

THE WORLD BANK GROUP STAFF ASSOCIATION

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Transcript of interview with

CHRISTOPHER REDFERN

**January 5, 6 and 9, 1989
Washington, D.C.**

Interview by: Charles Ziegler

Session 1
January 5, 1989

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

ZIEGLER: Today is January 5, 1989. I have with me here at the Headquarters of the World Bank Mr. Christopher J. Redfern. Mr. Redfern served on the Executive Committee of the Staff Association in 1986 and was elected Chairman in June 1986. Chris, if we could begin, may I ask what initially induced you to become active in the Staff Association?

REDFERN: Well, Chuck, soon after I joined the Bank in 1978 there was a lot of activity in the Staff Association over the new Kafka system for salaries. I remember being drawn into that and becoming quite active as an alternate delegate and speaker at various meetings that took place following the issuance of the first Kafka report. After that I dropped out to a large extent and was not particularly active in the Staff Association until I became a delegate for my department in the West Africa region in 1984.

I think my renewed involvement was largely as a result of having a number of friends who were active in the Staff Association at that time and who were on the Executive Committee under Damian von Stauffenberg. In fact, I used to carpool with 2 of them, with Damian and Hasso Molineus. They talked about what was going in the Staff Association each night when we were going home, and, after a bit, I began to get interested in participating myself. So that's really how I became active again in the Association in 1984.

ZIEGLER: So when you became Chairman of the Staff Association, you did have some Staff Association activity behind you. But the position of Chairman, as you later, no doubt, found out, is a rather onerous burden, to say the least. An honorable but onerous one. You had been a member of the Executive Committee for some three or four months beginning in March 1986. Then in July 1986 an election was held. So you only had a short time to form an impression of what being on the, quote, "inside" was like. What really induced you to stand as a candidate for the position of Chairman of the Staff Association?

REDFERN: Well, that's a good question, Chuck. Let me say that I never had any idea, much less ambition, of becoming Chairman of the Staff Association. I didn't consider myself particularly to be one of the stalwarts or activists, you might say, within the Association, but I was invited to join Donneve Rae's Executive Committee midway through its term.

ZIEGLER: Who specifically invited you?

REDFERN: I don't know who actually proposed me, but I remember that Donneve herself called me up to see if I'd be willing to join the Committee following the resignation of one of its members.

ZIEGLER: I think it was Ann [Margaret] Wallas.

REDFERN: It was Ann Wallas. That's right. I think she left on maternity.

ZIEGLER: Right.

REDFERN: So I joined Donneve's EC a little over midway through the year. Since I felt very much the new boy in the group, I kept fairly quiet during most of the discussions until I felt I had picked up some knowledge of the issues.

It did become apparent that there was something of a split, I suppose, within that Committee. I can't say exactly on what basis it was drawn, but there appeared to be some members who didn't seem to be particularly comfortable with the way all the issues were handled. I think it may have been more a question of emphasis than of the priority that the Committee was giving to some issues against others.

ZIEGLER: Would you care to stick your neck out and say which issues were involved?

REDFERN: Well, as I recall, there was a fair bit of time spent on discussion of issues that, I must say, seemed to me sometimes to be of somewhat secondary importance. A great deal of time was spent on discussing how to reply to a letter from the President on some relatively minor matter. It sometimes seemed to get a bit bogged down in some details. But, the meetings were well run, well organized, well prepared, though the Committee didn't always seem able to come to grips with the most important issues. Anyway, I felt quite comfortable in this Committee myself. But, as the election time approached, some of the members asked me if I had thought of running for election as Chairman. My reply was, "No, I most certainly had not thought of that." And my reply also was that I was not particularly interested in that. But a number of people did persist in asking me or, in fact, encouraging me to do this, and I thought about it pretty carefully. Anyway, in the end, as you know, I decided I would run and make the commitment to serve if elected. It wasn't an easy choice to make, but I thought about it a lot. I felt, in the end, that if I were elected, I would be able to get a good deal of support from members in helping the Association play the sort of role that I thought it should.

[End of Session 1]

Session 2
January 6, 1989

[Continue Tape 1, Side A]

ZIEGLER: Today is January 6, 1989. We had to cut short our first session with Christopher Redfern for the Oral History Project of the Staff Association due to some pressing commitments on his part. However, we are back the next day to continue this interview. Chris, in 1986, there was a Staff Association election. This was, in fact, the election in which you were elected Chairman.

REDFERN: That's right.

ZIEGLER: And as I recall, these elections were marked by a considerable degree of controversy. Could you comment on some of the causes of this controversy and could you note some of the lessons that could be drawn by the Staff Association from this episode?

REDFERN: Yes, this was a time that, I must say, I enjoyed least of all in my experience with the Staff Association. I'm afraid I have to say I think it was one of the toughest periods I've ever been through in the Bank or anywhere else. It was very difficult.

What happened, as I mentioned when we were talking yesterday, was that I was asked by a number of people and persuaded in the end to run against Donneve Rae for the position of Chairman. Donneve had completed one year and apparently wished to run for a second. I had a talk with Donneve at some point early on after I had made my decision and let her know that I would be running. She accepted this with good grace. I guess she didn't particularly welcome it, but, at any rate, she accepted it. After I had made the decision to run, I put all my energies into ensuring a positive outcome for my candidacy. I guess I met with or talked with every one of the new delegates after the delegate elections had been held. On the basis of this canvas, I got a fairly good idea of the strength of support that I might expect to receive and also of the sentiments of many of the delegates, that there was a need for either somewhat of a change in approach or a stronger approach by the Staff Association.

One of the reasons that I think some of the delegates, new and old, were interested in change related to a somewhat abortive series of general meetings of the staff in the courtyard in regard to the 1986 salary adjustment.

ZIEGLER: Which was quite controversial, as I recall.

REDFERN: Which was very controversial. Very controversial. So I remember that these large meetings were called, but the direction in which the Staff Association was going to go and the message that they had received from the membership at large during these meetings was, to say the least, unclear.

ZIEGLER: Was it the perception of those who spoke to you that perhaps there was an unwelcome trend toward the radicalization of the Staff Association, at least on certain issues?

REDFERN: I don't think it was exactly that it was a radicalization. I just think that a number of people felt that the meetings hadn't been terribly well handled, because in calling them, the 1986 Executive Committee had not given any clear indication to the staff as to what course it wanted to take. If I remember right, at the crucial meeting, a number of options were given, and people were asked to raise their hand or shout "yea" or "nay" in response. Well, the meeting, itself, was poorly set up. The sound system was so awful that nobody could hear. Unless you were in the very front row, nobody could hear what Donneve or the other speakers were saying. So, the results, in terms of shows of hands or the volume of "yeas" or "nays," did not provide a terribly accurate indication of what the staff wanted.

I don't think it was necessarily that everybody felt that the Staff Association was suddenly being taken over by a bunch of radicals, but that this episode—disturbing as it was to the staff because of the controversial nature of the salary adjustment—hadn't been handled perhaps as skillfully as it might have been. At least that's the lesson I draw from it in retrospect.

ZIEGLER: Chris, could I ask whether the people with whom you spoke were active members of the Staff Association or were they just staff members whom you happened to know and who spoke to you about this issue?

REDFERN: Well, this is going back over two years now, so I don't remember exactly, but I think it was on the basis of talking with both regular staff members and with the Staff Association delegates. No, not all the delegates, by any means, felt the same way.

Anyway, to get back to the election itself and why the election for Chairman and the Executive Committee was such a disagreeable episode: on the basis of the talks I had and the canvass of the delegates and the work that I and a number of my supporters carried out, it looked as though I could expect a reasonably solid majority. And I would say that we did our canvassing pretty carefully, right down to the point of determining which delegates were going to be in Washington on the day of the election and which were going to be away on mission or on leave. We contacted virtually all the delegates who were away, not successfully in all cases, to try to ensure that they would appoint proxy voters.

Then, the day of the election came. A number of people felt, and certainly I did, that we were not well served by our polling officer during this election. Normally, as you know, the Staff Association rules require that there be--I forget the minimum number of polling officers . . .

ZIEGLER: Somewhere between three and five.

REDFERN: Somewhere between three and five. This is a burdensome and not particularly rewarding job, but I think in the past, the Staff Association has been well served by women volunteers. Janice Williams-Polenzuela had done the job very well before. But somebody new was brought in, and I had the impression, and I don't think I was alone, that she hadn't really fully mastered the rules of procedure on how to conduct these things. The result was that maybe a bit too much latitude was left to the officers in responding to inquiries from delegates phoning in to ask what the procedures would be if they weren't there to vote and so forth. And all in all--and I think I could confirm this after I became Chairman--there was a certain amount of looseness, let's say, in the way that some things were run in the office.

ZIEGLER: You wouldn't be prepared to say it was a question of outright fraud, but simply that it was more a matter of laxness rather than a conscious malevolence, if you will?

REDFERN: That's right. I think so. No, I never alleged either malice or fraud on the part of anybody, but what did become apparent was the following: the actual election, as you know, begins with the election of the new Chairman and then proceeds in cascade fashion down the slate through the Vice Chairman and the Treasurer and Secretary and so on. It was announced that Donneve had won, and a number of people pressed the polling office to give us the actual tally. After a good bit of fumbling and hesitation, the tally was given, and it showed that Donneve had won and I had lost by a margin of 2 votes.

What was more interesting was that the total number of votes cast was something like 57. And as the election continued, that same number of votes was also cast for the subsequent slots down the slate. Well. I naturally felt pretty disappointed, if not downright dejected, by the result, but as the election meeting proceeded, I had a nagging feeling that something was not quite right. So I excused myself from the meeting, and I took a look at the list where the delegates sign in, as they do for all assembly meeting. There is one column for delegates to sign in, another column for alternates voting as delegates, and another column just for alternates, who are there just as alternates. It became apparent that there were a number of people who were there as alternates and signed in as voting for delegates, but who, as far as I knew, were not empowered to vote in behalf of those delegates.

The curious thing was that there were more people voting than the total number of either delegates or empowered alternate delegates that should have been voting. There were at least two more, and that was the margin. So I was perplexed by this, but at the same time troubled, because I felt it was possible that the result was, in fact, not a fair one. I had a word with one or two of the delegates who were supporting me and told them about this. I didn't want to make a big hue and cry, but I felt that something was wrong. We had to clean this up and raise the question before the meeting ended, so we asked the polling officer to announce the number of valid proxies that had been received and so forth. This she was unwilling to do. I think it was a perfectly legitimate request to make. We weren't asking who had voted for whom, but simply how many valid votes and proxy votes had been cast [inaudible]

She refused to do this during the meeting. During the rest of the day, we continued to try to persuade both the Staff Association office and the incumbent Chairman and the polling officer to clear up this apparent inconsistency in the number of valid votes. When this wasn't done, it served to reinforce a certain amount of feeling that we had that the election had not been conducted correctly and fairly and, above all, in accordance with the Staff Association's rule.

I didn't bring these problems to light in a capricious fashion. I felt extremely bad doing it. Not only had I apparently just lost the election, but to question the result then risked making me look like the poor loser. But I felt certain that there had been something wrong and that this had to be put right, or at least investigated.

Well, I think Donneve Rae proposed bringing Bengt Sandberg in to look at it. I said I had no objection to that at all. He seemed to be a very good person. I didn't know him.

ZIEGLER: For the record, we should say that he was one of the founding members of the Staff Association, one of the three to five or six people who really moved the Staff Association forward in its formative days.

REDFERN: Yes, absolutely.

ZIEGLER: And who made significant contributions thereafter.

REDFERN: No question about it. As he had shown during the many years he had served the Association, and as he showed on this occasion, he had the interests of the Staff Association at heart above all. I think that he went about this rather awkward task very well—even though I can say that I, and some of the people who had supported me, felt at times a little impatient that he was not prepared to fully get into and come out with an exposure of the some of the things that we thought had taken place. But he handled it very smoothly, very diplomatically.

He looked at all the voting records and found no evidence of any fraud or conspiracy, nor had I ever alleged that there was. However, he did find some irregularities in terms of the procedure that had been followed and determined that there were serious enough to warrant declaring the election invalid and to warrant holding a new election as soon as possible thereafter. I would have preferred to have had at least another week or so before the new election, because a good many of the people who I thought most likely to vote for me were away on mission. They were traveling around various parts of the world, and it would be very difficult to . . .

ZIEGLER: Especially in the summertime when . . .

REDFERN: . . . get in touch with them to ask them to revalidate and send in proxy votes and so forth. So holding another election again in a matter of days was maybe a slight disadvantage. But, anyway, I agreed to it because we wanted to get the thing sorted out

and, above all, to shorten the period during which the Staff Association's credibility might be put in question among the staff at large by this invalid election.

So, the next election was held a few days later. I think it was the 24th of July, and on this occasion, the voting for Chairman came out fairly solidly in my favor, with a margin of, I think, 15 or 20 votes. This time, Bengt Sandberg, himself, conducted the elections with all sorts of safeguards and checks as to who should be there to make absolutely certain that the voting procedure was correct.

ZIEGLER: I was at that meeting as one of the delegates, and I clearly remember him conducting it in a very firm but fair and scrupulous manner, which, I think, was needed at the time.

REDFERN: I think it was, and it helped restore a sense of confidence in the procedure.

Now, as I said earlier, this was a time of extreme tension and uncertainty for me, and no doubt for the others involved, and I didn't relish it one bit. However, I think the period following the election was marked by very little recrimination. I think the wounds, if you like, healed; and the controversy, therefore, was fairly short-lived, although there may have been some sort of aftertaste left in the minds of some. I hope that I didn't do anything to create this impression, but I would not be surprised if there were some who felt that there was a bit of an "us" and "them" division in this electoral split. By that, I mean the higher level staff against the support staff, simply because it was somewhat on those lines that the voting may have divided or appeared to have divided. Of course, it's a secret vote, and I don't think that I would have been elected Chairman had a good many of the delegates who were also support staff members not decided on the second round to vote for me. But it's entirely possible that a bit of an appearance of a split or divisiveness was created.

ZIEGLER: Over the course of your term of office--which was extended, of course, by the constitutional amendment that we referred to yesterday--did you perceive any negative fallout that you could attribute to this election incident, or was it largely forgotten once your term got going?

REDFERN: No, to be honest with you, if there was any fallout along those lines, I think it dissipated or disappeared pretty quickly. Obviously, I was conscious of that possibility, and I made it my business to try to make quite clear as far as I could to all the supporters and members that there was nothing about the new Executive Committee that would make them any less concerned about support staff issues than the previous EC had been. I hope that that was borne out. As new members, we did spend a fair bit of time during our year--when we weren't taken up with other things like reorganization--trying to help and encourage the Support Staff Working Group into producing and finalizing their report. That report ultimately went to the President this year and has, I think, been very, very useful in getting a number of things done to address some specific support staff issues.

So I don't think that the election remained an issue. I think it was also notable that with only one person that I can think of—that was Bruno de Vuyst, who had been very closely associated with Donneve's EC—specifically declined to serve and offer himself for election with me. Apart from him, everybody else--and there were quite a number of people like John Vincent-Smith, for instance, who had been devoted and active members of Donneve's EC--found they were able to work with me, and I think we worked together very well.

ZIEGLER: Well, interestingly enough, I went in on your coattails, as it were, because I stood for re-election to the EC. In the first round, I was not voted in, but during the re-election that was conducted by Bengt Sandberg, I was re-elected, little knowing that it would be for 18 months.

REDFERN: Well, there you are. It just shows that, in the end, democratic processes come out right when they work according to the rules.

ZIEGLER: Are you satisfied with that? Is there anything . . .

REDFERN: Yes, you asked what lessons can be drawn. I think the difficulties over that 1986 election were due to a certain amount of laxness in the way the rules had been interpreted, and this had been, in itself, a result of a declining support for the Staff Association and a declining level of participation, as evidenced by a growing number of vacancies for delegate positions over the years. Therefore, the rules had been applied a bit loosely, so that if somebody was nominated for a delegate position after the closing date, the nomination was accepted, and if there was nobody else on the slate, the person was considered to be elected as delegate, and that sort of thing.

ZIEGLER: Simply a matter of expediency.

REDFERN: Expediency in order to get as many people in as possible. I think this episode served to underline that bending the rules does have its risks, and it's important, above all in a representative organization, that its election process take place in a way that is absolutely free of any suspicion of irregularity. Otherwise, the consequences can be very damaging. Therefore, it's important that the Association conduct these elections very carefully and appoint polling officers who are capable of assuring that.

ZIEGLER: Chris, during your term as Chairman, compensation issues did not become as contentious as they had during the previous year, although there were, in fact, two compensation questions to be considered by the board. The first involved the award of the amount set aside in May 1986 pending, it was thought, the report of the Joint Committee of Executive Directors—the Kafka Committee. And the second matter was the 1987 salary structure adjustment itself. Could you highlight some of the issues involved in these compensation adjustment exercises and the Staff Association's response to them?

REDFERN: Yes, it's certainly true that compensation didn't reach the degree of contention that it had in 1986 or, indeed, that it reached in 1988. In regard to the 1986 issue, as you have recalled, an amount had been set aside, pending release of the Kafka II report, which was to have been ready before the end of the year. Well, as we all know, it wasn't ready by the end of 1986, nor was it ready by the end of 1987.

ZIEGLER: For the record, the draft came out in August 1988.

REDFERN: Yes. And we're still not through with it, right now in January 1989. So the first thing to do was to hold the management to their promise. One of [Alden W.] Clausen's last acts before retiring in June 1986 was to make sure that—I think it was a 2 percent holdover—was paid out in November, backdated, of course, to May 1, 1986. That went through without too much difficulty. I think people actually got it in their paychecks at the end of January 1987, so there had been something like an eight month wait for it. For that reason, we kept the Tribunal case that had been launched over the 1986 adjustment going, to see whether we could get a ruling to award interest on the eight months that staff had had to wait before getting that adjustment. As you know, we didn't succeed in it.

In 1987, this was more difficult because, first of all, three years had passed since the full comparative survey had been done in 1984. And secondly, the interim comparative survey that was carried out showed that there should have been a structural increase across the board for all staff levels, on the order of 5 percent. What we got was only 3 percent. This brought to light an important difference of approach between the Staff Association and management. By management I mean Martijn Pajmans and Reg [Reginald A.] Clarke and the others in the Compensation Department. There were two separate departments.

Martijn and Reg felt, and I guess they were right in this, that the 5 percent structural increase was not going to get through the Board and was not going to get the consensus it would need even at a prior stage in the Bank's Board Compensation Committee. Similarly, all the signs were that the 5 percent would not go through the International Monetary Fund. So, therefore, Martijn was working toward trying to get a consensus around some lower figure in the Committee, and he wanted the management to propose a lower figure.

I felt strongly that for the system to have any credibility, the figure that came out of the comparator exercise should be the one that was presented to the Board, and if they felt on some grounds, political or budgetary or otherwise, that that was too much, then let's smoke them out and let them say so. We had to do some pretty quick moving on this. One afternoon I had to type out a short letter to Mr. [Barber B.] Conable myself and take it up there. The letter urged him to go to the Board with the full 5 percent structural increase that the comparators recommended. I got to see him, I think, or maybe I saw Mr. [J. William] Stanton.

I was able to persuade him that this was the right thing to do and that if any shaving of that amount was going to take place on political or other grounds, then it should be the Board who did it, without having the management of the Bank be a party to it. Apparently I got there just in time. Martijn Paijmans was not happy, because he went up two hours later with his memo and was considerably annoyed to discover that we had gotten in there first and that the President had taken the position that the system should be followed.

ZIEGLER: Did he let you know that he was annoyed?

REDFERN: Yes, he did. At that time, in the early part of 1987, I had developed good and close relations with Martijn Paijmans. It was a relationship in which we were able to speak quite freely and frankly about a number of things. He made it plain that in this case, he felt the Staff Association had not acted properly and responsibly, but I thought otherwise.

Anyway, the end result was probably the same either way, and we didn't get the 5 percent. We got only 3 percent. Well, I guess some people may have thought that getting 3 percent, plus the average 2.4 percent merit increase for those who were entitled to it, was better than nothing. But once again, it was an example of the system not having been followed and of being given entirely unconvincing explanations for the failure to adhere to the system. We were told things like, quote, "1987 is a transition year from one system to another," as if that justified not following the system that was still in place.

So we got our lawyer, Bob Wallace, working with the Compensation Working Group on filing another case before the Tribunal. It was a case that we thought would probably have been one of the clearest and strongest in terms of the facts. It was uncomplicated by many of the other factors that had been involved in previous cases, such as the von Stauffenberg case of 1984 and 1985. Anyway, we filed a case with the Tribunal seeking a judgment that, in recommending a 40 percent reduction in the indicated salary increase, the Board had far exceeded its discretionary power. That particular compensation case was, in fact, ultimately discontinued by the succeeding EC. I'm not exactly clear on what grounds, but possibly on the basis of advice—I think misleading advice—that the new EC may have received from one or the other of the lawyers.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

REDFERN: I think that it's noteworthy that compensation is clearly one of the central issues in which the Staff Association gets closely involved, yet it seems to me to be one of those issues on which we are, in fact, least equipped technically to deal with the management and the least empowered politically to have any substantive impact on the outcome. That is because the Staff Association was never and has not been in a substantial negotiating position regarding salaries. And the consultations, if you like, have been more in the nature of keeping the Staff Association and its working group informed as to the progress of conducting these various annual and interim comparator

reviews and the progress of the negotiations, which are substantially conducted between the two managements and their respective boards.

ZIEGLER: The Bank and the [International Monetary] Fund are referred to.

REDFERN: Yes, in regard to further negotiations, which go on internally both within the managements and particularly within the boards amongst the different board members whose authorities often hold widely differing views as to what constitutes appropriate levels of compensation for World Bank and Fund staff.

Regrettably, in this whole process of proposal and negotiation the Staff Association is not a very important player. I think consultation, as far as I know, has remained rather close, in one sense, between, for instance, our Compensation Working Group and its opposite numbers working in Personnel and Compensation. The relationship has often been close and cordial, and there's a willingness to share confidential material on compensation. But it may also be precisely for that reason that we're not really in a direct negotiating position on these matters.

Now, I do think that we were and are able to make a difference at the margin, at any rate, vis-à-vis the Board. And if the Staff Association makes enough of a stink so that Board members can report back to their authorities that staff morale generally or at certain levels is declining, I'm sure that that possibly does have some bearing.

ZIEGLER: How do you feel about the exercise whereby the Chairman of the Staff Association is given an audience, as it were, by the Board and comes in, instead of conducting a negotiation or dialogue, effectively makes a presentation. The President of the Bank thanks the Chairman and then dismisses him or her and that's pretty much the end of it.

REDFERN: Well, I think it's a farce. I mean it's nothing more than pure tokenism in having the Staff Association Chairman, and whoever else he's allowed to bring along, wheeled in to make a speech and wheeled out. I think, nonetheless, it's still important that the speech that you make is a good one, if only for the sake of maintaining the image and credibility of the Association with the Board. But to have any real influence, I think one has to have access to and be able to strike some chords of sympathy amongst some of the more influential Board members in advance of such a meeting.

ZIEGLER: Well, Chris, undoubtedly the subject which absorbed the greatest amount of your attention during your term as Chairman was the largest and most far reaching reorganization ever undertaken by the World Bank. I recall that there was a view that, in very general terms, reorganization had been worked out in advance and perhaps even dictated by the U.S. Treasury, especially with regard to the number of redundancies. As a result, the whole months-long exercise was a bit of a sham simply, trying to legitimize what had already been decided a priori. With the benefit of some degree of hindsight, how would you respond to this view?

REDPERN: Well, that's a good question, Chuck, and I think in some ways it's a question to which the definitive answer, certainly as far as I'm concerned, still remains a little bit uncertain. But for what it's worth, I'll be happy to share with you what thoughts I have. My memory of this was prompted by some of the papers that you kindly sent over to me in advance of this discussion.

In March, I wrote a circular, which I sent around to the delegates and alternates on March 3. I addressed this particular question at that time. I'm going to quote this just because it's evidence of what we were thinking at that time, but I may add some afterthoughts, if I may, afterwards. What we said, then, in March was the following:

The briefings that we have received have made clear the extent to which the task forces are taking their job seriously. They are grappling with some fundamental issues concerning the Bank's organization processes and the way people are managed, and they appear to have freedom to explore a wide range of options in making their recommendations for changing these things. In other words, if the whole reorganization had been planned in advance somewhere all of this effort would have had to be an extremely elaborate smokescreen. In fact, we think that only a few broad parameters were decided in advance. One, that outside perceptions required that there be some visible signs of slimming down the staff and the budget. Two, that the new Bank President needed to take control so that reporting structures at the top needed to be changed. And, three, a realization that there was a great desire from within the Bank for change to greater efficiency requiring that there be a much more serious effort to change operating procedures and management styles than has been hitherto attempted.

Well, I guess, at that point, we were giving them the benefit of the doubt, if you like, and certainly the appearances were that these task forces that Conable had set up were exploring a fairly wide range of organizational options. But, later on, I think that we became a little bit more cynical, and we began to get the impression that a lot of the options that had been considered were within certain parameters that had to be attained--for instance, a slimming down of staff by some number, and that number always seemed to come out around 600. There was a lot of confusion and uncertainty about this particular parameter of the number of people who were going to get fired. Maybe some of the reorganization planners had their sights fixed on some higher goal, because I remember some of the rumors that had gained pretty wide currency and that were leaked to us suggested figures on the order of 900 or even more than 1,000 over a space of three or four years. That would include slimming down and contracting out in the support areas, which is a proposal that I think has more or less gone by the board now.

So I think there is a fairly strong sense now in many peoples' minds that a considerable slimming down in the Bank's staff numbers and a stabilization in growth and budget was a preimposed requirement—imposed, if not formally, at any rate informally, presumably by one or more of the largest shareholders in the Bank. All the indications are that the U.S. Treasury, particularly, was pretty keen on such a reduction, even though Conable

had earlier on, in fact [inaudible] consistently denied any suggestion that this was indeed one of the goals or objectives of the reorganization.

ZIEGLER: Does my memory serve? I remember going to at least one meeting with him collectively as a member of the Staff Association Executive Committee and hearing Conable saying that it was his reorganization. I think he was really quite straightforward about making the point that the reorganization stemmed from him.

REDFERN: Well, yes. I think his position on that varied a little bit according to the audience he was talking to, but he certainly, on some occasions earlier on was ready to take full responsibility, credit and blame for the reorganization. Later on, when criticism of the reorganization became somewhat more general and had spread outside the institution, I think there were occasions on which he was perhaps inclined to have attributed the responsibility for some of the things that seemed to have gone less than perfectly to the Bank's managers down the line. I think he even may have said this on one occasion to our Delegate Assembly.

But what I think is perhaps more fundamentally important about the reorganization than the question of whether there was a specific target for downsizing the Bank, is the larger concern that the objectives of this reorganization do not appear to have been adequately laid out and specified in advance in a way that could actually have guided a review of the Bank's internal organization and operational processes.

ZIEGLER: Now, let's make sure that this is clear. When you were referring to this specification in advance, you were referring to the work of the task forces that were set up to study a proposed reorganization of the Bank and not to some exogenous, if you will, imposition of objectives by, for instance, the U.S. Treasury or the British Treasury or whatever.

REDFERN: What I mean is that the function given to the Steering Committee and to the task forces that worked for it was not sufficiently clear in terms of either developing a diagnosis of what it was wrong with the World Bank as it was or providing prescriptions for the ways in which the reorganization should address these things that were wrong or how the work of the World Bank in the 1990s was going to be different from what it had been in the previous 15 years.

ZIEGLER: But to sum up the basis of this particular question, while there may have been some pressures from some of the larger shareholders, is it fair to say, then, that your view would be that there weren't any specific targets laid out in advance but rather simply some general goals desired by some of the major shareholders? For instance, there should be some slimming down of staff and there should be some changes of reporting structures and things like that, but not that you will cut X number of staff, for instance?

REDFERN: No, I don't think the actual details of the reorganization had been worked out in advance, in any sense. That seemed pretty clear to me because of the fact, for instance, that the Steering Committee—even as the deadline for submission of its report

to the President drew near—was still very much grappling with widely diverging formulae for how to reorganize such things as the Bank's operations. And I believe this sort of internal debate was going on right up to the last minute, and, indeed, quite a few changes were made even after Conable had seen a first draft of the final report. I think they held their final meeting on March 30, and it was only at that point that they got a fix on some of the things that were included in their recommendations. And even subsequent to that, there were quite a number of things that still needed to be clarified. For instance, what was the scope and extent of the reorganization? Which and how many parts of the Bank were actually included within the net? IFC [International Finance Corporation] was not going to be in it. Well, IFC remained out of it. But EDI [Economic Development Institute] and OED [Operations Evaluation Department] were going to be excluded. Then ultimately they came in. A whole lot of things were still unclear in early April and, indeed, later than that in some cases.

So I don't think anybody can suggest that this whole thing had all been worked out in detail. But what is equally true is that some of the parameters, like the impact on the budget and the numbers of the staff, were pretty much constrained in advance by the sentiments of the larger shareholders. But what I suspect is that none of them had ever made a terribly clear analysis of what it was that they felt that the Bank was doing less well than it could do or in what areas was it operating wastefully or with excess staffing. In short, there had not been any complete and serious consideration of where this reorganization was supposed to take the Bank into the future. And, of course, given the time constraints that were imposed upon the Steering Committee and task forces, it was virtually impossible for them to have conducted such a study and obtained the necessary consensus for it. They had about four months. So, I think, that was one of the major faults of the reorganization. The whole exercise was carried out much too hastily. But, as I said, there are a lot of unanswered questions about all this, and one doesn't know just how pressing some of the outside pressures were on Conable to get this thing done.

ZIEGLER: What were some of the measures taken by the Staff Association in response to the challenges posed by the reorganization?

REDFERN: I'm going back now to both the early months of my Chairmanship and our Executive Committee, which also coincided with the early months of Mr. Conable's tenure as Bank President. During this time, as you remember because you were on the Committee, we spent some time thinking about what the major objectives were that we hoped to achieve during our term of office. And as I remember, they were three-fold. The first one was to help the Bank bring about a process of internal change that we felt was very much overdue. Our discussions on the paper that had been produced by the April 1 working group were . . .

ZIEGLER: Which was in 1985 under Damian von Stauffenberg?

REDFERN: Yes, that was something that von Stauffenberg had started, and that work had continued through the following year, but nothing really much had come of it. They produced this short paper that set out in a rather appealing and persuasive way some of

the things that were wrong with the Bank. In particular, the paper explored the notion of the dual realities—the “real world” outside with which we interfaced when we went on mission, and the different, unreal and artificial world of bureaucracy, clearances and meetings and so forth that we faced in our work inside the Bank. So this was one of the three major areas.

The second was being able to defend and to try to improve the conditions of employment—benefits, salaries and so forth for the staff. And the third one was to try to make a big effort to strengthen the Staff Association itself as an organization and regain some of the staff support that it had apparently been losing over the last few years. If you remember, by mid-1986 less than 55 percent of the staff were active or paid up members.

So our initial position was one of support of change in the Bank. I remember David Delmonte and I went to the first meeting that we had with Conable in September of 1986 and talked to him about whether he had any plans for change in the Bank, being it a change in management, in organization or whatever. We were trying to convey to him our sense that many staff would be supportive of internal change, if it were planned and worked out in the right way. I think that was the message that we got over fairly clearly. But, at any rate, whether we did or didn't, it's of interest because it shows that we started off our term being basically pro change and supportive of some sort of exercise that would lead to reorganization. Not that we were looking for cuts in jobs, heaven forbid, but that, somehow, some things needed to be done differently.

ZIEGLER: The idea was that the Bank could conduct its internal processes even more efficiently, perhaps.

REDFERN: Yes, and that we needed to be more in tune with the realities of some of the countries we worked with. Maybe we were a bit innocent and naive in the way that we addressed this, but at any rate, we were not alone in our feeling that some things needed to be done differently.

Where was I? You had asked what some of the measures were that we took.

So whether or not he listened to what we had to say, Mr. Conable announced toward the end of 1986 that he was going to hire these consultants who nobody had ever heard of before—Cressock, McCormack and something or other, Padget, CMP--to study how the Bank worked and how it should be fixed up. And then he announced his Steering Committee and task forces. Well, since we had already been to him and shown that the Staff Association was prepared to be a constructive partner in such a study, we were disappointed that he had not reached out to invite participation in any of these task forces either from the Staff Association itself or more broadly from the staff. And, indeed, it was clear that the composition of the Steering Committee and the task forces was very narrowly drawn from a modest or fairly narrow segment of the middle management of the Bank. And so, once again, we wrote to him, because we had already requested a chance to be on this and had had no reply. We persisted once more, but again we got

turned down. I felt that this study could not be allowed to proceed, with the staff and the Staff Association just left completely in the dark—since, if you remember, we had decided this was one of our important objectives, and I think this had been started in the von Stauffenberg period. One of the reasons he had set up his April 1 group was to try to establish that the Staff Association had a legitimate interest in, at the very least, being consulted on issues were not simply restricted to the bread-and-butter terms and conditions of employment issues, personnel and compensation. The goal was to establish that the Staff Association had an equally legitimate interest in discussing and being consulted on other things that affected more broadly the way in which people went about their work. And that obviously includes, for one thing, how they are managed and how they are organized.

So the Staff Association's response to its being left out was to set up our own Staff Association task force on the reorganization.

ZIEGLER: The acronym was SABRE, as I remember.

REDFERN: That's right, yes, SABRE for Staff Association Bank Reorganization Task Force. I don't remember whether we called it task force or working group. Anyway, the EC put quite a lot of effort into figuring out who should be on this, how it should work and what its function should be. I think we were quite successful in getting a very well staffed and quite impressive group of people together who were able, within the limits imposed by their access to information, to do some good work. That ultimately stood us in good stead when we got to a point of actually trying to negotiate something with management. But that's jumping ahead.

For instance, we brought in Warren Baum, a retired Vice President for Operations Policy, Jim [James B.] Hendry, who'd been the Ombudsman and Assistant Director of Operations in East Africa, and a very widely drawn collection of people from throughout the Bank and from all levels. This is one of the great things about this group--you had people who were or at any rate had been vice presidents in the Bank in the same group as secretaries and people involved in plant maintenance. Everybody pretty quickly settled down and felt able to make their input on equal terms. Getting this group together was one of the most satisfying and heartening experiences I had as Chairman. It wasn't easy getting straight exactly what it was they were going to do, because it we were left out in the cold by the official task forces and Steering Committee, then were we just going to talk to ourselves in a vacuum and come up with an alternative reorganization plan, or what? We decided that wouldn't be terribly useful and that we should seek to get regular and frequent and full briefings from Kim [Edward V.K.] Jaycox and his Steering Committee and task force people.

ZIEGLER: Jaycox being the head of . . .

REDFERN: The Chairman of the official Bank Reorganization Steering Committee. We needed to get informed, so we would be able to make substantive input into the work of those official task forces and so that this SABRE group would be able to advise the

Executive Committee and Delegate Assembly of the Association on what positions it might want to take, vis-à-vis the Bank management, on the reorganization.

I think to a certain extent we managed to do job number one because we got, initially, quite a positive response from the management. I guess they had little option because we publicized our work widely throughout the Bank. We set up this SABRE group, and it had a fairly credible looking list of characters on board. It would have been politically inept for the management to have completely ignored it. Kim Jaycox, therefore, was quite responsive to having meetings, which, I think, we had at least once a week in those early days.

ZIEGLER: I remember he also came to address the Delegate Assembly.

REDFERN: He came to the Delegate Assembly at least twice, and I remember being struck by how open and outspoken he was with us in the Delegate Assembly as well as with the SABRE group. In fact, he was more outspoken in some ways with the delegates than he was in the SABRE group about what they were trying to achieve. I think he was quite canny in eliciting quite a bit of support, and positively, amongst our people at that time for what this reorganization was going to go for and also in allaying, for the time being, some of the fears that already, at that early stage, people may have had about job security. He was an engaging and persuasive communicator. At a personal level I found him open, direct, and willing to listen. One of the most attractive things about him was his willingness to spend time with us and listen to what we had to say. He was very much the antithesis of the old-style Bank manager who generally had very little time for the views of anybody who was hierarchically lower down the scale than he was. Kim was the opposite of that. So, while it was a little frosty at first and it remained cautious, at one level, a reasonably friendly relationship developed between the SABRE group and Kim and some of his colleagues. But it was noticeable that his task force people were pretty careful not to admit us into what they clearly considered their internal discussions about the different options they were considering within their different areas.

ZIEGLER: Chris, let me just ask you to stick your neck out for a moment. Was it your perception that Jaycox believed in the reorganization? In other words, was he just doing what he had to do, or was he saying, “Hey, we really do have to have a reorganization. I’m foursquare behind it.” What came through to you in your discussions with him?

REDFERN: Well, one had the strong impression that he did believe in it. After all, as we were saying earlier, I think that the thing wasn’t mapped out in advance so that I think he did have a fair bit of freedom of maneuver to shape the thing in the way he wanted, and I don’t believe that he was putting all this on. I think he believed, and I’m sure he does still believe, that the reorganization was a good thing. I’ve never had the chance to talk with him since it all happened, but my guess is that he would probably feel that the thing didn’t work out as well as it might have because other people and other things got in the way or because some things weren’t prepared the way that he would have liked. But, at any rate, he was given the responsibility for planning this thing. And, I think he was genuine in wanting to make changes and for some of the same reasons that we did.

And I don't think that he was just inventing all this talk about a new culture. If you remember, he made considerable play in his talks with the Delegate Assembly about the new style management. He was pretty openly critical of the over centralization of decision making and power in operations, and he practically criticized Ernie [Ernest] Stern by name, so I guess he was sticking his neck out pretty far. So I think that if he didn't believe in it before he started, he sure believed in it pretty strongly while he was [unclear] that reorganization was needed and, I think, in some ways, he would have wanted to have gone much further. Unfortunately we or any others weren't able to prevent the cuts in jobs from going as far as they ultimately did. One of the areas where we had some quite lengthy talks with Kim Jaycox later on was around the extent to which there was what they euphemistically called "skills mix mismatch" among the Bank's staff. I think that we helped persuade him that this was a case where perceptions might have been greatly exaggerated, and that it wouldn't do anybody or the Bank any good to go for surgery to the extent one suspected he might have liked.

ZIEGLER: Were there any other measures taken by the Staff Association that you'd like to mention besides the SABRE Task Force?

REDFERN: We set up the SABRE, and we can come back to that a little more if you like, but we also had an implementation working group because we quickly became aware that implementation issues would very soon be of central importance to the staff and to the Staff Association. We kept the SABRE group largely concentrated on keeping track of and discussing the design issues, and we had a separate and parallel implementation working group, which also reported to the EC, that started thinking ahead and working particularly with Personnel and Bill [William J.] Cosgrove's task force on the implementation issues. These concerned, of course, the staff selection process, arrangements for redeployment and retraining, and last, but not least, the financial arrangements that would be made for staff who found themselves without a job in the new Bank. A lot of really first class work was done in this group on all three of those aspects.

For instance, take the question of the financial packages. I think that we were able to make quite a difference in the discussions we had with Personnel. When I say personnel, I can never quite remember whether it was the Cosgrove task force or whether it was the Personnel Administration that was responsible for handling this, because it wasn't clear at the time. Martijn Paijmans and Ian Hume were responsible for the formulation of the financial arrangements from the management side. I think that we were able to make quite a substantial input on those arrangements.

ZIEGLER: To augment and to make them better.

REDFERN: To make them better, exactly, and, to help bring our weight in, through, for instance, the Board Committee on Compensation that had to review these packages before they went to the Board.

But secondly, and I think just as important if not more importantly, we made substantial inroads on the side of trying to inject more freedom of choice for staff in the job selection arrangements and in trying to inject a much greater degree of voluntarism.

ZIEGLER: I remember very lengthy discussions of those very issues in the Executive Committee with Bob [Robert B.] Myers and [Richard] Ian Knapp taking the lead, I think, largely.

REDFERN: Yes. Well, actually, if we hadn't been pushing for it, I doubt whether there would have been a voluntary exit package at all. But, in retrospect, there's no question we were far from getting all we wanted, because the notion of offering people the opportunity to have themselves made redundant and get appropriate compensation on a voluntary basis was really never entirely bought by the management. It was grudgingly accepted, and we got a much greater degree of support from some members of the Board. So as usually happens in such cases, there was a compromise and in this event, it was not a particularly happy compromise.

I guess one could debate at length what difference we made. But there's no question in my mind that we did make a substantial difference. What, however, disappoints me, in a way, most of all was the fact that we got very close to making a much greater difference than we actually did and that when we did not succeed, staff . . .

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

REDFERN: . . . quote, unquote, were "involuntarily selected out."

And the third major measure that we took, Chuck, was that we launched this Tribunal case, this class action to challenge the legality of the staff Rule 5.08, was it?

ZIEGLER: 5.09.

REDFERN: 5.09. Which was rushed out by the management to legalize what they had already begun to do.

ZIEGLER: Almost ex post facto, in a way.

REDFERN: It was certainly ex post some of the earlier redundancies. And as you know, our efforts on that side became in a way the symbol, the focus, of much of our antagonism and disappointment with the way in which the reorganization was conducted and with the breakdown in consultation that had taken place. This time window ran out.

ZIEGLER: Speaking of precisely that, I can well remember coming to the Staff Association office one day in May of 1987. I believe that the consultation rule was just coming out. You were on the phone, and you were, to say the least, put out because Mr.

[Willi A.] Wapenhans had given us less than 24 hours to respond to something fairly complex. Does my memory serve on that?

REDFERN: Yes, you're right. It was much less than 24 hours. It was like two and a half hours because we got a paper, a version of this staff rule at 10:30 in the morning.

ZIEGLER: And I came in just shortly after that.

REDFERN: And we were given until one o'clock to comment, and at that time it was going to the printer. Well, this was the final breakdown of consultations and something for which we were not in any sense to blame. If you like, I can recount to you briefly what happened over there.

ZIEGLER: Okay, yes, regarding the staff rule. I do want to get to one other little thing about the staff rule later on, but yes, do that. And also you might just want to follow up. You've already alluded to it, but I was going to ask your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the degree of consultation between the Staff Association, on the one hand, and Board and management, on the other, during the reorganization process. Let's not leave the Board out of this either, because, of course, the Board ultimately had to approve whatever arrangements were made. So perhaps start with this anecdote, if you will, on the staff rule and then you can follow along with consultation.

REDFERN: Let me do it the other way around and address them chronologically because, in a way, it's a case of things turning from good to bad as this reorganization drama unfolded.

ZIEGLER: Drama? Farce?

REDFERN: Well, I think it was more serious than a farce. I remember that it started off when our term of office began. It began almost as soon as we were in place, right after the summer holidays, with a round of meetings of the various personnel departments. We followed these up with regular monthly meetings with Personnel, with Compensation and GSD [General Services Department] and so forth. I was struck by how open the various little branches of the Personnel Administration complex were. I was relatively unfamiliar with many of these people, but they seemed to be very willing to discuss with us and bring us along with their plans and so forth. So our relations and consultation arrangements, both in spirit and in substance, started off pretty satisfactorily. On our side we had a good number of people, different working groups willing and able to put in their time for these meetings, so we had a good deal of interesting and useful interchange. Indeed, even in the early stages of the reorganization during this planning period, as I was saying, we had some quite useful meetings.

But when it came to the crunch, they were no substitute for the kind of real consultation that I think the Staff Association is entitled to expect. That consultation is a two-way street, but we had shown ourselves to be more than willing to put in the time and, in other ways, to consult constructively. I don't think that there was anybody on management's

side who would disagree with that. But this, in a way, added later to the sense of disappointment we felt when the consultation process broke down. I'm talking still about consultation with management.

What happened was that the preparations on the management side for the implementation of this whole reorganization staff selection process were lagging. They weren't ready in anything like an acceptable form at the time when Conable was ready to go ahead, so that they simply ran out of time to continue or complete the discussions and consultations with us on the implementation arrangements—particularly on the staff selection and redeployment parts and on the quasi-legal issues. And surrounding issues had only really just begun to be discussed before all this had to be set in concrete.

So the arrangements for discussing this rule were just abruptly truncated. I remember that on a Thursday we had a long three hour meeting on the draft rule, which was, as far as I remember, the first discussion we had of it. A whole number of points were put forth and left and agreed as requiring further discussion on a day early in the following week. And then, the following Monday or Tuesday, we were sent a revised version of this rule that barely took into account our comments on some of the most important issues.

ZIEGLER: And which management had indicated at least a willingness to discuss further, presumably.

REDFERN: Quite clearly. It was quite clearly recorded at the end of that three-hour meeting, the first one that we had on the Thursday, that there was going to be further discussion. And then we were just sent this final version of the thing at 10:30 a.m. and told we had until one o'clock. That was the point at which you remember coming in and finding me hastily summoning meetings. I got together comments and sent them off to Mr. Wapenhans by one o'clock and told him there was no way that we could agree to this rule.

ZIEGLER: Is it fair to say that it wasn't so much bad faith on the part of management as just pressures from even higher up, i.e., Conable, to get things moving as expeditiously as possible?

REDFERN: Well, I've no way of knowing what precisely were the constraints and pressures under which Mr. Wapenhans was operating, but it may well be that time had just run out and that they had to get this rule out. I don't think it was shown to the Board. It was just mentioned to the Board, I think, by the General Counsel, Mr. [Ibrahim F.I.] Shihata. Yes, I think it was just that they ran out of time, and so the thing that had to give way was the consultation process. There hadn't been enough time allowed. And, as it turned out, this wasn't the only occasion on which there was an abrupt change of face. We had been told, for instance, that we were going to be given the weekend to give comments on the implementation Blue Book before it was finalized, only to find out that the thing was sent immediately to the printers and came out in early June full of mistakes that we could at least have helped them clean up.

ZIEGLER: This Blue Book, just for the record, set forth the various procedures by which the reorganization was to be implemented, especially in terms, I think, of personnel changes.

REDFERN: That's right. And, once again, this thing came out without any consultation taking place, because we had only, as I said, seen this thing late one Friday evening, if I recall rightly, when we thought we'd received agreement to at least have the weekend to study it. And the fact that this thing had only come out in June, when Round 1 of the reorganization was already beginning in some parts of the Bank, was, again, further evidence that there hadn't been enough time to properly plan out this operation on the scale to which they ultimately wanted to extend it.

So this consultation just didn't work out. This lack of consultation was one of the major focuses of our case before the Tribunal because, while it might have been too late to do much substantially to alter the outcome of the reorganization, we did at least want to get some declaration from the Tribunal that the staff rules requiring consultation were important and hadn't been fully observed in this case. In that way, we hoped to try to get reinforcement for the consultation rules and commitment to them for the future.

ZIEGLER: You've responded to the question about your degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the degree of consultation with management, but do you have any comments on the consultation vis-à-vis the Board and the Staff Association?

REDFERN: Yes, that's another interesting aspect. Now, as you know, the staff rule really essentially covers consultations between the Staff Association and the Bank's management. There are no prescribed formulae or procedures for consultations between the Staff Association and the Board except the following: that the Staff Association has the right to make its views known on any matter that goes to the Board. And this is generally followed. This is generally done by allowing the Staff Association Chairman or somebody to come in and make a formal presentation.

Well, I think this doesn't amount to very much, but it's certainly better than nothing. But what is much more important is being able to establish frequent access to and contact with the various Executive Directors and their staffs on a one-to-one basis and in a situation of confidence. Executive Directors are not prone to speaking freely in a very large group about the positions that they or their authorities are going to take, and they expect confidences to be maintained. But once we established that sort of relationship, I found it enabled us to get our views across. At the same time, many of the Board members were extremely anxious to know what the Staff Association thought about some of the reorganization proposals that were being sent up to them.

ZIEGLER: So they were keen to know.

REDFERN: Oh, they were very keen to know, and they were very keen to have the benefit of the kind of analysis and alternative ideas that, for instance, our implementation working group and the SABRE Task Force had come up with. They were extremely keen

to know because, I guess, they had to report back to their authorities, and we had a much better structure set up for examining and discussing these proposals than I guess many of the E.D.'s offices had. Obviously, too, we were directly or closely in touch with a much wider number of staff and with what was going on once the implementation process started. They actually sought our views.

What was really interesting was the fact that considerable differences emerged among the Board members as the crucial May 19 Board meeting approached when, after one or two postponements, the Board was due to consider the management's reorganization proposals that required Board approval. And those were to get a budget for the staff redundancy packages as well as for other costs of the reorganization. And, therefore, while the implementation proposals themselves, i.e., the staff selection procedures were not formally subject to Board approval, the Board implicitly could comment on them and discuss them in considering budgetary requirements, which were very substantial.

As this meeting approached, it was clear there was a very wide divergence of views among some of the Board members. At the one extreme, the U.S. felt that the budgetary costs of the proposals were way too high and that, conversely, they would perhaps like to see inclusion of a somewhat greater number of skills mix, or what later came to be known as "efficiency gained" staff reductions. At the other end were principally some of the European Part 1 countries who felt completely unconvinced by the proposals and felt extremely out of tune with many of the underlying ideas that appeared to support them. They felt that much more emphasis should be given to staff retraining, that much greater emphasis should be given to permanency, security of employment within the Bank as a sort of international civil service and that the justification for the large number of cuts was absolutely unconvincing. If I remember, the proposal identified something like 260 structural redundancies, later corrected after taking account of the double counting, to 220, as well as about 400 or so, 380, other redundancies, the skills mix and efficiencies. At any rate, without going back over all the figures, they seemed to come to around 600, but with a large component of involuntary redundancies and very little provision for retraining and internal redeployment of displaced people. It appeared to me that there was a clear opportunity for proposing an alternative implementation plan that would take account of the objections both of the United States, on the one hand—which was concerned about skills mix and the budgetary costs of the reorganization—and the concerns the Europeans, along with some of the Part 2 countries, on the other hand, who, for differing reasons, were unhappy with the management proposal.

Following an Executive Committee meeting that we had on the Thursday, I remember scratching out on a piece of paper a few ideas about how this voluntary approach could be done, which would, in fact, rule out any involuntary redundancies beyond that point because there already had been a few involuntary redundancies at a very senior level. We're talking about mid-May at this point. Some of the Vice Presidents had already been fired, like David Knox. From that point on, they could say that this was going to be done entirely on a voluntary basis, for which the remuneration would be not the glossy Package B but the still pretty reasonable Package A; that more of the budget would be given to retraining; that a much better system of setting objectives for peoples' jobs and

evaluation of performance would be worked out and implemented; that a greater percentage of the Bank's budget would be given to training and retraining to take care of the United States' perceptions about skills mismatch and dead wood and so forth; and that, in short, one should accept the possible risks that a few, quote, "good people" would volunteer to leave the Bank and would go.

ZIEGLER: Was that not one of the big concerns? I remember hearing frequently that perhaps the biggest stumbling block to a purely voluntary approach was that the good people would leave.

REDFERN: That's right. That's right. This was the argument that they always gave, that they were afraid that the good people would leave. And yet, paradoxically, they still offered this package deal that was so attractive that lots of good people did, in effect, find ways to get themselves nonselected. And that led to one of the worst perversions, if you like, of the whole exercise, which was that it appeared that people higher up who got the first bite, first crack at the trough got a better chance of getting themselves nonselected and therefore of getting the Package B than the lower-level people down the line. And I think that was one of the worst things about it.

I scratched out these few ideas as this May 19 meeting approached. I think it was on the Friday before. I put them to Jaycox, and it didn't take very long before Kim Jaycox was persuaded. Now, he was prepared to go ahead and recommend this 100 percent voluntary approach from that point on, because I think he could see that the arrangements for handling it, otherwise, were going to be pretty troublesome for the staff and very damaging for staff morale. And I don't think he felt comfortable with these arrangements. He was prepared to buy the risks of quite a number of, quote, "good people" going, provided--and he insisted that the Bank retain an ultimate right of refusal for really essential people who would not be allowed to go--but he was prepared to buy this voluntary approach.

I remember getting a call midway through the afternoon on Friday before the weekend preceding the crucial Board meeting. I was asked if I could put down these thoughts and these ideas in one paragraph so they could be given to Willi Wapenhans. I did, and as far as I know, Kim Jaycox was able to get Wapenhans to agree to those suggestions, and they, in turn, went to see the President to see if he would buy this different approach. But he was apparently not willing to change his course at that point.

ZIEGLER: So it went that high up before it finally came down.

REDFERN: Yes. Now, this was, I think, the closest that we got to really turning this thing around. I think that had we—and I should add that, at this time, I was talking to quite a number of the E.D.s, particularly some of the European ones but others, too, whose thoughts seemed to be, independently, converging on some alternative solution along these lines. And I'm pretty sure that this approach, of going ahead with the voluntary but somewhat less expensive packages, would have received Board approval.

And I also believe that had that been done, the effect on the Bank staff and on staff morale would have been far, far less traumatic than it was.

ZIEGLER: Is it fair to conclude that you were, in a sense, more satisfied with the degree of consultation with the Board than you were with the degree of consultation with at least certain portions of the management?

REDFERN: Yes, because at that time, the kind of relationship I had with a number of E.D.s was a lot closer than with the management because the management had started off professing close consultation, but that process had broken down. This had ultimately broken down over the rule. But one still had access to and a good working relationship both with Conable, or the people in his office like Bill Stanton, and with Jaycox and with Cosgrove, too, who was primarily concerned with these implementation arrangements but working, too, with Kim Jaycox. So Jaycox was the more important player on this than Cosgrove. Jaycox, rather than Bill, was the person with whom one thought one could at least talk with about doing deals. But with the Board, one had pretty good access and openness with many of them.

ZIEGLER: Going on a little bit with the reorganization, those of us who lived through it remember a constant stream of administrative circulars signed by Bill Cosgrove-- administrative circulars designed to explain or to clarify the initial Blue Book that we had talked about earlier. To me, at any rate, these circulars were somewhat of a reflection of the fact that perhaps that the procedures had not been thought through to the degree that perhaps they should have. Although I'd be willing to say that in such a complicated institution as this, you couldn't possibly think of every single contingency straight out. But we must have gotten maybe 20 or so of these.

REDFERN: You're absolutely right, and the fact that so many of these FYIs, or whatever they were, had to be issued to correct or clarify various things that weren't right or weren't clear in the Blue Book precisely goes to show there hadn't been time to work all these things out. Now, I don't know exactly all the difficulties or ambiguities in who was reporting to whom over on the management side. I think there were some. But, anyway, the end result was that the implementation arrangements hadn't been fully worked out.

You'll recall, as well, that at a fairly late stage, some of us from the implementation working group had an early morning meeting with Bill Cosgrove and a few of his people. When we'd gone to comment, we were aghast at some of the things that still hadn't been worked out in the implementation arrangements. Bill was willing to admit that, and he asked for and we offered help in working collaboratively to fix them up. In fact, what we did was to lend Ian Knapp to Personnel. He, of course, was one of our most active people and one who had the most expertise on a lot of these things. We seconded him from our working group, and he worked with the official working group for a while. But by that stage, it was already pretty late. It was all very confused and very difficult.

At an individual level, I think that we, on our side, and there were people on the management side, too, who were still struggling to grope for ways to try to make this thing work better. But once some of those critical decisions had already been made—there was going to be a top-down selecting-in process and that there was going to be involuntary redundancy with Round 1 and Round 2 for those who were left out of this game of musical chairs--then there wasn't too much that one could do to try to make that either a fair or transparent or painless process.

[End of Session 2]

Session 3
January 9, 1989

[Continue Tape 2, Side A]

ZIEGLER: Today is January 9, 1989. My name is Chuck Ziegler, and I have with me here at the headquarters of the World Bank Mr. Christopher Redfern. We are about to start the third session of Mr. Redfern's contribution to the history of the Staff Association.

Chris, in our last session, we were discussing the reorganization of 1987. Given hindsight, in retrospect, what could the Staff Association have done better in responding to the challenges posed by the reorganization?

REDFERN: That's a good question, Chuck, and I think it's always worth looking back on our performance to see where we could have done better. I think, by and large, we did pretty well, because I think we addressed the things that were important at the time that we needed to. We didn't let much time go by before we reacted to the setting up of the Steering Committee and we set up our SABRE group. We set up a special group to look at the problems that we knew were bound to arise on implementation. And as far as helping out individual staff members was concerned, you will remember that we set up our own advisory and consultation service staffed by a whole panel of volunteers, so that individuals who were unsure where they stood or who wanted clarification of their rights and of what the selection procedures were supposed to be, could come and get informal advice from the Staff Association before they went to some official management source of information.

I guess we could have, perhaps, provided a fuller service had we had a greater number of volunteers, but I think, by and large, the contribution that they made was recognized as a useful one. And I think, too, that the position we took of being initially supportive and participatory stood us in good stead when, our worst fears, if you like, came to be realized about the dangers and inequities of the selection process. When we took a much more hostile stance, I think that that also worked in our favor because it established a greater credibility as well as information base for the Staff Association to work with.

There's no question, too, that in a reorganization situation like that, there was no way that the Association could have pleased all its members all the time. And I'm certain that we didn't and that there were probably people at both ends--some who thought we were being too combative, for instance, in the legal case, and others who wanted the Staff Association to have been much more militant and hostile. I remember receiving letters and notes from some staff members, named and anonymous as well, who wanted us, for instance, to tell the meeting in Venice, of the heads of state of the major nine Western countries, that the World Bank was about to go down the tubes and to ask Mr. [Ronald] Reagan or Mrs. [Margaret] Thatcher to intervene to stop this from happening. Others wanted us to parade up and down outside of the Annual Meeting at the Sheraton in September of 1988 to picket the Annual Meetings and tell the governors and the assembled world bankers that the World Bank was being sold down the tubes, as well. I

Christopher Redfern
January 5, 1989 – Final Edited

don't think any of us thought either of these measures was likely to have been very productive.

I only wish, as I said during our last session, that we had been able to convince Mr. Conable and the management to have proceeded with this voluntary basis for carrying out the reorganization. We did come very close to succeeding, which always leaves one with the thought, well, if we'd made an extra 10 percent of effort, would that have been enough to have won the day? We'll never know. I doubt it. But it was frustrating to have gotten that close to success with what would have been a very, very major change in the way in which reorganization was carried out. To have gotten that close but then, finally not to have succeeded, was frustrating, and, obviously, I wish we could have succeeded with that.

ZIEGLER: Was there a particular point at which the balance tilted on that particular issue? I'm not sure we covered that exactly in the last session. I want to make sure we get that on tape.

REDFERN: Well, you remember I was talking about how Jaycox and Wapenhans wanted to know more about our ideas for conducting this on essentially an entirely voluntary, rather than involuntary, basis.

ZIEGLER: Yes. And you had written those ideas up.

REDFERN: Yes, all of this was happening in a very short time frame in a few days running up to the crucial Board meeting so that the positions and so forth were changing all the time and things were happening very quickly. I don't think we could have done better, really, than we did. We had prepared our positions, prepared our ground, had given papers to Jaycox and the Steering Committee, had endless meetings discussing them and had made a lot of progress in getting marginal incremental improvements made. But on that big question, we weren't quite able to push them over the top of the hill.

ZIEGLER: Inevitably, Chris, organizations must reorganize from time to time in response to changes in their external and internal environments. When the Bank again reorganizes some 10 or 20 years from now, what broad lessons learned during the past exercise could be applied by the Staff Association in its responses to it?

REDFERN: Well, the first thing I'd say is that I certainly hope that the Bank itself learned some lessons from the 1987 reorganization, and that the next time that it attempts to reorganize the Bank, that it doesn't make the same mistakes that I think were made last year. The main ones were, first, the failure to identify clearly enough up front what the specific things were that were wrong that the reorganization was intended to address. The second mistake was not canvassing a wide enough section of opinion amongst the Bank managers and staff before working out the reorganization plan. The third lesson would be to avoid introducing this crazy cascade system.

ZIEGLER: Some of us called it an avalanche.

REDFERN: The avalanche system which, quite simply, allowed people to hire the people they liked and not to hire the people they didn't like.

ZIEGLER: On a not necessarily objective basis.

REDFERN: On a not necessarily objective basis. You could say that. I think there's one further thing, too, which is related to getting straight in advance what the things are you want to fix. And an obvious corollary of that is in doing a successful reorganization, don't try to fix everything all at once, but pick out the things that are the most important, the most in need of fixing, and do the most important things.

But for the Staff Association, well, I guess it's important that future Staff Association Chairmen are able to read about the experiences we had last year, because it was clearly a much more profound and painful and difficult reorganization than the one conducted in 1972-1973.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

REDFERN: Other lessons that we learned during the last exercise . . . We talked about consultation in our last session, but I think, clearly a major lesson, both for the Staff Association and the management, would be how important it is that—on something that affects Bank staff as vitally as reorganization does—there be full and genuine consultation on that all the way through and before it's set in motion. I think there were many people on the management side who started off with good intentions as far as that was concerned, but the timetable did not permit those consultations to be carried through; if they had been, I think it would have been better for everybody.

ZIEGLER: Well, we've talked a good bit about the external environment of the Staff Association. I'm going to bring us back again to the internal workings of the Staff Association. How would you characterize the working relationships within the Executive Committee during your term as Chairman? And if you like, perhaps contrast it to the previous year's Executive Committee on which you served for at least part of the term.

REDFERN: I think the working relationships that we had within our EC, Chuck, were excellent. As you know, we used to meet regularly, religiously, at least twice a week and sometimes more often than that when the reorganization got to be very busy. I can honestly say that I really looked forward to these meetings. Now, it's not often that one can say that meetings are something one looks forward to. I found being Chairman in a way is quite a lonely position, and I think a Chairman draws much strength and inspiration from these regular meetings with colleagues on the Executive Committee, whom you get to know well. I think that a good sense of teamwork and camaraderie was fostered within our EC. And the great thing was that we seemed to be able to, by and large, combine that with the ability to have a pretty free discussion around all those issues that came up. Reorganization was not the only one. You remember compensation, the

pension fund and so forth. We had pretty free discussion around these subjects and, still, we were able to reach a conclusion, a consensus. Sometimes our meetings did go on a bit, and I know this must have been difficult, but there really was no way that you can really have that sense of discussion and interplay and kicking issues around on the kind of agendas that we often had to deal with, in just one hour.

ZIEGLER: More typically the meetings, as I recall, lasted an hour and a half to two hours.

REDFERN: I think they were generally closer to two hours, and I honestly don't see how an Executive Committee can really get by on just one-hour meetings, unless it's a sort of rubber stamp, saying nothing but "aye" or "nay" down the line, down the agenda.

I used to spend a reasonable amount of time preparing the agenda, not that it was always too terribly long. We didn't always have lots of items, but I put quite a bit of thought into trying to separate the important and interesting from the purely routine stuff, which we often handled just on the nod. What I particularly appreciated, too, were two things: how quickly we set the problems of the 1986 election behind us and, secondly, how we were able to do our business in a relatively informal, relaxed fashion. We didn't rely too much on procedures and voting and so forth.

In fact, I recall really only one occasion during the whole 18 months when we actually had to take a vote in the Executive Committee. That was on an issue on which there were two points of view, and I don't think further discussion would have gone one way or the other. I think we made the right decision, saying we can't agree on this and it's something that the Delegate Assembly, in any case, should decide. That was the question of whether or not we should collect additional dues from the membership in April of 1987, a time when we expected to have substantial additional expenditures, legal and so forth, arising from the reorganization. That did turn out to be the case. But at the same time, we also had healthy financial reserves in the bank, over \$400,000 if I remember correctly, and there was a question of how this would be received by the membership. We went to the DA, and the DA voted in favor of collecting the dues. It was a split opinion there, too, but there was a majority in favor of collecting the dues because they felt that if there was ever a time when the membership would be ready to contribute a portion of their salaries to the Staff Association, it was now, on the eve of the reorganization. And, so, I think that was the right thing.

But otherwise, it was remarkable how we were able to reach a consensus on the way we were to go, without having to go through too much formality with voting. So I would just add that I think that, to me, the sense of solidarity and friendship and camaraderie within our EC was one of the most important things that, as far as I was concerned, helped me get through that 18 months. And I think that it is crucial to a successful term for the Staff Association to have an EC that can work this way.

ZIEGLER: It's not always easy, because people are elected--I hate to say, but almost willy nilly, in a way. They're chosen not as a ticket or as a block or a group but as

individuals, and these individuals may or may not get on together. Would you pretty much concur with that?

REDFERN: Sure. That's the way democracy works, but it's also one of the virtues of democracy that the people who are elected have all been elected on the same basis, and I think they have a mandate to get on with one another because they have a job to do. And I think this was certainly the case last year.

ZIEGLER: One issue that always exists in the Staff Association is the relationship among the various Staff Association governing entities. I'm trying to contrast the Executive Committee, on the one hand, and the Delegate Assembly and the working groups, on the other. During your term, how would you characterize the relationships between and among these three basic Staff Association entities?

REDFERN: To deal first with the relationship between the EC and the working group: during my participation in the previous EC, there seemed to be some problems of liaison between the two bodies, between the EC and the working groups, which relied essentially on having individual members of the EC designated as liaison persons with particular working groups. This seemed to me to be very uneven, because it depended upon how effective that individual person was in participating regularly and fully in the work of the working group. Sometimes they would miss meetings, and if that one person wasn't there, either at the working group meeting or the relevant EC meeting, then the liaison didn't take place.

You remember that what we introduced were three, actually later extended to four, subcommittees of the EC. Now, while this sounds terribly heavy and bureaucratic, it, in fact, worked quite well. What happened is that everybody on the EC expressed what their major areas of interest were. Then, those two or three or four people formed a subcommittee of the EC, and then meetings were held bringing together groups or clusters of working groups that were operating in broadly similar areas. This seemed to work quite successfully. We introduced it as an experiment for the first three months during the time when we were formulating our budget and work plan. But it seemed to work quite well.

I remember I was involved with the working groups in the compensation area, and the members of those working groups seemed to particularly appreciate getting together with other working groups--for instance, compensation, on the one hand, and tax, on the other hand, and then benefit and pensions, as well, seeing what people in those other working groups were doing. This also gave the working groups a sense of how their agendas fit in with the broader agenda that the EC was working on. And so, while the system wasn't maintained actively in all areas all through the year, it seemed to be a better way of coordinating with work groups than just relying on individual liaison persons. I don't think we had any major problems with the working groups.

ZIEGLER: And not all of them need to be active at any given time. It depends on what's going on at a particular juncture.

REDFERN: I think that the important thing is to make sure that the working groups are in touch with the others that are working in the same area and that they feel that they know where they stand in relation to the broader agenda and objectives formulated by the EC and approved by the DA, of course.

Now, relationships between the EC and the Delegate Assembly, on the other hand, provide much more fertile ground, if you like, for problems, even constitutional ones. I don't think that that caused us any major difficulties during our term because, relatively speaking, I would say that we were a strong EC because we had this cohesion. Even though we didn't always agree on every single detail, we had this sense of cohesion about where we were going. And I think we generally provided to the Delegate Assembly a strong sense of direction about what we wanted to do and what the posture of the Staff Association should be. So, in my view, while we did not give the Delegate Assembly as much business, if you like, to decide upon in terms of voting and approving things, once we got the work program and the budget approved I always felt that we had strong support at the DA meetings for the actions that we were taking. When, for instance, we were hesitant about how much money we should commit in support of legal expenditures to do the reorganization, we got strong support from the Delegate Assembly, in terms of being ready to raise dues and commit expenditures. We could get much stronger support from the DA than we would have felt able to ask for from the EC.

The strength of the Delegate Assembly is, or should be, in its ability to bring people together representing all parts of the Bank and to act as a faithful sounding board for staff opinion on the major issues affecting the Bank staff. And, for this reason, I believe that it's important that the Delegate Assembly is not treated purely as a rubber stamp to vote "aye" on a list of motions carefully prepared by the Executive Committee. Rather, the DA should be allowed to be a forum where free discussion can take place. And if this means that sometimes the meetings get a bit unruly or long, then so be it. I was never one for chairing the Delegate Assembly meetings strictly according to the rules of procedure. I think the rules are important to avoid complete chaos from breaking out, but I also believe that it's important that those who clearly have something to say be allowed to speak. Now, balances have to be struck, of course, so that the meetings do not get unduly long and the discussion is kept germane to some point. But I felt comfortable with our DA meetings, generally, and I felt that we were able to get a lot of valuable advice and insights from the discussions that we had.

ZIEGLER: So, in general, then you would say that the relationships among the three entities, that is to say the Executive Committee, the Delegate Assembly and the various working groups, were all very harmonious. You don't recall any significant difficulties other than what one would normally expect in dealing with diverse groups of individuals.

REDFERN: No, I don't recall any major difficulties, or any difficulties at all, really.

ZIEGLER: I know there have been times in the Staff Association's history when the Delegate Assembly has essentially felt precisely as you said, as a sort of a rubber stamp

or has felt it was not kept sufficiently informed by the Executive Committee. My own impression is the same as yours, that the Executive Committee and the Delegate Assembly did work harmoniously together during your term. I don't recall, either, any significant episodes of discord, luckily.

Well, can we go on to a slightly different tack? What negotiating tactics and strategy did you use with management in dealing with the various issues that you had to confront? Honesty is the best policy, perhaps?

REDFERN: Well, I guess we did, broadly speaking, conduct our negotiations on the basis of at least giving the other guy the benefit of the doubt until proved otherwise. In other words, we began from a position that assumed that the other side was dealing in good faith until proved otherwise. I think that's the way I tend to proceed generally. But I think that we also felt it was important—when we were discussing issues involving staff rights, as well as conditions of employment, benefits and so on, when we were discussing changes in the staff rules--to be, as far as possible, as well informed as the other side.

There is an awful lot of staff work to be done before you go into discussions or negotiations with the management, and that relies heavily on having people willing to put in long hours and able to interrupt their own work to come to meetings on short notice and review papers and give you comments. People outside the Staff Association would be amazed at how much work is actually done and how much work goes through that Staff Association office just in order to keep up with the regular business of rules changes and benefits changes and looking at the new compensation review and so forth. This is a perennial source of difficulty and sometimes weakness of the Staff Association, especially when its institutional memory of how such issues have been handled in the past is lacking. That's one reason I believe that this exercise that you're instrumental in starting, Chuck, is going to be of so much value.

On compensation, for example, I found that our knowledge of how we had dealt with Kafka I was lamentably weak because all the people who had been involved from the Staff Association side were no longer involved. Some of them were still around in the Bank, and we tried to gain the benefit of their advice, but it wasn't always easy to get that in a form that was relevant to the incipient discussions around the new Kafka II. The same is also true in the handling of the series of Administrative Tribunal cases. One area where I think we did do well was in going to a new source of legal advice on the reorganization case. We went to Herbert Golsong who, as you know, had been General Counsel of the Bank up until about 1981, I think, and we also talked with Ronnie [Aron] Broches, who also had been General Counsel before Golsong, and got their advice.

ZIEGLER: And who had, in fact, been even at Bretton Woods.

REDFERN: Yes. Broches was willing to give informal advice behind the scenes but wasn't willing to be center stage, if you like, in acting for the staff against the Bank. I think he wanted to, but he also had various relationships that he, perhaps, didn't want to endanger. That's perfectly understandable, plus he's getting on in years.

But Herb Golsong did a superb job in handling our class action case on the reorganization. But I use this as an example of how it can be useful to deal with somebody who knows what has gone on before. Golsong, of course, knew the Tribunal cases from the other side because he had been on the management side over the famous de Merode tax and salary case and the first big case that hit the Tribunal. But by virtue of that and of knowing the composition of the Tribunal itself and of how that body works, he was able to do a very good job in acting for us on the reorganization case. But on the compensation issue, it was difficult to tap an institutional memory within the Staff Association that went back longer than a couple of years.

ZIEGLER: So, in terms of negotiating strategy and tactics vis-à-vis the Staff Association and management, you're citing the importance of some form of institutional memory in dealing with a lot of these issues which tend to recur from time to time in one form or another.

REDFERN: Yes, and there never are easy answers to this because it's inevitable that working groups and other bodies of the Staff Association are going to be subject to regular and fairly frequent turnover because they depend upon volunteers. And the solution isn't simply to compensate for this by setting up a larger or more fully staffed Staff Association office as a repository of all this information. The information is, of course, all there on file. The problem is really that the people who used it or generated it have changed. The only practical solution, to my mind, is maintaining the Staff Association, broadly, as something that is seen to be of benefit to and relevant to staff as a whole, so that the Association will continue to attract and maintain a staff willing to put in their time working through it.

ZIEGLER: Who were some of the managers with whom you dealt most often, and what sort of working relationship did you have with them? We can tie this into the previous question about negotiating tactics and strategy, also.

REDFERN: Well, first and foremost, because he is the most senior, I should mention Mr. Conable, the Bank President, with whom we did have quite a number of meetings, some with whole EC present, some with a smaller number present. It wasn't a relationship where you could just drop in through door, obviously, but I would say that Barber Conable gave us pretty fair access in the earlier period, during the reorganization planning. And I think that we were able to make some impression on him. In particular, I remember the meeting when we had a number of pre-planned messages to give him.

The one that really emerged as being the most important and the one that caught his attention most involved the lack of trust among many of the Bank's staff towards their managers and the management, broadly speaking. He really picked up on this. You will remember that he went around the table and asked if everybody felt this was the case. There was a resounding chorus of "yeses," and various people went into various examples of how and why they felt this to be so.

The meeting was on Good Friday just before an Easter weekend. I heard later that Conable had come back from his Easter weekend up in New York State considerably troubled by what he had heard. The first item he raised during his Monday morning senior management meeting was this question of the degree of distrust that was apparently felt by many staff towards the management; of course, most of the senior managers present promptly put it down as typical Staff Association poppycock. But there was one who spoke up and said that perhaps we were not so far off the mark. I can't point to any particular way in which this perception, to the extent that Conable accepted it, actually changed the subsequent course of events, but it may be that it's something that filtered into his own thinking.

ZIEGLER: How would you characterize Conable's view of the Staff Association and his relationship with you and, through you, the Staff Association? As an example, when [Alden Winship] Clausen came into power, he pretty much said he had no use for the Staff Association.

REDFERN: Well, I think there's no comparison. I think Conable had accepted the role of consultations with the Staff Association in a way that no previous Bank President had done. In all his circulars to staff describing any of the studies or initiatives that are going on--whether it's Kafka II or actions on the support staff side—it is noted that consultations with the Staff Association are to take place. And he's given a number of specific instructions to managers on this in a way that I don't know that any previous Bank President had done. Martijn Paijmans as VPA [Vice President, Personnel and Administration] had been assiduous in reminding his colleagues, from time to time, of the importance of consultations with the Staff Association. But, previously, other senior managers saw the Staff Association and the things that it had to deal with as very largely confined to the personnel and the administration complex and as something that they really didn't need to have much to do with. Someone like Ernie Stern--if he's ever had to talk with the Staff Association before in his life [inaudible] as Senior Vice President for Operations or Finances, as he became after reorganization. Whether he found it a useful experience or not, I can't say, but it was certainly new.

So I would say that we had good access to and good relations with Conable. Bill Stanton, his principal adviser in his office, was very useful in facilitating this, as well as access to Kim Jaycox on the Steering Committee. During our term, Martijn Paijmans had been initially the focal point of my relations with management, and I didn't know Martijn before that. He didn't know me either, but I would say that we got off to a good start and I found him very open and very helpful. And sometimes, if something appeared to be going wrong as regards a particular staff member, it would be sufficient to have a word with Martijn, and he would be able to get something done or looked into much more quickly than if one had gone up through all the regular channels.

ZIEGLER: My impression of Paijmans was always that he at least recognized--perhaps more so than many staff members—the potential and, in fact, actual value of the Staff Association. Perhaps this served his own purposes, if you will, but I've gone to a number of meetings with him, and I never got the impression he was antagonistic toward the Staff

Association. Certainly he may have disagreed with a number of issues, but I always found him, at bottom, to be supportive of the concept of this strong Staff Association, if for no other reason than as a counterpoise to the Board. This would be one means by which the management would say, “Well, there’s also the Staff Association and they think whatever,” citing the Staff Association as supporting the views of management.

REDFERN: Yes, he was supportive of the Staff Association, and he would often be of great help to it. It’s also my impression that Martijn was a superb manager. He was very smart, very hard working and he was very much on top of his own job and of the people who reported to him. He was, if you like, a good example of the old style of very senior Bank managers who are mandarins in a sense and very much in command of the detail as well as the breadth of their jobs. So, inevitably, he must have been sometimes prone to—how shall I say it--using the Staff Association, and the indications that it could provide about staff morale and staff opinion on various subjects, to some extent, for his own ends, for his own agenda vis-à-vis his colleagues on the senior management councils. He was a patrician rather than a democrat, if you will, in terms of the way in which he saw the Staff Association. But I certainly enjoyed dealing with him. I admired him greatly for his acumen and his knowledge. And I think that there are probably people who work today or have worked recently in the personnel area who sometimes harken back to Paijmans’ era, saying, “Well, this wouldn’t have happened like this in the days of Paijmans.” This is ironic, in a sense, because not all those people have necessarily been totally vocal in their support of Paijmans.

But there was one thing about him, while we’re talking about Martijn, which I could never agree with, and I told him so. He seemed to have it very firmly in his mind that the reorganization was almost predestined to be a disaster for the staff. In that, I suppose, I have to give him credit as having greater prescience than we had, in that we had proceeded, perhaps more naively, on the assumption that we would be able to help make it better. He was firmly of the view that the thing was going to be a disaster right from the beginning, and he was very little involved in—and was barely consulted, I think, by Conable--in the planning of the reorganization.

But the thing that I could never quite understand and certainly could never agree with, was that he believed that the reorganization was largely prompted by dissatisfactions expressed by the staff themselves. When I pressed him to elaborate on this, he seemed to think that during the previous years, many staff had complained to their Executive Directors about this or that aspect of their work or their employment with the Bank, and that it was largely this complaining that had prompted, in the minds of some of the Board members, the need for reorganization. Well, if this was the case, I was certainly unaware of it, and I found no confirmation from any of the people with whom we worked that there had been a stream of complainers going to their Executive Directors demanding that the Bank be reorganized. But it was something he seemed to believe firmly.

ZIEGLER: Did he give any evidence or it was just, perhaps, anecdotal?

REDFERN: No, he never gave any specific evidence of this that I can I recall.

ZIEGLER: The two other managers with whom you probably dealt most often would be Willi Wapenhans and Bill Cosgrove. Any thoughts on the two of them?

REDFERN: Bill Cosgrove replaced Paijmans, in a sense, when he was elevated from Director of Personnel to take over the Vice Presidency for Personnel Administration, including compensation, which Reg Clarke previously been handling. And Willi Wapenhans replaced Paijmans at the top as the senior manager over all this.

About Wapenhans first. We did not have a lot of dealings with him. My very first dealings with him--as you recalled in our earlier discussion over the breakdown of consultation, as we saw it, over Rule 5.09--were . . .

ZIEGLER: Less than friendly?

REDFERN: Well, they were certainly not very fruitful. It was rather like the unstoppable meeting the unmovable. I guess it's fair to say that we were unstoppable in this case and that we didn't stop. And he was unmovable in that he did not move. Under the pressure of what constraints, one can only speculate. So it wasn't an easy start. But I think that despite one or two hiccups—there was a further one when we weren't allowed to comment on the Blue Book on the reorganization—we generally found that Wapenhans became increasingly open and certainly seemed to be very fair minded in his willingness to listen to us. And I believe from Ann [W. Hammond] and our successors that he's continued to be accessible to the Staff Association in his role. He's another example of somebody who had never had to deal with the Staff Association before and most likely had never previously been very much aware of it.

With Bill Cosgrove, of course, we dealt with him right from the beginning of our term on personnel matters. He was always very accessible, and I think he was somebody who, obviously, had a very difficult load to bear during the reorganization because he was, after all, responsible for planning the implementation procedures, for reporting to Mr. Jaycox. And then, of course, he and his personnel people had to administer and police the thing, and that was something for which I think they were hopelessly ill-equipped.

I felt that, on a personal level, we always got on very well, but we had a number of difficulties and things that we couldn't agree on. But I'll say this for him. He's somebody who was willing to discuss right up to the last minute; he was always working on weekends, and you could call him up and he was willing to get our comments. I think he believed in consultation, but I think the pressures on him were very great. And when it came to actually policing the implementation of the reorganization, I don't think he was really able to do a very effective job. It was just impossible.

ZIEGLER: It would have been impossible for virtually anybody.

REDFERN: It would have been impossible for anybody the way it was set up. And, in terms of the individual cases I'm familiar with, I know he went out of his way to consider

them on an individual basis and try to be fair. But there were also times when he disappointed us. For instance, there were the times when he came to our Delegate Assembly meetings and was not able to give us all the answers that we were looking for, either about how things were supposed to work or what had, in fact, been going on. It was a very tough job he was in. I suppose the fact that Personnel has continued actually to have some post-reorganization reorganization, is evidence of the fact that they had not yet worked out a satisfactory way of organizing personnel policy and operations and other activities. But that's something I'm not greatly involved with nowadays.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

ZIEGLER: In the course of your term as Chairman of the Staff Association, how did you go about trying to mobilize staff support, which is, of course, always a very crucial ingredient in the success, or lack thereof, of the Staff Association?

REDFERN: Well, this is a most important thing, Chuck, which formed one of the three planks, if you like, of our initial agenda. At the time when we took office in mid-1986, all available objective indicators of membership seemed to indicate there had been quite a weakening of staff support for the Association. I'm not quite clear over what period this occurred, nor am I clear exactly why this happened. We were never able to establish as good a database on the past membership trends as we would have liked, although we did get our membership database overhauled and up to snuff with help from David Delmonte during the year. But the dues-paying membership had been down to as low as 55 percent when we took over.

So, we made it one of our objectives to strengthen this and to strengthen the Association more generally. One of the ways, if you recall, was that we launched a membership campaign that went on during the year. Godwin Agodo was one of the leading lights and most active people involved in this. We held various functions and meetings in the different units--tea parties and briefings and so forth--with varying degrees of success. But we did boost our membership statistics quite substantially during the year. I think we got that percentage up from under 55 percent to around 63 percent, or something like that, by the end of July, 1987.

Another initiative was to send out newsletters to the staff. I was neither well versed nor initially particularly comfortable with this form of communication. As a normally cautious Bank staff member, I initially found it quite hard to write a memorandum that had to go to the print shop, be reproduced in 8,500 copies and land on everybody's desk. But as time went on, one got the hang of it and, with help from reviews in the EC and so forth, tried to get these things clear and to the point. I hope that the newsletters did help mobilize support for the Staff Association and interest in the reorganization. We used to issue these things quite frequently.

During the reorganization, too, we held one general meeting of the staff in the courtyard. It occurred probably toward the end of April 1987, at a time when negotiations with the

Steering Committee and Conable were nearing the crucial point over the implementation procedures. We still hoped that we might be able to persuade them to adopt entirely our proposed way of doing it. The staff was getting increasingly restless, because they had not been told anything by the management about how this reorganization was going to take place; they hadn't been given one single piece of paper, apart from a one-page circular from Conable, in which he announced he had accepted the recommendations of the Steering Committee. But the staff had received nothing at all telling them how the implementation was going to take place.

So that general meeting, as I recall, was taking place against an atmosphere of growing uncertainty and apprehension, and we wanted the staff at large to know that we were on the ball and were pressing for a number of changes to the draft implementation procedures that we had seen, which were very unsatisfactory. And secondly, we wanted the senior management and, above all, the Board, to know that we had considerable support among the membership, among the staff at large, so that when we told the Board the staff was very worried, the meeting would have demonstrated that. I think we got that support, although there were problems. It was a rainy day, and there was some uncertainty about where the meeting would take place, but we still managed to fill the courtyard with a reasonable number of people, around 1,000.

ZIEGLER: Well, as we're getting toward the end of this interview, Chris, I'll give you a chance to wax philosophical. What do you feel was your greatest accomplishment in your term as Chairman of the Staff Association and what would you like to have done better?

REDFERN: Well, I don't want to get too philosophical about it, Chuck. It was, as I said, I think, very much a team effort within the Executive Committee. I feel, above all, that we were able to do our best and that we held up the Staff Association as being professional, responsible and responsive and representative of the Bank's staff opinion at large. I think that the general line that we took was seen by the majority of the staff, not all, but by the majority, as being reasonable and the right one. I think we acted when we had to, that we took legal action in defense when we thought that staff's fundamental rights and basic fairness were being transgressed over the staff rule and the lack of right of recourse. We were not able to prevent or to correct many of the injustices or unfair decisions that took place, and I don't think we ever could have done it. But I think we acted expeditiously and honorably, and I think we behaved in the best traditions of the Staff Association. And I think that we clearly outlined to our successors some of the more important issues regarding the role of the Staff Association in the Bank that needed to be followed up on, and still need to be pursued, notably over consultation and the rights of the staff, through their elected representatives, to be consulted before changes are introduced that affect their conditions of employment and the way in which they work.

I think that we demonstrated, too, that you don't have to be a very senior manager or big-wig in the Bank in order to be able to make a valuable input and contribution to the design and implementation of the Bank's personnel and management policy. I was impressed many times at how a group of regular staff of all levels and backgrounds was

able to come up with well thought out comments and suggestions on many of the subjects that we touched on during the year. And so that, it seemed to me, provided an important reinforcement of the value of consultation and of the value that bringing staff into these things can make. And it seems to me that many of the lessons that we learned about the Bank's culture, as it's described and the way it's organized, are still a far cry from being fully assimilated into the way in which the organization works.

ZIEGLER: What advice would you leave for your successors as Chairman of the Staff Association?

REDFERN: Well, I'm chary of trying to offer any sort of general advice because no two chairmen, probably, have faced exactly the same sort of problems in the same context. But I think that if there's one thing, it is to maintain the strength of the Staff Association by making sure that it can capture as wide a spread of support as possible among the staff. The most dangerous thing is if the Staff Association is perceived as being overly interested in only purely sectional interests, which affect just one group of the staff at the expense of another, whether it's support staff versus higher level staff, or American staff versus non-American staff. It's terribly important that breaks and fractures along those lines be avoided. Otherwise, the position the Staff Association takes on anything risks being weakened and discredited as being unrepresentative.

And on the subject of representation, I do think that there are some things that can be done to strengthen that. It strikes me there's one very basic but important thing that deserves some attention. And that involves the way in which our Delegates come to be elected. I was taking a look the other day through our Delegate list for the last two or three years, and I noticed that in very few cases had elections actually taken place within the different electoral units for delegates. Nine times out of ten, or thereabouts, delegates are simply appointed or are "elected," in quotes, because there's nobody to stand against them. And that leads one to ask on what basis they have been frankly nominated in the first place. I think that in too many cases, the job of delegate is seen as being a bit of a chore, which sometimes it is. And, therefore, delegates are nominated on the basis of a friend persuading them to do it, rather than of allowing and, indeed, requiring, the members in each unit to actually think about who could represent them best and electing that person or group of people best able to consult with them and pass on their concerns in the Delegate Assembly. And I think that weakens the importance and representativeness of the Delegate Assembly in a very fundamental way.

I recall that during our term that you, Chuck, were instrumental in carrying out a review of our Constitution, in which you identified not only a number of areas where the wording of the Constitution could be updated to better reflect the conditions of today, but also a number of more fundamental points affecting the tenure of delegates, the relationships between EC and DA and so forth. One possibility that it strikes me should be considered is the size of the electoral unit. The Bank is now, what, three times the size it was 17 years ago when the Staff Association was founded. Yet, the number of delegates and electoral units has barely changed because it's fixed in the Constitution at around 70. As a result, a delegate now has to represent--it depends on the size of the unit,

but in many instances--over 200 people, or 150 people. This, to my mind, is an impossible job, because I don't think that you can really represent and be in touch with that many people. You can't be in touch with more people than you can easily see in the course of walking around people's offices in the time between one DA meeting and another. And, obviously, people have other things to do besides walking around offices. So, my idea would be for somebody to examine the implications of going for a larger number of units—each represented, shall we say, by one delegate. In other words, the objective would be to reduce the size of the electoral unit to a much more manageable number of people that one elected delegate could keep in touch with and could represent. And this is a two-way street; it means getting to hear what people think and also reporting back. If that were done, then I suspect that there might be more people interested in and willing to be nominated for the job of Staff Association delegate than is presently the case. As you know, at the moment, there are some very, very large units, in IFC, for instance, or indeed in the constituency that I'm delegate for, Asia, where I think it must be quite impossible for the delegates to stay in touch with their members. I think this is something that could be addressed without too much difficulty and that I think could make quite a difference in strengthening the organization.

ZIEGLER: In your view, then, what is the proper role of the Staff Association in the World Bank?

REDFERN: Well, I think the role is the same as it's always been. I think the reasons for its formation in the first place—which Bengt Sandberg and others have reported on—are equally valid today: to provide a representative body that can speak to management on more or less equal terms with the backing of staff opinion and that can also blow the whistle to senior management when things are being done that, in one sense or another, are wrong. I think it's very important to have internal safeguards like that because--at least until the grievance procedures and the Administrative Tribunal were introduced--the Bank staff had no formal recourse outside the Bank whatsoever. That has been improved to some extent, but as we well know, taking a case to the Tribunal is not the easiest or most expeditious way of righting a wrong in the Bank.

ZIEGLER: You may grow old and die before it's resolved.

REDFERN: You may well, indeed. So, I think the need for a Staff Association, an active one, is as great as ever. And its strength depends on it being in touch with the staff. And that, in turn, I think is related to some of the things that we were talking about earlier. It's a constant, never ending battle to maintain the interest of the staff in a Staff Association. And it's a problem which will never disappear. But there probably is time and scope for some of the constitutional changes that your group looked at and that we left for our successor body to study more closely now that the reorganization is behind it.

ZIEGLER: Well, this has been a very good interview, Chris. Is there anything else, as we wind up, that we haven't raised or that I haven't asked you about that you would care to mention?

REDFERN: Well, we haven't touched at all on one of the other issues that concerned us quite a lot, which had to do with the pension fund and the changes that were introduced following the reorganization in the way in which the Bank's pension fund would be managed. Those changes, in turn, raised a number of very fundamental questions--which were not entirely new but raised with greater urgency--about the legal status of the pension fund and what the rights of the actual future beneficiaries of that fund would be in the unlikely event that the Bank would ever wind up defunct, for whatever reason. These are issues that are being pursued actively, I think, by our nominees on the Pension and Finance Committee, and these are issues that led to some pretty tough exchanges with Ernie Stern and with the Legal Department.

Our relations with the Legal Department is another area that we also haven't touched on specifically, but indirectly, in relation to the class action suit that we brought over the reorganization. But I recall that that case and our views about the breakdown of consultation on the legal aspects did lead us to have very poor relations, if you like, with our counterparts in the Legal Department. And I think that underlines the importance for the Staff Association of being able to draw upon good advice from lawyers, whether inside the Bank or outside. But, there's a great advantage in being able to get advice from lawyers who have been on the Bank staff, because there are very few outside lawyers who understand well how an international organization like the Bank works. But in the last resort, taking legal action may often be the only thing that the Staff Association can do at the Bank, and that was, in the last resort, all that we could do over the reorganization.

Another channel that we learned to use with some success--and that might perhaps be used again on some future occasions by the Staff Association, but I would suggest with some caution—is using the press. As our concerns over the reorganization grew more acute, we were able to use talks with some gentlemen of the press occasionally to our advantage in having our point of view, particularly over these legal aspects, given at least equal prominence in the columns of the Washington Post, New York Times and some other journals.

ZIEGLER: Did they ring you up or did you ring them up?

REDFERN: Well, I think they rang me up. I was besieged with calls, and for quite a while, I wouldn't answer them. It was only with great caution and, really, trepidation, that I very gingerly began to talk with some of the press. But you've got to learn who you're talking with and be pretty sure how they're going to use what you tell them. And you've got to be sure that you don't step over the line of discrediting the institution as a whole, which is not going to do anybody, least of all yourself, any good.

ZIEGLER: Well, Chris, this has been a most interesting three sessions. And I thank you very much for taking time from what I know is a very busy schedule to participate in the Oral History Project of the World Bank Staff Association.

REDFERN: Thank you very much, Chuck. I've enjoyed it, too.

[End Tape 3, Side A]
[End of interview]