

INTERVIEW AND MEETING SUMMARY

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Interview and Meeting Summary - "Victor Hedgeman"
w/Bill Bader, August 22, 1975, S201

FILE:

After an extended tour with the United States Army and some education at San Diego State, Hedgeman went to Harvard where he studied in the Department of International Relations, working to a degree in political science. He didn't finish his degree but went after being recruited at Harvard into the OPC. He then became an NOC in Europe and for a number of years worked in Belgium, Luxembourg and France. His primary responsibility in Belgium was that of surveillance of Soviet operators in Europe. While in Brussels in 1959 he came to meet a good percentage of the Congolese who would be important in the Congo after independence: Ileo, Mobutu, and Adoula. In January of 1960 he became the first Chief of Station in the Congo; prior to that time the Agency had had merely a liaison service. In late July of 1960 Hedgeman returned to the United States with Ambassador Timberlake to press for a U.S. policy of political action in the Congo. Hedgeman's position was that the Soviets were moving large amounts of equipment and manpower into the Congo and that something had to be done to head it off. At the time he first went to the Congo he was the only man in the Station. A year later there were five or six and eventually the Station would reach upwards of twenty. Hedgeman mentioned that the relationships and staff that he built in the Congo persisted, and that when the Laotian operation started the group would move almost intact to Laos. Hedgeman believed that the Congo was vitally important to American interests,