William P. Mahoney Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 05/14/1975
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Biographical Note
William P. Mahoney (1916-2000) was an Arizona political figure and the Ambassador to Ghana from 1962 to 1965. This interview focuses on Mahoney's work on the 1960 presidential campaign and his time as Ambassador to Ghana, in particular his professional relationship with Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, among other topics.

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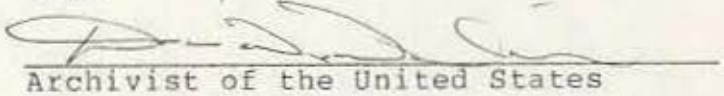

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William P. Mahoney– JFK #1
Table of Contents

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Document Type	Correspondents or Title	Date	Restriction
	Pages Containing Closed Portions		
OH	Page 45	05/14/1975	**A**
OH	Page 47	05/14/1975	**A**
OH	Page 85	05/14/1975	**A**
OH	Page 104 - 112	05/14/1975	**A**
OH	Page 118	05/14/1975	**A**
OH	Page 120 - 121	05/14/1975	**A**
OH	Page 129	05/14/1975	**C**
OH	Page 144 - 145	05/14/1975	**A**

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John F. Kennedy Oral History Project
William P. Mahoney, Interview #1, May 14, 1975

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Oral History Interview

with

WILLIAM P. MAHONEY

May 14, 1975
Waltham, Massachusetts

By William W. Moss

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: All right. I'd like to begin, Ambassador Mahoney, by taking you back before your ambassadorship to Arizona politics and the 1960 campaign and the maneuvering that went on before Arizona went for John Kennedy. If my understanding is correct, this started as early as the fall or winter of 1959.

MAHONEY: Yes, let me give you a brief idea of that. Actually, it began early in the fall, late in the summer of '59 when I had been, of course, county and district attorney and that sort of thing and greatly interested and had campaigned a great deal with Adlai Stevenson (Adlai E. Stevenson) like many Democrats. I had known John Kennedy for five or six years prior to that time, rather casually in political meetings and encounters. I had a

great friend from my Notre Dame (University of Notre Dame) days who was national chairman named Paul Butler (Paul M. Butler). And interestingly enough Butler, although he was a very close friend of Adlai Stevenson's and was literally the creation of Adlai in his role as Democratic national chairman, became disenchanted with Stevenson's capacity to be president. I was sort of shocked when I first heard this. And he and I started talking about the Kennedy candidacy, and I became convinced, number one, that Kennedy would make an excellent president; number two, and this was sort of personal, that as a Catholic I would like to see this barrier broken once and for all. So I can assure you that the Kennedy supporters in Arizona were my wife and I and our immediate family to begin with.

I began working with Bob Kennedy (Robert F. Kennedy) and then these other candidates began to loom. And I'll make this very short, but it's kind of interesting because our delegation's stand in Los Angeles in '60 was a critical factor in Kennedy's success there. The various candidates of course were Stevenson, Humphrey (Hubert H. Humphrey), Symington (Stuart Symington),

Lyndon Johnson (Lyndon B. Johnson), those were the chief candidates, and John Kennedy. And we were a very informal group, and we were trying to get more and more friends. We deliberately, for political reasons, avoided offending anybody because that never really helps. And so it became a kind of a good-guys-versus-the-bad-guys contest. I led the fight. And the Symington people, although they were alive at our state convention--I believe it was April 30, 1960--their power diminished, so did the Humphrey effort which, of course, started to fade in West Virginia and so on. And it ended up as a head to head encounter between the forces of Lyndon Johnson and John Kennedy.

I had spent six or eight months trying to get a good liberal fellow in office to hang our hat on so to speak, politically, and we finally convinced Stewart Udall (Stewart L. Udall) who I might add finally gave us his consent, and may I say very bravely so. But Stewart was quite late in the game although he was helpful later. Stewart represented the southern part of the state, but the political nut that had to be cracked from John Kennedy's point of view was central Arizona, Maricopa County, the Phoenix metropolitan area. That's where the fight occurred.

To give you an idea of how hot and close the contest was, I have to back up and say that we inherited all the liberal types of Democrats, the few that live out there and the younger people, etc., and the Johnson people ended up, of course, with all the power. They had Carl Hayden who was then the senator, beloved Carl Hayden, chairman of the Appropriations Committee (Senate Committee on Appropriations). They had the former Senate majority leader Ernest McFarland (Ernest W. McFarland). They had the big bankers, the big cattle men and the big people so to speak, what you might call the establishment. We had no establishment support, but we did have some very, very resourceful political workers.

So we went into the state convention on April 30 and in a twelve-hour-long convention we won by 403 to 401. We won by two votes and succeeded in also carrying a vote that invoked the unit rule. So we went to Los Angeles as the only state west of the Mississippi River of all places, Arizona, under the unit rule for John Kennedy. And since in those days as I recall, it was alphabetical, and we were either at the top or

near the top of the ballot, it was really very crucial. I might add for the record then--I can't give you details--the Texans and the Johnsons, etc., moved heaven and earth to try to change some of our people. I literally named a delegation of about thirty or forty people whom we knew we could trust that simply were not for sale under any circumstances. And it even got so far that they filed a protest before the Democratic National Committee in Los Angeles against us on the grounds that we had won by fraud. And here we were practically penniless, borrowing money to make our success, and we never asked the Kennedys for a dime. We wouldn't have accepted it if it had been offered. This was our little contribution. (Here we are being accused of fraud by LBJ's people).

I might back up and give you one little personal incident involving John Kennedy in this whole show. The night that we won this fight for the delegation, I had this lovely woman staying in our home who was Democratic national committeewoman. And we all came home and drank a lot of wine and other things. And the next morning, which was a Sunday morning--

Mrs. Bronson (Leisa G. Bronson) was her name--she asked me, "Shouldn't we call Senator Kennedy and tell him about this success?" I said, "Well, that's ridiculous. It undoubtedly went out on the wire service and he knows about it." But she kept insisting.

At this time John Kennedy was just a few days, as I recall, away from the West Virginia election. The prospects did not look too good. The religious issue was very much in the forefront. So I called Washington to a fellow called Hy Raskin (Hyman B. Raskin), who was one of the wheelers and dealers in our organization, and Hy gave me the number of the senatorial party in West Virginia. And this is hard to believe, but this actually happened, I called the hotel, got the desk, got to the room, and John Kennedy himself answered the phone. He had lost his voice. He did not know that we had won the delegation. The conversation went something like, "Bill, don't kid me, I'm not so sure I could take that." I said, "We're not kidding you. We've got it lock, stock and barrel." And he couldn't believe it. And I said something to the effect, "Look, Jack, if we can do this in Arizona, I think you can do something quite like it in West Virginia."

It evidently, I heard later, gave him a little hope, you know. Because it really was a man-bites-dog story that Arizona, which is partially southern, unfortunately, and as you know rather conservative, that Arizona would end up under the unit rule for Jack Kennedy. People honestly couldn't believe it. But it was done, done honestly and done after a solid year of awfully hard work.

MOSS: I'd like to ask you . . .

MAHONEY: Just a couple more items on that, Bill, and I'll shorten some of this. Just after we got to Los Angeles of course this effort to either woo us or disqualify us continued. But we stayed hitched and you know the result.

MOSS: Okay. A couple of things. One is that you say it's a year of hard work. What were some of the kinds of things you were doing for instance to get county chairmen in line and so on? If I remeber correctly there's a story about a county chairman in Greenlee County who has had the oh, candy bar machine concessions and so on, was under the thumb of Phelps Dodge (Phelps Dodge Corporation) and they were leaning on him, and you worked on him.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: What kind of this sort of thing was going on?

MAHONEY: It's, you know the whole business is an art. It's not a science. It involved a very painstaking effort that really lasted nine months to be accurate. It involved, for example, having precinct-committeemen slots filled with people that you think you could trust where the vacancies occurred. It involved winning over district leaders, precinct committeemen, state committeemen, combating brush fires here, there and everywhere. My god, I spent hours a day on this every day beginning the first of that year. It involved getting people like Stewart Udall committed. Let me tell you a story about that.

We were trying to get Udall, trying to get him and trying to get him. And so one day Bob Kennedy and I were talking about it on the phone. I said, "Look, I think Stewart is a great admirer of your brother's, a fantastic admirer, but I have a suggestion. Now if your brother has time, great, if he doesn't forget it. Why doesn't he take him to lunch?" And so

Bob said, well, I'll see what I can do, or something to that effect. So anyway, about a week later Stewart Udall called me. He said, Bill, how are things going out there, in effect. "Fine, Stu, how are you?" "Fine." He said, "Listen, we've got to get this show on the road." And I said something like, well what show? "Well, the Kennedy show." I said, "Well, hey, what happened to you?" I later learned that this gesture had been made, sort of a human thing. I think we probably would have had Stu anyway, but I think that was the event that turned the tide. Now, we needed him as I say. You know, they had Hayden and McFarland and all these old-time wheels. And here we were out there all alone. And Stu helped a great deal. And may I add for the record, I don't know of many politicians that would have done what Udall did. The race was still up in the air, to declare himself like that, he took some real chances. He also knew at the time, of course, that the opinion of the local Phoenix press toward the Kennedy candidacy was probably the most critical, negative and even vulgar of any press in the United States.

MOSS: Yes. Would you talk about Gene Pulliam (Eugene C. Pulliam) and the Arizona Republic (Phoenix Arizona Republic) a little bit?

MAHONEY: Yes. For example, and I'll make it short, we were criticized throughout, and Gene Pulliam I learned later, much later, was a real admirer and friend of Lyndon Johnson's. It was a friendship that had developed over the years, strangely enough; I thought all his friends were Republicans, but they weren't. He was a power player. Let me give you an illustration. We went to Los Angeles and I was leading the delegation and most of the activities. Every morning the Arizona Republic would be slipped under our door. And here were these unbelievably inaccurate articles on what we were doing in Los Angeles. And one day Udall and I were editorialized as the "camp followers and minions and footstools of the Kennedy dynasty," and that sort of thing. And the day after we won in Los Angeles or so, the Sunday, it was a Sunday front page two-column editorial, I'm sure, personally written by Pulliam, I think it was signed by him, bitterly commenting about the selection of John Kennedy using such phrases as

"the Kennedy whisky millions" and that sort of thing. It was a straight unadulterated Ku Klux (Ku Klux Klan) pitch probably without parallel in the so-called respectable press in the United States. It was unbelievable. And later when Bob was there campaigning in September, 1960, we were having a press conference in Phoenix, and a reporter asked Bob what he thought of the local press. And Bob said he wasn't, of course, a daily reader of the local press, he could only give its reputation. He said flatly, "This is the worst press in the United States." And may I say, I think that was an accurate characterization--it was awful, just awful.

MOSS: Do you recall an incident at the convention when the Arizona Republic got itself tossed out of your suite?

MAHONEY: There was a . . . Right after we won the delegation and sometime maybe two or three weeks before the convention a fellow walked into my office and said, "I'm Bernie Wynn and I'm the new political correspondent for the Arizona Republic." And of course at that point I really clammed up. This was nothing but bad news. Anyway he went over there and he was the fellow writing these vicious articles about our delegation,

about Stewart and me. And we had this wild wonderfully gifted Irish fellow, a lawyer from Bisbee, Jim McNulty (James F. McNulty, Jr.) who was educated here in Boston, just an elegant guy. He had been reading this for about three days and I guess he'd had all he could take. So he stood up during a meeting of our little delegation and caucus and said, "I want for the record to condemn what I regard as the outstanding example of yellow journalism," and on and on, and eloquently put. Well this Wynn who was sitting in the front seat in the front row, right in front of--I was presiding, I belive, at the time-- he got up and stomped out of the room into the foyer of this pathetic little hotel, the Mayan, where we were staying. McNulty followed him and got out in the lobby and hit him in the face and knocked him clear across the room. And it's a terrible thing to say, but it was one of the high points of our whole stay in Los Angeles.

MOSS: Did you have any trouble in keeping your own delegation in line on the LBJ nomination?

MAHONEY: None whatsoever.

MOSS: Okay. All right. Now coming back to Arizona and organizing for Kennedy in Arizona after the convention and the problem of an LBJ doublecross backlash, you

know, how could LBJ associate with Kennedy after all this and so on. Did this bother you at all?

MAHONEY: We never thought we could win in November, anyway. LBJ was helpful, nonetheless, in the Arizona campaign. In September, latter part of September, just before this Houston confrontation with the Prostestant ministers, LBJ spent a full two days in Phoenix in a m a n-killing schedule that I had arranged and spoke so eloquently, so brilliantly, for example, one night extemporaneously at the Jewish temple on this business of religious bias and prejudice which was sort of getting some currency then that early in the campaign against John Kennedy. God, he was simply magnificent. And so I think the Johnson presence really helped us. We found no difficulty in rallying the conventional elements of the Democratic party to our cause in the general election, but we were out-gunned from the beginning and we lost and lost it substantially.

MOSS: Okay. And Kennedy himself came in at the beginning of November just shortly before the election. Do you recall any of that?

MAHONEY: Oh, do I, my God. He came to Phoenix from Los Angeles just three or four days before the election.

MOSS: The third, I believe.

MAHONEY: And my gosh, we had a crowd at the airport. Well, we never had a crowd like it before, and the plane as I remember was due at midnight. There was a dinner affair in L.A. and then Kennedy and his party were coming over. So we mustered the crowd out there and the plane didn't arrive and didn't arrive. But anyway, I forget the crowd estimates, but there were between fifteen and eighteen thousand people there. And they waited until three o'clock in the morning. And he finally got there and we had this magnificent show. The poor devil was exhausted. And then we went to his hotel. The next morning we had a so-called, well, a little Kennedy breakfast they called it for about fifteen hundred people in a room and then outside John Kennedy spoke to another eight or ten thousand people assembled outside the hotel. It was a magnificent visit. The poor fellow, I don't think he had more than two or three hours sleep that night. He was half-dead. And a terrible thing happened, you know these things do, that kind of hurt me. He was

leaving, and I believe he was in the Caroline as I remember, but anyway, we had a barricade up there and he and I were chatting with each other and saying good-bye, and this newspaperman was shouting at me. He just had to see him. And I knew that--his name was Jack Karie. Finally Kennedy saw this fellow shouting over the barrier and he said, "Tell him to come on up." So I said, "Come on, Karie." Karie comes up to John Kennedy and says, "Sir, I have only one question. There's been considerable speculation about the state of your health. Are you really physically fit to be president of the United States?" Well, of course, if I could have gone down through the concrete I would have. It just made me sick. And Kennedy's face tightened and he said something to the effect, well, you know, you have the powers of observation. What do you think? And he walked away.

MOSS: How did the Kennedy operation, the Kennedy advance men and so on mesh with your local people?

MAHONEY: Very well. I'm trying to remember now who some of them were and I can't. I'm sure they're familiar names. Very well. This is always a problem. These fellows come in; they're "experts;" frequently they're second

or third or fourth stringers who really are not all that good to begin with. But as I remember the John Kennedy thing we were working with good men. I'll think of some of the names in a few minutes. They were willing to accept what I would suggest, for example, and I what they. Our minds would meet. We had no difficulties at all. I have been in campaigns, including some campaigning with Bob, where this has become a real problem. It did not in the John Kennedy thing.

MOSS: Now what about the activities with Ted Kennedy (Edward M. Kennedy) and Byron White (Byron R. White) and so on.

MAHONEY: Well, I can dismiss Byron, who is a friend of mine. Byron stuck pretty close to Colorado and, you know, we'd barge into each other's states in a small way once in a while on an ad hoc basis. Ted, I was deeply involved with Ted. In fact, I will take credit for helping start Ted out in presidential politics because he arrived in late '59 or early '60 with a fellow named Bob Wallace (Robert A. Wallace). Bob was a kind of, a pro.

MOSS: The one who wound up in Treasury (Department of the Treasury)?

MAHONEY: Right. Bob ended up in Treasury. Well, Ted ended up practically living in Arizona. He became terribly enamored of Arizona and we did an awful lot of work together. He had California and the West and that sort of thing. And, God, I could tell immediately that he was a guy with immense ability. Ah, but we just hit it off so wonderfully from the beginning, so much so that at one point Ted was looking for a house and was going to join our bar association, and I used to get these calls from Bob and he'd say, "Is Teddy out there?" I always was amused by this accent--I suppose they were amused by mine. "Yes, he's here, Bob." "Well, will you tell him to get off his ass and get over to California?" "Yes, I'll relay the message, Bob, I'd be delighted to." (Laughter) We used to have a lot of fun on that score. All I can tell you is that Ted spent all the time he could in our little state, and may I say, of course, he was very, very helpful and it was on-the-job training, I have news for you. He was not a pro by any means. But he became one very, very quickly.

MOSS: What kinds of things was he doing?

MAHONEY: Well, he'd come see me and then we'd have meetings, strategy meetings. He would be suggesting we should be doing this, that and the other thing; by we that meant myself, my wife and maybe three other people. We didn't have that many bodies to go around. I was constantly introducing Ted to people because he's just the kind of a guy that if you meet him, you're won over. And we had a lot of fence-sitters of real importance to us that Ted Kennedy literally brought in with a smile. And he was coming and going all of the time. God knows how many times he was in and out of Arizona. Then we'd travel over the state, and we had some rather hazardous airplane trips together. I didn't realize at the time that I was flying around with this fellow that he had, you know, six or seven hours in the air following his solo flight or I'd never have gotten in the airplane with him. We used to have a lot of fun, just a lot of fun.

MOSS: Okay. Now taking the election and just afterwards, were you expecting anything in the way of an appointment or involved in appointments in any way?

MAHONEY: No. Not at all. No. This is hard to believe. It never even crossed my mind. I had done what I could for my friends. And, you know, this sounds kind of strange, but it never even crossed my mind. An incident did occur though involving this sort of thing. Two incidents, just for the record, that I'll mention to you. Right after the election we had a few things that we were interested in, in seeing we get a good United States district attorney, etc. I got wind of the fact that the opposition--I won't name any names, but a lawyer in the opposite camp, it was the leader in the opposite camp, the Johnson forces--had interceded with the Justice Department and the name was being considered who was really a member of the enemy camp, as a United States district attorney. And I called Whizzer White and God I was really burned up.

MOSS: In the Department of Justice?

MAHONEY: In the Department of Justice, the United States district attorney's office was being filled and I heard this. This could have been just after the president took office, probably. Anyway, and Whizzer, I remember, he called me down and said,

"Bill, relax." And I said, "My God, this would be an atrocity." "Well, who would you suggest?" Well, I suggested a lawyer named Carl Muecke (Carl A. Muecke) who's now a United States district judge, and of course they appointed Carl. We asked for practically nothing from them.

And then my name . . . . not long after the president was in office they created some new federal judgeships, and my name got mentioned. You know, infallible sources would say that, you know, Mahoney was going to be the new federal judge here. This is an interesting thing involving Senator Hayden though. Well, this had never even crossed my mind. That's considered a great honor for a practicing lawyer, but I'd never wanted to be a judge. But anyway, I sort of got interested in it. Then the word got out that a nephew of Senator Hayden's by the name of Arthur Davis (Arthur M. Davis), a very fine person, that he was probably going to get the job. Well, the thirty or thirty-one district chairmen of the Democratic party in central Arizona--this is very uncharacteristic of

the Hayden situation--wrote a special delivery letter to Hayden, signed, sealed and, oh God, it was awful saying, "You appoint Davis instead of Mahoney, senator, and you will live to regret it." By the way Hayden was coming up for reelection the next year.

I saw the letter after it had been sent--a copy--and I was horrified. So I called Senator Hayden and told him I had absolutely nothing to do with that letter, that I was not at all anxious to be a federal judge, that Davis would make a good man and practically apologized to him. By the way, a year later he was offering me another federal judgeship. I never did take one. This did happen, for what it's worth; it didn't involve John Kennedy.

MOSS: Okay. How did the ambassadorship to Ghana come up? What was the first you heard of it?

MAHONEY: Well, evidently I have a dear friend here in Washington who was a friend of the president's and also Ralph Dungan (Ralph A. Dungan) who was one of the president's aides. And they got talking about

my situation, and I was summoned to Washington to speak to Ralph and to speak to the president and was told that he was thinking of making me an ambassador. Of course, this was the first I had heard of it, and I was really surprised.

MOSS: About when was this? January or February of '62?

MAHONEY: About, yes February of '62, maybe January. Anyway I was really quite surprised, you know, this had never crossed my mind. We got chatting about it and they mentioned four or five or six countries that-- I speak a little Spanish. You know the president was aware of the size of my family (we then had seven children). It was kind of interesting though, the way it developed. They mentioned Spain, Ireland, Ecuador, Taiwan, and they mentioned Ghana. Well, I knew President Kennedy well enough to know that if I had been asked back there he had something in mind. And I had actually had extensive experience as a lawyer representing the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) in the West in the early days before it became fashionable in these school desegregation fights. He knew this. So I said, "Look, you must have something

in mind or you wouldn't have called me back." "Well, you know, it's Ghana really, Bill, that we're thinking about." I said, "I've read about Nkrumah (Kwame Nkrumah). I'd be delighted, consider it an honor." And that's the way it happened.

MOSS: Okay. Would you talk a little bit about the briefing sessions that were set up for you in Washington? Of course you had to go back to Arizona and settle up there, but when did you start your briefings and what sort of things were being told . . .

MAHONEY: I was briefed about three months beginning perhaps early in March. March, April and May in effect. And it consisted of intensive reading about Ghana, its history, both past and present. It consisted of the usual thing, briefings and defense and so on. But it consisted mostly of my reading and catching up.

But there was a flash point in the whole show. President Kennedy had just approved, not too long before that, the Volta project. And this was a

very controversial subject. As a matter of fact, I've been told--I don't know this-- but if historians dig into this this could have been one of the most controversial and difficult decisions that John Kennedy made. For example, Bob was against it, I heard. And then Senator Gore (Albert Gore) and others in the Democratic party were violently opposed to it. So when I was getting ready for my test, for my hearing before the Senate committee, the foreign relations committee (Senate Committee on Foreign Relations), we majored in the Volta project. Fortunately I was a lawyer and read these voluminous contracts, etc., and was pretty well posted both legally and politically.

But there's a cute story involved in that and I'll get back to the other in a moment. Senator Hayden, who really was not the moving party in my appointment but who was brought into this process because, of course, John Kennedy really admired the old man plus the fact that he needed the old man.... Well anyway, Hayden was gradually given the impression that this was his project, making Mahoney an ambassador. I'm not sure how the boys

engineered it but this is the way it came out. He was very enthusiastic and we were great friends. Hayden was the last guy in the world ever to take a thing personally like our victory in the delegation fight. So the day that--no, the day before I appeared before the foreign relations committee --I was over saying hello to the senator. He knew about the hearing and he said to me, "Bill, do you think it would help if I came along?" I said, "My God, it certainly won't hurt."

So the day I went over there, there were some of those senators I'm sure were laying for me, and you know, I'm nobody, but for one thing it's a way to get at the project and for another thing for some of them it was a way to get at John Kennedy. Well, Carl Hayden was sitting there, and I have news for you, that was one of the sweetest sessions that could have been otherwise that was conducted that particular congressional year. It went off without any problems at all. The Volta was just touched on lightly. Hayden gave me a resounding endorsement for the record, etc., which is not common from

Carl Hayden either. He's a very reticent, very careful old man, you know, but we were great, great friends. So it was a no-sweat deal.

Now to get back to that other thing--and I'll get into this later and I don't want to take up too much time on your tapes. Amongst other things, I was briefed by the agency, the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). I can't remember particularly now what form it took but it certainly wasn't very intensive. When I get to the point where we're in Ghana, I had a rather surprising experience that I might detail a little bit later down the line.

MOSS: What were some of your impressions of the organization in the State Department, particularly the African bureau: Williams (G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams), Fredericks (J. Wayne Fredericks), Tasca (Henry J. Tasca), Trimble (William C. Trimble), people like that?

MAHONEY: Of course, you see, I had nothing . . . I had had no previous experience of this kind so I had nothing to compare these gentlemen with, but I was really impressed with the quality of the

department from top to bottom. Soapy Williams was a very hardworking fellow--I can get into some of that later--and Tasca was a sharp, sharp mind. Wayne Fredericks was one of the most beautiful people I've ever met; great heart and great mind. It was very impressive, all the way up through Governor Harriman (W. Averell Harriman), George Ball (George W. Ball), to Secretary Rusk (Dean Rusk). I was really impressed. They were very generous with me. Oh, I remember I had quite a few conversations with George McGhee (George C. McGhee). George was wonderfully helpful to me, just to give me the confidence to get started.

MOSS: What about people in AID (Agency for International Development): Bell (David E. Bell), Hutchinson (Edmund C. Hutchinson)?

MAHONEY: These are all names that are coming back to me now. They were fine. I tell you an awfully cute experience involving Bell. The AID director when I went in was not David Bell, it was . . .

MOSS: Hamilton (Fowler Hamilton)?

MAHONEY: It was a New York lawyer, I think.

MOSS: Yeah, Fowler Hamilton?

MAHONEY: Fowler Hamilton, yes. Anyway, you know, I wasn't impressed terribly one way or another. I remember being impressed by people like Bill Bundy (William P. Bundy); Bill briefed me in - Defense (Department of Defense). And I'm being unfair to some people because I just don't remember who they were. But then of course I was constantly in touch with Ralph Dungan in the White House. Ralph had a real good feel for Africa and I later leaned on him and Carl Kaysen in times of difficulties. The briefing was very helpful. There were certain issues that developed, such as the passport incident I mentioned to you and Mr. Fenn (Dan H. Fenn).

MOSS: Why don't you recount the story of Udall taking you to the Soviet embassy reception we talked about a few moments ago.

MAHONEY: Well, yeah, this is a little amusing sidelight. About a month--and the record should indicate when this was--before I actually was sworn in, I was here being briefed. Stewart called me one

day. We were great friends, of course, grew up together as kids in Arizona. He called one day and said, "How would you like to meet the Russian astronauts?" I remember my wife was in town, that's right. Alice was here for a few days. Well, I said, "I'd love to meet them." "Well, there's a reception this afternoon at the Russian embassy and the American astronauts, I believe, Shepard (Alan B. Shepard, Jr.) and Glenn (John H. Glenn, Jr.), etc., will be there." "Oh," I said, "this is marvelous." Stu said, "Then we'll go out to dinner."

So Stu's car came by and he and his wife Lee (Ermalee Webb Udall) and Alice and I went to the Russian embassy. We got to the top of the stairs--really this was my first experience of this kind. Mind you, my name had not been mentioned publicly or privately and it was a matter of some delicacy because I don't think at the time my predecessor knew that he was being replaced and he was ill. So we got to the top of the stairs and Stewart said in a big, loud voice to Dobrynin (Anatoly F. Dobrynin)--whom I

later got to know--"Mr. Ambassador, I want you to meet the new American ambassador to Ghana." When he said it, there was a newspaper lady in a big flop hat practically standing between me and Dobrynin when I shook hands with him and when this remark was made, I was really alarmed.

MOSS: This was May Craig (Elisabeth May Craig)?

MAHONEY: I think it was May Craig. I remember it was 5 o'clock, you know, on a sunny afternoon and she had on dark glasses and a flop hat, if that will help in any respect. But anyway, we got down to the end of the line and I said to Udall, "Listen, that word better not get out at this point..."

MOSS: You were in the reception line and May Craig was there.

MAHONEY: And I had seen her make notes of this announcement that Udall made at that point to the world and knew it would cause the White House embarrassment and perhaps my predecessor.

MOSS: As I recall, Francis Russell (Francis H. Russell) was in Bethesda at this point.

MAHONEY: Francis Russell was in the hospital in Bethesda. So Udall and I . . . I said to Stewart, let's get back there and get that off-the-record

pretty quick. We went back and Stewart said to May Craig--I believe it was May Craig--"You know, Ambassador Mahoney's name has not been mentioned yet and that sort of thing and it might cause a little difficulty, and we'd appreciate it if you'd just forget it." She made the remark, "I'll take it up with my editor." Well, I had a half an idea at that point that the fat was in the fire.

So I was having breakfast the next morning in my hotel and here is a headline across the social page, "Russian ambassador first to meet new U.S. envoy," with the story and a picture of me shaking hands with Dobrynin. I thought, "Oh, my God, my diplomatic career was short and pleasant but this is evidently going to be the end of it." So the phone rang and I--can I be explicit here?

MOSS: Sure.

MAHONEY: It was Ralph Dungan, my great friend. Ralph said, what the hell's going on"" I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "You know goddam well what I mean. Where'd that story come from?" At

this time I was trying to protect my friend Udall. I didn't want to . . . Well, I said, "I was out at this reception with Stu." And he made some crack. It was Dungan that made the remark, "Well, I guess that was another one of Stu's international days, international relations days." Stewart at that time was having an occasional difficulty in being the secretary of the interior (Department of the Interior) rather than of the exterior, as I remember--and I say that with affection. So Ralph of course was calling in a dire tone. I later learned President Kennedy thought the whole thing was as funny as could be. But from my experience with President Johnson, it wouldn't have been regarded in a humorous way.

MOSS: Coming back to the State Department for just a moment, did you notice any static between the Bureau of European Affairs and the Bureau of African Affairs as to who was really running the African show?

MAHONEY: Well, I got the distinct impression that there was a pecking order in the State Department, but this didn't dawn on me until later. I didn't get this impression at all when I was being prepared. I certainly got it to a fare-thee-well later in my conversations with George Ball,

for whom I have great respect. I just got the idea that George was only remotely interested in Africa, that his prime--and perhaps, from a real power point of view, he was right--that his prime and almost exclusive interest as far as I was concerned or could tell was Europe. But no, we never had static. At least if we did have, I was never aware of it. We were pretty much. . . We certainly had the ar, in those days, of not only Secretary Rusk but of President Kennedy. I could see Kennedy. . . I found to my dismay I should have been clearing these appointments. I'd just call the White House and go over and see him. I found that I was violating all kinds of rules. After about the sixth visit, I finally was squared away and told very tentatively and quietly that these appointments should be sought through the department.

MOSS: What kinds of things were you discussing with him?

MAHONEY: With John Kennedy?

MOSS: Yeah.

MAHONEY: Well, both African, Ghanaian affairs, Nkrumah, the Volta, the press--I can touch on some of these things later--the domestic political situation in Ghana, may I add the domestic political situation in the United States. We

were just a couple of real good friends and we would just cover the whole gamut.

MOSS: Okay. Would you describe your meeting with the president just before you went and the evolution of the personal note that he wrote?

MAHONEY: Well, that was really interesting. We were all meeting and, let's see, Ralph Dungan, the president, myself, Bill Brubeck (William H. Brubeck), I think. There were several people in the room. The president was sitting there in his rocking chair and we were having a wonderful chat. The president said something to me with just only a half smile on his face. He said, "Bill, I got news for you, you'll either be a success or a failure over there, there's going to be nothing in between." I said, "Well, that's reassuring. I want to thank you for that, Mr. President." We were kidding each other, of course. So Dungan brings in the letter from President Kennedy to President Nkrumah. So Kennedy looked at the thing very quickly and said, "Ah"--something to the effect--"let's warm this thing up. Come on, let's really say what we want to say here." What they were trying to do, of course, was to identify me with President Kennedy as a friend because by this time they were discovering that this sort of thing might appeal to Nkrumah. Of

course, as history will show, it later did. So Ralph took the letter back, and we continued our conversation. He came back with a. . . I don't remember the particulars, but all I remember is it was a much warmer version, that Ambassador Mahoney is not only a, you know, an official representative of mine but a personal friend, a person for whom I have respect, etc. And I may say I'm sure that letter had an effect. In fact, that was the opening wedge that led to a rather close relationship between me and Nkrumah.

MOSS: Okay, let me ask you to recount the little problem at Idlewild Airport of the passport.

MAHONEY: Well, it seems that Ambassador Mahoney's career was shot through with amusing incidents. It's a wonder I ever got down to work. But this was really funny. I had been prepared for three months and then my wife for a few days. We had this huge family of seven in those days, and they were all examined physically and etc., etc. It was like moving an army, of course. Soapy Williams used to tell me that whenever the Mahoneys made a move, there went the African travel budget for that fiscal year, which is almost true. So we go from Washington to New York to La Guardia and by limousine to Kennedy to take a seven o'clock plane to Ghana,

the whole family. I was given the VIP treatment wherever I went. This was a new experience in my case. We were greeted by a Pan American (Pan American Airlines) official who opened the doors of the car and escorted the children, Alice, and me to a VIP room. Then he said, "Mr. Ambassador, may I have your passports?" I looked at him and said, "Passports?" And it just dawned on me, I had this terrible sinking feeling; we didn't have any passports. In spite of the fact that I had received all this tremendous preparation, this was one small housekeeping item that had been forgotten along the way. All hell broke loose. I as a lawyer thought, well, you know, I've got to take charge here. I said, "You know, we really don't need passports. I represent the president of the United States, I have my letters of credence, I have this, that, and the other thing." This fellow was singularly unimpressed. He said, "We cannot let you on that airplane without the passports." I said, "Well, you do whatever you wish but I think you're making a great mistake." I was still trying to fight my way out of it. I realize now it was absolutely preposterous what I was suggesting.

So he dashes to the phone and he calls the duty officer in the State Department. From what I was told later, it really caused a stir, because they not only had a problem on this side of the water with Pan Am, they had a problem with Ghana. We were in Ghana two months before we got our passports. We finally got on the airplane, but it was really awfully funny.

MOSS: As you left Washington, what was your notion from Rusk and Ball and Williams, and the president and Dungan and so on, as to what you were to do? What were your marching orders?

MAHONEY: Well, I had no marching orders as such. My mission was twofold. Well, of course there was the typical, conventional diplomatic mission reporting and so on, but, you know, that's done by other people. My mission was to establish a warm personal relationship with Nkrumah which had not been established prior to my going there. At least this was my impression.

MOSS: All right. Ambassador, you were talking about your marching orders at the end of the other side. You had said that the first one was to, oh, develop good relations with Nkrumah personally; the second one was to try and influence him in whatever ways you could. Could you spell that out a little more?

MAHONEY: Yes. Obviously, the first phase of the order made sense because Nkrumah was the whole show in the most total sense of the word. You made progress or lack thereof depending on your acceptance with him. The rest of the government apparatus was almost insignificant. And of course, the second idea was to try to have some influence on him. My influence, I'd have difficulty illustrating any concrete examples of it but he frequently would seek my advice on things. You'd never know, talking to Nkrumah, what the subject might be next.

I remember early in the game I was in talking to him at a particularly critical time in Ghana's history. This is after the so-called Kulungugu incident. He had been injured somewhat. The place was in an uproar. Three of his top people were being accused of treason: Adamafio (Tawia Adamafio), Ako Adjei, Cofie-Crabbe (Hugh C. Cofie-Crabbe), etc. I was in seeing him on the press, which was, you know, saying in no uncertain terms that this assassination attempt was the work of imperialists, colonialist, and neo-colonialists, of course, of which we were exhibit A, and protesting this sort of thing. And in an offhand way, Nkrumah said to me, "By the way, you know, Prime Minister Nehru (Jawaharlal Nehru) is in

Nigeria and he's supposed to come here in a day or so"--I forget the time elements but--"What do you think? Do you think it would be safe?" I said, "You know, I just have an offhand feeling that it might be very dangerous." He said to me, "I think I'll cancel the visit." He did cancel the visit. Whether he relied to any extent on my advice or not I don't know.

Another thing, to show you how candid I would get with Nkrumah, once in a while we'd get into an argument, which he enjoyed by the way, a pleasant argument. I remember one day we were arguing and we were getting quite philosophical in our discussion. You must realize Nkrumah was Catholic in his background. At one time he was going to be a priest. And of course, I was Catholic and he knew it, I suppose, or assumed it. He said to me at one point in the argument, "As they would say in your church, Mr. Ambassador." I said, "Just a minute, Mr. President. As they would say in our church." And he started to laugh. He said, "You know, you're right." But it was that kind of relationship. I think I probably was successful in a few cases of at least slowing him down in some of the silly things he was trying to undertake at the time.

MOSS: At the presentation of credentials, your first contact with Nkrumah, what were your first impressions if you can recall them?

MAHONEY: Pretty much what I thought they were going to be from the Washington look at the record: warm, pleasant, witty. He had a scintillating personality, an alive, creative personality. He was a tremendously impressive man to meet. I think he was a man with all kinds of problems; we all have them of course. I think he was kind of mixed up. He was part juju, part Catholic, part Marxist, you name it. Unlike Tubman(William V.S. Tubman), for example, in Liberia or even Sékou Touré in Guinea--Tubman being a conventional type of old capitalist, you might say, Toure a fairly orthodox Marxist--Nkrumah was just a, was a mess, just a whole series of things. But my first feelings on meeting him--we had this warm exchange and were just about what I thought they were going to be.

MOSS: Anything of note on the occasion itself?

MAHONEY: Not that I recall.

MOSS: Just the routine, kind of formal . . .

MAHONEY: Right.

MOSS: Let me ask you about the U.S. embassy staff and the embassy situation that you found when you arrived. What in effect was Russell's legacy as a mission: the quality

of staff, the morale, the organization, the policy positions they were taking, that kind of thing?

MAHONEY: Well, I don't remember particularly. You know, I was new to the game and was sort of personally overwhelmed by it all. I'll allude to some things that were happening just as I got there, such as the Accra Assembly, for example.

MOSS: Right.

MAHONEY: But it was a good staff. It later got the reputation of being if not the finest staff, one of the finest on the continent. We were highly exposed there and we needed awfully good people. I had a funny experience. I don't want to get personal but I had a deputy chief of mission I inherited.

MOSS: Green?

MAHONEY: Jim Green (James F. Green). He was a very fine, elegant guy, but he really wasn't my kind of a guy. I'm used to a rougher kind of an existence perhaps. I would never see Green, although he officed right across the hall from me. The few times we would visit during a week were when I went across to see him. He was very reticent about correcting me or advising me. Well, I've just always done business another way. I was so much concerned

about this and felt so inadequate with regard to the professional side of the mission, for which I had little or no preparation, that the first time I was back in Washington--maybe two or three months after I had originally gone over . . .

MOSS: October.

MAHONEY: . . . October--I went in to see Henry Tasca. I had great respect for Henry Tasca and somehow we sort of hit it off. He was my kind of a guy. He was very outspoken. I said, "Henry, you know, I'm not so sure what a deputy chief of mission should do but I have a feeling that I haven't got my kind of deputy chief of mission. I want a tough guy. I want a guy who'll talk back to me. I want a professional. I'll do the politicking and that sort of thing but I want a highly skilled diplomat who's not the least bit afraid to tell me what to do and to criticize me to my face. And he's got to be hardnosed because we're in a hell of a fight over there. He said, "I know just what you mean."

Two months later or so I got this fellow Oliver Trovel (Oliver L. Troxel, Jr.). I had never met Troxel; I had never heard anything about him. I relied

completely on Henry Tasca's judgment. Oliver Troxel is the finest officer I ever encountered. He came over there and took charge. He was simply magnificent. He was a tireless worker, brilliant mind. He handled the professional side of the embassy, and I handled the political side, the negotiating and that sort of thing, and we got on famously.

MOSS: When you say he handled the professional side, just what do you mean by it?

MAHONEY: Well, he would say, "Mr. Ambassador, you should make your call on so and so. I would suggest that you consult the foreign minister on that. I suggest you give him this aide memoire, or this note," and he helped me make those judgments. And you know, of course I'm a politician, I'm used to negotiating with people; I've spent my life at it. I handled, especially on my level, I handled those other kinds of things and the PR type of thing, the representational type of thing, which I felt completely at home in doing. But I needed this kind of professional support because I wasn't all that sure that many of the things I was doing were appropriate.

Let me add one more thing before I forget it, at this point. We finally ended up with a really superb

bunch of officers, a country team: two or three political men, two or three economic men, and so on. And I can say in all honesty that that was a happy ship. For one thing, with my usual Irish enthusiasm, everybody seemed to get promoted with regularity because I really believed in these people. I really gave them their head and they really belonged to a country team. That's the first time I'd ever heard the phrase. We would meet at least once or twice a week as a country team. And I got news for you, that was a freewheeling session at which the only thing that was penalized was any kind of a lack of candor or courage or forthrightness. We had a magnificent bunch of men there who were willing to work endless hours. Our days were frequently twelve and fourteen-hour days with never a suggestion of a complaint.

MOSS: Okay. I've gleaned some names from the cables but not all. I have Carter (George E. Carter) as the Peace Corps man.

MAHONEY: George Carter, yes.

MOSS: Lawless (William J. Lawless, Jr.) as your AID fellow.

MAHONEY: AID director, yes.

MOSS: Pinder (Frank E. Pinder) in USIS (United States Information Service).

MAHONEY: Pinder was a black who'd had some twenty or twenty-five years in West Africa prior to my coming there. He was more or less Lawless's agriculture man. Lawless was an immensely gifted fellow. He had been loaned under the Operation Tycoon sort of thing that John Kennedy started, by IBM (International Business Machines). . . . Although Pinder did not have these kinds of academic and professional qualifications, he was an awfully good operator and the Ghanaians and the Africans loved him, and after Lawless left I insisted that he be made the new AID director, and he was. I believe he was the first black AID director in Africa; I'm not sure of that.

MOSS: Okay. [redacted] We'll talk about that one in more detail but I just wanted to get them down.

MAHONEY: [redacted]

MOSS: Okay. And your army attaché?

MAHONEY: Very fine guy, a black, Colonel--good lord--Colonel Evans (Luther B. Evans). Superb man.

MOSS: You don't remember his first name, do you?

MAHONEY: Luther. Luther Evans.

MOSS: Okay.

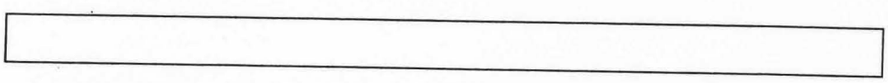
MAHONEY: But we had awfully good officers. We had, under Troxel, Bill Edmondson (William B. Edmondson), political; Jim Engle (James B. Engle), political; Jack Foley (John W. Foley, Jr.), economic officer. And then the finest--I keep using these terms--the very finest young foreign service officer I encountered in four years, a fellow named Funk, Howard Funk (Howard V. Funk, Jr.). God, he was magnificent. He must have been in his early thirties then. He was an economic type of officer. Very bold, outspoken, clever, sophisticated. He died tragically a few years later in a jeep accident in Kenya. Howard Funk.

MOSS: Okay. As you took hold of the embassy, what were the things that you felt you had to do while you were there? Any changes that you seemed to be making or that seemed necessary, before we get into the . . .

MAHONEY: Well, one of the changes I tried to effect, and probably almost subconsciously so, was to make it a

more democratic organization with more participation--and I don't have any purpose in blowing a horn here. I just wanted to see these men and these wives begin to understand that they really, number one, had a job to do and number two, their active participation in whatever we were trying to do was welcome. We just developed this wonderful spirit. Things were kind of drab, really, when we came there. People of course are naturally apprehensive when they see a, especially a non-career man like myself coming aboard. My God, we turned out to be a, just turned out to be a beautiful family.

MOSS: I was wondering about this because you have a kind of crisis in the foreign service going on at the same time that there's all the Kennedy excitement and that kind of thing. There's a notion that the foreign service is being put down as being a lot of stuffy old bureaucrats and that the young guys coming in are seeing it as being the tail end of things. I have a couple of friends who were in it at the time who felt that they were being cookiepushers and that in effect



the foreign service guys were being made to hold coats

and that kind of thing. Leon Poullada (Leon B. Poullada) in Togo resigned saying some of these things and the fact the foreign service was not being given the responsibilities it should, being directed too closely from Washington, things of that sort. What is your feeling on this?

MAHONEY: And of course you're dating this back to the Kennedy days, the Johnson days.

MOSS: Yes.

MAHONEY: Well, my feelings on that score, I have some fairly definite ideas about that from my experience. And I was going to get to this at one point. During the days that Kennedy was alive there was an excitement. I knew that John Kennedy sent me over there because he trusted me, trusted my judgment, would expect me to make decisions--which I did, by the way, frequently without communicating with Washington--and that I would be held accountable for my errors as well as for the few achievements. It was just a great, great feeling. And I think my staff had that feeling. I must say, and I was going to comment on this a little later in the stage, there was a marked change with the death of John Kennedy. Some of this is subjective on my part because I literally loved the guy, but I

think some of it's objective. A curtain dropped. We always had the feeling that Kennedy had a general idea of what we were doing and was behind us and was watching us and hoping and, you know, praying with us to get the job done. When he died, a curtain dropped.

Now, it was at this point in late '63, early '64 that President Johnson became more and more involved with Vietnam. He just, almost like a narcotics user, he got hooked; I think unfortunately so. Some of this is hindsight. By the way, I might add for the record, I think John Kennedy, given the marvelously empirical, pragmatic way he had of approaching problems, would never have gotten mired down in that sense, but that is pure speculation, and it'd take me a day to tell you why I think that. Let me give you an illustration. The last substantive encounter I had with President Johnson was February of '74 when a crowd stormed the embassy and ran the flag down.

MOSS: February '64.

MAHONEY: February of 1964, right. We got in, we were really in trouble. That was really bad. It was the culmination of a period of very bad feeling and a very frightening experience. I was afraid for our wives and children all

right. So I came home and I had a very interesting experience with President Johnson and Governor Harriman, etc. That was the last time I really saw Johnson till I left.

At a subsequent time I was in Washington and I paid my respects to the president in '64. I went up to see a fellow whom I knew named John Macy (John W. Macy, Jr.), who was chairman of the Civil Service Commission. At this time, he had two hats: John was acting as sort of, he was Ralph Dungan and Carl Kaysen's counterpart in the Johnson administration. So Macy said to me, "How are you doing over there, Bill?" I told him, I said, "I don't know." He looked at me with a very strange look and he said, "What do you mean by that?" I said, "Nothing is going on over there, John, but nothing." I said, "You know, we're over there, we're alone, the president," I said, "I'm sure the president's terribly busy and I'm sure we're not that important but," I said, "my God, he could look at Africa once in a while and just drop a remark, a paragraph." I said, "We're just losing whatever the hell we gained over there, which wasn't much, I guess, but . . . " He said to me, "What can we do about it?" Well, I said, "I don't know. I haven't been thinking about this, I'm just telling you that we're

grinding to a halt over there." I said, "Why don't you ask a head of state over here? Do anything," I said. "You know, I know that you're busy. My God, make a gesture. These Africans are sensitive people." He said, "Who would you suggest?" I said, "It doesn't make any difference. A black head of state. I'm not going to make a suggestion."

So they invited . . . They followed the suggestion. They invited President Yameogo (Maurice Yameogo) of the Upper Volta. And that was the occasion that turned out to be a very interesting one. He and President Johnson ended up after a dinner at the Lincoln Memorial--you remember all of that. But we did lose a lot of ground out there. And of course, I often said to my wife and family, "I'm glad I'm not an ambassador--or wasn't an ambassador during the Vietnam thing. I think life would have been unbearable. Thank God I didn't go through that."

But after John Kennedy died, I don't say this as a Kennedy fellow or partisan . . .

BEGIN TAPE II

MAHONEY: . . .the show simply stopped, period, paragraph. It was tragic.

MOSS: Okay. Let me turn around and go through a sort of checklist of events and issues and things. It goes roughly chronologically. When you first arrived in June of '62 the Accra Assembly was about to take place.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: There was a big question of just who from the United States was going to be there and why, and what Nkrumah was doing with this thing, and the whole shadow of nuclear testing, and that sort of thing. Could you go into your recollections of that a little bit?

MAHONEY: Yes. They're rather vivid. Let's call this the first occasion where I really exercised some influence, and I say this in all modesty, before I got there. This is the only thing I did with regard to Ghana before I ever arrived. In the months of April and May, there was a conversation in the department regarding this assembly, which I personally never thought was anything more than a communist type of sounding board, etc. The sentiment in the department at the time was rather pronounced and uniform, to the effect that we should have nothing to do with it. I personally felt very strongly that we should participate, you know, certainly at lower than White House level; I'm not talking about that. We shouldn't dignify it with anybody of real importance as

far as the president was concerned. But I felt it was absolute nonsense and stupidity to avoid that thing, as though these problems were going to go away. So I started a campaign . . . . Perhaps somebody else was doing it but as I remember, I was practically alone: that we should be over there, we should be over there with some competent people--whom I didn't know. I had no knowledge of who should or should not be there. I just felt that we should be in that ballgame doing what we can.

My suggestion was bought and accepted by Secretary Rusk and others, and then we went over a bunch of names. This is a very interesting story. They came up with the name of James Wadsworth (James J. Wadsworth), whom, I understand--with whom I became a great friend--had quite a distinguished record as a diplomat, schooled in a multi-member body such as the United Nations. Anyway, and then we had some other names of British and Irish, "of our kind of people." The first thing I did, I had only been in Accra a couple or three weeks when this Ban-the-Bomb Assembly opened. The night before the assembly opened, we had our first bachelor dinner in the residence, attended by James Wadsworth, Séan

MacBride of Ireland, Lord Kennet (Wayland Young) of Great Britain, another noted Briton who was a winner of the Nobel prize. Anyway, there were six or eight people who thought the way we think. All of them were men of great competence. We had a meeting. I said, "Gentlemen," I was very outspoken about our purpose, "we're here to see if we can agree on a strategy. You men are professionals, I am not. If this were a pure political assembly, I could take part."

We stayed on that night. Various men took different assignments: MacBride took such and such committee; Wadsworth took another committee; Lord Kennet of Great Britain--Wayland Young, I believe, was his name--he took another committee. And honest to God, we divided the assignments up and in large part, although the numbers weren't that great, the competence was so good and the expertise so obvious that these men either took over the committees, and in some instances led the discussions, or neutralized or defanged the chief, the Communist efforts. I forget how it was done. We followed it very closely. That was a planned campaign and it was relatively successful. The results of that assembly could have been much more devastating. For example, in the area of test bans. You know, we're

all for test bans if they're enforceable and if there's some way to see that the other guy's being honest. We were able, as I remember, to just blow them out of the water on this, that a test ban treaty without some kind of means of verification was stupidity, etc. I think I did make a contribution in that area.

MOSS: Did the Ghana government officials recognize and appreciate what was going on and if they did, what was their response to it?

MAHONEY: Do you mean to our effort to . . .

MOSS: Right.

MAHONEY: . . . coordinate our . . . No, I don't think so.

MOSS: No.

MAHONEY: No.

MOSS: You don't think that was appreciated?

MAHONEY: I don't think, no. It was a rather . . . Those African things can frequently be just like Chinese fire drills, they're pretty . . .

MOSS: Loose?

MAHONEY: . . . pretty loose. No. I don't think they knew what we were doing. I think there were many of the, there were a few genuine Marxists in the Nkrumah government. I'd like to talk about that somewhere along the line. Most of them were phonies or opportunists mouthing Marxist

lines to ingratiate themselves with Osagyefo. But I'm sure some of them were quite surprised and some of the, perhaps the Russian delegation, with the moderate tone of most of the assembly recommendations. But this came from two things: from some awfully good people who were organized and some hard work.

MOSS: And it might have been quite a show, as far as the . . .

MAHONEY: Well, I think it would have been pretty much a Marxist show. Of course, you know, people like Lord Kennet and Séan MacBride--whom I later got to know, who is an immensely gifted guy--they would have been there. But it was my suggestion out of innocence, "My God, if we're going to make an effort, let's all get together." I not only suggest that we have a strong presence there, for example, with a man like Ambassador Wadsworth, but let's get together with our friends and let's make this a team effort. And we did, and it worked.

MOSS: Okay. Nkrumah exchanged several messages with the president on the matter of testing and disarmament, particularly after we had gone in for testing. You had several meetings with Nkrumah, trying to explain to him just what our situation was. I think most of this comes out in the cables. But you at one point, in embassy

telegram fifty-two of the eleventh of July, you characterized him as knowing he could get nowhere with the Soviet Union and afraid he might antagonize them, whereas he believed the U.S. would tolerate him and might even listen. I think this is an interesting kind of comment on him.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: Do you still think that in retrospect?

MAHONEY: No, I do not. That's, you know, that's a pretty fine point. I'm not so sure what I think anymore, but I remember I was enraged over that. I used to get . . . You know, a diplomat shouldn't get personally involved but I have a way of reacting that way. I try to be civilized about it. When they came out and publicly, well, they handed us a note regarding our bomb testing, I was furious. This old double standard, you know; me, I was still kind of relatively innocent, I suppose, and I just blew my stack. Nkrumah and I had some discussions about this. I just thought, "This is just grossly unfair," and so on.

MOSS: You also noted at the same time the possibility that Ghana might become a major nuisance because of the naiveté and because of their pretensions as, moral

leadership and that sort of thing, particularly Nkrumah's himself. Does this hold up?

MAHONEY: Oh, yes. It held up through the whole time. He was a matter of some embarrassment to our country on many, many occasions as a result of his posturing.

MOSS: On the practical side, at this time in July, he was also concerned with his financial situation, curiously enough. Alongside this moral posturing, he was worrying about the international bank advisers who were coming and the VALCO (Volta Aluminum Company) situation, and so forth.

MAHONEY: Right.

MOSS: Could you talk about that side of him just a little?

MAHONEY: Well, believe me, brother, I can be eloquent on that score. If he was concerned at that time--and I'd forgotten this until I just read a few of these cables--that was the last time he ever showed any concern. I'll never forget, one of our great friends was Barbara Ward (Barbara Ward Jackson), you know, used to live there. She's a magnificent gal, the wife of Sir Robert Jackson, who's one of our very best friends. Barbara used to come there and go in to see the old boy and then come over to see me. They were really great friends. She

came back one day shaking her head--wasn't long after this cable that you read--saying, you know, "He's not an economic moron or even idiot; he is an economic cretin." She just absolutely gave up. The point I want to make is that Ghana was going downhill financially at this time. That's an interesting thing to have you read that because, God knows, after that he never indicated the least interest in the course of the years.

MOSS: Well, that's what I wondered because I didn't see any cables after that.

MAHONEY: Not the least in the course of three years. If anything, the spending was accelerated.

MOSS: Okay. It wasn't long after you arrived that you had the Kulungugu incident. As I understand it, he was injured. The bomb went off behind him and he was injured in tender places and that sort of thing and his pride was probably as much hurt as his body.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: And this resulted in a kind of paranoia on his part about the people around him and the West and the CIA and capitalists.

MAHONEY: Yes. Now that I look back, I think that was the beginning of the end of Nkrumah, that incident. I think that was the beginning of a kind of a paranoid condition that we

saw grow and grow and grow as we stayed there--that Kulungugu thing. If you recall, right after that, he suspected Adamafio, the . . . By the way I do, too. Adamafio was a cutey. And Ako Adjei, this poor simpleton who was his foreign minister, and a guy named Cofie-Crabbie, whom I didn't know. But this was the beginning of Nkrumah's preoccupation with forces outside his control. He was never the same after that.

MOSS: The Ghanaian press, of course, was attacking the United States at this time, and there were imputations of CIA responsibility and that sort of thing. I want to talk about this first on one level, on the diplomatic level. You were instructed to protest this.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: Later on in November when you have a recurrence of the press attacks particularly on the Peace Corps, you go in for a policy of, I think it's courteous aloofness, you called it . . .

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: . . . in the cables. Now, could you . . .

MAHONEY: Neither one worked, by the way.

MOSS: Well, this is what I was going to say. You know, was the second a conscious attempt at something else?

MAHONEY: Yes, anything else.

MOSS: Yeah, okay. How did they work and what happened?

MAHONEY: Neither worked. We would get temporary relief. I'll be very brief in this, but, my God, it was an unending agony. The Guinea press was stridently anti-American and in the case of Spark reprinted Izvestia articles. The press was state-owned and CPP-run--Kofi Batsaa, a Bureau of African Affairs activist, and Basner were Flagstaff intimates, as was Eric Heyman. You know, they can have any press they want. But they cannot have it as a government press attacking my country, that was my point. I'd go in to see Nkrumah and it would subside for maybe a week or a month. Or if Averell Harriman, who was a frequent visitor, was coming over, while Averell was there it would subside; or Chad Calhoun (Chad F. Calhoun), or Edgar Kaiser (Edgar F. Kaiser). But we could never lick it. Nkrumah and I had many, many discussions about this. He equated the Ghanaian Times with Life magazine or Time magazine.

By the way, that's another complete subject. Time used to do a really superb job of, you know, yellow journalism on Ghana. That's another story, I won't get into that.

But he equated the two. I said, "Mr. President, John Kennedy has no control over Henry Luce (Henry R. Luce)." "Oh, well," and so on. It just never ended. It was kind of, it used to get almost humorous. They had a very clever white South African columnist named Basner (H. M. Basner).

MOSS: Right.

MAHONEY: That guy, all credit to him, was good. He could take Marxism and Marxist principles and criticize almost anything we were doing plausibly with a front page editorial, daily. They used to mention me once in a while, Mahoney. I was kind of public enemy number one over there with the press. But they could always let everyone in Ghana after a few months know who they were talking about when they referred to me as the cowboy nuclear imperialist. Cowboy, I guess, because I was from Arizona and nuclear imperialist because I was an American. But we never really licked that problem. At first, Nkrumah indicated some responsibility for the quality of the press but after that, it just got wilder and wilder.

One funny thing happened, for the record. At the height of one of these press campaigns--they would peak

and dip, depending on the world situation and Ghana's problems--Senator Vance Hartke was there with his family spending a week in Ghana. While Vance was staying in the Ambassador Hotel, down the street from where we lived, the Ghanaian Times came out one morning with a big headline, "Mahoney go home." Well, Hartke saw it and really blew his stack. He came thundering over to the embassy and came in to see me and he was absolutely furious. And I don't think it was a feigned fury; he was really upset. You know, we're generous with these people, they're a bunch of ungrateful bastards, on and on and on, and I'm going to call a press conference and really tell them. I said, "Look, Hartke, you're a United States senator, I'm over here, you know, representing our president. If there are any press conferences, I'm going to give them. By the way, we're not going to have any. And if you give one, I'm just leaving. I'll just get the hell out of here." It got pretty hot. I finally backed him off. Vance was ready to set all of Africa straight at that point. Thank God he didn't. But that's an example of the kind of atmosphere it was. It was very volatile.

MOSS: About this time too Soapy Williams made a statement about Ghana having a kind of eastward bent or being more neutral towards the East than he was towards the West, or something of that sort.

MAHONEY: Oh, yeah, I remember that flap.

MOSS: Nkrumah went up in the air on it and the president sent a reply and said . . . He didn't disown the statement, as a matter of fact, he kind of backed it up.

MAHONEY: Certainly. Sure he did. Yeah, that didn't amount to much. Poor Soapy, he came out of that all right. But I think I might have mentioned this to you: we used to say that Nkrumah was, you know, if you were going to be objective about it, "genuinely" non-aligned. He was halfway between Peking and Moscow. You know, that's the truth. We used to have a lot of fun with that.

MOSS: Okay. In October, the first of October, he finally addressed the parliament and sort of came out of his seclusion. I believe he'd addressed the military academy one time before but . . .

MAHONEY: That's correct.

MOSS: . . . the parliament thing was really his first outing since Kulungugu.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: He made a speech in which he, amongst all the rest of it, there were some signs that he was trying to encourage

foreign capital to be invested in Ghana.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: If I read the cables right, you looked at this as a kind of hopeful sign . . .

MAHONEY: Yes, we did.

MOSS: . . . as an amelioration of the situation.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: How soon did that begin to break down again or how durable was it?

MAHONEY: Well, it went for another year or two as I remember. They organized sort of a development bank, they encouraged Halm (William M. Q. Halm) . . .

MOSS: Halm, the ambassador, became the head of it.

MAHONEY: . . . who became the head of it, Ambassador Halm. They were constantly encouraging American industry to come in and encouraged the Kaisers, of course, who were a rather special cup of tea. They were so rare and so different, unique, that you can't say that the Kaisers really, the whole Kaiser exercise represents the American situation from a private investment point of view. They'd come and go, depending on what magazine you read. If you read Spark, that was the magazine of the Bureau of African Affairs, advocating that we all be thrown in the Atlantic was one thing. It was always a mixed picture. I often thought that Nkrumah was a lot more clever than

we ever gave him credit for being. He had all these balls in the air at once. Depending on who you were listening to or what you were reading, you could gather almost any impression you wanted. There was a hardline Marxian viewpoint in Spark, there was a lesser line in the Evening News--I'm not sure of these names any more --and another line in the Daily Graphic, and an even, almost conservative line until they shut the place down in the Ashanti Pioneer. So it was always awfully difficult to have a reading, plus the fact that they changed from month to month.

MOSS: Okay. You wanted to go back to the . . .

MAHONEY: I would like to make, though, before we go any further, a comment about the Kaiser thing. Nkrumah operated on the basis of personalities. I've done some articles on Nkrumah where I've mentioned this sort of thing. Personalities, friendships, personal reassurance--I often thought that he had really serious problems emotionally--were much more important to Nkrumah than ideas, in my estimation. Ideas to him were mechanisms to be used for immediate political purposes, whether he's a Marxist this day, a capitalist that. I don't think he was ever profoundly anything but he put a tremendous importance on friendships and warmth and that sort of thing. He was wild about a few people that I've heard.

He just idolized John Kennedy, idolized him. No question about it. I'll tell you a story about that in a minute so I don't forget it. He idolized and loved Edgar Kaiser. He loved Chad Calhoun. Strangely, he was wildly attached to the old man who owned the goldmines at Obuasi, General Spears (Major-General Sir Edward L. Spears).

MOSS: Yeah, right.

MAHONEY: General Spears, who was the incarnation of the British colonial type. Just thought Spears was the greatest.

MOSS: Used to bring him toys.

MAHONEY: Toys, yes. Yes. But to get back to the Kennedy thing, if he told me once, he told me a half a dozen different times how warmly he was received early in the Kennedy administration at the White House by John Kennedy; and then introduced to Mrs. Kennedy (Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy) and the children. And believe me, brother, this was not phony. I was always surprised that I guess he forgot he told me previously. I'd say I must have heard that a half a dozen times. You'd walk into his office. . . He was basically a bohemian, an intellectual. You know, the entire room was lined with books. There was a photograph of Mao Tse-Tung and a photograph of Khrushchev (Nikita S. Khrushchev), but

the most prominent photograph of all was a photograph of--it's the only place I've ever seen it but--President and Mrs. Kennedy walking toward a chapel or walking along a walk. I had never seen that; never seen it since.

MOSS: I may be able to show you one. It's coming out of a chapel, I believe, and I . . .

MAHONEY: Coming out of a chapel, yes.

MOSS: . . . think it's down at Palm Beach (Florida), if I'm not mistaken.

MAHONEY: He would say to me, "Mr. Ambassador, you've seen this." "Yes, Mr. President. About three dozen times." But this was awfully important.

Oh, I got to tell you a little story. I was with the president on November the nineteenth, three days before he died, and we had a wonderful conversation and then I flew back to Africa that night. We got the news of his death on Friday night, our time; noon hour, one o'clock, here in our country. One of my officers came and first said, "The president's been seriously wounded," and then a few minutes later, he's died. And of course, we were absolute vegetables, my family and I. So we go in the library of the residence and we're saying a rosary, and the telphone rang. Now, in Ghana the telephone perhaps will come into its own in

another hundred years but it's simply awful. In the first place, we never had telephone conversations because everything is bugged to begin with, at least we assumed it was; in the second place, you couldn't understand anybody anyway. It was one of two times in the time I was in Ghana that Nkrumah ever spoke to me on the telephone. He called me while we were saying the rosary and he said in his big, deep voice, "Is it true?" I said, "Yes, I'm afraid it is, Mr. President." And he said to me, "What can I do?" I said, "Well, you could send a cable to Mrs. Kennedy"-- he was a great admirer of hers--"and you could say a Hail Mary." He said, "What?" Well, I have to say as an aside, I was just frantic, you see, and I shouted at him, "Say a Hail Mary." Knowing he was a Catholic, he was supposed to be like I was supposed to be. He said to me, "I'm on my knees now." And he hung up.

Well, then, by this time, he was afraid to leave Flagstaff House for any occasion. We had this mass the following Monday in the Accra cathedral and it was packed, in the evening. He came on the radio that night with a beautiful tribute to John Kennedy. That was his way.

MOSS: Okay. You were talking about the Kaisers. Let me ask you if there were any differences between the way that Edgar Kaiser operated with Nkrumah and the way that Chad Calhoun did. Did you see any differences in their approach to Nkrumah or the way they were handling the situation?

MAHONEY: No. No, the approaches, as I remember, were almost identical. You'd have to understand--I'm sure you do--how close Chad Calhoun, who was really a remarkable fellow, was to Nkrumah. Nkrumah just literally . . . Nkrumah just worshipped Chad Calhoun. Edgar didn't get over there as often, you know. Chad was over there once a month or so. Chad was a very . . . If you know Chad, he was a very warm, generous, kind man. By the way, so is Edgar Kaiser. Those two men are absolutely unique. Their approach is very much alike. There was always the question there, was the tail wagging the dog here? This was always being asked in Washington. It never concerned me, God bless them. The single most important thing we had going during the time I was in Ghana, over and above whatever relationship I had with Nkrumah and the Peace Corps . . . I'd say by far the most important presence we had was the Kaiser presence. That wasn't phony. It was just something else. Thank

God we had it, you know. Nkrumah really believed in those people, trusted them completely.

MOSS: I'll come to that in a moment because there were one or two things I wanted to get on that. But back to the chronology. In October of '62, you came back to Washington for consultation, just about the time of the Cuban missile crisis.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: Do you remember what the occasion for your coming back was?

MAHONEY: No, I really don't. I did get involved, though, in the Cuban thing, in a . . .

MOSS: I wondered what your impressions of Washington were at the time.

MAHONEY: Well, Bill, it was a very interesting passage. I came home, I'm sure there was some fairly critical problem but I can't remember what it is. Anyway, I came home. When I used to come home, in my simplicity, without ever checking with anyone in the State Department, I didn't know any better; I'd just call one of my friends in the White House and I would always get to see the president within a day or so. I'd call Sorensen (Theodore C. Sorensen) or Dungan or one of the boys. So I came home this time and I called

Ralph Dungan, and, for the first time, I couldn't get in. I didn't know what was going on and I had work to do at the department. I found out what was going on in the morning of his speech to the country. I was staying with Soapy Williams, as I always did, in his home. He said, "Bill, we want you at the State Department"--I forget what morning of the week it was --"I'm going early this morning and I want you to go with me." So I went with Soapy; I didn't know what was going on. So we got there. This is, mind you, the morning of the evening that the president addressed our people.

MOSS: It was Tuesday.

MAHONEY: Was it a Tuesday? So as soon as we got there, there was a meeting in Secretary Rusk's office. All the top people were there. I don't know who they were but Secretary Rusk, George Ball, so on. I think that was the group I was in. And Secretary Rusk, as I remember, in a very quiet way said, "Gentlemen, this is what we're confronted with." And he gave us a little background. Well, each of us had an assignment. My assignment, as I remember, I stayed in Washington that night; in fact, I was around the, near the president when his speech was given.

Early the next morning, I went to New York to intercede with the Ghanaian delegation for that debate that took place that day. At that time, I believe Ghana was a member of the Security Council, damn important. I remember I tried to lobby Quaison-Sackey (Alex Quaison-Sackey). I didn't get very far. He was kind of a wise fellow. I never trusted that guy, by the way. Anyway, then I immediately flew to Ghana, to Nkrumah to see him at the earliest possible moment because our country was afraid that Ghana would give overflight rights to the Russians. As I remember, something like a ten-thousand-mile hop from Moscow to Havana and they would need either overflight rights or landing rights or both. This is one of the most interesting encounters I ever had with Nkrumah. Anyway, I worked all day on the problem and then early the next morning flew to New York, a quick visit to Quaison-Sackey and immediately to Africa. I went in from the airport to see him and I had these huge blowups, pictures of the missiles. He had heard the president's speech and had read it and was very . . .

MOSS: He had gotten the blowups.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: From the press.

MAHONEY: From me.

MOSS: Oh, from you.

MAHONEY: From me. I hand carried them.

MOSS: Okay, fine. He had not gotten them through the London release.

MAHONEY: Oh, no.

MOSS: Okay.

MAHONEY: These blowups, Bill, were perhaps . . .

MOSS: Yeah.

MAHONEY: . . . four feet high.

MOSS: Right.

MAHONEY: And I hand carried them. I had about five of them. He looked at those things and, honest to God, you could have knocked his eyes off with a stick. I said, "Now, Mr. President, this is what we're concerned about." He said, "Oh, my God," or something like that. I said, "I have a request." Oh, first he said to me, he said, "You know"--I forget how he put it but to the effect that, you know--"your nation is finally acting like a major power." Then I said, "Now, Mr. President, I have a request to make of you." This is in a very ticklish, this is before Khrushchev backed off. This is within fourteen hours or so of the president's speech. "Were asking your country to deny the Russians overflight rights and landing rights." In effect,

this is what I said. He said, "No problem. No questions. Under no circumstances will they be able to do anything vaguely resembling that." Flat statement. I'll never forget that statement. I thought, you know, he's going to light into me for imperialism and so on. He said, "At last your country is beginning to act like a major power," which would indicate that sometimes it's the only thing people really respect.

. . .

MAHONEY: Isn't it interesting?

MOSS: . . . It's a rather curious apposition of things, his ideological bent on the one hand and his appreciation of a power situation on the other.

MAHONEY: Precisely.

MOSS: You had, I believe, if I'm not mistaken, a long talk with Carl Kaysen about Ghana during that time home. Do you recall that at all?

MAHONEY: Yes, I do. Only vaguely, because that was the first time that I really started to work with Carl. I'd been sort of working with Dungan up to that point.

MOSS: Were there any differences between the way Dungan and Kaysen operated that affected what you were doing? Even slight differences of tone or style.

MAHONEY: Yes, there are but you know, I'd have an awful time defining the difference. They're both brilliant guys for whom I have immense respect. Dungan was perhaps a little more the politician. Now mind you now, I'm assuming that these are two superbly gifted minds and basically scholarly fellows. Dungan's more of a meat and potatoes type tactician. Carl was a little more theoretical, you know; speculative type of mind. I felt more at home frankly with Dungan, probably because I'd known him and worked with him. But in a political situation if I have to make a choice, I would choose Dungan for judgmental powers. If I were writing a book, I would look to Kaysen. That's probably an unfair assessment. But Carl was a marvelous guy and very helpful to us. You know, I don't remember the details, I ran into one very unpleasant fellow--only one in the whole time that I was on the job, which wasn't all that long. It was this Robert--and you know, I shouldn't mention it because I hear him . . .

MOSS: At the White House?

MAHONEY: Yeah.

MOSS: Komer (Robert W. Komer)?

MAHONEY: Komer. He called me one day when I was back from Africa and started lecturing me about West Africa. I think I

knew a little bit more about what he was talking about than he did, that's number one--and he didn't give me the courtesy for knowing anything--and number two, he was a kind of an arrogant fellow. I'll never forget that. He was a Johnson fellow. I think we were on . . . We were talking about the Congo at the time but it was damn unpleasant, I remember. It was just plain damn unpleasant.

MOSS: Well, during the Kennedy administration he was Middle East, the Yemen war and that sort of thing.

MAHONEY: Was he?

MOSS: Right.

MAHONEY: Yeah. Well.

MOSS: And then he moved over to take over the Africa thing during the Johnson administration.

MAHONEY: That's the only difficulty I ever had of that kind.

MOSS: Very shortly after the missile crisis, Bowles (Chester Bowles) paid you a visit in Ghana. Can you recall that and . . .

MAHONEY: Yes, I . . .

MOSS: . . . comment on it?

MAHONEY: I was just reading the account of it.

MOSS: Yeah.

MAHONEY: And you know--I get to edit this thing, don't I?

MOSS: Oh, yes. Yes, very definitely.

MAHONEY: All right. Well, I want to tell you what happened. Chester was an old friend--I'm not dropping names--he was an old political friend whom I really admire. So he blows by and obviously he wants to see the president. Everybody did. We had to be kind of careful because we only had so much money in the bank with regard to going in and seeing Nkrumah with every fellow coming by, but of course Chester Bowles (then U. S. Ambassador-at-large) was something else. I had kind of trouble getting Bowles in. Frequently . . . We never called unless I was sure I could make it.

MOSS: Would you check this out with Erica Powell or somebody like that?

MAHONEY: Oh, no. No, we'd make our own judgments. But I'd always work through Erica and Erica would never fail me but sometimes she said, "Bill, I'll have to call you back," or something like that. But we finally got Bowles in as I remember. We had to wait for perhaps a day. Anyway, we got in in the evening, I remember that. Bowles started lecturing Kwame Nkrumah. The three of us were there. Now I knew Nkrumah by this time and you don't lecture a guy like this. You know, Nkrumah would regard this as some kind of an affront, you know; not from an ego point of view, it's just that,

you know, this guy's got to be more intelligent than this. Anyway, Bowles went on and on and on: India this and Pakistan that. I was sitting there and was watching Nkrumah and I'm not kidding you, if I could have kicked under the table and hit Bowles in the shin and slowed him down, I would have done it, but it would have been just too obvious. I couldn't do it without Nkrumah seeing it. Nkrumah was looking at the ceiling, looking at the floor, looking at me, twisting his ring. It's one of the only times I've ever seen Nkrumah--it is the only time I've ever seen Nkrumah--almost impolite. Honest to God, Bowles . . . You know, when I'm talking to somebody, I kind of keep an eye on them to see if they're being impressed or whether he's resenting it. Bowles just kept going on. He went on for about twenty or thirty minutes. Frankly, I was very, very apprehensive. He didn't score at all, I'll tell you.

MOSS: One of the curious things about that particular airgram that you're referring to is that . . .

MAHONEY: Now, by the way, I didn't say it in my dispatch.

MOSS: Yeah, right.

MAHONEY: But if you read it very carefully, I think you could see it.

MOSS: Bowles mentions, as they're looking at the blowups of the missile sites which were in the room and which he

walked over to look at, that he had talked to Dobrynin on I believe it was the twelfth or thirteenth, or fourteenth perhaps, of October and had informed him that we knew that there were offensive weapons in Cuba. Now, if that statement is accurate, Bowles told that to Dobrynin before the evidence came in because the evidence didn't come in to Bundy till that night.

MAHONEY: Now, when was this conversation? I'm trying to remember. When was it with regard to the Cuban missile crisis?

MOSS: All right. Okay. Bowles was in Accra on the first of November.

MAHONEY: Oh, yeah.

MOSS: . . . and he is saying that just before he left Washington on or about the fourteenth of October, he was talking to Dobrynin and told him that there were offensive weapons in Cuba. You know, that, the date leapt out at me because it was on the night of the fourteenth . . .

MAHONEY: That's very interesting.

MOSS: . . . that Bundy received the first photographs.

MAHONEY: Well, all I can tell you is that what is reported is what I heard. I was the reporting officer. I didn't bother to check with Bowles--wait a minute; yes, I did. I think I said in the cable that I'm sending a copy of this to Ambassador Bowles in the event he wants to correct it. I think I said that. Anyway, that's

probably what he said. However, there could be an error there.

MOSS: Yeah. I intend to send him a copy of it or get in touch with him and ask him just what the heck is going on.

MAHONEY: Yeah. That very well could be in error.

MOSS: A day or two or something?

MAHONEY: It could be instead of the fourteenth, it could have been the sixteenth or the twenty-fourth or it could have been a juxtaposition of numbers. As you say, I noticed that reading the cable, it does not make sense. But I don't think that I would resurrect that subject out of the thin air without having heard it but I could very well be wrong on that date.

MOSS: Okay. All right. In November, you had the press attacks on the Peace Corps and the Ghanaian government asked that all the Peace Corps volunteers except the teachers of English, French, math, and science be recalled.

MAHONEY: Right.

MOSS: Okay. Do you remember how you received this and what the notions were about it?

MAHONEY: Well, there were numerous attacks on the Peace Corps; CIA agents in sheep's clothing, etc., that disturbed me because I got to know most of these youngsters and they were beautiful kinds and I just didn't want to see them

being hurt. You know, they were over there giving, in some cases, their health to those people as well as their talent. But we never got terribly excited about that. You know, the interesting thing--and this was one of my suggestions that worked, that became an institution--we had a hundred and fifty teachers; they were all teachers. They were always, the host government was always worried about their getting into ideological areas. But I remember the contingent we received in September of '62, I said to my staff, "My God, these kids are coming here and they're all African-Ghanaian fans or they wouldn't be here. Why don't I ask Kwame Nkrumah if he wouldn't receive them in an informal little party? It'd be a beautiful thing for the kids and I think it'd be a damn good thing for Nkrumah and the government." Well, he jumped at the idea. So it became an annual event. I say this because no matter what kind of flack was flying from the Guinea press or from Spark, Nkrumah was always asking me for twice as many volunteers as we could supply. I'd say, "Mr. President, you know, we haven't got that many to . . . We're strung out thinly now." Then frequently I'd say, "By the way, I wish you'd tell some of your newspaper editors." You know, we'd

kid but it wasn't all that funny. That became quite an institution. These youngsters, of course, were they thrilled. Nkrumah would go down the line and meet every one of them and shake his or her hand. He knew about Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) and Keokuk, Iowa, the whole bit. It became quite an institution. Peace Corps never really worried us though. They handled themselves very nicely. I might say that we almost made a fetish of staying away from the Peace Corps in order to avoid that. The only time I ever saw them, really, is when one of the youngsters'd get hospitalized or something or we gave an annual Christmas party for them--our family.

MOSS: I got the notion from some of the cables at that time that Carter perhaps was overreacting to the thing and really screaming for help from the department and they . . .

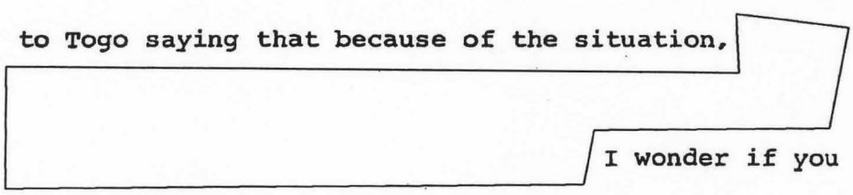
MAHONEY: He was.

MOSS: . . . came back and said, "Look, just calm down, it's all right."

MAHONEY: He was. Yeah. George was just a bit on that side of the ledger. Otherwise, but a great officer. He was succeeded by a fellow by the name of Broderick (Francis L. Broderick). Nothing disturbed Frank Broderick.

MOSS: Okay. About this time you've got a couple of things going on; three really. You've got Gbedemah (Komla A. Gbedemah) in Lomé and Togo and also in London sort of making noises in opposition to Nkrumah; you've got Busia (Kofi Busia) in Washington testifying before Dodd's (Thomas J. Dodd) committee and making all sorts of noises; and you've got the notion floating around Accra that the government is going to attempt to involve some U.S. embassy personnel in the bombing trial and so on that eventually winds up in the Nydell (Carl C. Nydell, Jr.) and Davis (William B. Davis) episode.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: Could you go into this a little bit? I notice that in October, for instance, there's a departmental telegram to Togo saying that because of the situation,  I wonder if you could get into that whole thing a bit.

MAHONEY: Well, no, I can't really. These are only vague memories now and I haven't read that traffic. I remember the Busia thing. It's interesting what happened there.

MOSS: That was not released until the next July.

MAHONEY: Right. Dodd . . . The Gbedemah thing is, I remember that vaguely. Any time there was a Ghanaian exile, an antagonist or that type of person, anywhere near our country, he represented potential for embarrassment because these people are so damn thin-skinned. But the Busia thing is interesting. It involved Senator Dodd. Dodd developed kind of hard feelings toward Ghana in particular and sort of made a one-man crusade out of it. I remember one day he was, one time he was holding a hearing in New York, a one-man hearing, and I believe this was the Busia testimony. I believe it was Busia. It was either Busia or--yes, it was Busia. Anyway, it was very uncomplimentary as far as Ghana was concerned and of course he released it immediately to the press. Well, I was on a trek in northern Ghana and got a telegram or the Ghana police intercepted me, wanted me back in Accra immediately. Nkrumah wanted to see me. Hell, I was about three hundred miles north of the capital. So I beat it back to Accra. Immediately went in to see the old boy, didn't have the vaguest notion of what was on his mind. Well, he had a dispatch--whether it was from a British paper or where it was from, I can't remember--regarding the fact that Dodd had convened this one man hearing, he alone.

The chief witness was, I believe it was he, and all these horrendous things came out of the hearing, you know; it's a tyranny, it's this, it's that, and the other thing. Nkrumah was really furious. He was really upset.

Well, at this point, there began a lesson in civics. I said, "Mr. President, Senator Dodd does not represent the president of our country." Now mind you, here's a guy . . . By the way, this is an interesting problem in the developing world. Even the heads of state and the university types over there haven't the vaguest notion of how our government works. I often think we don't either but they really don't. Here's Nkrumah, who's lived in our country for ten years; he holds two different college degrees, a degree from Lincoln University, a master's from the University of Pennsylvania, etc.; and he was genuinely incensed, claiming to me in no uncertain terms that whatever Dodd was kicking out of that committee was official government policy, etc. So all I could do is tell him that, you know, the tripartite system: the president's here, the judicial system's there, this is where the legislators are over here. He's one of whatever we had then, ninety-six, and God knows he

represents nobody but himself in most areas, and so on. I didn't want to say anything uncomplimentary about Senator Dodd. But I still don't, I don't think I ever got the point across. He thought that was official dogma, the official American position.

MOSS: Okay. You had a little bit of a problem there in credibility because Dodd had been playing games in the Congo too . . .

MAHONEY: That's correct.

MOSS: . . . and in a semi-official kind of way, and George McGhee going in there as a kind of sop to the Dodd position . . .

MAHONEY: Right.

MOSS: . . . may have given you a little trouble.

MAHONEY: A bit.

MOSS: Did Nkrumah bring this up?

MAHONEY: No, not that part of it. The only thing I ever remember with Senator Dodd--of course his name was in the press all the time over there--was this instance concerning the one-man show. I remember, it was the one-man hearing, it was Dodd alone in New York with his staff and Busia; I'm sure it was Busia. They issued a press release after the hearing and it was pretty rough.

MOSS: Okay. In January of '63 you get the notes on Nydell and Davis. Cable traffic covers it fairly completely, I think; describes the situation that Nydell had gotten himself into willy-nilly.

MAHONEY: In a perfectly innocent way.

MOSS: Yeah. Okay. I wanted to underscore that because . . .

MAHONEY: Perfectly innocent.

MOSS: . . . the cable traffic seems to say that very clearly.

MAHONEY: I'm trying to remember how it happened now. Carl Nydell was this magnificent man, doctor, and boy, we leaned heavily on doctors over there, you know. You either didn't have malaria or were getting it or getting over it. And he's now, I believe Carl Nydell is now the head of the medical department for State, yes. Anyway, he was on an airplane going somewhere. You see, Nydell was assigned most of the West African countries. He was the doctor for State Department personnel in West Africa, resident in Accra. He was on a plane where some Ghanaian suspected subversives were arrested as it landed.

MOSS: Sitting next to a fellow named Yaw Manu.

MAHONEY: That's the guy, Yaw Manu. I remember Manu. He was a, no doubt about that, he was a subversive by Nkrumah's standards. It was that innocent. The plane landed as

I remember and they arrested Manu and who's sitting next to him but our dear friend Dr. Carl Nydell, M.D. And that was it. That's all they had on Carl, he was clean as a whistle and decent, he wasn't an agent. Bill Davis was a big husky black fellow, USIS fellow, who was particularly adept at getting around the community and mixing with other blacks. Interestingly enough, most American blacks were not acceptable in Ghanaian circles. This is something that Soapy Williams and I used to argue about. An American black is as different from a Ghanaian as I am. We talk differently, we think differently, we look different, etc. Anyway, as far as I ever knew, Davis was a pefectly legitimate, marvelous guy who was number two or number three in our PAO (public affairs office) setup under a fellow named Mark Lewis (Mark B. Lewis). Very competent guy, Mark Lewis. I was absolutely convinced, as much as an ambassador can be convinced, that this guy was as clean as a whistle. I was really burned up over this but, you know, when you're PNG'd (personna non grata), you're PNG'd. Did Nkrumah back off on that?

MOSS: Yes. he did.

MAHONEY: I raised hell over that thing.

MOSS: In the cable, as I was reading the cables, he went back and forth on it quite a bit. Edgar Kaiser raised the thing in January. There's one point at which you get the feeling and say so to the department that Nkrumah is really looking for a way to get off the hook on this thing.

MAHONEY: That's right.

MOSS: And finally they do recall the cable, the two notes.

MAHONEY: You see . . .

MOSS: They wanted at one point for you just to forget about it but you insisted on the notes being recalled . . .

MAHONEY: That's right.

MOSS: . . . that it be made a matter of record.

MAHONEY: Well then, we made that one then, didn't we? You see, what Nkrumah did frequently, we used to see this. He was what we call a hipshooter, you know. He was very impulsive and he had all these clowns around him and he was upset, and it was a one-man operation, and probably most of the time he was exhausted. I remember we got into deep trouble on a PNG situation involving those university professors at Legon. Now Legon, I can say--I don't want to oversimplify--was the last bastion of freedom, toward the end. And finally, we know how the story got to Nkrumah. Some

disenchanted second-rate bureaucrat who wanted to be dean of the law school came to Kwame with the news that the dean of the law school, a fellow named Harvey (William Burnett Harvey), and two or three other American professors were CIA agents and without so much as a howdy-do or a check or anything else they were PNG'd. And Conor O'Brien (then Vice-Chancellor Conor Cruise O'Brien) by the way, fought like a tiger to save them and so did I. It's the only occasion in all the time I was in Ghana that Nkrumah refused to see me. But do you know the end of the story?

MOSS: No.

MAHONEY: They were PNG'd. They all had contracts. And by the way, again this was my suggestion--a lot of the things I did I didn't wait for Washington to . . . I went in to see Nkrumah one day and I brought the subject up again. I said, "You know, Mr. President, that was a gross injustice, gross injustice. What's more, I'll tell you as a lawyer, breach of contract. You broke an agreement. These are men with families, it's a . . . " He called in Erica Powell, directed her to get ahold of the Treasury Department and issue checks for the balance of the contract. That took about three minutes.

MOSS: You had the Olympio (Sylvanus Olympio) assassination next door in January. Do you recall the reaction in Accra to that?

MAHONEY: No, I do not. We were a bit apprehensive. There was always some tension across that border but I do not, I have no specific recollection of difficulties attendant to Olympio. I believe there were Ghanaians suspected of that and it was later developed that they were junior officers, if I'm not mistaken; just dissatisfied over pay schedules or something--junior Togolese officers.

MOSS: Right. Kaiser and Calhoun visit at the end of January and there's a meeting with Nkrumah in which Kaiser very frankly tells Nkrumah that he's got to mend his ways, that he's making Kennedy look bad; Kennedy's really stuck his neck out for him and that Nkrumah is making him look bad. Nkrumah in this meeting seems to nod and say yes and we'll do something about it. You follow it up with a very formal démarche on the thirty-first, I think in which you in effect underscore the whole thing and talk about specific cases: the Nydell thing and the interference with diplomatic travel from Lomé . . .

MAHONEY: That's right, yes.

MOSS: . . . and that sort of thing, And then you adopt a kind of wait and see policy and I see three steps: there's the, back in September and August, the protests of press, then the courteous aloofness, and now another démarche and a wait and see attitude. Again, is it just, you know, we'll try one thing, we'll try another thing, or what?

MAHONEY: Yeah, we were constantly, we were just constantly trying to come up with formulas that would sort of neutralize Nkrumah and his antics.

MOSS: Did you see any real change with Botsio (Kojo Botsio) becoming foreign minister?

MAHONEY: O my, yes.

MOSS: What was the big difference there?

MAHONEY: Well, the big difference was the entrance of some rationality in the area of foreign affairs. Now that shouldn't be overrated. I recommend to you a recent book written by Michael Dei-Anang, who was Nkrumah's top civil servant in the foreign affairs field; an interesting man who's now at State University of New York. As he mentions in there, the foreign affairs thing--and you know, we really didn't realize that; at least I didn't--was badly segmented. They had a foreign ministry, they had the African affairs secretary within Flagstaff House in which Dei-Anang was the top officer, and then they had this Bureau of African

affairs, which was nothing but a thinly disguised subversive instrument.

MOSS: That was the one that Tettegah (John Tettegah) was mixed up in.

MAHONEY: Yeah, John Tettegah and Barden, A.K. Barden, and those people. So we were dealing with the foreign ministry, you know, in the conventional way. The thing that happened though was that there's no doubt that Botsio was very, very close to Nkrumah. Nkrumah really respected and loved Botsio and Botsio and I were very, very great friends. I could say almost anything to Botsio and it would be accepted properly and confidentially and decently. Botsio was a very remarkable man. If you remember, just for the record, when Nkrumah fell, they were all singing like canaries, you know, and talking critically about their former god. Botsio never opened his mouth, never said a thing. Although to me privately and confidentially, he was very, very critical of Nkrumah. But he was very much of a decent man and a loyal friend. He said to me at one point, "My God, how long can this go on?" He was just desperate.

MOSS: By the way, I'm curious about the frequency of the use of the term, Osagyefo. In what circumstances was it used? Was it strictly a press thing and a public relations thing or was . . .

MAHONEY: It was an African thing. I'll tell you an interesting little story about that that involves Henry Luce. Osagyefo means brave one, warrior, leader. Why, my God, they have school superintendents down there that are called Osagyefo, you know. But Time magazine would start out every article, "Osagyefo (redeemer) Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, president," and so on. One night we were having dinner with Henry Luce in Phoenix right after I got back. Luce used to live out there and Mrs. Clare Booth Luce. Well, all of a sudden, in a small table of ten, I heard this violent argument at the other end of the table and it was my wife, who is very outspoken, who opened her conversation with Henry Luce to the effect that, "Mr. Luce, your magazines did our country a great disservice where we lived in Africa." The old man blew and he shouted at me, and Alice gave as an illustration Time's interpretation of "Osagyefo." He shouted at me, I was at the other end, "What does Osagyefo mean, Mr. Ambassador?" I said, "Well, Mr. Luce, it does not mean what your magazine says." He said, "I'm going to check you on that." I said, "My God, please do, will you?" We later became friends with the Luces. It was kind of funny. It had no theological significance.

MOSS: And Mrs. Luce would be one to pick that up.

MAHONEY: Oh, yes.

MOSS: You had Shriver (R. Sargent Shriver) come through in I believe April of '63, had meetings with Botsio and Nkrumah and Dowuona-Hammond.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: Remember that?

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: How did Shriver handle himself?

MAHONEY: Oh, superbly. Superbly. Probably the two Americans who would visit us on occasion with the greatest effect from our point of view were Shriver and of course Governor Williams, Soapy Williams. Williams, the people were just wild about Soapy, big, good-looking, friendly, genuinely friendly, warm guy. And they were also pretty wild about Sargent Shriver. Shriver'd come over there and charge up his troops, you know. He always made a hit.

MOSS: There were a couple of proposals kicking around and I never really saw what came of them. One was a kind of reverse Peace Corps proposal for Ghanaians to come over to the United States and be teachers of African history in American high schools.

MAHONEY: Right. Never got off the ground.

MOSS: Never did?

MAHONEY: No. Talked about over the years, by the way but . . .

MOSS: The other one was for Ghanaian military students to come and study at the military academies, probably as a counter to Nkrumah's desire to send them to the Soviet Union.

MAHONEY: Plus, perhaps, to neutralize a bit the almost solely British traditions in their military. I remember some vague discussions about that. But Ghana's military was basically British, as far as the European influence was concerned and secondly, while I was there, Ghana developed a rather fine cadet school, a kind of an African West Point. (INTERRUPTION)

MOSS: There's another proposal that finally got approved in October '63, aid to the medical school, that Nkrumah very much wanted and we were very reluctant to support until finally . . .

MAHONEY: It was withdrawn though.

MOSS: It was withdrawn.

MAHONEY: Withdrawn.

MOSS: Okay.

MAHONEY: Oh, that was a story. Let me, for simplification and brevity's sake lump that in with the other medical thing we were doing. We had a large study project in tropical medicine by Dr. -- I forget. Anyway, well they wanted to build this medical hospital, pardon me, medical school

and hospital, teaching hospital so we originally agreed to give them something like six million dollars. Well, Ghana, you must understand, had a rather fine medical profession of Ghanaians, blacks. There were Europeans there and South Africans but the leading medical figure in the country, in spite of the fact there were four or five hundred black MD's in Ghana, was a South African, Dr.--I saw his name in some of this traffic. Anyway, he was a well-known man and I'll try to remember his name. He was Marxist, I think, but he was unquestionably violently anti-American and he was constantly shooting at us. Dr. Edgecomb (John Edgecomb) was the head of the tropical medicine project, getting that under way and brought over dozens of technicians and doctors and millions of dollars worth of equipment.

This fellow made a career out of trying to subvert this program. He was a well-known South African doctor, he was not just another guy. He was a scientist. He was always carping at this medical school project saying, you know, this is nothing but a neo-colonialist device, etc. I kept advising <u>our</u> government, tell him to go to hell. We'll take that money and put it elsewhere. You know, I was getting pretty tired of this and it went on over a period of over a year. So finally we got word

that the Ghana government was going to unilaterally announce that they didn't want our money for their teaching hospital. Well, I just had to beat 'em to the draw; it was like the shootout at the OK Corral. I just, without even checking Washington, I just issued a press release that on the authority of my government --and I had some authority, as I remember; they gave me some running room--I hereby announce that that offer has been withdrawn for reasons that best not be mentioned. Well then, of course, they were really furious over that because, you know, that was supposed to be their privilege, but I thought the hell with it. We drew out a . . .

MOSS: Okay. All through the period of the Kennedy administration. . .

MAHONEY: You might check that but I'm pretty sure.

MOSS: Yeah, okay--there's a constant relooking at Ghana. I notice that Bundy asked the State Department to give him a monthly checklist of, you know, how are we doing? He didn't do this for other places. It was done for some of the big things like Vietnam and so on but they seemed to be taking a serious look at, you know, are we making any progress there at all and what can we do, what are the alternatives, what are the contingency plans, can we put any pressure, can we withdraw aid? From your

experience, just what is there that we can do to make an annoying situation better or to make the troubles go away?

MAHONEY: Well, when you get down to it, there's nothing you can do.

MOSS: Yeah.

MAHONEY: That brings up a very interesting point. This was an unending debate. It raged in the embassy, it raged in the country team, it raged in the White House, and the State Department. It never stopped. And I was trying to give it some kind of form from time to time with my officers. And we were important, I'm not overrating that. There were two reasons I think Kennedy and McGeorge Bundy were interested in Ghana: number one, Nkrumah was the leader of the black continent at that time. By this time the old star was starting to set but he was still number one, he was the big man. Number two, to Kennedy, I'm sure--and he and I never discussed this in these terms--this was an interesting experiment in the developing world that he was anxious to see work, you see, in its self-government. I'm sure of this. So he was particularly interested in Ghana for one thing because I was there, that helped. That made his interest perhaps a little more acute. But no matter what we did, all we did was buy a little time, save our pride

and face on occasion, and protect ourselves and our country. (INTERRUPTION)

BEGIN TAPE III

What my theory was, after I'd been there about a year, I decided, and said in no uncertain terms--and there were still believers left in our country--there is no hope with Nkrumah, none, as far as Ghana's concerned and our country's interests are concerned. I made a flat statement. All we can do is minimize the damage that our interests can be done and perhaps even Ghana's, but we must truly exercise cleverness and patience and prudence. We must stay here and maintain a bridgehead because in my opinion, for the following reasons--it was a long, year-end assessment, it's called; this goes right to the present, by the way--I will predict that the Nkrumah government will last two years. I missed it by about two or three weeks; it fell two years later. And for the reasons that I assigned; they were basically economic. And by God, it worked out that way. We got to stay here. There were people advocating that we get out of there. There were people advocating, cut off that Volta project, cut that contract off, the hell with it. Now one of the chief guys that helped stave off that kind of a solution was Averell Harriman. Oh, gee, he

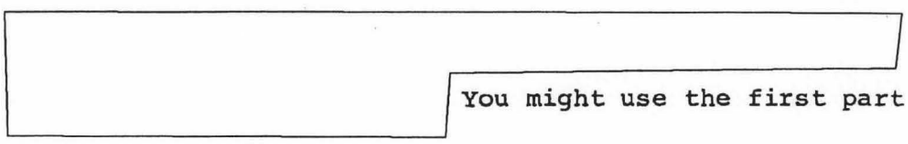
was good, took a very simple viewpoint: We gave them our word, we're Americans, we are not given to violating our word, period. I don't give a damn who Nkrumah is or isn't, you see? And so on. And by the way, that was the constant, thank God, attitude of John Kennedy. Kennedy and I used to say to each other, you know, that dam isn't for Kwame Nkrumah, that dam is for the people of Ghana, so on. (INTERRUPTION)

MOSS: We're talking about this notion of leverage and so on, of aid. There's one point in the files, and I cannot remember now exactly where I saw it. It was in one of these things that's like your year-end estimate. It may have been a contribution to an NIE (national intelligence estimate) or a periodic evaluation of some sort in which, or it may have been a State Department assessment of possible outcomes and contingencies and that sort of thing. They were talking, if I remember the wording correctly, about what might happen if Nkrumah were assassinated and went on to speculate on taking over of the more radical portion of the Ghanaian political scene, being countered by the more conservative and support coming in from the block and then this necessarily meaning our having to go in militarily. Do you recall this? Because it seems such a foregone

conclusion that if these things transpired then we would have to go in.

MAHONEY: No. No, I really don't. And that does not at all, you know, this is your field rather than mine, but that's frequently the way those minds work. You explore these kinds of contingencies. In my mind, as just a working politician, knowing the Ghanaian people, as I got to know them, I was absolutely and unequivocally convinced there was no chance of anything but a western succession in the event of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's passing. Never the slightest question. So much so that in my own mind I never even considered a viewpoint like that and I told the CIA this and the White House and everybody else. I remember, from time to time, we would hear rumors of a coup, from the far left of Kwame. This used to make me chuckle. This is ridiculous. I'm sure that some of those fairly conventional Marxists in the African bureau were disappointed with Kwame, where he received me regularly, talked to people like Edgar Kaiser. But hell, Ghana was so pro-western it was painful. The people themselves. Profoundly so.

MOSS: You said earlier that you had some things you could say

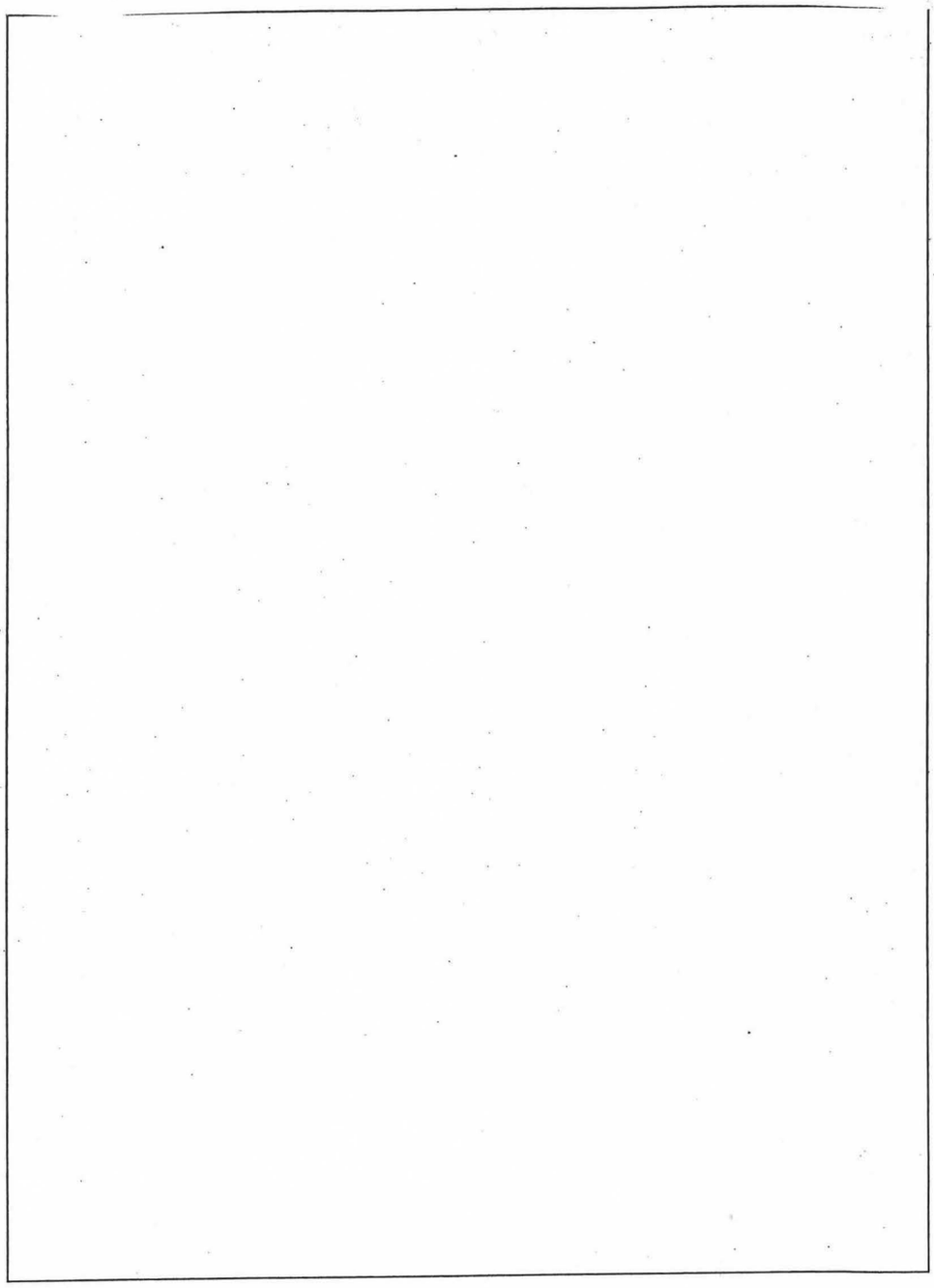


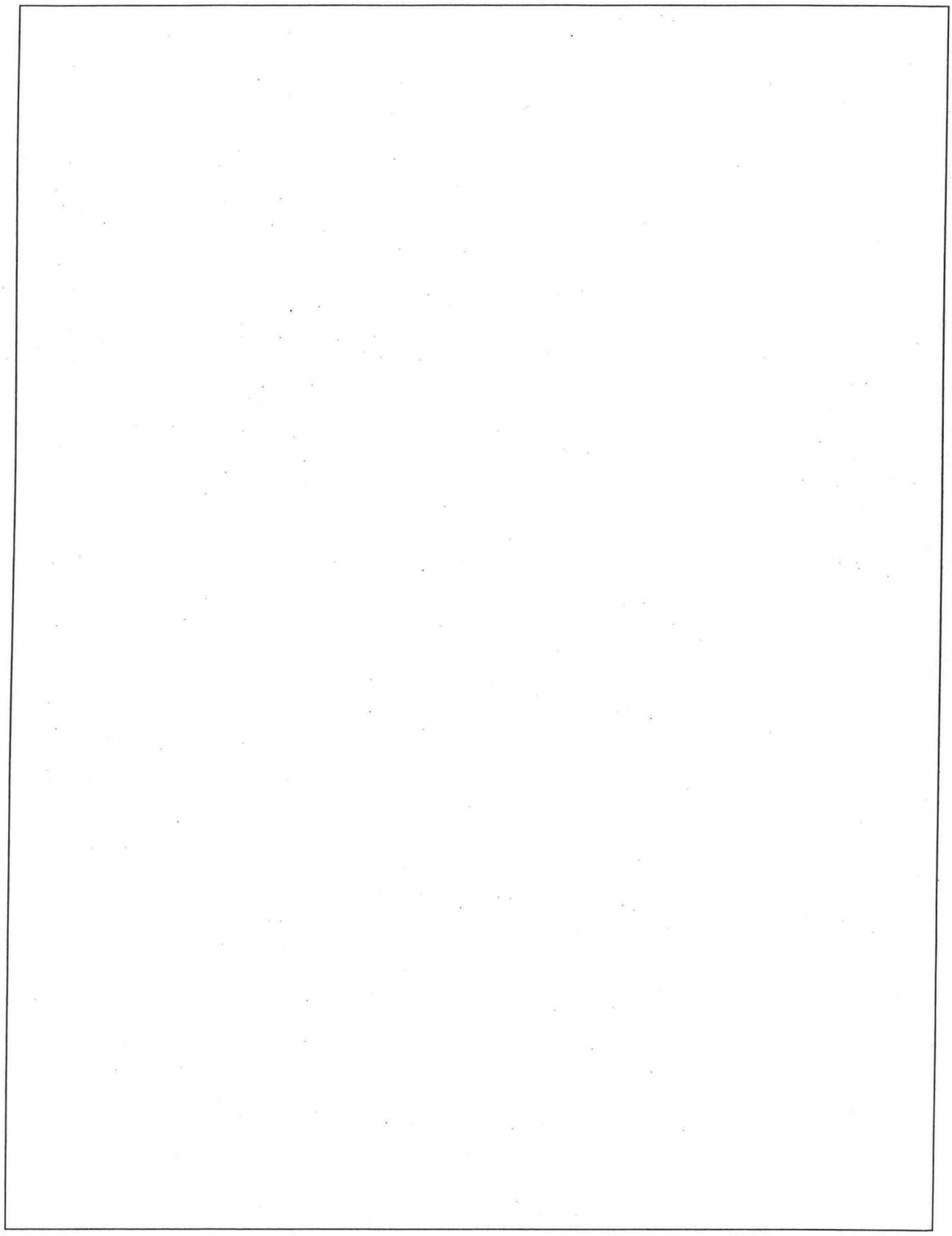
You might use the first part

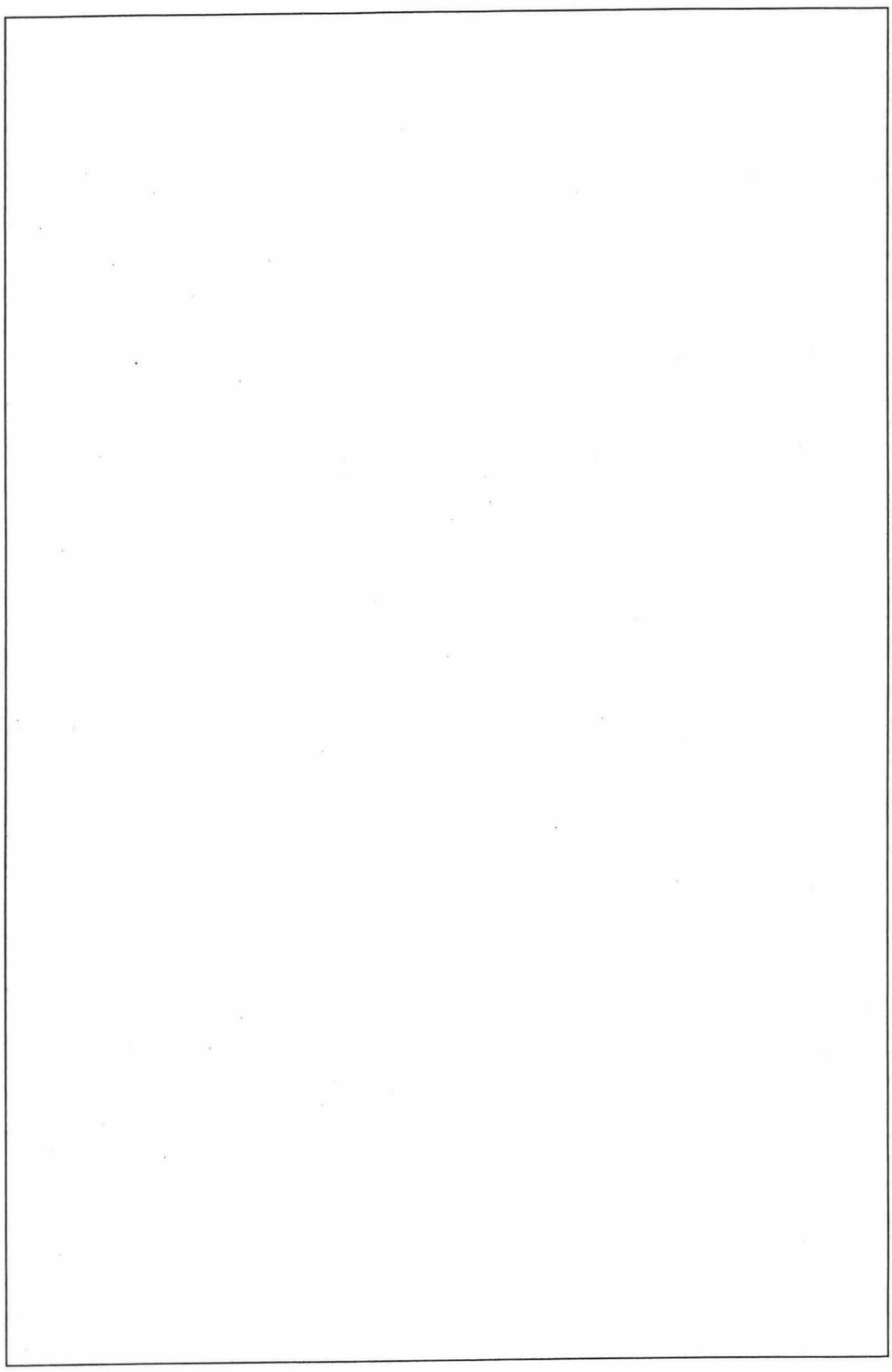
of this side to do that [redacted]

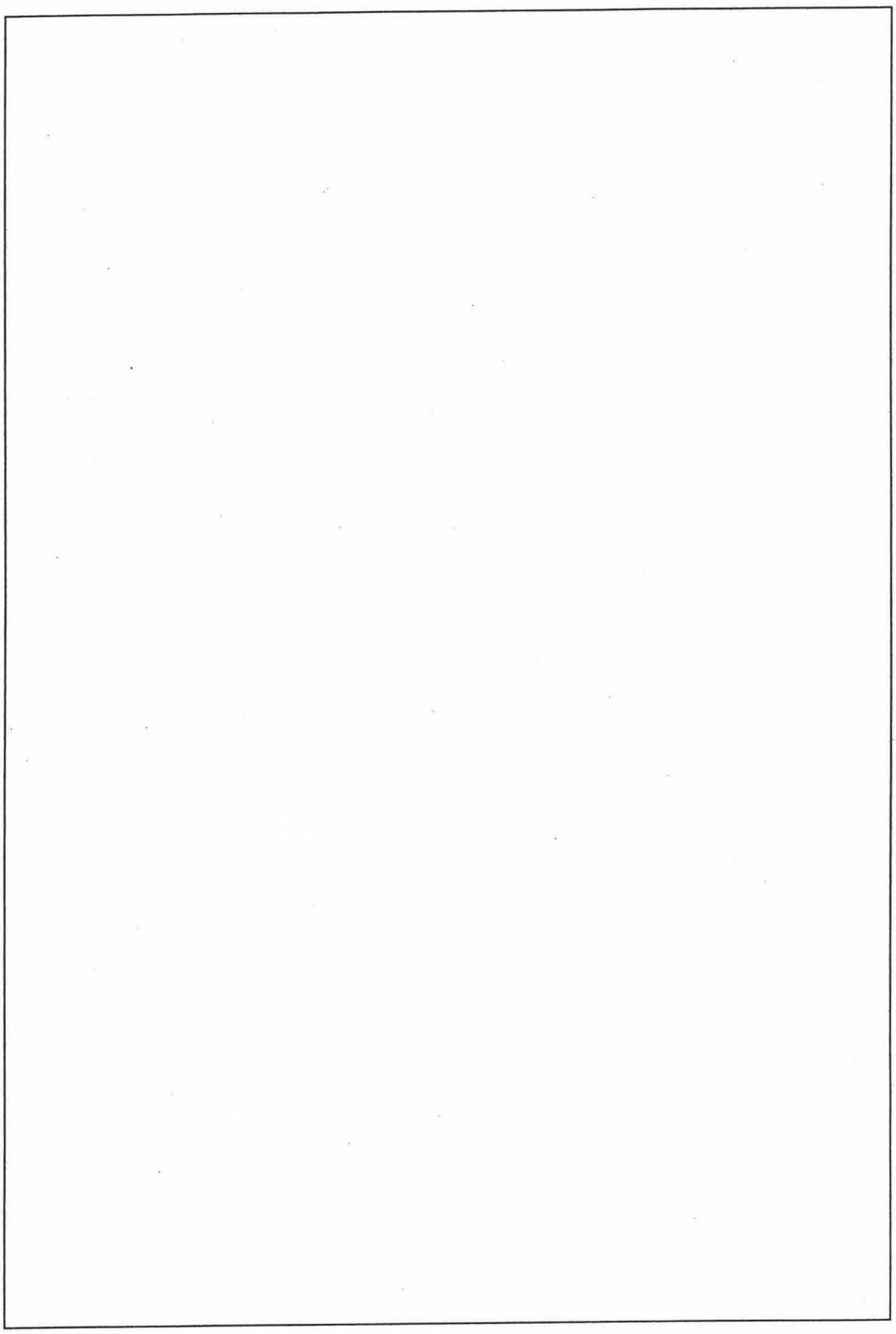
MAHONEY: Well, as I told you, [redacted] I spent several days knocking around that area. Very interesting. I got to Ghana and I'd, by this time knew Ghanaian history fairly well, modern history. Well one of the idols in my mind of Ghana's history was Dr. Danquah (Dr. Joseph B. Danquah) about whom I'd read, by the way, even before I knew I was going to be ambassador. He was a noted scholar, lawyer and political leader of the old order. And he's the one that you know actually started the modern movement toward independence and then Kwame was summoned back from London, as you know, and sort of took over and through the use of the CPP (Convention People's Party) became their leader.

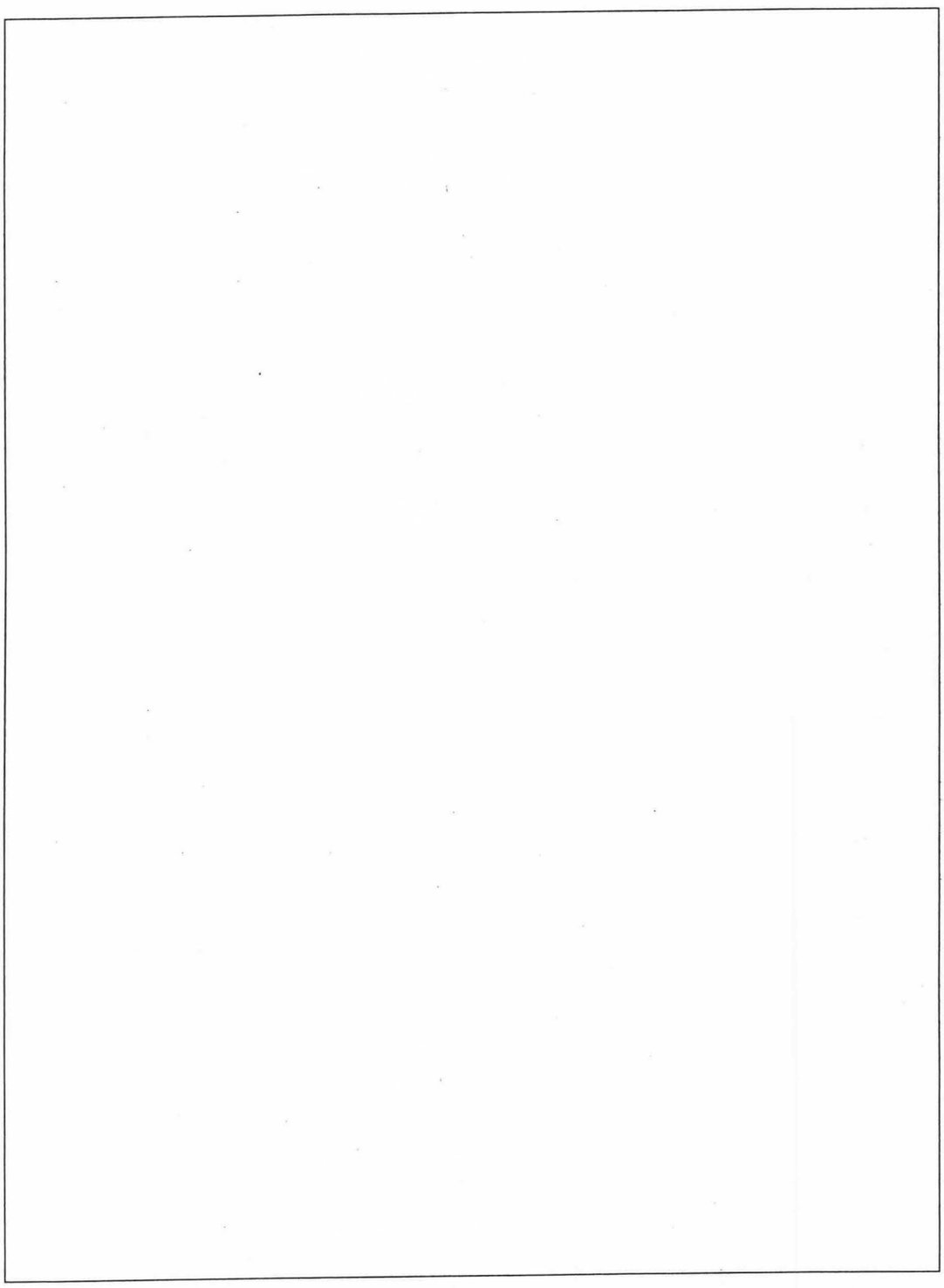
All right. When we got to Ghana Danquah was in prison so I didn't get to meet him. Shortly after we were there he was released from prison. Now he was of course a hot commodity. He was public enemy number one really. But a beautiful man. I got to know him. In fact some of my officers used to counsel me, "Now Mr. Ambassador, should Dr. Danquah be seen at the residence?" I said, "Well, I'll take that chance. The hell with them." You know? I was confident enough by this time

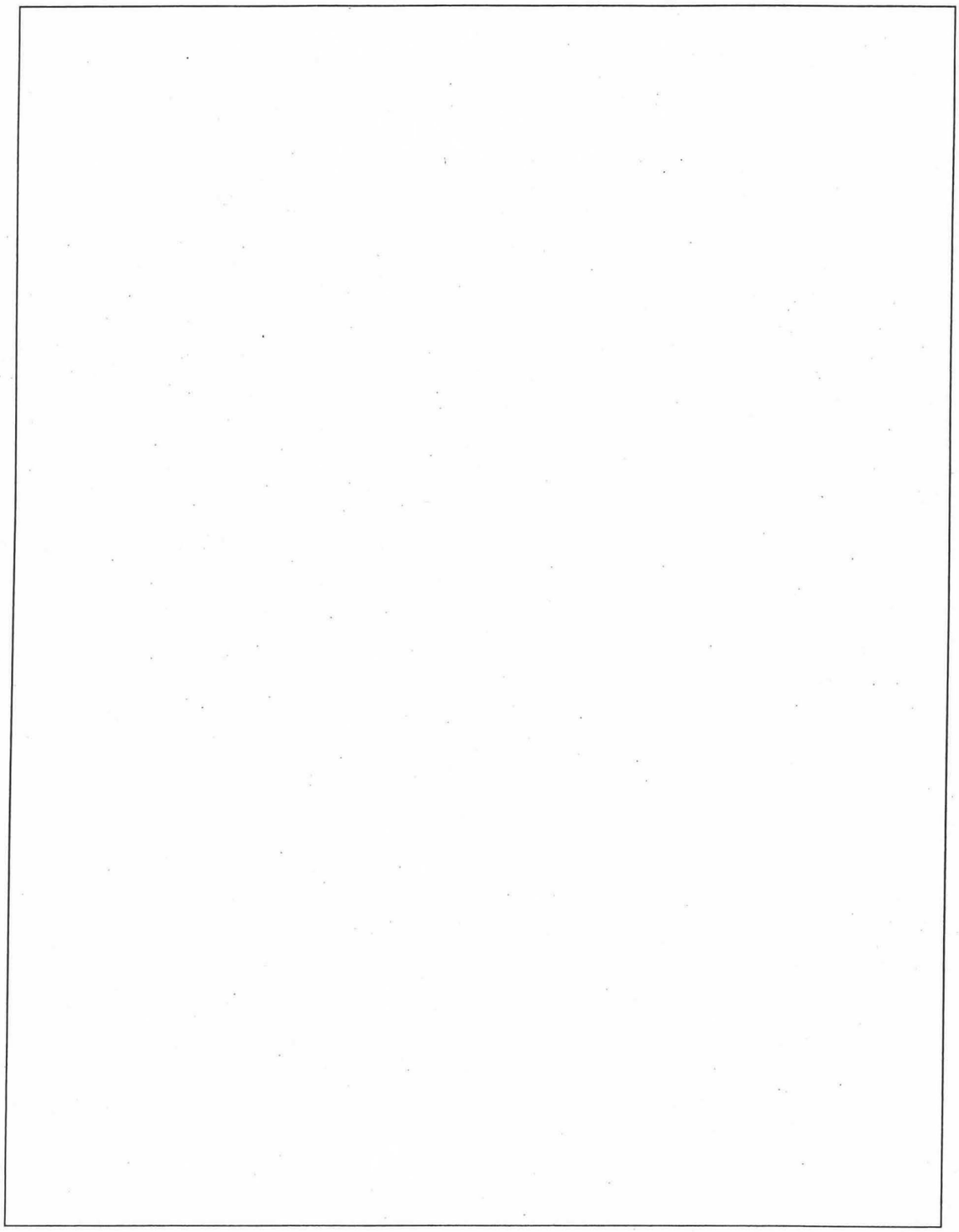


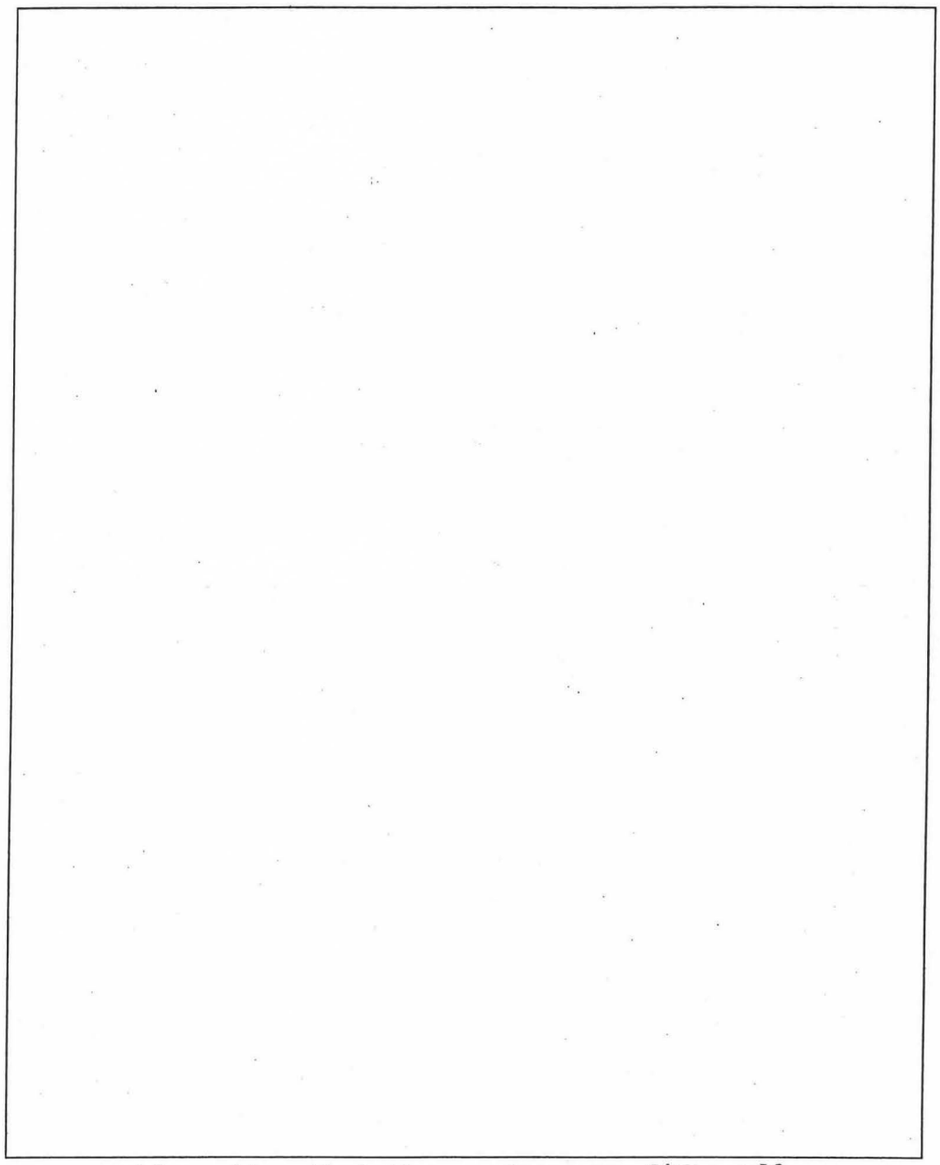












MOSS: You said earlier that there were some fifty odd delegations there: delegations, embassies . . .

MAHONEY: There were fifty-seven or fifty-six ambassadors there.

MOSS: And this is a, in a volatile area like Ghana this is probably good hunting for intelligence. I can imagine the kinds of things that were probably acquired.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: Okay. Let me go on to . . .

MAHONEY: Oh we ended up with Vietnam there. North Vietnam.

MOSS: Right.

MAHONEY: And there was an interest there, of course.

MOSS: Let me ask you about some individual people. Just sort of get a thumbnail sketch of your impressions of some people, Ghanaians and people who were in the diplomatic corps. Let's uh--on the Ghanaians first, the minister of defense Baako (Kofi Baako).

MAHONEY: Want a kind of a personal assessment?

MOSS: Yeah, and what significance he seemed to have for you and for American interests in Ghana.

MAHONEY: Baako was a rather militant, black, activist type of fellow. I think basically a man of good will. Somewhat hostile to our country. Not . . . Seemingly Marxist in a sense. I never thought he was any more Marxist than I. I believe Baako was Catholic in his background. Less of an opportunist than many of the people around Nkrumah. A more genuine fellow. Rather intelligent guy.

MOSS: Okay. Boateng (Kwaku Boateng), who was minister of interior?

MAHONEY: Foul ball all the way. A no good so and so. Tell you a cute story. There is a phony. There's a lawyer,

a fairly well-educated lawyer, who was a phony Marxist. One day I'd been in the United States I got an honorary degree, a doctor's degree, and I was flying home. And naturally I was in tourist because I was picking up the tab myself. I go to Rome to meet my daughter who was in school there. I go out to the plane at midnight. It's the Ghanaian Airways overnight flight to Accra. The plane was packed and I got up with the tourists and the taxpayers and crowded . . . Well as I went up the steps of the plane a little fellow named Kofi Badu who was the editor of the morning paper said, "Oh Mr. Ambassador, the minister of education is aboard." You know, it was like, you know, saying our Lord himself is appearing. "Oh great", I was thinking to myself. So just before we landed in Accra I walked back. I thought I ought to say hello to this fellow. I walked back to the first-class cabin and here was Boateng, you know, the great Marxist, sitting there with a basket of flowers on one side, a basket of fruit, books on his lap, perfumed air, alone in the first-class cabin. He looked up very surprised at me and said, "Oh, Mr. Ambassador. Where have you been?" I said, "Mr. Minister, I'm riding up front with the socialists . . ." (Laughter) He never forgave me

me for it. He was absolutely unreliable, phony and treacherous.

MOSS: Adamafio (Tawia Adamafio) one of the . . .

MAHONEY: I didn't know him so well. Adamafio was a fairly clever operator. Good looking big fellow. I've always thought rather dangerous and so did Kwame Nkrumah. He was one of the ones finally charged and convicted of treason. I often thought that of the three charged, Crabbe, the foreign minister Ako Adjei, those two were probably innocents. This fellow could have been guilty. He was very ambitious. But he left early in the game.

MOSS: You mentioned Adjei . . .

MAHONEY: Ako Adjei was the foreign minister when I got there. He was a well-meaning, fairly western-minded simpleton.

MOSS: You've already talked about Botsio and a little bit about Busia. You might talk about him.

MAHONEY: I don't know Busia. I've just met him but I do not know Busia.

MOSS: Cofie-Crabbe?

MAHONEY: I didn't know him.

MOSS: You talked about Danquah . . .

MAHONEY: O my. I knew Dr. Danquah. Probably the most civilized Ghanaian. And I mean in a country full of civilized people with black faces, all kinds of them.

The most beautiful man I've ever met. By the way, he was out of prison for eight or nine months. Then they came by one day and grabbed him again and he died in prison. Under very mysterious circumstances.

MOSS: Michael Dei-Anang?

MAHONEY: Dei-Anang was a very clever, highly sophisticated and, I think, highly educated professional civil servant now teaching at the State University of New York whom I used to criticize in those days as knowing better than to be just a flunky around Kwame Nkrumah. I'm a little less dogmatic now than I used to be. I'm not so sure I was right. A very fine person.

MOSS: What kind of function did he really perform?

MAHONEY: He, Michael Dei-Anang, was the top functionary--whether there was a foreign minister or who was involved in the Ghanaian government next to Osagyefo in the field of foreign affairs. Ordinarily Nkrumah always saw me alone, but on a rare occasion he would call somebody into the room, and it would invariably be Dei-Anang.

MOSS: Edusei (Krobo Edusei).

MAHONEY: A gifted, clever, little villain. One of the most competent ward-heeling, stump-speaking politicians I've ever seen. Almost amoral. Except . . . And would steal at the drop of a hat and did handsomely

but with certain fundamental loyalties. Really the guy was a Jekyll and Hyde. Krobo Edusei was the minister of agriculture. A little peasant, by the way. A little illiterate. But awfully bright.

MOSS: Gbedemah?

MAHONEY: Didn't know him. Well, I've met him. I didn't know him. I know him but I've never worked with him.

MOSS: Dowouna-Hammond?

MAHONEY: A mediocrity, utter mediocrity. Just an unexciting little fellow who was minister of education. Nothing to him.

MOSS: You talked very briefly about Quaison-Sackey . . .

MAHONEY: Quaison-Sackey I didn't know all that well because almost all the time that I was there he was in New York, but many cuts above the average, that fellow. But I really don't know enough about him to be fair to him.

MOSS: Okay. What about Halm, who had been ambassador . . .

MAHONEY: A lovely, kind, sweet old man. Ineffectual. Kind of second-rate but a lovely man.

MOSS: Did you get to know his replacement at all? Ribeiro (Michael A. Ribeiro)?

MAHONEY: Oh, Gus Ribeiro? As the ambassador? Oh yes, yes. A rather fine professional fellow. I knew Ribeiro both, I guess, in our country and in Rome.

MOSS: What about Tettegah?

MAHONEY: I never knew him too well but I've met him on many occasions. He was pretty much of a radical, this fellow. An activist. A doer. And he had lots of courage. I always sort of admired Tettegah. He certainly was no friend of our country but I think he was genuine.

MOSS: He was head of the trade union council and there's some thought at one point that he was the spear head of Ghanaian activity abroad in Africa.

MAHONEY: Yes, he was.

MOSS: . . . with the trade union movement and so on.

MAHONEY: Yes, it was. I think at one time he was the chief activist of the African Affairs Secretariat which was in effect the foreign ministry for the continent of Africa.

MOSS: Was there any attempt by you or your embassy [redacted] to get hold of that operation and try to do anything with it or counter it?

MAHONEY: We . . . Work was being done there and I'm sorry I can't tell you exactly what. We knew Tettegah. We stayed in touch with him. I forget what device we used. And we were doing some work in the field of labor. But I'll swear I can't remember.

MOSS: The chap you mentioned earlier--Ashanti (gold) fields, General Spears? Do you remember anything about him in particular?

MAHONEY: Nothing except as I said previously he is the incarnation of the colonial type. My God. And yet, I'm sure, a fine man. I've had dinner with the general several times. A very honest and decent guy for whom Nkrumah had a great regard.

MOSS: Okay. Robert Gardiner? (Dr. Robert K. Gardiner) Mostly UN (United Nations) but was he one?

MAHONEY: O yeah, I know Robert Gardiner. Oh yeah. Another, a typical one of those top, top grade Ghanaian public servants. Top, top grade. Gardiner, Adu (A. L. Adu), that stripe, they were superb.

MOSS: Was General Alexander (Major General H. T. Alexander) still kicking around with you there?

MAHONEY: No.

MOSS: He'd gone.

MAHONEY: He'd gone.

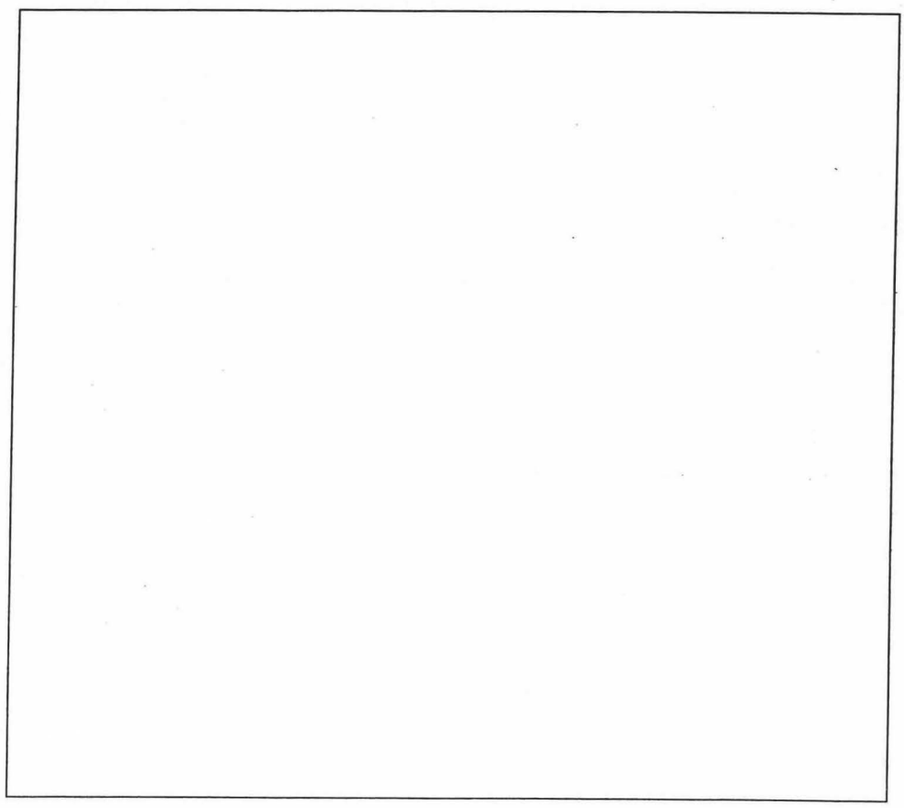
MOSS: Okay. Erica Powell who was the secretary.

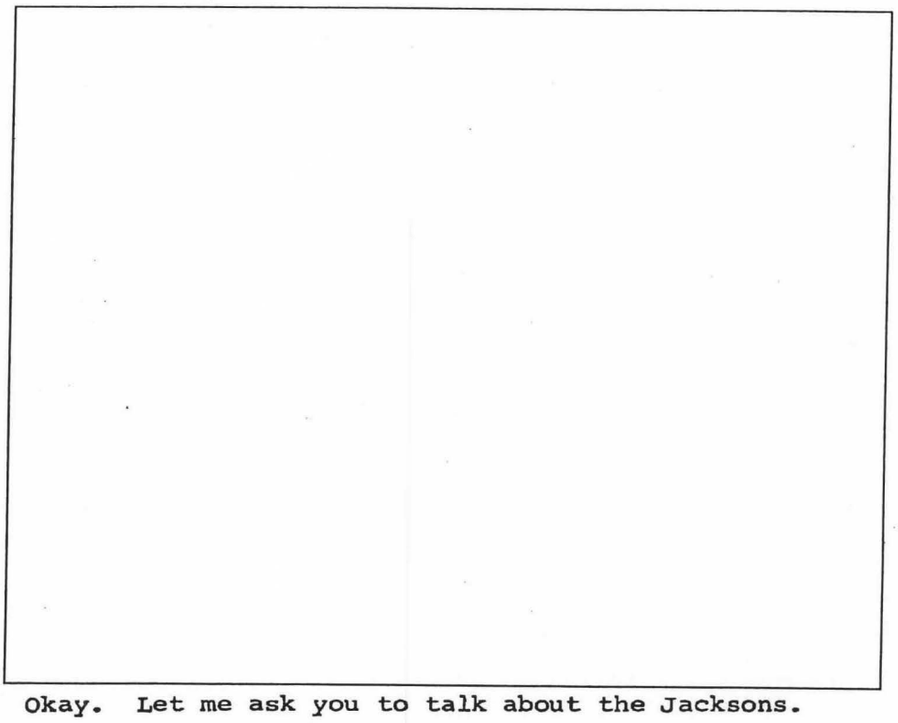
MAHONEY: Well, she was really a lovely girl. She uh, girl? She was my age. She was completely devoted to Kwame Nkrumah. In fact, I think she was in love with him and I think it may have had overt

manifestations. I don't know, but she was completely devoted to the president and I think for many years he to her. Highly competent girl. Executive, really. She could have been the head of a corporation. Bright. Discreet, and I think very decent. Tragically, toward the end when things were falling apart, Nkrumah called her in. I remember her telling me. Told her that he suspected her of subversion. And she went into a tailspin, physically, and went to bed and was there for eight or nine months. It damn near killed her.

MOSS:

MAHONEY:





MOSS: Okay. Let me ask you to talk about the Jacksons. Barbara Ward and Sir Robert Jackson. The two of them.

MAHONEY: Well, they were just institutions there. Neither was regarded as a colonialist or neo-colonialist, I don't think, by Nkrumah. Nkrumah just loved Barbara and Robert. Robert was quite influential with Nkrumah. You know, he was the planner and stayed on on the Volta Project. Barbara would come and go every three or four months. She'd always end up at the Flagstaff House. They were just the greatest people God ever made and I'm sure that over the years they had a moderating influence on

Kwame. Although they weren't there often enough, I wouldn't think, to have any really definitive influence.

MOSS: One of your people on your own staff I've noticed that you really didn't talk about much was Lawless, who was your aide director. Could you assess his performance generally?

MAHONEY: I keep giving you all grade As here. I wish I'd given you a C or something. Bill Lawless was just one of the nicest people I've ever known and a very effective officer. Widely respected. Bill had a very strong, strong feeling for people. He was very strange to be a--you know, I have the usual stereotype of the corporate executive who is some kind of gifted automaton. Here was this warm decent guy. Not that they're indecent, I don't mean that, but . . . I remember--this will describe Lawless to you just in a sentence. He had finished his two-year term--oh, he was awfully well liked and accepted --and he came to me almost like a little boy. And he was highly prized by IBM (International Business Machines Corporation) and Mr. Watson (Thomas J. Watson), whom I only got to meet once, just desperate to have Bill back. He needed him. He was one of

their wheels. So they were pressing him to come home, and he came in to see me one day. He said, "Look, you know they want me to go home and I'd kind of like to go on to Nigeria." By this time Ghana used to be big potatoes and we were there and by this time Ghana was fading and Nigeria was becoming the place. That job had opened and AID wanted Bill to go there because Bill was a top-notch administrator. And he said, "I just love Africa and love these people and I have mixed feelings about going home." In effect, he said to me, do you think it would be outrageous if I didn't? I said, "Hell, no, it wouldn't. You know you're a . . . Make up your own mind, Lawless. I can't tell you. I sure as hell admire your idealism because . . . " Two years in that kind of atmosphere was tough, you know, physically and otherwise. He went on to Nigeria and Watson was frantic. Finally flew to Lagos to try and get Bill to change his mind. And Bill didn't. He stayed on and, by the way, he went back to IBM and became the--last I saw of Bill was several years ago--and he was head of their Latin American division.

MOSS: In the diplomatic corps you mentioned briefly, I think off tape, Sir Geoffrey de Freitas (RT. Hon. Sir Geoffrey S. de Freitas).

MAHONEY: De Freitas was a--he had my background, sort of--he was a working politician. Only a much more excellent background. Geoffrey had been in Parliament many years. He had a rather high ranking, even in the days of World War II or following World War II. I'm trying to remember the name of the prime minister, the bald-headed man.

MOSS: Attlee? (Clement R. Attlee).

MAHONEY: Atlee. In the Attlee government. He was a laborite, a liberal from a wonderfully aristocratic family. His wife came from one of our country's greatest families. His wife Helen was the daughter of Laird Bell of Chicago, the famous lawyer, who was really the father confessor of Adlai Stevenson and so on and an immensely successful man. Helen Bell was Helen de Freitas. De Freitas was good, awfully good, awfully good. In fact, he was succeeded by a career guy who wasn't nearly as effective in my estimation.

MOSS: Okay, the German ambassador Lüders (Carl Heinz Lüders)?

MAHONEY: Lüders is a lovely man. Kind of a nervous fellow, like a prostitute in church, as they say. He had one concern and one concern only, that Ghana wouldn't recognize East Germany. (Laughter)

MOSS: There was one point at which Ghana set up a trade mission . . .

MAHONEY: Right, and he almost went nuts. I was holding his hand during this time. He was a lovely man, just a lovely man.

MOSS: Okay. And the two chief Communist ones, Huang Hua from the Chinese side?

MAHONEY: Well, of course, I told you a story this morning . . .

MOSS: Yeah. Put that on tape, would you?

MAHONEY: Huang Hua . . . We all had, we all had books on each other, you know. I'm sure they had me down as about grade-three slob. But the book we had on Huang--and mind you now, this is 1962--was that this is China's leading authority on the West and here he is the Chinese ambassador to a little place called Ghana. Anyway, I'd see Huang two or three times an evening at receptions six nights a week. And I'd walk in the room and he'd walk out, which was marvelous because this just gave me that much more running room. Well, then we had never spoken to each other and from a diplomatic point of view this is kind of an interesting thing for a fellow who is an aficionado of the game. Annually Kwame Nkrumah would give a reception for the diplomatic corps on Christmas Eve and on

these occasions, like on other state occasions, the dean of the corps, that is, the senior man present, stands next to the head of state and introduces the corps in a formal way. Well, the dean of the corps in Ghana was a great friend of our country's and of mine. A man named George Sherman (George E. Sherman), the Liberian ambassador. A hell of a guy, great guy. Well, this thing occurred--number two man was Huang Hua. He'd been there the second longest. So I arrived at the scene of this reception at Christiansborg Castle. It was a beautiful morning and Geoffrey de Freitas, the British, arrived the same time I did. I got out of the car and I'm walking up the walk with Geoffrey, and I look and I see the Chinese ambassador standing next to Kwame Nkrumah and my heart just sank. I had about fifteen-seconds thinking time and I said to de Freitas, "What do I do?" And de Freitas said, "My God, I don't know what you do." Well, I just thought to myself, the one thing I will not do is embarrass anybody. I just can't do that. As I walked up to Huang Hua he stuck out his hand with a smile and said to me, "Good morning, Mr. Ambassador." And I said--I grabbed his hand in relief, I might add--and said, "Good morning, Dean." Then he said to Nkrumah, "Mr. President, His Excellency the United States Ambassador." And Nkrumah started to laugh. It was really an African scene. Nkrumah almost collapsed. He thought that was the funniest damn thing that ever happened in his

regime, I guess. He just hee-hawed and we all ended up laughing. It all ended up kind of beautifully, you know. But in the over three years that I was there those were the only words we ever exchanged. He was a--I heard from other sources--top, top-grade guy. Top-grade.

MOSS: The Russian Ambassador?

MAHONEY: I never, you know, I used to talk to him. We treated each other like we had leprosy. Not overtly but . . . His name was Georgi Rodionov.

MOSS: And how do you spell that?

MAHONEY: R-O-D-I-O-N-O-V. He was a good-looking guy. Very handsome. About my age. Spoke good English and I'm sure he was, I believe that prior to this time he was first secretary in London. So, he was one of their better people. From the accounts, well, I know. He had an extensive entrée in Flagstaff House. He and I and the Chinese ambassador were sort of the three leading fellows as far as accessibility was concerned.

MOSS: I want to tick off a few Americans in Washington and get your thumbnail sketches. Dean Rusk. There was one point off tape when we were chatting and you were talking about him being a very tough person.

MAHONEY: I'm a great admirer of Dean Rusk and I would like to think I'm a friend. I'd be honored to think so. But I had the

impression he's a little bit more hardnosed than some of the other people I used to encounter. We'd banter back and forth about it. Beautiful man.

MOSS: Ball?

MAHONEY: Well, I never had much to do with George Ball. Again, I just think he's one of our country's great people. I always had the impression, and word was around the department, that Ball's chief, not only but certainly chief interest was Europe and he wasn't all that persuaded of the importance of Africa. And I used to even sense that on the few occasions when I talked to him.

MOSS: All right. We didn't get to talk about Trimble (William C. Trimble) who was the West Africa man in the State (Department) while you were there as ambassador.

MAHONEY: Well, I used to do a lot of work with Bill, and he, God he was a pro. He was good. He was . . . Didn't begin to think he had all the right ideas. He was kind of tentative in his approaches, very understanding of other people's opinions. But I always thought Trimble was overloaded with good common sense.

MOSS: Did you get down to the second-level people in the White House at all? Belk (Samuel E. Belk and Brubeck?

MAHONEY: I did some work with, certainly with Brubeck, with Bill Brubeck. Now I know the name Belk and I . . .

MOSS: Sam Belk?

MAHONEY: Yes, yes, but I, gosh, I can't remember . . . And I know Belk, or I did know him. I did quite a bit of work with Brubeck somehow and I can't remember when or where.

MOSS: On the Senate side you mentioned Dodd a little bit and touched on Gore; now what about Ellender (Allen J. Ellender)?

MAHONEY: I had a very unique experience with Ellender. He was considered the scourge of the State Department, you know. It was really amusing. You know, my God, he goes on tours, he knows where the skeletons are hidden and et cetera, et cetera. Well of course I'm one of these simpletons who didn't believe I had any skeletons to hide. So he comes by, and I've got to tell you a couple of cute stories because somebody might be interested in them some day.

MOSS: Let me just flip this. (Interruption) Okay, go ahead.

MAHONEY: Well, as you know, there were two fellows on Capitol Hill that were legends in the State Department. One was Rooney (John J. Rooney) in the House and the other was Ellender in the Senate.

MOSS: You left out Passman (Otto E. Passman). (Chuckle)

MAHONEY: [redacted]

DEED

MOSS: He'd show home movies when he got back.

MAHONEY: Right. He was a funny little guy. I never, I'd known him before but never really got a good look at him. Really a lovely little man. But anyway, he came by. Everybody was in a state of some excitement and we got the marching orders. He didn't stay with us. He stayed with Lawless, as a matter of fact, with Bill Lawless and his wife. But you know, he'd prescribe a daily agenda: awaken, 6:14; shower, 6:18; breakfast, 6:21, a two-and-a-half-minute egg, dry toast, et cetera; to embassy, 7:00 A.M. That kind of a fellow. Well hell, we had nothing to hide. And I brought my staff in. I must say he did know what questions to ask. But I told him a story that really impressed him. And it was partly a ploy.

While I was being prepared to go to Ghana, I was being briefed by all these people and I went by the air force and this general was giving me a big snow job. And said, "Mr. Ambassador, soon after you arrive there we will assign you a Fokker airplane with a crew that will be yours," et cetera, et cetera. And I said, "You know, General, I'm not so sure I want this airplane." And he looked at me like I had rocks in my head, you know. And he said, "Well, would you consider it?" I said, "Yeah, I'll consider it. Sure. But I want to get over there and take a look at that damn place. I'm not so sure we want an airplane with a big American

insignia." Because I thought it was kind of a place for a low profile. I thought that before I ever went over there.

Well I got over there and this months-long or year-long war began, Mahoney's attempt to keep from getting that airplane and the crew. It finally ended up in the White House. Under no circumstances do I want that damn airplane. Number one, I don't need it; number two, it's costly; number three, from a political point of view it would be counterproductive. But I had, you talk about a battle! And it would have cost hundreds and hundreds of thousand of dollars. Well, Ellender knew that story. You know, man bites dog. Here's a liberal Democrat saying, "Please, I don't want all that money and that airplane." And, by the way, I'd also made a campaign of keeping my staffs trimmed. I wanted guys that would work twice as hard as twice as many people would. I think they do better work. Well, Ellender knew, so Ellender and I got along very well. But it was after Ellender left our place that he got around to Rhodesia and made that famous remark that, "I'm not so sure the Africans are quite ready for independence." All hell broke loose. I had a personal account of that saga because one of my officers accompanied him. (Laughter) And you know, they landed at Nairobi (Kenya), and they wouldn't let him out of the airplane. Then he'd go to Addis (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), and he can't

get out there. It was funnier than hell and it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. But I remember we have at home the account of the visit to Accra. It occupies several pages and it's quite . . . It's quite friendly.

MOSS: Let me ask you to talk in general about a few things: Ghana's political problem and economic one vis-à-vis the Common Market and the Commonwealth. Here's an emerging nation, needing help and suspicious of being cut out of the Common Market and Commonwealth at the same time regarding it with suspicion as a European neo-colonialist kind of thing. That sort of thing.

MAHONEY: Well, you know, the older I get the more I think about what we did or tried to do over there, the more I realize that when--perhaps it's the Vietnamese syndrome--but a good deal of what we were doing over there, with aid--for example, bi-lateral aid--was neo-colonialism. You can stretch that term to mean almost anything, but what I mean is what we were doing was perhaps almost invariably well-meant but I doubt very much if it was all that productive. I'm a multi-lateral type, I think, from here on. But aside from that, Ghana can't survive outside of either the Common Market or a special relationship with Commonwealth in both trade and assistance. It just can't survive. The market. . . I had this kind of discussion, I spoke to several hundred university

students the other night about Africa and somebody asked the same question. She must belong. Now you can call that relationship anything you want. You can call it neo-colonialist or anything else. If there were the markets in Africa or not only the markets but the atmosphere that would permit some kind of an orderly years-long arrangement that would be one thing. But there isn't even a, the semblance, the beginning of that kind of an opportunity. And Ghana must make her peace economically, I would think basically with the Common Market. And I think she will.

MOSS: What about Nkrumah and pan-Africanism? OAU (Organization of African Unity) thing and so on?

MAHONEY: Well, you know, the funny thing about Nkrumah was he's something like Saint John: he was making straight the way. He really was, you know. He was a damn fool in many respects. This is a very crude parallel but he reminds me of Gene McCarthy (Eugene J. McCarthy). Forgive the allusion. He happens to be a very close friend of mine. McCarthy in many ways is a fool as they said Christ was a fool. <u>But</u> he's also right about the automobile, about the military, and a lot of other things. In my opinion. He's about . . .

MOSS: Someone compared Nkrumah to Jefferson? Carl Rowan (Carl T. Rowan), I believe it was.

MAHONEY: Well, that's a little far out but you see the pan-African thing is a joke. The United States of Africa, and, of course, the unspoken parentheses was, of course, led by a man by the name of Kwame Nkrumah. There was that element. That though doesn't detract from the validity or invalidity of the principle of the suggestion. Africa is a long way from being the United States. But you see on many of these things we all have our mixed motives. We're saying these different things for different reasons, uttering sometimes the same words for different reasons. On many things Nkrumah was right. His constant harping on imperialism and colonialism. Well, of course, those were largely things of the past. But neo-colonialism. I hate to say it, but you know he had a case. And some of that case pertained to us. It really did. We are not, we're just like anybody else--we have to grow up as people too. We're starting to realize this, I hope. But on some of his notions they were nothing but the antics of an exhibitionist and a, just a damn fool.

MOSS: You've mentioned that so-and-so was a Marxist and so on. What do you see as being, as Marxism or socialism meaning in the African and Ghanaian context.

MAHONEY: Not very much. Oh God, it's overrated. This was, this was always a source of unending argument between me and the Department or whoever the heck I was dealing with. This

black . . . You know they weren't using loosest terms, "the black Castro", et cetera, but this was implicit in a lot of very damn negative reporting. Now if it were accurate it would be one thing but they vastly overrate these guys. As I used to say to the Department, "I could count on the fingers of one hand what I thought were bona fide, informed Marxists who had black faces." And I would be hard put to do it today, at all. People like Ikoku (S.G. Ikoku), he wasn't even Ghanaian; he was a Nigerian. And some of those imports, you know, those refugees, and exiles,and freedom fighters . . .

I'll never . . . Let me tell you a little story. Let me illustrate it graphically. When John Kennedy died we got this film, Years of Lightning, Day of Drums. My God, that thing was magnificent. It was such a draw that I as a gut politician, I took that thing around the country. I bet I showed that certainly fifty to a hundred times. All right. So we get up to Kumasi which is the center of the Ashanti county and a beautiful city and a great people led by a district, or regional commissioner. (His name isn't important but he was a very well-known Ghanaian. I'll think of it in a minute.) Anyway, one who'd been in most think pieces done by the Department of the more prominent Marxists, overt Marxists in Ghana. Well, I never felt that

about this guy. I'd had dinner at his house several times. That was a lot of crap. They had Botsio down. Botsio was almost as orthodox a Catholic as I am. Not that you can't be a Catholic and Marxist. People succeed in doing this in Italy, I don't mean that, but to put him down as a kind of Moscow or Peking type is just slightly wide of the mark. But we'd get all this kind of junk.

So one night we were showing Years of Lightning, Day of Drums in this crowded theater in Kumasi. And the regional commissioner was sitting next to me. (I'll think of his name in a moment.) He's well known. Marxist. And his wife evidently didn't speak English so he was interpreting everything that was happening in that film to her. I didn't speak Twi either but I could understand some of what he was saying. So they get to the point where the--you remember the picture--where the Germans--pardon me, Germans, yes!-- are trying to escape through the wall. The East Germans. And they're being machine-gunned. There were some pretty hair-raising scenes there, I remember that. And he blurted out to his wife. He blurted out to her. You could hear him all over the theater. "They're trying to escape from the Communists!" Just shouted at her. There's our friend the Marxist. (Laughter) I often wonder how many thousands of dollars were spent analyzing people like him.

MOSS: At lunch you gave a couple of little vignettes. One on the birth of your daughter. And the outdooring?

MAHONEY: Of the outdooring.

MOSS: The outdooring. Would you do that for the tape?

MAHONEY: Well, as I . . . The way that subject came up is that one of the reasons we were a success, quote, unquote . . . A better way to put it is one of the reasons we were accepted there and that we delighted in the Ghanaians and they in us and our children was that we have this huge family. The center of the Ghanaians', I think most Africans, but particularly the Ghanaians' existence are children. And here was a white man who's not only a white man but a prominent friend of the president of the United States with all these kids. So we were kind of a hit for that reason alone. They just didn't believe that white people had these big families that way and our kids were friendly, beautiful children. And we had this--did you want me to refer to the birth of the baby? What was the first item that you mentioned, Bill?

MOSS: Well, the . . . Your wife had the baby in a Ghanaian hospital? Correct?

MAHONEY: Oh yes, sure. What happened was that my wife, who is a rather courageous girl, had our eighth child there. Noel. And while the child was coming, why I suggested like all

Europeans and Americans that she go on back home to have this baby because their facilities were quite limited. Although their doctors were numerous and thoroughly competent, their MDs. And my wife decided that if they could have a baby there, she could too. So we had this, she had this baby girl, Noel. God! It was some political triumph. It was all over the Ghanaian papers. I had cables from Nkrumah, flowers were sent to my wife from Nkrumah. A few days after the child was born the chief of the Ga people, which is the tribe which inhabits the capital, the Accra area . . .

MOSS: How do you spell that?

MAHONEY: G-A. The Gas came to me and wanted to outdoor Noel. Well, I said, "Fine," you know, anything for a vote. And what it actually is is a beautiful ceremony comparable to our baptism. It's done ordinarily on the dawn of the seventh day after the birth in the jungle in the African setting. I told them I didn't like the dawn part, but if they could come in the evening, fine. So they showed up on the seventh evening. About a hundred people in tribal regalia and there was this beautiful ceremony, in which corn beer is poured, prayers are uttered, the evil spirits are asked to leave, et cetera. The child is given an African name and then the hat is passed. People present would throw in a shilling and they tell me that in the jungle there will be

a thousand villagers there attending this event and every person there who makes a contribution becomes charged with the responsibility of protecting that child for the rest of its life. In other words, instead of in our Christian tradition our having a godfather and a godmother, in the African scheme you would have hundreds of godfathers and godmothers. It is not a symbolic thing. It is not a gesture. It is a living reality, that relationship. It's really very beautiful. This great honor was accorded our daughter Noel, who is now twelve, and so on.

MOSS: And your son went to a school that Nkrumah had set up for his own children?

MAHONEY: Yes, there's an interesting little story connected with that. Nkrumah--his wife was a beautiful lady, Fathia (Fathia Helen Ritzk Nkrumah)--she was an Egyptian and they had three children. They were very lonely, and my wife would visit Fathia once in a while. She was a beautiful gal but terribly lonely. And our children started playing with their children. Once a week they would go to Flagstaff House, our little ones, and this became a kind of a tradition and Nkrumah got to know some of our children and he liked them. So one day he and I were walking around the grounds and I spotted this new building. And I said, "What is that?" He said, "Well, that's the new school

building. By the way," he said, "we would love to have Emmet"--this is our, he was then about a six year old, five year old, but a contemporary of Kwame's boy Sekou--"we would love to have Emmet out here." I said, "Fine." But a very interesting thing occurred though. Nkrumah said to me, "Would this embarrass you and Madame in any way?" And I said to him something like, "Mr. President, I don't know what you're talking about." "Well you know, the black and white thing. Would this be of embarrassment? Because," he said, "it'll be two of mine and two Ghanaian doctor's children for a total of five." And I said to him, I said, "You know, Mr. President, I would like to think that my family's been brought up properly. As a matter of fact, that's one of the reasons that we're here." And he was very, very grateful for this. But the point I want to make is that I don't think this problem was ever very far from his mind. He was extremely sensitive on the race problem, although he always proposed to be the ultimate man of the world and above all this. Super sensitive on this.

By the way, there's one part of the story that I forgot to mention to you. That conversation occurred in ~~August~~ June of 1964, as I remember. So we went home--no, in June. We went home on home leave, the whole family, to the United States. And I told my wife about it and she was a bit

apprehensive because it was really quite dangerous around Flagstaff House. For example, there'd been several attempts on the president's life. You had to go through three armed gates to get inside. It was a bit hairy, but you know, what the hell. I told my wife--I suggested to my wife that there was no really great danger. So she said, "Fine. Great. What the heck." But we'll be gone for two months and perhaps by the time we get back he will have forgotten. So Alice and the kids and I come home, and I go back a couple of weeks early in August. The first thing I do I go by to see Kwame. First subject. Mind you now this is two months later--"How are Madame and the children?" I said, "They're fine, Mr. President." "They're coming back, aren't they?" He knew they were gone. He said that with an almost apprehensive voice. "Well, certainly. Sure!" Next statement, "Well, you haven't forgotten about the school, have you?" (Laughter) I was half hoping he would, but he didn't. And so Emmet went and was there the whole year. Had a great time. In fact, this is mentioned in Dei-Anang's book.

MOSS: And your two older boys went to the Ghanaian prep school.

MAHONEY: Achimota (Achimota College). They went to this very, very fine prep school called Achimota. It's quite well known. It preps for Oxford and Cambridge (University of Oxford, University of Cambridge).

MOSS: You mentioned in the car coming from the airport, very briefly, the occasion during "Congo two"* when you talked with Nkrumah, you said it was one of the only times you really had really a difficult time with him. And you had discovered that there was gunrunning from Accra to Khartoum down to the Congo. Will you describe that, please?

MAHONEY: Yes. You know I didn't tell you the whole story. That occasion--let's call it Congo one and Congo two. I was really involved in Congo two because of Nkrumah's constant interference and so on. And as you say, we learned that the guns that were being furnished the so-called "Simbas" who were coming down on this occasion now, this is after Tshombe (Moise Tshombe) was in office, as I remember, coming down from Sudan, south. Those guns were coming from the UAR (United Arab Republic) to Accra to Khartoum and down to the so-called "Simbas." Now . . . And we had, we even had the serial numbers on some of them. And you know, I got quite exercised about this. And this was the only occasion where I ever got into a really unpleasant exchange with Nkrumah where we were almost shouting at each other. And it was also the only occasion when I ever talked to Nkrumah with Kojo Botsio present. And Dei-Anang. I would

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Editor's note: "Congo two" refers to the second round of Congo strife, during the Johnson administration.

say 95 percent of the times that I've talked to Nkrumah it was just the two of us. Which was really quite a compliment.

This occasion these other two were in the room. So I told him, I said, "Mr. President, you know we recognize the Congolese government as a legitimate government." I was thinking in the back of my mind, "Headed by Moise Tshombe." I was sort of quietly holding my nose without the gesture actually being done. I said, "And we know that the arms being supplied to the rebels." He said, "They're not rebels; the're nationalists." I said, "Okay. They're nationalists. Call them anything that you want, are coming through Accra and through Khartoum and down. And you know my country . . . I forget how I framed it. I didn't call it a "hostile" act but I said, "My country takes a very dim view of this sort of thing." Something like that. And he just glared at me. And he said in a cold voice, "What are you going to do about it?" Well, God, I was kinda shocked, you know. I expected either a denial or he'd take the fifth amendment or something. But he just glared at me and I said, "You know, I'm really not sure. But I just want you to understand that we're not pleased with this at all."

Well then a full-blown argument started on the Congo. This is what I previously forgot to tell you. Nkrumah really got heated up. And he--I can't remember now what he was saying--but he said, "You have planes down there.

Your airplanes [redacted] and you're pouring gold . . ." Oh it was a wild peroration, see, and . . . so I started arguing with him but not--I was trying to be polite but he was just making some misstatements of fact. [redacted] the guy was just going wild. And I'll never forget it. He made a statement with regard to the number of airplanes or some-t hing, I can't remember now; it's somewhere in the reports. Well, this was during the Johnson administration. Anyway, I said, "Mr. President, that is not right. That is not right. That is inaccurate. As a matter of fact, it is inaccurate. It isn't twenty-four planes, it's six." Whatever the figures were. Botsio--this was unheard of--barged into the conversation and said, "Osagyefo, the ambassador is right. There are six, not twenty-four." Whatever those figures were. I'll never forget that. I can assure you that is one of the few persons that ever corrected Kwame Nkrumah in front of a stranger. But, boy, it was a hot session. And by this time our relations, certainly the United States-Nkrumah relations, were just . . . There just wasn't much left, except our personal friendship. There was nothing to be accomplished. It was just by this time, it was a holding operation. And, as I remember, we were really pulling in our, hedging our bets. It was just

unpleasant as hell. As I mentioned to you, another thing I'd like to mention for the record. [redacted] But the Chinese and the Russians were always feeding him all kinds of things . . .

MOSS: He had the Tully book (CIA-The Inside Story, by Andrew Tully).

MAHONEY: He gave away more editions of the Tully book than I'm sure the author did. He had a whole stack of them in the office. I don't care who showed up there, he was given a copy of Tully--Inside CIA (sic)--so anyway . . .

BEGIN TAPE 4

. . . he and I had a couple of conversations and I forget how they came up on the CIA. And I remember--I'm sure he brought it up as I remember--I said something like, you know, [redacted] or maybe you don't know"--and I was using that old thing and I think it's true--"two-thirds of any Russian presence, two-thirds of any supposedly diplomatic Russian group are professional agents." I said, "Do you know the difference between some guy that reads spy novels and a professional?" He's as much a professional

as I am. He's a lawyer. Boy, I really burned it into him, you know. I kinda shook the old boy and oh, I remember, I said this, and I reported this, too. I said, "you know" --there was an awful lot of talk the CIA was out to assassinate him, speaking of current events. I said, "That's pure unadulterated baloney." I said, "You know, Mr. President, it's a terrible thing to say, we have the capacity to do anything we want. Anything we want. Quick." I said, "We're not doing them. We don't do it. Wouldn't think of it. Immoral. It's wrong and the whole bit. Please let's not indulge in fantasy." Oh, it was a very candid conversation. But this did not in the least bit detract from his general suspicions.

MOSS: I want to ask you to talk about your last conversation with the president on the nineteenth of November in '63. There is a memorandum of the conversation on file about your talk about Ghana which probably covers it pretty well, but there's nothing in there on your talk about Arizona and Barry Goldwater (Barry M. Goldwater) and that sort of thing. I wondered if you'd cover that.

MAHONEY: Well, yes. We talked about a lot of things that day. I'll say one more personal thing for the record. On this girl that was born in Ghana, when she was born we sent out announcements and we got a beautiful print of the White

House with a lovely inscription to Noel from Mrs. Kennedy and the President. It said, "To Noel Fitzgerald Mahoney." Isn't that mouthful? So the day that I saw the president he walked in and he said, and the first thing he said to me was, "Bill, how is Noel?" I was really surprised. You know, they had lost this little boy a few months earlier, Patrick (Patrick Bouvier Kennedy). I said, "She's fine." And he asked who the doctor was. I said he was a Ghanaian, named Kwesi Bentsi-Enchill. Then he said to me, "I note her middle name is Fitzgerald." I said, "That's right, Mr. President." I said, "By the way, there's a small explanation involved." I said, "You know, my mother's maiden name is Fitzgerald, but we had you in mind when we named her." He started to laugh. And he said, "Oh, come off it." I said, "Hey, listen, friend," I won't say for this machine what I said, "that child, most emphatically, that child would never have been named Fitzgerald if it hadn't been for you. Never." Well, he was really grateful for this. Then we started chatting. We talked first about Ghana. He always inquired about the dam and, God bless him, I told him. "You know you'll never regret that decision. You'll never regret that decision." By this time I think the dam was finished--no, no, the dam was under construction. Good God! Well then we got off on

other things in Ghana. But, oh, there were a couple of very interesting things we discussed. First, we discussed the '64 campaign. He asked me if I would come home and help. I said, "You name it. I will come home and do anything in the world to help you." Then he said to me, "You know whose name is being talked about?" I said, "No, I'm living over there in the boondocks." He said, "Goldwater." I said, "Goldwater." I said, "My God, my friend." I said, "You know, Mr. President, you've got to give the opposition credit for having some sense. Just a little sense. And they're not, they're just not that stupid." He said, Well, that's the word out, Bill." I said, "Absolutely impossible. Unthinkable." Of course, I was slightly wrong, as it turned out. And he said to me that day, "God, wouldn't that be a delight." I said, "It's too good to be true. You just get off that fantasy kick and get back to real life."

Well, the most interesting conversation, though, was the conversation regarding civil rights that I've never mentioned to you in any way. You'd have to understand that my chief interest in life, prior to going to Africa, and aside from supporting my wife and children, was the black movement. I was the attorney, beginning in the early fifties for--pardon, in the forties-- for the NAACP

(National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and we won some big victories in the school of, in the area of school desegregation . . .

MOSS: Excuse me. Let me just turn this. Okay? Fine.

MAHONEY: Well, you have to understand that I have that kind of a background. That's probably the reason that I ended up in Ghana. And by the way, Nkrumah knew all about that. He was delighted with that. So, the previous summer there was this big march on Washington or whatever you want to call it, and the president addressed the nation, as I recall. And we had a televised account of it that we circulated overseas. And, as I remember, he made a fine statement on the issue of decency, and then ad libbed. Eloquently. He said something to the effect, "Look, let's try to put ourselves in that other guy's place. What if your skin or my skin were tainted. What would we think?" It was just magnificent, and I think it was ad libbed. I didn't know. Oh my God, it was moving. So we showed that all over Africa, at least in our part of the world. Beautiful statement. And up to that point, if you remember your history, typical of John Kennedy with that marvelously tentative way of his, he hadn't come flat out in this area. Neither did anybody else, for that matter, except a bunch of fools like me.

But the point is that I said to him, "Mr. President, I want to congratulate you on that statement. That statement was magnificent. I just want to tell you that I'm just proud as hell of you." So--typical--he kind of laughed and he said, "You know, I'm kind of proud of myself." He had that marvelous sense of humor. So he said, "I want you to listen to something." So he went over to his desk and he came back with this article. He said, "Listen to this." So he, it was the only time I ever saw, he put on a pair of glasses. Looked like a steam roller had gone back and forth over them. And he started reading this article to me. Now I never checked this up. Maybe some day you can check this up and let me know. He said, "Now, Bill, this is an article that's going to appear in Look magazine. The next issue." I might say as an aside, I don't think it ever appeared. Maybe they scrubbed it because of his death. It was written by some reputable political writer concerning the reaction to the Kennedy position in an electoral precinct in Iowa that's called, in the game, a swing precinct--a precinct that either in the five or six preceding elections the people voted for the successful, ultimately successful candidate for president of the United States. You get the idea?

MOSS: Um-huh.

MAHONEY: A swing precinct. What had happened was the Clarke County, Iowa, or something, I forget the name--anyway this writer had polled people up there. And person after person said, "Look, I supported Kennedy in '60, but after what he said on civil rights I'd never support that guy, I'd never vote for that fellow again." This is what he was reading to me. So he read it and he said, "What do you think of that?" I said, "I don't care what that article says. I am not surprised or--this concept then was 'backlash'--I'm not surprised. I think that's perhaps a little more extensive than I thought it was going to be but look, there's only one way to go. He said something like, "You're telling me. And that's where we're going." I said, "Yeah. There's only one way to go, Mr. President." And you could tell that--you know the eternal pragmatist. "Great idea, Bill, but you know, what have you got to say about this?" He was concerned about it as any decent politician should be who lives in the real world. But I'll never forget that conversation and I never . . . I'd be very curious to know whether that article ever ran in Look.

MOSS: We can check it out. It may be amongst his papers. It may be amongst Robert Kennedy's papers or some of that stuff.

MAHONEY: He went over to the desk and snatched it up and brought it over and read it to me. And then he told me as I was

leaving, he said, "I'm going to Texas on Thursday." I said, "What are you doing down there?" He said, "Well, you know, Lyndon, Connally (Gov. John B. Connally, Jr.), Yarborough (Sen. Ralph W. Yarborough), and these guys are kind of fussing a bit and I'm going down to smooth over a few feathers." Then he mentioned to me that his wife was going with him. He said, "Mrs. Kennedy is going with me." I was pleasantly surprised to hear that. I think he knew that I had an idea what that meant. Then I said goodnight and I left. That was on a Tuesday. Gee, I don't want to take up the time on the tape, but it was such a typical Kennedy scene and so American that I would like to record it. The day of--have you got a few more minutes here?

MOSS: Sure, sure.

MAHONEY: The day of that visit--you know, the New York Times, the Washington Post carry a very abbreviated schedule of the president's day--so that day it was nearing Thanksgiving, you see, and it was the National Turkey Growers Association at 10:15 and the United States ambassador to Ghana at 10:30, so I always got there early and I was sitting in the Cabinet Room reading a paper or something and his doors were open. They were always open. And I saw him standing there talking to Senator Dirksen (Everett M. Dirksen). So this event preceded my going there. So all of a sudden,

you see, and Kennedy was looking at that turkey and the turkey was looking at John Kennedy. It was absolutely priceless. So when the farmer finished--and by the way, I thought he would never--John Kennedy said to him, "Mr. President," he says to this guy, "on behalf of Mrs. Kennedy and the children, I want to tell you how pleased we are and how grateful. This is a great occasion for the American people. This is really an even sacred occasion." You know. Oh, when the farmer finished, he said, "Now in addition to Tom here--and by this time Tom was just becoming another person--"we have a frozen turkey and we want to know what you want done with these turkeys." So John Kennedy said, after he thanked him, he said, "I'd appreciate it if you'd send the frozen turkey to the Salvation Army. Now," he said, "with regard to Tom," and he was looking at Tom and I was kind of holding my breath and he said, "it would be a shame, a terrible shame to interrupt a great blood line like Tom. I think we're going to keep Tom." (Laughter) It was beautiful. It was beautiful. You'd think he was talking about Secretariat or something. Let me see if I've got anything else. No. That's about it.

MOSS: Okay. Once this is transcribed and a copy sent to you, you can always add footnotes and edit things if you want to. If other things occur to you.

MAHONEY: Yes.

MOSS: Okay. Fine. Let me turn this off.

I should add a couple of footnotes to our Ghana experience, one of which might be of interest to Peace Corps historians. It involves a rather dramatic and, to my knowledge, an unprecedented one-to-one encounter between our Ghana contingent and a Russian counterpart.

Our corps consisted of approximately two hundred volunteers at any one time, all of whom were secondary school teachers and all of whom taught in bush schools, away from main cities such as Accra and Kumasi. There were usually two or three volunteers teaching and living at remote spots. Because of Ghana's ideological sensitivity, they taught only non-idiological subjects such as science, math and languages. All instruction, of course, was in English, understandably the official language of the country.

During my years there, I made a practice of traveling over the country -- at least monthly -- meeting paramount chiefs, regional officials, American missionaries, AID workers, and schools of all kinds, especially where Americans were involved. At secondary schools, all of which had Peace Corps volunteers on their staffs, I usually was given the opportunity to address the students. It was a marvelous opportunity to present our country's culture, governmental system and racial practices.

The students were always interested in the latter and I was candid with them, an attitude they fully appreciated. I should add, they were universally quite well informed and, more so than in our country, very aggressive in their questions.

This had gone on for two years or so when my chief rival, Russian Ambassador Georgi Rodionov, decided to do a little campaigning of his own.

One day he traveled to a secondary school near the Togo border, where the usual Peace Corps volunteers were present. He addressed the student body, mouthing the Soviet line, and then, as was my practice, opened the floor to questions. At this point chaos ensued. We were told that the students ended up whistling and hooting at his stock answers.

Infuriated, he returned to Accra and told Nkrumah that the volunteers were brainwashing the Ghanaian students with imperialistic propaganda (a standard accusation in Ghana's press) and demanded that the Soviets be given the opportunity to furnish a comparable cohort of secondary school teachers. In typical hip-shooting fashion, Nkrumah readily agreed.

We learned of this episode a few days later (as I recall, this occurred in May 1963). I cabled the White House and Sarge Shriver with the news and Shriver came right back with a message to the effect that our government welcomed the opportunity to compare the quality of our teachers with theirs.

This occurred at a particularly ticklish time in our bilateral relations and I feared one of our "friends" such as Senator Dodd would exploit it for unhelpful purposes.

Somehow, the story never reached the press, either then or later. The following September about one hundred Russian teachers arrived in Ghana to take up teaching duties in its secondary schools, side by side with our volunteers. We learned that approximately one-third of them spoke English, another third spoke broken English, and the rest spoke no English. By all accounts, they were qualified in their subjects but had great difficulties communicating with Ghanaian students. In fact, two of my sons attended Ghana's excellent prep school, Achimota, and one of them took a science course from a Russian teacher through an interpreter -- with disastrous results.

Because of these and other difficulties -- largely the cultural barrier -- Nkrumah asked them to leave at the end of the school year.

To my knowledge, this was the only full-blown encounter of its kind in the Third World.

One other incident for the record, involving a vivid illustration of the difference between our system of government and that of Soviet Russia.

When I arrived in Ghana, the Russian ambassador was recuperating from an illness in his country. I was told he was elderly and ineffective. He never returned to Ghana and was replaced a few months later by my colleague, Georgi Rodionov.

Rodionov was a first-class operator, tall, handsome, personable, and fluent in English. He had been first secretary in London and the book we had on him was complimentary in every respect.

Nkrumah delayed receiving him and his credentials for several weeks -- a quiet way of expressing displeasure. Customarily, a new envoy does not publicly appear until his credentials have been accepted by the head of state. I had been received the day after my arrival.

Nevertheless, two weeks or so after we knew Rodionov had arrived, Alice and I were attending an art exhibit in downtown Accra where a large number were in attendance, including many numbers of Accra's extensive diplomatic corps.

I was amazed to see Rodionov present and greeting guests, quietly pointing him out to my wife. A few minutes later he and two or three aides came over to us. With a number of knowledgeable onlookers gathering around us, the following exchange occurred:

Rodionov shook hands with my wife and me and then said to Alice, "Madame, are you Irish?" Stunned, Alice replied that she was American Irish.

He then turned to me and asked, "Your Excellency, are you Irish?" At this point, I quietly decided that more than a conventional reply was in order.

"Obviously, Mr. Ambassador, I am an American of Irish derivation. But I would like to ask you a question. Has your head of state ever appointed an ambassador whose father was a native of a country other than your own?"

Rodionov got the point and was visibly embarrassed. He replied that had never occurred in his country.

I then said, "My father, although a good American citizen, was born and educated in Ireland and I represent a president of the United States by the name of John F. Kennedy."

I think this exchange had some effect on our guarded relationship for the ensuing three years. It epitomizes the vast differences between our two countries.

Final Note

In remarks about my last conversation with President Kennedy, I neglected to mention an interesting exchange on Red China, which might have historical interest.

At one point, I stated that I was tired of approaching Nkrumah each fall at the beginning of the U.N. session with the request that Ghana vote against the admission of Peking to United Nations membership.

The President remarked that in his contemplated second term, something would be done to improve our relationship with Peking. He stated that Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, was addressing the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco on that very subject on the following Thursday (November 21, 1963) and commented that he was "going to open the door a bit."

He gave me a copy of Hilsman's prepared remarks which, as I recall, did in fact send out hints of a new departure.