J. Wayne Fredericks Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 4/18/1966
Administrative Information

Creator: J. Wayne Fredericks
Interviewer: Joseph E. O'Connor
Date of Interview: April 18, 1966
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 15 pages

Biographical Note
Fredericks, (1917 - 2004), Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, United States Department of State (1961 - 1967), discusses JFK's Africa policy, the U Thant plan to end the Katangan rebellion, and George McGhee's mission to the Congo, among other issues.

Access
Open.

Usage Restrictions
According to the deed of gift signed March 8, 2002, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

Copyright
The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

Transcript of Oral History Interview
These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the Library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

Suggested Citation

J. Wayne Fredericks, recorded interview by Joseph E. O'Connor, April 18, 1966, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (NARA)
JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of
J. WAYNE FREDERICKS

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, J. Wayne Fredericks, of Bronxville, NY, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of a personal interview conducted on April 18, 1966 in Washington, DC, and prepared for deposit in the John F. Kennedy Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcript shall be made available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the John F. Kennedy Library.

(2) The tape recording shall be made available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.

(4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the John F. Kennedy Library.

J. Wayne Fredericks
Donor

Feb 17, 2002
Date

John W. Carlin
Archivist of the United States

3-8-02
Date

J. Wayne Fredericks – JFK #1

Table of Contents

Page	Topic
1	Appointment as deputy secretary of state for African affairs
2, 3	John F. Kennedy's [JFK] Africa policy
2	The Angola vote in 1961
3	Key players in American foreign policy toward Africa
3	JFK and African leaders
5	Change in policy in Guinea
6	Policy toward the Congo and J. Wayne Fredericks's involvement with it
8	Decision to send troops to disarm Katanga
9	The conference at Kitona
10	The U Thant plan to end the Katangan rebellion
13	George McGhee's mission to the Congo

Oral History Interview

with

J. Wayne Fredericks

April 18, 1966
Washington, D.C.

By Joseph E. O'Connor

For the John F. Kennedy Library

O'CONNOR: All right, Mr. Fredericks, how did you happen to be appointed to the post of deputy secretary of state for African affairs?

FREDERICKS: For many years I've been interested in Africa. Although I had worked in the campaign of 1960, immediately after the election I went to Asia with my wife on my semiannual trip for the Ford Foundation. While I was out there a number of friends of mine began to call about joining the administration on African affairs because I'd been interested and involved for about twelve years. And finally in Kuala Lumpur or Singapore I started receiving telephone calls from Neil Staebler, the state Democratic chairman in Michigan and from Governor Williams [G. Mennen Williams]. I was finally asked to return to the U.S. to spend the night of December 23, 1960 at Ann Arbor talking about Africa with Governor Williams, and following that he began to ask me to join him as his deputy. At that time I had no real desire to join the government because of my new interest in Asia, and finally offered to come down for a year on a leave-of-absence basis. Finally Governor Williams asked Chester Bowles [Chester B. Bowles] and then

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
Department of State By Guidelines
By NP NARA, Date 2/06

President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] to call me, and it became quite clear I'd better come to Washington.

O'CONNOR: You hadn't known Governor Williams before that really?

FREDERICKS: I'd known Governor Williams slightly. I had been a resident of Michigan, and I had served on several of Governor Williams's state commissions. But a number of common friends of the governor and myself, principally Neil Staebler who was state Democratic chairman in Michigan and Thomas Farmer [Thomas L. Farmer], a friend of mine here in Washington,

tended to bring us together. But I had known him in the past and had worked with him. While living in New York during 1956-1960 I helped Governor Williams establish some of his study committees during the time he himself had presidential aspirations.

O'CONNOR: Okay, we can move on into the administration itself. It is often said that John F. Kennedy's administration, that his policy toward Africa signified a major change from what American policy had been toward Africa prior to 1961. Do you have any comments on that? Would you agree with it? Could you explain it a little bit?

FREDERICKS: Yes, I think it did represent a change. I think it represented a change in top level personal interest in Africa. I recall having been involved with the Kennedy airlift in 1959 or 1960. Thus President Kennedy came to office with many Africans interested in him because of his interest in Africa. There was also the Kennedy speech on Algeria in 1957 which had excited a great deal of African interest. This speech came at a time when it was unpopular to talk about the Algerian struggle in the terms in which President Kennedy talked about it. I think both of these things then opened up an era in which there was a lot of interest on the part of Africans in this new, young, American president who had already displayed an interest in Africa and in Africans personally.

O'CONNOR: Sometimes people point to the vote in the UN [United Nations] on the question of Angola early in 1961. Were you involved in that vote? Do you know what vote I'm talking about?

FREDERICKS: Yes, indeed I do.

O'CONNOR: Were you involved in that vote at all?

FREDERICKS: Yes.

O'CONNOR: Can you tell me how our position was formulated on that particular vote? It was a change in our policy really, our vote on Angola or the Angolan question at that time.

FREDERICKS: Yes. I think it was in December, 1960 that the U.S. was in the company of three or four colonial powers in voting against a resolution on colonialism. I had the feeling during the early months of the new administration that this vote somehow had to be corrected; that this was not in the American tradition; that it was not the right kind of posture for the U.S. to maintain. So by the time the vote on Angola came along there were a number of people in Washington and in New York who believed that this vote ought to be changed. And I can recall…

[-2-]

O'CONNOR: People like who? I was going to ask you.

FREDERICKS: Well, I was certainly one of those. But as I recall at the time there were people like Ambassador Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson], Jack Bingham [Jonathan Brewster Bingham], Mr. Bowles, Governor Williams and others who believed that the vote on Angola was the same kind of issue, in a sense, upon which the nation had voted in 1960. So out of this group of people, plus a number of others - I can't remember all of them - there developed a view that this vote ought to be changed at the first opportunity.

O'CONNOR: Do you consider then these people essentially responsible for the change in American foreign policy toward Africa at this time?

FREDERICKS: Well, they were part of it. But President Kennedy himself, of course, was the real force in all of this.

O'CONNOR: Did Averell Harriman's [William Averell Harriman] trip to Africa, I guess it was in late 1960, have anything to do with this? What side was he on in this whole business?

FREDERICKS: Well, he was on the same side that I was on in this issue - that is, that the vote on colonialism in 1960 had been a mistake. I think his trip to Africa was an addition to the aura which surrounded President Kennedy and his interest in Africa. I think it was a real benefit, yes.

O'CONNOR: One frequently mentioned change in policy is a change on a personal level, a change in President Kennedy's personal handling of African leaders. You were present at a number of exchanges. Would you discuss this just a little bit? It is often said that President Kennedy was very, very effective, particularly effective in dealing with African leaders as opposed to leaders of other countries.

FREDERICKS: I can't really comment on the degree of his effectiveness with Africans as against others because I didn't see him with leaders of other parts of the world. But I can comment on his effectiveness with Africans, and here I think his effectiveness was very great indeed. First of all, President Kennedy had the facility of listening to people. This is very important with African leaders. Many of them are new, inexperienced. It was very important that their point of view be heard. The point of view of Africa had for so many years been heard only through the European capitals or through other colonial spokesmen.

[-3-]

President Kennedy was prepared to listen. He was also prepared to receive them as equals. I think he gave them the feeling that they were just as important as any other chief of state who came into his office. He was also prepared to talk to them as fellow politicians. After hearing their problems he would say, "Okay, I've listened to your problems. Now let me tell you some of my problems the problems I have with foreign aid, the problems of gaining understanding in the American public." So that the exchanges would frequently move from a discussion of statecraft to politics. And on other fronts the president communicated with the Africans.

I remember in particular after a long discussion between Prime Minister Abubakar Balewa [Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa] of Nigeria and the president that I took Balewa back to Blair House. And Balewa said, "Well, Mr. Fredericks I'm very greatly impressed in your new young president." And I said, "Well, why do you say that, Mr. Prime Minister? What's impressed you about the talk we've just had?" He said, "Well, first of all, he was prepared to spend so much time with me, the prime minister of what must, by his standards, be a relatively unimportant country in the scale of things. And secondly, Mr. Fredericks, he knew so much about Africa."

I think this latter point is important because President Kennedy clearly studied his briefing papers carefully. When he talked to the Africans he talked to them not only about his problems, but in some considerable detail about their problems. He had mastered the briefing papers which he had been sent.

O'CONNOR: Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr] in particular makes a big point of this personal diplomacy of President Kennedy's contact with these leaders, person to person, and speaks as though or writes as though this had a great effect on the policy of those individual countries. Would you agree with that, or do you think this is simply a question of personalities and it really didn't affect the policy very much? The important thing, as I understood it, would be to effect policy from the United States' point of view.

FREDERICKS: I think it's always difficult to determine precisely what things do affect policy. All I can say is that, on this point, perhaps there wasn't enough time for President Kennedy's presidency to determine what the total effect on policy was. But I would say that one of the very important things with the new African countries was to gain their confidence as new leaders and new countries. This

president Kennedy did. And I operate on the assumption that one of the first steps toward policy formulation is gaining the confidence of the people.

[-4-]

Another thing he was able to do was to establish a sense or spirit of communication. I also think that effective, honest communication between leaders is important in the formulation of policy. I think I ought to think about this question before I comment any further about any specific things that might come to mind.

O'CONNOR: I would like to have you comment further if you would, or think about it further if you would. But one comes to mind immediately simply because I read it - the change in policy that was effected by personal contacts between Sekou Toure and not only John F. Kennedy, but Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy], Sargent Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.], Ambassador Attwood [William H. Attwood]. I wondered if you felt that this was actually so, that the change in policy or the change in direction, let's say, of Guinea, was affected by these personal contacts or by other questions, other matters such - as aid or failure of aid on the part of the Soviet Union, for example.

FREDERICKS: I suppose in the case of Guinea it's a product of all of these things. I wouldn't think that any one thing perhaps was the total answer, but I would say that the communication and the comprehension was the first step in the formulation of other acts of policy such as aid. Certainly in the case of Guinea – here you had a leader Sekou Toure who had been severly rebuffed by deGualle [Charles A. de Gaulle]. The French had departed very precipitately and virtually pulled the telephones up by the roots. It was a traumatic experience for both the French and the Guineans, but more so for the Guineans. They had a weak society. They didn't have a great reservoir of money and good will and resources with which to work. So that the attempt to establish some kind of communication with Sekou Toure was exceedingly important because much of Sekou Toure's communication with the western community had broken down, had been virtually destroyed, because it had only existed with Paris in the past, and when that was broken no communication remained with the west. It was only then, in the early months of the Kennedy administration, that determined efforts to reestablish a line of communication with the Guineans were undertaken.

O'CONNOR: In what respect, do you know? What are you talking about when you say determined efforts? Can you be more specific than that at all?

FREDERICKS: Well, I would say that part of that effort started in the bureau. I was personally interested in the case of Guinea. I operated on the assumption that Guinea had arrived where it was, not because of communist influence in the world, but as a result of western influence, in this case

French; and that the experiences of 1958 had left great scars in Guinea; that our inability to respond to Sekou Toure's attempts to communicate with us in 1958, which had been obstructed by the French, had been an important part of Guinea's growing radicalism and estrangement from the West. One of the very first things that I started to work on here was, How could one develop a policy toward Guinea which would develop a better relationship Between that country and ourselves? Bill Attwood who was appointed ambassador to Guinea, shared this philosophy. So Bill Attwood in Conakry, and myself and others here worked on the development of this whole policy: How could we open up new lines of communication and new lines of comprehension between the United States and Guinea? There was of course at this time private interests who had interest in trying to develop the dialogue as well because of Guinea's interest in developing its great bauxite deposits.

O'CONNOR: All right. The problem which grabbed most of the headlines during Kennedy's administration in Africa of course was the Congo. Now there's obviously a change in John Kennedy's African policy. Would you care to comment on whether you feel there was a change in the United States' policy toward the Congo beginning with the Kennedy administration?

FREDERICKS: In most respects I suppose that the policy toward the Congo is one which had been inherited. By that I mean the United States made a decision to back the UN in its efforts to reunify the country. And that policy we pursued. I think perhaps President Kennedy gave the UN more support than had been the case beforehand, but I think the general direction of policy on the Congo had been established prior to January, 1961.

O'CONNOR: I was wondering whether you felt that there was any major difference, or major difference in emphasis, in our policy, although we had of course supported the UN in the Congo prior to 1961.

FREDERICKS: One important change was the change of ambassadors. President Kennedy had known Ed Gullion [Edmund A. Gullion] during the days Ed was in Saigon and apparently they had formed a friendship and respect for each other, so that when the subject of ambassador to the Congo came up, Ed Gullion's name came to mind. Perhaps this became as central to policy formulation as anything else because President Kennedy had a man in the Congo in whom he had previously had confidence. But the main outline of policy had been established prior to 1961.

O'CONNOR: When did the problem in Congo begin to impinge on your work here on Guinea?

FREDERICKS: On the day I arrived.

O'CONNOR: Could you elaborate at all on that? Could you tell us how you first became acquainted with the problem in the Congo after you - I suppose you were quite acquainted with it before you came to this office, but…

FREDERICKS: Yes. My first acquaintance with the Congo problem started in July of 1960 when Kasavubu [Joseph Kasavubu] and Lumumba [Patrice Lumumba] and a great coterie of ministers arrived in New York to debate the Congo question. At that point I became involved with a number of Congolese officials, and my involvement in the Congo began on the day of my arrival here when I went to a meeting of a huge task force concerned with the Congo problem. Governor Williams and I discussed the vast array of people around the table, and we concluded very early in the game that the direction of the Congo operation had to be moved back to the African bureau rather than to be executed in the midst of forty or fifty or sixty people.

So one of the first things we did was try to move the development of Congo policy back in the African bureau where it belonged. By this I don't mean that all the normal processes of coordination throughout government didn't continue; they clearly did. But we tried to reduce the numbers of people who were involved in these painfully long meetings, most of which didn't seem to be resulting in any decisions or any action. This was one of the first steps in my involvement, to try to reduce Congo policy to a manageable operation, which I think we succeeded in doing.

O'CONNOR: Who did you talk to about that? Did you talk to the president or somebody else to accomplish that?

FREDERICKS: I didn't talk to the president, but Governor Williams and I talked with the secretary of state. I don't know whether he (Governor Williams) talked to the president about it at that time or not. Whatever I'm telling you really has got to be followed in the context of Governor Williams who was my boss and whom I was advising. He was the man who discussed these issues with the secretary and the president.

O'CONNOR: What happened when you were able to bring it back into the small group? Who did that mean was working on the problem - you and Governor Williams, or who else.

FREDERICKS: And the office director in the African bureau, plus our colleagues in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs especially Joe Sisco [Joseph John Sisco]. And, given the nature of the problem, Adlai Stevenson in New York

and representatives from the Defense Department, because of the American logistics support to the UN operation.

During this period, as I think about it, we developed over a couple of years quite a close working relationship with the ambassadors of the various countries that were involved in the Congo. Apart from our own government's activities we found ourselves in close contact with the UN, with the Belgian government, and with India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Canada, Tunisia and all of the rest of the countries which had contingents in the Congo. A rather uncharacteristic coalition or alliance develops around the Congo operation that bore no relationship, it seemed to me, to any other collection of countries with which the U.S. had been so intimately involved.

O'CONNOR: The first real crisis that came up, I suppose, was the UN decision to send troops to disarm Katanga, disarm that Katangese military forces. This occurred in August of 1961. Were you involved in that - I presume you must have been - or the discussions behind this?

FREDERICKS: Yes.

O'CONNOR: What sort of threat or crisis did this present to your office?

FREDERICKS: This is one I have to think about a little bit. I don't want to give you an off-the-cuff answer.

O'CONNOR: All right. Well, I was wondering in this particular question if you could remember this, if there was any opposition to our backing this policy within the State Department itself. There must have been. I was wondering what sort of opposition there was, or who was opposed to this? I'm looking really for other people to talk to in the State Department on this question.

FREDERICKS: Yes, there clearly was opposition. I'm not sure I can give you the names of people at this point, but much of the opposition at that time came from the Bureau of European Affairs because of their necessity to reflect the interests of Belgium and of the great number of Belgians who still lived in the Katanga. I think Bill Burdett [William C. Burdett] might be able to answer some questions on that.

O'CONNOR: All right, I can look his name up.

FREDERICKS: He is now in the inspection corps [Foreign Service Inspection Corps]. He was a deputy assistant secretary at the time. And I recall a number of conversations with him. Of course Assistant Secretary Bill Tyler [William R. Tyler, Jr.] would have been involved in these decisions.

O'CONNOR: Okay, the upshot of this troop clash was the conference at Kitona where Cyrille Adoula and Tshombe [Moise Kapenda Tshombe] met and discussed and on the surface at least reached some sort of agreement. I've heard from other people that really Moise Tshombe went at least as far, and in effect really farther, to see to it that these agreements were fulfilled than Cyrille Adoula did. Now that's contrary to what I had expected to hear. I wonder if you have any comments on that?

FREDERICKS: I don't think it's true. Again, I think this is a matter in which the record really needs to be examined, and when we talk about this again I think I should get a list of things that were agreed to at Kitona, perhaps examine them item by item. For example, I can think of one thing offhand in which there was an agreement to reestablish telecommunications between Leopoldville and Elizabethville. And for some weeks there were efforts on the part of the Leopoldville regime to communicate with Elizabethville, but Elizabethville wouldn't turn its antennae around in order to receive the signals. But both parties were maintaining that they had in fact made the most elaborate efforts to reestablish telecommunications. But the physical act required in Elizabethville hadn't actually been carried out. Was the deposit on Katangan taxes actually deposited to the account of the central government, or was this in fact a stated position on the part of Mr. Tshombe? I think there were failures on both sides. But before commenting I really would like to look at the whole list.

O'CONNOR: I was less interested in getting specific issues from you, less interested in that than in getting your general feeling because any scholar or any amateur who wants to can go and look at the record himself. But I wanted to know what you had to say about this, whether you felt that this could be justified in any way at all, or this was the feeling, or just what you felt about it?

FREDERICKS: Well, then my first general answer would stand.

O'CONNOR: Okay. U Thant announced in August of 1961 the plan to end the secession of Katanga. Did the U.S. have any direct role in formulating this plan?

[-9-]

FREDERICKS: Not in the formulation of the plan precisely as it was presented by U Thant. An earlier resolution of the UN had been passed. We tried to help the UN in the resolution of the Congo problem. The secretary general, if I remember correctly, had issued an appeal of his won. There were a number of people including myself who felt that all sorts of ideas were floated but they never really came to rest in the form of a specific proposition. But I recall that - I take it this stuff is not for publication now. I was one of those who was concerned that nothing really specific was being developed for some kind of arrangement which might peaceably end the Katangan rebellion. So in a sense I suppose one could say that what emerged as the U Thant plan

really began in my office.

I talked to Ed Gullion and said, "Look, why don't we try to put down on paper what the potential elements of a solution might be which, one, would satisfy the various conflicting interests of the Congolese which, two, would receive the backing of the Western countries principally involved (Belgium, the U.S., Britain, and to some extent France) which, three, would satisfy the African nations as a group - many of them had contingents there - and which, four, would finally satisfy to an acceptable degree the UN. So we had a series of meetings, some in my office- and during that time Governor Williams was traveling - and some in the governor's office. And we put down the various elements of the solution.

O'CONNOR: Anyone there besides you and Ambassador Gullion?

FREDERICKS: Well, he and I talked this out first. We talked about it with various members of my staff. We discussed these ideas with representatives of other governments, including the Belgians who had the greatest number of nationals there. We discussed it with the British because the British had their problems in what was then the Central African Federation. And you may recall that in the early days of the Katangan rebellion the European countries most involved - the British, the Belgian and others - had tended to, to be more emotionally attuned with Mr. Tshombe and the secessionists than with the idea of reunification of the country, which governed American and UN policy. So, yes, during this period after we had put our ideas together these were discussed then with at least the British and the Belgians.

The French at one point came in, participated in some talks, and then announced that they could only be observers in view of the fact that they didn't really agree with the whole UN approach to this problem. So they only listened. I then talked with a number of African ambassadors who came in here, "What would you think about some sort of package like this? If this were proposed by the secretary general, do you think your government might support it? If not, why not? What things ought to be changed?" The outcome

of this series of meetings was a kind of contribution to the secretary general saying, "We think that something like this might possibly be a basis for solution. Something along these lines could be supported by the United States, and although we can't speak for other nations, we think it might substantially be supported by a number of other countries. So, for whatever it is worth, here it is."

The secretary general and his people then took a look at it and they elaborated on it and produced their own document, and what actually come out was the U Thant plan. It had many of the elements that we had talked about in the conversations I have described. But in a sense it was a normal evolution of a set of ideas, and I don't think anybody could say that it was anything other than U Thant's plan because he clearly had inputs into this from the UN secretariat and from other nations, all of whom, during this period, had been responding to his plea to produce ideas or contributions, or suggestions for a resolution of the problem without resort to further conflict.

O'CONNOR: This is not something that he requested, though - he did not request help from the United States toward formulating a plan, did he?

FREDERICKS: I've forgotten the precise language of the resolution made at the secretary general's request at that point. It would be in the record. It was not anything that came to us saying, "Please produce a plan." This was something which we thought might be a possible contribution to the solution of the problem.

O'CONNOR: Did you notice any major changes in the plan as it was eventually put forth by U Thant? Were there any things that particularly disappointed you about it, or can you recall any areas in which you thought perhaps the plan went too far?

FREDERICKS: I think the principal measure of controversy that arose over the U Thant plan was not with respect to the plan itself, but a series of what I might call punitive measures or actions to be taken if either party didn't live up to it. There was a series of graduated sanctions up to and including the use of force in Katanga if the plan wasn't accepted and followed. And I think more than the outlines of the plan itself, it was the gradation of measures to be taken that caused most of the controversy in various capitals and in the UN.

O'CONNOR: Well, had these sanctions been part of the suggestion that you and Ambassador Gullion had discussed or had presented to U Thant?

[-11-]

FREDERICKS: What we were talking about principally were the elements of the solution. We certainly had in mind that there might have to be inducements or pressures to try to get some acceptance of these ideas. Once again I'd have to look at the record a bit more carefully. But our principal focus was on what would be the outlines of a possible solution, not on getting into punitive measures.

O'CONNOR: You didn't really carry it that far then, to suggest sanctions or graduated steps?

FREDERICKS: We thought about the problem. We had our own ideas about what might be required. But as I recall, this was not a part of our suggestions to the UN.

O'CONNOR: Do you have any comments on the sanctions then as they did emerge from U Thant?

FREDERICKS: Again, I'd like to go back and refresh my memory with the series of graduated pressures the secretary general had in mind.

O'CONNOR: There's one particular question I'd like to ask you, though, in connection with these sanctions. I've heard it from a man who was in a very good position to know, that President Kennedy urged stronger sanctions than emerged in the U Thant plan or emerged as related to the U Thant plan. Did you ever come across that, or did you ever find that? Do you know whether that is so or not so?

FREDERICKS: I'm not quite sure that the president had those views at the time the U Thant plan itself was being developed and discussed. But there were certainly occasions later on when various elements of the U Thant plan were not lived up to, when the situation seemed to be deteriorating. On these occasions it seemed to me that the president was prepared to take a more vigorous line than other people in Washington were prepared to take, yes.

O'CONNOR: What do you mean by other people in Washington? Do you mean people here in the State Department?

FREDERICKS: Well, I didn't participate in all of these meetings, so I don't really know the character of all the debate. Governor Williams would be a better source of information. At least his record would be more available on that point. But I can think of several instances in which it was quite apparent in the meetings which I attended at the White House that the president was prepared to go farther than the top people in the State Department, yes.

O'CONNOR: Can you give me a specific example, if you can think of an instance or a particular issue about which a dispute arose and he was prepared to go further?

FREDERICKS: If you can give me time to look through the record I had and…

O'CONNOR: I'd like to come back to that, so I will mark that down. We can move on, unless you can think of something else. We can move on to another chronological step.

FREDERICKS: I'm sure more things will come up on the Congo…

O'CONNOR: Well, this is still on the Congo. I mean, I'm not leaving…

FREDERICKS: All right, go ahead.

O'CONNOR: Late in 1962 a step that this government took was to send George McGhee to the Congo. There's some misunderstanding as to what Mr. McGhee's mission really was in the Congo. Do you have any comments on what his mission was, if you understood it, or whether you were in agreement with the mission as it was sent?

FREDERICKS: I think I can speak about the mission since I was a part of it. The principal effort which Mr. McGhee undertook in the Congo (and in which I was involved) was to try to find ways and means to bring about implementation, if I may use that awful word, of the U Thant plan. How could one get Adoula and Tshombe to actually do something about communicating with each other? How could you, in fact, get Mr. Tshombe to deposit some tax money to the account of the central government? Could you, in fact, get Mr. Tshombe to rebuild the bridge over the Lualaba River and to reestablish transport communications between the two parts of the country? So as I recall, the actual mission in the Congo, it was an attempt to try to bring these two figures together and to achieve a reunification of the country on some acceptable basis to the Congolese and to others in a way that would, well, reunify the country. I don't mean to say that I think a single act would reunify the country but one which would resolve the issue of Katangan secession and end that. As I saw Mr. McGhee in operation, it was an attempt to work on both figures to bring about an end to secession.

O'CONNOR: I'm under the impression that Ambassador Gullion and Mr. McGhee had something in conflict in connection with that mission. In other words they were to a certain degree at cross purposes. Do you agree with that or not?

FREDERICKS: Yes, there were disagreements during the course of this mission. The whole history of the Congo is filled with disagreements, whether they be in Washington, in Leopoldville or elsewhere. I found myself in disagreement with certain positions reached by McGhee while we were in the Congo. And, generally speaking, I was more nearly in agreement with Gullion than with McGhee because I felt more strongly about the necessity for the reunification of the Congo as part of our entire African policy. I felt that the continued division of the Congo was basically setting up a deep division of Africa. A division of Africa would set up classical cold war confrontations in which the Western powers would be determined to back one side, and the communists another. It was my view that the split in Africa, along what would eventually appear to be basically a racial split with the Katanga, and everything to the south being more or less under white minority domination and the rest of Africa under black majority domination; that this would be the kind of confrontation across the heart of Africa which would not be in the interest of Africa, nor in the U.S. national interest. Both Ed Gullion and I felt much more strongly about this view of Africa than Mr. McGhee. I think Ed Gullion and I both felt that Mr. McGhee was probably prepared to compromise more points on this particular question than Gullion and I thought would have been wise. This doesn't mean that there was any

disagreement as to objective, because the immediate objective was to end the Katanga rebellion. But on what terms?

O'CONNOR: Well, the reason I asked that is because I was told that this in effect represented a real disagreement in policy. It was a major inconsistency in American policy, to send this McGhee mission, because McGhee was hoping for a peaceful settlement, when there were others in the Congo and back here in the United States who felt absolutely that a peaceful settlement could not be accomplished and to stall longer would mean there would no longer be any opportunity for a forceful settlement because the United Nations would collapse - funds. I mean, and I thought this was looked upon - I thought it might be looked upon by you, and I thought this might be looked upon in this way by Ambassador Gullion.

FREDERICKS: I think one is justified in asking whether you can <u>ever</u> afford to give up on the prospects for a peaceful settlement. In that respect one could say that Mr. McGhee had more capability of influencing Tshombe than certain other people. He had not been one of those who had been visibly, publicly committed on the whole Congo question. If one asks himself the question, How do you get two people like Adoula and Tshombe together? and the person you've got to bring back in is Mr. Tshombe, then you've got to work on Mr. Tshombe, because our ambassador had been in Leopoldville and had a strong working relationship with

Adoula and the central government, not with Tshombe. How then do you really bring in the man who is determined to be in rebellion? As today, how do you end Mr. Smith's [Ian Smith] rebellion in Rhodesia? And the same kind of issues arise; use of force? use of persuasion and diplomacy?

There are many who, in retrospect, felt that the McGhee mission delayed things, and so forth. But it was a determined effort to try to get the Katanga regime to end the rebellion and to play ball with the central government. I can recall both McGhee and myself arguing vigorously and vociferously with much of the power structure in Elizabethville, who said, "Leopoldville is nothing but a network of Communists and incompetents." McGhee and I would say, "Well, when were you last in Leopoldville? Because this is not what we see there. The people in Leopoldville are just as determined to maintain their independence as you are. There are businessmen in Leopoldville who are just as determined to work with the central government as you are determined to work with this rebellious government. When did you last talk with the representative of the Belgian Chamber of Commerce in Leopoldville, because the view you express in Elizabethville about Mr. Adoula is not what the Belgian and American businessmen are saying in Leopoldville about Mr. Adoula." Much of the effort here was to try to convey some understanding about what was really going on in Leopoldville, and what the issues were. McGhee, as a businessman in this country, was better able to try to convince some of the power structure in Elizabethville regarding the issues than somebody who didn't have that kind of background. This is not to say that there wasn't a deep division over the mission. And this is not to say that a lot of people were not

unhappy over the McGhee mission. They clearly were. But as a question of policy I think one still has to ask the question, "Shouldn't you make this last effort here?" And I think the answer to that is, yes.

O'CONNOR: You yourself feel that the answer is yes, that you should. In other words, you yourself were in favor of this - you took part in it?

FREDERICKS: Yes. The development of the U Thant plan took place in August and September and, if I remember correctly, the McGhee mission took place in November.

O'CONNOR: Yes, I think I have it down here somewhere, but it was about November.

FREDERICKS: Well, this is - what? - two or three months? In the scale of things that's not really very long to try to reach an amicable solution on the basis of a plan which the whole world community had indicated it was prepared to support.

[-15-]

O'CONNOR: Where did the opposition to the McGhee mission lie - the center of opposition to McGhee?

FREDERICKS: I'd have to refresh my memory on that one. If I remember correctly, I think there was some opposition in the UN.

O'CONNOR: On the part of African leaders, or do you mean on the part of representatives of our country?

FREDERICKS: I think that there was some doubt in the minds of UN officials about what the real purpose of the McGhee mission was. There was a feeling that the entry of McGhee would confuse a situation in which the UN had the primary responsibility (with U Thant and Robert Gardiner [Robert Kweku A. Gardiner] trying to resolve the problem on the basis of the U Thant plan) and that the entry of somebody else who was going to maneuver back and forth would be unduly confusing. There was also a view expressed by some at the UN (I can't remember who they were at this point), and even some in this government that to send such a high ranking American emissary to Elizabethville to talk to Tshombe would be to encourage Katanga in the continuation of the rebellion rather than to end it, that this was a measure of official recognition beyond which we ought not to go. And if I recall correctly, Gullion was strongly opposed, on those grounds, to McGhee's going to Elizabethville. It was all right for the UN to shuttle back and forth, because they were expected to be the peacemaker, but a high-ranking emissary of this sort from the U.S. would only feed the doubts of those who thought that Western policy in the end would end up supporting the Katangan regime.

O'CONNOR: Do you know what Adlai Stevenson felt about this? Do you know what his position was?

FREDERICKS: I wasn't in as close touch with Adlai Stevenson at that time as I was later, but he was strongly on the side of the UN effort in this matter. But I don't know where he stood on the McGhee mission.

O'CONNOR: Do you know that there really was strong opposition from U Thant, for example, regarding the McGhee mission or from the other Americans? Was there, was there not, do you know?

FREDERICKS: I don't really recall in enough detail. I never discussed with U Thant his position on the McGhee mission although the results of the mission were discussed with Robert Gardiner in Leopoldville and with the secretary general in New York.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

J. Wayne Fredericks Oral History Transcript – JFK #1
Name List

A

Adoula, Cyrille, 9, 13-15
Attwood, William H., 5, 6

B

Balewa, Abubakar Tafawa, Sir 4
Bingham, Jonathan Brewster, 3
Bowles, Chester B., 1, 3
Burdett, William C., 8

D

de Gaulle, Charles A., 5

F

Farmer, Thomas L., 1

G

Gardiner, Robert Kweku A., 16
Gullion, Edmund A., 6, 10, 11, 14, 16

H

Harriman, William Averell, 3

K

Kasavubu, Joseph, 7
Kennedy, John F., 1-6, 12
Kennedy, Robert F., 5

L

Lumumba, Patrice, 7

M

McGhee, George, 13-16

S

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., 4
Shriver, R. Sargent, Jr., 5
Sisco, Joseph John, 7
Smith, Ian, 15
Staebler, Neil, 1
Stevenson, Adlai E., 3, 7, 16

T

Thant, U, 9-13, 15, 16
Toure, Sekou, 5, 6
Tshombe, Moise Kapenda, 9, 10, 13-16
Tyler, William R., Jr., 8

W

Williams, G. Mennen, 1-3, 7, 10, 12