

Interview with Henry Loomis

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HENRY LOOMIS

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The Non-VOA Years

Bio Sketch

Q: This is Lew Schmidt interviewing Henry Loomis at his home in Jacksonville, Florida. Henry, I think you've pretty well covered your career with the Voice and consequently although it may stress a little bit some of the Voice experience, we'll deal primarily with things on either side of it. I would like to have you start out by saying a little bit about your education and background and then how you got to CIA. Then we can stop and I'll ask you some questions from that point on.

LOOMIS: All right. I was educated at Harvard, specializing in physics. About the middle of my junior year I was discouraged with the equipment at Harvard and I went out to the University of California where they were just building a cyclotron. So I decided to move to California and finish in California in physics. I had tried in the fall of '39 after the invasion of Poland to join the Navy. And I found you had to be a college graduate in order to be an officer. So I had decided to try to accelerate my education rather than join as an enlisted man in '39. So by the time I left Harvard at the end of my junior year, I had several

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post-graduate courses already done. But in July or June, I forget which, of '40, the Navy announced the V-7 program which meant you only needed two years of college for an officer. I was at sea in a yacht race when I heard that. As soon as we landed I went right to the Navy Yard in Boston and joined.

Navy Duty: 1940 - 1946

So I was in the Navy until 1945, or actually '46 counting leave, which was a very good experience. Because I went to the first class of the V-7 reserves out in Chicago, and because I was graduated first in the class, I was assigned to the staff of Admiral Richardson who was the commander in chief of the U.S. fleet, located on the USS Pennsylvania then in Pearl Harbor. So I went out there and I spent a year on his staff as a communication watch officer, which meant that you decoded and coded messages which was a perfect place to learn what was going on, because you saw the messages, you met and had a close relationship with senior officers, the admiral himself and his staff officers.

In the spring of '41 one of the messages I decoded talked about establishing the first radar school for officers. I had worked with my father who was very much involved in the early radar days before joining the Navy, so I knew what radar was and I thought that would be great. So I applied for the school, got it and went to radar school and graduated, oh, I guess in about November of '41.

I came back to the staff and was made Assistant Radar Officer on the staff and went to sea right away with the Enterprise installing some radars on her. And we were lucky. We went to Wake Island to deploy a Marine fighter squadron, left on December 2nd and got back to Pearl December 7th as the attack was underway.

Most of my career in the Navy was dealing with radar, first radar maintenance and then training radar operators and then training admirals and captains to understand and utilize the capabilities and limitations of radar.

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Q: Were you much of that time at sea? Or were you about half and half? Or how did it work?

LOOMIS: It worked out very well. Because by this time I was on Admiral Nimitz' staff. I persuaded the Admiral that I couldn't teach radar operations and tactics if I didn't know what it was like. And the only way to know what it was like was to be there. He agreed to that. It meant that I basically wrote my own orders. In the latter years when we were controlling the pace—in the first years when you never knew if you were going to be hit—I would assist in writing the radar portion of the operation orders. Then I would get an assignment on one of the ships or admirals staffs actually operate the radar, or be involved in the decision and see what worked and what didn't work.

The result of that was that I was very interested in being basically a translator between the people who knew the technology and the people who had the duty and authority of using it, the admirals, the captains and so forth. Because radar was so new, no senior officer knew its capabilities and limitations—very much the way senior people are now about computers. You know they are great. But you're scared of it. You don't know how good or how bad or what to do with it. And, of course, radar was a key ingredient in the war. It wasn't just a little thing off on the side.

Post War: Report Writing at Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, Berkeley, California

After the war, in fact, I'd only been out of the Navy about a week, I was asked to go out to the University of California and write a report for the trustees of the University on what had happened at the Radiation Laboratory in Berkeley during the war. Because during the war they'd been told to “get lost, this was classified, shut up.” And there they had a huge manufacturing concern making uranium 238, which really wasn't the job of the university, and what do you do about it?

Q: Is this at the Lawrence Library? I mean, the Lawrence Laboratory out there?

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LOOMIS: Yes, the one on the hill, in Berkeley. Correct. And that was a very interesting assignment. And again, it ended up by a translation job trying to explain in a few pages what physically had happened, technically had happened, and then examine the varying alternatives that the trustees would have.

Back to Academe at University of California, Berkeley; Then Assistant to Carl Compton, President of MIT

Then I went into post-graduate—by the way, Harvard had given me a degree by this time because of the work in the radar. So I was legally a college graduate. So I was a post-graduate at the University of California for a year working as a student half the time and working for Louis Alvarez in the laboratory the other half. Then out of the blue I was asked to be Assistant to Carl Compton who was the President of MIT.

Q: It was his brother, wasn't it, who was subsequently short term as the head of USIA's predecessor agency?

LOOMIS: No, I don't think any Compton was involved in USIA.

Q: There was a Compton who had a short tour as head of IIA, but he came from over near Pullman, Washington and spent—until the Eisenhower Administration came in, he was the director. He made a trip to the Far East and was there at the time that Eisenhower was elected and shortly thereafter he was replaced by somebody else. I don't know who came in immediately after Compton.

LOOMIS: That must have been IIA anyway.

Q: Yes, it was.

LOOMIS: Well, he may have been. That brother I don't know about. The other brother, Arthur Compton, was a Nobel Prize winner in Physics.

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Q: He was a brother of Arthur.

LOOMIS: Then it must have been. And Carl was President of MIT. And Carl was the one I worked for.

Q: Unfortunately, his brother didn't inherit the brain power of the other two.

LOOMIS: Yeah. So at that point when I was asked to come back to MIT was the turning point as to whether I stayed in the laboratory or whether I went into administration or whatever you want to call it. The employment of technology, utilizing my sufficient knowledge of technology to understand what the capabilities and limitations were. And yet being really interested in the policy decisions and really interested in dealing with human beings and their reactions rather than dealing with electrons and their reactions. So ever since then I have not been a student scientist. I worked at MIT from '47 to '50.

Q: At MIT.

LOOMIS: At MIT as Assistant to the President. And there were a couple of very interesting things. Because Carl was a leading light among college presidents, particularly in determining right after the war all kinds of policy things. One of them, for example, was what to do about profit making companies that were given to universities—one was a spaghetti factory for example. MIT took the lead in saying that they felt that the universities should pay taxes unless the company was really serving an educational purpose.

Compton Takes Loomis as His Assistant on Presidential Committee Dealing with Security Clearances

LOOMIS: Then Carl was called to Washington. This was the era of McCarthy. It was the era of how do you define security? What is security? The President set up a special panel under a retired Supreme Court justice. (Roberts?) Carl was one of four or five members of the committee. The FBI, the military and the Atomic Energy Commission and others

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sent the Committee their most “difficult” cases. “Difficult” in the sense of determining what was right and what was wrong, not which ones were obviously a communist. That was no problem. But the ones that you didn't know. What did you do about it? And since this was led by a justice, they thought the way to do it was by the case method—to seriously consider each individual case and make a decision on that individual case. And from those decisions try to draw general principles.

Q: This was when you were with the CIA?

LOOMIS: No, this was when I was Assistant to the President at MIT.

Q: Oh, still Assistant to Carl Compton.

LOOMIS: Yes, to Carl Compton. That's right. And he was on there just as a wise senior gentleman, only incidentally the President of MIT. And he had two assistants. The other assistant was primarily involved in internal MIT academics and administrative problems. And I was chiefly involved in his external problems or national policy issues that may affect the university but they were national policy rather than domestic things.

The way the committee worked was to divide each batch of files up among them. Everyone would read a summary of all the cases. But each member would take home his quota, not merely read the summary but rather read the whole file. And write his own summary, highlighting what differences there might be between his summary and the summary prepared by the government. And then to come to the next meeting with their judgment of what the answer should be and what were the policy implications.

I did the detailed reading and then went over the files with Carl so that he knew the contents in detail. He knew the file faster than he could have by reading it alone. It quickly became apparent that the government summaries were pretty biased. But it did turn up all kinds of interesting situations.

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And I remember one, for example, where the individual who was a scientist and dealing with in this case Atomic Energy. He was clearly non-political. He was an “out beyond” mathematician who was just thinking of math. He was good. However, his wife was clearly very political and clearly had parallel thinking with communist or at least pro-Russian groups.

So that raised the issue, do you judge an individual as an individual? Or do you judge the individual as one of a pair? And that was debated at some length. The recommendation was that the individual was less important than national security, and that therefore you had to look at them as a pair. You had to assume that a husband and wife had a close enough relationship that if the wife really wanted to know something, one way or another she could probably find it out. Or she could compromise him in many ways. In that particular case the judgment was not to give the husband a security clearance. That's an example of the kind of basic policy which is tough. There's no right, no wrong. It's difficult to do. And we had to apply that to one of our professors who was teaching. And that was another example.

This was another man who was a mathematics professor. But he had seminars in his house with students, most of which were harmless but there were some others, in which they very much discussed politics. And he had been accused by McCarthy and all kinds of people of being a communist. And the alumni were up in arms. And what do you do about it? His mathematics teaching was good. That was no issue. He didn't talk politics in his mathematics class. No issue. The policy that was developed was that the responsibility of determining whether or not a law had been broken was the government's, state or federal. It was not appropriate for the University to judge. The University said that they would continue to employ the professor until and unless he was accused by a government body, state or federal. At that time they would put him on administrative leave with salary until the case was adjudicated. And if he was guilty he'd be fired. And if he was not guilty he'd be reinstated. And that's what they did.

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And I had an interesting several months of long exchanges of letters back and forth with very senior and very important alumni who initially disagreed strongly with that policy and eventually pretty well came around and withdrew their threat that they would no longer contribute to the University. It was a very interesting learning process to see how these fundamental policies were developed.

Compton Called to Washington; Loomis Becomes Assistant to New MIT President

During my time there, of course, I got to know the members of the board. And after I'd been there a while, Carl left to go to Washington to be the Chairman of the Department of Defense Research and Development Board, RDB, which is now called DDR&E. It's on the assumption that there is a Defense Department as compared to the Army, Navy, Air Force. And it is responsible for making the funding decisions on military research. Carl was there for a year. And I was transferred, working for Jim Killian, the new President of MIT, on the same problems, the same way. So there was very little change for me except it was just two different individuals.

Loomis Goes to Washington: Immersed in Policies on National Defense Matters

When Carl left Washington, Bill Webster who was President of New England Power and Light was selected to replace him. Bill was a Trustee of MIT. Bill came into my office at MIT and asked me to Washington with him so that he would have somebody whom he knew who would "be his person" in this den of thieves. He was thinking of going down for a year.

I talked to both Carl and Jim and both of them strongly advised me to do it as they advised anyone who was at MIT to go to the government for a while and come back. So I went down there for what was in theory a year and worked for Webster. I learned two things in that. One was how impotent the Defense Department was and in many ways still is, vis-a-vis the departments. I learned that particularly in the missile field where there was a great

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overlapping of missiles, a great contention as to whether the Air Force had to be further ahead than the Army and the Navy was all by itself, etc. Webster appointed a committee, headed by Mr. Keller, who was Chairman of Chrysler Corporation, to make a rational decision. So he came in and he was a tough bird. And he made a rational decision that a number of missiles would be abandoned because they overlapped each other. One would be an Army and one would be an Air Force weapon.

And the decision was final and that was it. And the funds were withdrawn. And everybody thought a great job had been done. A couple of months later the Korean War started. And that, of course, changed the ground rules. Then it turned out that the missiles that had been "killed" had become "training missiles" and were funded probably more than they would have been because the service was so mad that they had been cut. You hadn't accomplished a damn thing except on paper. That was an interesting lesson.

And the second lesson I learned was really more about myself. That was in some of the research we were doing included biological and chemical warfare, and I found that I had a fascination for that. And that the use of it and how you could use it was fascinating. Because if you did it right you could use it and no one would ever know you'd used it.

So I got quite involved in that. And it was interesting because many people had a revulsion against it and wouldn't consider it, wouldn't think of it. It was dirty. It was unclean. And I couldn't understand the difference between blowing somebody up or shooting them or burning them up with a bomb as compared to another method of accomplishing what you were after. The kind of thinking you had to go through was interesting. You really thought about it. You didn't really want to kill a guy in the politburo. You wouldn't gain very much because he'd be replaced. And the guy who replaced him might even be better. But if you can make the guy in the politburo sick, not so sick that he would be replaced but sick enough that he would not be as effective, you would probably do your cause more good than killing him. It was that kind of thinking that people found repulsive. I found it fascinating.

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At the time Webster left, the OCB had been formed by President Truman. The Operations Coordination Board was part of the NSC structure. The theory was that the NSC prepared policy alternatives “on the way up.” The president determined the policy. The OCB was meant to coordinate the implementation of the policy “on the way down” which may sound all right on paper but was not that effective. But again, it was an interesting bunch of people. It was the deputies of all the departments. It was headed by Gordon Grey.

I was asked to do a study for them on “social science” research, how much “social science” research was there going on in the United States that would be of interest to the federal government. I think the people who initially thought of that, the need for that, were thinking mostly of universities and commercial research. So getting that information took a little time but it was pretty straight forward. But the more you look at it the more you found that that was really a very small part of what was being done. Most of the work was in government departments. Now, finding out exactly what was going on in government operations was a more difficult job. But I did the best I could, I had good backing, and I got to know a lot of the people in the CIA and the military and other intelligence operations. Because the Soviet specialists in CIA are exactly the same kind of people doing the same kind of things as the Russian Research Center at Harvard. And among other things, they all know each other pretty well anyway. So you had to count that as part of the whole. So I ended up with an analysis of the entire national effort, with all the numbers. That study was so classified there was only meant to be one copy with the numbers in it. All other copies had blanks.

1950: Loomis Involved in Early Study of Parameters Within Which CIA Should Operate

But that gave me again a very useful access to key people in the wide community. Just as that job was finishing, Beetle Smith who was the head of CIA wrote a letter to President Truman. It became known as the “order of magnitude” letter. And it said, Dear Mr. President, You have made me Director of the CIA. But I have no clear mission. Am I meant to be able to mount a civil war in China? Am I meant to be able to analyze in detail

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what's going on in Russia, etcetera, etcetera, all of which were pretty basic policy issues. And that was a hot potato. So that was handed over to poor Gordon Grey to prepare an answer for Truman. So he made the pretty clear, obvious decision where he better find out what the CIA had been doing covertly and how successful it had been.

Well, that was a tough nut. But eventually Gray—backed by the President—and I got the detailed descriptions and budgets of all the projects CIA had done since its inception when it succeeded OSS. Gray had three of us assigned full time for three or four months in analyzing these and drawing conclusions which were pretty stark. CIA had clearly thought they could operate in Eastern Europe the way the OSS had operated in occupied Western Europe during the War. That was clearly impossible. The Communists knew exactly what the CIA was doing.

So at the end we had fairly strong views and opinions. The report went to Mr. Gray. I never saw the answer from the President to the Director of CIA.

But again, this experience reinforced my view that I really thought that the way to move would be on biological chemical rather than trying to do it brute force. So I ended up going over to CIA in the operations side under Frank Wisner and a side that was called the psychological side under Tracy Barnes. That was propaganda. But it was also unconventional warfare kind of stuff, black information the whole works. And I had really basically just started in that when Mr. Eisenhower was elected.

1953: Loomis Assigned to the Staff of Famous So-Called Jackson Committee, Officially the President's Committee on International Information Activities

When Eisenhower was elected, he was elected on “rolling back the curtain” which sounded great in Des Moines. But the day after he was elected he suddenly woke up to the fact that he had to determine how was he physically going to do it? What should he do? So in the first week after the election he set up what was called the President's Committee on International Information Activities under the Chairmanship of Bill Jackson

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who was ex-Deputy CIA. But also including C.D. Jackson of Time-Life and propaganda field in World War II, and Bobby Cutler who became the NSC assistant, and the future Under Secretary of Defense.

The Committee had the assignment to formulate concrete recommendations within four or five months—not theories, but what was desirable and feasible. What would be the negative impact if things failed? Suddenly I found myself one of the two CIA staff members assigned to that duty.

Q: Why do you suppose that there were no IIA members on that committee?

LOOMIS: The State Department provided two staff members. One was a policy planner, the other a Soviet expert. Neither was familiar with IIA. There were only two staff from each department. They picked people from the departments because they had to start right away, they didn't want to go through clearances and all that stuff. Abbott Washburn was the Staff Director for the Committee.

I was assigned by CIA to talk about biological and chemical warfare. I worked there for about a month and had some proposals, some specific proposals, which could be done. If you did it right, no one would know it. I made my presentation to the committee. And they all turned white and said, “no, no, a thousand times no. We won't do that.”

And I said, “okay, I'm not sure I would disagree if I was sitting in your chair, but you asked me what was possible.”

I went to Bill Jackson the next day. I said, “The committee has decided not to consider biological and chemical warfare. I suggest that I go back to CIA.”

He said, “now wait a minute. You're here and you're assigned to me. What do you know about IIA?”

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I said, "I've never heard of it. And what is it?"

He said, "it's the ex-OWI or the remnants of it in the State Department and these two people from State Department don't know anything about it. So you might as well learn.

I spent the next three or four months, five months, something like that until about May or June full time on IIA with full access to all information. Right in the middle of the McCarthy and the Hickenlooper investigations. I worked very closely with Marcy, chief of staff of the Hickenlooper Committee. He was helpful and I think we each learned from the other. Cohn and Schine tried to bully me and we had kind of a stand off on that. I didn't give them any information and they were pretty unhappy. But so be it.

Loomis Writes Chapter of Committee Report That Led to Creation of USIA

At the end of that, I wrote the draft of the chapter in the report about information and propaganda which the committee accepted with some editing. I had some very strong ideas of what should be done and what was apparently effective and what was not. And incidentally, not only did I have access to the government people, I had access to all kinds of ex-OWI people, all kinds of refugees from every country in the world all saying you should do this or you should do that. I had every conceivable concept urged on me.

Q: It might be a little diversion, but did Eisenhower do anything to implement this study of IIA and what ultimately became USIA? Or was he just wisely off on the side as it was being done by people like C.D. Jackson and his committee? And another question is was Bill Clark, who later became Assistant Director of USIA for Latin America, involved in this at all in that stage of the game?

LOOMIS: Bill was certainly not involved with the committee. I may have talked to him, but there were so many people I can't remember them all. And at that point I didn't know Bill as I knew him later. But he had no significant impact on the committee report.

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I don't really know what Eisenhower did to implement the committee's report, to answer your specific question. Abbott Washburn had a close rapport with Eisenhower as did most members of the committee. I would assume there were many informal conversations. The chief product of the effort may well have been the exposure of new sub-cabinet members and the new NSC assistant to the President to the difficulties of decisions in real political life.

The one thing that there was a good deal of debate on was whether IIA should be an independent agency or whether it should stay in the State Department. The committee recommended that it stay in the department but as a really separate division with power. They did this on the theory that it was important that IIA have access to U.S. policy, and have an opportunity to contribute to U.S. policy with “the psychological factor.”

And at the time I thought that was probably right. In retrospect I think it was probably wrong. I think it would have been very difficult to make a new IIA—without direct access to the President—strong enough to withstand the Secretary of State on any issue of importance.

Q: At this point the Voice was still an anomaly under IIA.

LOOMIS: Sure.

Q: Although it was operating up in New York at that time.

LOOMIS: That is correct.

Q: But I guess VOA didn't come down to Washington until '54, which was a year after the USIA was established. So indirectly at least the Voice was involved in that determination.

LOOMIS: Oh, the Voice was in many ways the principle activity.

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Q: *I see.*

LOOMIS: Because it was the activity that everyone could see. The refugees were concerned about broadcasts in their languages, both the tone and content of the broadcast, as well as the duration and power of the broadcasts. Many had family or friends whom they urged the Voice to hire. Many of them lobbied the Congress and press. Don't forget that the Voice was in the middle of being torn apart by McCarthy during all this time. Reed Harris was testifying and that whole mad scene was going on simultaneously with the committee's effort. The Hickenlooper Senate Committee was also heavily involved..

In fact other parts of IIA really didn't enter into the discussion much because your library is a library. The selection of books in the library was a long way away from the immediacy of what the new president should physically accomplish. That was too long term to put a highlight on.

1953: USIA Established; Loomis Called to be Director Ted Streibert's Special Assistant

The press service had the same immediacy—just a different medium—but it could reach the foreign audiences directly as the Voice radio broadcasts did.

When the report was done, I went back to CIA to continue to work in the biological field—chemical field. In August I got a call from a gentleman by the name of Ted Streibert.

Q: *Streibert wasn't on the committee at the time.*

LOOMIS: He was not on the committee. I was vaguely aware that USIA had been established, but I was not involved. Abbott Washburn, the committee's chief of staff, and I got to know each other very well during the committee study. I thought that Streibert wanted me to come over and talk to him about why the report recommended X, Y, Z. I would have given you a thousand to one that I would never under any circumstances worked in the organization that I had watched disintegrate under McCarthy and the press.

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However, Streibert said, "I've read the report. I agree with it. It should be done. Will you come and be my special assistant and help implement what you recommended?"

So there I was "hoisted of my own petard." I agreed to do that for a while so he could get started and then we'd see what happened. I talked to Allen Dulles and he agreed that it was worth doing. But he said, let's keep your special clearances so you can be a consultant to me as well. So I had both the CIA and the USIA clearances. I have some vivid memories of some of the early days.

Early on there was a discussion within USIA as to what to do in a particular country—I believe India. I asked my secretary to get me the NSC papers on India to see what our policy was. She looked a little blank. You know, "National Security Council papers. Go to Policy and get them." Pretty soon she came back and said we don't have any. And I said, what do you mean you don't have any? And she said, we don't have them.

So I talked to Andy Berding and asked where are the NSC policies? And he said, "NSC won't send us any."

I replied, "How on God's earth are you meant to be able to give rational information to the world about our policies if we don't know them ourselves?" I called up Bobby Cutler, the new NSC Assistant to the President. He said, "well, they're all a bunch of commies over there. We can't send them over there."

Q: What was his foundation for that belief? Was he tied in to the McCarthy investigation?

LOOMIS: No, but it was all over the press everywhere. You know how the thing—"Another communist found in the Lithuanian service." You'd never read the fact that he wasn't a communist, it was—"they're not reliable." "They're infiltrators." "They're not safe."

Well, we compromised and agreed that he would send me personally the NSC policy documents, not for distribution within USIA but under my personal cognizance. I had to

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set up a separate file and handle it myself, which was a bloody nuisance. People came to my office initially and read the papers there. After a while we relaxed a little and let the policy staff hold some. In about six months we had the papers going straight to Policy as they should have gone. That's just an example of what was going on. In about six months I realize that one of the problems was that USIA didn't really have any information about foreign— especially Russian—propaganda. What were they saying, how did they distribute their movies or books, which foreign newspapers worked with them overtly or covertly? USIA required a valid, useful, organized, and retrievable memory. All USIA had were irregular reports from the field, a couple of clips from newspapers, a PAO saying he thought such and such. But it wasn't organized. It wasn't filed. You couldn't use it.

Loomis Persuades Streibert to Set Up USIA Research Organization

So I went to Ted Streibert and said, “we've got to have our own intelligence operation to find out the mechanisms and contents of Soviet and enemy propaganda. How do all their books suddenly arrive in Uruguay? Where do they go after that? Also, what are the policies they're using? What are the principle points in their arguments? Where is their emphasis? Are they changing emphasis from Country A to Country B? All of this sort of stuff. You're not going to get it from anywhere else because the State Department is concerned with what the foreign government is doing and the other sections of the embassy are engrossed in their areas—military, agriculture, covert, etc. The PAOs aren't set up to do this. Organization is required to estimate public opinion because public opinion, whatever it is, is not press opinion. That just tells you who's buying who in most countries. And it is not talking to your counterpart in the foreign office. His government may be in the process of going out. He doesn't know what they're really saying. Or if he does he won't tell you.

Q: Before you go on with how the research organization was established, I forgot to ask you a couple of questions when you were describing the activities of the committee. One question that I wanted to ask was since you said that your own recommendation had been

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that the organization be retained in the State Department, who was it who finally made the determination that it would not be retained there, but would be independent?

LOOMIS: I'm not sure. Because after a report was completed by the committee, I was back in CIA not paying attention—didn't have access to the information, wasn't following it. It probably was both the Congress (the Hickenlooper Committee recommended separation) and the State Department. I believe the Department wanted to get rid of IIA. It certainly was not anxious to keep it. Many believed information people, especially broadcasters, were strange types, uncontrollable, had foreign accents, and were probably commie too. The State Department was having its own problems with McCarthy. And my guess is that they certainly wouldn't have resisted anybody suggesting taking it out.

Q: Dulles was very much desirous of getting rid of it.

LOOMIS: Yes, my guess is that the push came from the State Department.

Q: Probably so.

LOOMIS: But that's a guess.

Q: And I guess I determined I was going to ask you how you came to feel that independence was necessary. But it wasn't you that came to that conclusion.

LOOMIS: I later came to believe that USIA must be independent when I and Abbott Washburn were told by John Foster Dulles that he was not concerned with public opinion. I also saw how State Intelligence resented USIA having its own intelligence. CIA, on the other hand, strongly favored it. The military were neutral.

Q: Okay. When the other side of the tape ended, we were just discussing your inability, anybody's inability, to get information out of the host country government because they

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wouldn't give it to you even if they were leaving the government. They didn't want to say anything about it. So why don't we pick up from there now?

USIA Establishes Office of Research and Intelligence with Loomis as Director

LOOMIS: Well, Streibert finally agreed to set up the Office of Research and Intelligence. The only existing group was the Voice of America's audience research and library files. They were in New York. And the head librarian, Roth Neupher was a very able guy, very quiet, very unassuming, but a very capable guy.

Q: Who died last year.

LOOMIS: Did he? Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Roth came down to Washington and started the library files. And then there was Leo Crespi who was the audience research head. He also was a very gifted public opinion poller and analyst of the information. I learned a lot from him. He was an eccentric individual.

Q: He was a character all right.

LOOMIS: He could never stay warm enough. He used to wear longjohns in the summer in Washington. But I think he was a very able individual. That was the nucleus from which we expanded. I was able to get some budget and personnel ceiling. And we started trying to gather information in a systematic way.

Q: Streibert finally agreed that that was necessary.

LOOMIS: Yes. Well, he said, "well, you may be right. I won't stop it." He was not really for us in the beginning but I believe he became more understanding as we began to get results.

Some Activities of New Office (Research and Intelligence)

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Getting Information on Propaganda Work By Other Nations Out to American Public

One of the problems that we faced was the gross ignorance in the U.S. at that time about what particularly the Russians, but the communists of all stripes were doing in propaganda and misinformation. While you had the McCarthyites on one side, you had the “liberals” or whatever word you want to call them on the other side saying: “This is all unnecessary.” “We're all friends together.”

And the question was how to get that information out without it looking like a government white paper that no one would ever read. So we started the idea of having an annual book which would appear to have been written by some academics and could well be written by academics and they would have to approve what was in it. But the data on which the words were written would be our data because no academic could ever get the data of how many books are being distributed where, the latest changes of all these different radios and so forth and so on. That was agreed to, and Evron Kirkpatrick became the author of these books. And the idea was we would put one out each year.

Q: Who? Kirkpatrick?

LOOMIS: Yeah.

Q: This was the young crippled gentleman? Or no.

LOOMIS: No, no.

Q: This was Albert.

LOOMIS: This is Evron Kirkpatrick.

Q: Oh, I see.

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LOOMIS: Who was a, I don't know, social scientist. I don't know who selected him. But he was all right. He understood what was going on, of course. And he agreed with it. And he approved all the language. We would do the graphs. When it first came out it had some notice. It was referred to in newspaper articles in the States which used the data. The data was as accurate as we could make it. There was absolutely no attempt to jimmy the data around. I'm not sure how accurate it was. But it was as accurate as we could make it. And we did, I think, two or three or four of those. And the second one was, of course, a lot easier to do than the first because all you had to do was update, change whatever information you had, draw conclusions from the changes. Of course, in these days this would not be looked on as an appropriate activity for USIA. But in those days it certainly was.

Instituting Opinion Polling in Other Countries

And another highlight of that period was we started for the first time to do significant public opinion polling in West Europe usually over the opposition of the State Department who would say it was an unfriendly act. "The French or the Germans will be unhappy with it."

We said, "well, they poll in our country. Why the hell can't we poll in theirs?" We seldom had any flap. Though on occasion people would say, why did you ask these kind of questions?

And again, we did our best to ask the questions right, in an unbiased way. For the first time we began to get information across Europe of the same questions at the same time, and could detect easily the very great differences between the different European countries. And we asked significant questions. If invaded by Russia should the U.S. use their atomic power? Those kind of questions.

Gaining Eisenhower Interest in Polling Results

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And I remember when we did the first one which was on use of atomic weapons. Streibert was sufficiently impressed with this that he set up an appointment with Eisenhower. He and I went over to see Eisenhower. He was very polite. Of course, he didn't know me from Adam, but he was very polite. Streibert said we've set up this research office and we've got some opinion poll data from Europe which is the first that we've ever had. We thought you might find it of some interest. I've asked Loomis to brief you on it.

So I started out. The President was looking at me, sitting there in his chair rocking back and forth, chewing on his glasses. And I went through the data and showed what it was. And you could almost see his eyes half closed, still and rocking. So I said, oh Jesus. He's going to sleep! But what can I do about it? So when I finished, I'd finished. That was it. There was no more data. And I don't know how long it was, but it seemed like three hours I suppose. Maybe three minutes. He didn't say anything. The President just rocked with his eyes sort of closed thinking, chewing on his glasses. And then suddenly said, now, tell me why do you think the French have 38 percent feeling such and such on such and such an issue?

Jesus, I didn't remember 38. I'd been reading from my notes. The meeting went on much longer than it was meant to. He was thinking through the figures and the meaning of those figures. He wasn't questioning whether they were accurate or not. No one was saying was it 38 percent or 37 percent. But it was the idea that it was a third of the people and not two-thirds that felt a particular way on a crucial subject.

After that we sent summaries of all of our reports to the White House and we got considerable feedback. Of course it was, and it should have been, only one of the inputs into policy decisions and public statements.

Special Analysis on Hungarian Uprising in 1956

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Another interesting project was the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. We, of course, had a great paucity of information from behind the Curtain. We couldn't do opinion polls there.

Q: Now, had you gone to the Voice?

LOOMIS: No.

Q: You hadn't gone to the Voice yet at that time.

LOOMIS: No.

Q: You were still on the research.

LOOMIS: Yes, still on research. That was '56. We rushed and got some assets into Austria, and for the first time had a significant number of interviews, in the thousands, with as random selection as you could possibly do under that chaotic conditions. You didn't have a really random sample anyway, because you only had those who were able to get out. That may have been geography or may have been desire or may have been fear, all mixed in together. We had the real data. Had it been the Voice or Radio Free Europe incited the uprising? It came out clearly that they had not. That was way down about a third or fourth or fifth.

Q: But for some reason exploded finally after a long—

LOOMIS: Well, part of it was their own government. Part of it was their frustration. Part of it was the way the Russians behaved. And when you came to the question of did you think America was going to come in and help you, a lot of them said yes because of what Cabot Lodge had said at the United Nations which of course we'd carried. Now, that was perhaps a foolish statement for Cabot Lodge to make at the United Nations, but he made it. And we sure as hell had to and should have carried it. Now, then you get back to who was to blame, that sort of stuff. And there were clearly a couple of cases from Radio Free Europe

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where the individual announcer got emotional, not at the very beginning, but the very end. Help should be coming, must be coming, will come, kind of thing. Which of course it never did. But that was very useful information.

1957: Sputnik Goes Up: White House Sets Up Office of Science Advisor to President. Killian Appointed—Asks Loomis to White House as Hill Assistant

And then suddenly Sputnik went up. Eisenhower brought Killian down from MIT to set up the Office of Science Advisor to the President. Killian called me up right after he was appointed and asked me to come over and be his assistant again because he was all by himself in the moonlight. And I said, oh Jim, it's been quite a while since I was in science. And I'm having a ball here. And he said, well, this is important. And I said, well of course, I'll do whatever you and George Allen, the new Director of CIA, agree to. It turned out they'd both been to college at North Carolina together. So Allen said no, I don't want you to go, you shouldn't go, I don't want you to go, so Sherman Adams settled it that afternoon. I reported to the Executive Office of the President the next morning.

Q: Before we go on with what you did with Killian, when did you bring Lou Olon into your program? I think he's told me that you brought him into your research operation at some point.

LOOMIS: I found him in State Intelligence working on our kind of problem. He came at the very beginning and became head of the whole analysis, real intelligence part of it, as compared to the public opinion polling part.

Q: That's the only part of the USIA he ever worked in except for going to be the Executive Secretary of the Advisory Commission.

Well, let's move on to where you were. You went over to Killian's office.

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LOOMIS: Yes. The Office of the Science Advisor was a complete change of subject, and was pretty hectic. Again, I learned from the experience. The lesson I learned was that whenever there's a major crisis, you dismantle the organization you had in "peace time" and release most of the individuals and start over again.

There had been a science committee that had just piddled along with little or no effect in the top levels of government unlike the OSRD days during the war.

Killian came in, had access to Eisenhower. The two men had great personal respect and affection for each other. Sputnik was on the front burner of the world, particularly Eisenhower's. Killian was able to attract to the re-constituted committee most of the people who succeeded him as presidential advisor, Nobel Prize winners from diverse fields. They weren't just shuffling paper, they were doing something.

For example, George Kistiakowsky who was a Professor at Harvard who had done the design and implementation of the implosion of the atomic bomb added to the committee. There was trouble with one of the missiles because they couldn't get it to work, something was wrong with the booster, and this was critical. So Killian called up George and told him to go to California and find out what the matter was and fix it. So George went out and climbed up inside the missile and fiddled around and found what was wrong, told them how to fix it, and caught the red-eye back. The NSC was meeting the next morning discussing the satellite booster problem. McElroy, who was Secretary of Defense, had his brief and said we think we'll find something soon, reading from his paper. I was, of course, then not there but Killian told me on returning from the meeting that he said, "Mr. President, if I may interrupt, sir. George Kistiakowsky was up in the missile last night and he found, this, this, this and this. And it will be fixed and it's all set." McElroy was just sort of looked at him. This episode proved the advantage of getting somebody who is technically competent to personally look at a problem, report immediately, and stay with it until it is fixed.

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1959: Loomis Called Back to USIA to be Director of VOA

That was a hectic year and a half. We got satellites up in the air, NASA was created and much of the frontier pace slowed. Then out of the blue I got a call from Abbott saying would I come back to USIA and become the Director of the Voice of America.

Q: Who had been your immediate predecessor? Button?

LOOMIS: Yeah, Button.

Q: And he had succeeded Poppele, I gather.

LOOMIS: Yes. I knew enough about the Voice to think that would be interesting. I also knew enough about their sorry technical positions to think that that area might also be interesting. But again I said, you know, I'll serve where the powers that be decided for me to serve. And I think basically George Allen wanted to get even with Jim Killian.

But clearly, the situation had changed. The pressure was off. Our satellites were getting up in the air. We were beginning to go. There was a perfectly competent staff that had been inherited from the old organization. There were some new ones brought in and there were plenty of replacements. The office was now getting to be more stable, more normal, a variety of things. NASA had been set up, which was another big accomplishment. Killian was a very, very clever politician, very quiet, very behind the scenes, but very competent and effective in getting jobs done. None of this was personal projects, it was all for the nation. So I went back to the Voice in 1959.

Q: There is I think a pretty complete summary of what you did or a discussion of what you did in the Voice in the interview that was done by Cliff Groce a year and half or so ago. And I don't think, therefore, we need to go back over that experience in detail here. But a few of the things that were in the transcript of your interview at that time raised some interesting questions which you have referred to but didn't actually go into in great detail.

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Problems with Tom Sorensen on Handling Policy Guidance

So I think if I may I would like to jump to the point of Murrow's directorship of the Agency. At one point you said that you felt there was a great deal of pressure on Murrow from the White House, largely because of the fact that you had Sorensen with his brother over there at the White House and because you had Don Wilson's very close association with Bobby Kennedy. They really fed in from different channels. And I know from personal observation and experience that they didn't always agree with one another. In fact, there was quite a bit of tension from time to time between the two of them. But what primarily were your difficulties with Sorensen? I mean, what was it that he was doing that caused you so much difficulty at the Voice?

LOOMIS: I guess in the fundamental basis he wanted to control—or have his office control—the output of the Voice in detail. He was unhappy about two things. He was unhappy on our reporting of domestic issues if they indicated there was any disagreement with or problem with Kennedy's position or his ability to do something. That was not unique. Because every president and everybody on any presidential staff feels the same way. You can understand why. It's wrong. But they still feel that way.

And the other was the policy directions were fundamentally difficult to follow. First of all, he felt that if you didn't know the policy, you didn't say anything. This is, of course, absolutely wrong because the whole world is speculating or trying to combat your thrust. Secondly, he did not understand the difference between a policy directive and a broadcast commentary. For example, if a policy directive made 5 points using precise legal language, he expected the commentary to mention all 5 points, use the same precise key words, all in a two to three minute commentary—translated into many languages to many ordinary people, most of whom don't understand legal terminology. This is a broadcast—you can't put everything into even a three or four minute commentary. You can't have a ten

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minute commentary. People are not going to listen ten minutes. This is not like reading a newspaper where you can go back and reread a passage you did not understand.

Q: What he really wanted was for you to be a spokesman specifically for the Administration.

LOOMIS: Sure. But it also came down to operational detail. I think he had very little understanding of the medium. Policy had very little understanding of the urgency of time when it came to broadcasting. If, for example, we were broadcasting to Burma in two hours we might seek guidance. Can you tell me what the story is? Policy would say, well, we will have a meeting shortly. I'll get back to you. Of course, they frequently never got back to you. But we had to broadcast within two hours to Burma because if you didn't it wouldn't be there for another 24 hours. And that has been true with the Voice and the State Department and USIA policy or any other policy organization who'd work on a different time scale.

And that's, of course, the thing that makes the Voice so exciting and to me so effective is that you deal directly with the foreigners. You don't go through their government. You don't go through anything else. And you're in head to head competition with all the other broadcasters. It is very difficult—I'm not talking now about Sorensen, I'm talking about anyone in that position. Very difficult to understand why the Voice has to dwell on negative information. And I feel strongly that the more negative the information is, the quicker and the deeper you've got to discuss it because you know your enemies are going to be discussing it in great detail for a long time.

And you've got to show whatever positive thing you can find. It may not be much but you've got to show it. And if it's been dead wrong you'd rather say we're not perfect. And that is much more effective and gets much more respect for America than either disclaiming it when that's not true or ignoring it.

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Q: In the middle of a lot of this controversy that you were having with Sorensen I remember that he decided that we had to write a new charter for the Voice. I think you had already gotten your earlier charter before.

LOOMIS: Right.

Q: And Sorensen wanted to write a new charter. I remember that he had a group of people working on it. At that point I don't know just exactly what detail he was going into. But I remember sitting in several meetings at which he indicated that the charter ought to be thus and so. But I'm not sure that I realize what the final disposition of that effort was, and I'm not sure that I remember all the instances in which he wanted to go off and deviate from the earlier charter. Would you have any recollection of that?

LOOMIS: There wasn't a deviation in that sense—all the original charter was continued. They added another paragraph, a directive on how to do the commentaries. And I don't think it really changed anything very significantly. But it could have during drafts when policy people were trying to put the commentaries under direct policy control, they did in the Cuba crisis when they sent poor Bernie Anderson down.

Q: Bernie had to come down and deliver the line.

LOOMIS: He not only had to deliver it, he had to in theory see that it was followed which put him in a difficult situation.

Q: Very difficult. Did you find that Sorensen was more difficult to deal with in these kind of circumstances than was Don Wilson? Or did you have about equal difficulty with both?

LOOMIS: Well, I did much more with Sorensen because it was his business.

Q: Yes.

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LOOMIS: And there also was the subtle differences that I did not work for Sorensen. And I clearly worked for Wilson. And if I got a directive which I disagreed with, I would try to say why I disagreed with it. Don knew that if they pushed too far I would resign, which I eventually did when I was directed not to carry a news item that was being carried worldwide. But I think Don wasn't as uptight as Sorensen was. Sorensen was a driven but uncertain guy.

Q: Yes, he was.

LOOMIS: Wilson was much more relaxed and he couldn't be bothered with the details anyway.

Q: *I also think that, this is my impression, that Sorensen had a much more vindictive attitude in the event that you didn't agree with him or didn't go along with whatever you wanted.*

LOOMIS: Oh, sure.

Q: *Wilson never seemed to have that degree of vindictiveness that Sorensen had. It's not I'll do you for this if you don't do it attitude. In dealing with Bobby (Kennedy), Don was dealing with somebody who had a vindictive streak of his own. I don't think really that Ted Sorensen had that kind of vindictiveness, but Tom did. I remember it was very difficult. I had several difficult times with him too.*

Loomis' Evaluation of Carl Rowan and His Direction of USIA

The other question has to do, not with Murrow's time, but with the difficulties you had during Carl Rowan's period in the administration of the Agency. Do you feel that most of what Carl was giving you trouble about was the result of LBJ's insistence? Or did you feel that Carl had some of his own input to that?

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LOOMIS: I have no way of knowing that.

Q: I mean, just a feeling.

LOOMIS: I'm sure he was under a lot of pressure from Johnson. If Murrow had been alive, either Johnson wouldn't have tried to put him under that pressure because of Murrow's position or Murrow would have resigned noisily, in my judgment, which may have forced Johnson to back off. I don't know.

Q: I don't know either.

LOOMIS: But I had little respect for Rowan as an individual. I never saw anything sort of interesting or new or different or creative coming out of him. He'd pontificate in obvious statements. I certainly never was close with him. And I may be wrong, but it goes back to, when he first came to the Agency and set up a bowling group to go bowling.

Q: Yeah, I remember he had this bowling group that he wanted to institute.

LOOMIS: Yeah. I don't bowl first of all and secondly I lived in Middleburg. And I wasn't about to give up a night or two a week to go bowl with him. So I told him, I think politely that I was sorry, but I live in the country. He was really quite annoyed that I wouldn't do it. Now, that may have been in my imagination. That's pure speculation. But if it hadn't been that it would have been something else. And this was I just didn't respect him, didn't respect his judgment or knowledge. I would send him material to read, I'm almost positive he didn't read it or he read it so superficially that he didn't recall it. I don't think he worked at the job.

Q: No, I don't think he worked at it very much. Of course, I had left my job in the Agency. At the time he first came in, I was studying German to go to Germany which never eventuated for a lot of reasons. So I didn't have a chance to observe his incumbency very closely. I did get much the same impression from word that came back to me from

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people who were still immediately active under him which correspond pretty much to the conclusion that you have come to.

Episode: Problems in Discontinuing Contract with Mr. Lemon and His Station, WRUL, to Broadcast to Latin America

Did you at any time have a direct confrontation with Johnson himself? Or did it all come filtered through Rowan?

LOOMIS: I had a direct confrontation not with Senator Johnson himself, but with Jenkins, his chief of staff, years ago when I was in the Voice. And Johnson was very much aware of it. And he was aware of me in that sense. The difference was concerning the continual funding of a "private" station in Scituate, Massachusetts, WRUL.

Q: Oh, the Lemon operation.

LOOMIS: Yes. Johnson had supported funding for WRUL and I believe got some quid pro quo. How I don't know. Marks was Lemon's lawyer.

Q: He was Lemon's supporter. He wanted you to continue to contract with Lemon.

LOOMIS: Yes, and Lemon was his supporter financially I believe. We had trouble trying to follow some of the funds. When I ordered the staff not to renew that contract, all hell broke loose. Jenkins demanded my presence. And so I went up to see Jenkins on the Hill with an Agency lawyer. Jenkins had Marks.

Q: Marks wasn't yet at that time the Director of the Agency.

LOOMIS: Oh, no. He was just a lawyer. And I think Lemon was there. But anyway, there was a military lawyer and his name began with an "M." this was before I knew Jenkins' problem. But we had a head-to-head on this because I had a lot of facts and figure, no question about it. So the compromise was that everyone agreed that I was young and

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didn't understand how business was done. That the budget would be reduced this year, further reduced the next year, and out the third year. And I said fine. I accomplished my purpose. I just didn't accomplish it as fast as I wanted.

Q: That eventually happened.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

Q: He was out.

LOOMIS: Yeah. So Lemon was out. I think maybe it was two years. Maybe we cut it in half and then out the next year. But I had the figures there. There was no point in making a big brouhaha over things. So I think ever since then Johnson was very much aware that in theory I suppose I could have blackmailed him with some of this. But I wouldn't. I don't play those games.

Q: Well, he probably would have blackmailed you in the other direction.

LOOMIS: Well, I think that may be.

Political Maneuverings of VOA Language Desk Personnel

Q: He was involved obviously. I had one other question that I wanted to ask about that time. Well, I have another one too. Just for a short time while I try and think what this other question was, what was your observation on maneuvering within the language desks? Obviously there was a lot of politicking going on among people and often disagreement, I understand, within the staff of any particular language. There might be some who felt one way and some who felt another way and each one was trying to maneuver in such a way either with Hill connections or press connections to get his own point of view across and accepted. Did you have much of a personal input with that? Or was that pretty much left with Barry Zorthian or whoever was running the program?

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LOOMIS: A lot of that took place, I think less took place over a period of time. Because don't forget under Poppele and Button there hadn't been very strong administration in the Voice for a very, very long time.

Q: *No.*

LOOMIS: And Alex Klieforth was a very or is a very able guy, as is Barry Zorthian.

Q: *Yes, he is.*

LOOMIS: And he's very politically astute and he's very politically knowledgeable about all these countries. And he would inform me that there's a problem in the Lithuanian desk and so forth but he would take care of it. And mostly not by firing but by really convincing the guy or guys that it wasn't worth doing. One of the reasons we closed down the Farsi service was that there the conflict was so drastic that you figured you had to start all over again. It was a forerunner of what was going to happen in Iran. I'm not sure that when they set the service up again they did start all over again.

Q: *They probably did but I don't know.*

LOOMIS: I don't know either. But that was inherited. Now, take a look at the Russian desk where you had Barmine, an ex-Soviet general, White Russians, jews, and almost every mixture possible. I think the strength is it prevented any one group from running rampant. Now, you had a checks and balance within the service. As long as it kept within normal bounds it was a process. But you had to watch it or it would explode.

Q: *I think I recall the major trouble in the Farsi broadcast came from the fact there was a former Iranian police chief who headed the Iranian staff. There was intra-staff disagreement, and he had some connections on the Hill which were stronger than those of anybody else in the organization. Things just reached an impossible impasse while he was there.*

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VOA Engineering Modernization Necessary, and Relations with Ed Martin, VOA Engineering Chief

I now remember the other question I wanted to ask you. It had to do with the transmitter facilities which you found pretty inadequate, in repair, condition, and modernization, when you came in. I don't know whether you want to comment on the controversies you may have had with Ed Martin or not. I just by accident happened to read and review the transcript of his interview about ten days before I came down here.

LOOMIS: I'd really like to see that one.

Q: I can make it available to you if you'd like. It's hard to ask the question. At what point did you feel that Ed was going off on his own, or what points? And in what way did he try to shape engineering efforts in his own image no matter what anybody else thought? I guess that's a very broad question and I don't know whether you want to speak to it or not. But I got that impression in my dealings with Ed too.

LOOMIS: Well, Ed had run the engineering operation with virtually no direction from anybody. So it was his fiefdom. And he had his favorites and he rewarded his favorites. He had selected all the people that were there. And they were running a very cozy shop, very slowly aging and deteriorating fixed operation. Well, you had to have a lot of upheaval when you suddenly began a major construction operation and you had to bring in new people. And then the other fundamental difference is how much authority did you give the base managers versus the central staff? And Ed having run a closed shop wanted more at home than he did overseas. I thought he should have more overseas. It should be balanced. It's not all one or the other. But it also requires that you have competent people overseas. And there weren't many competent construction types when we started nor could there be. The competent construction people wouldn't stay there because there was no construction. On the other hand, you couldn't have somebody coming in out of the blue who hadn't worked overseas and had some idea of the problems. The greatest

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engineering problem with the Voice was and is that there is no commercial high powered broadcasting. There is no commercial short wave broadcasting. So there is no pool of people in the U.S. to draw from. There is also an order of magnitude, greater power, and problems of the huge SW antennas which are unique. You had to train on the job. Everybody trained on the job including Martin. And Martin seldom gave information unless he had to or unless it was in his interest to give it. So sometimes you would find that there are things going on that he had not told you about which he must have known. And the longer I stayed there the better my relations were outside of him. So I got to know what was going on.

And I had an assistant by the name of Walter Mylecraine whom you may remember who was somewhat of an abrasive guy, but he was a doer. He was an ex-Marine. He'd go charging into things. And I used him to visit a lot of these overseas posts. And, of course, I visited a lot of them too. None of the previous directors had ever been to these places. So nobody knew what was going on over there. And I'd come back with a long list of things, why this, why that. We better change this. And that, you know, upset the apple cart. And I'm sure Martin resented it. He never got mad in overt way with me. He'd been in the military. When he got a command he'd say he'd do it and then see what would happen. But he had to follow up on your suggestions.

Q: I gather there were a number of instances in which he disagreed engineering wise and technically particularly on the antenna fields with decisions or the thoughts that were being proposed back in Washington. Did you find him difficult to overcome on those occasions? At least he used to bitch about it a lot. I'm not an engineer so I couldn't judge the validity of any objections that he would indicate. But several times he let fling that he felt this was all being done in the wrong way.

LOOMIS: He was never that overt with me on that subject.

Q: Probably not.

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LOOMIS: And I don't know what you mean by the construction of the antennas. Because I certainly had no personal input in that. That's when you had A&Es. And he would be having much more impact with and contact with the A&Es during construction, during design than I did or should have. Because I had no technical competence in the design of antennas. I could follow what was going on. And I could see the antenna patterns and understand this and that. One of the things that bothered him was that I would use somebody like Goldmark who was the chief CBS scientist and engineer and a very bright innovative fellow. I also had Mitre Corporation, before I had any relationship with Mitre, do some studies of design of a SW system, because I wanted to get some new ideas and some new blood in this, and a few of those new ideas worked and many of them did not. I'm sure that was another disturbance to Ed's placid routine. And, of course, he was greatly feared and disliked by many of his people.

Q: *Oh, yes.*

LOOMIS: And I'm always concerned when someone is feared and disliked. That is not a good sign.

Q: *Yes, when we were making the study of the agency, of course we spent part of our time on the Voice. At Keogh's suggestion, of course, we talked to Martin a good deal and also to a lot of his people. It was very obvious that many of his people were afraid to say much. But on one occasion I can't even remember the name of the gentleman whom I'm talking about now but he had served in Thailand at the station in country the last year that I was in Thailand, and he said, I was never one of Ed's favorites. But I will say this, that I never felt that I was discriminated against. He said, there are other people who feel that way. He said, I wasn't a favorite of Ed's but I felt I got everything out of the Voice that I was entitled to. A lot of people don't feel that way and probably did not. So it was clear that there was a lot of unhappiness and dissatisfaction.*

You said you had some additional things you wanted to say.

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LOOMIS: Yes, there were a couple of people in that shop that I had great respect for. One was George Jacobs and his assistant Ann Case.

Q: On the frequencies.

LOOMIS: On the frequencies. Not only technically on what frequencies to pick, but also in the international arena and also the domestic arena between us and Radio Free Europe and so forth. I think he was a very competent person. I think they were both good.

And Wayne Rhyne who was in charge of running the overseas bases from Washington, I think he was competent, too. I didn't always agree with his judgment about other people. But I think he was competent. And I think he was particularly useful in Greece where over the years he had developed close relationships with the military, Greek military, who were running the country much of the time that we were involved, and in getting bases for us and keeping the ones we had. Because of his political astuteness and ability as a negotiator, I used him principally in the political field of getting and keeping the bases which was not an easy job. And he was good at that.

And I think another area where undoubtedly I did get involved was in the selection of who was going to run the bases. I based my decisions on more than Martin's recommendation, because I traveled to the bases enough that I knew those people personally. I could see how they operated. When I was visiting the bases I would get a feel of how the other people worked with them. And then I also had Walter Mylecraine who was very good eyes and ears, particularly in the facility side. Sometimes his opinions would be quite different from others and was worth a stop, look and listen. I'm sure that riled Martin because he was no longer the sole arbiter as to what happened.

Q: I think Wayne was not one of Martin's favorites.

LOOMIS: He wasn't.

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Q: I've forgotten now whether any of us (on the study) actually interviewed him or whether he submitted a written statement. I think he went to live in Switzerland after he retired. And I don't remember now whether we interviewed him directly. But I know he was not one of Martin's favorites. Generally other people thought he was very competent. Martin never had very much good to say about him. And Wayne himself indicated that he was not one of Martin's boys.

LOOMIS: Yes.

Q: Do you think you have anything more you want to say about the Voice now?

LOOMIS: No, I assume it's covered by the Groce interview.

Q: Well, let's—I guess you went away from the Voice to the Public Broadcasting, didn't you?

LOOMIS: No.

Q: No?

Loomis Leaves VOA For the Office of the Commissioner of Education

LOOMIS: Oh, no. First of all, I went to be the Deputy Commissioner of Education in 1965.

Q: Oh, that's right.

LOOMIS: As things were getting more and more untenable at the Voice, Frank Keppel had approached me to be his deputy. Because the Office of Education clearly needed a major reorganization. And apparently I had been recommended to him by Macy which surprised me.

Q: By whom?

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LOOMIS: John Macy, the Head of the Civil Service Commission.

Q: Oh, yes. Macy was an old friend of mine.

LOOMIS: As someone who could help him in the management and administration side. He had come to me a year before. And I said no. The Voice was having its problems. And I thought because of my longevity I could probably protect the Voice better than any new person could at least initially. Then he came back to me a year later and I said, yes, I would accept it, because I had now come to the conclusion that I was hurting the Voice, that if I said this room has brown walls they'd say, no, it doesn't. It has white walls. I was just harmful. I resigned when Policy tried to control the news as well as the commentaries.

President Johnson Tries to Block Loomis' Appointment at Office of Education

I gave a farewell address to the staff at the Voice. I told them of the successes in the past seven years and I told them what I thought the current problems were. There was a slight coverage of it in the press, but enough to draw the attention of President Johnson. And he called up Frank Keppel and said was it true he was thinking of hiring me as Deputy Commissioner? Keppel said, yes, that he had hired me. I found out quite a while later that the President told Keppel not to hire me. Keppel answered, well, then Mr. President, you have two jobs to fill. The President backed down, but a year later both Keppel and I were out.

Q: The resentment on the part of Johnson obviously went back to the time with the Lemon contract.

LOOMIS: I would assume. I assume this was just cumulative.

Q: I'm quite sure that was it.

Loomis Spearheads Reorganization at Office of Education

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LOOMIS: So that was that. And that was an interesting reorganization. You're probably not familiar with it at all.

Q: I'm not familiar with any of the details. In fact, I wasn't even in the country when it was happening.

LOOMIS: The Office of Education was 100 years old. And initially it was a statistical group that just kept statistics years after that actual fact. Then in the mid-20s it came to the idea that it had the job of having experts to help the local schools. I felt very strongly that the federal government could not directly get involved in education at all. Experts could only advise the states and local school districts. One commissioner back in I think the late '20s, early '30s, actually set out a list of the fields that he needed experts in. And there was some 2,000 or some unbelievably large number. Over the years they collected a large number of "experts." the average age of the professional staff was 54 when I came in because you couldn't be an expert if you hadn't been around a while. Curiously, the experts usually had to go South to advise in the winter and north to advise in the summer. They were not distributing money. They were distributing advice.

Then suddenly Johnson started to put in money. Initially they had—I think it was \$700 million or maybe it was \$350, I forget. The first Johnson budget had doubled. And then it doubled again to roughly 1.4 billion. And the thing that was really important was that you had funds to distribute and you had formulas to observe and to administer and decisions to make as to whether you gave it to A or B and so forth. And this staff was not either emotionally or policy-wise wanting to do that or physically capable of doing that.

And when I came there we were about to double again in three months. And it was absolute bedlam. We had four bureaus and 35 divisions. And they were the worst type because the divisions were organized by narrow function or even a specific section of a law. The head of many divisions reported to the chairmen and chiefs of staff of the relevant subcommittees. You had absolute incest in a whole series of places. There was no logic

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to the organization because the organization had been adding a new organizational unit every time there was a new law.

So after I'd been there a few months I guess, I convinced Keppel that: one, we really had to do very drastic things, and that we had to have a total reorganization from top to bottom. Two, neither he nor I had the political power to do it. We had to convince the president that it had to be done. Three, we couldn't wait to get a blue ribbon commission of civilians. We had to get competent government officials from anywhere in the government that we could get them. And they had to be assigned now because we had 1,400,000,000 coming down the pike.

So we had a meeting with Cater, Doug Cater, who understood the issue, not with the president, but it was basically agreed to. And Dwight Ink was brought in as the Chairman of the Commission having just come back from Alaska where there had been coordination of repairing earthquake damage. They got some very competent people. We had drawn up our own suggested organization chart which was the basis on which they started to look at the possibilities. And they amended it and they changed it. At the end it was a lot closer to ours than it was to the old organization. It and improved ours. They had more people, better people, working on just the reorganization, and outsiders and so forth. They had no political constraints, even though Senator So and So was not going to like it. They operated on the theory that you've got to gore every sacred ox and let them all bellow at once so that they can't say "I'm being picked on." So on July 4th we fell out. And then after the holiday everybody came back in. And most of them went to physically different places. We still had four bureaus but none of them had the same mission.

Q: Well, this was July 4th of which year?

LOOMIS: Well, let's see. I left in '65.

Q: '65.

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LOOMIS: '65, yeah. And we demoted “voluntarily,” 15 supergrades. Only four supergrades including Keppel and myself had the same job. The ones that stayed had entirely different jobs. And I think there were only two divisions that had the same job. Those were administrative divisions. So it was an absolute blood bath. And I'll never forget talking to Irons on the Civil Service Commission and saying we need 50 more super grades. He sat there and his eyes were popping out. “That's impossible. That's impossible.” And I said, but it's got to be done. The President wants this. The President has demanded it, the reorganization calls for it and so forth. We got it. It turned the office around and a lot of the old staff left because they were in disagreement with the federal move into national education. I admired them.

Q: They couldn't take it so they got out.

LOOMIS: Well, the experts thought we shouldn't be distributing money. And then the other thing I learned on that assignment was that there is no such thing as domestic intelligence that you can use. Because among other things we had the civil rights stuff coming right down our throat and all the integration of schools. And you'd get an appeal from the school board from such and such a town. They couldn't do this because a railroad separated a section or something like that.

Before they visited me, I would take a trip to find out about the school board members. Tell me what their position is, what they are in the community, what are their policies on this or that, how many of them are black or whatnot. There was no way to find out. There was no organization to go back to. And then I was told it would really be improper to even keep newspaper clippings on the school problem in Timbuktu. I said, hell, I know more about Laotian politics than I know about what's going on in the school board down there. It was a real problem. You had to try to make quick judgments as to who was a redneck and who wasn't, and who was really trying and who was dragging his/her feet and how much

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political freedom did they have within their own community to do things. All of that was a mess.

Loomis Works in Nixon Campaign

I didn't go into Public Broadcasting until after the Nixon Administration came in and I had been Deputy Director of USIA for over three years. I worked in the campaign for Nixon. I had learned from my experience with the Eisenhower committee that the individuals trying to be elected president should have a group not involved with the campaign at all or involved in what the candidate should be saying to get himself elected. Rather the special group should be preparing short papers outlining what the new president, no matter who he turned out to be, could and should do if elected.

At the urging of Abbott Washburn, I met with Nixon and proposed this concept. I suggested organizing groups by subject matter, telling them that their report would be for the next president which would include Mr. Humphrey. We had to select a diverse group that would have different opinions and had to include as many if not more Democrats than Republicans. Nixon would have to pay for it, but he and his cabinet members when selected should have documents that would tell them what were the major issues, what were the alternatives realistically available. The group's report might recommend Alternative A over Alternative B, but each report could not be more than ten pages.

Nixon bought the concept. Paul McCracken was selected the head of the "task forces." I was the only full time person. There were all kinds of members. You had Kissinger, Shultz and many of that caliber. I had a little trouble from Flanagan and Mitchell on the staff saying you ought to get "Jones," and for Christ's sake don't get "Smith." But most of the time, most of the time, we got back what we wanted.

We usually held the meetings in airports where members would fly in for the day and then fly out again. I remember One meeting where we had three HH buttons and only two RN buttons on member's lapels. They were all professionals. There usually was very little

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disagreement on the problem, but as you would expect, there would be disagreement as to the best solutions. But working and debating together was helpful.

After Nixon had won, and after the selection of the last cabinet secretary, we had a three day meeting in the Hotel Pierre in New York. Each cabinet secretary was briefed by one or in some cases two committees because of the difference between the secretaries' responsibilities in the cabinet and the organization of the committees. All members of each committee were present. Each secretary had had the opportunity to read the short committee reports prior to the meeting so the time was all spent in answering the secretaries' questions and discussion with the committee members.

After these meetings, the reports and summary of the discussion were turned over to Arthur Burns. Burns used the reports to develop a list of the most important actions to suggest to the President for immediate action. I think that we made a significant impact, at least Nixon thought so, in starting his administration with a lot of ground work done. Nixon also clearly used the task forces as a scouting exercise to pick the people he wanted in the administration. A number of them at varying levels went into the administration which was fine and appropriate. This was a good education for them among other things.

After that I was briefly on the White House staff to talk about government reorganization, particularly in foreign affairs. Roy Ash was trying to do the same thing for Haldeman that I was doing it for Burns. There was a head-to-head between Haldeman and Burns. Haldeman won.

1969: Loomis Declines White House Assignment and Accepts Position as Deputy Director, USIA

I was asked to do White House personnel. I said in no way was I going to do that. First of all, I haven't followed the campaign organization or fund raising. I said I did not know,

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quote, who's a good guy and who's a bad guy. And I did not wish to get involved with that. I said I was non-political in the party sense.

At that point Frank Shakespeare talked to me about being Deputy of USIA.

Q: Did you come back into USIA then as Deputy Director?

LOOMIS: Right.

Q: Nixon was already in.

LOOMIS: Yes, he was just in.

Q: Just in.

LOOMIS: Yeah, maybe a few months.

Q: Yeah.

LOOMIS: A few months when I was still around in the White House before.

Q: That must have been '68 then.

LOOMIS: No, it was '69.

Q: It was '69.

LOOMIS: So it was the spring of '69 some time. I don't know. I forget whether it was April or some time like that. [It was March]

Loomis' Evaluation of Frank Shakespeareas Director, USIA

Q: You covered that to some extent in the interview with Cliff Groce. And I don't know what else you may wish to say about it. One thing that interested me there was that you had

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pointed out that you had come to have a great deal of respect for Frank Shakespeare. You're one of the very few people to whom I talked who did, both in the media and those who encountered him elsewhere. There was not very much respect as far as his ability to handle that kind of a job was concerned. You may not want to say anything further about it. What were the qualities that made you respect him and what made you see in him what other people didn't see I wonder?

LOOMIS: Well, I think he may have been miscast in that job. I think in some ways he would have been a better Secretary of State or at least Assistant Secretary in a geographic area. He was thinking geopolitics all the time. Like the way he insisted on going to the Persian Gulf. He saw that the area was certain to become a real crisis point. He felt that the U.S. wasn't paying attention to it. He felt he didn't know about it, but that he ought to know about it. I think he felt that USIA could make a contribution just because that was his job, but if he had been Secretary of State he would have done more about it. And he wanted USIS staff (this is probably where a lot of people disagreed with him) who weren't just public relations people but who were thinking in political terms as they affected the relations between the U.S. and whatever countries they were serving in. We would push people who had impressed him with their ability in political analysis as compared to other abilities. He did not admire the nice guys that got along with everybody and didn't rock any boats. I think he hoped to see USIA out front more. Many PAOs felt that "out front" was probably an impossible place to achieve in the embassy. If you did achieve it, you were in a pretty vulnerable position to being shot in the back.

I believe that push was a useful push to have. I think there was a good deal of validity in it carried to a reasonable length. And as you know we set up a pretty formal promotion and firing mechanism. But I think that it was right for the Director of the Agency, any director of the Agency, to have the final say in the promotion of the top grades where he clearly knows the individuals or at least should know the individuals. Provided that the list is prepared by the system so that you don't get a promotion from out of left field. I think by

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and large that worked. And Lord knows in personnel decisions everyone of us has made mistakes.

Q: *Oh, yes.*

LOOMIS: And you just hope you made more right than wrong. I disagreed in some of his choices—not necessarily at the time—but later as their performance did not live up to expectations.

I admired him for knowing his limitations. He knew he was not a detail guy. He knew he wasn't really interested in the administration. He knew that he reached quick decisions. He needed somebody to say, "Now wait a minute. Let's really staff this out and let's really take a look at it." He certainly gave me perfect working conditions for a deputy. He gave me complete authority when he wasn't there. He gave me complete authority in the day to day running of the shop which I thought was appropriate and which had not always happened in other cases. I think he had fairly good political connections in the White House. He was a help to the Agency.

The Influence of Weinthal on Shakespeare in Both Policy and Personnel Decisions

Q: *What if anything did you think about, and do you want to make any comments on, the role of and relationship of Teddy Weinthal to Frank?*

LOOMIS: It was one that I never really completely understood. I think he was fascinated by European devious thinking of a Pole like Weinthal. He was impressed with Weinthal's detailed memory of the past which went back further than his memory in considerable detail. And I think he felt this was someone who was out of the mainstream with whom he could be completely frank and throw ideas around and learn from. I guess that's a useful function for somebody to perform. He found someone who was as anti-Russian as he was and that was a comfort to him. Weinthal didn't interfere with me very much. I think he may have impressed Frank with certain individuals in the foreign service, some positively

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and some negatively, more than Frank might have on his own. And that's good or bad depending whether the impressions of Weinthal's were correct or not.

Q: There was a lot of unhappiness on the East European area. I've forgotten. Particularly the one case in which they pulled up one fellow who missed promotion several times. He was of Polish extraction himself. And they made him a PAO I think, either in Poland or one of the other East European countries. Nobody in the area office felt that he had that competence. There was an awful lot of unhappiness about it. And there were one or two other cases in which the unhappiness over what they considered to be Weinthal's intervention on the selection of people to be PAOs in certain places, really stirred up a lot of private disapproval.

LOOMIS: Well, that kind of a loose person like Colonel House or anybody else always disturbs the regular organization. And you'd have to know going back over the history how did that PAO in Poland work out? Was he a dud? Or did he turn out to have qualities that hadn't been perceived? Or was it a policy difference? You know, you can't tell. And I don't remember that particular case.

Q: Since I retired not too long after that series of incidents, I don't know what the final outcome was.

LOOMIS: So you can't say it was good or bad. You and I can't say whether it was good or bad. It depends on whether the decision was right or not. But picking people from way down and putting them up usually turns out if you do it right to be very efficient. Look at the way Eisenhower was pulled up. Sometimes it doesn't work. If you look at your friend Sorensen who Lord knows was picked from out of the depths and put on top. But I think it's a useful thing. I think sometimes it should be tempered instead of going from way down here to way up there in one jump. He ought to go faster from step to step rather than jumping over four or five levels at once.

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Q: This was the main thing. The area office had a person whom they felt was very well qualified and who was a grade higher on the scale. They didn't think the gentleman selected had the competence. And they figured as long as Teddy Weinthal influenced Frank to make that appointment, it was irreversible. There were a couple of others that were less odious to them, but still with which they disagreed rather substantially. Well, I don't think I have anymore questions, Henry. Do you have anything else that you feel you would like to add to the comments you've made today? To sum up or anything that you'd like to say.

Comparison of Conditions in USIA With Those Loomis Encountered in Corporation for Public Broadcasting

LOOMIS: Well, I'll give you a comparison. Because as you know when I left the Agency as Deputy Director I went to Corporation of Public Broadcasting. If you think things are sorry in the Agency, you haven't seen nothing yet. And Public Broadcasting was, I think, the most unpleasant assignment I've ever had for a variety of reasons. The fundamental one I guess is that no one can agree on what its mission is. And no one can agree on how you measure success. I used to call its bureaucratic status "a duck billed platypus." It is only one of a kind. You're warm blooded. You look like a mammal but you laid eggs. It's an absolutely screwy thing. You're meant to be a private company chartered under the laws of the District of Columbia. But your board of directors is appointed by the President, confirmed by the Senate. And in fact, 99 percent of your money comes from the federal government. Now, it doesn't have to if you're smart enough to get it from the private sources. But in fact 99 percent of it comes from the federal government. So you never know who's in charge.

Then you find that the mechanism of selecting a board of directors while it sounds good on paper—that the President doing it and confirmed by the Senate—is an absolute horror, because while the first board were first class people because Cater was the staff man in the White House, Johnson cared and there was a lot of publicity, and he put

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really able people on it with one exception, it rapidly deteriorated to be a third or fourth class patronage assignment. Or worse, ideologues of varying descriptions would seek assignment, a militant woman, a militant laborer, militant black, militant news person, militant culture, you know. The directors had a six year term. So it took a while for things to percolate down. The board was fighting itself in a most disrespectful fashion, publicly. How can anyone admire that? And, of course, the corporation had a thankless job. It received money from the government and had to justify the past expenditures. But you gave almost all the money to other people, and no recipient was every satisfied. "You should have given me more." Or "you shouldn't have wasted your money giving it to that guy." So you had constant emotional fights that you couldn't really judge factually on their merits other than your judgment of the merits. But what is your judgment based on? What mission are you trying to accomplish? Should you put more money into news or more into culture? I happen to like news. Therefore, should we put more into news just because I happen to be more interested in that than I am in culture? That's not really right. Then how do you do it? If you think there's politics in the foreign service, you should see politics at its worst—personal aggrandizement, vindictiveness, pettiness, stupidity throughout Public Broadcasting. It drives you up the walls.

Q: Our friend Jack O'Brien felt after less than a year that it was a mess.

LOOMIS: Sure.

Q: He just wasn't going to take that kind of stuff.

LOOMIS: There's no need to. So I think there's nothing else to say. Looking back on it, clearly my time in the Voice was the most enjoyable and I believe productive assignment. The mission was clear and I pretty well had my own show. The Voice was in direct contact with the audience, was worldwide, and covered every subject in creation. You had a staff that was as diverse as the beings on this earth. You had, I think, a higher percentage

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of real competence and real dedication in that staff than any other staff I've ever been associated with anywhere.

Q: Yes, I think that's true. I think the staff was certainly very dedicated even if they might sometimes be dedicated in different directions.

LOOMIS: Sure. Well, that's all right.

Q: But they were highly dedicated.

LOOMIS: They cared.

Q: Yeah.

LOOMIS: They weren't just pushing paper.

Q: As I look back now too I think that years ago when the Agency was young it was staffed with people who were much more dedicated than those who have come later. I think the dedication is at a much lower level now. I don't know about the Voice because I haven't been in contact with them. But I think the whole agency has lost some of the dedication and elan that it once had. It's more a job and it's more a matter of how fast you can get ahead now than it was in the old days. But, I suppose everybody who believes in an organization thinks it was better in the old days.

LOOMIS: Well, the problem is that the organization ages. When USIA took over IIA, it completely changed and expanded the mission. It really was pretty much a new agency. There was an awful lot of new people coming in from all over.

Q: That's right.

LOOMIS: When you stop expanding you can't bring in anymore people. And there you are. And then you bring them in slowly and through more normal bureaucratic channels.

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Q: *It becomes more bureaucratized.*

LOOMIS: Yeah.

Q: *Well, Henry I thank you very much for your time. I think it's been a fascinating interview and it adds a great deal to what was primarily almost entirely to focus on the Voice when Cliff did it. I think that interview was also fascinating. This one has been equally so because it has got the other phases in it, your experience both in and out of the Voice and how they meshed into the total picture of USIA. So again, I thank you very much for it.*

LOOMIS: Well, I enjoyed doing it. Thank you.

Note: I should add that I think the system we introduced in personnel when I was deputy of requiring that each class be ranked relatively—identifying the top 10 percent and the bottom 10 percent—was significant. It allowed the Agency to select out a significant number of employees that were not effective and highlight the more competent ones. Obviously some wrong ratings were made but I don't think many were. Obviously career employees resented it because all want absolute tenure like a college professor. I'm sorry the system did not survive.

End of interview