

Interview with Paul D. McCusker

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

PAUL D. MCCUSKER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is October 14, 1991. This is an interview with Paul D. McCusker. This interview is being done on behalf of The Association for Diplomatic Studies. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

I might add that Paul has done some interviews for our program too, so we're colleagues on this. Paul, could you give me a bit about your background? Where did you come from?

MCCUSKER: I'd be glad to, Stu. I'm happy to have the opportunity to participate in the program as a subject, rather than as a medium. I was born on the Canadian border, but I was born on the American side. My father, who died before I was a year old, had come from Canada; he and my mother met in Niagara Falls, New York, were married, had three children, I was the third obviously. I grew up with one foot sort of in each of the two countries, and I suppose to some extent I was international from birth on; helped by the fact, too—I remember, talking about consular activities—Niagara Falls, Canada, was a consular post for the United States for many years. And my mother, who was a legal secretary—after my father died she had to go to work immediately- -and in the course of her work she had come to meet the U.S. Consul for the Niagara Falls-Ontario district, and she pointed him out to me. He was a very distinguished looking fellow, somewhat like you,

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bearded and tall and imposing. And I thought, "Gee, there's a man I'd like to be someday." That's just a very incidental family sidelight.

I went to a Jesuit College, got out in 1943—the Jesuit College being Holy Cross, which by the way was Clarence Thomas' college many years after me. I graduated in 1943 with my Bachelor's, a major in economics, and promptly went into the Army where I was assigned, after basic training, to the Army Specialized Training Program which was designed for two reasons: a) to keep the universities going because the military was paying the universities for each student in uniform; and the other reason was—it's kind of blunt to say it—but that was the reason behind putting males in training programs whether they had degrees or not. I was one of those that already had my degree. The other reason was to skim off and try to keep from the trenches those with a quite high AGCT, as we used to call it, intelligence tests, scores. Well, it worked in my case.

I was sent to Stanford University from basic infantry training. At the beginning of it, they screened us all individually through civilian educators. They were teaching at that moment at Stanford four languages for Army people. They were teaching Russian, Chinese, for some reason Dutch—I never understood why they were teaching Dutch—and the fourth language was Italian. So during my interview with the three distinguished pedagogues they looked at my record and they found six years of Latin, three years of Greek, three years of French, and two years of German. And one of them said to me—this of course was long before Sputnik—"Young man you're already overeducated in languages." So, on the basis of the Latin, Greek and French background they put me into the Italian course which was fine. I became fluent in Italian in six months, thanks to an excellent teacher I had, with whom I'm still in touch and who married a Foreign Service Officer thereafter—Lucia Wolff, Hugh Wolff's wife.

Of course, as happens with the Army, after the program broke up I never went to Italy, so I never had a chance to use my Italian abroad. I came back from a year and a half in India, was discharged, honorably I'm happy to say. And the first thing I did was to apply

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to take the Foreign Service examinations, the written exams. I started also at the same time at Cornell Law School, which is what my alternative thinking at that time was, Foreign Service or law. As a matter of fact in September of 1946, I started in law school, and within about two weeks after the beginning I had to go from Ithaca down to New York to take the Foreign Service exams, which I did, subsequently learning that I had passed the written exams. By January or so when I was invited to go to Washington for the orals I had received the results of my first term's work in law school. So I wrote a letter to the Board of Examiners turning down the invitation to take the oral examinations in Washington because I felt I was going to finish law school, become a lawyer, and make a lot of money. I think I said something to that effect in the letter which obviously has disappeared from the archives. So I did finish law school, and by that time I was already married to a Denver girl who had already been in Europe, had fluent Spanish from a year and a half or so in Mexico. So, not having been to Italy myself, I decided I'd apply for a Fulbright Fellowship to go to Rome in the field of comparative law. I had gotten interested in comparative law in my last year of law school. I had an excellent professor, Rudolf Schlesinger. I helped him produce his first case book on comparative law. Well, with that background I got a Fulbright grant and went off to Italy just after I completed law school, took my New York State bar examinations, passed them, and was admitted to practice in late 1949.

I was one of the first group of Fulbright students to go to Italy, and my institution was the University of Rome where there was a very, very, I'd say incipient program in comparative law studies. But actually what I did was, I dealt in a number of aspects of Italian law in comparison with American law on the subject. During that year on Fulbright, our embassy in Rome—a famous name in the legal office anyway, Office of Legal Affairs, Lionel Summers whose father had been a consul in Moscow if you will recall the history. A job for an American lawyer speaking Italian, and knowing something about Italian law was open in the office handling claims against the Italian government under the Treaty of Peace. So I was offered a job as a legal officer in the Claims Program. For security reasons, I couldn't be recruited abroad, or appointed abroad. So we took our return trip on the

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S.S. Saturnia, of the old Italian Line, back to the States in 1950, after a very pleasant year on the Fulbright program. Joan went on to Denver, I went to Washington, took my oath in Washington, and was duly appointed. But nobody told me that I was entitled to a travel order, and I had been used on the Fulbright program to travel everywhere in third class. So I bought a cheap charter flight out of Montreal to Paris, bought a car in Paris—a little Renault—and drove down to Rome in a horrendous—there was a terrible fog, it was night, I was driving along the coast road past Genoa, and suddenly this brand new car had no more brakes. It was a terrifying night, however, I managed to survive but we'll never try that again. I was so keen to report to work on the first of October 1950 at the embassy.

Well, I did. I spent a year in Lionel Summers' office doing the work on claims against Italy. Then we had the court, the International Tribunal, which had been set up under the Treaty of Peace, involving an Italian member, and an American member. The American member was a Democratic politician from Kansas City, Missouri, who had lost an election and got the appointment to Rome for which he was totally unprepared professionally, or any other way. He was the U.S. member on the Italian-U.S. Conciliation Commission. And I went to work for him. It wasn't a transfer because it was obviously the same embassy. So I stayed on for a total of five years in the embassy working on this claims program, and getting exposed to a lot of areas in which I did research in public international law. I think probably the most outstanding, most important work I did was, on the question of claims of dual nationals which are espoused by the government of one of those two nationalities, against the government of the other nationality, and how do you resolve this conflict of nationalities. For that case, because both the U.S. and the Italians could not reconcile or compromise a position, or find a compromise, we had to have a third member. The same member took my draft and practically translated it into his language, Spanish, and it came out as sort of leading case in the law of dual nationality claims of dual nationals, which was applied in the recent Iranian claims situation. That is the theory of dominant, or effective nationality, the nationality with which you are most closely connected. And that is

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a question of fact. So the U.S. lost the case, but we established a decision which has been used down through the years adopting the theory of dominant nationality.

I could probably have stayed on in Rome for some more time but I thought, here I am, by this time I had come into the career Foreign Service through the lateral entry process. I should add though, after I was in Rome at the embassy, I did take the Foreign Service examinations again, and again I passed them, but it would have been ridiculous to go back to the entry level when I was by this time in the Foreign Service staff corps. I was already, I think, FSO...I can't remember, whatever the numbers were at that time, FSO-5, I think, level. So I waited for the lateral entry program.

Q: Before we leave the Rome thing, could you describe a little bit—we had three major figures in the foreign affairs establishment as ambassadors there. First was James Dunn, who represented the old Foreign Service...

MCCUSKER: Celluloid collars, and all that.

Q: ...you know, a top ranking person. Then we had from outside, but a man who had a very distinguished career, although technically not a career ambassador, Ellsworth Bunker, whom I served with in Vietnam. And then Clare Boothe Luce who was really considered a major figure both because she was an early major political figure, and a woman, and also married to the head of Time-Life Magazine. So this made a very powerful combination for her. So she was extremely powerful there. Could you describe, from your vantage point, how these people were viewed within the embassy, and how they operated?

MCCUSKER: I'd be happy to, Stu. Let's start with Dunn who was ambassador when I arrived and started work. Dunn, as you point out, is an old-line traditional...I call him the celluloid collar type ambassador. Aloof, at least from those who were at that time third

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secretaries, or attaches at the embassy. His wife was, as you may recall, Mary Armour, extremely wealthy...

Q: From the Chicago Armours.

MCCUSKER: That's right. So he had no concerns about living within his Foreign Service salary. An impressive couple. He was highly successful and went on to greater things, actually, from Rome, if there is anything greater than being ambassador to Rome.

Ellsworth Bunker came and it was just unfortunate that the administration changed after he had only had the job for eleven months and he had to go away, submit his resignation. Ellsworth Bunker, as you certainly would agree having served with him, was a very kindly gentleman, and had time for everybody, very democratic and just a delight to see and be with. Now my work was very independent of any of the usual embassy functions, doing international legal work. So I didn't have any work relationship directly with him, but certainly around the embassy he treated everybody well, fairly, and everybody loved him.

But there it was, he had to go, and in came Clare, arriving on an Italian ship, by the way, when all the rest of us, of course, had to travel by some U.S. carrier, cleverly enough, because she was not welcomed in the initial days in Rome, the Italians being very full of machismo, felt it was an insult to them to have a woman as an ambassador. Well, she quickly disproved any ideas the Italians, or for that matter, her co-workers had that she was just another pretty face, which she certainly was—a very pretty woman, very charming woman actually. And she showed that she was made of flint, if not stainless steel.

Her ability to argue logically was phenomenal. I've never seen such a steeltrap mind that she had. And with her I was a little bit closer because I had been working on...I should have mentioned that I probably was more fluent in Italian than any Italian member of the staff because during my years I had acquired a degree in Italian law at the University of Rome. Since I had registered at the University when I was a Fulbright student, I had overcome the main problem of getting a university degree, which is fighting the

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administration at universities. And since I had to work full time and I didn't have to go to classes, I read the books and took my examinations, wrote my dissertation on a comparative law subject, and acquired an Italian law degree. That gave me a kind of leg up in the embassy and I was put on assisting with some of the status of forces military agreements between the US and Italy. Tony Freeman was there at that time, and heading it up.

Well, I thought Clare Boothe Luce was great, and you know the famous story about the arsenic in the coffee, was absolutely true. I knew very well her then staff assistant, Jack Shea, who subsequently moved from State to another agency, through the Luce connection with Allen Dulles. When the story began to break about the fact that she was suffering literally from arsenic poisoning, she looked awful, I must say, and was away from the office quite a bit. Well, the story was true. There was arsenic in the lead in the paint in her boudoir, and flakes dropped into her coffee cup, and she drank the coffee. Jack told me one time that she used to complain about the taste of the coffee, and she said, "This tastes like poison." Actually, it was. And he sent away to Sears for a new coffee maker for her and that didn't help the situation, because she would, like the Marschallin in the opera *Der Rosenkavalier*, kind of hold her levee in the morning, and sip coffee in her bed, really. And Jack would go there early in the morning—not too early—bring her the overnight collection of cables, and messages, etc. And she'd come into the embassy quite late as a result, but having drunk a lot of coffee, I guess, with arsenic of lead in it.

She was brilliant, and made a tremendous impression on anybody she met. So I was sorry to leave during her regime, and she was very kind to me in a number of ways.

Then I went to Washington...

Q: How did you find that sort of representing American interest to the Italian system, and subsequently as Consul General in Naples. The bureaucracy is quite something in Italy.

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How did you find the American system impacted with the Italian system? How did they deal with each other on issues that you had to deal with?

MCCUSKER: The issues I had to deal with were unusual because our little office, under the claims provisions of the Treaty of Peace, collecting money from the Italian government to pay claims of our citizens who suffered damages as the result of the war, was the only program in the entire American government relationship with Italy where we were trying to get money out of the Italians, rather than to give it to them. And there was an awful lot of money changing hands, overtly and covertly, in Italy at that time through those years. Now since we were trying to get money out of the Italians, and the Italians were nowhere near as well off as they are today, they dug in their heels and fought us every inch of the way by fair and foul means. I'm not going to identify any foul means, but they took legal positions which were untenable in my view, and obfuscated issues to the point that they were defeating our efforts to collect money under the Treaty of Peace. So we had probably the toughest time in this claims work in trying to get money from the Italians. They didn't say they were not going to pay; they just dragged their feet.

Q: It's no secret, today anyway, particularly in the election before you arrived in '48, which was considered a critical election, that major amounts of money were given to the Christian Democratic Party by us, covertly—not terribly covertly—but also were doing that. There must have been times at the embassy when, say the political people, would come around to you and say, “What the hell are you doing trying to get money? We're trying to give these people...cut it out. You're just screwing up the matter.”

MCCUSKER: Nobody ever said that to me. But perhaps I should have indicated earlier, during the Dunn/Bunker period the head of the claims program—the American side of the Conciliation Commission—was a man who devoted very little time to the job at hand. Mostly he was interested in his investments in the United States. He was getting the Value Line, and spending most of his day looking at the Value Line materials. I mean, that's a serious criticism, well deserved in my opinion. He was replaced when Eisenhower came in

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by a serious, hard working, Italian- American, who also had been a defeated Republican candidate for Congress from New Jersey. This fellow had a totally different view of his job. And obviously nobody had given the previous man any instructions from Washington saying, don't push the Italians too hard on these claims, because we had an obligation to our citizens, and a legal obligation to proceed, which was not pushed by the earlier administration's nominee. But it was by the new man who came under the Republican administration, and we accomplished a great deal more after he arrived because he pushed the Italians. He didn't hesitate.

Now there's an interesting conflict as you with your experience in Italy will realize. This is an Italian-American from New Jersey, a son of immigrants from southern Italy.

Q: Remember the Sons of Italy.

MCCUSKER: Well, I don't know. He wasn't a member of the Ancient Hibernians, that's for sure, which the previous man could have been. He was looked upon by the Italians, the educated Italians, as a product of peasants, and they were very nice to him on the surface. But they considered him an oaf, in their terms.

Q: This for the record often happens, particularly in Italy, and maybe some other countries, because so many of the people who left Italy and settled in the United States came both from peasant families, and often from the Mezzogiorno, the southern part and any good Roman of any background, or pseudo background, is immediately qualified to look down upon these people. And when they come back they are not greeted as long lost brothers, but as...

MCCUSKER: ...rather resented.

Q: ...and sort of rustic, country cousins of obviously lower background and to be disdained.

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MCCUSKER: Yes, not obtrusively but in any case they are considered to be “caffoni”, as the Italians called them. Well, nonetheless, he was successful in pushing for it, and there was absolutely no indication that anybody had told him, or his predecessors, to go slowly and not push the Italians too much. There was, of course, some difference between the Conciliation Commission work which I was doing, and the work that Lionel Summers headed up in the embassy. He was the agent for the United States in processing the claims. There was a claims programs set up which finally wound up with a kind of lump sum settlement at the end. I wasn't there but other people carried on. Carlos Warner, for example, was part of our team. I don't know if you know the name but Carlos was a marvelous, great, old-line Foreign Service officer who hated the fact that they had discovered that he was a lawyer, and put into this claims program.

At any rate, should I go on with the next move?

Q: Yes.

MCCUSKER: Let me point out that when I went to Washington it was my first Washington assignment, of course.

Q: *This was 1955.*

MCCUSKER: That's correct. I was assigned to the Office of Special Consular Services partly because of my legal background. I was in Consular Services dealing with very interesting questions at that time of property rights of Americans in Eastern Europe, and Central Europe, where the communists had taken over. So if they hadn't lost their property to the Nazis, they had lost it to the communists—that is, inherited property. Absolutely fascinating questions of that type, and I also got into the delicate political issue of people dying in the United States, and leaving, either by will or intestate, their estates—sometimes of substantial size—to people in Eastern Europe. There was a Treasury ruling about the transfer of federal benefits to people in the Iron Curtain countries...

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Q: ...because things have changed so much in the last year, the Iron Curtain refers to at that time Eastern Europe, really would be what was then East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia...

MCCUSKER: ...Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and to a certain extent even Yugoslavia despite the fact that Tito had split with Stalin. In any case, it was a matter of protection of American property and interests abroad that I was dealing with in the first couple of years I was in Washington, very interesting work.

Q: How were some of these cases resolved? Did we tell our consuls in the field to go out and see if they were really getting the use of it, or did we come to sort of broad decisions for each country?

MCCUSKER: As far as the Treasury was concerned, the transfer of federal funds, Social Security or Veteran's benefits, or whatever, to people in Eastern Europe was totally blocked. It couldn't be used by the Communist regimes. So the money accumulated presumably as long as those people continued to reside there, and I suppose ultimately was paid over to the one whose situation was clarified with respect to anyone of the countries that we're talking about. With regard, of course, to the private property, there was no way that the federal government—that we could make any decisions which would affect transfers of private property through the states, because that was all covered by the law of the then 48 individual states. But in responding to lawyers' questions, or sometimes from courts, we would respond that the federal government believed that these people would not get the full value of whatever dollars were transferred to them because of confiscatory taxes.

Q: ...arbitrary exchange rates.

MCCUSKER: ...exchange rates, exactly, and that sort of thing. So many times the courts of particular states would adopt the same kind of rule with regard to the transfer of private

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estate monies. It was really one of the more interesting sidelights of the Cold War, and of course, gradually as relations improved with some of the countries like...well, for a while, Romania, when those European countries in what we used to call the Soviet Bloc who were going with the Chinese version of the international communist movement, and we were encouraging them to split up the monolithic nature of the communist movement. Then we would relax the restrictions on transfer of the funds abroad. But that was very slow, and gradually through the years the policies were changed.

I'm trying to remember the other things. Oh, I got to be kind of...I was backstopping the field on notarial services because of my legal background, and I got to be fairly...that's why I'm anxious to read your book because we used to get some very interesting questions at headquarters in Washington from the field either in advance of some notarial services that they had wanted to render—or were asked to render—or after the fact and we would point out the errors of their ways occasionally in the consular activity. It's a function of consular services that is very little studied or understood. As I say, I became kind of interested to the point that after I left the Department and went off to Hamburg, Germany—I had known a number of lawyers in Legal Affairs, Warde Cameron being among them—and Warde put me on the U.S. delegation to the 1963 Consular Relations Conference in Vienna to adopt a multilateral convention, which was in fact adopted.

Q: This is the Vienna Convention.

MCCUSKER: That's right, the second Vienna Convention. The first one in '61 dealt with diplomatic functions, and immunities, etc., and the second one in '63 dealt with the consular functions, and immunities, and privileges. So I was on the delegation for that having been picked out of the field, so to speak in Hamburg, and sent down to Vienna for my first exposure to...well, not my first exposure, but first official mission to a UN meeting, which I enjoyed very much.

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Q: We'll pick that up chronologically. Could you explain...I'd like to cover the full aspect of foreign affairs as we do these interviews, what some of the problems were with notariats? As an old consular officer, I know some of the uses notariats are put to abroad that would be almost undreamed of here in the United States. I wonder if you could explain this?

MCCUSKER: Well, first of all, the fact that we have consular officers performing notarial services in foreign countries is already pretty shocking when you stop to think of it because, by what authority do American officers do this? Well, there is of course, legislative authority in the United States, and there must be for services to our nationals or for our nationals. That's what consular officers are there for. I don't recall that there was any service that the consular officer performs as a notarial function that was not performed by notaries public in the United States. Of course, the problem is that notaries in Europe, as you know, are very important people. They are all people with a law degree, and a license to practice as a notary. They perform a lot of functions like drafting wills which is done only by attorneys in the United States. So people in Europe, for example, looked upon the consular officer when performing a notarial function as a very important person. Actually the same kind of work as a drug store clerk, or a gas station attendant, or a bank clerk, would be performing in the United States, taking an affidavit, or taking an acknowledgment of a document, which in the United States is a very mundane function from which, of course, nobody could possibly make a living. That's why it's done by people the way it is. Of course, almost all the lawyers that I know have a notarial seal, and perform in their offices, all kinds of notarial functions.

I think the big thing about the consular officer performing notarial functions was that it was vital to accomplish certain legal acts in the United States. Because often people were abroad who had to, say, give a waiver, an agreement, for example, to probate a will where there was a relative or somebody in the United States, particularly in an emigrant country like Italy where there were still a lot of family relationships. There were times I've seen where a consular officer would not perform a notarial function for somebody on the

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grounds that it looked suspicious to him, or her. That would be difficult to defend legally because the consular officer, as a notarial officer, is really performing a ministerial function and therefore there isn't any discretion. You don't have discretion to refuse it under the laws governing notaries. Even if you know what the person is stating in the affidavit, for example, you personally know to be a lie, you have no responsibility...you have no right, really to refuse to take that person's affidavit.

Q: Speaking as an old consular officer, we refused a lot of them because the problem would be that often the person taking the notary, using the transposition of the power of a notary in a foreign country, would make a statement which would be a lie which would be used in the country. They would show the notary seal showing the endorsement of the United States for it, and you could explain until you're blue in the face that, no, we don't do it that way, and they'd just say, "We have your seal on this." So here was a conflict between two laws, and sometimes as a good consular officer you did a lot of things without going back to you, back in Washington, and telling you what you did. And probably the cause of justice was well served by not asking questions.

MCCUSKER: ...by not asking headquarters for an opinion, because you probably would have been turned down. That's true, and you're quite right that an exaggerated weight was given to the old-timer who used to put the eyelets and the ribbon and the seal and so forth. Well, that's all changed now. You don't see that anymore. You're lucky if you can even read the rubber stamp that's put where the consular officer signs. So I don't think it has...it may still in some jurisdictions abroad, have a kind of probative value that the United States government is asserting the veracity of the contents of whatever the applicant is saying.

Q: I must say also that we sometimes give, just for the record, a non-document on which you would put a big seal on, and all this, this is to certify that, "I'm unable to certify this document," which you would give to somebody if they wanted to get something, you knew the cause was just, you'd give them a piece of paper to wave in front of the person.

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MCCUSKER: Well, of course, there was also the problem...a large area which I don't want to get into, it's too technical, but of international judicial assistance. Actually, legislation and treaties now cover the subject pretty well, and it's a lot easier now to do things than it was before. But you get into the whole question of letters rogatory, and judicial commissions to take testimony, and whether the consular officer is authorized to do that, and so forth.

Q: Well now, Paul, you were in Washington for about five...

MCCUSKER: No, less actually. About three and a half years.

Q: Did you serve elsewhere in the Bureau of Consular Affairs?

MCCUSKER: Oh, yes. I graduated from the Office of Special Consular Affairs up to the bureau level where I had a title something like Legislative Liaison Officer, or something. I got involved in the drafting of...well, first of all analysis of the Supreme Court's decision which said that the Department of State did not have the authority to revoke, or withdraw, passports from American citizens who had them, or much less to refuse a passport to an American citizen, regardless whether he or she was a member of the communist party and traveling on communist party business. Which John Foster Dulles, when the Supreme Court handed down the decision, couldn't believe that the Supreme Court would be so insensitive to the security interests of the United States in his view, although he was an eminent Wall Street lawyer. He felt that the Supreme Court was wrong in its decision. On the other hand, there is nothing you can do after you go through the Supreme Court, and what we were doing was, in fact, unconstitutional because we had no legislative authority. So I worked quite hard on preparation of legislation, draft legislation, which was sent up by a special message from Eisenhower to the Hill, and was assigned properly to the Judiciary Committee, not to the Foreign Affairs Committee, and it died in the Judiciary Committee. Now subsequently, there was some legislation adopted, many years after that. It was not a popular thing on the Hill, I remember that.

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So that sort of culminated my Washington career. I remember the farewell luncheon when I was leaving for my next assignment abroad, a very witty guy in my office in the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, prepared a little going away present which was "A Leather Medal with a Wooden String." This was a medal for not having achieved the passport legislation that the Department of State wanted very badly. So I got a medal for that.

Q: Was Frances Knight, in the passport office?

MCCUSKER: Oh, indeed she was.

Q: I wonder if you could talk a little about the relationship, which was really a very interesting one between Frances Knight, who was head of the Passport Office and was almost...it was really her little duchessdom.

MCCUSKER: Queendom, we could call it.

Q: How you saw this, and the relationship there with the rest of the State Department?

MCCUSKER: Well, it was amusing and amazing. I moved out of the Office of Special Consular Services to the Bureau level. First, I had John Hanes as the Administrator as they called him of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, and then Roderic O'Connor. The next level up was the famous Loy Henderson. Now "Francey", as my buddies there used to refer to her, Frances Knight, was a problem for any administration. As her predecessor, I don't know if you remember Ruth Shipley, who ran things with a very, very iron fist, and Frances Knight, I guess, got her briefing from Shipley. I don't make light of Frances Knight's intelligence. She was very clever. And, of course, being in a position to do favors for congressmen gave her a lot of pull within the Department because they knew if they did anything to try to curb her...what should I say, hegemony, they were going to run into trouble on the Hill.

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Q: I might explain that doing a favor usually meant that she ran an extremely efficient passport service. So if a congressman wanted to get an emergency passport issued to a constituent for a perfectly valid reason, she could really produce it which had not been the case under Shipley.

MCCUSKER: That's correct. Shipley was not indebted particularly to congressmen, but Frances Knight made a great effort. In fact, you know there was a move at one point to split the passport office off, and make it kind of a separate agency, and she, of course, would have been the head of it. Well, fortunately I think, that was knocked down by...I think it had to go to the Secretary at that time. Anyway, she was a cause of considerable concern as far as obeying, shall we say, instructions from above. John Hanes gave up, and Rod O'Connor couldn't do much with her. She'd come to the staff meetings, I must say mostly, and of course we had a lot of business because for exactly the kind of thing I'm talking about, we were proposing legislation to authorize the Department to refuse passports to communist party members, or even crypto-communists, etc. So we had a lot to do with her. I worked closely with her underlings on the legal side in the passport office.

Q: She had several lawyers who were extremely devoted to her.

MCCUSKER: Well, if you worked for Frances Knight, you were automatically devoted or you didn't work for her. Yes, she demanded loyalty, and we had great difficulties in convincing her underlings to change their mind, or change her mind for that matter. I think my greatest memory about the conflict between the administration in the Department, and Frances Knight, was the kind of resignation with which Loy Henderson in a personal one-on-one conversation one time said, "I literally do not know what to do with that woman." It wasn't because she was a woman, by the way.

Q: One of the great conflicts of government bureaucracy was between Frances Knight and Barbara Watson, the head of Consular Affairs. At a certain point they weren't even talking

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to each other although technically Frances Knight was subordinate to Barbara Watson. It wasn't just a male-female thing.

MCCUSKER: No, not at all. I had left before Barbara Watson came in. But she was a problem for everybody.

Q: The one other thing that was happening during this time, and also when you were in Rome, I wonder if you can talk about it? Particularly being on the legal side. This was a period in the early '50s particularly of McCarthyism, and the developments of accusations of disloyalty. From your vantage point, how did you see this business?

MCCUSKER: Well, of course, the general reaction to the McCarthyism era within the Department was strong. But I happened to be working in this Bureau which combined consular affairs and this new animal of security. The Deputy Administrator of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, was a former FBI man in my time, and the relationships between the FBI and the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs are extremely close. My own impressions were that a lot of the security office's work was based on extremely flimsy evidence, if any, based on what I would consider as a lawyer, extremely untrustworthy evidence. I can't tell you how impossible it was to find any cases where American citizens had somewhat damaged the interests of the United States abroad, which would have justified...made our case with Congress for some kind of passport security legislation. There just weren't any.

Q: I'm sure you looked very closely.

MCCUSKER: We were under the gun to find cases. You can't manufacture them obviously, but you could find cases where people...well, there were a number of cases which I don't remember, of individuals making speeches in a foreign country.

Q: Paul Robeson was a major case.

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MCCUSKER: That's right. William Worthy was a big case on the journalistic side. There's no way, in our system, you could prevent people from traveling, or take away a passport on any constitutional ground.

Q: And then freedom on speech, particularly the journalists. This is open speech, this was not espionage or something.

MCCUSKER: It wasn't even inciting...well, of course, desperately we looked for cases of couriers for the communist international, and all that, but we couldn't find any. We kept failing to come up with cases. I think to some extent I feel kind of good about that period in my life when I really had to say, "We don't have any good cases to bring up." No, there was an overbearing attitude that I found atrocious in the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, on the part of the security people. By that I don't mean...the head of security at the time I was in the Bureau of Security, was Tom Bailey, who subsequently was my boss as Consul General in Hamburg. He was Consul General and I was his deputy, the next senior Foreign Service officer. Bailey was an old-line Foreign Service officer, I would say New England granite. He came from New Jersey, actually, but kind of a New England conservative type. He'd do what he was told, but he also had a sense of fairness about him which made him a good choice for heading, at that time, the security office. His predecessor had been a guy...well, actually a predecessor of the Bureau before John Hanes, was Scott McLeod, whose name will go down in the annals of those of extreme McCarthyism. It was a difficult period in the Department for those who felt that we were finding communists under the rug. But I don't say there weren't people who were extreme leftists, but communist party members, I never found one, although I was looking hard.

We would get names which came to the passport office, and passport often referred cases to us because of the security part's liaison with the Bureau—the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I fortunately didn't have an awful lot to do in the security side, except to try to get the legislation through.

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Q: Then you did go to Hamburg?

MCCUSKER: Yes, I did.

Q: You served 1959 to 1963. What were you doing there? And could you describe a little about the operation of the Consulate General.

MCCUSKER: A large Consulate General authorized to issue immigrant visas at that time, and an important listening post because it was the closest to the East German border of any of our consular offices. We had all the usual consular functions there plus one political officer, and a large office called the Office of the Political Coordinator, or some nonsense like that, which everybody, the local staff—I didn't know it, I didn't realize the extent of that office—but it was the Central Intelligence Agency's contingent. These days you can talk about it. We didn't know what they were doing. The guy who was Consul General when I first arrived was a man named Ed Maney who had been in the visa office for years, a very nice gentleman. He retired from there, as Tom Bailey later did. Hamburg is a delightful city which very few Americans know much about because none of the tourists go through there, businessmen occasionally. I started as head of the consular section, which as I say, had all the usual functions, and then I moved to be head of the economic section, which was actually economic-commercial, and I finished up there. But I spent a lot of time...since Tom Bailey was away from post a good deal for either health reasons or being called back to serve on a selection panel, or whatever...being in charge of the Consulate General for extended periods which gave me an overall view of the functions of a consulate, with the exception, of course, of the secret functions, which were not really under State control.

Well, of course, these were years of intense intelligence activity. One of the most significant things, and I don't want to spend too much time on Hamburg. I loved the place. Probably the most significant thing that happened while I was there, and it happened also at a time when I was in charge of the post, was the first post-war visit of a U.S. naval...NATO unit to the port of Hamburg. It was a most successful visit. It was not simply

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a courtesy visit because it lasted for ten long days. Well, it was absolutely amazing because there wasn't one single adverse incident involving...we had 4,000 sailors, and something like 400 officers. There was an aircraft carrier called the Essex, since decommissioned, or at least laid up, which was headed by an admiral whose name was George Koch, and George Koch was one of the most deft public relations experts I ever met. He was himself an interesting fellow. Among other things he was a good cook, which made the name Koch (pronounced "cook") particularly appropriate. He got along fine with the Germans. But the whole idea of the American Navy coming into this ex-enemy's major port, under the NATO shield, was very touching, and particularly with the labor unions. North Germany in general, Hamburg in particular, was a socialist city. There was, of course, a good deal of opposition from the socialists to the whole idea of a NATO force. So it was daring politically, but it was a huge success on the personal level.

We had the People-to-People program operating...we put up a separate switchboard to handle the flood of calls and offered anybody who wanted to take in an American sailor for a few days and the number of calls we got from women saying, "six feet, blue eyes, blonde hair," they'd like to welcome. We came out very well and it was a huge public relations success. I can tell you exactly when it was because our first son was born in Hamburg, and we came close to considering calling him Essex, based on the fact that the Essex was in port when he was born. So it was an exciting time for us personally, and we didn't call him Essex. We called him Alexander instead. It was actually '62, he was born in January — had just been born when the fleet came in, my wife was in the hospital most of the time that the fleet was there.

It served a good purpose as far as indicating that the socialist opposition in North Germany to the NATO treaty was not so ferocious as it could have been. Not so effective anyway. Of course, the CDU (Christian Democratic Party) had at that time an absolute majority and it worked out. By the way, the other I think great thing that happened to me was meeting Helmut Schmidt...well he was already a Bundestag member from the Socialist Party in Hamburg, and he loved Hamburg. He hated being in Bonn, as a matter of fact, away from

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his wife. He was a very brilliant man, and I was glad to see that he had such a long regime as the “Bundeskanzler”.

Hamburg was a great place. We had all kinds of...Willy Brandt would come and give speeches. The ambassador came up for the visit of the Essex. The ambassador, who was Walter Dowling at the time, and he went aboard the Essex. They had gotten together a kind of a Marine band, which played some music. He went down to congratulate the officer who was in charge of the band, and all the Marines were standing at attention, and the Marine officer in charge of the band had his sword at the tip of his nose holding it stiffly in his right hand, and Ambassador Dowling, in one of the major faux pas I've seen in the Foreign Service, stuck out his hand to shake hands with the officer. And here, of course, is the officer standing there...I tell you the officer didn't blink an eye. And I must say my admiration of the Marines went up considerably. He took his left hand, grabbed the blade of the sword, took the sword out of his right hand and returned the Ambassador's proffered hand. The ambassador didn't really realize how he was putting this guy in a very tough spot. That was an incident I'll long remember.

Other than that I'd say I had a nice time, particularly representing because you could do that all day long. If it was the 50th anniversary of the establishment of a firm, for example, they would start serving the “Sekt”, the German form of champagne, at 11:30 or so in the morning. The amount of alcohol that got consumed...

Q: ...for your country.

MCCUSKER: During the Hamburg period, it was in 1963, that the consular relations convention conference in Vienna came up.

Q: Could you talk a little about this, because this became sort of the model convention.

MCCUSKER: That's correct.

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Q: ...for consular operations. What were the issues that we were particularly interested in, and how did we do in getting, or not getting, what we were interested in from your viewpoint.

MCCUSKER: The fact is that after we had gone to great lengths to try to whittle away at things we considered adverse to our interests, the Soviets were pushing very hard, and some of the other countries as well—outside the bloc—were pushing very hard to expand the immunities and privileges of consular officers until there was almost no difference in immunity between a consular and a diplomatic officer. And the U.S., of course, was adamantly opposed to that line on the grounds that all the Soviets wanted to do was make it easier for them to send in KGB people with diplomatic immunity assigned to consular offices. Well, we did preserve...we were successful there in preserving the traditional difference in the immunities between consular officers and diplomatic agents.

Q: Just to get an idea...I mean overriding on that was really we were thinking about the security aspects of using consular officers as spies.

MCCUSKER: That's correct. Of course, we with the number of consular offices of other nations in the United States, particularly in New York. I might point out that Hamburg, by the way, was the second largest consular office city in the world, headed only by New York. Actually, Hamburg being a city state too, was almost like a diplomatic post. They would have a New Year's reception of all the consular officers by the Burgermeister.

But to get back to the consular convention. Within a very short time after the convention was concluded and signed, not yet ratified by many states—least of all by the United States, although we did eventually. The Soviets insisted on having a bilateral consular convention, and we were happy with that too because we wanted to nail them down on the right of access to arrested Americans in the Soviet Union. It would have turned out to be in effect, was a model, the convention, because many, many countries have their own bilateral consular conventions.

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I teach a course, and I have been teaching for the last nineteen years now, a course in Public International Law. And, of course, I tend to spend time on the Consular Convention because I was involved in the negotiations. It was an exciting experience. My first time in being in an UN sponsored multilateral convention conference, and I tell you I was most impressed by the UN. I suppose that might have encouraged me to think of the UN as a second career, which I eventually got into.

The details, I don't really think there's much point in going into. The overall was our concern for Soviet penetrations into everybody's areas—jurisdictions. And we weren't trying to defend that. We did lose a big battle on some aspect—I've forgotten—to the Scandinavians—more the fishing countries, northern European countries. I can't remember what it was. We lost that battle. But generally speaking we came out pretty much with what we could accept. We didn't have any major disasters. And, as I say, we did preserve the concept of the difference in the immunities between consular officers and diplomatic agents.

Q: The comfortable existence in Germany and Vienna as far as—I mean this is not a confrontational place. The Gods of assignments came around and determined you go elsewhere. Could you explain how this assignment came about, what you were doing, and the situation?

MCCUSKER: As I mentioned to you, in Hamburg I had been originally chief of the consular section, and now I was chief of the economic section. Little did I know in my ignorance of administrative matters that the title of that particular post was Commercial Officer, although chief of the economic section. And my name flashed suddenly up on a board in the Department of Commerce. Now the Department of Commerce, and the Department of State for that matter, was having a tough time finding a replacement to go to Jakarta to replace a man who had been there as commercial attach for seven years.

Q: Seven long hard years.

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MCCUSKER: Well, he didn't think they were hard at all. As a matter of fact he was happy to stay on. I think he'd gotten tired, worn out, plus the fact, of course, that our relations with Indonesia had changed considerably following the British Embassy—but Sukarno was president then, president for life, and he was beginning his attacks on British policies and those he considered their minions, the Malaysians. It began just a few months before I got to Jakarta.

To go on, I've never really been terribly clever at moving the administrators of the machinery in my favor. So I wound up in Hamburg getting instructions to report to Jakarta by way of Washington, of course. First of all, I knew about commercial attaches in general, as we had one in Rome. I had only a general idea what they did, but I had to take a training course before I went off. Actually it was very interesting because we left Hamburg in November, went direct to Washington, and right after I arrived in Washington for consultations in this course I was to take, President Kennedy was assassinated. Now Kennedy was extremely popular in Germany, all over, and Hamburg was sort of representative. They changed the name of a very important bridge over the Alster Lake in the center of Hamburg to the Kennedy Brucke, from whatever it had been before. I had dozens of letters, and communications, expressing to me their sorrow over the loss of President Kennedy—very touching, really.

So I get prepared to go from my northern European climate to the equator. I was terrified because during World War II I had been in northeastern India in Assam which was frightfully hot. Actually it turned out to be hot, of course, in Jakarta but not anywhere near as horrendous as the climate in northeastern India. I don't think I was particularly happy to go as a commercial attach in view of the fall-off in trade between the two countries.

The function of commercial attach, which I went out for, however, was melded into counselor for economic affairs after about a year that I had been there. The then counselor for economic affairs left Jakarta, and so I was given the job of counselor for economic affairs, and commercial attach kind of disappeared because there really wasn't much going

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on. We weren't out there selling things. We American officials never have been really out there selling things very hard, leading to one of our major problems now, the trade deficit. I was there from '64 to '69. When I got there the ambassador was Howard Jones, a marvelous man.

Q: I've heard him described as saint-like.

MCCUSKER: Yes, well he was. He was a practicing Christian Scientist, as was his wife. I don't know whether his Christian Science philosophy, religion, what have you, but both he and his wife were what I would call optimists. He was an optimist with respect to Indonesian politics, and he could not believe that this guy Sukarno was leading the Indonesians down the path to communism. He knew, of course, the strength...it was the largest communist party outside of China. It wasn't yet in power but the way things were going when I got there in '64 it was very clear that unless there was a radical change it would become a communist government. They were talking at that time, already in '64, about a third force—the workers, the peasants, and then a paramilitary force representing both workers and peasants, a dangerous innovation in the communist march to power. Anyhow, there was a clear split between the Ambassador and the political section about what was going to happen. This has been documented elsewhere, so I won't go into it.

Q: Just to give a little feel, you arrived obviously no expert on the area, coming from Hamburg, and all of a sudden you're in this. Was it the embassy versus the ambassador in a way? I'm not talking about enemies in a confrontational sense. Were there neutrals on this? What was the atmosphere in the embassy?

MCCUSKER: It took me a while to find out that there was any difference in the view, until I got to know the political people. I had a fairly large section of my own. When I first arrived, of course, somebody else was the counselor for economic affairs. Well, my function was commercial attach, I had to be in touch not only with local businessmen, but with American business people in the area. And, of course, we had major petroleum interests in

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Indonesia. I mean in fact as it turned out these were terribly important politically— Caltex and Stanvac, which was the only remaining vestige of the old Mobil-Esso combination which had been broken up all over the world by the virtue of a Supreme Court decision. But in Indonesia there remained, 50% Mobil and 50% Esso, a company called Stanvac. But apart from the oil companies, and an occasional American businessman, there wasn't much commercial work. We were writing economic reports in great depth about the state of the economy, which was miserable, because, of course, Sukarno had no concept of what he was doing to the country by the enormous spending on prestige projects. Now, of course, there was always the income from the oil, but that income from the oil rarely got into the control...in fact, never did get into the control of the Central Bank until after Sukarno was out of power. It's a very long and complex story, of course, but it was a vital period in Indonesian history.

Anyhow, the spirit within the embassy: considerable feeling that, backed by the Department, Jones was too weak with the Indonesians. I mean we had all kinds of problems, and Jones felt, I think quite incorrectly, that he had an inside track with Sukarno. First of all, Jones was the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, a fact of which he was quite proud and played heavily on to keep him in this job as ambassador to Indonesia. He had been there for seven years, like my predecessor as commercial attach who had also been there seven years. He'd gone out there as head of AID—or whatever they were calling the aid program then—and then became the ambassador. He would go and see Sukarno early in the morning at the palace, unaccompanied, and come back to a staff meeting and report how rosy things were looking—he had had a long talk with Sukarno, and so forth. It colored his reporting back, I believe, in the sense that he felt Sukarno was not going to do anything drastic to the United States, and that the country was not going to go communist. I'll never forget one day, when Jones told me and another colleague, just the three of us at lunch, that Subandrio, who as far as I'm concerned was an out and out communist, then the Foreign Minister, couldn't be a real Communist because he had a son studying in the U.S.

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Q: He was Foreign Minister.

MCCUSKER: That's correct, Dr. Subandrio was the Foreign Minister. He could not possibly turn the country into a communist country because he had a son studying in the United States. I mean, that was sort of Jones' ace in the hole, that it couldn't happen. Well, it almost did. And, of course, it did not happen, but not for any reason that Jones had come up with because he left by the time of the abortive communist-led coup.

Q: Before he left, obviously Jones was out of sync with, you might say, our policy.

MCCUSKER: No, he was backed heavily by Harriman.

Q: I was going to say, where was his power coming from?

MCCUSKER: Oh, his power was Averell Harriman, and, of course, they had known each other since the time when Harriman was governor of the State of New York—and Jones had some kind of a public finance position in the government of the State of New York. He would rely heavily on Harriman to back him up, which Harriman did for a long time, urging patience with the Indonesians despite all the insults we were getting by that time. I tell you, the only time I ever saw Howard Jones angry was the day that the students—so-called students, but most of them were perennial students and provocateurs for the communist party—who came, as they often did, to demonstrate at the residence. Mrs. Jones was there at the time, invited them to come up on the veranda of the residence to have a coca cola—coca cola was served. And the students got into a discussion with the ambassador and Mrs. Jones, and one of the students—I use the word “students” loosely—called Mrs. Jones a liar. Jones had all kinds of forgiving spirit, but he could not forgive anybody who would call his wife a liar. And he came back to the embassy that afternoon, and he was just furious. I think maybe that was the beginning of his willingness to leave, because he was already getting signals that maybe his time was up, and he had been trying desperately to hold on.

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Q: Did you have any feeling where you were in the reporting on the economy, that the ambassador was asking you to hold back, or do anything?

MCCUSKER: No, no. You see, when Sukarno started the campaign against the United States interests almost to the point of nationalization of American enterprises, we were not only reporting that, but I can't tell you how many formal protests I wrote to the Foreign Ministry on stiff paper complaining about the measures that were being taken against our companies, trade representations, etc. No, but I remember one incident which was very typical of Jones' attitude. We were at the palace together one day—I've forgotten why I was there. I think it had something to do with a contract that an American company was getting Sukarno to sign. But Sukarno had just received, not one, but two new Cadillac cars which he had on the palace grounds. And he invited the ambassador to take a ride with him around the grounds in a Cadillac, which they did. The ambassador and I went back to the embassy together, and he said in the car going back, "Write up a short cable reporting that despite all of the anti-Americanism afoot in Indonesia sponsored by Sukarno through various means, that President Sukarno has just purchased two Cadillac vehicles." I thought that was kind of a dumb comparison of things, and I didn't make the comparison. I simply reported that, as some measure of sales of American products in Indonesia, "The President just bought two new Cadillacs." Of course, he had a Mercedes, and all kinds of vehicles coming out of his ears. Well, that was Jones, report the good side. I don't say he didn't report the bad side, but more objective reporting was done actually by the political section.

Q: And they were telling it like it was.

MCCUSKER: Yes, if not by despatches which Jones would not have signed, at least in official-informals, I think they were called. It was clear that there was a conflict of views between Jones and the Political Section, especially Bob Martens.

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Q: We have interviews with Marshall Green, but I wonder if you could describe a little about how the arrival of Marshall Green and events as you saw it?

MCCUSKER: Yes. Let me put it this way. Jones left, I believe it was May of 1965. Now Green could have gotten there by let's say, June. However, if he had gotten there by June, he would have been there for the Fourth of July, and Frank Galbraith was the DCM—Deputy Chief of Mission—at that time. Frank was an old Indonesian hand. He had started out learning Indonesian way back in the '50s, and had first served, as a matter of fact, in the Consulate at Medan. I would say Frank spoke better Indonesian than almost anybody in the embassy staff. Well, Green postponed his arrival, to Frank Galbraith's dismay because Frank didn't want to give the Fourth of July party, but he had to. Green arrived then sometime later in July and, of course, his first exposure to Sukarno was the dirty trick that Sukarno played on him at the credentials ceremony. It's normal for the Foreign Ministry to give you the text of the remarks that the Chief of State is going to make. We got it three minutes before the ceremony was scheduled, and that was done on purpose because the remarks turned out to be a diatribe against U.S. policy, and imperialism, and neo-colonialism, what have you. Green has already publicly reported on this, most recently in his book that just came out.

Q: Which in part the oral history we did with him helped inspire the book.

MCCUSKER: He had to be there and present the credentials, which he did, and he made a bland response. He did not turn on his heel and walk out of the palace, but he was very shaken—Green was shaken by the experience. His instructions when he came out, and he was frank to tell us in the embassy that these were his instructions, were to be cool, but civil, to Sukarno. And he was. Fortunately it wasn't more than—well, the first of October, they call it the 30th of September, it happened during the night between the 30th of September and the first of October, when the Gestapo, as it became to be called, which is a very neat Indonesian acronym. There's no question that Sukarno was out of sync with his country—the top level of his country—not only the army which was staunchly anti-

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communist, but also the civilians who were thinking about the future of Indonesia. He had lost touch with sensible people, really. Green treated him with civility but a noticeable lack of warmth.

Q: Because the Indonesian thing has been documented so much, I'd like to get you to talk about...you went to the United Nations where you worked for some time.

MCCUSKER: Yes, I was thirteen years with the UN. I left the Service in 1969, and I went to Washington—in sort of exit procedures. Oh, yes, I did make a tour of a number of American cities on my return from Jakarta in March of 1969, because a great many commercial interests in the United States were interested in what was happening, and what had happened in Indonesia, and through the Department of Commerce they set up a whole schedule for me. I arrived in Los Angeles, as I recall, working my way eastward, and there was a message from some fellow in the Department of State that I had never heard of, and an office that I had never heard of. It was the recruitment part of the Office of International Organizations—the Bureau of International Organizations. He said he would like to see me when I got to Washington because there was a post at the Secretariat in the United Nations which he thought I would be ideal for. So I took down his name but I wasn't the slightest bit interested because my objective at that point was finally to get into the legal business, and find an international law firm, or a multinational corporation that could use my background in languages and experience in the Foreign Service.

I completed my tour, got to Washington and finally got around to calling on this fellow in recruitment for International Organizations—recruitment of Americans. He talked to me, and tried to talk me into going to the UN. I said, “Look, I just arrived back and I don't see a great advantage of moving from one bureaucracy to another bureaucracy. He said, “Okay, but let's keep in touch. Don't close your mind to the idea.” I kept going from Washington to New York to be interviewed by law firms, and multinational corporations. And one day I had an interview in the morning and I did not have anything for the afternoon, so I had the name of a person in the U.S. Mission to the UN whom I was supposed to contact at

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whatever time I was ready to go and see some people in the UN. So I called this lady, and she promptly made an appointment for me with the Secretariat for the afternoon, met me and took me over, and walked me through the Secretariat's revolving doors. And I felt very much at home. I was taken up to meet two gentlemen who were...well, I could sum it up for you. We talked for two and a half hours. Now it's rare that any kind of an employment interview lasts that long. Aside from indicating that these two guys must not have had anything very urgent to do. But that wasn't the point. They were interesting.

What happened was, we talked about everything under the sun except—I think we devoted roughly 30 seconds to the nature of the job that I was going to be called upon to do, if I was interested. Well, these two fellows were absolutely fascinating to me. Not just because one was a Frenchman who had served with the British during World War II—a very interesting man. We had Italy in common because he owned a piece of property down near the Mediterranean. Both of these gentlemen, well, one less than the other, spoke Italian among several other languages. The other guy became a very close friend, and in fact became my first supervisor in the UN. Anyway, they never tried to get...they were just talking to me, and we had a lot of exchanges. I'd just come, of course, from Jakarta and the major fact about Indonesia was not simply the political problems, and the reversal of their political direction vis-a-vis the United States, but it was a developing country. And here I was the counselor for economic affairs, the first developing country in which I had served. I used to think Italy was kind of—in the south maybe—a developing country but nobody has ever classified Italy as a developing country. Indonesia was, and the job at the UN was to be recruitment of technical assistance, experts to be sent out to developing countries—recruitment from North America. It's a function which has long since disappeared from the United Nations Secretariat because it was very odd for the United Nations to have inside the Secretariat, paid out of the budgeted funds, an office specifically devoted to recruit North American, mainly U.S. and a few Canadians, experts. So eventually that went down the drain for political reasons. Well, anyway, after listening to these two guys, and feeling the atmosphere in there because you can't be in a place that's

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more international than the Secretariat of the United Nations, I felt very much at home, and as I say, with these two guys I used all of my languages. The only one I didn't use was the Indonesian that I had acquired. I was mightily impressed, and I never regretted that I accepted the offer of the post in the UN Secretariat.

Q: We're running into a time limitation—so let me ask you the question, during the period you were there from 1969...

MCCUSKER: '69 until '82, and the only reason I left in '82 was because I had reached the age of 60 in '81. I had a six month extension which was the most that they could grant at that time, but it was mandatory retirement for age because the UN still has mandatory retirement at age 60.

Q: How did you feel about the Soviet influence there? Because this seems to be still a major thing at that time?

MCCUSKER: Well, I remember one of the rare occasions that the U.S. Mission to the United Nations invited any American staff in the Secretariat for any social event at all. Now since we were the biggest contributors, we had the biggest number of posts to our credit under the quota system for what we called geographic posts— professional posts subject to geographic distribution and many Americans in staff support jobs. So there were a lot of Americans and the Mission obviously thought, we can't possibly entertain the Americans at the Secretariat. But once in a while they would invite a few Americans. The point of the story is, I went to one U.S. reception. John Tower, when he was a Senator, was there, and we got talking about the relationships in the Secretariat between the Soviets and the rest of the world, and he said, "It's really just a double standard, isn't it?" in favor of the Soviets. And I said, "Yes, clearly its not in favor of the U.S.A." Out of the thirteen years I was with the UN I spent three years in Vienna with one of the, at that time, parts of the UN called the UN Industrial Development Organization—not a happy experience. I mean Vienna was marvelous. Both my wife and I speak German and it was very easy adapting,

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but professionally it was a disaster for me. So I wangled a transfer back to New York and spent the remainder of my time, mostly in personnel administration and in recruitment. Now I knew long before that there were certain procedures which the Soviets never had to follow. For example, we checked the references, the degrees, claimed by everybody, particularly for professional posts, well, actually for any post, by going to the source. That is, to the people and to the universities that were supposed to have granted the degrees because they have to verify it. The Soviets never permitted the United Nations to go to any office in the Soviet Union, much less any university, and ask for confirmation of what was claimed on the application form. They insisted that the UN accept their statement that everything had been checked. We knew for a fact that wasn't the case, but that's all we had to go on.

Q: Was this just a complete nest bed of KGB agents, or was it a mixed bag?

MCCUSKER: It was a mixed bag. Of course, everybody reported to the Soviet mission, particularly on Fridays. They had the meeting Friday afternoon—and I'm talking everybody. Here we're only talking about professionals because the Soviets had no staff support employees in the organization. Everybody, non-Soviets, assumed that every Soviet employee, whether Belorussian, Ukrainian, or Russian, was in fact a KGB agent. There was no question that they had absolute obedience to the Soviet Union and to the mission because, of course, they were all Soviet bureaucrats one way or another. To my knowledge I got very heavily involved in personnel affairs and there was only one, for almost all those years that I was there, one single Soviet national who was a career UN staff member. I ran into him in Vienna, a marvelous guy. He was in the language services area. He spoke all of the UN languages, I think, except Chinese. He would drive his Jaguar in the Soviet Union, on home leave. I don't know where he retired but I doubt very much if he retired in the Soviet Union, probably in Switzerland. Now he, as far as I know, was not KGB, but he had some kind of magic that let him be a career man. All the

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other Soviets went home after two, three, or five years in the Secretariat. That has just been changed.

Q: Did this impede, or do you just sort of go around it, or say, what the hell, we've got nothing to hide?

MCCUSKER: Well, every office, including the office I worked in, had to have its allotment of Soviet professional staff members. The simple fact is that the organization didn't expect much from them, and didn't get much. There were those who couldn't possibly be KGB agents, at least in my judgment, because they were too stupid, and didn't produce anything. They'd sit there all day diddling, or reading Pravda, or whatever they did. There were others who were very good, and very impressive in their work, and could also have been KGB agents. You got to the point, I'm not going to worry about this. The FBI has got to be able to control this.

Q: Are they producing something? How about some of the Third World Countries? Was there a real problem in the bureaucracy there of people coming to represent a quota who weren't able to keep up with the Work?

MCCUSKER: That's part of it, yes. But I must say, I have great admiration for the UN system in the screening process. We did get some hacks. Often enough at the very senior level because there was some foreign minister from a country whose regime had changed; the guy is out of a job but wields some power.

Q: That's not unknown in the United States.

MCCUSKER: That's right. In this case, of course, it was international, and wound up with some Under Secretaries General who I thought were not up to par. But in general the quality of the professional staff members, even apart from the language staff which is beautifully managed, was very high. And my experience at the UN was that, while it's not like the Foreign Service in the sense that there was a competitive entry exam for all levels

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—actually that's not true in our Foreign Service—it's the entry level that's competitive. Now the UN has nothing but entry by competitive examination. So it's improving, I think, the quality of people. On the other hand, there are a lot of political limitations on that.

I must say, one parting shot, in favor of the UN and against the U.S. Having experienced the bureaucracy in the United States Department of State, I got to the United Nations and I found a totally different attitude towards staff members. The UN is pro-employee. There is no question about that.

I'll never forget—one incident I have to tell very quickly, if I can. I checked in at the UN around the first of July—actually it was the 30th of June. And having been used to the travel reimbursement system in the Department of State, I assumed I would have to file a voucher, a claim of my airplane ticket from Denver, and somewhere down around Christmastime I would probably get my check.

Q: That's optimistic.

MCCUSKER: I was told to see an administrative person in my area, and I said, “I think I need to fill out a form.” And this charming young Armenian background lady said to me, “Usually your secretary is supposed to fill out this form,” but she said, “I know your secretary is in France, her father died (my secretary at that time was French, her father had passed away, and she was gone), so she said, “I'll fill it out for you.” And I said, “Roughly how long will this take?” And she looked at me, and she sort of said, “We celebrate here the Fourth of July as a holiday,” even in the United Nations because it's the U.S. national day, “So it probably won't be ready until the 6th of July.” And this was already the third—second or third of July. Now that's the difference, and I was properly impressed, and I continued to be impressed by it. I'm back working now on some legal matters in the personnel area. So I still keep my contacts there, and I've enjoyed it.

Q: Paul, I didn't realize our time was up.

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MCCUSKER: I'm sorry it is.

Q: *Thank you very much. This has been very fine.*

End of interview