

RALPH SMUCKLER

September 26, 2000

Jeff Charnley,  
interviewer

**Charnley:** Today is September 26, the year 2000. We're in Washington, D.C., at the home of Ralph and Lillian Smuckler. I'm Jeff Charnley interviewing Ralph Smuckler for the MSU [Michigan State University] Oral History Project for the sesquicentennial to be commemorated in the year 2005.

Dr. Smuckler, do you give us permission to tape-record this interview today?

**Smuckler:** I certainly do.

**Charnley:** I'd like to start first with some questions about your personal and educational background. Where were you from and where did you go to school?

**Smuckler:** I went to school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Washington High School was my alma mater. After some months, actually, I was in the Army for a while, when the war ended, I came back and attended the University of Wisconsin, did a Ph.D. in political science there, and finished up the year I came to Michigan State. My dissertation was almost finished, and I moved to the university in East Lansing.

**Charnley:** Had other members of your family gone to the University of Wisconsin?

**Smuckler:** The only members of my family that ever went to a university went to the University of Wisconsin.

**Charnley:** So there was a tradition.

**Smuckler:** My father was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin. Had it not existed, he probably never would have gone, but he was a very bright student in a small town in northern Wisconsin, and he was offered by his uncle or his cousin or somebody to be supported at the university, but at that time Wisconsin was free, and he went and he worked, and he made his way. And then my sister came along, and she went to the University of Wisconsin.

**Charnley:** Your World War II experience, would you talk a little bit about that?

**Smuckler:** Well, I was seventeen when I enlisted in the Army, and I enlisted in the Army at the age of seventeen in order to be sent for special training and education. I went off to the Army Specialized Training Program. I was a part of the reserves in that program for about a year shortly after I was seventeen when, about three months into it, the program was abandoned, and I was sent immediately into infantry basic training down in Texas, went from there to immediate assignment to a division that was heading overseas.

So I celebrated my eighteenth birthday in the Army. I'm trying to remember whether it was--it would have been my eighteenth birthday in the Army in training, actually, and then shortly there upon my nineteenth birthday I was overseas in northern France, fought in the pockets in L\_\_\_\_ and St. N\_\_\_\_, finished up safely, was sent then to Austria for--actually, we were in the occupation down in France for a while, and then our division was sent up to Austria and it was broken up, and I was assigned to training as a clerk typist. The Army needed people to keep the records, and for some reason they picked me out and sent me off to that school, which was in St. W\_\_\_\_, and I ended up at the age of twenty having earned enough credits for overseas service to come home. That was good, because Lil and I got married shortly thereafter, within three weeks, and went off to the University of Wisconsin to get educated under the GI Bill, which was a great thing for all of us.

**Charnley:** What was Wisconsin like at that time at the end of the war with the return of all the vets?

**Smuckler:** The place was swarming, as was East Lansing, with veterans. We were lucky. One reason we got married so quickly was that we had a place to live in Madison as a married couple. We had an apartment that we were able to locate, that Lil was able to locate before I got home, and we were already engaged and got married and went to live in Madison. It was a lively place, a lot of excitement, a lot of GIs who had been all over the world.

**Charnley:** Your bachelor's degree, what field was that in?

**Smuckler:** That was in economics. It was a multi-disciplinary degree for international affairs, and I became interested in international service as a result, I think, of my work not only during the fighting but also in the occupation in Europe. I took a strong interest in it and came back to study international affairs. Wisconsin had a multi-disciplinary degree, which involved geography, economics, and political science, and it was a good degree. I majored in economics in that track and then went on from there to a Ph.D. in political science within the international interest.

**Charnley:** Was there anything that you saw in the occupation that maybe directed you? What was it that you did that caused you to pick that field?

**Smuckler:** Well, at one point, after being trained as a clerk typist, I was sent to Vienna and served there for about three months in General Clark's headquarters in G-3, which was the intelligence section, and that sounds very glorious. I was then nineteen years old. It was so glorious because they gave me a jeep, and as the jeep driver, I presided also over the message center, and that meant I made the rounds of all the embassies that Clark was dealing with and took messages and picked up things and all that kind of stuff. So I got to know Vienna and I got to know the embassies pretty well. I think that sort of sparked my interest. I saw a lot of these Foreign Service guys around. I never talked to any of them. At that time I don't even think I had the dignity of a PFC. I was a private at that time. So I think the whole war experience said to me that I wanted to be active in the world.

**Charnley:** Did you have language other than English at that time?

**Smuckler:** I studied some French before I left for my initial stay at the university. I went to the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee waiting for actually coming into service. I was seventeen at that time, and I had about three months before they pulled me into the AST. I studied French. I studied a lot of French over the years. I never got anything less than an A, and I took enough French courses to get a major, spent a lot of time in French literature study as well as French language study, and when I got over to Vietnam later and had to use it--this is some years later--I couldn't speak it, and that frustrated me. It made me think a good deal about how we teach languages.

**Charnley:** Interesting. When you first came to Michigan State, how was it that you ended up at Michigan State?

**Smuckler:** A very good offer. Actually, it's a funny story. My dad, because he never had to support me at the university, Lil worked and I worked and we had the wonderful GI Bill, so my dad and mother, who had saved for my education, ended up having about 3,000 dollars in the bank that they didn't need, I mean I didn't need, and they gave it to us as a gift in the form of a new car. And with a new car, I was, oh, at the top of the ladder in graduate school. I only had it for about six months, for the last year, actually, of graduate school in Madison.

During that last year the political science convention occurred in Minnesota, the APSA meeting, and we loaded six of us, with me driving, and we went in my splendid Olds 98 to Minneapolis, and there Michigan State was recruiting. I wasn't looking for a job yet, because I hadn't quite finished, but some of the guys brought me into the Michigan State session where Ed Weidner, a bright, young, able guy who was new on the faculty and trying to organize a Governmental Research Bureau in political science, was speaking, and then later he set up a series of interviews with anybody that wanted to meet with him.

Well, I went in and met with him, and so did a number of other Wisconsin graduates. Ed himself had attended Wisconsin at one time, a long time before, and had already established a reputation before being hired to

Michigan State, a reputation at Minnesota and UCLA. He was only about five years older than I was, but he was established in the field. I don't think he served in the war, but in any case, he was there, interviewed me, and lo and behold, a matter of months later I started getting phone calls, and that was it. They made me a good offer. I was offered a salary of 4,500 dollars, which I think was about the best offer that anybody got in political science at Wisconsin that year.

**Charnley:** When was your first trip to campus?

**Smuckler:** He invited me over. There was a position open in the Governmental Research Bureau and in political science, introductory politics, and Herb Garfinkle, from the University of Chicago, was also interviewed for that position, and Herb was selected for the straightforward position. I was then asked to take a position open for a year in international politics because they saw me as having a special interest, which I did have, and the training.

So I took the position for a year, but I never left. After that there was one thing or another, always in political science, until I moved into the international program.

I think the Governmental Research Bureau was the main attraction when I first went, that plus the fact that Jim McAme [phonetic], my major professor at Wisconsin, said, "Michigan State's a good place to go. They made you a good offer. You should take it." So I did. Had no reservations at all.

**Charnley:** Did the university or the federal government provide that funding for the Governmental Research Bureau at that time, do you remember?

**Smuckler:** That was the university, state of Michigan, yes.

**Charnley:** When did you meet John [A.] Hannah for the first time?

**Smuckler:** Let's see. I didn't meet him until--well, I'd see him in big meetings, but an instructor in political science doesn't meet the president except under special circumstances, and I didn't really meet him until I came back from Saigon. That would be in 1956, early, January of '56. I came back in December of '55. No, wait a minute. I've got a year off here. We went over in '55, came back in December of '56. In January of '57 I met him. Okay. During the year I was back, yes. The international program that I was being recruited into by Glen Taggart and by Hannah was sort of the apple of his eye, I got to see him very often after that. He was a strong influence on my own role at the university.

**Charnley:** What was Glen Taggart's position at that time?

**Smuckler:** Glen had just been appointed in late '56 to be the first dean of International Programs. He was also a professor in sociology, and I think a part of the Extension Service. But Glen had joined the university a year or two after I did, I guess, in the early fifties, and he already knew Hannah--Hannah was one of those that recruited him there--because of his having served in the USDA, and Hannah was, of course, active in USDA affairs.

**Charnley:** When you first got to campus, what were some of the early courses that you taught?

**Smuckler:** I taught municipal government, state and local government, introduction to political science--Poly Sci 7, it was--and a U.S. and world affairs course, which was the apple of my eye. That's the one I wanted to teach. I think I did all right in the others, but I had never taken a course in municipal government. I avoided it. I never took a course in state and local government. I avoided it. But there I was, using Ed Weidner's textbook in teaching those courses. I had seventy-five, eighty students. It wasn't a lecture session; it was a class where I'd meet with them three times a week and try to get to know some of the students. It was not an easy teaching assignment, because the first year I taught twelve credit hours each term. One term I went up to fifteen hours. That was half-time. The other half was the Government Research Bureau.

**Charnley:** And in your spare time what did you do?

**Smuckler:** In my spare time I dreamed of teaching the world affairs course, which I did. Leroy Bennett, who was then on leave to work at the U.N. and who vacated the position that I was appointed to for one year, had been teaching in the international field directly, and then he left after a year, and I moved into the international field.

**Charnley:** How did you first meet Wesley Fischel [phonetic]?

**Smuckler:** Wes was my office mate right from the very beginning in political science.

**Charnley:** And where was political science housed at that particular time?

**Smuckler:** We were in the basement of Morrill Hall, and it was sort of the center of things in the sense that Morrill Hall had a number of major departments housed in it. Economics was there. Some of the Arts and Letters departments were over there.

**Charnley:** Why don't we talk a little bit about the Vietnam project and how MSU got involved, or how you were involved in that project. I know it'll be coming out in your book and that sort of thing, but maybe if you could, in a nutshell, talk a little bit about that.

**Smuckler:** I'd like to talk about it, because there's a hell of a lot of foolishness that's said about it, in my judgment, foolishness. Wes Fischel was a Far East hand, he was a Japanese language specialist during the war and had been over in the Far East and had met various people. He knew an Okinawan whose name escapes me, who is a political

scientist and who eventually became the head of one of the universities in Japan. He knew a Thai professor of political science who became president, I think, of [unclear] University in Thailand.

Another person he knew as a man by the name of Go Din Diem [phonetic], and Diem was Vietnamese, he was a strong Roman Catholic, he had a brother who was a bishop, and the family was well known as a Catholic family. Wes wanted to, at some time, do a little study of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the Southeast Asian setting. He had a friend in Thailand. He had Diem in Vietnam.

Vietnam, after a few years we all became aware of the fact that France was hanging on in Vietnam and that the war was going on and on. West invited Diem to come and visit Michigan State. I don't know if Wes did it. I think the Governmental Research Bureau invited him, and at that time Diem was, I think, in one of the seminaries on the East Coast. So he came out for a few days, and I had numerous contacts with him, being in the same office as Wes. He gave forth at several seminars describing some of the things that he felt his country needed, and that was about it. He went back home, and Ed Weidner and Wes talked a lot about how they might develop some kind of an aid program.

That was a period in which the University of Michigan's work in the Philippines was well known to us because it was in public administration, and that was a part of our department, and we knew some of the people who'd been out to the Philippines for the University of Michigan, and the Indiana University people were getting involved in Thailand, although that came along a little later. They were exploring it a bit later. Universities were getting engaged in technical assistance. Michigan State at that point had several projects, one of them in Colombia in agriculture, one of the first of the Point Four programs under the [Harry S.] Truman Point Four programs.

We had a major involvement in Okinawa, which Milton Melder certainly helped to develop. The American Council on Education had asked us to get active there, and Melder put it together in behalf of Hannah. So we had two projects. Colombia was pretty much unknown to me because that was agriculture, and in those days and, unfortunately, over many years, if you were in agriculture, you were over there, if you were in social science, you were over here, and if you were in arts and letters, you didn't talk to either of them. The university was united only by the parking problem.



We didn't know what was going on in Colombia, but Ed Weidner knew quite a bit of what was going on in Okinawa because Guy Fox from our department went out there among the first, and Milton Melder was at that point chairman of our department in the early period, the first year I was there. Therefore, we knew a lot about Okinawa, and it was that kind of formula that prevailed in the discussions with Diem in the early time.

But I became involved because, having met him in the university then once he became president after the fall of the French at Dien Bien Phu, once he was president, he invited Michigan State, Fischel, to immediately send out all this kind of stuff. I, as an active member of the department, was asked to be one of the Michigan State team members. That was in late '54, early '55. We ended up going to Vietnam in 1955 about--I think we left on July 4 for Vietnam.

**Charnley:** That was your first time in that country?

**Smuckler:** Yes. First time in Asia.

**Charnley:** What were your impressions?

**Smuckler:** Vietnam is a beautiful country. My impressions were based on--the first day we were there, my family--we had two small children--Lil and I were assigned a storeroom in the hotel for the first night because they had run out of hotel rooms in the Hotel Majestic. So we slept in a basement storeroom that we couldn't lock because there was no wall up to the ceiling. It was just a partial wall. We got through the night all right, and the next day we moved into a regular hotel room. But that night there were mobs in the streets shouting up at the hotel, and for me that was very exciting, but the hotel was saying, "Keep away from the windows." So we had turmoil the first few days. A young political scientist, all kinds of excitement this presented to me.

We had three or four nights like that in which we were being told by our Vietnamese counterparts who were watching out for us in our new office facility and all of this, we were being told that this was a demonstration against

the International Control Commission, which had been set up under the terms of the temporary partition, and the International Control Commission had Indian, Canadian, and Polish diplomats on it, and since their staff and some of them were in the hotel and had just had a meeting that Diem's government disagreed with very strongly because it was very limiting on what Diem could do, that is, the decisions made at that meeting were, the mob in the street was an orchestrated mob, as most mobs, as you gradually learn in political science, most mobs are orchestrated in one way or another. This one was orchestrated by Diem's government probably to protest the ICC's decisions, which were not friendly to the Diem government. So we didn't worry about it.

But about the fourth or fifth morning we went up to the dining room where we had breakfast each day. Our little kids, Gary who was then age, I think, maybe six, maybe seven, and Sandy, his little sister who was just two and a half, had befriended the waiters, and the waiters got a hold of us as we came in. They said, "Leave the hotel. Get out of the hotel. Something's going to happen here today."

We had already scheduled Lil to go over and visit Jean Weidner in the house that they had. Ed was chief of party at that point. Lil and the kids, I took them in one of these little Volkswagen taxis, all four of us squeezed into it, and we got out to Jean Weidner's home, and I left Lil and went back to the office to work.

About 11:30, 12:30, there was all kinds of turmoil in the streets, and we began to wonder what was going on, but we learned through a Vietnamese contact of us who came running in about noon saying that the Hotel Majestic is kaput, it's dead. What did that mean? Well, in his language it meant that it was finished, and that was bad because we had Michigan State people in that hotel at that very moment.

So we went running down Rue Catinade [phonetic] to the hotel, and by the time we got there, the hotel, indeed, had been looted. Among other things, the wine cellar had been broken into and the whole first floor, the basement and the first floor was covered with wine, and if you could get through the slippery areas you could get your way to your room, which I did. I went up to our room, which had been broken into, and all of our stuff had been strewn around and a few things had been cut. I gathered everything up in a big sheet off the bed and carried it out like Santa Claus.

Fred [Frederic] Wickert had his family in the hotel. Dorothy Wicker and their two daughters were in the hotel, and Dorothy was able to speak some French, and she sat the invaders down. They were just kids, you know, they're high school kids. They were taking advantage of a situation. That's not what Diem wanted them to do, but there they were. They took over the hotel. John Dorsey's wife, was in the hotel with her two kids, too, and there were a few others like that, and they, too, had been able to calm the kids that were trying to invade enough so that they didn't lose very much.

But Guy Fox, who had moved into the hotel the day he was joining the team, that very day, and had arrived at the airport, found his way to the hotel with his friend whose stuff from Hong Kong was supposed to last him two years, completely wiped out, lost everything.

None of our people were hurt in the process. There may have been a few people roughed up, but not Michigan State people. It was rather terrifying.

So my first impressions of Vietnam are based in part on that experience. Each night from then on, there were bombs going off in the city. Because the hotel was unusable, we were put into an apartment that was supposed to be ready in about three weeks. So it really wasn't ready. It was pretty bad accommodation, but you took what you could get, and the family adjusted to it.

Each night we'd be awakened by the sound of artillery or bombs. One night we woke up and there were a lot of sirens outside our window. We were right on one of the main streets. We looked out and saw the police and some Army vehicles, and they were all working their way to surround and to try to get up the pole to get into the defense of a relay station that was on that post out there, a telephone relay station.

We learned then, the next day, that the reason they were so numerous and so cautious was that several of these relay stations had been blown up that night. And there were bombs going off from time to time even during the daytime. I remember walking down Rue Catinae one day with bombs going off two or three blocks away. I kept telling Lil that because of my experience in the infantry I could tell when something was close and when it was far away, and I knew what incoming artillery sounded like pretty much from the Army, and therefore, you know, I kept calming them down.

One night in particular comes back to mind, and that is that we heard--clearly it was artillery on this occasion, not bombs, and the artillery kept going from about four o'clock in the morning on for about two hours, and I kept telling Lil it's at a great distance and it's probably artillery fire practice, you know, the Army's practicing with artillery.

Well, we learned the next morning that they had been reducing the stronghold held by, I think it was the Bin Swin [phonetic] or one of the other river--what were called in those days pirates, and I think that's really what they were, and they had taken over that stronghold and defeated the opposition at that point. So Lil used to kid me about calling everything practice and artillery practice. "Don't worry." [Laughter] But that was our first impression.

I worked immediately on the library of the National Institute of Administration. I'm leaving out being introduced around to various people, but I had a counterpart immediately at the library. I was a research director for the program, and he and I planned the library and a facility that had been designated for that purpose. Mr. Suu was his name, S-U-U, and he was a nice gentleman who began to educate me about Vietnam.

By the time I left there, a year and a half, two years later, we had pretty much established the library, and then Michigan State provided a training program for librarians, and we set out Mrs. Ella Bowitch, who was our reference librarian in East Lansing. She spent two years there whipping the new library into shape.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

**Charnley:** When the tape ended, we were talking about establishing the library in Saigon.

**Smuckler:** Yes. It was the National Institute of Administration, to which our whole program was attached. The library was nonexistent until that point. We did put up a pretty good facility, just one small item in the many things that I was involved in in Vietnam.

**Charnley:** How was it that they made it a family affair? It would seem like if power wasn't consolidated and yet families were invited, do you think that was a mistake in retrospect?

**Smuckler:** We didn't lose any. A lot of the families--quite an adventure. I think those that were there at the beginning like we were had a substantial adventure as I've been describing it.

Incidentally, I learned a pretty basic lesson in the process, because the French and many of the Americans were saying the Diem government can never amount to anything, it can't keep control of the streets, it's unable to govern, and the Diem people, and I knew what they were saying because it wasn't that Wes was there, but Ed Weidner was chief advisor and was in touch with the presidency, and at that time we had an advisor to the Surete [phonetic], a man by the name of Boudrias [phonetic]. Boudrias used to be right in the middle of discussions that were occurring in the police headquarters, and several of our other police advisors were, too.

We heard from Diem's government that these aren't Vietnamese who are opposing the government; these are the French who are trying to discredit the government. You know, I couldn't believe that the French, our allies, freedom, independence, and so forth, would be doing anything that sneaky as to blow up some of the government buildings and to create havoc on the streets of Saigon. After all, we Western countries don't play the game that way. This must be something else. I didn't know who to believe.

But after a month, about four weeks of this stuff, they caught two bomb-setters driving in a jeep. One of them got out and was planting the bomb at the front of a big bank building in downtown Saigon, plastic bomb. The other one was sitting in the car, sitting in the jeep, when the police caught them. These were two legionnaires who were on the payroll of the plantation owners, loaned to them by the government, and they were trying to do what Diem had described, namely to upset everybody to the point where the Diem government couldn't survive. So it was clearly in the hands of the French, the turmoil that we lived through in that period, other than the initial riot which I described, the initial hotel looting, which the young people themselves took on as a result of the protest that was organized.

**Charnley:** The informal contacts that were made at that time, for example, did the MSU members of the Vietnam project, did they have contacts at the U.S. Embassy or were you invited to parties or some of those informal things?

**Smuckler:** There weren't many parties in those days, but there was certainly a lot of informal contact. For one thing, everybody was trying to get established. The Michigan State group was very prominent. We were very large. We became very large. I'm not going to give you the whole history step by step. I'm sort of jumping into the middle of it. But after a couple of years we had thirty people on site, and then we went up to fifty people on site, and we always had ties with the embassy because the ambassador considered what we were doing to be extremely important and wanted to talk from time to time to see what we were doing.

AID, of course, its predecessor being the Foreign Operations Administration, was our sponsor. So what we were doing was, in a very broad sense, supervised by AID. I don't like the word "supervised" because we were on our own, but financed by AID and supported and sustained.

We got into a big hassle the first six months when Ed was out there, Ed Weidner, because our business office could not write piaster checks. That was the currency locally. Yet we had a local payroll. We had well over a hundred people after a year or so on the MSU payroll. These were drivers, there were sweepers in the building, and all that stuff, and interpreters as well. So we had to figure out a way of paying these employees, and we did not have an ability to write checks. For various business and accounting reasons, we did not.

We wanted AID's predecessor--it wasn't AID then--to take over on the payrolling, but there, too, you run into questions when the government hires somebody and pays payrolls and they have to go through certain kinds of procedures and have certain kinds of--there's a different relationship. And when the university did it, they couldn't pay them. So we were in turmoil.

We went to the mat on this issue with the government, with FOA, our sponsors. It was to the point where Weidner was threatening to withdraw the MSU team from the field because we couldn't operate unless we could pay for the things that we were using, including employees.

Finally, after quite a bit of tension, we did get that settled, and it got settled on the basis of Filmet [phonetic], who was then the vice president for business, agreeing to write the checks based on the kind of documentation we had to provide. So we were sending stuff back and forth through the APO system that never should have been. There should have been a simple way of doing it. Somebody should have been able to break through that.

**Charnley:** And Filmet was here back in East Lansing?

**Smuckler:** Yes, he was in East Lansing. We get our checks from East Lansing, piasters written out. We cashed them in Saigon in some way. He would only issue the check against a list of receipts and so forth that we would send. We'd get the money, and then we'd write the check locally because we had a bank account there. Well, that's a detail you don't have to worry about, but there were a lot of other relationships.

We had a Police Advisory Group, which was a very sensitive operation. Evidently Hannah had agreed when the National Security Council contacted us--not us, but him--had agreed that we would make use of the recruitment of some intelligence officers to be a part of the training of the Surete, the Surete being the French intelligence security police.

**Charnley:** For the Vietnamese?

**Smuckler:** The name came from France.

**Charnley:** They kept that name.

**Smuckler:** Yes. They kept that title. We kept calling it the VBI, Vietnamese Bureau of Investigation. So we had in our midst one person who was seconded from the CIA to the Michigan State group, and it was no big secret to

anybody who looked at it. I never looked at it, and he was in the police team. I didn't know any of the police team.

The guy who headed it was Howard Hoyt [phonetic], a very able chief of police from Kalamazoo, Michigan. You know, that's quite a jump from Kalamazoo, Michigan, to Saigon, Vietnam. But, nevertheless, Howard was capable and able to do this, and he had a team of four or five people at that time. It grew to eight, and then later it grew to about twenty. So it was a substantial part of the Michigan State involvement.

So since we had these Surete to train, we had a lot of contact with the other agencies that were involved in intelligence work. We were making use of the CIA or DIA or whatever it was that was nominated. Art Brandstetter [phonetic], who was the head of our School of Police Administration, Art would pick and choose among them and hire one or another. They would second them to us. They'd be on our payroll and under our discipline in the sense that when I was chief of party I could have sent any of them home. That we assured ourselves of because we did get rid of one. Not get rid of him, but we shortened his stay.

Because of that function, dealing with the police, we were also dealing quite a bit with the U.S. Embassy people that are interested in that whole array. And at AID they were trying to help us out here and there, but they were completely incapable in the early years of dealing with police administration and Surete-type stuff or any other.

We had municipal police. We had rural police, which were the Garde Seville [phonetic]. We likened them to the state police. They're not an exact parallel by any stretch of the imagination, but they were one of three different police forces that we worked with. We never worked with the *gendarmes*, I mean the Army police. They had their own training mechanism. But we eventually helped the Vietnamese to build up a School of Police Administration, police training, and we worked with all three branches in that context.

**Charnley:** Was Ralph Turner involved at that time?

**Smuckler:** He came out later, yes. He was there when I was there for my second tour. He was there as a consultant, as I recall, earlier.



You see, Michigan State, in accepting the obligation to train and prepare the Vietnamese police services, accepted it for all three of the civilian services. I think that's the way it should have been, but it became an overwhelming thing for us, and we, by 1957, had decided to get out of it, I mean reduce it considerably. When I went out as chief of party in early 1958, one of the things I did immediately was to get in with the CIA and negotiate the withdrawal of our role in the Surete and negotiated with AID to be sure they had the capability at that time to pick up on the police.

Now, you know there's been a lot written about that. I mean by that, a lot of people like to chew on that and talk about this undercover activity. Let me tell you that undercover in the field, everybody knew who was working in the intelligence portion of the police division, and everybody knew, including the Vietnamese, because I personally took that up with Go Din Diem before we expanded to include any more than a small handful at the very beginning. Diem knew, his whole government knew, all the Michigan State people in the field knew, AID knew, anybody who hung around the airport knew, because when a new person came in it was always a ritual to be met, and if you were met by one of the wives of the embassy CIA crowd, and they were all known, then people would know that this was a--so the whole business of secretiveness is sort of silly. In fact, the names were read over the radio from North Vietnam.

But, you see, it fit into a nice pattern for people who came along later to try to make use of this secretiveness and so forth. It was understandable, but it was a distortion, a dramatic distortion. Every one of them was required to be under the discipline of--I'm talking about the intelligence people now--under the discipline of the chief advisor and his man, the chief police advisor, and they were. We were told that they could only participate in training activities, but when you're dealing with the intelligence services, you can't really verify what anybody does between ten o'clock at night and two in the morning. We believe that these were all trainees. They reported to us, and they reported on the training that they were engaged in, but it was an interesting period.

**Charnley:** Were there any other American universities that were doing similar things?

**Smuckler:** We heard that there were others. Glen Taggart later told me, but I have no first-hand knowledge. The Cornell Southeast Asia Center, I think, was at one time pretty well known as having been writing reports for the intelligence services, but I couldn't verify that. And besides, by the time I left, we were out of that business on the Surete side, and we were largely out of the police administration advisory role.

**Charnley:** By 1958?

**Smuckler:** When I left in 1959.

**Charnley:** How would you describe the political situation in Vietnam?

**Smuckler:** Very tense to begin with. When you say "political," I would say it was evolving. We were there during two elections, and when I think back on it, those were spectacular developments in the sense that in the midst of all of this and the uncertainty, there was an election held, a referendum, to put Diem in as president, to move Bowdai [phonetic] out, and many Vietnamese that I've talked to really resented that. They had an admiration for Bowdai and the lineage that he represented. But nevertheless, there was a big election, and many of us were out on the streets when the balloting was counted and went over to the polling booths to see what was going on and witnessing the significance of an election actually occurring, a referendum occurring.

Then later there was the election that put in a constituent assembly, and a constitution was then formed, and we participated to some extent in that. By that I mean we brought out an advisor on constitutional law, a man from UCLA who was a consultant to our group and worked with the Vietnamese as they spelled out their constitutional law issues. I forget what his name was, but he was quite prominent.

In any case, we had also the election of the first legislature, and that, too, when you think about it, we're talking about a country that is divided, going through all of this turmoil, all this difficulty, and here it is holding elections. So we observed this kind of political evolution.

There were many positive things happening in that period of 1956. I wouldn't include '55, because in those early months the country was still in turmoil, which I've described. But shortly after '55 wended its way off the calendar, we were able to go out in the countryside quite easily, comfortably. So the country was settling down. There were disturbing reports, by the time I left, of assassinations in the countryside, that the local officials were being singled out if they were loyal to Diem and being killed, and those reports I heard from time to time at the meetings, at the U.S. operations at USAM [phonetic], the AID program headquarters.

There were disturbing reports of the government being nonresponsive, and those came from Americans. You'd hear Americans saying, "Oh, it was never like this back home. We could do this and that," and I can tell you that, on hindsight, especially since I've been writing this book, that I think that this period of lack of understanding of the process Americans were going through probably did as much harm as anything else to unseat the government of Diem later on. I think one could document that. It would be an interesting book. But here you had a bunch of Americans in our group, but mainly from USAM and from all over, looking for something ideal and finding something considerably less and becoming critical. Inevitably it was considerably less than ideal. And you found that kind of griping and nonsense.

Remember, I used to go out in the countryside, and here I'm mixing the '55, '56 time with the '58, '59 time because this was a spread of five years. I was there practically all the time. One year we were back in East Lansing having our third child, who went back with us later. We had Michigan State people, one economist, another economist, who formed very strong views on how inadequate the Vietnamese economic improvement, how inadequate their planning was. As I think back on it, they were really incapable of handling the kinds of issues that they were dealing with, which were really political economy in its rarest form.

Milt Taylor, our tax advisor, went around and wrote a report, finally, went around talking about the progressive income tax, a very uncreative way of trying to deal with Vietnamese tax policy in those days. But he went on record, and I remember him asking to come in and talk with me one day when I was chief advisor about why he had to put up front on the third page of the report a damning reference to this governmental deal. "It'll never be anything until you put into effect a progressive income tax."

I said, "You know, does it have to be said in the take-it-or-leave-it sense or as a report-writer and consultant who has been admitted to the inner circle of information? Can't you say something that would not require Vietnamese readership and Vietnamese leaders to not just cringe, but to take offense and eventually to reject everything else in your report because you're so one-sided on the issue?"

"Ralph, when everything is said and done, you just gotta tell it the way it is."

You know, that's not exactly technical advisor in the best sense, and Milt was a good guy, but he was looking for something that he could never find in the overseas setting. He looked for it in Panama, too, later on under government auspices. And that's only one example, but I single that out because Milton went back and wrote a devastating article about how horrible the government was, how badly it was, how the U.S. was being taken.

**Charnley:** How was that article received in Vietnam?

**Smuckler:** That article plus one or two others--we had Adrian Jaffey [phonetic], whom you may know. He's in the Arts and Letters arena. Adrian came out, not as a consultant to the project, but because of so many of us being out there, he came out as a Fulbrighter. I remember going up to his apartment with our kids, Lil and I. Adrian was an old friend from East Lansing. He was sort of a curmudgeon, but he was a bright one, and Adrian was telling us about what he was into, how he was having so much trouble at the university and so forth as a Fulbrighter. At one point the toilet flushed because our seven-year-old--I think Gary was about seven then--had gone in to use his bathroom. He said, "Did he flush my toilet?" Adrian almost jumped out the window, he was so upset. He said, "I get one flush a day, and your kid went in there and flushed my toilet." [Laughter] You can see the conditions under which we lived weren't exactly the luxury conditions that some people have described.

In any case, Adrian came back and wrote an article on how terrible this thing was in Vietnam. Milt Taylor wrote an article like that. Frank Child, who was another economist from Michigan State, wrote that kind of an article. They had very negative views. The country was not living up as quickly to their ideals, and they were in no position to judge, but they judged, and they went way beyond their areas of specialization. They talked about

politics when really they were economic analysts. They talked about issues in the government that they really knew very little about. But when you're, like all of us, a professor and you come into a juicy situation, you can put an article in *The New Republic*, we're tempted beyond what we should be to do just that.

In any case, as a result of this, when the contract was up for renewal, we were requested by the government--by this time Al Seely [phonetic], who was head of the business college, was involved heavily because the project shifted. It was always under our International Program Office in the early sixties, but it came into being, incidentally, before the international program was created. It was under political science in the Governmental Research Bureau initially, and later, when our international program dean's office was created, all international projects came under that jurisdiction.

Then later, Al Seely, whose people were heavily involved in the field, insisted on having more control, and Glen Taggart yielded to that desire. That was our general philosophy. If a project's heavily involved in a college, it ought to be administered through that college with certain residual controls staying in the central dean's office. And Seely was out in the field, actually, when Diem unloosed the idea that unless he could have assurances from the university that our people would not write critical articles and publicly denounce him, as they were, unless that happened he would not renew the contract. So there was no way that any of us would have supported the idea that he would have that kind of control over what our people said. He said, "Look, your people are in my files, and it seems to me that they should respect the right of the government to control its own flow of information on such matters."

But we couldn't do it, we wouldn't do it, and the contract terminated. We had requested a final two years at a very reduced level in order to cement some of the good things that we'd seen, and we did accomplish some good things during the period.

**Charnley:** What were some of those?

**Smuckler:** Well, I would say the resettlement of the refugees was a very significant development, which would not have occurred, I can say without any hesitation, would not have occurred anywhere near as well or as systematically without our direct involvement. We wrote the plan under which the Vietnamese government operated and under which the AID program operated and which resettled almost a million refugees. I think we had 800 to 900,000 that were unsettled when we started to get into it.

I was out in the field with three or four of us in the team. We went all over the country, developed the plan. Diem and his refugee commission, Bouy Von Luong [phonetic], endorsed it. Well, his name was Luong, but not Bouy Von. In any case, they endorsed it, and they put it into effect, and when I came back a year later, the tense and temporary living arrangements that I saw when I first arrived in 1956 were gone. They'd been put in places where they could be productive.

That movement was criticized by some because they say it was so outside of the ordinary. These were all Catholic refugees, and Vietnam's a Buddhist country. There were references to the fact that some of them were placed in locations which made them sort of buffers between Cambodia and Vietnam. Those criticisms, whether they were partially correct or wrong or whatever, really didn't make any difference. These were human beings who had to be resettled, and they were, and they became productive parts of the economy.

Now when I look at the refugee situation in the Middle East, for example, and think of the horrors of having refugee camps for decades, generations, I realize that what we did in Vietnam, and that was among the first of such developments the U.S. got into in Vietnam, what we accomplished there was a major accomplishment. Well, that was one thing.

Our main goal was to establish a National Institute of Administration, which we did do, and we did it at a substantial level. It became a leader in the eastern region organization for public administration. It began to develop a professional public administration cadre, people, and a good number of them came over to this country for advanced degrees and went back. So an institution, I think, had been built, and that's what we wanted to round out in the final couple of years.

In addition, there was a budget process put in place for the government. We had Marvin Murphy, one of the deputy budget directors in the state of Michigan, and a Michigan State friend, he'd been in and out of Michigan State classes for years. Frank Landers, who was director of the Michigan budget. They came out at various times when Marv was resident there and developed a budget process, making use of primitive IBM equipment. We had counter/sorters instead of IBM full equipment. We had a colleague in Vu Von Tai [phonetic], who became an outstanding administrator, took a high position in the U.N. Development Program later on, came from France to head the budget operation, and we worked with him. Marvin Murphy was close to him and advised him. They were working wonders.

We had visitors from all over the region, all over South Asia and Southeast Asia, coming to see how this was working. So there was a kind of momentum of administrative adequacy that was coming in place. And of course Diem would work eighteen hours a day in his little cubbyhole office in the palace to get things going. He'd read everything that came across his desk, unfortunately, and the government was settling down. It was accomplishing things.

There were public works, which we didn't do, but because the government could function, the public works were getting put in place. The railroad was reestablished up to Hue. Well, a lot of good things that were beginning to happen until the assassinations in the countryside began to catch up and the Diem government was put under so much pressure that Go Din Nu [phonetic], his brother, increased, I would say, the opportunities for corruption in order to maintain a political stability, and the country became much more corrupt by the time Diem was overthrown.

**Charnley:** The communists were doing the assassination?

**Smuckler:** The Viet Cong, who were communists. We always like to think of them--we did at that time. I was part of thinking of them as being southerners who were anti-government, who were pro-independence and who were communist. It turns out many of them were being led by the North in the whole movement. I think the history that

has been written since then would show that these were hardly indigenous local people. They were, in many respects, masterminded by a much broader scheme that any of us realized. At one point--

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

**Charnley:** This is tape two.

We were talking about the Viet Cong when the last tape ended.

**Smuckler:** At one point there was a cache of arms that were uncovered in the basement that nobody knew existed under one of the houses that a good friend of the American community lived in. At one point a bag of hand grenades was thrown over the wall into our front yard, and Lil found them out out there. They fortunately had all been defused. But things were going on all the time we were there which made you realize this was far from a settled situation. It, of course, began to erupt after I was there. The Army began to come in in larger numbers. But Wes told me that the Army, the U.S. Army, would never have been invited to become so strongly entrenched had Diem not been overthrown, and, of course, he was killed in the process, but I don't know the ins and outs of that. I believe that's true. While he was in place, the U.S. military involvement was kept to a minimum.

When I came back in 1958, I think there were about 1,500 Army people. When I left there, maybe 500. So there were 1,500 going up to 3,000 while I was there, and these were heavily committed in Bien Hoa and other places where training bases and in military equipment activity which the council, the International Control Commission, knew about. It all changed after Michigan State was there.

I would like to say something about the living conditions, because some of these guys that have come along and taken a look at this talk about Saigon in those days as though it took these Midwestern bumpkins and put them into luxury where they had servants and all of that. That is such a misunderstanding of the conditions of life that existed. It's an understandable misunderstanding.



We had physical examinations of the Vietnamese servants as well as the employees of the MSU group, and I think the disease rate was something in the eighty to eighty-five percent category. We had to fire some of our people because they had galloping tuberculosis. Practically every one of them, or eighty percent of them, probably, had worms of some kind in their intestinal tract, and I would say probably ten to twenty percent had syphilis or some other venereal disease, and we were living and working in the midst of all this without, in the initial two years, any real American medical support at all except if you went off to Clark Field. We had our full share of evacuations because of amoebic dysentery and allergies to parasites of various sorts.

In the end, several of our people died in Vietnam in the early sixties. Some of our police advisors died as a result of--I'm not sure why but they did. One of them was Bud Hanville [phonetic], and I forget what the name of the other one was. So disease was a problem that was not acknowledged by most of the reviewers that went in.

Secondly, when you talk about servants in that setting in which we were living, almost a necessity of life because all the water had to be boiled and because everything else had to be kept in a clean condition far beyond that which you'd have to do in East Lansing, Michigan, and because just getting something done--for example, you could spend your whole day without any Vietnamese language ability in the market buying enough food to serve that night.

The conditions of life were such that servants were pretty much required. There were a couple of our people that tried to make their way without servants, but they didn't do very much except maintain their household, and we always felt it was an obligation and a desirable aspect of what we were doing to get to know Vietnamese and to socialize and accept invitations to parties and have an interaction, which the Michigan State people did with many Vietnamese.

In addition to that, the insecurity and uncertainty, the way it weighs on you after a while, never figures in the writing of these Johnny-come-latelys who suddenly use their own standards of judging what's going on, and I really have been irritated and angered by some of the stuff I've seen written. My wife had amoebic dysentery twice; I had it once. We constantly were worried about our kids in that respect, almost had to evacuate one of them to Clark Field. So this was no hayride that we went out on. This was a certain adventure where one thought one could do some good.

In the end, I would say largely because of the ignorance that prevailed in assessing what was going on in Vietnam, we got caught up in a bad situation. There are a lot of avenues one could pursue in that respect, but I hope we're going to talk about the international side of the university. This Vietnam project was only a bubble in that respect. It became the prominent one because of all the anti-Vietnam activity and then the way itself.

**Charnley:** Would you talk a little bit about your role? You were assistant dean of international programs.

**Smuckler:** Yes. When I came back from Vietnam--of course, I was in the political science department all the way through, but when I came back, Glen Taggart asked me to be in his office, so I joined him. There were just the two of us for a while. [Tape recorder turned off.]

**Charnley:** Before the break, we were talking about international programs and your role in that as assistant dean. Would you talk a little bit about that and where Michigan State University was involved in the 1950s in its international programs and international study.

**Smuckler:** When I came back from Vietnam, I joined Taggart, and from then on we worked very closely together on international program developments. Michigan State, in my humble opinion, was probably the lead public university in the country in developing an international dimension, which was our goal. When I joined Glen, we had already become active in Colombia and Okinawa, two places. We had an involvement in Turialba that was just coming to a conclusion. That's in Costa Rica, Central America, generally. And we had the Vietnam project. In addition, in 1954 we had started to work in Brazil in the field of business administration.

Then, during that year, 1957, when I was back, the first year I was with Glen, the first year of the international program existence, International Program Office, we were invited by the Ford Foundation to help set up an academy for rural development in Pakistan, which we did. So by the time I came back from Vietnam in late 1959 or early 1960, we were already very active in five countries, with major commitments.

There were other universities at the time also getting engaged heavily. I refer to the public administration involvement by the University of Michigan, but when I was in Vietnam I ran across a University of Michigan team, and they had about three or four people there in Laos working on language. It was a language team of some sort. I forget exactly what they were doing, but they used to come down to Saigon, and we associated with them quite a bit. And then they had somebody actually stationed in Saigon, I believe.

Cornell University had become active in agriculture in the Philippines in a big way. University of Wisconsin was getting active in India. Harvard was in Pakistan and in several other countries in connection with economic development. They were forming a development advisory group. I don't remember exactly what they called it in those early years, but that evolved into their Development Institute that they operate even now. There were many other universities involved.

Michigan State, as I indicated, was probably, among the public universities and even including the private, right up at the top, and I don't just refer to technical assistance. I refer to building the dimension of international studies into the program of the university, the whole program, and that we did with the help of several substantial Ford Foundation grants and with the help, of course, and the commitment of the top of the university and with a number of very strong allies throughout the university, faculty members who really took it very seriously and wanted this to happen.

So with the help of the Ford Foundation and the university's own investment, with what we could develop as a result of the experiences of our faculty abroad--we had as many as a hundred in any one year who were overseas during these early decades--with those advantages, we were among the leaders.

**Charnley:** Were there many graduate students at that time involved?

**Smuckler:** A good share of the Ford Foundation funding that we got was used in support of research programs that employed graduate students. Then later, under UCIA, which we helped to form, UCIA being the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities, under that umbrella there were competitive grants made to

graduate students who were doing dissertations. In various ways, the faculty was our main target, and they brought with them the graduate students, and then later, of course, as we evolved the international and area studies, we had substantial support from Title VI to deal with dissertations abroad under that funding for Africa and for Asia.

That evolved very nicely, because we had as many as four or five, when I was still the dean, grants coming on an annual basis under Title VI. I understand that since I left the deanship about nine years ago, that the number has continued to increase, has gone up to become the lead. I think only two universities in the country have six sustained support arrangements under Title VI for international studies and for area studies. A lot of that channels into graduate student support. I think that there are only two, and Michigan State is one of them.

So, going from a position in which we were, I would say, unheard of in the international studies arena and not taken seriously, the university is now a major competitor on any international studies, international research line, that comes along of interest to the faculty. And that's because the faculty has become very international and because, through one avenue or another, they've been exposed to different parts of the world.

**Charnley:** At what point was the decision made to bring large numbers, or encourage large numbers, of international students to study on campus? Was that President Hannah's idea? Where did that come from?

**Smuckler:** I'd have to check data on this, but my recollection is that at no time was Michigan State considered to be the largest, or among the largest, of the foreign student training institutions. When I arrived, we had a small number. I arrived on campus in 1951, and we had a small number of foreign students. I think there were probably three or four hundred.

Hannah was an enthusiast for foreign students. Hannah always talked in terms of people. "Don't tell me about programs. Tell me about the lives of people." He used to bring all the foreign students to his home once a year, and he was a great leader on all of the international things that we were trying to accomplish in those days.

But we made the decision, contrary to most other university in the country, that we didn't want to increase our undergraduate foreign student enrollments. We did not want a larger number. We had maybe 200, 300, 400, as

we went into the sixties undergraduates out of a couple thousand or 1,600, whatever the number was in any particular year, foreign students altogether. Our graduate student numbers from other countries increased continually, because that's a matter of control by departments as much as anything else. A department decides who they will accept as a graduate student. The university processes them and all that, but these are departmental decisions. In some cases you can't get a graduate student to come unless you can support him, but in many departments that's not true. They'll come supported by somebody else and gradually find a way into the department.

In any case, the decision we made to keep our numbers of undergraduates low was contrary to the trend in those days. We heard about, participated, in discussions where colleges and universities were going out recruit foreign students because they were a source of higher tuition. They all paid out-of-state tuition, after all. We never had many scholarships to offer foreign students in my years, as much as we tried to find that kind of money. They had to be supported by departments if they were going to be supported. We had no general pot out of which to take much support. We did have some, but not much.

Now, we decided not to have undergraduates for several reasons. One, we were building up institutions abroad. At one time we had a good number of our faculty in Nigeria building up a new University of Nigeria, and we were told by our colleagues that if they couldn't keep undergraduates to study in their country, the best all had to go to the U.S., as would have been their inclination to do, it would have harmed the development of their own universities. We saw that as a reasonable argument.

But beyond that, we also saw that foreign students at the undergraduate level were still pretty young and were having difficulty adjusting in the U.S., especially in a large university. We did not have a good English language studies program in those years. So we had a lot of trouble with undergraduate foreign students in the early years and decided that we didn't want a large number, that we'd admit them at the graduate level or they could transfer from other schools where they would have gone through the initiation, you might say, at the agony of some other institution.

On hindsight, I'm not sure we were right. We probably should have geared up and done the necessary. We did build an English Language Study Center eventually, and that enabled us to do a good job with English language training for foreign students.

What happened was that the admissions office at the undergraduate level became so enamored with keeping them out that we could never get the guy who was in charge to really begin to build up the numbers. That's a highly selective thing, you know, subjective thing, when you begin to admit undergraduate foreign students. You have to have a certain sympathy for them, and I think our admissions office lagged.

As we got into the period where the enrollments weren't as high, Lee Winder, our provost, and a number of others decided that we ought to let that number go up. Why not? Furthermore, they would be paying higher tuition, and that wasn't bad either, because we were suffering pretty badly on budgetary matters. So we talked to the admissions officers under the old regime, people that were there, and we began to gradually increase the numbers. This was in the eighties, really, seventies and eighties.

And we gradually, but never very much--even today I believe it's a problem at Michigan State, because even when we decided that by not having undergraduate foreign students we were denying our American students, our Michigan students, a genuine opportunity in the classroom to interact with people from all around the world, even when we made that decision, we couldn't get the numbers up fast enough. We wanted them. We had no money to buy them or to bring them, and we had so many foreign students who were graduate students that our curiosity, so to speak, was satiated.

I knew we were doing the best job in the country with these students because our guys like David Horner and Homer Higbie and Benson and the others were all national leaders in the professional field related to foreign student affairs. Chuck Lioso [phonetic] was head of his section on study abroad, but that was not foreign students; that's another side. So we were doing a very good job, but on the undergraduate side we never built up our numbers as rapidly as we could have.

Now, as a part of this desire to build a dimension, we had to build up a strong overseas study component, and we did just that with Sheldon Cherney and Chuck Lioso and a few others taking the lead and developing what

became known as a kind of Michigan State model, that is, a professor in our Department of Social Science every other year would take a group of students who were going to study social science under him in London or wherever, and on that basis we built up our numbers. So I think we were probably the largest overseas study university in the country based on any single campus. We weren't the largest in terms of percentage because some places like Albion or some of the others, their percentages were way ahead of ours. But we had enough activity in the overseas study arena so that we were very prominent there, too, and I would say that that continues to evolve.

Our current president, [M.] Peter McPherson, has a strong commitment to getting a good number of our students, increasing the number of our students with overseas experience while they're students.

**Charnley:** Did that develop while you were dean?

**Smuckler:** Well, Peter was not there.

**Charnley:** You were dean in what, 1968?

**Smuckler:** I was acting dean during the mid-sixties when Glen was out in Nigeria as vice chancellor of the University of Nigeria. When he came back, about 1966, I was still assistant dean. I took leave for a while. In 1967 I was asked by the Ford Foundation to go to Pakistan to head up their program. I joined the permanent staff of the Ford Foundation actually in 1967, thinking that my days at Michigan State might well be finished because the job that I could have done well was occupied by my close colleague. Glen knew that, and I knew it. So when Ford came knocking I went off, and when Hannah got wind of it, he insisted that I not go. If I had to go off on this adventure, he said, "You've got to hang on to your position here because we're going to get you back." So he did.

**Charnley:** He was persuasive?

**Smuckler:** Yes, he was always persuasive.

**Charnley:** Was that a face-to-face meeting that you had?

**Smuckler:** Oh, yes. And later, this was in '67, '69, I was in Pakistan about '68, I don't remember the exact date, he became the head of AID. Before I could get back. I already committed over the phone. He called me in Pakistan, "You've got to come back!"

We were shouting over the wire, back and forth, and I told him, "I can't leave here until I've done something. I came all the way out here."

He said, "Okay. If you've got to stay, stay there," he said, "but you come back as soon as you get free, and we'll ask Milton Melder to be the acting dean." So that's what he did.

I came back in '69. He'd already gone. You know, there was a political change in the state of Michigan, and he called me in Pakistan and said, "I want to meet you in London," and we did because he wanted to talk to me. This was when he was going to AID. I had just seen him a few months earlier because I came back to campus for a couple of days and spent some time with him.

When I went to London, Lil and I had talked at great length about why he wanted to see me in London. I was living in Islamabad. We agreed that he probably wanted me to join him in Washington, because we were very close in those days. We didn't want to. We wanted to come back to the university. The position I was offered was a lifetime position for me, the position of dean of international programs at the best university in the country for that type of activity. When I met him in London--I did go spend a weekend with him in London--he flew in from East Lansing, and we had agreed, Lil and I, that I would hang on to my decision, knowing how convincing he could be.

When we got together we got in a good solid discussion, what's my future, "Where are you going from here, Ralph?" All that kind of stuff. I said, "I'm just looking forward to getting back to the campus. Our goal is to get back there in '69 and move the international program along."



He looked at me. You see, when they appointed Walter Adams as acting president, which was a good political statement, but it was not a statement that Hannah would have encouraged them to make. I think it was then a Democratic board, and Walter was very active in Democratic politics, and he was a good faculty member, too, but Walter was never an international program enthusiast. Walter figured that if you can't speak the language of the country, you shouldn't go there. He told me that once. He spoke German. He'd been there during the war. He spoke some French, he spoke French. So France and Germany were good places to go. Walter never got enthusiastic about the university's technical assistance role or Point Four or any of these ways of opening to the rest of the world.

And Walter would be the president when I came back, acting president, and Hannah knew that that was not a friendly home for me, so to speak, administratively, although Walter and I were good friends. We were neighbors and used to play volleyball and soccer and all that stuff out in the backyard, and we were active together politically when I first came to Michigan State. We helped to put Don Hayworth, one of our faculty members, in as congressman. He defeated a right-wing McCarthyite, Kit Clardy [phonetic], his name was. Walter and I worked avidly. I was from Wisconsin, so they made good use of me to talk about McCarthy, you see, and Adams was a Democrat with all kinds of connections. So I knew Walter very well, and I knew that he was not friendly to the program. He was friendly to me personally.

John Hannah, in the first few minutes, looked at me, you know, and said, "Well, if you're going back to the university, that's what I wanted to hear." He said, "I was afraid that if I was going off under the arrangements that had been worked out, you would decide to stay permanently with the Ford Foundation."

I said, "Nope. Lillian and I are going back to the university."

So we spent the next two days telling stories about AID, telling stories about the university, and we had a great time walking the streets.

**Charnley:** Did you feel that your own life was at a turning point at that point?

**Smuckler:** No. It had already turned when I accepted. Well, not in London. When I accepted the deanship and knew I was going back, I had to resign from the Ford Foundation. I was permanently appointed at one point, at one time there, and that was a turning point. I had to decide whether I wanted an international head of Ford Foundation programs around the world or what, and that was a turning point. The turning point led us back to East Lansing. That's where we wanted to be.

**Charnley:** What was homecoming like?

**Smuckler:** Enthusiastic by my colleagues, negative in terms of support from the central administration. I can say negative because I took about a forty percent cut in pay to come back to the university, and not a finger was raised to correct that.

**Charnley:** Not at the dean level, either?

**Smuckler:** No. It was a substantial cutback for me to come back, but I didn't mind that. I can honestly say I did not mind it. It rankled me a bit that without Hannah there I had nobody to really watch out for me, but then, from then on, Cliff [Clifton R.] Wharton [Jr.] was a good friend before he ever became president. I had known him.

**Charnley:** Were you surprised when Walter Adams didn't get the permanent presidency, or the presidency, anyway, or not surprised?

**Smuckler:** I was not surprised. I had met with Don Stevens, who was chairman of the board, at lunch, and I had a pretty good inkling that they were worried at that time about a couple of things that Walter had been involved in and--

[Begin Tape 2, Side 2]

**Charnley:** When the tape ended, we were talking about Walter Adams' interim presidency, and you mentioned you met with Don Stevens, who was chairman of the board of trustees at MSU at that time.

**Smuckler:** Don wanted to have lunch because I just came back from Pakistan and had been overseas. I knew Stevens. I knew not the inner circles of the Democratic Party, but a lot of the trustees. The trustees have been active supporters of the international program, and I had traveled with--I don't remember with whom I had traveled in the sixties before I went to Pakistan, but I knew them from one presentation or another. They were moving on the decision of the presidency, and I did not get the impression in that lunch that Stevens was going to push Walter.

That afternoon Walter had a press conference in which he made it clear that he did not want the presidency. He'd been saying that all along. At the press conference he reiterated that. Well, I had sort of interpreted that to mean that he wasn't going to get it, and this was his calculation, and he sincerely did not want it to begin with. He may have been tempted, but now this was the moment to make it clear that he was withdrawing from any interest.

Then they made the appointment of Cliff Wharton, and Stevens had asked me about Cliff when we had lunch. I knew Cliff from his Rockefeller Fund days and from his days of general work in the international development field. Cliff was a professional in this field, a very strong professional. So when they turned to Wharton, I was not surprised.

**Charnley:** Did you have contacts with Dr. Wharton in professional conferences or anything like that?

**Smuckler:** Before he went out to survey a program for the council that he was being pulled into, the Agricultural Development Council, ADC, I think it was called then, before that he was sent on a visit to some of the major agricultural development universities in this country to appraise how he could be a useful person. He came. We were still in the library at that point, the upper floor of the library, and I remember that we had lunch together and

Cliff was asking all kinds of questions about how he might be able to fit well into the Asian program of the ADC or what their program ought to be.

Larry Witt, who was an active internationalist in ag economics in those days and became a close ally of our international program development, a major figure, Larry knew Cliff very well from economist days, and he was talking with Larry, he was talking with me and with Glen Taggart and others. That must have been in 1957. It was either '57 or 1960. The reason I'm hesitant about the date because I remember in the library building--it was '57, because he came on a tour of Asia then, afterwards, to see where he might locate and where the ADC program might be built. ADC was Rockefeller money.

When he came through Vietnam then, the second time, he wrote to me, and we had a group together for Cliff. We had lunch, and he met John Dorsey and he met our other Michigan State people, and he knew what we were doing in Vietnam, knew our work very well. He was active in Southeast Asia himself personally, professionally.

So by the time I came back in early '60 or late 1959, Cliff was already established. Then he was out in Malaysia, where he was based and where he was sending trainees to the United States itself. So I knew his work. I knew him personally. I met Art Mosher [phonetic], who was his mentor at the ADC, was president of the ADC, a very strong international ag figure. Mosher told me even before I learned from any other source that Cliff was a serious contender for the presidency at Michigan State, and he said, "I keep telling Cliff you should not take a presidency at this stage. You're still too young," you know, this kind of discussion. We were lucky to get him, because he had other options open all the time.

**Charnley:** So when he came to campus, then, as president--

**Smuckler:** When he came as president, we met and we talked about how we could do this together, you know. He wanted the university to be what it was, moving toward being a national leader in internationalizing its program.

**Charnley:** Were you optimistic about his appointment, not in terms of you personally but how it affected his attitude toward international programs?

**Smuckler:** I was very enthusiastic when he came and had good reason to be. I knew he knew as much about the field as any of us and would have things to do that would contribute. A good example, I took the group of Brazilians that came through, high-ranking Brazilian educators, to see Cliff Wharton. We walk in the door, and Cliff starts talking to them in Brazilian Portuguese. It wasn't just a matter of politeness. I mean, they talked serious business. Cliff did that on a number of occasions when we had people coming here.

He never went out and inspected what we did. I mean, he didn't take advantage of that opportunity, whereas the other presidents did. I worked with [M.] Cecil [Mackey] and I worked with John [A.] DiBiaggio, even John Hannah. They would get out there and see our projects. But to Cliff that was always peripheral; he knew what was going on.

**Charnley:** He'd been around the country, around the world.

**Smuckler:** Yes. If he had some problem, he'd ask me about it. Cliff went out for other reasons. He'd be invited out to Malaysia or whatever, and while he was there he'd stop by a Michigan State activity here or there. I'm trying to remember. I think the Rockefeller Foundation board--I don't remember if he was on the board at that time or not, but they had a meeting scheduled out in Asia, so he took in several Asia projects in connection with that. That's how he got into it. But his being there, it added to our glow as a university on the international scene.

**Charnley:** After his appointment, were there any ties strengthened at the university or programs that the Rockefeller Foundation had been able to support?

**Smuckler:** No, it was never that way.

**Charnley:** He didn't push it or anything?

**Smuckler:** Well, in the case of Brazil, it ended up with a very large technical assistance project because when they met Cliff, they knew that whatever we did with them in Brazil would be watched over with great care. We were competing against Ohio State, against Illinois, against Wisconsin, a whole bunch of universities that this group of Brazilians had visited, and within two days they elected Michigan State. After they got back to Brazil, they met and they called me on the phone and said, "We want to go with Michigan State." We haggled over details, and that was it. Cliff was undoubtedly the reason why we stood out above the others. He followed the project pretty closely. Each of the presidents have been supportive in a different way. Cecil Mackey was the momentum that got us into China.

**Charnley:** Can you talk a little bit about that?

**Smuckler:** I was in Washington, I think. I had taken an appointment on an IPA arrangement. When Cecil came on board as the president, we talked on the phone, I in Washington and he wherever he was at the time, maybe in East Lansing.

Then when I got back to the campus, I returned to the campus to get back into the dean's office, Warren Cohen, who was then our Asia Studies Center director, told me how interested Cecil was in China, rightfully so, because China was the great land mass and great population and great culture and great history, and a university of any size or importance has to have people who know China, otherwise our classrooms would be weaker.

So Cecil kept talking with Warren before I got back, and then shortly after I got back--this was in the late seventies--Warren became the sort of director of the state office dealing with China as well as our own Michigan State leader. Cecil wanted him to put together a team, asked us to put together a team, of Michigan State leading faculty people and a few of the deans, to go to China. We had invitations for that kind of a visit.

So I put together a team with Cecil's agreement, including Dean Anderson of Agriculture, Dean Hollingsworth of Arts and Letters, who was studying Chinese at the time, and Sylvan Whittwer, who was head of the Ag Experiment Station, and three or four others of equal leadership roles, and we had everything lined up. Warren had done an excellent job of scheduling things with colleague that he already had in China and with Chester Sye [phonetic], who was back in China at the time, I think, and we went in 1980.

We were supposed to be there arriving early September, and on the way, I represented the university at the International Association of Universities meetings in the Philippines, and then we flew over to Thailand, Lil and I, and she was with me because of the IAU meetings and because I wanted her to come to China. There were several wives that were going to be in China. She got into an accident in Thailand, which was terrible, and I had to leave her behind after her surgery, with assurances that she would be all right.

I went on and met the group in Beijing a day late, just before they were getting started with their official routine, and we went to four or five different locations and came back to Cecil eventually back in East Lansing and assured him that these were places we ought to associate with, that they were good universities. Cecil put his stamp of approval on it, and we proceeded. So he moved us along a year or two, and he always paid special attention to the China program. He was also supportive in other respects, but that was his special brand.

John DiBiaggio was sort of international by orientation. I mean, he was just plain interested in what we were doing. He was never a great development person, as Cliff was. He didn't have one particular hobbyhorse, as Cecil did. I don't want to limit Cecil by saying he had a hobbyhorse. He followed everything, but John just plain took a strong interest.

For example, he came out to the meetings in 1985. A matter of weeks after he was appointed president, he came out to the UCLA campus where the International Association of Universities was having its once-every-five-year meeting. That's the meeting I attended in the Philippines five years earlier. John came out and established himself within the larger circle of university rectors and presidents from all over the world.

Later, in Helsinki in 1990, he was brought into the leadership cadre within the IAU, one of the backup representatives. The University of Pennsylvania president was involved heavily. For reasons best known to others,

not to me, it was a very prestigious organization. It was made up of hundreds of major universities from around the world, and John was in the lead role in that group and made a serious statement, a serious speech, to the group.

Then, on campus in many ways he was supportive, not in the same way as the others, but supportive if there was anything we wanted him to do. He would ask us, and we would suggest things to him, and he would do them. So that's the kind of president you want.

**Charnley:** Was he supportive both of international programs and study abroad?

**Smuckler:** Yes. International development was important to him. He could see the difference we were making in various institutions. And study abroad, he was happy with that. I don't remember that as one of his specialties, as it is with Peter. He had receptions at Cowles House for international students, things like that. Within [unclear], the presidents were always brought into the [unclear] concept. When we organized [unclear] way back in the early years, there were only four universities, and we were one of the four.

**Charnley:** Are there schools other than Big Ten schools in that?

**Smuckler:** Just the four Big Ten schools. Gradually, over the years, not with any enthusiasm from the original four, it began to get too big. Five, six, seven, okay, but when you get up to ten and eleven, it becomes a conference, and the intimacy began to evaporate. I was never in it when it had ten. I was in it from the very beginning. In 1991, when I left for my position in Washington, it had only grown to about seven, I think, and it had changed in nature. From my vantage point, it was losing its zest. It was beginning to be viewed as a foundation instead of a technical assistance operation. That may be too harsh, but I think it's accurate, and I think history has borne it out.

I got into big hassles in the board meetings because I kept trying to keep it a different kind of organization than I'd seen so many others become. We didn't have to have a cast of thousands. We needed a cast of hundreds. When you have four major universities, as we did, that's pretty large. CIC could never go anywhere, in my



judgment, in the international arena, because it was just too big. It was the whole Big Ten plus Chicago, and they kept trying to figure out what they could do internationally. Finally got to organizing some study abroad programs, but they could never take on anything of direct importance. So now I guess [unclear] is probably the CIC international wing.

**Charnley:** Are there any aspects that you're particularly proud of, of the development of international programs, the relations that you developed under your deanship that you can point to?

**Smuckler:** I would say that some of the projects that were taken on in agriculture were very successful. The work we did in Brazil was very successful, both in business and in the broader agriculture and management side that we got into in the late eighties. I could go on with four or five others, but I think the work that we did in Thailand in the field of education was important. I think that our work in Pakistan, at Comilla [phonetic], was outstanding, and, in fact, I devote a whole chapter to that subject in my book because it brought us in touch with Akter Hamikan [phonetic], who was an outstanding rural development administrator in the Pakistan setting, and he taught us a lot along the way. So I think our work at Comilla you can say was one of the outstanding things.

My general observation on technical assistance work and the university's contribution is that as we went along and learned more and more about how to do things, we learned just how complicated and how slow-moving some of these processes are, and therefore, I would say that, from my vantage point, I began to understand the limitations of what a university can do in the international field. I put some of that in the book, too.

But, no, I would say my position as a leader in international programs for those thirty-five years, the thing I would be most proud of would be the lead role that the university came into in the U.S. setting when it came to things international. We were not a Princeton nor a Harvard where we were producing the ambassador. We never had a school that could do that. Public policy was not our thing at Michigan State. I tried to push that as I was pulling out of the deanship and as McPherson was reviewing what the university should do and might do. I tried to make the pitch that we needed a School of Public and International Affairs, a graduate school, and we began to produce

Michigan State types of ambassadors instead of the starched shirts that I'd met over the years, and few Michigan Staters in that mix would make a substantial difference over the years. Not that I don't admire some of them. I met some outstanding ambassadors, many of them over the years, had some good friends who were ambassadors.

But Michigan State students and graduates are different than those coming out of Harvard and Yale and Princeton and the SAIS down here at Johns Hopkins, and we had a lot to contribute. I think that John Hannah Fellows and maybe eventually the Peter McPherson Fellows and professors and all of these would have been a hell of a good mix for turning out the generation of statesmen of this century, but I was never sufficiently persuasive, and I didn't have a million bucks, or five million, to put into it either.

In any case, I would say that would be one of the disappointments that I had, and it only came to me in the last few years just how active we could be in that direction. I put it in writing and failed to get it taken seriously.

But the thing that I took the greatest pride, that I think the university can take pride in, is that we did become the university that one could not be without if one were planning some new international education venture or some new international development venture. I can illustrate that with statistics, but it can be illustrated by some of the conferences we held in the later years also, some of the materials that were written, or what was said about us by the people that took a look, always very high-ranking.

Dave Wylie [phonetic], outstanding director of our African Studies Center and who was and still is the outstanding expert on Title VI support, found about the last year or so that I was there, before pulling out of the deanship, found that the foundations were putting together a major fellowship program to support graduate work in Africa and in other areas of the world under the area study umbrella. We needed Ph.D.s in history who also had a serious African commitment. David's people had been very competitive under Title VI, and we had many graduate students going through under Title VI, but this new program, which was going to make, I think, at the outset, fifteen to twenty-five significant awards to graduate work and then go from there to larger numbers, had defined area studies in such a way that we did not fit into the top eligible universities, which was incredible.

But if you take the graduates of the Indiana University Africa Center and the Johns Hopkins University and some of the others, they define it entirely in terms of Arts and Letters, in terms of history, with all respect to

historians, and political science, my own field. They don't deal with the broader problem orientation of an area, nor do they deal with the broader definition of what makes a person an expert on an area. David had been toying with these concepts for years and put together a strong statement, strong paper, which I joined him in by reviewing it and commenting as dean, and he sent it in to the foundation and said, "This is something you have to take into consideration," and it was. They opened the door to Michigan State. Michigan State has put through more students as foundation-supported fellows under this program I'm referring to than any other university in the last decade. David filled me in on this last time I saw him.

So I think that what we had going at Michigan State was outstanding in four or five different directions, and nothing happened in this country in the international education sphere without Michigan State being involved. Now, I'm not sure how many fields you can say that about coming out of our great university, out of Michigan State. I know you can say that when it comes to certain fields in the natural sciences. I know you can say it in certain fields in agriculture, all of these things drawn fairly narrowly, but when you talk about the university as a whole becoming international, that concept became a model and the way we went about it became a model for university after university.

If you look at Peter McGraw's speech at the time John DiBiaggio was being inaugurated into the university, Peter McGraw was then chairman. He was president of the University of Missouri, but he was chairman of the Land Grant Association International Division Committee or whatever it was, or he was president of Land Grant that year, president of the whole association, he came out and gave a speech in behalf of higher education at the time of John DiBiaggio's big celebration. It must have been '85, fall of '85. And to my surprise, and I hadn't even coached him on it, he said precisely what I'm saying, that this university is the model in the international arena for development and related activity and service particularly, but he singled it out and said it. It was good to hear.

**Charnley:** The connection between land-grant philosophy and international relations, what do you see as that connection, or maybe talk a little bit about John Hannah's view of it. Was that different in terms of how you view it?

**Smuckler:** Hannah, when he initially set up the Office of the Dean of International Programs, clearly wanted it to help people in the poor countries of the world. If you take Truman's Point Four and read it carefully, Truman lays out a broad agenda for this country and the developing countries. He says that we will attack the villains of humanity: poverty, illiteracy, and so forth, and we will overcome them. As a country we will help, we'll provide technical help and so forth. And that's where the universities fit in, under that definition.

Hannah took that very seriously, and he was the president of Land Grant Association in those days, and he wrote the initial letter on behalf of all of higher education to tell the President that we were behind him as universities, and then he came on the campus itself. He began things, set things in motion. He had been on a study commission, Rockefeller commission, dealing with these subjects before. He knew them himself. He knew them well.

When he set up the International Program Office, he did not set it up to become also the builder of the international dimension in our academic programs. I believe it's fair to say that he was concerned with our relationships abroad and with what we could do to help those poor countries out there, as he would have put it. But when it came to feeding that back into our own programs, he was on uncertain ground. Taggart is the one who conceptualized it in that way, and Hannah grabbed it, but Taggart had to bring it to him.

John Hannah was the kind of a thinker who could see the importance of the concept, and he carried it from there so that he never in any way diminished the other side of the coin. In fact, when the crunch came and Taggart and I went to Jake Neville, who was then the provost of the university, and talked with Jake about the fact that we as a university had to evolve a strong international studies dimension, that we couldn't just extend ourselves overseas and that our Ford Foundation money had enabled us to do that, the momentum was there, we had to keep it going, we had to institutionalize it, and we need money from the university budget for Asia studies, Africa studies, and so forth. I don't know if we said Africa studies in those days, because this may have been before Africa was open to us. But we did say that to Jake, and Jake reached into his drawer, pulled out the budget, "How much do you want?"

**Charnley:** Writing the check.

**Smuckler:** And Hannah confirmed it, of course. So you can see that he picked up the concept of building the university [unclear], and then it's Hannah who said, "You have to have a building." Glen didn't want a building, but Hannah wanted us to have a building. He was a builder, you know, Hannah. He said, "If you don't have a building, you're not permanent on this campus. You'll get wiped out by something ten years from now, five years. I want to make you permanent. You're going to have a building."

**Charnley:** Which now is in the center of campus.

**Smuckler:** Yes. To begin with, it was going to be a wing of the--the first drawings that Hannah had generated put us at--

[Begin Tape 3, Side 1]

**Charnley:** This is tape three.

We're talking about the building of the international center on campus.

**Smuckler:** The initial plan, Hannah wanted the building, and he told--what was his name? It began with a C. He told the university architect and the man who was designing quite a few of the buildings that he wanted an International Programs Center and he thought it could be put as an adjunct to the Student Union toward the Human Ecology Building. There's a way of building a wing out there. So they looked at it, and they had designed a three-story arrangement. They went ahead and built it later. It's being used for other purposes.

We went over the design, Glen and I. Glen was very unhappy because he didn't want this to become--the university, in embracing an international dimension, could not turn it into a wing of the Student Union because that

med it an extracurricular kind of activity, and he said, "We've got to be in the center of campus. We've got to be where faculty can reach us and graduate students can reach us." And he said, "We should have our own freestanding building if we're going to have anything at all."

So I remember it got pretty tough, because Glen was willing to resign, and Hannah was not a person who backed away easily. But Glen went over--he didn't want me to be with him for this one because things could be said. I waited back in the office, and, sure enough, he came back from the meeting. He said, "We did it. We got the building." And from then on it was a matter of designing it.

Hannah then began to make it clear that this ought to be freestanding and self-supporting. He took a big chunk of money out of the international overhead bin, which is the same bin that they took the initial area studies funds out from. In those days we were permitted to accumulate in the central budget office all indirect cost repayments. Later, the university could not do that. We became part of the regular budget and there was no means of holding back on indirect cost earnings, overhead earnings. He took I don't know how much of the initial cost--the figure that comes to mind is \$800,000 or so--in order to pay our share of the building, which would be named--it was not to be called the International Center. Glen insisted it be called the Center for International Programs. And that's the official name of the building.

**Charnley:** I think many people call it the International Center.

**Smuckler:** Glen would roll over in his grave, I think, if he--he used to make the point, "I don't want to see a lobby in which the students are lying around and sleeping," he said. "That's not what we're about. This has to be an intellectual exercise." Sure enough, I've been through the lobby and seen students lying there sleeping. In any case, the building was built according to our approval arrangements, and the bookstore got active with us and designed their wing, and at the last minute the Concon [phonetic] Room was added, and that was because Hannah was a part of the Concon.

**Charnley:** You mentioned Glen Taggart. Talk a little about his relationship. Was he a mentor to you? What was your relationship with him?

**Smuckler:** Yes. Glen was about ten years older than I was, I guess, and I always admired his broad perspective. You see, I grew up as political science and the background I quoted earlier, but Glen had a different dimension to him. He saw things in ten-year spans, twenty-year spans. He didn't think in terms of what's going to happen next year. He wants to know what's going to be there ten years from now, twenty years from now. And that was an important lesson that I learned from Glen. He behaved that way, too. I mean, he'd build bridges on the assumption that sooner or later we'd want to walk over them.

He had a background in international work in the Department of Agriculture. He was a Mormon, and as a Mormon, he had experienced international service in the missionary assignment that he had in Czechoslovakia. He learned how to speak Czech. He had a very serious mind. He was a graduate Ph.D. of the University of Wisconsin and experienced in agriculture, both. What he brought to me was this sense of long-term thinking and patience with how you can make things happen, and a combination of just plain knowledge about international affairs, international relationships, not on the political science side, but on country activity. I think he was director of the Foreign Agricultural Service before he was enticed by Hannah to come to Michigan State.

**Charnley:** When did he leave?

**Smuckler:** He left while I was in Pakistan. He was approached by Utah State University to be their president. Glen was an alumnus of that university, and he was hesitant to begin with, he started to say no. I don't think the fact that I was waiting in the wings influenced him. I think he made his decision because he really wanted Utah State to be a great university. I worked with him very closely after that, too, when he was at Utah State as president for whatever it was, a decade or more. We used to be opposite sides of the table reinforcing each other's viewpoint at national meetings. Frequently that was the case. We'd schedule our travel to Washington at the same time so

that we could figure out what ought to happen on some committee or another, and then we'd see that it happened.

He's say one thing and I'd come in from the other angle. Everybody knew that was going on. He was a great guy.

**Charnley:** Taggart Hall is there now, too.

**Smuckler:** Utah State benefitted greatly. The Kellogg Foundation became more interested in Utah State. He used to tell me that faculty member for faculty member, Utah State had more research money than any other university in the country. That was a great attainment that he pursued.

We always had a strong orientation toward research in the international program, and that may not be as well understood by people who are in the social sciences and the policy-oriented sciences, because we didn't have the same kinds of research going on as you'd find, as I indicated earlier, in some of the Ivy League schools, where they were putting out future diplomats and such. But we had multi-million-dollar projects going on on food policy, on food security policy.

Toward the end of our work, toward the end of my stay, I should say--it's advanced since then--we had the momentum built up so that we were receiving each year as much money for international studies and research as we were for international development. We were the largest university in that respect on international development, and a lot of that development work in the latter years was the work of people like Carl Eicher, Glen Johnson, Carl Niedhom [phonetic].

**Charnley:** You mean ag econ?

**Smuckler:** Ag econ. Carl Niedhom is in economics. A couple of people in political science began to attract that kind of money and some major work that was going on in the agricultural sciences. If you added that up, as I did, I put out the annual report each year, which I don't know if they do anymore, which was about a seven- or eight-page document listing all of the projects and all of the externally supported activity in Michigan State, and on an annual



budget basis, not on a long-term budget basis, but annual, we were attracting as much money for that kind of activity toward the end--well, almost as much as we did for the straightforward technical assistance.

**Charnley:** What about the bridges to Washington?

**Smuckler:** Glen started them, and I built them from there. Of course, John Hannah came in as AID administrator, and he was a bridge. He brought me in. Well, he didn't bring me in, but he recommended me on a list to Irv Long and others on AID as head of the Research Advisory Committee, which was a very prestigious and important committee at AID. It had about fifteen people on it who passed judgment on every research project that AID got into. So he put me on the list to be considered, and I was considered, and I was appointed and then became chairman of that group for about ten years. That was probably, on a sustained arrangement, the best thing that could tie me and therefore the university into Washington.

Carl Eicher in ag economics became very active in the Washington setting, including the World Bank. We had sustained relationships with Title VI through various faculty members who were on one review committee or another, and then each of the reviews that came up, either I served on it or somebody else did. I mean, reviews of AID. In the end, my final few years, we organized at Michigan State probably one of the largest reviews of U.S. development work that had ever been organized. I went out and find about half a million dollars from the foundation world, and in 1988 we had a big conference on our campus, at which John Hannah, who was by then retired and out of things pretty much and his mind was going, came and sat in on the banquet that we had. It was quite a thrill for his old colleagues to see him again. A lot of these people were development leaders and didn't even know where he was anymore. He disappeared from Italy, where he was head of the World Food Council. Once he left here, they lost track of him, and we pulled him in from his retirement on the Hannah farm, the farm just off campus that he lived on.

That program resulted in a major report. We fed it into Congress so that Lee Hamilton and some of the others were able to say that the Michigan State study and imprint was very strong and what they tried to do when

they revised AID. We were the first major study that said that environmental considerations have to be extremely important in the considerations of development. I think if any university could take credit for it coming in, Michigan State could, and it is now an extremely important part of all our relations with the developing world, if you will, now.

Gus Spaith [phonetic], who was at that time the head of the World Resources Council and then became head of UNDP and is now the dean of forestry and environmental studies at Yale, Gus Spaith was an active insider in our planning of the conference, and then he himself organized one of the seminars that we had in the eastern part of the country, and he pushed hard on the environmental issue. When we got going on this, it was not at the top of my list. It still isn't, but it's very high, and he insisted that we put it up there among the top three or four considerations for the U.S. development role, and he was right, and I think we can take credit for accepting his advice.

We had a number of other links into the Washington scene as a result of that that were very important, but it wasn't just on the development side that we were so active. It was also the international education side. I was on the International Committee of the American Council on Education for a couple of years. I was brought into the board of trustees of the Institute for International Education in New York, which is the leading international exchange and international studies kind of operation outside of the university world, and IIE managed the Fulbright program and all of that stuff. I was on their board for, I think, sixteen, eighteen years.

I was the only university person, really, brought in from outside of New York to sit with them, and I felt it was an important thing to do because these were important board members. There were about twenty of us. It was good for Michigan State to be seen at that table and for me to have a voice, which I exercised to see to it that universities were also considered as one of the issues as they related to the international world. I mean, these were guys like Baron Guy de Rothschild. The chairman of our council was Henry Kaufman, the chief economist for one of the megabucks investment outfits. These were the board members of IIE, and they didn't know very much about what universities could do and were doing. So it was important from my standpoint to keep rubbing that information into the mix. And there were a number of others. I took leave several times from the university and

went off on two occasions under intergovernment personnel agreement to participate on the national scene, the last one being this AID appointment.

**Charnley:** Were you involved at all when Peter McPherson was in AID?

**Smuckler:** Yes, very much so. Peter was administrator when I was still chairman of the Research Advisory Committee. Peter worked up to the administrator's job. He had been in the White House as one of the chief people dealing with appointments that the White House would make once [Ronald] Reagan and [George] Bush came on, but Peter had been involved there-- [Tape recorder turned off.]

Peter was a part of--I got to know him when Title XII was coming into focus. Title XII is the Foreign Assistance Act. Title XII was the vehicle that not only legitimized but encouraged an active role for universities in famine prevention and the food program. He was then participating in the designation of people who would serve on the commission of BIFAD, the Board of International Food and Agricultural Development. Cliff Wharton, in that initial period, was president of Michigan State. So if they didn't before, they got to know each other quite well at that point. Cliff became chairman of BIFAD. So as president of Michigan State and as chairman of BIFAD, the most important board that Congress had created for university work, we got to know Peter quite well.

Then he became--now, wait a minute. I'm confusing this. There was a sequence of events--let me put it that way--which got Peter first involved with the Title XII committees. He was a part of the board, and then as administrator of AID he was dealing with all of these. So I'm wrong when I refer to Cliff and Peter working in that sequence that I mentioned.

After a while, when Peter was head of AID, Cliff was still chairman of the board, and at that time there was a close relationship. I knew him well enough so that when he was AID administrator, one of our major projects was threatened as being poured down the drain by some second-echelon AID bureaucrat because of some technicality that only he had uncovered and only he understood, but he was in a position in that situation to have knifed the

project because it was coming up for a budgetary review and a renewal, I was confident and comfortable in calling Peter, then head of AID, getting through to him at about six o'clock in the evening from East Lansing.

I remember I was going in to dinner at the University Club, and our faculty colleague came running in telling me what was happening and that if something didn't happen on this in the next day or two, I think it was the food security project that was going to be in real trouble.

**Charnley:** Was that in Africa?

**Smuckler:** Yes. And I knew it was a good project and everybody else in the world did except this one bureaucrat, and how do you leverage the bureaucrat? Well, it was too late to start playing games. I called Peter McPherson, and he took notes over the phone, and he said, "I'll look into it tomorrow," and he did. And we reversed the guy. The bureaucrat had already signed off negatively, "This project will not go ahead." But Peter saw to it that he was reversed. So he was not a casual acquaintance, and I had a lot of respect for what he was doing at AID. He was a good administrator of the agency, and he was respected by the members of the agency. At one point they tried to get me to come in. I don't know if you want that kind of a reference.

**Charnley:** Sure.

**Smuckler:** I knew him well enough so that he tried to get one of his deputies to bring me in as a deputy to him, not to Peter, but to the other man. So I went in for a number of interviews, but in the end I decided I wanted to really stay with the university.

**Charnley:** When did you retire?

**Smuckler:** I retired after I'd been here for a couple of years on loan at the IPA. It was 1993, I think. I came in in '91, stayed in this agency here for two years, and then said, "That's enough." So I pulled out of the position at the same time I retired from the university.

**Charnley:** When you took that job at Michigan State in 1951, did you anticipate you'd be there for most of your working career?

**Smuckler:** No, I didn't. Once I took the deanship, once I saw the trend and knew where we were heading, that's the place I wanted to be. But very few people would stay on a prolonged basis as I did. I never felt that anything I did was boring. Everything I was involved in was front burner within the university. A lot of faculty members may have not felt that way, but the university was, in fact, establishing a model and a reputation which was being picked up very widely, and there was never a dull moment because my career was sprinkled not just with the university side but with my years in Pakistan, my years in Vietnam, my year in Washington, my year in New York. I went in for a year with the foundation world and education in world affairs. So while I was always at the university and always wanted to come back to it when I was away, except this last retirement, I had a lot of sprinkled-in other excitement that kept my life pretty interesting and which goes into that book.

**Charnley:** In reflecting on your career, is there any maybe one single thing that you think stands out or is most important?

**Smuckler:** I think of all the things I was doing toward the end at Michigan State, the National Science Conference that Michigan State held and which I was in the middle of orchestrating was an outstanding year of activity. I think my baptism of fire in Vietnam as a part of technical assistance and with all that followed after that, as I look back, was a set of key experiences which not only kept one on edge all the time but which were exciting and, while we were in the midst of it, seemed to me to be very important. It did affect the lives, literally, of a million refugees to

begin with, and then a lot of trainees and a lot of individuals, some of whom have been over to the United States and we've maintained contact with. So that was an exciting part of it.

I must say that the life of what would be called a senior Ford Foundation official in those days was pretty much of a frosting on the cake, and if any of the people who've come along to be critical of the lifestyle in Vietnam, and I would say again foolishly, if they really want to see lifestyle they ought to see some of the foundation arrangements. Hannah told me when I was taking the foundation appointment, he said, "Ralph, you've got to know that you can always come back here." And then he said, "You've got to know, too, that the foundation will spoil you rotten." And you know, when everybody started to laugh at my jokes, which they never used to laugh at, I realized the foundation had put its stamp on me in such a way that I had to watch out. Now, the foundation people, my old colleagues, wouldn't like that. That's a truth that they would have to discover.

**Charnley:** Sounds like a Midwestern perspective there.

**Smuckler:** Well, it is a Midwestern perspective. It truly is. Living and working in New York that year with EWA shortly after I came back from Vietnam in the early sixties, that was a learning experience for me which taught me that you didn't have to really have a Ph.D. from Harvard to associate in those circles and provide some leadership, because I used to have a whole bunch of Harvard guys--I use Harvard as the Ivy League symbol--and most of them didn't know which end was up when it came to what we were dealing with. They did their best, and they were pretty damned good, but we had to provide a lot of guidance. I had to provide a certain amount.

**Charnley:** I want to thank you on behalf of the project. I appreciate the time that you've spent on sharing your insights.

**Smuckler:** I hope you got what you'd like.

**Charnley:** Very much so. Thank you.

**Smuckler:** You'll have to read my book.

**Charnley:** Absolutely. I look forward to it. Thank you again.

[End of interview]

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