New York City for a day. I graduated, my school year ended the year the war ended in 1945.

Q: What year were you born?

MELADY: 1927. And I entered the Army as a draftee and had my first foreign exposure. By that time the war had ended by the time I finished my basic training, and ended up in Italy. It was called the Army of Occupation. I was assigned to the Office of Information and Education, planning trips for the GIs who had four or five years of duty. It was very pleasant duty for me because I toured Switzerland four or five times.

Q: You had to scout out the territory.

MELADY: Yes, France, England, Ireland, you couldn't go to Spain. We even did things in Germany, Denmark, Austria, and all of Italy. So I think really to look back upon it now, my interest in foreign affairs was stirred by two things. As a boy I was a stamp

collector--I collected stamps from all over the world--and I remember as a result of a stamp collection, I ended up on quiz kids' shows. I sort of knew things about geography, and I made it to a regional contest, I've forgotten where I got washed out, but I won a war bond and I believe that, plus having been in Italy, and traveled around Europe in that immediate post-war period, when I returned I began my university studies at Duquesne University, and majored in rather classical things like philosophy and French. Then, graduating in 1950, I came down to Catholic University of America where I did my MA and Ph.D. in international affairs. (1952-1954)

Q: What switched you from philosophy and French to...

MELADY: Well, actually in those days, it has changed now, but there really wasn't any undergraduate major in international relations. You were supposed to have a classical, a liberal arts curriculum, which I had--a minor in history. You won't find too many undergraduate majors in international relations. Anyway I came to Washington and did the Masters. I loved Washington, and immediately afterwards a Ph.D...I've seven years of schooling, B.A., MA, Ph.D., and finished up in '54, and then it came time to get a job. And I ended up in the then Foreign Operations Administration, now known as AID, in the trade and investment office because my doctoral dissertation was devoted to the impact of taxation as it affected the flow of investment capital from capital exporting countries to capital importing countries. It's a long title for a doctoral dissertation. And I ended up in Ethiopia.

Q: This was from when to when?

MELADY: I was in Ethiopia--I started with FOA approximately in the fall of 1954, having gotten my degree in the summer and spending the rest of the summer in polishing off the dissertation. And I was with FOA for about two years, mostly in Ethiopia, or getting ready for it or coming back. And I became fascinated by Africa. Ethiopia is a very special "cup of tea" in regard to Africa. It was then especially in the time of Emperor Haile Selassie. And it was really there that I said to myself, I really ought to have an area specialty. I became fascinated with the Emperor because one of my students--I also taught part-time there at the university--and one of my students was a nephew of His Majesty, and I arranged to interview him. And to make a long story short, I returned after two years, and joined the staff of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh where I, among other things, set up the Institute of African Studies.

Q: I'd like to make the long story longer. I'd like to return to Ethiopia. Here you were a young man in Ethiopia, how did you see Ethiopia in those days?

MELADY: Well, it's mountainous kingdom, a very special face of Africa, in the continent of Africa, impacted by the Middle East, one of the ancient Christian lands, at least the northeastern part was, a monarchy with an emperor who was a world figure going back to the League of Nations who fought the fascists, etc. A fascinating country. His predecessor, Emperor Menelik and Queen Zauditu both gave a welcome to refugees.

For example, there was a large Armenian community, people who had fled there and were given refuge after the Turkish problems of 1917. You had a Greek community. The emperor himself welcomed specialists and teachers, engineers, etc. from Eastern Europe. And you had a Polish community, rather small communities. I was fascinated by this mosaic of culture in Addis, and also Ethiopia itself. I remember I went down to Dire Dawa, and I had heard there were black Jews in Ethiopia, and I went down and explored them near the Falashas, and one of my first published articles, entitled The Black Jews, and I interviewed them. It was a scholarly article. While there I became fascinated by the role of the emperor who I felt then, and still do, and I said this later in a book, but in my first article he had this plan for evolutionary change. He was an authoritarian. He was the classical believer in Plato's republic ruled by the elite. He was quite authoritarian but not a tyrant, there's a difference. And I thought it was appropriate at the time, and just before leaving Ethiopia I remember I wrote an article, I had a contact--a friend of mine was on--for a magazine in the United States of the Pittsburgh Post Gazette. And soon after I was back in the United States, Macmillan publisher called me, and it was an editor, and he said, "I've just read your article on the emperor." The article took the man and described the man against the country, so it was about Ethiopia and how he was the natural product of Ethiopia. And he said, "Given the interest in Africa, I think we'd like to come up with a book which would be on ten to twelve of the African leaders, with the same writing style, the man, the country, the culture." So to make a long story short, I said I'd like to do it. So between '57 and '60 between setting up the Institute of African Affairs, and doing other things at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, I made some trips to Africa and met the then African leaders in countries that were just emerging into independence: Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Leopold Senghor in Senegal, Houphouet-Boigny who is now deceased in Ivory Coast. I got over to the east African coast, Tom Mboya, and Julius Nyerere. They were leaders then struggling for independence, with the exception then of Ghana who had already achieved it. But I did the research in the period of really '57, '58, '59. By '59 many nations in Africa were on the road to independence. I remember I enjoyed doing it, and got down to the then Congo, Kinshasa. Stopped at Togo and met Sylvanus Olympio who later was assassinated. All these people were in my book, and the book was sort of a hobby because I had a full-time job. But it enriched my fundamental knowledge of Africa and the whole movement towards independence. The book came out and I was very fortunate...I've written twelve books, but probably that did the best of them all, mostly because of timing. It came out in 1960 and I remember it was prominently reviewed by the New York Times. And that sort of confirmed my interest in Africa, and you might say it gave me an extra credential.

Q: I want to go back to Ethiopia and then come back to the book. In Ethiopia what was your job with AID or FAO?

MELADY: FAO, the administration of President Eisenhower, and we had a great emphasis on trade and investment, not aid. So it was an office known as the Office of Trade and Investment to identify trade opportunities, and investment opportunities. Our goal was to pick a favorable investment climate, avoiding some double taxation and other measures to attract foreign capital. And other measures to attract good trade relations.

And one of the things that we suggested was a trade fair. I remember it was a lot of fun working on.

Q: Looking at these leaders, I recall at the time there was sort of a glow in the United States. This was just before the Kennedy administration came in, but people were looking with great enthusiasm on Africa.

MELADY: That's right, in the whole of the '60s, but particularly the early '60s.

Q: Were you seeing something different with these leaders than actually developed? So much has sort of turned to ashes in some of those areas.

MELADY: Again the leaders reflected a background in culture, dealing with Leopold Senghor a man of great culture, now a member of the French Academy. In fact that was the title of a chapter, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Poet, Philosopher, President. Houphouet-Boigny, who was a MD, a medical doctor, the son of who would have been a king, or a chieftain. They were involved in the sweep of history. And the sweep of history was calling for independence. Now that was then. I certainly supported the whole concept. Remember it was also a period of the cold war. It wasn't a neutral period. Would the enthusiasm have been there if it had been a neutral period with no major confrontation? I'm not sure, but nonetheless, there was general support in American establishment circles that it was in the interest of the African people, and in the interest of the west to have a rapid evolution to independence. Rather than what had happened in Kenya of the major power fighting it, and having what was called Mau Mau, or not so well recorded in history, what the French did in Madagascar to put down the revolution of 1945-1946.

Q: It's a little hard to go back but I think its interesting since you were surveying the area at the time, what was the view of the role of the Soviets? Was this of concern on the academic side too or not?

MELADY: I'd say not so much in Ethiopia when I was there, but later in traveling when I would deal with just the leaders, have interviews with them, etc. It included Tubman in Liberia, by the way. I would stay a month or so in a given country at the policy level. There was no doubt that the Soviets were quite active. First of all, they made it public in terms of their proclamations. They felt at that time that it was ripe for revolution, the destruction of the old order, and the establishment of a new order. Therefore they were active in terms of spreading their doctrine, and in practical things like technical assistance reflecting their economic philosophy. And a very active student exchange program dramatized by the establishment of Lumumba University in Moscow. So scholars in the next century will evaluate it. There was no question that the cold war confrontation played a major role in some of the good things like rapid movement to independence. And some of the more recent tragedies, of course, were in Angola and Mozambique. Hopefully the one in Mozambique is thoroughly over, Angola might be over. I mean the cold war was fought out in Angola and Mozambique.

Q: So how long were you running this Institute?

MELADY: The book got published. I like writing books. I must say from the standpoint of sales of all my books that did the best of them all, and it encouraged me that I might be able to become a full-time writer. So I went to New York with that in mind, and I put together a package of where I had taught in a special arrangement, either having adjuncted two courses between Fordham University and St.John's University. St.John's University later establishing an Institute of African Affairs. I wanted to teach and have the spare time that professors get. I also was part time head of a Catholic sponsored organization known as Africa Service Institute tied into the Catholic Inter-Racial Council, and I began writing books, and going off to Africa in the summer free from my academic duties. I decided the second book ought to be on Southern Africa, and wrote White Man's Future in Black Africa. The reviews were fairly good, but it didn't sell quite as well. I never sold enough books to make it a full time activity, but I kept on writing. I did for Macmillan Faces of Africa (my third book) which turned out to be a supplementary textbook. Then I went on to white a book on the rise of the relationship between nationalism and racism, a book I'm rather proud of, and I was pleased to see it has been reprinted a couple of times. I remember Hawthorne did it, and I gave it the title, The Rise to Power of Non-White Peoples in Africa and Asia and the Caribbean. But they redid the title and called it The Revolution of Color. It did fairly well. I also did Western Policy and the Third World. I would write them in the course of the year. From June through August I'd be traveling. And I was in various civic committees. I was an active Republican. In those days I was a Young Republican, one of the largest and most effective Young Republican clubs in the country was in New York City where I lived. And I was chair of the African Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and did think pieces and that kind of thing.

It became apparent to me after my third book, Focus of Africa, was published by Macmillan that writing would have to be an extra-curricular activity as the earnings were not sufficient to support a family.

By the time President Nixon was elected president, 1968, I had produced about eight of my books, all on Africa, or race relations plus a lot of articles. I was chairman of the department of Non-Western Civilization at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. I had done a few think pieces on African policy for Mr. Nixon in the 1968 campaign. And I had served as adviser to Nelson Rockefeller on Africa. I was appointed Ambassador in 1969 to Burundi.

Q: I want to go back just one step. When you were making these trips through Africa I assume you were stopping by our embassies and consulates?

MELADY: Oh, yes. Normally I would have my mail addressed...I'd write to the ambassador first and said I would drop in and see him, and have my mail...

Q: What was your impression of our Foreign Service establishment in Africa at the time?

MELADY: Generally speaking my impression of the Foreign Service establishment was made in two long periods of government service were in the State Department, AID presence, and later under President Reagan I was presidential adviser to AID, and the Department of Education where I was Assistant Secretary for Higher Education. I rate, and do respect the other agencies, but I always rated the standards in the Foreign Service higher than the others. In regard to your question on Africa, I still maintain contact with quite a few of the people I met in that period who later became ambassadors--now are all retired. They were competent and enthusiastic. Now in hindsight, as I look back upon it, they and I may have been too enthusiastic about what independence would accomplish. Some Foreign Service officers of the 1960's may have been also. I was among the great enthusiasts for rapid independence in Africa.

Q: I go along with so many other people who look at this, we had such great hopes and it was a disappointment to some extent, but not completely.

MELADY: I suppose if you look back at history of other parts of the world...look at Uganda where I had visited in private life, lectured at the university and later went there as ambassador, the British are very proud of the constitution they left, the parliamentary system, etc., but perhaps we should have allowed local culture to develop its form of government. We essentially are convinced the system that worked so well for us, not perfectly but worked well for us in the western world, was the right form of government for the Africans. Perhaps it wasn't. The purpose of good government, and the common good, and maybe other forms that the Africans felt at home with, may have been more appropriate.

Q: Going to Burundi, was this just something that came out of the blue? or had you asked...

MELADY: I had worked for Nelson Rockefeller as a consultant at the time he had presidential ambitions, and I did this part time kind of thing, and I did various things there on the staff, one was position papers on Africa.

Q: People talk about part time consultants on Africa. What did you do?

MELADY: For example, I would do think pieces that could be the subject for a potential speech, or point of view, or conversation. Generally speaking in that period I was advocating recognition of the phenomenon of independence, supporting pro-western parties, and a liberal AID program. That would be the thesis, and then I would take a particular country like Nigeria which we all had great hopes for as the major power. I must say, he seemed to like it and he and some others recommended me to President-elect Nixon as one of his non-career candidates. It seemed that that administration wanted to continue the tradition established by President Kennedy of bringing in several academics. So I was contacted by the President-elect and his staff. We actually discussed Botswana, then still known as Botswanaland, which was just becoming independent. I had written

on the Kalahari Desert, and I knew Dr. Khame, the president. Peter Flanagan, an assistant to President Nixon asked me if I would like to go there. I said yes. I was told to see Mr. Mitchell...this is the office of the President-elect, and "get the forms." I filled out the forms. It was my first major federal appointment and the clearances took several months. The inaugural took place maybe a month or so afterwards, or several months afterwards, I received a phone call from the New York Times saying they wanted to interview me because they saw on the wire service that the President had named me as Ambassador to Burundi. And I accepted to go to Burundi, and I was very happy about it because I benefitted from the very excellent State Department training program in languages. I had what they call Ph.D.-French, I could read but I spent three months over there in their language program and I was able to speak French after that three months. I was sworn in as U.S. Ambassador to Burundi in November 1989.

Q: A little about getting ready to go. How did you get ready to go?

MELADY: I had been through that thing really twice, Uganda followed Burundi, and then 15-16 years later, to the Vatican. There has been a great improvement, it was far more comprehensive in '89...there was the Institute, I guess there always was one, very definite briefings on high policy matters, the protocol matters, the Ethics Act, and all kinds of things. It was very well programmed, and I thought it was quite well done. Whereas in '68-'69, I definitely attended classes in French, and that was quite good, but from the standpoint of being briefed on lots of other matters, I got briefed by the desk officer and you couldn't compare the preparation of '69 with that of '89.

Q: You were just sort of tossed out there. If I recall the genesis of the real ambassadorial course came from Shirley Temple Black.

MELADY: That's right, in fact Ambassador Black was involved in the '89 program, and she later was appointed ambassador to Czechoslovakia.

Q: But she originally went to Ghana, and I don't think you had much by the time you went out.

MELADY: That's right. She certainly played a role in designing it. And then a separate program for wives, the spouses. There's no comparison between the program of '89 preparation and '69. The briefing in 1989 was comprehensive and the briefings were excellent.

Q: You were in Burundi from 1969 to '72. What were U.S. interests at that time as you saw them?

MELADY: The U.S. interests were...remember it was a historical period, I remember the one detailed briefing I got...Burundi was a member of the Security Council, a non-permanent member of the Security Council. And we were pretty upset that Burundi was attacking us verbally in the Security Council. We had no vital interest, and I'll tell you

about that in a moment, an incident I had with President Micombero. But we had about 400 Americans there, mostly Protestant missionaries who had worked there historically. We bought their coffee, a mountain grain. Of course, it was 1969, and as you remember we regarded the then Congo, now Zaire, as an area of vital interest and it was a major source of confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. A lot of the arms for the anti-government rebels, communist inspired, were being funneled through East Africa and Burundi over Lake Tanganyika. So therefore, we regarded the government as unfriendly, but not totally unfriendly. We had some concerns about the background of ethnic tensions between the two principal communities, the Tutsis and the Hutus. I remember about a year later, maybe two years--I have it in my book, Burundi, the Tragic Years--we had an incident of where I was called back from a long weekend in Kigali, Rwanda, and my deputy chief of mission, Mike Hoyt, said, "We've got some real problems. The Foreign Office called me that they had picked up a secret document of a letter written by the head of the CIA to you outlining a plan to overthrow the government of Burundi." And it was going to be done, that the CIA was going to fly in submarines from Mozambique, then still under Portuguese control, up to the southern part of Lake Tanganyika. The submarines would come up to Bujumbura, emerge, and overthrow the government. They were taking it quite seriously. We were under notice that we might all be asked to all be expelled within 72 hours. So I had a meeting with Colonel Micombero, the president, whom I had gotten to know--I used to see him at church on Sunday, and various things--and I could see it was a serious matter. So I asked for 24-48 hours to look into the thing, and I'd be back to see him.

I went back the next day, or maybe it was two days later, and I declared the document to be a forgery. We wanted to send over a person to convince them of that, it was an office in the State Department. It was a forged document by the Czech embassy in Kinshasa to one of their agents. And not very well done, a couple of misspellings in it, etc. But anyway, I could see that I wasn't totally convincing, so I had to make a judgement call. I said, "Your Excellency, you're very proud of your country, and it's a lovely little country here in the heart of Africa. But you know we have no viable interest really." I said, "I happen to know something about how things work at the White House. If something happened to anyone of eight to ten countries, the Soviet Union, Germany, Japan, like a coup d'etat, the President would be awakened and told about it." I said, "Another group of countries, about 30, that if something had happened that could be adverse to our interests, the President would be briefed on it first thing in the morning before he came down to the Oval Office, or depending on his style, in the Oval Office." I said, "There's another group of countries where he'd read about in the papers, because it made no "god-damned difference." I know we don't use that language, and Burundi is one." I said, "We have a few people here. We buy your coffee, mostly one company, Folger, they could buy a mountain bean from other countries, the mountains of Africa." I remember he laughed. He said, "You're right, [French]. Somebody is trying to break up our friendship," and he embraced me. That ended the incident. It was unusual diplomacy. It was a judgement call and it worked.

Q: This, of course, points out very much the role of the ambassador. There's talk about, well, things can be run from Washington. It's very obvious they can't be run from Washington.

MELADY: No. Certainly the impact of modern communications, instant telephone, and faxes, plus the end of distance--I mean long distance, has changed diplomacy. I could see the change in 1989 in comparison to 1969. You're subject to more control from Washington. I would think in the old days, 50 years ago, the ambassador had a broad mandate and implemented it based on judgement. But you still need a person there. I mean my dealings in the Vatican with the Pope, I certainly had a broad mandate, but some things are very immediate where the Pope would see me in a ceremony and call me over and tell me something to tell President Bush, and I really had to make a judgement.

Q: Also, I think, something that is of historical interest is the fact that you had both, particularly the Czechs and the East Germans were producing these documents to try to upset things that are known as disinformation.

MELADY: By the way, that was established. After President Micombero embraced me, then, "By the way, send a specialist over." I've forgotten the name of the gentleman, and he came over. He was a specialists in the field, and he fully documented with other documents, traced it right back to the embassy in Kinshasa, and almost down to the name of the agent who brought it to Bujumbura.

Q: How did you deal with the government of Burundi?

MELADY: It was a highly personalized relationship. You dealt with the sources of power. I mean you have on the one hand, the sources of power, and that was essentially the controlling clique of Colonel Micombero, who relatively speaking was more moderate than others, represented the minority Tutsi, the controlling group. And then you had technocrats under, and so on a little thing of trading out something with Folger coffee, or helping missionaries with their visas if they had difficulties, it was a rather traditional kind government-to-government at an operating level. When it came to the top, they were governed by their own vital interests, operating in an era of psychological insecurity. And now I think it's probably easy dealing with some of those countries that don't think they're so important. That wasn't true in the '60s and '70s. So it was highly personalized. I got a few gifts from President Nixon to give, a hunting rifle, and so forth, and that would come up in conversations. And then we sent people to the moon. I remember some ambassadors got the moonstones, and I got one and I called the president, and he rushed over to my house to get it.

Q: You're dealing with something which turned into, well, continues to turn into a tragedy, this Hutu-Tutsi thing, which we're just seeing in Rwanda.

MELADY: It may regarding it in Burundi.

Q: Did we have anything to do except just to sit there and...

MELADY: Well, let's look at the facts. The facts were, I remember I studied it at the Institute of African Affairs in Germany. The Germans arrived in 1894 after a military operation in the then Tanganyika. They arrived in the mountains, and they found what they thought was a monarchy, the characteristics of a monarchy. There was an obvious leader who was tall, he had warriors around him, and then there were the subordinate types who were short. They were the Hutus. So after a military expedition in Tanganyika that was expensive in terms of lives of the Germans, they had malaria and other things. They, I think gleefully, signed a treaty in the then Rwanda-Burundi area with the local leadership. So the Germans practiced indirect rule from 1894 to the end of World War I. Indirect rule meant you kept the local leadership. They found what had been going on from probably the seventeenth century, was that the warrior class maintained a predominant role and they were the land owners and the warriors, and the Hutus were the serfs. Some may say in a situation not too far from slavery. But anyway, there was certainly a significant class distinction between the two. Even the Germans recorded there also was a dislike bordering on hatred between the two, and there were outbreaks of fighting, immediately put down by the German colonial government. Along came the end of World War I, the Germans lost, the League of Nations assigned Burundi-Rwanda, then named, to the mandated authority of Belgium since Belgium had a colony next to it. There was a fine line of distinction between a mandate and a colony, and the Belgians followed indirect rule, and it went on to the '20s and '30s. And you go to Brussels and look at the documents there, and you find that also there were troubles. There were always the Tutsis maintaining control and perhaps became the favorites. There was a clear physical distinction, and there was a lot of folklore about them. The facts are that they were Hamitic-Semitic peoples like the Amharics of Ethiopia, and had distinct physical characteristics, tall, the average height was about 6'1", an Aquiline-Semitic profile. And the first that would get some education, would be of course that class. It wasn't necessarily planned as a conspiracy to keep them in power but this is the way it worked out. The first ones went off to Belgium, the Germans didn't have any that I could see in the records. But Belgium did have a few who, thanks to the Catholic missionaries, would have schools and they would end up in Belgium. Not at high university studies but some sort of secondary or technical studies.

Alright, so we go to the '60s, and Belgium saw the realities of the early '60s of what was happening in the rest of Africa. So they arranged for democratic elections. Elections in Rwanda elected a Hutu government, and then you had the slaughter of about 400,000 Tutsis with another half million taking off to Zaire and Uganda, and the children of the ones in Uganda organized this last invasion in 1994. In Burundi, then a kingdom, the elections didn't take place and the Tutsis remained in control.

I remember in studying it there was deep, deep alienation. I never realized it was so deep until I got there. I remember once I was giving a speech, I had a visiting congressman, Congressman Charles Diggs, now deceased, then chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa...

Q: And of African descent too.

MELADY: Yes, an African-American, and several other house guests. I was speaking in French to a group, you might say the elite, and since it was known that I was a non-career diplomat for Republicans, Charlie Diggs was Democrat, we talked about the role of the opposition. I was under instructions to preach democracy, you always have an opposition. And we respect the opposition, we protect the opposition.

I had to work on my French when I got there, my wife was perfect in French and was interested in anthropology, worked in the local language. She said, "Tom, no one understood you." And I said, "Why?" "Because every time you said opponent, the word is enemy." So the translation would be, you respect your opponent, you do everything to have your opponent speak. And they would say, enemy. So what do you do to enemies? You kill them. I remember I was there for two years and it was going on to almost my third year, and I knew the history was that every so often the Hutus, 85%, would attempt to change things. Then came the classical thing. We should have known the moment it happened. The economy was bad, and the coffee production was way down, it dropped, a major source of earnings. So there was a Hutu rebellion on a given day in April of '72. I had already received my transfer orders to go back to Washington and go on to Uganda. In the first three days, or perhaps five, it was relatively successful as an attempted revolution. And about 10,000 Tutsis were killed, the exact numbers none of us have although I have it in more detail in my book, Burundi, The Tragic Years. And then the Tutsis who were in control entirely, the military retaliated and eliminated in about a three week period about 150,000 Hutus, including anybody who had any kind of education beyond what would have been their elementary of about seven years. It was brutal, the tragic years, and deep alienation.

I came back, and in the book where I was spanked by various reviewers, because I said the alienation is so deep, and I documented various illustrations of it, and so much a part of the culture. It's in the folk tales that Hutu mothers will tell their little babies, beware of the awful Tutsis. If you're not a good boy, they will come and get you. I recommended the separation of the two communities as the only way out in both Rwanda and...and I really hate to come here and say, "I told you so that the alienation is so deep." They lost a half a million Tutsis in Rwanda. And in Burundi we've had several outbreaks since I left, one very bad one four years ago. Five hundred people just a month ago. I'm convinced that for a temporary phase there has to be a separation of the two communities because of the very deep rooted nature of the alienation.

Q: You and your staff were in Burundi at the time of this outburst in '73. Could you tell us what the staff of an embassy does when this sort of thing is going on?

MELADY: Of course, we were a small staff, no military attachés, no Marine Corps, etc. Once the fighting started what were we going to do? Our first interest was to protect our own staff, and I was concerned about the Americans who were there. I remember I went

to see Colonel, Micombero and indicated that. The tragedy was that only one Belgian was killed. The saying was, "if you're white, you're safe." So our interest was to protect the Americans. This was our only "vital interest." We must remember the historical period of the early '70s. You had people then, and less so now, who advocated that we should have taken a more active role, maybe military force. I recommended against that. While it was a tragedy in the historical period of 1972, the sending of any troops for any purpose other than actually to save our own people, as we did in Zaire previously, would be misinterpreted as another form of American imperialism.

Q: Yes, we were just coming out of the Vietnam war. How about with the American missionaries?

MELADY: I remember they had to make some judgment calls. The American missionaries, predominantly of two protestant denominations, very heroic people, they essentially were assigned to areas that were predominantly populated by the Hutu peoples. I used to worry about that. So my constant visits during that period before I left in May, was to assure their safety. We got them through that tough period of mid-April '72 to mid-May. We didn't lose any Americans. They were scared, we didn't lose them. I remember some commentators thought I was a little bit over concerned about the Americans. It's always a dilemma. Protecting the Americans paralyzed us in terms of recommending United States military intervention. I was totally opposed philosophically, and I held that point of view, to military intervention, and also held it in my book and in subsequent articles. Now you haven't got a...because there's no one today...very few people who are responsible in academic establishments who would recommend military intervention in areas we have no vital interest. In Somalia, under President Bush in 1992, we went in in answer to humanitarian appeal. It was later modified by President Clinton. But it was a trying period for about three to four weeks.

Q: Then you moved to Uganda.

MELADY: Previous to that I'd been back on the usual consultations. Dr. Kissinger, who was still over at the White House, spoke to me and I was asked if I'd like to go off to the Cameroons. Since our girls at that time were three and five had started in the nursery school, first grade, etc., in a French speaking school in Burundi, my wife said, "Let's go to the Cameroons." Well, I was back on consultations, and both Dr. Kissinger and then Mr. Newsom, Assistant Secretary for Africa, said, "We've got a more interesting assignment for you. We think you ought to go to Uganda where a new general has come into play. We don't know too much about him. You know Uganda..." actually I knew both countries, Uganda and Cameroon, "why don't you take Uganda?" Well, I did and my wife has never forgiven me because we probably could have gone to Cameroon. To make a long story short, I said, "Yes," and went through the usual procedures of being nominated and getting the agrément. And I came back for consultations the end of May, and went through the routine procedures. Again, there wasn't much preparation, nothing like what would have occurred in '89, and I went off to Uganda.

The general assignment was, since Amin was quite unpredictable, minimize American presence, don't get too involved, but hopefully this unpredictable person who the British seem to think could be influenced, will not get himself tied into the eastern bloc. Well, that didn't work. Within a month or two of my arrival, August '72, he went into a violent anti-Semitic period.

Q: We're talking about Idi Amin.

MELADY: Idi Amin. We're now in Uganda. He went into a radical anti-Semitic period. Because in trying to raise a substantial grant from the British, they turned him down. And while in London, Mr. Qadhafi contacted him and he stopped off in Libya. This was in Qadhafi's real radical period. Amin essentially bought the Qadhafi requirements which were violently anti-Israeli, which probably would have been not pleasant for us, but not disastrous, but he went from anti-Israeli to anti-Semitic. So the whole thing changed after I got there. I remember he called me to his office...he had given a speech, and we were all told to listen to it on the radio. And the speech was obscenely anti-Semitic. He talked about Hitler who knew how to take care of the Jews, "you kill them, you put them in the soil, they are treacherous." These were the words of Amin. Well, I had given a report of the speech in total to Washington, and I received instructions from the President. I regret to say, he was the only chief of state, who was aroused by it. I had told him about seeing Idi Amin. My instructions were to find out: "Did he really mean that? Was it something that had been written by an aide?" It took me several days to get the appointment, and I went up to Command House, and there he was. And I asked if he meant it, and he said, "Yes, I meant exactly that." Then he went into a long tirade about the Jews, and he grabbed me by the necktie, and he said, "Mr. Ambassador, how many Jews do you have on your staff?" And I said, "Your Excellency, my government doesn't allow me to reveal the racial, ethnic, or religious background of my staff people." We have no official designation of race or religion. And then he continued to grab my necktie, and I tried to pull away from him, and he said, "How many CIA do you have on your staff?" Well, I may have had some people who were thought to be CIA, or were formerly CIA, but by the time they arrived at my embassy, they were Foreign Service staff officers which allows the ambassador to handle that question. So I responded, "I don't have any CIA people on my staff." He said, "I know you have CIA on your staff. We don't like Jews, we don't like CIA." So I said, "If I did have CIA, they'd be American. And if I did have Jews, they'd be American. They'd be on my staff. Do you mean they're not safe here?" "I can't guarantee them." So I went back and filed a report to the Department, and actually was quite concerned about it. I did have perhaps a dozen people of Jewish background, and a large Peace Corps operation, and I knew several were Jewish, etc. I'd only been there for four or five months. This was actually in September. I got the Jewish people out, I just had to make the decision. So I filed a cable, Top Secret/Eyes Only because I felt it was dangerous because people were being eliminated. I felt that Amin...I'm not a psychiatrist, lacked stability, and was totally unpredictable. So I began to evacuate, and I talked to my Jewish people, and they became concerned. So we found ways to get them out.

I recall about the day after I did that, and had gotten out three or four people, the phone rang and it was the Associated Press and wanted to know if it was true that I was evacuating the Jewish members of my staff. I said it was not true and I hung up. I knew the phones were all bugged by Amin's intelligence people. The next day or two we got a few more out.

I came back in November and I presented the point of view to the White House, I didn't see the President, but Kissinger was still there, and to the State Department people, I said that we ought to close the mission. There was a division of opinion. I held that while most governments at that time, in basic criteria, were authoritarian. There's nothing wrong with authoritarian government, nothing wrong perhaps with dictatorship. There was a critical difference between a dictator and a brutal tyrant. At that point Idi Amin had probably eliminated about 100,000 people. He had made these various threats. He endorsed Hitler. He was a brutal tyrant, and we shouldn't dignify him with a presence of an ambassador. Some said, "You're talking yourself out of a job." And I said, "I believe in this, and I'll return to academic life, to my professorship." What I would say from the White House, there was general agreement, so I was to follow a plan of getting people out, and I remember it was about November, and we had a very good plan for the Peace Corps because there would be the usual holidays of December, and they all could go off to Kenya. So I had to encourage that, and they wouldn't return. Furthermore, I somehow had to get to the Americans living there, overwhelmingly missionaries again, a higher number than in Burundi, about maybe 500, and point out to them there might not always be an embassy there to protect their interests, but not to scare them. I remember it was a delicate assignment.

Well, come January or February '73, the situation got worse, and there were worse kinds of things, and there became some fear about my own security. So I came back again on consultations. While on consultations in '73, the American ambassador to Sudan, Cleo Noel, was kidnapped by the Black September group who were actually headquartered in Uganda as Amin protected them. So the big debate was whether I should go back, and how we were going to close the embassy. About three or four times the State Department had me ready to go back, I had my wife and daughters there. And somebody would come up, CIA or some other intelligence agency, would pick up some dangerous information. My return could be delayed. It went from bad to worse in that period of dealing with the most notorious terrorist. So the decision was to close the embassy, so I stayed in Washington and helped out on the whole business that followed the plan that when appropriate people would leave. So by the time of the summer of '73 about all of the Peace Corps was out. People tied up with the AID missions, academic people, were out, and it was a fairly successful thing. There was one bad incident where a Peace Corps person didn't follow advice in one area and was shot and killed. There were lots of other incidents, a series of incidents just confirmed the recommendation I had made months before that we close the embassy. It was closed in the fall of...my wife came back in the summer of '73, and my girls, and the mission was closed sometime in '73.

Q: Was it a matter you felt you couldn't just say, "Okay, we're closing and move out."

MELADY: There was concern because of the unpredictable nature of Amin. If you dealt with an authoritarian who was predictable, a dictator who was predictable like in most other countries, you probably could have done that. It was my feeling, I must say there was a general confirmation by my colleagues in the Department of State, that given his record, there was total unpredictability, and no regard for human life, and a breakdown of the internal social order, and therefore you had to do it surreptitiously, which we did. Then it was dramatically when the people were out, with the exception of the missionaries, most of whom said they would stay, understanding the dangers involved, and nothing ever happened to them physically. I still stay in contact with some of them twenty years later. But after the withdrawal of official Americans, i.e., Peace Corps, AID, and a few teachers under contract, and the staff was down to a handful of people, then the chargé d'affaires closed the Embassy.

Q: Who was your DCM at that time?

MELADY: Bob Keeley.

Q: How did you find him as a person? I know he's a rather outspoken person, particularly on Greek policy.

MELADY: He was my predecessor's DCM, and was there when I arrived, a good career officer. Later he was ambassador to--he had two appointments [AE/P-Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Greece]. I have read his articles on Greece. I think now he's now retired. I heard he may be doing a book on Uganda, or maybe it's Greece. His tour in Uganda was longer than mine because he was my predecessor's DCM, and then he stayed a couple of months past me. I had a good staff in both places. I had an excellent staff in Rome.

Q: Was your impression of Amin that he was crazy?

MELADY: He's still alive. Let me tell you that I felt...my wife and I wrote the book, I'm sure you have copies here in the library, "Idi Amin, Hitler in Africa." We co-authored it. I urged that he be charged with those crimes. I was always disappointed...when I came back I documented things. But that time I had become a university president so it became a hobby. But I was able to document that the coffee product, which he was selling in New York--the government was selling--the hard dollars went into his "goon" fund. So I urged President Carter to issue an executive order, which he could, prohibiting the purchase of Ugandan products. I remember, thanks to a friend of mine who knew the President, I had an appointment with him. My wife and I flew down (this is circa 1978, time went on, and in private life, president of Sacred Heart University in Connecticut), and I received word that morning the appointment was canceled and I should see Mr. Young, then U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. So I did see Mr. Young, and we came in with the various documentation, which he didn't deny was accurate, but he said he was sort of the President's advisor on African policy, notwithstanding his title as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, thought that I should come through with a recommendation concerning

South Africa. And he asked me wasn't South Africa just as bad as Uganda? Well, I knew South Africa. I'd been there...two of my books, written eight years previously were on South Africa. The South Africans were very unhappy with the book, and made me a prohibited alien. But I felt I couldn't make such a recommendation on South Africa, and I felt from what I knew, while certainly I was in total disagreement with apartheid policy, in other things it was not as bad as Uganda. So I told the ambassador that I felt I couldn't...I was thinking of Uganda which I knew pretty well because my wife and I had documented it and produced all the documents. But I didn't know what to do. So I knew there was another way to bring forth an embargo, that was by an act of the United States congress. It was a very usual way to do it.

So through another friend, my wife and I had a ten minute appointment with Senator Church, Foreign Relations Committee chairman. So we flew down again and saw Senator Church. But my wife took over the ten minute conversation, and she began by telling a personal story how the priest, who gave first communion to my older girl, Christine, the next day Amin's bodyguards turned over the car, which was a Volkswagen, doused it with kerosene, and burned him alive. And she told him other stories. And he said, "What are you doing tonight?" And we stayed and had dinner with him. I was always very grateful for it because we gave him the documentation. He didn't know us, we came from another part of the country, another political party, etc., and he introduced the legislation which we helped him on, and which we recruited senators and congressmen for him. I must say it wasn't difficult. It took some effort, and to make a long story short, for the first time in the history of the United States, an embargo was passed by the United States Congress prohibiting the purchase of Ugandan goods. We got on radio and TV. It played a role in bringing down Idi Amin. A role, I wouldn't say major. I suppose the major role was Julius Nyerere's energizing of the invasion. By the way when our book came out, "Idi Amin, Hitler in Africa," it was reviewed one evening by British Broadcasting Corporation, and the next night Ugandan radio, which BBC picked up, Idi Amin said he would "get us," my wife and I. So we began receiving phone threats, and the FBI stepped in and gave us protection when I was president of the university. Nothing ever happened.

Q: What was your impression of the British during the time you were there? Was their policy, "not to pull the plug"?

MELADY: Well, it was. Remember the history of Uganda, always a special relationship with the British crown. I collect first editions on Africa, and in Winston Churchill's book (400 copies published), I have one, "My Travels in Africa" when he got out of the university, went to Nairobi and he spent an extra week or two after a month for the inaugural of a train trip.

Q: Oh, yes. I read that book.

MELADY: He went up there and he met the Kubaka (King) of Buganda, the sovereign of the Uganda Kingdom. And he said, "These people are special, they have a monarchy." So he went back to England. He influenced the British government not to turn Uganda into a

colony. Uganda was never a colony. It was a protectorate of the crown. The first black students seen at British universities were from Uganda, one of the four kingdoms of Uganda. British were always very proud of Uganda.

Q: That was supposed to be a beautiful place.

MELADY: Very beautiful. Okay, its history went on and then came the sweep of independence in the '60s. They knew the realities. They worked for the orderly transfer of power, presented them with a great surplus in the treasury, with a Bicameral Legislature like their own. A special role for the four monarchies, mostly honorary, but to keep them there. So when Idi Amin came along, the British thought this too will pass. So, being as patient as they could, originally they were, and clearly now, we know whatever estimates they gave the State Department when Idi Amin took over that he could be influenced, and while he wasn't a brilliant man, he was an ex-sergeant, deal with him, it turned to be the wrong estimate. That's hindsight. So now we look back upon it, a lesson for both of us, that once you recognize you have a brutal tyrant, don't expect him to change. That was the theme of my book, and it was hindsight. Although without bragging about my own role, I felt we had a tyrant and urged that we close the embassy, and quite a few professional diplomats and others thought, you never close an embassy because of an dictator. I said, "Not because of a dictator, but you do when it's a brutal tyrant."

So we played with Idi Amin perhaps too long. We had the tragedy of the Air France plane. By the time I was back in Washington I helped with that problem. Israel came out as heroes. If they hadn't sent that group in...

Q: This was called the raid on Entebbe.

MELADY: Yes, if they hadn't they all would have been killed. I said that in the State Department, once Idi Amin separated the Jews from the non-Jews, the next step was going to be execution. And, of course, he executed the poor lady, I can't think of her name now, who had both Israeli and American citizenship. We were dealing with that kind of a person. So I say in hindsight, both of us...first of all it's hard for the western mind to grasp total brutality. I tried in doing the book research the response of the American diplomats and the consul in Munich against Hitler. You read some of the responses in reports by our consul in Munich of 1934-1935. They classified Hitler as "a beer bum, he's bombastic, don't pay any attention to him." Well, we saw what happened. That's, of course, hindsight.

So I think in hindsight, I hope we learned a lesson. That once you identify a brutal tyrant, don't expect a change.

Q: Then moving on, between '73 and 1989, could you summarize what you were doing?

MELADY: Well, I came back, my children by that time were five and seven, we made a career choice. We decided to settle in the U.S.A., to be settled for them to get through school. I returned primarily to academic work, and kept up my interest in foreign affairs. I

became, first executive vice president of St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia where I wrote the book "Burundi, The Tragic Years" and also wrote the book, "Uganda, Expulsion of the Asians". Did some scholarly articles, and was active in helping out the African-American Institute in New York, and various committees. Then I had ten years from '76 to '86 as president of Sacred Heart University. I was a trustee at the International League of Human Rights, and looked into the human rights situation in Sudan, particularly as it affected southern Sudan at the time. I went off to a culture conference in Senegal, and stayed active in the private aspect of foreign affairs, but still mostly Africa. Had some African leaders on my campus because we had a good number of Cape Verdean students. And '86 came along, I spent '86 to '89 as president of the CPEC, the Connecticut Public Economic Council. I remained active in foreign affairs, and in 1988 George Bush called me, then president-elect, and asked me to be the ambassador to the Vatican.

Q: So you went to the Vatican from '89 to '93.

MELADY: Yes, I was the Bush ambassador and stayed on for about two months of the Clinton administration.

Q: You said you got a much better briefing operation.

MELADY: Oh, yes, no comparison. The way it works, you get the phone call from the President, you're going to do it, so to make a long story short, the first announcement is it's the intention of the President to appoint you, then checking out your background. I had to find a replacement for head of the institute. So I used to come down every Thursday in that period of February-March 1989 and worked at the Vatican desk, and read reports. And then the official training started in April, and it seems to me it was about six weeks. A very well designed course covering the whole area of diplomacy, reporting, the Ethics Act--by that time it had achieved some importance, things we could do, shouldn't do, a very clear disposition of what was right in the public perception, conflict of interest. And then some language training, and then I remember I was supposed to probably be on a list of people who were going to be interviewed by the committee. In early June there was a hassle over some appointments. I was rather fortunate, there wasn't any hassle over mine, but we all got held up. It always seems part of the confirmation drama. So you might say I benefited from that by getting about six weeks of preliminary training in Italian. I asked about the language. The Vatican is very proud of the fact that they deal in four languages. My predecessors hadn't bothered learning the language, I was told it wouldn't be any problem. They were quite accurate when it came to dealing with the top people, they just automatically dealt in English or French. But I knew I would be living in Italy, and I had been there in a previous experience, so my wife and I started Italian. Very happy we did, we continued that when we got there so we could really deal with the ordinary people and get around Italy.

So I got over there in August, and began my almost four years as ambassador to the Holy See.

Q: What is the interest of the United States and its connections with the Holy See?

MELADY: When we established diplomatic relations with the Holy See in 1984, we had a Special Envoy--there's a whole difference between a Special Envoy and Ambassador. It was done with the procedure whereby the President nominated William Wilson to be ambassador to the Holy See, that is to the government of the Roman Catholic Church. As a professor of political science, I'm very much interested in church-state relations. I spent my whole time studying the whole confirmation process in which the majority of the senate committee members said, "We have unique special interests with this government with its worldwide connections. It is both a source of information and they engage strategy and they have influence in various parts of the world." So Mr. Wilson was approved by a landslide majority in the senate. And before going to Rome, there was a court case under our constitution, the American United for Separation of Church and State, and several other groups--I've forgotten their names now, they are in my book--they said it was a violation of the constitution. And the court held that it wasn't, the President did have the power, Article II, Section 2, said the President nominates with the advice of and consent of the Senate. He did that, and that the senate was the controlling group which would make the decision. So therefore, the first who was Ambassador was Mr. Wilson, the second, Mr. Shakespeare, I arrived as the third ambassador. I had no doubt there would be vital interest involved. I must say it turned out to be more than I ever thought it would be from the standpoint of information worldwide. The whole Gorbachev business when we got information that no one had, including the CIA, which I was able to transmit to Washington--the cooperation between Gorbachev and President Bush and with the Vatican in the key period of '89 to '91, until Gorbachev left office in '91.

It's a unique diplomatic post. I think very much like the embassies of the 19th century. If you just check the embassies (I used to teach diplomatic history) you have the ambassador and a few aides. That's all we had. I mean, we represented U.S. policy, we were involved in visas. I used to kid my good friend, who was the ambassador to Italy, if someone called us who had a visa problem, I'd say call his embassy. If something on trade, call the other embassy. We just did diplomacy. We were a small staff: the ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission, a political officer.

Q: Who was your deputy chief then?

MELADY: I had two. Jim Creagan, who is now the Deputy Chief of Mission to Italy; and Cameron Hume, who is now chief of the political division at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations--both first class officers.

Q: Jim Creagan certainly. He was political officer in Naples when I was Consul General there.

MELADY: Oh, he has had a great Italy experience. I'm just hoping he gets an embassy in the next go-around. You never know how the cookie crumbles. There never was any

doubt in my mind that a U.S. Embassy to the Holy See was in our interest. And I felt so strongly about it that I wrote a book, "The Ambassador's Story. The United States and the Vatican in World Affairs." It always would have been an interesting place, but under this Papacy with a Pope who was very much involved in strategy. It was even more valuable for the U.S. to have a diplomatic mission there. This goes back to the meeting of, before I got there, the famous meeting--President Reagan and Pope John Paul II. At that meeting, and I remember the background, 1982, we had a Special Envoy. Reagan was getting ready to go to the meeting, and the essential advice was in "executive summary," "Don't be talking about overthrowing the communists in Eastern Europe. Look what happened when we talked about it before. The Hungarian revolution, the Prague revolt of '68, the Soviets aren't going to do it." It's interesting. By the time I got there the Papal advisors were saying the same thing as this "Polish" Pope, "Don't be talking about it." Well, lo and behold, neither (President Reagan or Pope John Paul II) followed the advice of their experts. The President brought up to the Pope that he had read that the Pope had said that one day "Eastern Europe will be free, and Eastern Europe will join with western Europe." And President Reagan said, "Your Holiness, when will that be?" And the Pope said, "In our lifetime." The President sort of jumped out of his chair and said, "We're both not exactly young people." "Yes." So the President grabbed his hand and said, "Let's work together."

I remember Time magazine about 1991 had a major cover story, The Holy Alliance, and a picture of the Pope and Reagan. The article, with the exception of the first five paragraphs, was really quite accurate. With a handshake, without a formal treaty, there was never anything written--I know that--the United States and the Holy See cooperated in one of the greatest events in modern history. The collapse of an empire without, relatively speaking, any major bloodshed.

Q: What was the Holy See doing with its influence with the Soviet Union?

MELADY: Well, actually they had very good sources of information despite the difficulty of operating there. Soon after I arrived, I found out that there had been about a three to four year contact between Rome and Moscow. Cardinal Casaroli had been there on one of his visits in '87, there was a famous conversation between Gorbachev and Casaroli where they were talking about some things. At the end of a formal meeting, Gorbachev volunteered that he would be visiting his mother that weekend. And he said, "My mother is a deaconess in the church." And, of course, Casaroli knew he was talking to a very astute person, not an adolescent high school boy who just blabbed on, every word was meant to convey a message. And he described how sometime when he visited his mother in this cottage where she lived (she took care of changing the linen, etc. on the altar of the--it was the orthodox church), she had two portraits of Marx and Lenin. Pretty standard at that time for any Soviet home, and that sometimes she would take them down, when she took them down there were two icons, and she would bless them. He said, of course, she is the one who baptized me. So the conversation went on and naturally Casaroli reported all that to the Pope and it began a correspondence period in which the letters were rather friendly. Gorbachev sent a note to the Pope inviting him to send a delegation

to the 1000th anniversary of the orthodox church, and invited the Pope to come. The Pope said he appreciated the invitation but he couldn't make it but he sent a very high level delegation. Other letters followed. So therefore when Washington heard in November '89 that Gorbachev on his way to the Island of Malta to meet President Bush on December 1, with a stop-off in Rome to meet the Pope, I received high level instructions to find out what was going on, which I did. And I got all this information about the three and a half year relationship with Gorbachev, and the analysis by the Holy See that there was a change in the attitude of the leadership. It was far more flexible and amenable, and prepared for change, providing the change would protect their interest. But a rather rapid change which they found. They were communicating that. Our people and in my briefings didn't feel that way. They thought maybe Gorbachev was trying to pull something off. Remember the crop harvest wasn't too good. Was he looking for some of those arrangements in regard to wheat and other things.

The President told me later that he felt that way too. So about two days before Gorbachev arrived in Rome, I received additional instructions. Try to find out what the Pope thought of Gorbachev, and various such questions. Can Gorbachev be trusted? Well, I dealt with Casaroli, who was number two--the head of government--the formal title there was Secretary of State, which confuses people here, but really is Prime Minister. I had known him for years before I went there. I didn't have much time because it was like two days after he saw the Pope, he would be in Malta. So I had to see Casaroli fairly soon, and I saw him in a long meeting and he briefed me on all of the things that were said, which I transmitted all to Washington. And then he said, "In regard to trust, we think we know the man, he's from the heart of the communist power structure, he believes in change and he wants it. We believe he can be trusted, within those perimeters." So I got that cable off.

I wonder if I can come back another time to continue this?

Q: Absolutely. We'll pick up on the Holy See. We're just really starting, we've talked about the Gorbachev thing, but there's much more to talk about.

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Q: Today is the 19th of January 1995. I'm never quite sure how to pronounce your name. Malady. I'm sure you get Melady.

MELADY: Meledy is the first guess. When I was in the Army, I stopped correcting the sergeants. They get irritated anyway.

Q: Let's talk about the organization of our mission to the Holy See. It started when?

MELADY: Well, let's get a little history. In the 19th century we had diplomatic envoys to the Papal States. Now, technically that was not the Holy See. You may recall in history up until the unification of Italy, the territory of the Pope actually met the criteria of a sovereign state. They had land, they had a government, they had an army, they had

currency. These Papal States extended from approximately north of Naples up to Florence.

Q: That was the mid section of Italy.

MELADY: And the United States recognized the Papal States, first in a cautious way with consular officers, but then full diplomatic officers from 1848 to 1867. In 1867 the United States congress passed the no-funding act. In Article II, Section 2 of the constitution is quite clear. The President appoints with advice and consent of the senate, and that was done. But the house of representative got the purse strings, and said, no more money for a mission accredited to the Pope.

Q: This is the 1860's.

MELADY: So our mission to the Papal States closed. When I was ambassador to the Holy See we tried to discover the grave of the first diplomatic representative, Mr. Jacob I. Martin. He was only there for three weeks after he presented his credentials to the then Pope, and he died of malaria which was quite a curse in those days in that part of Italy. And the State Department would only allow $100 for sending the body back, and the family had him buried there. We found the grave. It is in the Protestant cemetery in Rome. We have erected an appropriate stone, and every year flowers are placed on his grave. He was the first diplomatic representative of the United States in what is now known as Italy, even before the Republic of Italy.

After 1867 there was a long interregnum, which coincided with a period of anti-Catholicism in the United States. The most difficult period was the Ku Klux Klan movement against immigrants. Now, some would say it was primarily against immigrants, some would say against Catholics, it was probably a mixture. A large number of immigrants were coming from Ireland, France, Italy. Eastern Europe came later, Germany, Spain, Portugal. I doubt that there would have been any kind of diplomatic representation in the late 1800's. But probably after the unification of Italy in the 1870's, our basis for recognition of the Papal States was based on the traditional customs. It had territory, chief of state, etc. That disappeared with the unification of Italy. The government of the Roman Catholic Church, which is the Holy See, existed and about 18 to 20 countries still recognized it in that period of the end of the 19th century. Along came the first 30 some years of this century and FDR, seeing that the clouds of war were gathering in Europe, wanted some sign of contact with the Vatican. He did various things. He sent Joseph Kennedy--he then was U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom--as his personal representative to the coronation of Pius XII. Pius XII had visited the United States as Cardinal Pacelli, Secretary of State which is really their operating head, and was the guest of Roosevelt at Hyde Park. So there had been activity. FDR was convinced that the Vatican was a great source of information.

Q: Pacelli had been nuncio in Munich.

MELADY: So, what to do? And FDR's advisers came up with what they thought was a solution. They were fearful they would have trouble in getting Article II, Section 2 carried out with confirmation by the senate. So President Roosevelt announced on Christmas eve, 1939, after the war had started in Europe, that he was sending to--and he used the word the Vatican, not the Holy See--a personal envoy who would represent him, not be a government official. He also announced in that same radio address that he would be in contact with the Council of Churches in Christ in New York City, and the Jewish theological seminary.

Q: Touching all bases.

MELADY: Well, it was a qualitative difference, and the other contacts were never really carried out. But soon after Myron Taylor, his long-time friend, a leading Episcopal laymen and retired head of U.S. Steel, went off to Rome as the Special Envoy. There was some opposition to it, but there was no focus for debate because it did not require senate confirmation. Whatever goals he had for Myron Taylor, it certainly exceeded the goals. It was a gold mine. As things went on in '40-'41 there in the heart of Italy was Myron Taylor, operating in Rome outside of Vatican walls. After Italy declared war on us, he went inside Vatican walls. For a while he had freedom. He used to go up to Florence to visit his villa. The two significant sources of information for the United States, were Myron Taylor and Mr. Allen Dulles in Switzerland. So significant was the information some of it is still classified. That was the office of Special Envoy. FDR died, Mr. Taylor continued through the first several years of Truman's administration. He was an older man then, and then he retired.

In 1950 Truman concentrated on the Vatican assignment, and he saw what a gold mine of information came out. Information, there wasn't much strategy, but information. He, without much consultation from what I can see in my own research, decided that we ought to have an ambassador. So he nominated General Mark Clark in 1951 to be the United States ambassador to the Vatican. Now I'm saying Vatican rather than Holy See for a reason. And on the basis the Vatican was a sovereign state, it was independent, it was small, that it had a chief of state in addition to being the Pope and leader of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world, was sovereign of the territory of the Vatican. It had its own other characteristics. But he didn't do much advance research on it and it raised a great storm. I recall because I was a student at the time at Catholic University, never knowing that I would later become the ambassador to the Holy See. I recall going down to the convention hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution, it was packed. I was then doing an MA on international relations. I was shocked as most of the signs were clearly in the category of anti-Catholic, some of them quite vulgar as a matter of fact. The nomination got stalled. It was quite apparent it wouldn't get through, and it died in that session of the senate, and Mr. Truman did not resubmit it. Technically, therefore, it never was defeated, but it would have been.

Q: It's a little hard...we're doing history now and both of us are of a certain age, and we know the era. But somebody coming along to understand the depth of anti-Catholic

feeling there was in the country in some areas, and it would come out in these things. The idea being that somehow the Pope was a foreign agent. It's almost like anti-communism in a way.

MELADY: Yes. This was really quite strong. Actually, I'm doing another book which we can get into at another time, it's not out yet, "A Catholic Layman Looks at His Church." I'm right now on that, in the 19th century. Never to the point of oppression, never to the point where they excluded Catholics from the establishment. Catholics clearly were not in the establishment. There were other reasons, they were first generation immigrants, peasants, laborers, etc., not property owners. So there were other reasons. The one exception probably was a few Catholic families in Maryland who got here early because of Lord Baltimore's agreement--the Calvert family among them.

But getting back to that period. It really was a rough period. And obviously the three succeeding presidents--President Eisenhower, who made a visit or two to the Pope; President Kennedy, who announced in the campaign he was opposed to the reestablishment of a Special Envoy; and President Johnson, who also had some visits with the Pope--never reinstituted, which they could have done because it did not require senate confirmation, the Special Envoy business. President Nixon reinstituted the Special Envoy, and did what President Truman did, selected a prominent American. He selected Henry Cabot Lodge, who had been a previous U.S. senator, and a previous ambassador to Germany and Vietnam.

Q: And also a non-Catholic.

MELADY: That's right, a member of the American establishment. And he served throughout Nixon's term as well as the two years of President Ford.

Q: Did you have any feeling, looking back on it, that he did much there? One of the things that comes through with Lodge was that if he wasn't really engaged in things, he could be...lazy is the wrong term, but he has been called this. If he really got going on something, he'd do it.

MELADY: Well, I did some research, because remember a Special Envoy which meant he had someone in the State Department, I've forgotten the name, he's a retired Foreign Service officer living in Portugal, so it was the local officer so to speak, and there would be an office at the U.S. embassy that would sort of handle the paperwork. Although he would always stay in the big hotels, and he would generally see the Pope, and it was in a way very high level type of representation ad hoc. Remember it was the Vietnamese era and a major thing was in presenting our case in regard to Vietnam. And also remember it was the year of a major confrontation between the two super powers, and they'd be talking about and informing the Pope of the dangers of communism.

That took us through the administrations of Presidents Nixon and Ford, and along came President Carter. President Carter continued the Special Envoy, and appointed Mr. David

Walters of Florida. Mr. Walters served for a brief period of time, and I wasn't able to find out just what was done there. It was about 12 or 13 months, and he resigned. And then President Carter appointed Bob Wagner, a former mayor of New York City, and you might say went back to the role of a rather prominent person. Walters, by the way, was Catholic. So he was the first Catholic to hold the post. Bob Wagner was also Catholic.

When I received my appointment as ambassador in '89, I talked to Bob Wagner. And he told me what a delightful position it was. It came at the end of a career. He was still in the practice of law. He took it all very seriously, he played a role in trying to extradite the hostages out of Tehran, and lots of things. He served the last three years of President Carter, and made a very strong recommendation that we send an ambassador there.

Along came President Reagan. People didn't notice at the time, but President Reagan in the first week or 10 days after his election were known historically...announcements were only made about major appointments--Secretary of State, members of the cabinet, he announced that his long-time friend, William Wilson, a well-known business leader in California.

Q: William Wilson?

MELADY: Yes, William Wilson, a well known Republican, civic leader, with other corporate interests, and a member of President Reagan's kitchen cabinet, would be his Special Envoy. Mr. Wilson went out (it didn't require confirmation) so he was out there probably right after the inaugural. Mr. Wilson, at that time regarded it really just about as a full-time job. A man of evidently significant personal means, he established his own residence. There really wasn't any budget, and carried on. He was, of course, the President's personal representative still, but he was given the courtesy title of ambassador. And in private life he was well known in Rome's aristocratic circles, the old noble families, his wife being of partial Italian descent. He carried on as Special Envoy. In 1981 President Reagan decided he wanted to see the Pope--I go into more detail in my book, a full chapter, it was quite important. You may remember in the campaign and in private life, President Reagan talked about the freeing of Eastern Europe from the communist oppression, and also Russia. He was warned by his advisors that this was not going to happen. Look at (he was told) the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the Prague revolt of 1968, the rioting in Poland. The Soviets are there (he was told) and they have superior armed forces and there would be blood shed, and the Brezhnev doctrine, etc. Evidently in getting ready for the visit, Judge Clark, then assistant to the President for national security affairs, came across a speech the Pope had given some months earlier on his first visit to Poland after he became Pope.

Q: John Paul II, who is Polish.

MELADY: Made his first trip to Poland, and in an address that was ignored by the American newspapers, but was in Le Monde and therefore it came up in some research, the Pope said, "Soon Eastern Europe will be free" (of this domination), and western

Europe and eastern Europe, because of their common heritage, will have a community in Europe." So the president had that quote, and there was more in the Pope's speech. In getting ready for the visit I found in my own research for the book, that some of the Pope's advisors too were concerned in '80-'81, that he was talking about freeing Eastern Europe. They said the only reasonable goal was reduction of the oppression, "some outside contact, build up the strength of the church in Poland and Slovakia, and Lithuania, where it had lots of members, etc." So a meeting took place. Mr. Wilson was the Special Envoy, he arranged for the appointment. President Reagan was there with his advisors. Then as the Pope does, and he did with me, he meets only with the principal. For example, I was not present when he had his long talk with President Bush, that's a standard procedure. He and the Pope, and President Reagan met alone. President Reagan gave him that quote, and Reagan said, "When do you think it will be?" And the Pope said, "In our lifetime." At that point the President grabbed his hand and said, "Let's work together."

You may remember that about 1991, Time magazine had an article on the "sacred alliance," the United States and the Vatican with a picture of President Reagan and the Pope. Its a fairly accurate article, with the exception of the first four or five paragraphs (from what I could see from my knowledge of the archives). There was no signed document, no formal agreement on cooperation between the Vatican and the United States.

Q: You said 1991?

MELADY: 1981. Eighty-one was the meeting. The 1991...

Q: ...was the article.

MELADY: It was a very interesting article. They (the Pope and President Reagan) talked about how to help each other, and the President said, "We'll do everything we can." The Pope emphasized it should be a non-violent transition from his analysis of the situation in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland. The Pope felt that you could maneuver the transition through tactics, and strategy. He then, as in the Gulf War later, has always opposed the use of war to solve problems. I think he recognized that in a political pact there might very well be a riot, but not war. It was a very important meeting and the President returned to the United States and instructed the State Department to work closely with the Vatican. Following the Papal-Reagan meeting the Special Envoy office suddenly had a lot of visitors. General Vernon Walters, then Ambassador-at-Large in the first term of President Reagan, was a frequent visitor. Other senior people like Judge Clark, then assistant to the President for national security affairs. And they coordinated assistance, and strategy. The U.S. assisted the solidarity movement. I was president of Sacred Heart University at the time, and even I had some visiting professors because there were all kinds of exchange programs. Printing presses were made available, advice on strategy. That was clearly the deciding factor when President Reagan said, "I want to establish a full fledged embassy."

He appointed an in-house commission in '83. The in-house commission was to look at several points. Is it constitutional? Is it in the national interest? And is it political prudent? Haig, who had left the State Department, got involved. A private person was brought in, Dr. Billy Graham.

Q: The most prominent Protestant leader in the States.

MELADY: And Senator Lugar, who at that time was chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. In other words, there were quite a few people in on it. It was the unanimous recommendation, that it was constitutional based on Article II, Section 2. The President appoints with the advice and consent of the senate. It was the unanimous opinion of the group that it was in our national interest. The Vatican had gone from merely being a treasure house of information, to having influence and engaging in strategy. The third was probably the most important aspect of the study, and Dr. Graham played a major role there. He felt that while there certainly would always be opposition to it, that it wouldn't be a firestorm, and that it would get senate confirmation. So based on that in '83 there were discussions with the Vatican. President Reagan's original proposal was to recognize Vatican City. The Vatican said no, you must recognize the government of the Roman Catholic Church. This dates back to the 1815 Vienna conference. Around 70 other countries so recognized the Holy See in 1973. And President Reagan did that.

In January 1984, President Reagan announced the appointment, the nomination of Mr. Wilson as our U.S. ambassador to the Holy See. And that set in motion the normal procedure; the senate must confirm. Senator Lugar, meeting with his ranking Democratic colleague who was Senator Pell at the time, agreed they would have hearings and there wouldn't be so much of an examination of Mr. Wilson's credentials, but rather "should the U.S. have relations with the Holy See?" And that went on for about three weeks, and there were some organizations that were quite strong in opposition. The American United for Separation of Church and State, ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union). Actually the Baptist Association, the southern Baptist group of which Dr. Graham is a member, was opposed to it. And some Catholic organizations, not major ones, but several were also opposed. That went on for about three weeks, the public hearings. And to make a long story short, the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee by a strong vote, voted in favor. Then, of course, it went to the floor of the senate. The confirmation got 80-some votes, I think 12 were opposed, and one or two weren't there, so it was a landslide confirmation. Mr. Wilson took the oath and went off to Rome as the ambassador of the United States to the Holy See.

Now, there's another footnote. Under our constitution there's still another way to challenge a decision by the Senate. Did it violate the constitution? So several organizations brought a suit, and I'm not a lawyer, but it went before the superior court in Philadelphia, for some reason, and the court ruled unanimously that there was no violation of the constitution. It was the constitutional prerogative of the President. He had to consult the senate, and that if there was any question about it, it was basically a

political matter to resolve at election time. But constitutionally there was no question. So therefore, Mr. Wilson became our first ambassador to the Holy See having served previously as Special Envoy to the Pope. Mr. Wilson served approximately two years--it was in the second term of the President Reagan, I haven't the exact date but I'd say until about '86. And then he resigned in what was described as a controversy over whether or not he met with Mr. Qadhafi, head of Libya...

Q: With whom we were, to use a term, at loggerheads.

MELADY: So therefore, he served approximately two years as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. He was succeeded by Frank Shakespeare. Mr. Shakespeare had been in the administration of President Nixon, head of the United States Information Agency, and a communications executive in New York. And for a short term, I think less than a year, was ambassador to Portugal when he was named ambassador to the Holy See. The same questions came up in his confirmation. And I think he may have had one or two votes against him, but he was confirmed. And the same question came up in regard to the court, and the court made the same decision. So therefore, he served from approximately 1986 to the spring of 1989--he was the last Reagan appointment. I was nominated by George Bush, and he stayed there until the spring of '89.

I was fascinated by these questions in preparing for my confirmation. And I remember when President Bush asked me to serve. The process takes a couple of months. I used to go down to the Department every Thursday as Ambassador-designate and read all the files thinking that there would be a big question of the church-state thing again. And while that was not my specialty as a political scientist, I had a long-term interest in it. I was told by Senator Jesse Helms, then a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee...

Q: The House has affairs, the Senate has relations.

MELADY: He did not show up at the Senate hearing. Senator Biden presided. No questions came up. Several people had sent in petitions. I remember I was rather surprised, Senator Biden said, "Leave your document, and we'll put it in the record," and they were quite nice to me. I was unanimously recommended by the committee. I was pleased by the fact that my two senators who were Democrats--I'm from Connecticut--strongly supported my nomination. And then I also had letters from Protestant and Jewish groups. I had been active with ecumenical affairs. And I was recommended by the committee unanimously, and then was confirmed. I can't say unanimously because it was a voice vote, so technically you say there was no recorded opposition.

Q: The period again was...

MELADY: From the summer of '89 to the spring of '93.

Q: And this was when basically Eastern Europe crumbled.

MELADY: Oh, yes. I arrived as Poland was pulling out of the communist orbit, and the whole transformation of Eastern Europe.

Q: What was going on as far as American relations with the Vatican because most of Eastern Europe has a very strong...I mean Poland is the most renowned, but Czechoslovakia, Romania, all had strong Catholic roots. Were we doing anything, either coordination or something?

MELADY: Well, once we opened up the embassy under Wilson, and continued by Frank Shakespeare and by the time I got there, we shared the Vatican analysis which was, the mood was changing. The time was right for a transition, and that we should think of using strategy, always opposed to the use of war. But the information which the Vatican conveyed to us, was they felt things were also "right" with Gorbachev. So the dual analysis was that things were ripe in Eastern Europe, and Gorbachev.

I recall in Czechoslovakia, there in Rome in October of '89 before Gorbachev's famous visit to Rome, that there was going to be a religious ceremony, and all ambassadors were invited. It was for the canonization of a Czech woman, Agnes. And it was said that maybe about 25 people would come from Czechoslovakia. About a week before the ceremony, it was on a Saturday, it was announced that approximately a thousand had gotten out of Czechoslovakia. And by Tuesday or Wednesday, 5,000. They came by car, they came by train, they came by various ways. The Czech government, which wouldn't allow the Pope to appoint any bishops to any of the vacant Sees, was very hard dogmatic communists. They announced towards the end of that week that they were sending an official delegation, and that they would allow the Vatican to transmit it electronically so the people in Czechoslovakia could see the ceremony on television. I remember I went to the ceremony. There were about 10,000 people from Czechoslovakia. They sort of took over the Basilica.

I remember saying to my wife as we walked out, and I was going to a coffee shop there in Via Concilroziore, "That this is the defining moment." I remember it was a Saturday and I wasn't planning to be at the embassy, and a Marine came up to me and said, "Oh, you've got a message. You've got to go to the embassy." So I found my driver and I went to the embassy. I had instructions from the State Department to find out what was going on. And I received some instructions. I met with Cardinal Casaroli, the number two, and he gave me their analysis. They were convinced from the reports from the church of the underground, that Czechoslovakia was "ripe" for change. Cardinal Korec, now a cardinal, was a leader of the church of the underground in Czechoslovakia. It was a strong movement. And so we encouraged the Pope to visit Czechoslovakia. Well, they had a rapid transition in Czechoslovakia after that ceremony in November-December of '89. Soon the Pope was allowed to appoint the bishops. And then he was invited to visit Czechoslovakia in 1990. This was dogmatic communist country. You had the awful memories of the '68 spring revolt. The Pope quickly visited the country in one day. And his evaluation was that, "Yes, there is a movement." I recall looking at my television set

there in Rome and seeing the candlelight march in Prague. And I said, "Will this be another '68?" Because the same Soviets were there in bigger numbers than in '68. There could be a violent reaction by the Soviets. That was the assumption the Vatican passed on to us. Gorbachev would not order the troops in. To this day I don't know whether the Pope had inside information, whether it was just a feeling, or just what it was. That was a very important thing--the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia, and the rise of Havel. So we worked very closely in the period of '89 through '90 because it was then Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania where the Communist empire fell apart.

By that time it had moved into the '90s, President Bush had a more confident feeling about Gorbachev, and he more or less converged with the feelings of the Vatican about Gorbachev that we could deal with him. So when Gorbachev sent word that he couldn't rush things in regard to the Baltic states...remember the Vatican and we never recognized the Soviet takeover, particularly in Lithuania. We got word and I met with the Vatican officials, to give Gorbachev a little breathing time. And that happened. Now the attempted coup against Gorbachev in the summer of '90...

Q: He was in Odessa down in the Crimea.

MELADY: The Pope was in Hungary and very interestingly he wrote a...I'd love to have the document, it must be a great archival piece. He was on the outskirts of Budapest, and an aide said to him, "He has been overthrown." He issued a very strong statement supporting Gorbachev in terms of human rights. There's no question that he had that confidence. President Bush followed it with a statement. So did the Prime Minister of England. I remember Mitterrand didn't say a thing. And that gave us another year of Gorbachev. So in that, I would say, the Vatican was a significant player in a) the original analysis that the time was right and coming in with information and participating on strategy. And it went on later to the Ukraine, and the breakup of Russia itself into the federation. Gorbachev fell, went out of office, the end of the Soviet Union in December '91, the first visit Yeltsin made when he assumed his responsibilities as chief of state, was to Rome in December '91.

Q: What was the impression of Yeltsin who continues to be a controversial figure in the analysis that you were getting from...

MELADY: They were less confident. There was a very special relationship developed with Gorbachev which continues to this day. And Gorbachev has maintained his contacts with the Pope, and has written articles on it, etc. But when I interviewed Vatican officials in December '91, after the Yeltsin visit, they obviously were pleased that Yeltsin came down and reported to the Pope. He pledged to continue and carry out the promises of Gorbachev in Gorbachev's December '89 visit, which were freedom of religion, human rights, the restoration of the rights of the Ukrainian Catholic church, and the full freedom of the Pope to appoint without prior consultation bishops to all the vacant Sees in Russia. Yeltsin pledged to continue that. But they didn't feel, and never have felt, as close to Yeltsin.

Q: Were you getting from the administration of the Catholic church, and the Holy See, any concerns about the grass roots priests who had risen up in some of the communist countries, particularly Czechoslovakia?

MELADY: First of all, we knew that happened, and you had the famous case of now Cardinal Korec, a Slovak. So we were interested in getting what information they had. But when it came to church matters, I followed the guidelines very strictly. I separated between the state, the government. So the question of these priests who were married, was a church matter. I stayed out of all church matters.

Q: The problem, particularly in Latin America, of liberation theology? We saw this as being somewhat of a revolution, almost Marxist type of theology coming out of parts of the Catholic Church in Latin America.

MELADY: Well, giving you a quick summary. The political implications would have been appropriate for the ambassador to get into. The theological thing of doctrine would not be appropriate. That was the position I held. So I would report on the political aspect, but during my four years I followed a very strict policy of avoiding religious and church activity. Liberation theology, which was of great concern--perhaps in the time of President Reagan, and Nicaragua, etc., and that whole business of my two predecessors than it was with me, although I did have instructions in regard how to react to it, I separated the part that would affect us politically from the strictly religious.

Q: But in a way it was very political.

MELADY: Oh, yes.

Q: Was it much of an issue when you were there?

MELADY: It was not a major issue.

Q: By that time it had lost whatever...

MELADY: Oh, yes. The whole Nicaragua thing had been...

Q: For one thing Latin America had turned much more democratic than before. How did you find American Catholics? One of the big problems we have if you're the ambassador to Israel, and I'm sure you probably had an awful lot of people who come for religious purposes, its the social side you've got to tend to it but it sort of gets in the way of the practical diplomatic...

MELADY: People don't quite understand that I was the ambassador to the government. We rendered various courtesies. For example, the weekly audience of the Pope. We arranged tickets for prominent Americans, but always just Americans, not just Catholics.

I made that a very important point with the staff who'd try to get first row knowing when the Pope came down the steps he would visit personally. I had people of all denominations in that first row. He also had a very select number, about 30 people could attend his private mass in the morning, and I would try to get people into that. But, for example, I made a point to distinguish, I thought it was important because of our constitution, in what was accepted as the basis for opening the embassy in the Senate hearings of 1984. For example, the canonization of a saint, and other religious ceremonies, we regarded them as affairs of state, not religious. Being Catholic personally, I benefited from attending. But it would be like our ambassador in Norway, who was a friend of mine, evidently there would be the birthday, I've forgotten whether it was of the King, would be at the Lutheran church. And she attended an affair of state.

Q: I have to say I was Consul General in Naples, I'm a non-practicing Protestant, but I could recite the Catholic mass in Italian after a while. I went to everything.

MELADY: Like when I was first got out of school I served in Ethiopia and our ambassador would go to the various things in the Ethiopian orthodox church, when the Emperor was present. So we would distinguish. But not, of course, everybody could see that fine line. I can remember, for example, a very definite prohibited area to stay out of, anything dealing with appointments of the Pope with Bishops. I can recall one day my secretary said, "There's a Mr. & Mrs. So-and-so who just came in from the airport and must see you immediately." So I said, "Of course, bring them in." And they sat down and I called for some coffee, and they were people you might say, as they say in French, of a certain age, a couple. And he said, "We have a very important document here for you." And he pulled it out. "The Pope is going to make an awful mistake if you don't get this to him." And I said, "What's that?" "We have inside information that the Pope is about to name Monsignor so-and-so as a bishop and we've got this..."
---end Tape 2, side A
---begin Tape 2, side B

MELADY: I remember I said to the lovely lady, "I have to stop the conversation here as I cannot get involved in this. I am the ambassador of the government of the United States to the government of the Holy See. I have nothing to do with the religious activities, appointment of priests, bishops, etc." And she started to cry. You know, a person who didn't have an understanding of the hearings. I said, "I think there are channels for you, but it's not the U.S. government channel. If you were still in the States you should have gone to the nuncio." I said, "Here there is the office of the Congregation of Bishops if you wish to go there." And I tried to explain the whole thing, but they never really quite understood. We did have one famous recorded attempt to influence an appointment. It was at the time of the Special Envoy. President Roosevelt instructed Myron Taylor to take up with Pius XII the fact that he felt that his good friend, the Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, Bishop Shiels, should be named the next...there was a vacancy here in Washington, the Archbishop of Washington. So the records are there following some business that Myron Taylor had with Pius XII. He said, "Oh, by the way, I have a message for you from President Roosevelt. President Roosevelt wants you to know the high regard

that the American people have for Bishop Shiels, and that he would make an excellent Archbishop of Washington." The record says that the Pope smiled, and brought up something else. And Bishop Shiels remained the Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago. That was a definitely prohibited area. Some felt that maybe I was a little too strict on it. I am for better or worse, a known Catholic layman. I felt I had to be quite correct on the matter, and I also believed in it. I never officially called upon five or six high ranking people in the curia of the Vatican because they handled strictly religious matters. I dealt with the Secretary of State and the several subordinates. I dealt with the head of the educational office. I dealt with the foreign aid office, the office concerned with assistance to refugees, and other matters. But I did not deal officially as the ambassador of the United States of America with those offices charged with strictly religious activities.

Q: Did you find that you were rubbing up against or involved with the...what is it, the American House? There's an essentially an American desk at the Holy See.

MELADY: Oh, yes. The North American Affairs. Monsignor Harvey, James Harvey, a native of Chicago. The Vatican, by the way, our people in our Foreign Service only have about a tour of duty of three years. The Vatican is not forever, but you definitely stay on for about seven years to eight years and have a different approach to it. Maybe even as long as ten. Jim is still there. I just talked to him a few weeks ago. And as the North American desk officer he has therefore been the officer for the United States and Canada. Oh, I wouldn't see a lot of him on U.S. policy and the usual exchange diplomatically of government policy. I had a lot of business. For example, a very important assignment given to me was Israel, to encourage the Holy See to establish diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. The instructions were secret at the time. They were later declassified. But the most amazing thing is, we kept it secret. When Archbishop O'Connor came over to Rome I briefed him, got him sympathetic to the matter. He played a leading role in influencing the Pope, helped me carry out my instructions. I also dealt with Jewish leaders, particularly the American-Jewish Committee whereby Rabbi Rudin, and Rabbi Leon Klenicki of ADL. I went off on a surreptitious trip, approved by the State Department, to State of Israel, to meet the heads of the small Catholic minority groups, to find out the problems. I played something of a role and I was very pleased when it happened. It happened not while I was there but we were on "third base" when I departed Rome in March, 1993. The Commission on Vatican-Israeli Relations in 1992 was established. The final establishment of Vatican-Israeli relations happened in December of '93.

Q: What was the problem between relations?

MELADY: Well, that's a long thing. The sovereignty of that area; remember it had passed from various hands. A long period was the Ottoman empire. And the Vatican had various concessions with the Ottoman empire, this little piece of land was tax free, etc. The Vatican wanted to make sure that all those rights were accepted by the government of the State of Israel. They were also concerned about full freedoms in Israel for everyone including the Christian Arabs, and their right to participate in the government, and have

equal rights. They were concerned about the state of war that existed at that time. In fact I don't think it would have happened if President Bush, and Jim Baker, hadn't engineered the Madrid conference. Everything began to move rapidly after that. First of all I recall, I was called to the Vatican and given a message to President Bush congratulating him on the Madrid conference from the Pope.
Q: You might explain what the Madrid conference was.

MELADY: On the Middle East.

Q: You were getting the Palestinians and Israelis together for the first time to discuss things.

MELADY: It was a major accomplishment. The Holy See was very happy about it. Soon after that the Holy See announced in Israel the appointment of a commission to study the matter of diplomacy. We thought the commission was moving rather slowly. It was very legalistic, this point, that point. Our position was, which we expressed to the Vatican officials, and which Mr. Baker did, and actually the President on his visit, that, "Why don't you proceed ahead quickly and resolve these things later?" The Vatican wanted to resolve the issues as quickly as possible, but the movement went very quickly. And in December of '93, five or six months after I completed my mission, the New York Times phoned me. It was about November of '93 that the State Department responded affirmatively to my request that my instructions be declassified, or at least that part of the instruction that I received from Secretary Baker, so I could have it in my book. I recall I spent that period in Lithuania between mid-December and mid-January advising the universities there in restructuring, and the New York Times tracked me down to my hotel. And I was very happy because the data had been declassified. I could talk about the whole role that I played, and the government played. It was Holy See decision. But you might say it probably was an unusual fact that an ambassador of a third country received instructions from his government to urge the government to which he was accredited to diplomatically recognize another government. It was unusual.

Q: What was our rationale?

MELADY: That it would help the peace process in the Middle East. There would be a step forward, that it would increase the influence of the Holy See. I personally, as an individual, was very happy to carry out the instructions, which I would have carried out anyway because it was my duty, but personally because I felt it helped to correct a misperception that somehow the reason that the Holy See was anti-Semitism--that there was an anti-Semitism. I feel there wasn't. But this clearly was a perception in various circles, including Jewish circles, that I had been long active with the Jewish groups in my work as a trustee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. So some of my friends, would frankly just tell me that they felt there was a lingering.

Q: There were still some things...I'm using the wrong term, but within the documentation, or whatever, of the Catholic church about the Jews being responsible for the death of Christ. Wasn't there something...

MELADY: Yes. One great result of Vatican Council Two, and something I participated in and played a very minor role in at their meetings, was to eliminate those references. You might say that the Jews killed Christ, that was exactly the...

Q: We're of an age where Irish boys chasing after Jewish boys and yell "Christ killers." That still permeated the church up through our youth.

MELADY: I can say now that in my personal talks, I'm thinking I made an official call on the Secretary of State of the Holy See, and transmit a message on this matter, and then at the end of the conversation I'd say, "Personally"...and I had gotten to know the people there quite well..."I really think it should happen." I said, "I know its not true, that it was not deliberate anti-Semitism, but that was the public perception." It's now past history but it was a step forward in better dialogue, etc.

Q: Back to something else and then we'll go to the Gulf war. On the social side, you say you'd arrange for prominent Americans. Whose a prominent American? This must have been a can of worms for you.

MELADY: Well, that was a judgment call. I say the judgment call, obviously if it were a U.S. senator, or former mayor, or people who had titles regardless of religious background, there was not a problem. And there's a lot of competition for that first row. And some people would sort of understand, and would request "tickets," and they wouldn't even ask for the front row because they sort of knew that. These are just judgment calls you have to make. And I'd say it's remarkable that in my four years there, probably just one exception from the standpoint of "getting good seats," that I avoided negative reactions. The one thing I felt important, and told my staff, that if Reverend Smith walks in, who happens to be of the Baptist church in Texas, he's just as important as a Monsignor from New York. We stood straight and leaned backwards on treating all Americans the same regardless of religious affiliation. I had a theme that I represented all Americans regardless of religion. And in the review of my book, I thought it interesting that Rabbi Jim Rudin, of the American Jews Committee, in his review it was his observation that I managed to carry out that goal.

Q: Did you get a lot of congressional mail and that sort of thing?

MELADY: Not so much, but congressional visitors. But not so much in regard to mail. It's a very popular place, former members of the senate, present members of the senate, and former and present members of the cabinet. We had former presidents, both President Ford--didn't have Nixon, he was planning to come in '90 and '91 after Moscow but got sick in Moscow and phoned me and didn't come down. But I had President Ford, who made a private visit to the Pope, and President Reagan. President Reagan after his last

visit to Moscow had a long visit with the Pope, and the Pope also received Mrs. Reagan in for the whole business meeting which was unusual.

Q: The Gulf war. We're talking about events of '90 where Iraq seized Kuwait in a surprise invasion. George Bush led the opposition to this and eventually we led an Allied invasion which took back Kuwait.

MELADY: The Gulf war, there were three phases to it. The invasion, August 1990. You might say there was a total convergence between the Holy See and the United States. It was a unilateral invasion, it was the wrong thing, it was condemned. About two or three months after that various information came out about the occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces. It was bad. The Holy See condemned it, we condemned it. The convergence came to an end in or about October of '90 when we began talking about military action. And particularly when we introduced a resolution in the Security Council of the United Nations. And then I was called in by the Pope, and while acknowledging that it was wrong, and Iraq should leave, he urged the U.S. to avoid the use of war. I remember his famous words: "War is a road of no return." So therefore, it was the first area of disagreement in our policies while I was the Ambassador. I remember I was back on consultations. I informed the Department of State on the Pope's opposition to the use of war. His whole life when he fought the Nazis, then the communists, his whole campaign in Eastern Europe, strategy, etc., but war should be avoided. In November I was back and I informed the President personally in the Oval Office that we weren't going to get Papal approval of the use of war to solve the Kuwait problem. Some in the Department thought we should be critical of the Pope. Some thought that I should be under instructions to request the Pope not to voice the opposition publicly. I was back in Washington and I knew this was happening. So I took advantage of a personal connection, and got to see the President. I remember when I heard on one day, thanks to his staff, I got in the next morning in the Oval Office bright and early, 7:15 or 7:20 after his briefing with the security people. I said, "I know we would like to have the Pope agree that it is a `just war'. And there are six criteria for a just war. The sixth one, I said, he doesn't accept proportionality. You have to do what's in proportion. He thinks we should prolong the embargo, strategy, etc. The President more or less told me there was no change in plan, that we were going to proceed with whatever we were going to do. And I said, "There's no point in my being given instructions to ask him not to speak." First of all he had already spoken, while in an indirect kind of way. Because I said, "We have to respect him, because of his unique role, if he gives in to our pressure he loses his position of influence. If it became know that he gave into American pressure, and didn't speak, he loses the independent moral voice which is intrinsic to his sovereignty and respect." I have great admiration for President Bush. He understood that. I was never given those instructions to, "Ask him to keep his mouth shut."

We can sit here and have a big long debate what would happened if the thing had gone on for six months or a year. It only lasted a few weeks, and the military operation came to an end, and then we had the Madrid conference. But there were several subsequent developments. The Pope always said we were wrong, but never held it against the U.S. I

mean he smiled a lot and went on to other things. It never became personal. In the months preceding the Gulf War and during the war I never had a difficult personal experience with Vatican personnel.

Q: What was your impression of the Pope as a leader in foreign affairs? We're talking about John Paul II, Polish origin, the first one who is not Italian.

MELADY: Let me give you my impression. As a man, this will very much be in my new book, he is the product of his culture. So what was his culture? It was Catholic and Polish. I'm not quite sure what was the predominant element, but let us say he was strongly Catholic in a middle class family by our standards now. I've been to the little town where he was born. I've talked to the people. At an early age he went into the seminary which was traditional then, less traditional now. From the people who knew him then, sort of unique for a seminarian, in addition to being good in Greek and Latin, all those kinds of things, his interest in the theater, he was also writing poetry. He was ordained, and he lived through the whole Nazi occupation of Poland. There's a lot of written record because he was really chaplain to the students at the university in Krakow in southern Poland, which is the historic cultural capital of Poland. His advice to the Polish students was to stay together, help one and another, remain faithful to your beliefs, but don't do anything to risk war. Then came the communist takeover, and he systematically rose quickly to Monsignor, Auxiliary Bishop, and Archbishop of Krakow, a position of strength. He was the architect of a strategy against the communist leadership. He was always pushing for the rights of the church. He took some time off to go down to Rome and do his doctorate, went back, was active in Vatican Council Two.

Q: Under Pope John XXIII.

MELADY: Yes, and Paul VI, who made him a Cardinal. It was the time also he came to the attention of people from the standpoint of his philosophy. He was regarded as a strong person, articulate. That is combined with a very avuncular kind of personal personality. He was the friendly uncle. He set high standards, but he was always understanding. He was exceptionally good in languages. I'd say at this moment in the church, I think Time magazine made the right decision, it was my decision, Man of the Year. Strong and articulate for what he represents. He takes on what could be unpopular causes like the Cairo conference. He has played a major role in world affairs.

Q: You're talking about the Cairo conference which was on population.

MELADY: That's right. After my tour of duty.

Q: He was opposed to...

MELADY: What was the key element of the U.S. proposal that abortion be recognized as a legitimate form of family planning throughout the world. He essentially side-tracked it. I'm not going into the merits of that, but he played a leading role. I'd say a significant role.

But using his tenure so far in the papacy, as a person to deal with, you know you were dealing with a man of history, the moment you sat down with him. He knows strategy. He speaks with a commitment. It is awesome. I got that evaluation from most of my colleagues--my European colleagues and ambassadors. He has a phenomenal memory. He remembers me personally. I hear from him, and of course, I was the ambassador of the United States, you might say it was a major country in that four year period.

In summary, I'd say he's a significant world leader, and has been an excellent leader for the Catholic Church.

Q: Do you have time for one more question"

MELADY: Yes.

Q: This is one that has bothered me. And that is, I'm a Balkan hand, I served five years in Yugoslavia, and I know that I served there during the '60s, and I know that in the Serbian world the Catholic church...and we're not talking about the communist, we're talking about the normal Serb, has a very deep concern and distrust of the Catholic church. Not just because of being Serbian, but because of the role that the Catholic hierarchy played during World War II, of forced conversions, slaughter, and this sort of thing, and that the Catholic church did not play an ameliorating role in this, but actually was in the forefront, the local priests. When Yugoslavia was coming apart, the first two states you might say to try to recognize Croatia, the Catholic one, with Germany and the Pope. You couldn't have asked for a worse combination. As a Serbian hand myself, I knew what this did. This aroused every animosity that you can think of. And here is the Pope who is a Slav. Why couldn't he have kept quiet on this one?

MELADY: What the Holy See advocated has turned out to be quite right. We wanted to keep Yugoslavia together. Those were my instructions. Keep it together. The house that held together was held by the communist hard fist of Tito. You had the whole phenomenon that little Liechtenstein could be independent. Luxembourg could be independent, the Baltic states, but why not the Slovenians? Why not the Croatians? After 1989 it became apparent that the Croatians really wished to have their own nation-state. I mean, I've been there, their own culture, their own country. And we said yes to 40 countries in Africa, to Benin, ex-Equatorial Guinea of Spain. We said yes to them all. We didn't say they had to remain part of the colonial power. Every public opinion pool in Croatia, and Slovenia said they wanted independence. So therefore, by the time I arrived in Rome, the Vatican was saying that the solution was to grant what these people want. My instructions were quite clear, "keep Yugoslavia together." And so I followed my instructions in '89 and '90. Right now the Serb record has not been very pretty, they're charged by the United Nations with atrocities.

Q: To understand, 50 years before the Croatian record was less than pretty too.

MELADY: And I can understand the reason for those tensions, and this is hindsight, but here is tragedy going on, would it have been a little different? If Europe had accepted either in late '89, or early '90--I've forgotten the exact month, the position of the Holy See was, recognize what the people want. Croatia, independent. Slovenia, independence. I don't think they had made a pronouncement on Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Q: Bosnia-Herzegovina was sort of off to one side at that point.

MELADY: It had to be worked out. Serbian, Montenegro, etc. We had a lot of supporters of Yugoslavia, and you can see why, because it was a great success story in the 1950's and we pulled Tito out of the communist empire, we put a lot of money into Yugoslavia. I thought it was interesting that most of the officers of the Yugoslav army were Serbians. The whole "greater Serbian" philosophy. So it's hindsight. I'm not saying it would have been any better. But it would not have been worse than the current tragedy.

Q: Which the Serbs resolved at this point.

MELADY: With the Serbs still fighting it in Bosnia-Herzegovina, even going over to Croatia. Would it have been a less of a traumatic event if we had gone the route of '89 by saying, we'll accept these boundaries of Slovenia, Croatia, Herzegovina had to be worked out, Montenegro agreed to stick with Serbia, that was now Yugoslavia. I think probably there's fault on both sides. Certainly the way we went. My instructions were changed in about '91, and we're accepting that reality; Slovenia and Croatia would be independent.

Q: My only concern on this thing was, the Pope and the Catholic church because of its not so benign role in the 1940-'45 period in Yugoslavia, that it would have been best for them to have let other countries take the lead, but to have the Holy See and Germany, the two parties that were seen by the Serbs as being unfriendly powers certainly going back to early things. I mean France, England, United States, anybody but not those two. Anyway, I was just surprised.

How do you want to work this? Is there anything more that we should discuss.

MELADY: You're going to do a quick transcript?

Q: It will be a transcript. Quick is not a word we use for our process.

End of interview