

JAMAICA

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PERRY W. LINDER
Consular Officer
Kingston (1961-1964)

Perry W. Linder was born in California in 1931. After receiving his bachelor's degree from San Jose State College in 1952, he served in the United States Army from 1952-1955. His career has included positions in Hamburg, Kingston, Tegucigalpa, Paris, Contonou/Dahomey, Brussels, Amman, Athens, and Madrid. Mr. Linder was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in December 1996.

LINDER: The next post was Kingston, Jamaica. When I learned of the assignment I phoned a colleague who had served there and told him, "I'm going to Kingston, what can you tell me about it?" And he said, "Hey, get out of it if you can. It's a terrible post." And he said, "If you have to go, when you get there the first thing you should do is buy a dog and a gun. And every night before the sun sets, you go out and fire off that gun a few times so everybody knows you've got a gun." And he said, "Train your dog not to take anything from anybody, because they'll poison the dog, they'll feed him some ganja and he won't do you any good." He told me it was a terrible place fraught with crime and not a pleasant place to be.

Q: After that advice, did you try to get out of the assignment?

LINDER: No, I didn't.

Q: Did you find that both the dog and a gun were essential?

LINDER: No, not at all. I thought it a great country and great people, and I never felt uncomfortable there at all. I met my wife there, my present wife. I spent three years there; I was, again, Consular Officer, I did some visa work, but mainly citizen services. I also did some economic reporting. I was there when they set up Air Jamaica. While I was there Jamaica became independent; it became independent in 1962. When I arrived I served in a consulate general, and when I left it was an embassy.

Q: And the first United States ambassador arrived while you were there?

LINDER: I think his name was Bill Doherty; he had been the head of the Postal Workers Union.

Q: And that would have been an appointment by the Kennedy administration, I guess.

LINDER: That's correct. Because I was there when Kennedy was assassinated. And also, when I was there, the first group of Peace Corps volunteers arrived, mostly teachers.

Q: Yes, I think some of the English speaking countries were the first to actually receive the Peace Corps because they didn't have to have language training, Jamaica, and I know Ghana was actually the very first, I think, where they actually arrived, but there were others that were close.

LINDER: Yes in 1961, the first group. I must say they had a very nice experience. I mean, I knew the kids that were in the Peace Corps. They were a young group, mostly just out of college, and they were very well set up there. It was a very receptive place for them, and you know, they got a little bit of money, and having just come out of college, they had a good time out there, and I think they provided a good service.

Q: Was the training done in country in Jamaica, or...

LINDER: No, they had some training before they came. I think they set up a training school in Saint Lucia, one of the other Caribbean islands.

Q: Were you Consular Officer throughout your time there, or did you switch to another job?

LINDER: No, I was Consular Officer, I was there for three years, and that was my job throughout. It was then that I decided that I would really specialize in administration.

Q: Even though you really hadn't done that yet, other than the graduate training in business administration.

LINDER: Right.

Q: This was before we had cones, so you were forced to decide.

LINDER: That's right, there were no cones at that time, but they did have the four divisions, political, economic, consular and administrative.

Q: Did you decide at that time that you would pursue a career in administration because you had seen some good role models, good administrative officers, or maybe some bad ones and thought you could do as well or better?

LINDER: Well, there was Marme a part-time administrative officer in Hamburg and I never really thought much about that at the time. In 1962, Vice President Johnson was the US representative to the Jamaican independence celebration. In any visit of that magnitude there's a big administrative to-do and that peaked my interest. When I saw what the administrative office had to do and to take care of, it interested me, and, my own background. Academically I was better prepared for administration than I was for other functions in the Foreign Service.

Q: Was there quite an expansion of the post when it moved from being a consulate general to an embassy at the time of independence, or was it pretty much the same structure, same staff?

LINDER: No, it expanded. We got Marines, we got a station, I don't even know that we had a communicator before becoming an embassy. I know we used to get all our communications from Cable and Wireless. We'd go down to there at night, they'd give us a call and we'd pick traffic. If we had something to transmit we'd take it down there.

Q: Did Kingston have regional responsibilities at that time, or was it only...

LINDER: Not regional responsibilities. However, the Cayman Islands were included in its consular district. But you know, it was at that period when the hope of the US, and perhaps the British, was that all of the Caribbean islands would combine into a federation.

Q: Confederation?

LINDER: Into a confederation, right. And you know, they made a stab at that. The capitol was to go in Trinidad. However, there was a referendum, and Jamaica decided they didn't want to be part of that. So when Jamaica became independent and the embassy was established, they actually moved some of our people, who were in Trinidad in anticipation of the confederation, to Jamaica.

Q: When you actually arrived there, I guess in 1960, was it known that independence was coming, say, in 1962, or did that happen fairly abruptly? Were they ready or independence?

LINDER: Yes, it was known. I think Jamaica was ready for it. The British did a good job of leading them into it. They had well established political parties, both political parties in Jamaica had a labor union base. They had some senior statesmen who were recognized and well trained and educated.

Q: With your wife from Jamaica, you've been able to go back, I assume, a number of times over the years, and you've probably seen a lot of change.

LINDER: Yes, I go back fairly regularly. Well, there's been change. Of course, the biggest change was when Michael Manley was elected in the '70s. He was the son of Norman Manley, Jamaica's first Prime Minister.

Q: Was he first?

LINDER: Maybe he wasn't; I don't recall...the two prominent leaders were Bustamante and Norman Manley. I know Bustamante was elected and headed the government. I believe Norman Manley was Prime Minister at the moment of independence. Anyway, his son, Michael Manley, was a socialist, certainly liberal, and he had definite ideas of how things should be. When he was elected, he brought about dramatic economic and social change, many of the middle class, established Jamaicans left, and he gave opportunity to those who hadn't had an opportunity before. That was the biggest change. At that point the establishment began to be replaced by new people, and the class structure--I don't know if it was broken, because it still exists, but at least you had an influx of new people who had never had an opportunity before in Jamaica. There was

a breakdown of established structure and responsibility. The country never really recovered from Michael Manley's experiment with change. It is a bit frightening in Jamaica these days. But, when I say it hasn't changed much, it looks much the same, people still have to hustle for a living, and nothing works quite properly.

Q: When you were there, though, on assignment in the consulate and in the embassy, the British were still very important, in terms of civil service and administration.

LINDER: Yes, permanent secretaries in most ministries were senior British civil servants.

Q: When you were doing consular work, was there a lot of pressure for visas to come to the United States to immigrate, or...

LINDER: Yes. There was a lot of fraud on the visitor's visas side, and I think the immigration quotas, or whatever they were, were also fully subscribed. At that time, Jamaicans still had access into Great Britain, a lot of them were going there. One interesting thing while I was there, what the British call "hire purchase". You could buy a car and pay for it on the installment plan. Well, that came to Jamaica, and the Jamaicans are real hustlers, they made the most of that. They'd buy a car and then sell it and use the money to go to Canada or to go to Great Britain or the US, and the whole hire purchase thing sort of ground to a halt after about two or three years.

Q: They were taking advantage of that.

LINDER: That's right.

Q: Probably at that time, though, it was easier for Jamaicans to go to Britain, I mean to Canada, and it was later as there were restrictions, that more and more pressure came to go to the United States, is that right?

LINDER: That could be, I don't know. But, there was always pressure for visas; there was a big Jamaican population in the United States, in New York particularly; that creates its own demand.

Q: For families to come together and so on.

LINDER: Right. And you know, there was a long history of movement of Jamaicans to the US. At that time they still had the agricultural program where they would take agricultural workers to the US to work in the fields of Florida and Louisiana.

Q: The economy of Jamaica itself was still largely based on sugar?

LINDER: They had three bauxite companies in there; they were doing well at that time. The price of bauxite was good, and they were still expanding. That may well have been the biggest single source of revenue. Of course, tourism has always been a source of revenue; sugar and bananas, were in decline.

Q: Montego Bay was up and running?

LINDER: Yes, Montego Bay was up and running, it was a popular tourist resort. When I was in Jamaica I had to go to Round Hill; Senator Javits was a frequent visitor there. It was interesting, a lot of prominent American figures would visit this north coast, both political and from the entertainment world. They would fly into Jamaica and spend their vacations there, but you'd never see them or hear of them at the embassy. It was rare that we ever got involved with these visitors.

Q: But they would go there essentially on a private basis....

LINDER: Yes, they would just fly into Montego Bay, they would never come to Kingston or inform the embassy of their presence unless there was some particular service that had to be performed for them.

Q: Was there quite a bit of American investment in bauxite and otherwise in Jamaica at that time?

LINDER: Reynolds Aluminum was there.

Q: Kaiser?

LINDER: Kaiser as well. Reynolds, Kaiser, and ALCAN were the three.

Q: Let's talk about, finally, one of Jamaica's other neighbors, Cuba. You were there during the Cuban missile crisis, I believe.

LINDER: Yes.

Q: How was that?

LINDER: Well, it was certainly exciting. We had this fleet in the Caribbean with the Marines. It was decided that they would use Kingston harbor as a base for recreation and resupply. Tenders were anchored there, and there was constant movement of naval vessels in and out. At the time, I was responsible for shipping, and became the post's liaison with the Navy.

Q: There was no naval attaché or...

LINDER: No, we didn't have anything like that. I made the initial arrangements for docking, water, supplies, lighters, garbage. I remember I went around with the Shore Patrol; they did a survey before the ships got there. We visited all the warehouses in town. They each showed us all around their place. It was just an interesting experience. From a political standpoint, I don't recall that it affected Jamaica much. Of course, one development was that Guantanamo Bay was blocked off from Cuba. The Navy then recruited workers in Jamaica, and would take them to Guantanamo. They would do their work and then they'd get home leave. In other words, Jamaicans replaced the Cubans in Guantanamo.

Q: And that happened as a direct result of the missile crisis in 1962?

LINDER: As I recall.

Q: Did you get involved in that recruitment effort, or did the Navy send people in to do it?

LINDER: The Navy sent people in to do it. I did go out to Guantanamo Bay at least once, to do some kind of consular work, I don't recall what it was now.

Q: That must have been a good source of foreign exchange for the Jamaicans, in addition to tourism and bauxite, and...

LINDER: I think, you know, remittances from abroad were always one of their top sources of foreign exchange.

Q: From Jamaicans in the United States, and Britain...

LINDER: ...The United States and Canada and Britain, yes.

Q: Okay, anything else about Kingston we should talk about, Perry?

LINDER: No, I think that'll be all.

Q: Okay, what was your next Foreign Service assignment?

LINDER: I went to Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

**NANCY OSTRANDER
Chief Consular Officer
Kingston (1967-1970)**

Born in Indiana in 1925, Ambassador Nancy Ostrander received her BA from Butler University. She was posted in Santiago de Cuba, Havana, The Hague, Antwerp, Mexico City and Kingston and was the Ambassador to Suriname. On May 14, 1986 she was interviewed by Ann Miller Morin.

OSTRANDER: At that time, Washington was unable to fill the chief consular job in Kingston. They had sent one person who had had a nervous breakdown shortly after he arrived. This was 1967. Jamaica had become independent in 1965, something like that. There was a new immigration law which took effect in about 1967, which moved the immigration quota for Jamaica from 200 a year, which it was as a British dependency, to 20,000 a year. That became effective in '67, and the day it became effective, I would suggest that a majority of Jamaicans walked in and registered for immigration at the American Embassy.

So the consul general they had sent had gone around the bend in a very short time, and they had sent a new one, Vern McAninch. Vern wanted to try his hand at administration, so although he was running the consular section, he moved upstairs. They had to find somebody for the consular work and they couldn't. Nobody in his right mind would go into that mess, and I mean *mess*. So they found me, and I said I'd be happy to go.

Well, I took one look at that section. The section had been two rooms, small rooms, when there were only 200 a year, and the bank next door had moved out, so Vern had arranged to get part of their ground space. They had torn up the floors and it was a dirt floor, and raining a lot. They were trying to put tile down, but the tile layers had gone on strike. We had planks over the mud. I have never seen anything quite like that.

Q: A physical mess.

OSTRANDER: It was a physical mess. Again, if you opened drawers of desks, you would find applications for visas that nobody had ever even acknowledged, let alone tell people what the next step was. It was so far behind, it was incredible.

Q: Vern was too busy building his empire, was he?

OSTRANDER: With all due respect, it had just been sort of make-do. I don't know what was going on. It was not Vern's bag, that's for sure. Just sitting down and working on things one page at a time is not for Vern McAninch. I'm not bad at that. As a matter of fact, if the day is over and I see that there's a pile like this that's taken care of, I feel pretty good. Besides, women, I think, have more patience for that sort of thing than men do, anyway. Still, I used to think, "If somebody showed me a warehouse full of dirty dishes and told me that they had to be washed, I would do it, but I would be mighty unhappy doing it, and I would hate every bit of it." It's not a job that couldn't be done; it's "who wants to?" I think I went home and cried every night for the first six months I was there. But I did bring order out of that chaos and found that there were an awful lot of really good clerks, local clerks, and brand-new, "retread" officers, who were willing to sit down and do the job if somebody would just tell them where to tackle it. What they needed was somebody to run it. I had something like ten officers. They were ambassadors' secretaries, who wanted what they would call an "excursion tour" now, but who really wanted to be commissioned, wanted to be integrated, and others were pouch clerks, as we were getting away from that. There were former Marine guards who had joined the Foreign Service. There were political officers who were about to get selected out, but were given one more chance. I have never seen anything quite like it. Those folks were given a half-day's training and sent to me, into this mess. Well, you can imagine what their morale was. There were also two or three brand-new FSO-8s, I think they were, at the time. I can assure you that this wasn't their idea of what should be the lot of somebody who wanted to be a political or economic officer. But they were good, you know. It also brought to mind that a good FSO does whatever he's given to do and does it well. None of this, "I'm not going to stamp these." They did it, and they did it well.

I tried everything I could think of to give them other things that they could do. I can remember one of them became involved in getting to know youth groups at universities and did reporting on the side, on the youth of Jamaica and what they were thinking. Another one I got a rotation

job so she could go into the USIA. But anyway, I did everything I could, and I got a superior honor award for the management of that. It did get untangled. We broke all the records for immigrant visa issuance at that place.

But mainly what we did was answer the mail and get a routine going on immigration so that they didn't feel that they had to come down to the embassy every day because nobody ever answered the mail. I can remember I found one officer who, when there was too much mail to answer, decided not to answer any of the mail from American citizens. You can imagine what that caused. This means phone calls from the States, and not only from the States, but from every congressman and senator that you could think of. It just was creating work. So anyway, a little instruction on management went a long, long way.

I also had a DCM who said, "Tell us what you want and we'll get it." Vern backed me up on stuff out of administration that I had to have. So anyway, it got done, but it was physically exhausting, absolutely physically exhausting.

We had a team there and we were all so loyal to each other.

Q: How many people did you have under you at any given time?

OSTRANDER: There were well over twenty there, maybe twenty-five, I'm not sure. I'm talking mainly here about visas, but it was all consular work, and I had a superb passport and citizenship officer. I didn't often have to get into that work, thank God. I should have, but she was very good. I just had to tell her, "I've got to untangle this visa mess before I can even think." We had well over a million tourists a year in Jamaica, well over a million. Some of them needed help. They died, too, up at Montego Bay, and got into trouble and got into jail. When I look back on it, I think the first thing I did was call in all the local employees and say, "I'm sure that each and every one of you has good ways that we can streamline this." Then I got big charts on the wall to show where the bulk of it was going. Once they could see progress and once they realized a pattern, they were ready to just knock themselves out for it, and did so.

I think I learned from that that if you can begin to see that it's getting better and that there's life after that mess, why, you get a lot of loyalty and a lot of hard work out of people. I got a lot of promotions for a lot of people out of that, too. I really sat down and redid all the position descriptions for that entire section, and the local help was so underpaid compared to what was going on in the embassy side of it. I can understand why nobody had had time to do this.

Q: That's a big job, though, that job description business.

OSTRANDER: Come to think of it, I did that in Mexico, too.

Q: That was for the locals, as well as the rest?

OSTRANDER: Yes. Actually, in Mexico it was only for the locals, because they were the ones. I'm always the one that gets that stuff dumped on her.

Q: That's because you'll do it. You didn't have a nervous breakdown there, though.

OSTRANDER: No, I did not. I thrived on it, as a matter of fact. As a matter of fact, I think I thrived on it because you could see the progress, and I was getting credit for it and I had an ambassador and a DCM and an administrative officer, even those that came after, who were--I can hear the DCM right now, David Wilkins, say, "Nancy, tell us what you want and we'll see that you get it." And this just makes all the difference. I learned to love Jamaica. Not too many people liked Jamaica, and still don't.

Q: Was it dangerous when you were there?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Quite.

Q: Did you have to carry a weapon?

OSTRANDER: No, no. And I wouldn't have if I'd had to.

Q: But they were having trouble when you were there?

OSTRANDER: Yes, they were having all kinds of race riots, burning buses, hitting people on the head, this sort of thing.

Q: Did you have a rape gate in your house?

OSTRANDER: No, we had guards. They gave us guards. I don't know, I'm just not a frightened person. I just can't live that way. I soon got rid of the guard, because he wanted me to provide him with food all night long and beer all night long, and there were all these beer bottles all over everything. I just got myself a dog. [Laughter]

Q: Do you have any anecdotes that you remember about this time when there were all these riots? Were you ever in physical danger?

OSTRANDER: Most of the wives sat around and talked, and people would find white chickens, with the necks wrung, floating in their swimming pools and this sort of thing. That was *obeah*, and it was a threat. People would talk about it a lot and they would sort of fan the flames of each other's panic. I just can't listen to this sort of thing. I'm firmly convinced that bad things can happen, but you can also ruin your life sitting around and waiting for them to happen, and you can become housebound. I think what you've got to do is learn where it is that you can go that's safe. I don't want to downplay a lot of the danger that people ultimately got into, but I wouldn't go into West Kingston for anything on earth then or now or any other time. There are just places that you don't want to flaunt it, and you don't want to be out all hours of the night when there are problems.

Q: Did you have to work late? If you did, how did you get home?

OSTRANDER: I didn't work late, that I recall, although there were times when I had to go down, when I was on duty. We were in the middle of town at that time, too. The embassy now is up and sort of out of the danger zone. It was down by the waterfront, on Duke Street. That was a dangerous area. We had some things befall us in the embassy family, and maybe it did get worse later, but I got sick to death about hearing how dangerous it was in Jamaica, because I had lived through it, and I just feel that you can ruin your life by living behind a locked door.

I think you can invite problems, yet I also realize that things are going to happen to people even if they're not invited. One of the girls was raped while I was there, one of the gals in the embassy. They got her out of there fast. I think she left the patio doors unlocked. I don't know what the answer is, but I know that the only two times in my life I've ever been robbed were in Arlington, Virginia, in forty years in the Foreign Service. I don't want to tempt the fates.

Q: But you took good care.

OSTRANDER: I think I did, and I think I lived in an area and had a dog and all these sorts of things, but I just simply can't be worried about it.

Q: It was perhaps worse among the wives, wasn't it?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes, who didn't have anything to do, of course, or not enough to do. They did nothing but feed on these problems. I know one of the junior officers' wives was threatened while she was at home one day. Somebody walked in and threatened her. Of course, he just wanted to be transferred immediately.

Q: But nobody was actually beaten up, were they?

OSTRANDER: The gal was raped. We had one officer who went out to cover a political riot and was beaten over the head, his head split open, and his car smashed up. But that was in the line of duty, you know. If you go to a political rally that is apt to get out of hand, and does, why, it's too bad that this has happened, but he knew it when he went out to cover it. He wasn't complaining.

Q: That might be a case where you wouldn't want to send a woman political officer.

OSTRANDER: I suppose that's correct, if there's danger of riot. Yet, again, she might not have had her head split open.

Q: Who can say?

OSTRANDER: Who can say? You're quite right. Anyway, I left Jamaica and I haven't been back since, in spite of all of this, but I will go back some day.

Q: Did you travel a lot while you were there?

OSTRANDER: Oh, you couldn't get away too much, but I did get up to Montego Bay for a couple of long weekends. I can remember one lovely time that a bunch of us, about twenty of us,

of the embassy gals, went to Frenchmen's Cove, which was the most--I think it cost \$1,500 a week at that time, which was the most expensive place. But in the month of October, they closed to the public to redo everything, and you could go there for ten dollars a day. So we went up and took one of the beautiful beach houses and just had a wonderful time. That's a place where each person has an individual golf cart to whip around in. We had a marvelous time, at only ten bucks a night. Of course, we didn't have anybody waiting on us. It was fun, and I loved the place. I really did. But then, I'm a Caribbean whatever.

Q: You seem to love every post you've been, except Mexico City. But even then, you loved Mexico City.

OSTRANDER: I loved the city, but I certainly didn't like that work, and I didn't like working in The Hague. I liked that city. I think what I've tried to do is learn to split--I really didn't like The Hague. It's the most beautiful city I've ever been in, but the people were very cold.

Q: You mean in the embassy?

OSTRANDER: No, the embassy was fine.

Q: So you sort of split your work and your social life?

OSTRANDER: There are things that detract from every post you're ever in. What you like at one post is not there at the next.

Q: But you do like warm weather, don't you?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes. I used to say I'm like a tropical blossom. I really flourish in the warmth.

Q: All those years in northern Europe, than which there is nothing more dour.

OSTRANDER: Just really awful. But you have things to make up for it, that's for sure.

Q: Did you used to travel to Paris and other European capitals?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes. Whenever I could get away, I did. I had that feeling when I went to The Hague. It was only to be for a year, to fill in. It was a direct transfer, and I was going to fill in for a year. Then they left me two years and brought me back and said, "You'll be given a direct transfer in another year." Okay. After a year, I was transferred down to Belgium, where it was only going to be for another year, because then I would have home leave. So for seven years, I was going to be leaving in only one more year. I felt like, "You'll never be back this way again, so you can't afford to miss this, you can't afford to miss that." I almost went broke with all the things I couldn't afford to miss, and if I'd known it was going to be seven years, I could have taken it a little easier. But it was hard to get away from the work, but certainly every chance I could, I did. I saw pretty much of it, at least northern Europe.

Q: To wrap up for today, do you want to tell me anything else about Jamaica? You have already said what you learned about running a place, that if you can make people see that progress is being made, you can get their loyalty. Any other bits of wisdom that you can pass on?

OSTRANDER: That I learned out of Jamaica? I suppose the importance of teamwork.

Q: And praise, too?

OSTRANDER: Oh, yes! I got full credit for what happened there.

Q: And you did it by praising your own people, didn't you?

OSTRANDER: I certainly praised them. There wasn't a year that went by that we didn't have a meritorious award, for the section, anyway. That helps. As far as management goes, with that many Foreign Service nationals, you must have a promotion chain. If you're going into that big a section, you want something that can give somebody a thirty- or thirty-five year career straight up the ladder, and they must be able to see that, starting at the bottom, that there are promotion opportunities and that there's going to be a turnover, and that they're going to progress up the ladder. Otherwise, you're going to be losing them to AID, you're going to be losing them to the administrative section, they're going to go to work for the bank down the street. You're just going to lose them like crazy. But once you can show them that, then they can see it happening, it just makes a lot of difference.

Q: How many local employees did you have there?

OSTRANDER: The immigrant section was big. I think it was about twenty locals and about ten Americans, give or take three or four on either side.

Q: Did you find three years was about all you wanted of that?

OSTRANDER: I wasn't ready to leave. I was just beginning to enjoy it, because it was just untangled, except that it was time to leave. My experience in Foreign Service tells me that my third year I'm really doing a superb job. The fourth year, it's old and you're beginning to wish, "Oh, dear, is that report due again?" This sort of thing. But that third year, at least that's been my experience, in the third year, the government is really getting double its investment out of me. The fourth year, it's past the point of diminishing returns, although I'm still giving more than enough, but the challenge has gone and it's time to be thinking of what's coming next. I also felt that it was time to come to work in Washington in consular work, if that's what was going to be my lot. That job in Kingston, which at that time was an FSO-3, which is now the FSO-1 job, is now an MC [Minister Counselor] job.

Q: I wouldn't doubt it.

OSTRANDER: Frankly, I think it's because they couldn't get anybody to fill it, so they just kept hiking it up higher and higher. But I would say that in my estimation, there were only two things

happening in Jamaica at that time that were of concern to the U.S., two major issues: One was bauxite, the other, immigration.

KENNETH N. ROGERS
Political Officer
Kingston (1968-1972)

Kenneth N. Rogers was born in New York in 1931. He received his BA from Ohio State University in 1953, and his UJD from George Washington University in 1958. His career includes postings abroad in Hong Kong, Saigon, Luanda, Kingston, and Tangier. He was interviewed on October 21, 1997, by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You left there in 1968. Whither?

ROGERS: Jamaica.

Q: You were in Jamaica from 1968 to when?

ROGERS: July 1972.

Q: Who was our ambassador while you were there?

ROGERS: The first was Walter Tobriner, who was one of the three District of Columbia commissioners when there was no mayor in the District. At that time, there were two civilian appointees plus a U.S. Army engineer. Walter Tobriner was a Democrat and was appointed by Lyndon Johnson to be the ambassador. He was there when I arrived.

He was replaced by a Republican, Vincent De Roulet, whose mother in law was a contributor to Richard Nixon. When the parties changed, he got that assignment. She was the owner of the New York Mets baseball team at the time.

Q: He was a controversial figure.

ROGERS: Oh, yes.

Q: Could you tell me about him?

ROGERS: He died at 48. He was tall, a little bit frail. I think his father owned Foremost Dairies in California. He married Lorinda Dayson of the Witney family. He was eccentric and fancied himself a certain stature in U.S. society which, if it exists, I've never seen it. When I was first assigned there, he asked me to come and meet him on his estate on Long Island. We got to the house and the front gate was enormous. It was really his wife's estate. He had a 90 foot yacht, "Patrina," and looked upon the Jamaicans perhaps as the Portuguese looked upon those from

Angola that they considered must be looked after, so that they could eventually develop. Civilizing nonsense. When my tour was up after two years, he kept getting extensions of six months for me because I had become a very dear friend of the person whom I had claimed would become the prime minister of Jamaica. De Roulet said, "Oh, that's impossible. He couldn't possibly win the election." So, I said, "Okay, there are 52 parliamentary seats. Whoever takes half plus one, the leader of that party will be the prime minister." I gave him a list of 52 and I said, "These are the seats that will be won by the People's National Party (Michael Manley's)." I'll never forget, the night of that election (That was in 1972.), Vincent De Roulet had a party of the country team and friends. The symbol of the Jamaica Labor Party was a bell. He had on every table a bell that was to be rung when Hugh Shearer would have been reelected. Shearer was a lovely person, a very nice guy. I saw him not too long ago. The news came through that the People's National Party had won. The phone rang and whoever took the call said to the ambassador, "Well, it's Michael Manley." He said, "Oh, I'll take the call right away." He said, "No, Mr. Manley wants to speak to Mr. Rogers, not you." This was the end of my career in Jamaica.

Q: Oh, God. So Manley knew what he was doing.

ROGERS: Oh, yes. Worse, Manley said that he wanted me to come right over to his home. I asked permission. He said, "Yes, go ahead." When I got there, the chief of the Jamaican army arrived in his uniform at Manley's house drunk. Manley kicked him out and fired him from the army the next day. All these people are dead now, sadly. But that was a fascinating time. I was still there for several weeks. Michael used to call me and De Roulet would say, "You can't go to his house anymore." So, Michael Manley would come over to my house and sit on the front porch at six or seven o'clock in the morning. He said, "What is this? What are these things?" I said, "Well, they're all things about voting at the United Nations, oceans, and so forth." He said, "We're going to decide in the cabinet what to do about a vote." So, I would brief him on all these things. He had no background in it. He had no idea what it was all about. So, it was great fun for a few weeks. I had been there double the length of time I was supposed to have been. But it was very exciting.

Q: Didn't De Roulet do things like forbid visa applicants from using the toilets and things of that nature - or was that someone else?

ROGERS: There are a lot of stories about Vincent De Roulet, some of which have been embellished and unfairly so, but by and large, 2/3 of them are true. They are mostly rather petty, silly things that are hardly worth mentioning. He made a mistake when he, after that election, went back to the U.S. and said in an open session of Congress that Michael Manley had promised him that he would not nationalize the bauxite industry. That was of great interest to us because four out of the five bauxite aluminum companies in Jamaica were American (one is Canadian). I had only left a few weeks before. The government in Jamaica informed the Department of State that Vincent De Roulet was "no longer persona grata." He was not permitted to return. They always make that distinction. He wasn't PNGed; he was "no longer persona grata." What they did was very polite. They said, "However, later, if he would like to come down on a holiday, he is always welcome." It seemed to me that he listened to the station chief, who was certainly a conservative Republican as well, and he read things as he wanted them to be,

rather than the reality that they were. Incidentally, of the 52 seats that I predicted in advance and reported to the Department of State, 51 were correct. The 52nd on a recount was also correct two weeks later. That was the brother of Michael Manley, Douglas Manley.

Q: What were you there?

ROGERS: Chief of the Political Section.

Q: Before Manley came in, what was the political situation in Jamaica?

ROGERS: Since independence, it's always been parliamentary democracy, the Westminster system. When I arrived, the Jamaica Labor Party was in power. Hugh Shearer was the Prime Minister. Earlier, Michael Manley's father, Norman, had been the premier once of what was to have been a West Indies Federation of Trinidad, Tobago, all of the British Antilles, Windward Islands, Jamaica, etc. But it was so scattered and diverse that it just couldn't hold together. It didn't sustain itself and didn't work. So, the parts broke up into separate units of the Commonwealth. I remember when Michael Manley made his first speech in Parliament, when he was first elected to a seat, the Jamaica Labor Party still being in government, his father saw me and he said, "How did Michael do?" I said, "He did fine, but why didn't you go?" He said, "I didn't want to make him nervous." Norman Manley died in 1970. Michael Manley died early in 1997.

Q: What was your impression of Manley at that time? He was rather controversial.

ROGERS: Oh, yes. I liked him very much. He was then a labor leader, the National Worker's Union. He was called "the island supervisor" of the union. That union was mostly in sugar, but later in the bauxite alumina industry. Both political parties, the PNP and the JLP, had as their power base labor unions. One, the ILB, developed out of a labor union, BITU, and the other party, PNP, formed a labor union from itself. So, they were very work-oriented. I saw Michael many times after I left. He used to come and visit. He kept writing to me. He kept worrying about what he called his "Third World credentials." I used to argue with him that the Third World is a myth. It isn't there. It's all self-interest and puffery. But he said, "That's not true. I've been to Algeria and Cuba and these people understand that." I said, "They're taking advantage of you."

Q: You had this time with him, but did you find that basically most of the rest of the embassy considered him beyond the pale? Was there a problem?

ROGERS: The assumption was that he would never amount to anything. They couldn't believe it when he got elected the first time to a parliamentary seat. They couldn't believe it when his party won the general elections. "Why, this can't happen. This is a conservative government." Otherwise, the theory was that because Manley was a "socialist," our mining interests would be nationalized. They were. To put it in the terms of the time, they were "Jamaicanized." Curiously, when I returned from Jamaica, I was first assigned to be the desk officer for Uruguay and Paraguay and then Argentina. After some months, I was loaned back to be the Jamaica desk officer during the negotiation on the Jamaicanization of the bauxite aluminum industry. I made a

number of trips back and forth to Jamaica in that regard and to the corporate headquarters of the various companies such as ALCOA. That thread of contact carried on even after I left.

Q: Were we saying that if he were to win the minds of the nationals...

ROGERS: That was the concern, yes. That is because bauxite in its first stage of refined powder, alumina, has no value at all until it is extruded into alumina, then to aluminum, which is done in Canada and the U.S. Bauxite has no real value in its form in Jamaica. Manley and his economic aides wanted to assign to it a “national” value. That is, to find out what the market price of tubing and sheeting would be in Toronto and Pittsburgh and then back down from that and say a certain percent of that value was what we should have. That was how they tried to change the value. Of course, the Jamaicanization and the nationalization after that meant that almost every major aspect of the economy was nationalized: tourism, hotels... The government of Jamaica did not have the manpower, the skill, and the talent to operate any of this stuff. Eventually, it was permitted to revert to the private economy.

Q: How about tourism while you were there? Was this working well or not?

ROGERS: It was. Just as in some parts of Washington, DC, I wouldn't want to walk at night, or even in the day, now, certainly in the tough areas of Kingston, it was not wise for anyone to be there unless they lived there. People were desperately poor. Even though I was well-known in the ghetto, it still was terribly unsafe, even for me.

The Rastafarian cult was very interesting. The followers felt that Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, who was then still living, was in fact the personification of God on Earth. They literally worshiped him. Some people who really didn't have that “calling” adopted that lifestyle, which was associated with some musicians. To understand the true nature of Haile Selassie, you had to take the “herb.” The herb is ganja, or marijuana. I think so many of them who had adopted that faith system were not particularly sincere in their ecclesiastical orientation, but wanted a little pot.

Q: Was drug smuggling or marijuana smuggling a problem when you were there?

ROGERS: Yes, but much less so than now. Jamaicans had been using marijuana for countless years as a medicinal supplement called “bush tea.” It was said to be good for a toothache. The toothache didn't go away, but you didn't feel it anymore. It was an old traditional herbal medicine.

Q: What were you getting from the desk? Was Jamaica at all in the Cold War calculation with Cuba nearby?

ROGERS: No, not then, but Russian ships used to visit after they visited Cuba. I actually used to go down and go on the Russian ships and visit. They were all electronic surveillance ships, no warships. They had giant masts and huge globes on the top with listening equipment on board. The personnel were very pleasant. I would come aboard, call on the captain, and give him a bottle of Jamaican rum. He would give me some phonograph records. There was no problem at all. It was after I left that the identity with Castro became so close. In fact, Castro went to

Michael Manley's funeral last spring.

Q: Back to Ambassador De Roulet, how did he get along with his staff? Did it work?

ROGERS: By and large, they felt that he was artificially presumptuous, as if he were from a royal class that didn't exist in our country. In many respects, I really liked him in spite of himself. But he was terribly insecure, didn't know what he was doing. But he had been a spoiled, privileged person all his life. He would make fun of it, too. He would say, "I'll never forget when I first went into the Air Force and my chauffeur drove me up to the camp. The boys thought this was great. But strangely, the drill sergeant didn't think that was appropriate." He made fun of himself in those regards. I liked him. His wife was very nice. But he didn't understand that setting.

At that time, I'll never forget, Herbert Kalmbach came through. I didn't know how things worked in this way. Well, that was for De Roulet to make a contribution and then make a "wish list." How they did that was so funny. Kalmbach would say, "Write a letter to your mother or your mother in law and tell her what you would like to do next." He would take that. This was the wish list of the contributors. But you don't write to the President. You write it to your mother and he took it away. I thought it was very cute. De Roulet asked for either Paris or Madrid. It turned out that coterie went down the tubes. I remember now, he took me to see Maurice Stans, the Secretary of Commerce, in Washington. He knew those people very well, the Republican inner circle.

Q: Until Michael Manley didn't call him.

ROGERS: He deliberately called where he knew he was and said that he wanted to speak to me.

Initially, I didn't really like Jamaica, but it grew on me - the music, the food, the personalities of the people were just delightful. I still count them some of my very close friends and see them often. It probably is, mile for mile, the prettiest country in the world that I've ever seen.

Q: In 1972, whither?

BRUCE MALKIN
Rotation Officer
Kingston (1969-1972)

Bruce Malkin was born in Philadelphia in February 1946. He received his bachelor's degree from University of Pennsylvania University. His career includes positions in Jamaica, Mexico, Singapore, and Washington D.C. Mr. Maklin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 2005.

MALKIN: I was first told that I was assigned to our consulate in Khorramshahr, Iran, but was subsequently changed to our embassy in Kingston, Jamaica, where I duly arrived in November of

'69 aboard a U.S. cruise ship.

Q: Then you came in '69. Your first post was what?

MALKIN: I was very excited. First of all, all the single men were being assigned to the Cords Program in Vietnam. They were going as Village Pacification Liaison Officers or, if they were lucky, assigned to our embassy in Saigon. However, I was the only bachelor who had taken the economics test option and done very well, and I was told that is why I was given the option to go as an Economic/Commercial Officer somewhere other than Vietnam. I was offered a position that had been vacated by a medical evacuation in Khorramshahr, the port city in southern Iran, which I think is mostly an administrative post for bringing in household and other shipments for the embassy. Still, I thought this was fabulous. I was going to Persia. I didn't care what the work was - it just seemed to be the whole beauty of the Foreign Service. I'd be going to a famous country. I bought my Farsi language book and I was anxious to get started with the language, I was doing area studies. And then I'm told that State received word from the Ambassador in Tehran that there had been an internal juggling of positions. Someone from the Embassy went to Khorramshahr to fill the job, and the embassy did not require anyone going to the position in Tehran to fill it when that transfer was made. Basically there were no more openings in Iran.

So, after a little bit of internal discussions, I was told by FSI that the only other available post at this time, because everything other than Cords in Vietnam had been assigned, was an opening for an economic/commercial officer in Kingston, Jamaica. Actually, it was a junior officer rotational position, eventually rotating into economic and commercial work. This was very disappointing as it was so close to the U.S., and I was really down for a while because it didn't seem to be in the mainstream of foreign policy. But I came around to thinking of it as a good assignment when I considered the alternatives.

At that time you were allowed to take U.S. ship lines, so I went on the U.S.S. Roosevelt, which stopped at Aruba, Curacao, and Caracas before reaching Kingston. It took ten days to get there, and I enjoyed every minute of it. Then I got to Kingston, and it turned out to be a wonderful place.

Q: You were in Kingston from when to when?

MALKIN: November '69 to February '72.

Q: What was so wonderful about Kingston?

MALKIN: The people were great, the climate was beautiful, the beaches white sand, and the water blue. Being brand new, I liked everything I was doing. Even the visa work was different. I made good friends there. I was married there.

Q: You know, I've heard about Kingston – a real problem of lawlessness and all that. Had that developed at all while you were there?

MALKIN: I think that was very minor when I was there. It was when Michael Manley became

prime minister, just after I left in '72, that Kingston and all of Jamaica took a political and economic nose-dive. Manley decided to get close to Castro, and his politics went way left and anti-American and anti-white. But when I was there it was under PM Shearer and his finance minister, Seaga. I tried to write a doctoral thesis there for Geneva on how Jamaica could be the Switzerland of the Caribbean. The Institute wanted me to come there for further work on my first draft, which I could not do at this point in time, so it was never approved.

Q: This was when Manley came in?

MALKIN: Yes, he was a disaster. Although he was the son of the George Washington of Jamaica, his politics were really left wing.

Q: What type of work did you do?

MALKIN: The first six months I was in the admin section working with the GSO and Admin Officer in a wide variety of tasks designed to keep the embassy functioning smoothly. Then it was the visa section, immigrant and non-immigrant, which was also active because there was such a demand for visas. Occasionally I see my old supervisor, Bill Moody, who is retired and now lives in Reston.

Finally, for the second year I was rotated into the Economic/Commercial Section, where there was a junior officer position. There were only an Economic Counselor and a Political Counselor, but there was no political support job. So I got the available commercial job and started meeting the business community.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

MALKIN: When I went down it was a political appointee named Vincent De Roulet.

Q: He was a problem, wasn't he, as I recall –

MALKIN: He was there the whole two years that I was. He created problems until he was PNG'd (made persona non grata) by PM Michael Manley. During his 1972 open congressional testimony in Washington, De Roulet said that he had met with Manley privately and told him, "The U.S. doesn't want you as Prime Minister. I'm going to work against you." Manley took that personally, and told De Roulet when he was in Washington to not come back.

The ambassador was very wealthy. He had a yacht with a five-person full time crew. He had race horses which he boarded at a stable in Jamaica and the Admin Officer was basically in charge of the race horses and the GSO (General Services Officer) was taking care of the yacht. Any time left over would go to the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission).

So there was a lot of pressure on Admin from the top. And De Roulet was very quixotic and erratic. He once came to my office when I was interviewing immigrant visa applicants, and told me not to give anybody a visa. He stayed there for a half-hour or so, and I had to turn down everybody before me. If I thought they were good applicants, I told them to come back with

some more documentation in a day or two and I'd look at it. But I believe that if I had actually granted a visa to anybody in front of him after he had told me not to do it, he would have had me sent away to someplace else on my first tour.

Q: What about Jamaican society, was it pretty open, did you meet many Jamaicans?

MALKIN: Yes, I did. The Political Officer, Kenneth Rogers, was very nice and he invited me to his receptions. He was very well connected, so I met a number of Jamaica's business and political leaders. At the end of '70, at the Political Counselor's Christmas reception, I met a woman whose parents had a record distribution and music studio company in Kingston and were doing very well as the sole licensee for many Motown labels. They distributed throughout the Caribbean Islands. I met her on her holiday vacation. She was back from Canada where she'd just graduated from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. She was planning to work for her parents until it got warmer and then go back to Canada to live again. The short story is that we got married in September of '71. So I left Jamaica in February '72 with a new bride.

Q: How did you find the economic-commercial situation while you were there?

MALKIN: It was doing very well. The isle was definitely prospering. The business community was mostly Lebanese- and Chinese- and Jewish Jamaican. They owned the bigger businesses, such as the brewery and the dairy, and were the biggest employers. The dairy owner was my next-door-neighbor where I was living. It seemed the economy was doing pretty well. It was not a rich country, but it has good climate and the food was cheap, unless you bought imported food.

Q: Did you feel any of the tensions of the more black Jamaicans, the underclass? Did they live in areas where it wasn't a good idea to go?

MALKIN: Well, there were areas in west Kingston, or Spanish Town, which was a small city not too far from Kingston that were considered dangerous by other Jamaicans, especially before elections. I remember driving into a poor black neighborhood because I wanted a piece of this famous Jamaican carver's work. I drove to his place several times and nobody ever bothered me. There was still a certain respect for foreigners and white or light-skinned people. If you met somebody who was high on ganja, then he might give you a hard time. The one time I remember meeting a Rastafarian smoking ganja, he offered me some. When I told him I don't smoke, he said, "That's baad mon, that's baad."

Q: What about the white ex-colonial class? I sort of have the feeling that they were somewhat replicating the Kenyan upper class or white settlers there, or dissolute, remittance-type people and all that. Was that around?

MALKIN: I don't recall a big British overseas resident community in Jamaica.

Q: Maybe what I'm thinking of was more in Bermuda and Bahamas.

MALKIN: Sugar plantations and rum mills were big in Jamaica, but except for the banks, I don't remember a large British business community,

Q: When you left there in '72, where did you go?

MALKIN: I had to come back to Washington, of course. I'd married a foreigner.

Q: She was Canadian?

MALKIN: She was born in British Guyana, and she had Jamaican citizenship as well as Guyanese.

WILIAM T. BREER
Political Officer
Kingston (1972-1974)

William T. Breer was born in California in 1936. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth University in 1957 he served in the United States army from 1957-1958. His career has included positions in Tokyo, Sapporo, Kingston, and Yokohama. Mr. Breer was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in May 1999.

Q: Well then, in 1972 whither?

BREER: To Jamaica as political officer.

Q: This was quite a change.

BREER: I think there was a GLOP [Global Outlook Planning] program.

Q: Yes, this would have been the time. Kissinger was very unhappy when he went to a Latin American conference and discovered everybody had been there forever and ever and really knew very little about NATO or anything else.

BREER: Well, I never served in a NATO country except here. Jamaica counted not only as a GLOP assignment but also a developing country assignment, even though the north coast of Jamaica is kind of elegant in places. We settled down in Kingston for two years, 1972-74.

Q: Who was the ambassador at that time?

BREER: A fellow named Vincent de Roulet.

Q: He had quite a reputation. Could you give your impression of how he operated and the effect on the embassy?

BREER: He was totally conspiratorial, figuring everyone was [suspect] except a chosen few. He

treated everybody like his personal lackey. Before I got there he had animal names for everybody on the staff. There was a very good article in Harper's Magazine in 1974 about him. He didn't like Blacks. He had a lot of disdain for humanity in general. He was horribly vulgar. Generally a kind of despicable person.

Q: Where did he come from?

BREER: From Los Angeles originally. An old Lost Angeles family, I think. My mother was in high school with one of his aunt's. He was married to the daughter, Joan Pacson, who was Jock Whitney's sister. He had a private plane and flew back and forth to the United States and kept a large yacht in Kingston harbor. He ran horses at the local track, hobnobbed with the north shore investors from Texas and other places and really thought he was the smartest man in the world. He got PNGed (persona non gratis) in 1973 after accusing me... I can't remember the exact details now, but someone in the Jamaican government had spread the word that de Roulet wanted me to report to Washington that Manley was a communist or friendly with the communists. I don't recall having done that but he wrote a seriously derogatory telegram about me to the State Department. Then, he flew to Washington to testify in congress and testified something to the effect in both closed and opened sessions, that he made a deal with Manley in the 1972 election that if Manley would lay off the bauxite, he would keep the CIA out of the election. Anyway he was PNGed when that became public and never came back to Jamaica again.

Q: This was a peculiar assignment for you.

BREER: It was for everybody in the embassy. There was nobody with any Jamaica experience in the embassy.

My foreign service experience is that I have never had any particular set of instructions, but I was expected to get to know the political system and political leaders and analyze the political situation for Washington. This was at a time when there was a less than friendly prime minister, Michael Manley.

Q: One of his mainstays was a certain amount of confrontation with the United States.

BREER: Well, he was a third world leader, a friend of Qadhafi's and he cozied up to Castro who are against American policy. He was pretty basically socialist at heart and scared away a lot of investors from Jamaica, I think. He didn't encourage, but I think under his regime there was more violence in Jamaica and more attacks. He scared a lot of white and brown Jamaicans out of town, while he took their capital and make trips to Miami and Canada. And, these were some people who supported him. He was supported by part of the business community.

Q: How about reporting in a place like this? Who was your DCM?

BREER: George Roberts.

Q: He was a Foreign Service officer?

BREER: Yes.

Q: How did he get along with the ambassador?

BREER: All right. He made it his business to get along with him. George is a terrific guy and we got along very well.

Q: Did you find that the government, other than Manley, was fairly open and you were able to go talk to people?

BREER: Yes. And, I ran around and lunched with or called upon politicians. I used to go to observe debates in parliament and traveled around the country and talked to local leaders. I went down to Spanish town to PNP (People's National Party) political rallies at night by myself and was carefully watched by the police.

Q: You had a prime minister who was a black who had evidence of racism towards whites, did his party reflect that?

BREER: I shouldn't say towards whites so much as I should say North Americans. He had white people supporting him for a while.

Q: Did you find any crimp on your reporting coming from the ambassador?

BREER: No.

Q: So there really wasn't an issue about what you should report with him?

BREER: No, I don't think so.

Q: Was the ambassador an issue in Jamaica?

BREER: Oh, yes, very much so. If I remember correctly, de Roulet refused to shake Manley's hand before he was prime minister.

Q: I recall at some point there was an issue of not allowing visa applicants to use the embassy bathrooms.

BREER: Yes, that was part of it. I think the Jamaican visa line set the example for the rest of the world of how badly we treat visa applicants. The treatment of visa applicants in a whole host of countries is really pretty horrible, both for the applicant and the visa officer.

Q: I would think in your job that you would find that every contact you would make would have a list of people who wanted visas. How did you handle this?

BREER: Some I rejected and some I sent to the consul general for his judgment.

Q: Did you see Manley as a threat to democracy in the place or was he sticking pretty much to a rule by getting popular support?

BREER: I don't think he was a threat to democracy. Manley was a great sort of English tradition LSE, London School of Economics, liberal who had been a RAF pilot. He was a tremendously charismatic leader and a wonderful speaker. He had a booming voice and spoke very elegantly about rights, poverty, education, and all these horrible issues facing Jamaica. But, I think he managed in the process to scare a lot of capital away. Up until the time he was elected, there was a great deal of inflow of capital due to the rapidly expanding bauxite industry and that spilled over into many other industries. There was a great deal of prosperity but when I got there, there was a strike. I was stunned in Jamaica. We took a trip to Guatemala, a long weekend, and walked through the market there and the prices were [higher] than they were in Jamaica and [there was] not nearly as much abundance of produce. Of course, Guatemala is a bigger country but Jamaica grows lots of fruits and vegetables.

Q: Was there concern at the embassy for personal safety because of the growing violence?

BREER: We didn't let our children walk on the streets by themselves. They were small but we wouldn't let them even go next door by themselves. In retrospect we may have been reacting too much to our Jamaican neighbors' caution. Actually, we took some precautions but I never felt particularly frightened. We drove all over the island. We drove at night through villages that had no electricity up in the hills. We drove over the mountains and back roads. I never felt threatened. Now, downtown Kingston is a little different. It is teeming and seedy and rundown.

Q: What about the opposition? Did they sort of represent wealth?

BREER: Yes, but not entirely. There was one tremendously wealthy, prosperous family that were Manley backers. One of them was the lord mayor of Kingston while I was there and another, one of his brothers, was head of the bauxite board. There was another family that was all the other party. The banks were basically foreign with Canada having the biggest bank there. But the old money, I think, supported the JLP, Jamaica Labor Party, the other party.

Q: When the ambassador was PNGed was there a period of time where you were working under a chargé?

BREER: Yes.

Q: Did a new ambassador come out while you were there?

BREER: Yes.

Q: Who was that?

BREER: Ashley Hewitt was the new incoming DCM and served as chargé until the new ambassador arrived. The new ambassador was Sumner Gerard from Philadelphia and a banker or something. A very nice man. He arrived in the summer of 1974 and things settled down quite a

bit.

Q: There was quite a change?

BREER: Oh, yes.

Q: Did he understand that there was need to repair the damage?

BREER: Yes, very much.

Q: What about relations with Cuba? I imagine we were reporting on this or was it left in the hands of the CIA?

BREER: More in the hands of the CIA, which, by the way predicted that Hugh Shearer would win the 1972 election and my predecessor predicted that Michael Manley would.

Q: A classic case of the foreign service versus the CIA.

BREER: I think we have been more generally right. Nobody handles Cuba more than I reported on exchanges back and forth. There was one time when I was down there when Jamaica's biggest agricultural foreign exchange export was sugar and they were importing sugar from Cuba. They had a quota to fill with the UK and they ran out of sugar for local use and had to buy it from Cuba at one point.

Q: Had the Jamaican community in the United States established enough roots to become a political power the way other groups had?

BREER: In local politics probably. There was and is such a huge concentration in Queens in New York City. Most of the Jamaican migrants to New York were pretty well educated people.

Q: One always notices in our politics that often the African American leaders who really move to the fore often have a Jamaican or Caribbean background. Barbara Watson, Stokely Carmichael, etc. They don't seem to have suffered from whatever the problems are within the United States proper. They come with a certain amount of both education and drive.

BREER: Yes, a middle class self-consciousness. A lot of them come from middle class or professional families.

Q: They seem to get ahead. It reminds one of Asians who come to the United States. They are not wasting their energy in feeling put upon. When you left Jamaica in 1974 in what direction did you feel Jamaica was headed?

BREER: I also kept in touch with the leader of the opposition too, Edward Seaga, who was a Harvard graduate and eventually became prime minister. He didn't do a very good job either. It is a tough proposition. There isn't much to work with. I felt Jamaica was in for a hard economic time and therefore social tensions would persist with huge unemployment. Kingston had some

elegant suburbs up toward the hills but otherwise was dreadful. The government tried redevelopment projects. I don't know what it is like now.

Q: Did you see that bauxite was becoming less important?

BREER: During my time there it was still very important and was the major export. I think it was still expanding but bauxite is not a rare commodity and there was growing competition from Surinam, Ghana, etc. The Jamaicans were trying to squeeze everything they could get out of it. They were squeezing the companies more, and probably rightly so. The original deals were probably one-sided with the middle man making out well. I think they are still exporting bauxite but... The emphasis went on tourism but a lot of tourism is backed by foreign investment and profits often go back outside the country. There was a huge influx in the '60s of second home buyers and developers all up and down the north coast. These projects employ a lot of local people but a lot of the stuff is owned by outsiders.

Q: Were there an increase in community guards?

BREER: Yes, guarded communities existed all over the north coast. All the hotels and resorts have their own security forces.

Q: In 1974 where did you go?

BREER: To Japan.

KENNETH N. ROGERS
Jamaica, Guyana Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1973-1974)

Kenneth N. Rogers was born in New York in 1931. He received his BA from Ohio State University in 1953, and his UJD from George Washington University in 1958. His career includes postings abroad in Hong Kong, Saigon, Luanda, Kingston, and Tangier. He was interviewed on October 21, 1997, by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

ROGERS: I was assigned to be the Jamaica and Guyana desk officer. I worked those talks. I made trips to Jamaica to review all aspects of U.S. investments there.

Q: You were there on the Jamaica and Guyana desk from 1973 to when?

ROGERS: 1973 to 1974. Then, I was assigned to the only bad assignment I ever had at the request of a friend from Vietnam who had become a very senior officer in ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency). He had me assigned to ACDA. It was interesting. I learned a lot about nuclear weapons proliferation, and chemical and biological warfare. But, suddenly, this mentor, who shall remain nameless, was transferred elsewhere. I was isolated high and dry. The

Arms Control people who worked there had no interest in arms control at all, but quite the reverse. I was sent on a trip around parts of South America having to do with nuclear weapons proliferation. We were concerned that Brazil and Argentina were making nuclear weapons.

Q: I've had many other people discuss this issue, so I'd like to get your view.

ROGERS: We were really worried about that. Because I had had Latin American experience, I was assigned by ACDA to go with a physicist and another person to try to ferret this out. The trip also took us to Chile, Peru, and Mexico. Argentina and Brazil were the main targets of the trip. The concern was that they were going to buy a reactor called the Becker Nozzle System. This would permit weapons grade untraceable byproduct to come out of the reactor so that they could, without IAEA monitoring, make nuclear bombs. There is a Westinghouse similar product of similar price. We were trying to encourage them to buy not the German Becker, but the Westinghouse model which we could monitor well for a lot of reasons, partly because our engineers were supervising it. That was the main project. I was assigned to write the report on this trip and I did so. As an experienced FSO, I cleared each part of the report with the desk officer of each of the countries we visited. The then director of ACDA, Fred Iklé, sent word down that I had shown my trip report to the State Department and this was a terrible thing to do. I said, "What are you talking about? It's the same government. They have to do the work after we leave." They were furious. I was so shocked at attitude. I was in shaky condition, then. Suddenly, a call came that "We need somebody in Angola right away, because there has been a coup in Portugal. They're going to have independence in about three months. Could you go? We have all kinds of terrible problems on reporting, refugees, American citizen protection, that sort of thing." I said, "Sure, whatever is needed." I was delighted to escape ACDA. It still was an exciting and dramatic challenge. Within 36 hours, I was on my way to Angola.

HERMAN REBHAN
General Secretary, International Metalworkers Federation
Washington, DC (1974-1989)

Herman Rebham was born in Poland and raised in Germany. He came with his family to the United States in 1938 and settled in Cleveland, Ohio. After working in auto manufacturing plants in the Midwest, he became Administrative Assistant to United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther, and dealt with domestic and international labor matters throughout his career. In 1972 he became the United Auto Workers Director of International Affairs in Washington, D.C. Mr. Rebham died in 2006. Mr. Rebham was interviewed by James F. Shea and Don R. Kienzle in 1995.

REBHAN: I had a similar thing [happen] in Jamaica. Who was Prime Minister of Jamaica?

Shea: Edward Seaga.

REBHAN: Not Seaga. Before Seaga. He [Michael Manley] went through training in the Steelworkers Union. He was from the Bauxite Workers Union. He recently [declined to run for Prime Minister] because he has cancer. Anyway, he was the Prime Minister. We had a Latin American conference and the Prime Minister was going to come and the ambassadors were at the meeting, and in my speech. . . -- They were horsing around with Castro at the time. The Cubans sent a lot of teachers and health officers to Jamaica at that period. -- I criticized Jamaican policy and I said, "If Pinochet sent troops to South Africa to defend South Africa like Castro sends, what would you say?" The Prime Minister got furious at that. He had to answer me in his speech, and the next day the opposition paper published my whole speech.

FREDERICK IRVING
Ambassador
Jamaica (1977-1978)

Ambassador Irving was born and raised in Rhode Island and educated at Brown University and Tufts University. After service in World War II, he worked in the Bureau of the Budget in Washington, DC before joining the State Department in 1951. In the course of his career with the State Department he served in several regional and other bureaus in senior level positions. In 1972 Mr. Irving was named United States Ambassador to Iceland, where he served until 1976. From 1977 to 1978 he served as US Ambassador to Jamaica. His other foreign posts were Vienna and Wellington. The Ambassador was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2013.

Q: Well, I'm thinking, Fred, why don't we call it quits and set up another time, because we do want to talk about Jamaica.

IRVING: You know, every ambassador makes a call on the prime minister. Let me tell you about a previous U.S. ambassador's call on the Prime Minister.

Q: OK.

IRVING: And the fellow that told this to me escorted de Roulet to meet the Prime Minister. When Michael Manley put out his hand to shake de Roulet's our ambassador said, "Sorry Mr. Prime Minister, but I don't shake hands with a black man."

Q: Oh God, I can't --

IRVING: Yes. And this has to be true because the Jamaican chief of staff to Michael Manley, also told this to me, so it has to be true. And why Manley tolerated him is beyond me. Also, about a year or so later, there was a hearing on a Jamaican bauxite issue, and also drugs, you know, because Jamaica was a hot place for marijuana. There was another job that was in my portfolio -- to get Jamaica to stop producing marijuana. De Roulet was called to testify at the senate hearing about this topic and about bauxite. He replied that we would have no trouble on

bauxite and all that. So the stupid de Roulet says, "Don't worry about Manley. I've got him in my back pocket." And this was a public hearing, open to the public.

Q: Oh nice. Oh God.

IRVING: Yes, it hit the press (*laughs*).

Q: Well, of course.

IRVING: So when de Roulet came back to Kingston two days later, he was declared *persona non grata*, which was obviously what they should do, what Manley should have done, kicked him out right away. And another thing about de Roulet is that he had rubber stamps made up in the form of animals. Like he'd say, "The DCM, from now on when I want to send for you or send a piece of paper to you, you will be the lion. And here's the stamp." For economic officer, "You will be the tiger. Here's the stamp." And that's how he communicated to members of the embassy, with these rubber stamps. Also, the symbol of the embassy, you know, the big medal round thing, he took it off and put it on his yacht. He had a yacht in Kingston that was bigger than the biggest military vessel in Kingston. And that used to grate the government. Again, I was told this by the prime minister's office. So he got kicked out and who should he be replaced? By another guy, political, who was almost as bad. And that guy interfered openly and blatantly in local elections in Jamaica. And that didn't sit too well with the government. But they let him stay.

Q: How the hell did this happen? I mean I would have thought that after one disaster they would have spent some time making sure it wasn't going to happen again.

IRVING: Yes. And each guy said that they paid \$300,000 for the -- to the Republican National Committee. De Roulet said he thought he was getting Austria and I forgot what the other guy was supposed to have said he was getting -- I think France or something like that. And what did they do? They sent him to, quote -- well, I'll use the polite term -- "negro" country, unquote.

Q: Oh God.

IRVING: So this is the situation I walked into (*laughs*). You know, it's ridiculous. So then I was -- my name was sent forward. I had a very easy time in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee --

Q: Well, did they -- did the Foreign Relations Committee make any allusions to the disasters and --

IRVING: (*laughs*) Well, I think one of them said, "Do you know what you're getting into, Mr. Ambassador?"

I said, "Just somewhat, somewhat. I'm not quite sure." And I related what I was told about what I'll be facing. They knew I was sticking my head in the lion's den.

Q: Well, the morale must have been awful.

IRVING: To be honest about it, it was a -- they all had a good time together. They couldn't care less about what's going on in Jamaica, as far as the United States was concerned. And I guess this was what Phil Habib was referring to. The agrément took a little while. And I couldn't figure out why. And then when the agrément came and I arrived in Kingston, I was told that because of the types of people that the United States had sent previously they asked Congressmen Rangel to investigate me and my wife regarding our racial attitude.

Q: Oh yes, Rangel, from New York.

IRVING: Yes, yes.

Q: Black congressman.

IRVING: Yes, congressman, yes. And he, in turn, had Howard University, which was a black university, investigate my wife and me. And as far as our racial feelings were concerned and our opinion, and this I was told by Michael Manley, because he wanted to make sure that this time they weren't going to get the disasters that they had before me. Manley and I hit it off beautifully.

Q: All right. Well, let's talk a bit about the political situation when you arrived there.

IRVING: Yes. There were two political parties mainly, the National Party and the People's Party. The National Party, I think it was the National Party, was Manley and the other party, the People's Party, which was very, very much pro-American. I called on both party heads of course and when I met the party that was defeated, the People's Party, the first thing he said was, "I suppose we'll have the same relationship as my predecessors that I will keep him very much informed on at least a weekly basis if not daily on my conversations with Prime Minister Manley, and I would seek his advice on matters." That was Seaga. Apparently, our two ambassadors had a close relationship with Seaga and it was a question in my mind as to who is running the embassy, Seaga or our ambassadors. So I said, "Well, Mr. Seaga, I'm neutral when it comes to the political parties and I'm sure that you will know what I'm doing in the country, the same way that the government is knowing. And there are some things I'm sure of course that I will not tell you."

So he got mad and said, "Then you're going to have a hard time here, and I'm going to see to it," or something like that. So I figured oh boy.

I got invited by the yacht club for afternoon coffee. So I went. Made up of all white people. And they told me what a close relationship they had with my two predecessors and they assume I will continue the practice of any time a white person or white Jamaican or, or a member of the yacht club wants a visa, can they assume it will be automatic? And I said no, you cannot assume it's going to be automatic as far as I'm concerned. The ambassador cannot interfere in the issuance of visas. And whatever happened before I arrived, if it's legitimate fine, if it isn't, then forget it. And that was the last time I got invited there. So what I was doing is wanting to know for what

basis my predecessors formed -- and it was evident that they would do anything that they thought maybe Manley didn't know to sort of thwart the current, the new government. Now, another thing on the political side, Manley said his government will be open to me. Interesting, as we were having a cup of coffee when I presented my credentials, Manley said, "Oh by the way, do I have a yacht?"

And I said, "Mr. Prime Minister, no, I don't. I have only a canoe. But don't get me wrong, I sure would like to have a yacht."

We both had a laugh and he said, "You know, I like you," (*laughs*).

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: And actually, this type of thing was written up and published in, I think in Harper's monthly magazine here. Well, anyway on my first day at the embassy there was a dead body on the doorstep of the embassy. And I said, "What in the world is going on?" So we had the body removed. The next day there was another dead body at the embassy. I figured, "Oh boy, here we go again. This must be a sign of anti-Americanism." And I had CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) do a little investigating, and they told me that the body of yesterday was a Manley's party body guy. The body the next day was Seaga's body guy. This went on, believe it or not, for two weeks. Each day a dead body on my embassy doorstep. So I figured, you know, this can't go on because I had suddenly two young FSO's wives are scared and they wanted to go home. And I couldn't really stop them because they were really frightened. So I asked the CIA who their leaders were which I then named the "mafia". And they gave me the names of the mafia chiefs, if you will, of each of the parties. Each political party had a military force or police force of their own. They were the ones who were leaving the dead bodies. So I called them to the embassy and the first thing I had them do is give the Marine Guards all the weapons they were carrying. And believe it or not, these guys had a total of 17 knives and three pistols --

Q: Good God!

IRVING: -- that the Marine Guard confiscated before they were allowed to see me. And I read the riot act to them. I said, "I am tired of your leaving dead bodies here. If you want to kill each other, that's your business. But it's my business if you put them on my doorstep and I'm giving you a warning. You're going to regret doing this. Now, let's make a deal." And we had a long conversation.

I finally got them to agree that they will not harm me, harm my wife, my family, or any other person who was with me, politicians of any or both parties. Also, that they will no longer leave dead bodies on my embassy doorstep. It worked very well...! Sometimes a politician of one party wanted to go to another part of Kingston controlled by the other party. I would escort him. Formerly, if he tried it, he would find a knife in his back!

Q: Well, had these gangs displayed any anti-Americanism or was this sort of a local feud type thing?

IRVING: Well, it was a local thing, but they figured why not have it do double duty? Because there was a lot of anti-Americanism? And I think Habib and the Secretary of State really assessed the situation quite accurately. They didn't like Americans. Castro had a great influence on the government and somewhat on even the opposition party. So I at least calmed some of the anti-Americanism by the blatant members of the party that were the dangerous members of the party. And my wife moved in on the various organizations and they liked her very much. She was an early childhood education specialist -- well, my wife was a teacher of early childhood education. She discovered that there was no such organization in Jamaica. So she went to the Minister of Education and talked him into the need for that kind of a teacher's organization. He then said, "You've got me convinced, but she should see Manley." And so she made an appointment to see Manley and she talked to him and Manley said, "Oh, that's in his fifth year of the third five-year plan." And by the time she left Manley's office, it was moved up to the first year of the first five-year plan. That really impressed --

Q: Oh yes.

IRVING: -- the Teacher's Association. And Manley said he liked her and he would hope that he would have more contact with her. So right away we're starting to eat into the strident anti-Americanism.

Q: Well, how did you evaluate Manley as a leader? I mean, you know, he had this proclivity to look upon Castro as being a good model, but how did you -- what was driving Manley?

IRVING: Well, he felt that the bauxite people were trying to control Jamaica, point number one. Point number two, he thought Castro did a lot of good things, especially in the health fields for his people. And Jamaica was really suffering from health problems. When Manley came into office, the doctors made an exodus for from Jamaica. When I got to Jamaica I asked the Minister of Health what's the health situation. And he said, "They're all leaving. There are now only 63 doctors in the whole country." And he doesn't know how to stop them.

And I said, "Oh, I know how you can try, This may be interfering in your internal affairs, but, why don't you calm down? Why don't you listen to the pleas of the business community and the health community and all that?"

He said, "Well, well," well, he hmm-ed and hah-ed.

And I said, "Well, it's worth a try."

That helped the situation. I've also got to tell you that during my two years in Jamaica the government had my phone tapped. He knew I knew and I knew that he knew he was tapping it. So we were always careful what we said in our phone conversations.

And another thing, Manley saw that they were losing tourism. And I said to him, "You know, tourism is a big moneymaker in Jamaica. Has it occurred to you to say "please and hello" and all that sort of stuff?"

And he said, "Well, it's worth a try." And again, we moved in.

Manley still didn't admit that he was tapping my phones. When my staff and I had telephone conversations, I warned them, "Don't talk in specifics." Well, one day the AID chief and I had a disagreement during a phone conversation.

And then (*laughs*) a voice broke in and said, "You know, the ambassador's right. Because I'm the one monitoring the phone that day."

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: Then she says, "Oops!" And then she *begged* me not to tell the government.

I said, "Oh, I knew you were listening in, so forget it." Well, that won another friend in the phone system.

So you see, little by little by little we chipped away to a point where when we left, and I'm skipping a whole lot, of course, Michael Manley for the first time since he said he's been a prime minister, he gave a luncheon reception in honor of my wife. The foreign minister, when it was customary for him to give a luncheon in honor of a departing ambassador, scheduled one for me and my wife. When we got there, I looked and I said, "You know, I don't know these people."

And my wife said, "Oh yes," they're her contacts.

I said, "Oh, this is not for me. It's a scheme to have it look legitimate. It's really for her." And when it came to the speech by the Foreign Minister to which I was supposed to respond, I said, "Mr. Foreign Minister, you know and I know that this is really for Dorothy. So I'm going to let her respond to your speech," so we all had a good laugh and we all had a good time.

The Minister of Interior, who, you know, handles the police, also, had a reception in our honor. He made a speech saying, "We're sorry you must go Mr. Ambassador, but must you take Dorothy with you? She is irreplaceable."

So I said, "Fine. I agree with you completely. So Dorothy, you respond." So we all had a good laugh. And she did. And by that time, within two years, I think I could say, the anti-Americanism did get lower.

On the marijuana issue, Jamaica was a major grower and exporter to the United States. Two of the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) people came down to see what they could do. They weren't getting any place. They appealed to me. So I took them to the Minister of Health and said, "I want you to listen to them, if you don't mind. It would be a personal favor if you would." So the two DEA agents convinced the Minister of Health. Within two years, when I was leaving, Manley cut off the exports of marijuana to the United States. So I can say that we did something that Secretary Vance wanted us to do and so did our Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration. They gave me a citation for my work on that. Now, my last six months, I actually had trouble getting rid of the 8-Balls in the embassy. And I needed the cooperation of

the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs.

Q: Who was that?

IRVING: The Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs came down, visited, saw the crappy place where people waited for visas, which was a disgrace. And it was always under criticism by the government and the opposition. Both parties said don't believe what the U.S. government says about human rights, etc. They've denied visa applicants water fountains and they've denied them toilets.

Q: Oh God, yes.

IRVING: It's true. I mean if you went into the ally, you had to hold your nose. So I said, "I'm going to improve this and I'm going to fight forever if I have to, because this also generates anti-Americanism."

Now, Barbara Watson, the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs who came down insisted that I get rid of the consul general who was a racist, and he was. He was.

And I said, "Well, I'm going to need your help."

So she said, "You've got it. You've got it 100%."

So I started to make a move. And suddenly Barbara Watson did an about face. And I said, "What's going on? I need your help now, I'm at that point."

She said, "Oh, you're going to have to rely on somebody else," because she had been notified that she's going to get an ambassadorship. She's going to go to, I think it's --

Q: Malaysia.

IRVING: Malaysia. Yes. I said, "Well, I'll be darned. You told me you're going to help me and I counted on it."

"Well, you're on your own. And you'll have to do it yourself because I'm not going to jeopardize my ambassadorship," that's what she told me.

I said, "Great."

So then I turned to the Office of Personnel. The guy who's in charge of this area. And we had served together actually in CU at one time. He was staff aide to the Assistant Secretary for Education and Cultural Affairs. Trying to think of his name. And I explained the problem. And what do you think he said? "Fred, we've known each other a long time. I know you're able. Don't count on me to help."

I said, "I suppose you're going to get an ambassadorship."

He said, "You guessed it." And he wasn't going to jeopardize his pending ambassadorship.

Q: Oh my God.

IRVING: I figured this is ridiculous. I can't get these people to help me get rid of these people. They were hypocrites. And so I started to get discouraged, to be honest with you.

Let me give you another piece of what they said regarding the physical conditions of the visa office that applicants had to tolerate. "If we improve the conditions for the visa applicants, we'll get more of them!" Our visa officers, of course, had air-conditioned offices, water fountains, toilets, etc. all visible to the applicants.

Barbara Watson was then replaced with Joan Clark, wonderful person. Absolutely wonderful. So I explained the situation and I said, "We need a new building. There's a new building going up. We could lease it. We're at the point, at the stage where we could specify what we want in it. Let's have some benches, let's have a water cooler, and let's have a few toilets for men and for women."

And Joan was a pretty practical person. And she said, "You know, I've heard about how rotten it is there. Give me a couple of weeks." And sure enough, she was able to get the money to lease a new building. You'd be *amazed* how the anti-American press became favorable to us. And I think we recaptured what we thought we had lost.

Q: Well, let me talk a bit about the Consular Section visas. Now, in Jamaica there are an awful lot of Americans who hire Jamaicans to do things and who come to the United States essentially illegally by saying they were going to be tourists and are really going for jobs. Technically the ambassador can't do anything about that. But --

IRVING: That's true.

Q: But you do have the power of efficiency reports.

IRVING: *(laughs)*

Well, let's go on to another topic that did involve visas. Michael Manley was the leader of the group that opposed western world actions – the so-called neutral group -- the international group that opposed us on international economic issues.

Q: Yes, the Non-Aligned Movement.

IRVING: The Non-Aligned Movement, yes. They and India, yes, some of the others. The United Nations was going to honor Michael Manley. So the prime minister came to me and he said, "He's having visa problems."

I says, "Don't tell me you didn't get a visa."

He says, “Oh no, no, they wouldn’t dare not.”

But his assistant couldn’t get a visa. I said, “You’re kidding,” (*laughs*). So I called in the consul general and I said, “I heard that so and so, who is the prime minister’s second in command was refused a visa.”

So he said, “Yes, that’s right.”

I said, “What have you got against the prime minister’s chief of staff?”

He said, “Well, how do we know that he’s going to come back and doesn’t stay in the United States?”

I says, “Let’s be realistic. Do you honestly think that Michael Manley’s chief of staff, the guy he relies on, the second in command, is not going to return to Jamaica?”

And he said, “Well,” and he mentioned the FSO’s name and said, “That he was not allowed to overrule him.”

I said, “The hell you can’t You’re the Consul General. You can take the case away from him.”

And he said, “Oh, that would create bad morale.”

I said, “You know, I think I’m going to come over to the consulate in a couple of weeks and just have a general discussion as to what U.S. policy is towards to Jamaica. And it’s about time we discussed this.”

So he said, “Well, then it might be considered as interfering in the rights of the consular officers.” Nothing that I said should have been interpreted as violating actions by a visa officer based on concerns that a visa officer has about issuing a visa. But I believe I have a right to know what those concerns are, since, as ambassador, I am the one who has to defend his actions.

I said that this is incredible (*laughs*) and I decided that the next country team meeting will be at the consulate. As a matter fact, I always included the consul general in the country team meetings every week. And the consul general, a new consul general, came from London I think - or was it Greece? One or the other. And the first thing he told me when he made his call on me was he wants me to know that the Consular Section is not part of the embassy. I said, “Where’d you hear that?”

He says, “Oh, it goes back to the law. There’s a diplomatic law and a consular law.”

And I said, “Oh, I’ve got news for you. I know that I can’t interfere in visa issuance, but the consulate sure as hell is part of the embassy and don’t you forget it.” I asked him why we need a consul general if you had no authority to review contentious visa matters. I asked him was he aware that most, if not all ambassadors, are also commissioned as consul generals, as I am?

And then he changed the subject and said, "We work so many hours overtime, we need more people."

So I called in the embassy's administrative officer with the consul general present and said, "This may be true. Work with the consul general and make a survey for a week or two weeks, to make it even fairer, and have them jot down how much overtime each consular officer works." Well, the survey showed that not a single consular officer worked more than a half hour overtime total in any week, if that. And I didn't know what they were trying to pull, but I didn't let them get away with it.

I always felt that the rest of the embassy could learn a lot about the atmosphere in the country and what goes on because a consular officer, along with the administrative officer, is often the first contact with the citizens of the country. That's why I felt that it was important to have the consulate represented in the country team.

Now, I want to come back to the visa. What I had to do is -- I said to the consul general, "I will guarantee the return of the chief of staff and a few others in the prime minister's immediate office." And he said all right, if I will jot down that I will personally guarantee their return, they will issue the visas. And I did that and of course they all came back. The new consul general was starting a fight with me trying to say that I had no right to even call him to the embassy or even to invite him to the country team meetings.

Q: You know, I've been a consul general --

IRVING: Certainly the situation -- because I wasn't getting the cooperation of the office personnel, or the consuls in the office personnel.

Let me tell you one more, it deals with policy. There was a head of government meeting with President Carter and Michael Manley in the White House. Michael Manley's wife was the head of the anti-American party cell. She was so anti-American, it was dripping from her. And she also was a member of the government. Manley said he wanted his wife present because she's a key member of his political party. And I find that Washington said, "Well, there's no need for her."

And I said, "Look, she's a member of the political party. She's in Michael Manley's government cabinet. You cannot exclude her."

So I dealt directly with the White House on this one, because I wasn't going to let the Inter-American Affairs Bureau make that determination. I could think of nothing worse. The prime minister wouldn't come to Washington then if he couldn't take his wife in her capacity as the leader, leading person in the government. So now we get to the Oval Office. And then somebody, I don't know, some special assistant to somebody, and then Brzezinski suddenly decides that wives are not invited to the Oval Office for the meeting. So again, I had to get involved. And Terry Todman was the Assistant Secretary. He was a decent guy. And he said, "I'll take care of it." And there was a big hullabaloo about it almost in public in the public

rooms. And finally Manley said, "She stays." So of course she stayed. I wrote some of the discussion points for the president and there was going to be cooperation on the business side. President Carter said he would like to suggest that there be a commission made up of maybe six American businessmen and six Jamaican businessmen to see how the trade between our two countries can be stabilized and then maybe increase to the benefit of both. And Manley bought it immediately. Terry Todman thought this was a good idea. Brzezinski was absolutely silent, which was rather unusual. And the bilateral discussions went very, very, very well. And President Carter said to me, "Fred, I'm going to hold you responsible to make sure this gets organized and this works well."

And Manley said, "I agree. Your ambassador, Fred Irving, is the ideal person because now Jamaica loves him and he's so friendly to Jamaica." That's a quote, end quote.

So when I get back to the country and about a week later I get a very short message. "Forget the president's proposal. Don't do anything about it." That surprised me. This was Carter's own suggestion. Something wrong, there's something wrong.

So after six weeks go by and Manley called me and said, "What's holding it up? Why are we not proceeding?" And he's already designated his six men. And I had to make up some cock and bull story.

I said, "Well, I guess we're just having trouble identifying the best American businessmen." So then I sent an eyes only president, and I hear nothing. I tried to telephone the president. I was blocked and I was told I should call the Secretary of State's office. So I called. Suddenly I could not get connected to him. So somebody was blocking it.

About two weeks after I tried to reach him, I get a call from Secretary Vance saying, "The President wants to know what's holding it up, why am I stalling."

And what I should have said was, "Brzezinski told me to forget it," but I wasn't that sure. But it wasn't until I left the ambassadorship, made a call on Vance and he asked me why was I stalling. I said, "Didn't he get my message?"

He says no. He says, "As a matter fact, I'm disappointed," he's disappointed because he was counting on me to send him messages on Castro because Jamaica was a good listening post.

And I said, "Mr. Secretary, I was sending you messages on Castro just about every third week." And he said he never got them. It was later I found that there was somebody in Secretary Vance's office who was withholding them. Now I cannot, you know, say it was Brzezinski. But I sure as hell think it was. And he had people all around the place that were blocking messages. Vance was so upset when I told him this that he asked me and my wife to come to his house the next evening for coffee and let's talk. And we spent two hours with him and his wife. So now I suspect this was going on. Now Brzezinski's policy toward not only Jamaica, but a lot of the semi-underdeveloped countries was if the country is opposed to any part of the United States policy then put them in the unfriendly category. President Carter told me just before going to Jamaica that his policy, Carter's policy, was that there are all gradations of being against. If the

country is doing something that has no adverse affect on the United States, then forget it. If the country does something that may have an affect on U.S. relations or activities in the area, then discuss it with the prime minister and let him know that we have some difficulty with that and won't he consider some other activity. But, he said, don't make a big production out of it. If the country does something that is clearly inimical to our interest, then move in with two feet and two hands and try to dissuade them of that policy and consider whether we should take certain actions or not. So there were three gradations President Carter personally told me as far as Jamaica is concerned. You could see how that differs from Brzezinski.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: And you know, when there was a chief of mission meeting in Washington, oh, after I'd been there a year, and he made it clear to all of us FSOs who were ambassadors that he doesn't see the need for FSO's. They're just in the middle. They interfere too much. And he's not sure that even we, FSO's, know anything about the foreign policy of the United States. So that gives you some idea as to what I was up against (*laughs*). So, and there are a lot of other things that went on.

When Castro came to Jamaica on a state visit and Michael Manley asked me if I would be at the airport, of course all the other ambassadors said they would if the American ambassador would. So Manley said, "Please, please, we'll make it worth your while, interest in the United States."

And I said, "Oh, well what the hell." And I said, "Well, I'll call the State Department." This was on a Saturday morning. And by this time Pete Vaky took over, and he was out of the office that Saturday. And there was -- the deputy assistant secretary, she was a political appointee. And people who knew her said she was a birdbrain. And I figured well -- I told her why I was calling and did they have any ideas.

And the conversation went this way. She would say, "Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God. Do you have to -- did I," -- and all that sort of stuff.

I said, "I gather you would rather not tell me."

And she said -- well, she said, "No."

So I said, "Let me change the purpose of my call. The purpose of my call is to let you know that I'm going to shake Castro's hand. Have a good day." So I told Michael Manley, "Sure, I'm going to shake his hand. But I'm not going to smile. I'm not going to say anything, not going to say good morning. Just going to shake his hand."

She said well -- he said, "Well, fine." And of course when Castro came and shook the hands of everybody and he got to me and shook my hand, and what do you know? The press took a picture of me shaking hands. And Walter Cronkite put it up on that evening's television program news. 53 congressmen signed a letter to Secretary Vance wanting to know why the United States has a commie sympathizer as an ambassador to Jamaica, namely me. Vance just ignored them.

But I'll tell you what happened. The next day I get a message supposedly from Castro. He was meeting with the group of the young Jamaican political leaders, the Communist political leaders. And he told them, and obviously he leaked it on purpose to me, that if he had to do it over again, he would not be so vigorously against the United States, he would try to make an accommodation to the United States and Jamaica is -- Cuba is suffering because of his attitude initially. And if he had it to do over again he would do it less virulently, and he told the younger Jamaican leaders, "Take it easy. Think twice before you pull the tail of the Americans," -- so I sent this off. Vance never got it.

Q: Yes. Well, did you have congressional visits?

IRVING: Not in Jamaica, no.

Q: How about, were you getting all sorts of mail from congressional people saying their constituent was trying to get a maid and we weren't giving them visas and that sort of thing?

IRVING: No, I never got any of those, believe it or not.

Q: Because I'm told that that's pretty much stock and trade today.

IRVING: Oh, I wouldn't be surprised.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: No, I expected I would, and I never did. Which was surprising.

I used to get letters or telegrams from congressmen on visas, or some veteran living down there is having trouble with the Veteran's Administration, that type of thing. And the, you know, I would contact the veteran or have someone contact the veteran and, you know, have them call the VA and find out what the problem is. I've had more of those than any visas.

Q: Was it safe for Americans to come as tourists to Jamaica in those days?

IRVING: It was not, not good because they would get robbed. They would get put in jail, however, because they unknowingly brought in too much Jamaican currency. They'd get put in jail because the law in -- at least when I was there -- was they could only bring in five dollars worth of Jamaican dollars. Yet, in Miami all the banks advertise they have plenty of Jamaican money and American tourists not knowing the law, Jamaican law, would buy maybe 100 dollars worth in Miami. And when they come into Jamaica they would be asked, "Do you have any money to declare?" And they say yes, and they declare the Jamaican dollars. And bam, they're thrown in jail. And one day I discovered that the jail in Kingston, where they put all these people, was loaded with American citizens. And of course they're screaming. And Jamaican government keeps saying, "Look, please, can you make the American banks in Miami put up a sign or something that that you can't take any more than X number of Jamaican money?" And I'm told constantly by Washington the United States cannot do that.

So I tell the Jamaican government, "How about you making a sign and putting it there and trying to work with the banks in Miami. They said they tried that, but the banks say no. And why should they, because they want to get rid of the Jamaican money."

I tried to get our consul general involved, but he thought that would be interfering in the internal affairs of the Jamaican government!

So I then again got a hold of the Minister of Interior and raised hell. Every time I did I would get an American off and then I insisted that they not close the jails -- that they keep the door open so these Americans until they could pay their fine or something or we can straighten things out, they could walk in and out. And I got a complaint one day from the minister saying I must think they're running a hotel because they're just walking in and out. They're all eating meals being brought in from local restaurants. I told him, "Well, I'll tell you how you can stop that. Release them on probation and then forget about it," which they then did. But I got a lot of complaints from -- oh yes, one, one was put in jail because the immigration official said he thought that the 100-dollar bill of an American tourist was a forgery. So I said, "I've got to be honest with you. I don't think I've ever seen a 100-dollar bill."

So I called a consular officer. And she said, "Does it say In God We Trust?"

I said, "I don't know. Please go down there, if you will, and find out for yourself."

So she came back and called me, "It's phony. Because it doesn't have In God We Trust." Or maybe it was the other way around, I don't remember. And he was screaming.

And I told her, "Call the United States and find out whether it says In God We Trust or it doesn't say In God We Trust. And she said all right. And then two days went by, three days I think and I didn't hear from her. And she said oh, she forgot. And I read the Riot Act to her, frankly, which the consul general thought I was stepping on his toes. So I told him, "Well, maybe I should read the Riot Act to you, Mr. Consul General." This was a guy who also, by the way, said that he's going to put in -- and he did -- all the vice consuls in the Consular Section that a condition of an immigrant visa, if the applicant can qualify otherwise, must agree to live in a certain part of the United States for a minimum of two to five years. I said, "You can't do that!" And I had another argument about what the United States law is and who am I to interpret the foreign policy of the United States and all that. And of course they were -- whatever it was in God We Trust and all that. But whatever the visa officer who said it's all right to put this tourist in jail, was wrong. Whatever, that tourist did not have a phony 100-dollar bill, and he was ready to sue the Jamaican government and United States government. I talked him out of it and wished him well.

You know, by this time my two years was up and I called. Meantime, Phil Habib had a heart attack and died. And I decided my two years were up and I've got to make up my mind, do I go to Harvard or not. I'm making progress, but I'm not satisfied with the pace. This is a lousy embassy. And so I wrote a letter of resignation. And I got the usual perfunctory one paragraph signed by -- this time it was Christopher who was the deputy secretary. And suddenly I was told the president wants to see that letter that supposedly went to him for his signature accepting my resignation. And then I got a call from a special assistant to the president saying the president

decided that he's going to write the letter himself personally. And boy, what a beautiful letter it was, I'm telling you. And he congratulated and thanked my wife as well. It also said, you know, I'm sorry that you're resigning, but I want you to know should you decide to come back, I would welcome it. Now, isn't that a sweet letter?

DONOR M. LION
USAID Director and Economic Counselor
Kingston (1977-1979)

Donor M. Lion was born in Manhattan and raised in Brooklyn. He attended Erasmus Hall for secondary school. He received his undergraduate degree from Harvard University. He then earned a master's degree in Buffalo before returning to Harvard to obtain his Ph.D. All of his degrees were in the field of economics. His first overseas assignment was working with the Marshall Plan in Norway. He has also served abroad in Brazil, Jamaica, Guyana, Peru, and Thailand. He was interviewed by W. Haven North on June 25, 1997.

Q: After a year there, then you went where?

LION: The US ambassador to Jamaica, designate, came to the bureau and I was asked to brief him on Jamaica. That selection was made because we had decided to help Jamaica some months before that, resume a bilateral program or something. I was made chief of a group that went down there: a fellow from Treasury, a fellow from AID, a fellow from State and I were asked to draw up a program of assistance to Jamaica, a multi-year program. So I learned a lot about Jamaica and what its needs were during that time. I don't know how many weeks we were down there. I was considered the expert on Jamaica in the bureau, which meant that nobody else knew about Jamaica and I knew a little bit.

Fred Irving, who was ambassador to Jamaica, newly selected or designated at that point, I don't remember, came to the bureau and I was asked to brief him. We sat down, chatted for a while then we had lunch in the executive dining room. He said to Lalo, "I want this guy in Jamaica." Lalo said to me, "Donor, you can go anywhere in the bureau that you want to." I said, "I'll go to one of two places, please, I'll go to Jamaica or Haiti." I was a glutton for punishment.

Q: That's right.

LION: So it was kind of a coincidence. Our ambassador to Jamaica wanted me. Jamaica was one of the two countries that I would like to go to. So, I ended up in Jamaica as the Economic Counselor and the AID director.

That was an interesting experience because I had to supervise the commercial attaché, or whatever they called him then, since I was also the Economic Counselor. But that didn't work too well because State Department people never paid any attention to a personnel evaluation written by an AID person. Not in those days, they may have improved since but they didn't then.

So in a way, John, who was a wonderful, nice guy, was penalized by the fact that I was made the Economic Counselor. But I tried very hard to give him as much responsibility as I could because being the AID person was a full-time job. I couldn't spend a lot of time on the stuff that Economic Counselors usually do. But it was interesting trying to do that kind of combined work. I didn't enjoy that nearly as much as the combined job in Recife.

Q: What was the situation in Jamaica that you were working with?

LION: In Jamaica, the big challenge was whether we could push the Jamaican government into sensible economic policy: macro, micro, budget, fiscal, whatever. The head of Jamaica was Michael Manley, who always had been a socialist. He was educated, along with a lot of other people many years before that, at the London School of Economics, which produced several terrible policy people. Manley seemed to be receptive and was willing to explore with the IMF, a stabilization program. So that took a lot of my time, at that point.

Another thing we worked very hard on was primary health care in Jamaica. There was a major effort. Another thing in Jamaica that we worked on was trying to convert hillsides into agricultural productive locations by terracing, bulldozing and making them flat. Not successful, that did not work. The health program was useful.

Q: That started with the stabilization program where we did major balance-of-payments assistance.

LION: No. We came up with the program that we developed when I went down there, in the neighborhood of 60 million dollars. That doesn't sound like a lot but you're talking about two million people. You're talking about a country that's the size of the state of Connecticut. I think ten million of that was for balance-of-payments assistance, the rest was for agriculture and health and PL 480 and training programs and stuff like that.

Michael Manley tried, I think sincerely, to work out an agreement with the IMF. He went on national television. A magnificent speaker he was, articulate, beautiful, persuasive, trying to sell the IMF program to the people of Jamaica. And he did but his party screwed it, undermined it. Part of the agreement involved the development, what might be called a social compact, with the private sector, with the cooperation of the opposition political party. That just never came off and the agreement collapsed. But part of our work, as the AID fellow more than the Economic Counselor, was working with the IMF people who were down there. Briefing them about Jamaica and then thinking with them behind the scenes. We were not involved with the negotiations with the government, on the structure of the program. I found that very exciting. I had already been involved with multilateral coordination and regional development so it was something I was comfortable with in supporting.

Q: How did you find the IMF at that time?

LION: It depends so much on the individual they send down. The guy they sent down was very understanding, very thoughtful, reasonable. He was not, what I think IMF had been and was even after that for some years, rather formulaic about their approach to macro problems: you've got to

cut expenditures, you've got to cut the public payroll, you've got to cut tariffs. Automatic, that's what you always had to do. In the end, they did not take sufficient account, in my opinion, of the social impact. But he was not that way, so we sort of saw eye-to-eye. It just didn't work out.

Q: Basically it was because of the party?

LION: Because Manley was subverted by the extremists, the leftist extremists in his party.

Q: Which were what, protesting?

LION: He had to have their support and their cooperation. After all, they were in key positions in the government, they were the managers of the bureaucracy, they ran whatever it was, agriculture, finance, planning. There was one guy in planning who was very good and who would have supported, did support what Manley was trying to do, what the IMF was trying to do, what AID, in the background, was supporting but he was not politically potent, he was a technical person, he was an economist, Richard Fletcher, his name was, a wonderful guy. The head of the central bank for a time, was also a good guy, but he got clobbered politically.

Q: In retrospect, could there be anything that one might have been done differently that you learned from that experience?

LION: I learned that we're less powerful, less influential than we'd like to be and hope to be and sometimes think we are. It's the domestic scene that really calls the shots. I don't know whether we could have in some way persuaded the other people in the party.

Q: Engage them more in the process?

LION: I don't think that would have helped, Haven. Here is the head of the party, presumably, who was trying to do the right thing. A very powerful man, one of the most popular men in Jamaican history, Michael Manley. He was the son of Norman Manley, who was kind of like the founder of an independent Jamaica. Who wasn't able to do it.

We've always had these people in the world: fanatics, ideologues. The enemy of progress.

Q: But weren't these people, let's say, threatened in terms of their jobs, in their economic situation and so on?

LION: No. It was just an ideologue kind of thing. It was too bad.

Q: You spoke about having a health program. Did that work pretty well?

LION: There was a woman in the ministry of health, she was on contract. I believe she was English. A wonderful lady. Linda, my wife, was head of the health/population office in Jamaica. Thereby hangs a tale too. How do you work that out as mission director and office director. She and this lady got along very well.

The Jamaican health care system was in terrible shape. Few resources, not enough trained people, badly managed, inefficient, all that. That's what they were working on. I think they made some progress but we weren't there long enough.

The Jamaican program was up and down, up and down, depending on the political situation. After Manley there was a fellow named Seaga who was a moderate and whose party was more willing to undertake reforms of various kinds. But then they ran into trouble. Up and down.

Q: You said that the agricultural program of terracing didn't work. Why didn't it work?

LION: I think that the whole approach was cost ineffective. To bring in heavy equipment, how many thousands and thousands of dollars you'd spend on heavy equipment. It was more of a photo op that it ended up being. The ambassador and I, or some other people from the mission, would go out there and cut the yellow plastic rope at the front of one of these flattened terraces. The evaluations that have been done within AID around the world have indicated that that is not the way to go in most places. What works in one country, like putting rocks up to shore up some dirt and making a bed that way, worked a lot better than terracing--in some of the countries in Africa.

I wasn't there very long, '77 to '79. We were having some problems with the DCM when I was there. The DCM liked to go home on a Friday and come back on a Monday with a 15-page economics cable. He was not all that, well, these cables were not good. I think you know that I always said what I thought when I was with the agency, I always said what I thought and I didn't change when I was in Jamaica. So I used to tell this fellow, I used to suggest changes and tried to be as delicate and diplomatic as possible but by the time I got through with my corrections, suggestions, and all the rest of it, it was a different cable. This irritated the hell out of him so we didn't get along very well. The ambassador had to make a choice at the end of my two-year tour. He chose the DCM.

So I left and came back to the states and bought a house and was looking around for what I might do. When all of a sudden, Edna, who was the director in Guyana, was called back to Washington to be head of personnel.

Q: Edna Boorady.

LION: First woman personnel director. I think Linda is the second. So, they had a vacancy in Guyana and that's where I ended up, in Guyana. The house that I bought turned out to be a great investment so something good happened.

By the way, the ambassador met me at the State Department dining room a few years later and he said, "I shouldn't have done it. You should have stayed."

Q: In Jamaica

LION: Yes, Ambassador Lawrence, Larry Lawrence.

Q: You were going to Guyana, right? At this point?

LION: After Jamaica, yes. Edna was called out to be head of personnel in Washington so Guyana opened up. Alex Shakow was the PPC guy at the time. At my swearing-in, you know sometimes the PPC chief or whoever is the host makes a few comments. He said, "Couldn't think of a better person to send to Guyana." The place just roared. Sort of like Siberia or something.

DENNIS HAYS
Consular/Administrative Officer
Kingston (1977-1979)

Ambassador Dennis Hays was born into a US Navy family and was raised in the United States and abroad. He was educated at the University of Florida and Harvard University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1975, he spent the major portion of his career dealing with Latin American, particularly Mexican and Cuban, Affairs. He also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Burundi, and from 1997 to 2000 as U.S. Ambassador to Surinam. Ambassador Hays was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2001.

HAYS: There were at this point only two jobs left; B&F (Budget and Financial) officer in Lagos and vice consul in Kingston, Jamaica. There was one other guy, Brent Miller. I remember talking to the personnel person saying, "You know, Brent really has an accounting background and I think he'd do well in that job. I think that would work out well for Brent." So I took the Kingston job, and as it turns out there were three of us from my A-100 class who went there because in the previous two classes no one had been prepared to go. It had been left at the bottom of the list and no one had bid. So when our class came around, they said were going to take three from it and two out of the next class. So we became the Kingston trio. We had the consular course and were due to be shipped out. The first guy, Harold Bond, left in December. This was at the time of the second Michael Manley election in early December. So Harold is scooted out immediately, and he was there by the time of the election. He wasn't happy about it, as I remember, but it worked out. Then I went. I was supposed to go at the end of January, and I actually checked out, said goodbye, loaded the car, and was going to drive to Miami. I woke up with 104° fever, went to the doctor thinking I would get a late start, and he said I had mononucleosis. So I had to postpone my departure which made the post very unhappy because they wanted me there, of course, two months before. So that added a week and another tearful farewell to my then girlfriend who had given me the mononucleosis, and so I finally got to post on February 6, 1977.

Q: And you went as vice consul in the consular section, doing visas primarily?

HAYS: Yes, doing nonimmigrant visas. There was Harold, my classmate, and we had a supervisor. We also had what seemed at the time like thousands – but was actually hundreds – of applicants every day. My on-the-job training consisted of the supervisor – who was in his seventh year as an untenured officer at that point – coming up and doing the first two interviews.

He then patted me on the back and said, "Good luck." I had had the consular training. This was when the security consciousness was only weighing in, and we weren't quite as sophisticated as we are these days. So shortly before I arrived, they put in those flexguard windows and fortified the wall between the applicants and the people. Of course, we walked out to hand out the passports to people, and we had to go through the waiting room to get in and out and other such things, but nevertheless, we had this wall and this flexguard window that they had drilled some holes in. The problem was that sound did not go through these windows very well, and so you ended up having to lean forward on your tippy toes and scream into the windows and the person on the other side would scream back.

At that time Jamaica was having a lot of problems, a lot of violence. There was the beginning of the flight of the business class, and everybody else for that matter, and so there was very heavy demand both on the IV (immigrant visa) side and the NIV(non-immigrant visa) side. Probably 75 to 80% of first-time applicants were being denied. Like most people I had never said no to anybody in my life really about anything, sort of here take my last dollar sort of stuff, and now you're in a situation where all day unrelieved, you're telling people, "No, your hopes and your dreams are crushed by me." There is an adjustment, and you obviously get calloused or hardened or toughened or whatever you like to call it as time goes on, but nevertheless it was interesting to watch the other people who came behind me over the course of the next two years to see how people respond to that kind of pressure. Some keep their objectivity, some are hardened and find that it's easier to say yes or they find it's easier to say no and then that becomes the answer.

I knew from Jamaican friends of mine that one of their challenges was to wait and see and position yourself for the right vice consul for the match. That would increase your odds of getting approval. One of the things I went through early on was to put yourself in their shoes, and I said, "Well, I were on the other side would I be a bona fide applicant or would I be an intending immigrant or something?" So that seemed to work for a while until I got a guy who came up who was born one day before me, i.e. he was one day older than I was. He was sort of my height and my build and he was a Jamaican guy, and he didn't qualify under any circumstances. He was a young male, and he had a job where he worked for his brother at a garage. He wanted to go buy auto parts, like everybody does. He was a bright guy and I enjoyed talking to him. I normally tried never to tell people to come back; that was a problem.

In this case I said, "Look, bring me some stuff about your brother's business and let me take a look at it." So he did that, and we talked some more. There was a restaurant across the street from the consulate. It was the only place that you could eat, and so we would always go over there. We would be eating on the patio, and of course, the visa line would be watching us eat. Of course, sometimes the applicants would go there; it was the only place for them to eat too so it happened that this guy was there. He was clever and maybe he planned it, and we started talking again. He wasn't pushy or anything. I said if I were born in Jamaica, you know I could easily be this guy, and I'd want somebody to have some faith and trust in me, so what the heck, I'm going to go issue the visa. What the heck?

I did that, and I was feeling quite happy and quite proud of myself for helping humanity. Three or four weeks went by and the blue sheets came back, the turn-arounds that the INS (Immigration and Naturalization) does at the port of entry. There's his name. Of course, when

they saw this guy they wondered how he got a visa, and so they took him to secondary. When they opened up his luggage, they found letters and other things. It turns out that he was basically a pimp. He had some girl friends who worked for him that he had smuggled through Canada, and he was going up to join them to set up business in New York City. So that was the last time I put myself in their shoes and tried to anticipate other people's reactions to these things. I went back to a more standard gut reaction based on salaries and earnings and family ties and these kinds of things. I never found anything that I had that much confidence in that ensured I was making the right decision at the right time.

Q: Did you basically do this work for the whole two years you were there or did you switch to another?

HAYS: No, I switched. We had a visit. I think the first one was Rosalynn Carter when she was First Lady. She came down, and I was taken over to help out with the visit. I liked that, and I was pretty good at it at organizing and scheduling and doing those sorts of things. The then admin officer, Gene Scassa, who I also hit it off, invited me to come over, and it worked out for me to do a detail in the admin section because there was no GSO (General Services Officer). I think the last one had been shipped off to detoxification or something so there was a vacancy there. Anyway, I came in and worked for what was supposed to be a six weeks' rotation. It worked out pretty well so then he got me reassigned at post. Meantime, I had worked on IVs for a few months and also non-immigrant visas. Then this happened, and I moved over into the admin section. So I spent two and a half years in Jamaica which is a little long for the first tour, but I was reassigned at post with the last year was in the admin section.

Q: When you were doing visas, either nonimmigrant or IVs, were you doing some third country nationals or pretty much Jamaicans?

HAYS: It was mostly Jamaicans. Occasionally, we'd get some third country nationals. Here's my first sort of brush with the wider diplomatic world; I play tennis and there's a club there called the Ricketty Club and one of the few places to play. A guy comes up, and I didn't have a partner, and so we played tennis. We had a drink afterwards and agreed to meet two days later and play some more tennis. It turned out it was the new Russian ambassador. So I thought this was kind of neat, the Russian ambassador and we were diplomats and here we are. So I mentioned that to somebody and, of course, twenty minutes later the phone is ringing. I go upstairs, and the RSO (Regional Security Officer) and the Agency guy were there and say, "What is this? Where did this come from? What the hell are you doing?" It wasn't that big a deal, but they were excited because this was still 1977. They arranged for me to introduce one of the other guys who was actually a better tennis player than I was and more at the ambassador's level. I brought him along the next time and introduced him there, and they did whatever they do from that point.

Mostly it was working with Jamaicans. We spent a lot of time together, because in many ways at that point – I don't know if it was a conscious decision but it sort of worked out at that time – we were getting single males assigned to the embassy because of the security situation and so it turned out it was sort of like a fraternity which I was used to. We had all these guys, we'd go out and party and make friends and go to the beach and do these kinds of things. Actually, even

though it had the reputation of being one of the worst assignments in the Service, as I suspect is not uncommon, once you get there you find out that it's not so bad. There're lots of things to recommend it and it's a fun place and there you go.

Q: Who was the ambassador then?

HAYS: The ambassador was Sumner Gerard when I arrived. He was a very patrician political appointee from, I think, upstate New York, married to a Polish countess who had a yacht as I understand it. I thought he was a very charming, very elegant man, but I'm told that once he got on the yacht he turned into Captain Bligh. On Friday afternoons as one of the treats for the young officers, he would invite them to crew on his boat over the weekend. I think, quite sincerely, he thought this was a nice gesture to help the staff out. Of course, from the staff side, people would hide under desks or jumping into closets to avoid being given the honor of getting to crew on the ship. Anyway, he was there for only the first three or four months that I was there.

Then Frederick Irving came in as ambassador. He was very helpful to me. It's sort of the next chapter of the transition, and I'll explain one of the ways he was very helpful. I hit it off really well with him. I think it was the twelve hours I spent over one weekend fixing his electrical system that cemented that relationship. And also with the visits, as I said, I think I have a knack for organizing official business and things and so that was helpful and he liked those sorts of things too. And finally Roy Lawrence came in just at the very end, the last two or three months I was there.

Q: You mentioned other visits besides the first lady Rosalyn Carter. Were there others?

HAYS: Yes, we had Andrew Young come and Peter Bourne if you remember him? Actually, he was Carter's drug czar or drug adviser, and it turned out that he had firsthand knowledge of the subject and so he left. Interestingly, I ran into him about two weeks ago in the audience at CFR (Council on Foreign Relations) where I was giving a speech on Cuba and there he was. My crystal memory of him was at three o'clock in the morning at the Kingston Airport looking for his lost luggage. We had a number of these trips that came along and so they were fun.

Q: Anything else about your admin experience that we should mention?

HAYS: It was good. I got to be the GSO for a long time, and then they brought in a supervisory GSO who was an AID (Agency of International Development) guy who was a good guy and I learned some things from him. This care and feeding of an embassy certainly was more complicated than I had anticipated, and of course, demands were placed on us by the embassy staff. Throughout the rest of my career, I had a very soft spot for GSOs (General Services Officer) because of those calls at two in the morning about a plumbing leak. Here in the States, you know, no one would think of calling someone at two in the morning to come fix a blocked toilet, but overseas that seems to happen.

Also, I got in trouble a couple of times for excessive use of discretionary authority. Perhaps, I'll tell you one quick one. I like it, no one else does. I had a running feud with an AID guy for some reason I can't remember now. We had a visceral dislike one for the other. A number of incidents

occurred, but the one I'll relate here was when we were remodeling the embassy. As usual it was disruptive, it was messy, and we had to demolish the section that this guy happened to be in and stuff them, doubled up, in another area for about two or three weeks so that we could do the building. It wasn't anything that was planned; it was just the way it was. Anyway, he refused to move. He said, absolutely not until my new office is ready, I'm not moving. The weekend that this was supposed to take place he locked the door of his office with great ceremony and stomped off. So the next morning, there I am with the crew and we're moving furniture and all, and we can't get into his area. So I took the walls down on the side and pulled out all his furniture and his safe, and then put the wall back up. So the room that was his little office space was the only thing on Monday morning that was there. The door was locked, of course, and when he opened it all his furniture and everything was long gone. I got into some trouble for that, but it was worth it.

Q: Was this a joint administrative section?

HAYS: It was one of the first, as I remember – I forget the acronym now, JCAS or something like that – for joint administrative support. It covered the AID mission as well as all the other agencies.

Q: In view of your subsequent involvement with Cuba, I was wondering if you had any particular involvement with Guantanamo or Cuba?

HAYS: Guantanamo was at our supply base, and at this point, in Jamaica there were almost no foodstuffs you could buy. Other than some mangoes and pineapple juice, literally, supermarkets were empty. There was a once a month support flight where people would fly to Guantanamo and load up. But the Cuba question really didn't come up while I was there. There was a Cuban Embassy that opened up during the time I was there with great fanfare, and Castro came for a visit during this time. There was a lot of concern over his activities which proved out later to be with good reason. Castro was prepared to encourage Manley to do a lot more. There was a program to train Jamaicans in sort of CBR-type environment that included defensive maneuvers. I think fortunately for Jamaica, and for Manley, in 1980 he chose not to go that route and went to an election and lost and gave up power and came back some years later. But my involvement with Cubans was at that point very much at a distance.

Q: And you weren't involved in political matters in Jamaica?

HAYS: Some. There was a political officer, Cochran (was it Rob?), who was quite good, and we worked with the junior officers. The DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) Roy Haverkamp also encouraged the junior officers to get involved, and one or the other would take us to a lunch when we had a contact, again to just sift through my contacts. My future wife at that point, was Jamaican. We were dating, and so through the university I made contacts with various people. One of the opposition leaders who was sort of on that line between statesmen and thug was someone whom the Political Section was very interested in. So I was helpful in setting up meetings with them.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say about your first post in Kingston?

HAYS: Everyone has a special place in their heart for their first post, and it was a good post. I think I would have preferred to been in a language post, it would have helped me, but I had been sent to Kingston and it was all right. It was the sort of place where there were things happening; it was interesting politically, it was interesting economically and socially there was music. Bob Marley was down the street from me. It was a great assignment.

Q: Certainly, that's one of the aspects of doing first tour visa work, in many places it is an opportunity to use a foreign language.

HAYS: I didn't have that at all.

ROY T. HAVERKAMP
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1978-1981)

Roy T. Haverkamp was born in 1924 in Missouri. He served in the U.S. Air Force in World War II and later earned degrees from Yale University and Cambridge University. Mr. Haverkamp joined the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included positions in Korea, Sweden, Japan, Cambodia, Congo, Benin, Vietnam, Guinea, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, and Grenada. He was interviewed on April 11, 1994 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You went to Jamaica from 1978-81. What were you doing there?

HAVERKAMP: I was the DCM.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

HAVERKAMP: The first one was Fred Irving and later it was Loren Lawrence, both career officers.

Q: What was the situation when you arrived in 1978?

HAVERKAMP: In 1978 the government of Jamaica had been run by Michael Manley and his party since 1970. It was a nationalistic government, a government with socialist ideas of the general welfare. While it had friends and supporters among the rich and famous, it was also a very class conscious government. It reveled in excess going so far that it not only drove out speculators and the idle rich and many of the working rich but also people like carpenters, plumbers and skilled and trained people in a wide variety of occupations. The economy was in a mess. There was a serious shortage of foreign exchange. They had tremendous problems of over population, poverty and economic slump. There was much talk by the government to solve all these problems, but little was done. You had education for everybody, but when children went to school there were not always enough teachers. There was medical care for everybody but a large

number of physicians and medical professionals had left the country and there was no money to buy all the medicine and things needed.

We had an AID program there at the time which increased to the "enormous" sum of \$6 million a year. Carter and the Democrats were very friendly to Michael Manley and he certainly did not return their friendship. He was going all over denouncing the United States, blaming us for everything that was wrong with the world. But Carter continued to believe that this was one of our friends who was telling it to us straight. Manley preferred the Cubans.

Q: Where was this coming from? Was this Carter himself or somebody around him?

HAVERKAMP: I don't know who it was directly influencing him on this, but the whole administration I believe were strong supporters of Michael Manley. Manley was very cozy with Castro and the Cubans and said "I will go to the mountain top with Castro". He did things like taking a couple of thousand of his young teenagers and sent them to Cuba to learn socialism. He had Cuban advisors in each of his ministries and his security services. Well, if you favor a socialism that includes the essentials of a democratic society like Manley inherited, there are many socialist countries to which you could send them and you would not send them to Cuba where it was tied in with an authoritarian government. But Cuba was Caribbean and all Jamaican leaders look at Jamaica first of all in relation to their neighbors in the Caribbean. But Michael Manley was using us as the bogeyman to avoid blame for the disastrous economy. He was, I believe, genuinely concerned to improve the lot of the poor who were mostly Black, through education, jobs, and social services. His heart was generous, but he did not know how to manipulate the economy and the society to bring about the changes he wanted. He also did not know how to get what he needed from those outside who could help.

Q: At the embassy how did we view Michael Manley? You had an administration which had a rosy eyed view of things.

HAVERKAMP: When I went there I think they went too far. Our interest in Jamaica is in supporting their democratic system of free elections, an independent judiciary and all the other trappings of democracy. There are legitimate things that you could do that would not interfere in any overwhelming way in their society that you should do. But some in the embassy had gone too far, I think, in supporting Michael Manley because I think they felt that was what the President wanted. Criticism of him was anathema.

The leader of the opposition, a man named Edward Seaga...the opposition party was the conservative party although it was called the Labour Party... In the Westminster system, the leader of the opposition is usually the number three ranking person in the country and has a place in the hierarchy and protocol. Mrs. Carter came down and they did not schedule any appointment with Seaga. I can't remember the Ambassador ever seeing Seaga. After the first Ambassador left I tried to establish relations with Seaga and it took me months because he didn't want to see anybody from the embassy. Like elsewhere in the third world, politics was a winner take all competition. Add to that, die-hards in both parties had armed supporters willing to fire.

We also had another unfortunate thing. Also before I arrived, an Embassy officer, a cynic, left a description of Seaga which was highly detrimental, where it was found by a Seaga henchman. Naturally, this did not help.

We had access to Manley. He would see the Ambassador and listen, but he did not change. When he first ran as head of his party in the 1960s, he had a Foreign Service officer who wrote speeches for him and traveled around with him. That was early Manley.

Q: You mean one of our Foreign Service officers?

HAVERKAMP: Yes.

Q: Good God!

HAVERKAMP: This was in the time that he sang a different song.

Q: This lack of dealing with the opposition, was this coming from the ambassador, from Washington?

HAVERKAMP: Oh, I think this was coming from the Ambassador. It wasn't the whole opposition, it was just that the Ambassador avoided Seaga.

Q: How did you see Fred Irving?

HAVERKAMP: A very bright guy, a very able guy. I respect and like both him and his wife. But I think he felt that he had been sent there and had been told that there is a close relationship between Carter and the Democrats and Manley and his People's National Party and to do everything we can to help them. Since there was so much antipathy between the party members and the leaders, balance was hard to achieve, nevertheless, it is done all the time in Embassies around the world.

I can remember one White House official telling me at a meeting later on when they were having elections in 1980 that I should go to see Seaga and tell him not to do anything that would politically hurt Manley. That was absolutely insane. If you went into any country in the world and told them not to criticize the opposition, they would say, "Don't come back and see me, see your doctor." So we were all mixed up in those things.

It was important to help preserve the democratic structures of Jamaica, to know and encourage our friends. In the 1980 election I did everything possible to stay neutral. This was not courageous on my part as it was evident people wanted a change. Seaga was certainly better able to do something about the economy and was friendly toward us, although we learned he was no pushover on any issue. In the end his record on the economy was mixed. It was exciting to be there during the elections in 1980. It was a dramatic demonstration of democracy working in a poor country. The Jamaican Defense Force played a critical role by remaining neutral.

Q: When did this happen?

HAVERKAMP: This was 1980.

Q: Who was ambassador then?

HAVERKAMP: It was Lorrie Lawrence.

Q: Well, when he came could you describe how he operated?

HAVERKAMP: Well, he prepared himself very well for it. He was somebody who had great interpersonal skills. He was very intelligent. He brought in the balance that we needed. To see a balance in that type of democratic society does not mean that you ignore things that either side is doing that you think are detrimental to us.

Q: Was the CIA playing any role that you were aware of?

HAVERKAMP: Any dirty tricks role?

Q: Yes.

HAVERKAMP: None that I was aware of. Guns were one of the problems. Both Manley and Seaga had their armed youths in ghetto areas of town. There were certain areas of Kingston where you could not go unless you were accompanied by, introduced by and supported by a Seagalite or in the other case a Manleyite. If you did, you were liable to be shot. And there was one very bizarre case where the military carried out an operation which they botched up. They got a bunch of youths in one of the ghettos which supported Seaga and killed five of them and some escaped. There was a big to-do, but nothing ever happened. The killers and the victims were the poor, never the big shots in either party. It was a real tragedy.

Q: Were we seeing that things were going to be changing as we looked at this 1980 election?

HAVERKAMP: Yes, I think the general expectation was that in a free election Manley would be voted out and that there would be a change of government. But, I don't think anybody expected a great improvement. People felt Seaga better understood what you had to do to revive the economy than Manley did. Some people felt he was a fascist. He, like Manley, left quietly when he was voted out of office. He was a tyrant within his own party and ruthless. But towards the end the Manley government was very touch and go. People were very concerned that there would be a big shootout. The defense forces once they got rid of a corrupt commander were under a new commander and were pretty gung ho types, committed to supporting the government and its democratic structure. The police were less reliable. You needed an organization that was going to maintain order or deter extreme violence and that was going to be the JDF and they played that role very well and constitutionally. Manley, to his credit went out of office without causing any disturbance or behaving in a disruptive way.

Q: Was the Carter Administration, at least from the White House and what you were getting, still sort of Manley supporters or were they beginning to change?

HAVERKAMP: I think in the end they saw two things. Number one, Manley went to a meeting in Cuba where he really castigated us, including Carter. Then they began to see that this was a bit much. It was one thing to have your friends tell you about your faults, but to tell the whole world and lay the whole world's faults at your doorstep is going a bit too far. Particularly since we felt ourselves to be their supporters. And to their credit, when Seaga came in the Carter administration did raise the AID program a bit.

During the election campaign the Republican National Committee sent down a guy who made contact with the Seaga people. I don't remember the Democrats sending anybody down. If they did, they did it sub rosa. Manley really needed the AID money and he wasn't getting it on terms that he felt he had to have it from the Carter Administration. I made it very clear to everybody in the embassy that our job was to stay out of the way. To know what was going on, but to stay out of the way. I think that if we had evidence that the Cubans or the Soviets were giving any kind of covert support to the Manley people, depending on the circumstances, we should have exposed them. It was clear that people wanted a change and they turned out and lined up to vote.

Q: Was there a Jamaica lobby in the United States or in Congress? A lot of Jamaicans had immigrated to New York.

HAVERKAMP: The Black Caucus was very interested and were strong backers of Manley. Seaga wanted to send somebody to meet with them, but they wouldn't meet with Seaga's people. They were out and out Manleyites.

Q: Was Seaga Black too?

HAVERKAMP: No, Seaga was of Syrian-Lebanese decent.

Q: So that played a certain element there.

HAVERKAMP: Yes, but probably more back here than there. While race and class are problems here and there, racism is much less a problem in Jamaica.

Q: It is funny because I had the impression that Manley had gone far too far and it was a relief to get him out of there.

HAVERKAMP: Oh, he had very definitely, but Manley had White supporters and some rich White supporters and Seaga had poor and middle class Black support.

Q: But within the Democratic Party up until close to the end they got involved with his cause.

HAVERKAMP: Oh, I think they stuck with him all the way through, the Black Caucus and his other supporters back here. He had convinced them of all of these horrors of the opposition. Seaga was a man without much warmth or personality, but he had a lovely wife, a former Miss Jamaica, who was party Black and partly European. She was a beautiful person who greatly improved Seaga's image and acceptability. But he never used that or bragged about it. Their

eldest child was a Black child that he had adopted after a fire in the area that he controlled in the ghetto. Race was never an overt question, although I am sure that there were some Black Jamaicans who would not have voted for Seaga and some White Jamaicans who wouldn't have voted for Manley. But early on the Manleys had all of the upper classes as supporters. Manley's father was a very famous lawyer and a man of great character who lost his position as Prime Minister because he insisted on having a referendum which he did not have to have on a West Indies Confederation. Michael Manley was always compared with him and found lacking. His mother was a very famous sculptor.

Q: You were there when Seaga took over?

HAVERKAMP: Yes.

Q: For about the first year?

HAVERKAMP: I was there for about a year and a half, I guess.

Q: How did that go?

HAVERKAMP: The transition was very smooth. I used to meet with Seaga once a week, having breakfast with him well before the elections. One of the things that the government needed was some up front money to bring in consumer goods...not the way he did it in the end, but that is beside the point...to bring in medicines, spare parts, and things that would help the economy to get going. One way to do it was for us to buy bauxite for the stockpile. We needed bauxite in the bauxite stockpile like I need a hole in the head. We didn't need it, but for political reasons it was a good thing to do. Well, we did it. It took almost two years to get it because it had to go through committees of Congress, the General Services Administration, and a whole host of interests. This was started under Carter. Then when Seaga came up and met with President Reagan, he was assured we would do it, but it still didn't happen right away, it took time. Anyhow by the time he got the money the bottom had dropped out of the bauxite price and it really didn't help him to do what he wanted to do at all, which was unfortunate. Our purchases made up the loss in foreign exchange income, but did not give them the extra addition of cash they needed.

But I think the Seaga people had the impression that he was elected because he wasn't Manley and understood how to manage the economy in a way that would restore economic activity and bring jobs to people.

Q: Well, you left there in 1981 and went where?

HAVERKAMP: I went to Dillard University in New Orleans as a diplomat in residence.

HERMAN REBHAN
General Secretary, International Metalworkers Federation
Washington, DC (1980)

Herman Rebham was born in Poland and raised in Germany. He came with his family to the United States in 1938 and settled in Cleveland, Ohio. After working in auto manufacturing plants in the Midwest, he became Administrative Assistant to United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther, and dealt with domestic and international labor matters throughout his career. In 1972 he became the United Auto Workers Director of International Affairs in Washington, D.C. Mr. Rebham died in 2006. Mr. Rebham was interviewed by James F. Shea and Don R. Kienzle in 1995.

REBHAN: I had a similar thing [happen] in Jamaica. Who was Prime Minister of Jamaica?

Shea: Edward Seaga.

REBHAN: Not Seaga. Before Seaga. He [Michael Manley] went through training in the Steelworkers Union. He was from the Bauxite Workers Union. He recently [declined to run for Prime Minister] because he has cancer. Anyway, he was the Prime Minister. We had a Latin American conference and the Prime Minister was going to come and the ambassadors were at the meeting, and in my speech. . . -- They were horsing around with Castro at the time. The Cubans sent a lot of teachers and health officers to Jamaica at that period. -- I criticized Jamaican policy and I said, "If Pinochet sent troops to South Africa to defend South Africa like Castro sends, what would you say?" The Prime Minister got furious at that. He had to answer me in his speech, and the next day the opposition paper published my whole speech.

**W. ROBERT WARNE
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1981-1984)**

W. Robert Warne was born in Washington, DC on November 30, 1937. He attended high school in Iran, Hawaii, and Brazil. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1962. Upon graduation, he joined the U.S. Army. Mr. Warne joined USAID in 1962. His career included positions in Buenos Aires, Brussels, Kingston, and Paris. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy April 1, 1995.

Q: Well, then let's talk about Jamaica. You were in Jamaica from when to when?

WARNE: I was in Jamaica from '81 to '84.

Q: What was the situation?

WARNE: I came in just after Seaga was elected, and stayed during the first part of his administration.

Q: How were our relations then?

WARNE: Our relations were very good. The first year was a very good year, because I had an old, seasoned, career ambassador to work with.

Q: Who was that?

WARNE: Loren Lawrence, a very affable and friendly guy, whose main mission in life was to get along with Seaga. And he did that very well. Seaga used him very well.

I'm not sure that all was in our interest, to be honest. I think there were sides of Seaga that became more apparent as we went along. He was not a good manager. I think probably there were some aspects of him that we didn't fully appreciate, on the corruption and ruthless side. But certainly we were committed to him.

Despite all of our aid, the country didn't turn around. If anything, it was depressed. He had some bad shots. He had the depressed bauxite. The difficulties of criminality and theft against tourists hurt him. But he didn't manage the situation nearly as well as he thought.

He was a very arrogant and difficult person to work with, in some ways. But Lorie got along with him superbly. And, as chargé, I got along with him well. I had a stint of more than six months. But it was during a terrible time of a drought, and they really didn't have any water for parts of the city. Seaga asked me to do an emergency program to bring water in.

We had a large AID program. We built up our AID mission very, very rapidly there. Probably we were not well oriented in our AID program, and I don't think it was a great success, to be honest.

And then we brought in Bill Hewitt, who was the former CEO of Deere and Company, who had never had any governmental experience.

Q: Agricultural and farm...

WARNE: Equipment. Bill was a very fine guy, but was just not the right person to be an ambassador. He just didn't have, I didn't think, much in the way of political intake. It was an unfortunate match, I thought. But he did his best to get along with Seaga. He was very committed.

But he resented me very much in my relationships that I had developed with the opposition, which subsequently came into power. In fact, once, he told me he was going to get me for meeting with the opposition.

Q: This sometimes happens, particularly with political appointees, who don't really understand the long run.

WARNE: Not only that, but feel that you're not being correct in your handling of diplomacy, to meet with the opposition. But Seaga understood. He never called me down for it. In fact, I was quite open with him. And Seaga shared a lot of confidences with me.

In fact, one time, I was really chagrined. Hewitt had to go to Japan just at the time when Seaga decided to hold his snap election. He ordered me, before he left, not to tell the Department about all these plans and everything.

Q: That he was going?

WARNE: No, no, that Seaga was going to have his snap election, and he was going to redo the government, and how he was going to deal with the opposition and so forth. It was almost anti-democratic, what happened. I said, "Well, Bill, what can I do?"

And he said, "Well, if you really feel you have to send a message, here are my numbers in Tokyo. Call me and I will assess it."

So I called him in Tokyo, and I said, "I really feel the situation has gotten to the point where I have to tell the Department."

He wouldn't let me do it.

He had worked out an arrangement with the station chief, and the station chief was doing the reporting. So I essentially got cut out of it.

Q: That's very serious, of course.

WARNE: When I got back to Washington, I told the Department that I really was upset with the way that was handled. And they said, "Well, we knew what was going on. It didn't make that much difference." My political section, obviously, was really distraught, but what could I do?

So I think Bill didn't really have confidence in the State Department; not only me, but the whole political section, and maybe some of the economic section. He just felt that maybe we were too open or we didn't know how to protect secrets or whatever.

Q: Also, there can be this fascination with the CIA station chief. It's enticing to feel that you really are...

WARNE: In the know?

Q: In the know. And, of course, it was an era of William Casey being the head, and the Republican administration was...

WARNE: They cooked up one idea that I really strongly opposed, and that was, Casey was going to come down and visit Seaga. And I said, "There's no way you can do that. This would be a

serious mistake. There's no way you could cover it up. If it ever got out that he'd been down here, and he'd been that close to the CIA, it would damage everybody."

No, I had a very difficult time. Bill asked me to stay on for another year, but I just found it an unworkable situation. He let me run the embassy. I did all the work during that Seaga era. He was home during the time when we did the Grenada thing.

I had one political officer, who was not a leftist, but was sort of open minded, who was sleeping, maybe, with the editor of the newspaper or something. And the Agency got on her back a little bit. But I never felt that she was confiding secrets to anybody or anything.

Q: Oh, boy.

WARNE: Boy, I had some tough ones. But Seaga and I got along well. I mean, he's still a good friend of mine. We trade letters and cards. But I didn't trust him.

Q: Well, you came back and did what?

WARNE: I was the director of the Economic Bureau, the Economic Office in Latin America, for two- plus years. And I ran the CBI program for State, and also did a lot of economic work.

Q: This was from when to when?

WARNE: That was from '84 to '86. My main effort was on Central America. That was under Elliott Abrams. I did a lot of work in putting together what was then called the Kissinger Plan for economic development.

Q: Was the Kissinger Plan a real plan, or was he dragged in as a sort of sideshow for pursuing the Contra business and all that?

WARNE: A little bit of both. It was a real plan, and we had a lot of aid effort. But I never felt that we had the discipline in the use of that money to make a difference. I was convinced that, if we were going to do a program, it would be much like the one that we tried in the Caribbean, where we'd get the IMF and the Bank involved, and we would do a thorough analysis and come up with a solid action plan, where the governments had to make commitments to stabilize and to open and to really rejuvenate their economies. That's what I argued about, and, frankly, it just rolled right over the top of them. So I thought a lot of the aid was misused. It was just a short-term payoff. But it was a very substantial program.

Q: For the record, this is about the conflict with Nicaragua, essentially.

WARNE: Well, Salvador, too.

Q: But it was the left versus the right.

WARNE: And it was trying to contain the Contras and also to prevent the insurrection in Salvador from getting out of hand. I was handling sort of the economic side of it with AID.

Also, the Caribbean Basin Initiative was a big effort at that time, and we did quite a bit. I went around and negotiated and settled agreements with all those countries on CBI.

Q: Was this Caribbean Initiative a real program?

WARNE: It had a substantial program. The main thing was the preferential trade arrangement. And I think it made a big impact. But it was a long-term program, and it wasn't going to turn things around right away. It certainly helped solidify our effort in the region, and we had congressional support for it. It didn't make as big a difference as we hoped, because, frankly, it depended on those countries' ability to organize their trade to take advantage of it, and a lot of them were slow in responding, such as Jamaica.

And then, finally, my last tour, I went to Paris. Actually, I did it as a last choice. I wanted to leave the Bureau. I felt that I had had enough of working on economic affairs, and I wanted to go overseas as a DCM or ambassador. At that time, I was a minister-counselor, and had been a minister-counselor for three or four years. I ran in competition for about six or seven DCM jobs, and I didn't get one of them. And it finally came down to Caracas. They had a new ambassador, not a career guy, and he chose a different candidate. So I decided to throw the towel in.

JOHN TODD STEWART
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1984-1986)

Ambassador John Todd Stewart was born in New Jersey in 1940. He received his bachelor's degree from Stanford University in 1961 and his master's degree from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1962. His career has included positions in Munich, Puerto La Cruz, Geneva, Kingston, San José, and an Ambassadorship to the Republic of Moldova. Ambassador Stewart was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in October 1999.

Q: Where did you go next?

STEWART: I went from Personnel to Kingston, Jamaica.

Q: What were you doing there?

STEWART: I was DCM.

Q: You were there from '84 to?

STEWART: '86.

Q: Who was the Ambassador there?

STEWART: There were two. The first one was Bill Hewitt, a political appointee who had been chairman of John Deere for a long period and retired from that job. He was appointed by President Reagan and started his tour before I got there. He was succeeded halfway into my two years by Mike Sotirhos, another political appointee who had run the ethnic campaigns for Reagan/Bush in both elections. He was a businessman from New York who had an interior design firm, not a chi-chi sort of thing, as his firm designed places like officers clubs and hotel lobbies. His hobby was politics, but he was also interested in foreign affairs. His great desire was to become Ambassador to Greece, given his Greek heritage, and he went there after Jamaica.

Q: How about Hewitt? Was Kingston an award for political support?

STEWART: Very much the case. He certainly supported Reagan in the 1980 election, probably with campaign contributions, although I don't know that for a fact. He was CEO at John Deere for 28 years. His wife, Tish, was John Deere's great-granddaughter, and he was the last member of the family to be CEO. He was very experienced in running an organization, and I found him to be a very instructive person to work for. He was not a hands-on manager. One of his aphorisms was that if he knew more about the functioning of a John Deere division than the person in charge, then something was seriously wrong. I also found him to be a very ethical operator. He would say in this respect, "If the deal is not good for both parties, it's not a good deal." The Hewitts took a great interest in art and had a fine personal collection. There's a lot of art in Jamaica, it's an enormously rich country in that respect. They did a tremendous amount for the artistic community, in no small measure by making substantial purchases.

Because of Ambassador Hewitt's operating style I became the hands-on guy. It was a great experience in that respect. And Jamaica is a wonderful place to be a diplomat. You are taken into the society there more quickly and more completely than in any other place I've served. You are suddenly enveloped with all sorts of interesting contacts and interesting things to do.

Q: What was the political situation there like during '84- '86?

STEWART: Edward Seaga, the Prime Minister, had come to power as head of the Jamaica Labor Party in 1980, after a very hot election in which there was considerable violence.

Q: Manley was in it?

STEWART: Seaga's opponent was Michael Manley, the head of the rival party in Jamaica's two-party system. The invasion of Grenada had taken place the year before I got there, and that action very popular in Jamaica. The Jamaican Defense Force followed the Americans in and took over as the occupying force in Grenada, allowing us to pull our troops out quickly. The Reagan Administration did not, therefore, have to pay the domestic political cost of running a U.S. occupation while the country was being reorganized prior to elections. The popularity of the invasion led Seaga to call a snap election before my arrival, but the opposition People's National Party, Manley's party, charged with some justification that the election breached an

understanding between the parties that no election would be called until a new voter registration had been completed. As the result the PNP boycotted the election, and Jamaica had on my arrival a one-party parliament with the opposition on the outside.

To put it mildly, Seaga was not the easiest person in the world to deal with, but Manley was still suffering from his reputation in the late '70s as being the next thing to a communist. While he was not a communist, a lot of his positions were very leftist. He rethought those positions after losing the 1980 election, and my efforts, and I had support from both my ambassadors, were directed at rehabilitating him in Washington's eyes. This strategy culminated in a good meeting with Secretary Shultz in 1985. I maintained pretty close contact with him during the two years that I was there, and I was happy to see that U.S.-Jamaican relations improved when he won the next election.

Q: How was Seaga difficult from our perspective?

STEWART: He was referred to in the AID mission as the City Planner because he got into everything. He wanted to micromanage this, that and the other thing. But he really couldn't do it all. There were plenty of competent Jamaicans he could have worked with, but delegation was definitely not his thing. He had, I think, a profound distrust of market processes while our objective was to introduce market mechanisms and wean Jamaica away from the statist approach to development that the country had been following since independence. It was like pulling teeth to get him to agree to fundamental reform, and the privatization of state companies went very, very slowly. As a result of Grenada, we had a huge AID program, over \$100 million per year, which was Washington's way of saying "thank you." It included a lot of ESF - Economic Support Fund - money, which was basically a dollar check written to the Jamaican treasury in exchange for the government's undertaking certain programs. Unfortunately, we were never able to make adequate use of this money as leverage for policy reforms because Seaga regarded it, perhaps with some justification, as payment for services rendered in Grenada.

Q: What about Cuba at this time. Was Cuba playing any role in Jamaica or hovering over the horizon?

STEWART: No, but it's not very far away, of course. If you climb Blue Mountain Peak in Jamaica, you can see Cuba, and there were always some stories about Cuban-sponsored guerrilla bands in the hills and other such nonsense.

Q: What about crime? As DCM, you're responsible for the Embassy community there and also, through your consular section, for private Americans. And I've heard that crime is a major problem.

STEWART: It's certainly no joke. It is a major problem. We had several attacks on Embassy houses when I was there, including one rape. No deaths, thank God. We finally moved to a solution of establishing small compounds, groups of townhouses to which we'd assign a security service. The Ambassador's and DCM's houses had their own guards. And virtually every house in the Embassy housing pool had a so-called "rape gate" that allowed you to cordon off the bedroom area from the rest of the house when you went to bed at night. It was not a particularly

pleasant situation in that regard, but it was not the kind of politically motivated violence that would target me because I was the American DCM. Despite the crime problem we didn't have any particular qualms about going up to the North Coast and renting a house for the weekend. But most of those places were located in compounds where there was some security.

Q: Was there almost a double life? I mean there was Kingston and then there was the North Coast, which has rather protected hotels, etc.?

STEWART: Certainly the hotel compounds were rather well guarded, there is no question about that. Once you got outside the hotel compound, you had to be concerned about street crime, and tourists were looked upon as easy marks. I was never really hassled, although we often drove around by ourselves. If you knew your way around, you were much less likely to be bothered.

Q: At one time bauxite was a very important thing. How was it during this '84 to '86 period?

STEWART: Still very important. One of the fiascos during Manley's first period in office was to try and set up an international bauxite cartel, which never really got off the ground. The price of bauxite had fallen, largely as a result of recycling aluminum cans and other end products in the United States and other developed countries.

Q: How about immigration, both legal and illegal? I've heard people who've served in the consular section there say they were getting telephone calls from yuppie couples, asking, "Where the hell is our maid?" They had to wash their own dishes.

STEWART: The visa problem there was dreadful, as it is in so many Caribbean countries. There was an enormous line leading into the consular section every day, people trying to get visitor visas. Sad to say, very few of them were eligible.

Q: Did you find that you were getting a lot of pressure from Congress or from Jamaican officials?

STEWART: I didn't get much pressure from the U.S. We referred Congressional letters to the Consul General and told him, "Good luck." We'd get calls from Jamaican political figures, and I avoided virtually all of them, unless Manley or Seaga called me personally to take a look at a visitor visa case. But by and large their referrals were pretty good cases as they didn't recommend anyone they thought was likely to skip. That was important. The other major activity there was drugs. Primarily marijuana.

Q: This is part of the Rastafarian thing?

STEWART: Well, that's a part of it. Marijuana is called ganja locally, which is an East Indian word. East Indian laborers brought it from the subcontinent at the turn of the 20th century. It grew wild in all parts of the island, and virtually every Jamaican has tried it at one time or another. But the real problem was, of course, cultivation for shipment to the U.S. We were pretty successful during the time I was there in helping the Jamaicans begin a serious eradication campaign. Seaga was opposed at the beginning but then gradually gave way because of serious

U.S. pressure. Eradication was not an impossible task in Jamaica because the island is pretty small when you get right down to it. If you can get a plane to do some serious mapping, you can get enough helicopters to land eradication workers at the ganja fields, and you can conduct spot-checks on a periodic basis, then you can have a pretty good eradication campaign that really cuts the guts out of the industry. We had a program budgeted at \$40,000 a year when I came and \$2,000,000 a year when I left. Seaga was not enthusiastic about chemical spraying although he was starting to give way on that issue toward the end of my time, but spraying was really not necessary there. You could just cut the ganja down and burn it. The fields were not huge—just a hectare here, a couple of hectares there. It was just a matter of getting the chopper to the field with a crew who could cut it down, pile it up and burn it. There were few people who were dependent on ganja because they could easily switch to another crop.

Q: How about Sotirhos as Ambassador? How did he operate?

STEWART: I think it's fair to say that my relationship with Sotirhos wasn't a marriage made in heaven. This was largely due to the fact that I was brought in to do a certain kind of job for Bill Hewitt while Sotirhos was a very hands-on, my-way-or-the-highway sort of guy. We parted quite amicably, I think, at the end of one year, and then I went off to the Senior Seminar.

Q: Why don't we leave it at this point in 1986 when you are going to the Senior Seminar?

DAVID RYBAK
Private Sector Officer, USAID
Jamaica (1985)

Mr. Rybak was born and raised in New York and educated at LeMoyne College. He joined the Peace Corps in 1963 and was assigned to El Salvador. In 1966 he joined AID in Vietnam, serving first in Public Administration and subsequently in the Refugee Program. He returned to Washington in 1973 working in the Disaster Relief Office of AID, later being transferred to Jamaica. Mr. Rybak had a number of senior level assignments in AID headquarters in Washington, including assisting in the creation of the Center for Trade and Investment. Mr. Rybak was interviewed by Frank Pavich in 1998.

RYBAK: One day I was approached on the telephone by someone named Glenn Patterson. He introduced himself as the AID Mission Director to Jamaica and asked if I would be interested in talking to him about a position in Jamaica as a private sector officer. I have always known better than to spite myself even though I had ambitions of going to Asia on assignment. I told Mr. Patterson I would be happy to talk to him about an assignment to Jamaica. And we did. He explained the situation in Jamaica. With President Reagan committing the U.S. to the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) and to Prime Minister Seaga of Jamaica in particular, Mr. Patterson was developing a private sector initiative early in the game.

He told me he was proposing I come down to AID/Jamaica as his private sector officer. At that

time, Patterson had the foresight to realize that AID's emphasis was going to be increasingly on the private sector. And the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which he knew was coming down the pike and Prime Minister Seaga of Jamaica was to be instrumental in playing a major role. Seaga actually came to the U.S. and talked to Reagan about the regional private sector initiative about to occur in the Caribbean.

Patterson had the foresight to see what was happening and decided he would get the USAID/Jamaica Mission involved in the private sector. Therefore, he asked me to consider going to Jamaica as the private sector officer in the USAID mission. I agreed to go take this assignment with little or no training in private sector development. But I realized in AID as in so many things I had done in the past, where I didn't necessarily have the specific training, one can take the job and learn as much as possible about the job so you can function well in the job. I always took an assignment with AID with the objective I would become an expert and do the best job possible in each position held. That is one of the reasons I feel that I had such a wonderful, diverse career with AID.

Many people hesitate to take jobs because they don't have the background. They don't realize they have experiences which can qualify one for positions. Experiences can't take the place of a master's degree or a Ph.D. If one knows the ropes of how to operate within the parameters of the agency, then one should be more than willing to take on an assignment and accept it as a challenge. One can learn as much about that position as one can and function well.

In Jamaica, we were providing funding to more than one hundred private sector consultants (these were American and Jamaican consultants) to implement private sector activities in the country. For example, Jamaica was trying to market its products in the U.S. and elsewhere. Those products must literally jump off the shelf so the consumer will want to try it. However, the labeling on Jamaican products at that time was not very sophisticated and the outside packaging was poorly done.

So I arranged to contract with a very sophisticated advertising firm in New York City; I brought an expert to work with the Jamaicans to improve their product labeling. This man was a labeling expert. Because Jamaica had some very decent products, the labeling expert felt with better labeling, the Jamaicans would be able to export those products to the United States and elsewhere. They also would have better opportunities to sell their products with better labeling. AID funding was also used to support the Kingston Export Free Zone, Small Business Association, Jamaican Investment Group, and a host of other individuals and groups working in the private sector.

I would recommend this project I was responsible for conducting in Jamaica be done in every AID country where we are trying to develop the private sector. It was called the Technical Consultations and Training Grant. In Washington, they termed the project a boondoggle. But without such a grant funding to, we would never have made the strides we were enabled to do with the private sector in Jamaica. This grant project was started with a few million dollars. It gave us immediate access to funding to contract for consultants and services directly from Jamaica without having to go through approval in Washington. It gave us a great deal of flexibility to accomplish activities and promote private sector projects without Washington

putting in their two cents, which often was the reason for the demise of some very good overseas projects.

Q: Who were your customers?

RYBAK: Customers were basically Jamaicans. It was all part of the Caribbean Basin Initiative. It was where you saw a need the Jamaicans couldn't fulfill themselves that we would bring an expert in to their system - basically business people to assist the Jamaican private sector.

Q: Big ones, small ones?

RYBAK: Large and small. But the whole idea of the grant was to give us flexibility in approving these \$20,000-\$2 million projects immediately. We did not have to go through the Washington bureaucracy for approval on evaluation of the effectiveness of the projects. But as it became known that we had this special grant, Washington started calling it a boondoggle. And we had to prove to Washington it was being used for worthwhile activities within the mandates AID had set for us to develop a country's private sector.

Q: You are now in Jamaica?

RYBAK: This was in Jamaica, yes.

Q: You were physically located in Jamaica.

RYBAK: I was physically located in Jamaica with my family. When this project was initiated before I got there, not one single project had been implemented. The project was taken away from another officer and given to me by the Mission Director. Within one month, and this is not to brag about my capabilities or anything, but within one month we had at least ten of the fifteen projects already underway.

Q: How did you do that?

RYBAK: By contacting the people who were to be involved in the projects. There was already a list of some projects Jamaicans wanted to do which had not been accomplished yet. It required a lot of initiative to get out to see these people, to talk with them and find out what they needed. Since I had direct access to the Mission Director, I would discuss the project with him, whether or not we could do them. They had been sort of pre-approved by AID prior to making the contact but needed an implementor. AID needed somebody to get the job done.

When the person from whom I took his job came back from a trip to London one month later, he was flabbergasted I was able to get as much started as we did. And I am talking about all sorts of initiatives with a small business association, business groups that we worked with and through to promote projects in the private sector. Some of them were almost "Mom and Pop" type projects. People who had projects in their backyards. Maybe they needed a little extra money to boost their production, to buy some resources, tools perhaps to make their project grow. They usually had five or six people working for them. These were fantastic opportunities for private

entrepreneurs and it was great fun to have a job where I touched the lives of so many people to make their lives better.

We did some work with the Kingston Export Free zone. I would like to visit Jamaica to see if some of those businesses are still functioning. We also were trying to attract U.S. businesses to Jamaica. The Jamaica Exporters Association was another group that we worked with.

Q: Mr. Patterson was the director then?

RYBAK: Yes.

Q: And how did he feel about this approach?

RYBAK: It was due to the initiative of Mr. Patterson and the foresight to get this project initiated that made it easy for me to actually implement and build on it. By the time I left Jamaica four years later, the project had grown to a \$20 million dollar program and was being replicated in other AID countries. I earned a promotion during the years I implemented this series of projects which brought me up to the FS-1 level.

The focus changed a little bit with the change of directors. After Patterson came Lou Reed. Reed came from the private sector and the independence I felt we had with Mr. Patterson was not there when Mr. Reed arrived. He took a much more direct role himself rather than let the officers, myself and others implement the projects.

Q: What would you say the major accomplishment of this activity was?

RYBAK: It was to put funding where our mouth was. It was basically to tell the Jamaicans we would check to see if we could do something and we did. If we found we could do it we did. If we were unable to utilize the money because of stringencies in the AID regulations, we would tell them we could not do it. But we would try to find other ways of getting around it, particularly if the Jamaicans came up with good concepts for projects. My counterpart on the Jamaican Government side was a wonderful person by the name of Corinne McLarty, Prime Minister Seaga's choice to head up his private sector and investment initiation.

Q: At this point you are about 20 years into your development experience...

RYBAK: That's correct.

Q...if you go back with the Peace Corps as the beginning. What are some of the changes that have occurred to you and to development over this period? Anything that comes to you at this point?

RYBAK: We touched on it during our discussion. Development became more sophisticated as I went along in my career. Maybe too sophisticated. We were going over and beyond in not staying and building more at the grassroots level with the people who really needed the assistance - the urban and rural poor. We generalized and what was good for one country was

good for any country. Each country is different. I think we tended to forget that very important concept as we proceeded down the development road. I believe we have to work with development uniquely in each country. We can use many of the ideas and concepts that succeeded in other countries and apply them to a country but not exactly in the same way. I am afraid that sometimes AID made the mistake of trying to apply a program in exactly the same way because it was successful in one country it would work exactly the same way in another country. Nothing works exactly the same in another country. Each country is different.

Q: Not to put words in your mouth but it sounds as though you are talking about a kind of "cookie cutter" approach.

RYBAK: Right.

Q: Was that reflected in the attitude of the director?

RYBAK: I think it was at that time, yes.

Q: You're saying that it was working or it wasn't working...?

RYBAK: I am ambivalent. I would say maybe some of it worked but certainly if it didn't we should have dumped it quickly...rather than let it linger on the way we did.

Q: There were some good ideas that may have applicability?

RYBAK: Absolutely. Even if there were some things that were bad there was still some good to come out of it. It may take a little longer with AID though. We can always profit from our mistakes. It just seemed to take longer for AID to understand that concept.

ELIZABETH ANN SWIFT
Consul General
Kingston (1986-1989)

Elizabeth Ann Swift was born in 1940 in Washington, DC. Her father worked for the International Red Cross, but died when she was very young. Her grandparents and uncle were all Navy world travelers. Her desire to enter foreign service was sparked by their tales of traveling abroad. She attended Stanford, but graduated from Radcliffe in 1962. She has served in the Philippines, Indonesia, Iran and Jamaica, as well as several other positions within the State Department. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 16, 1992.

SWIFT: So there was Dick Williams, who was a senior OC officer, there was me who was a new OC officer, and the two of us in jobs that were undergraded for what we were doing. When Personnel started looking around for somebody--first Haiti, and then for Jamaica--they knew that there were the two of us there. Dick and I had called back and said, "Look, this is really silly to

have two officers at this level." We had said, "If you've got something that you want filled, just ask us about it. The two of us will sit here because we're not exactly unhappy, but if there's something good you might ask us."

So basically what happened was they started asking Dick first, would he like to go here, and would he like to go to there? And if Dick said no, then I got the next shot at it, which was how I got Jamaica. Basically, Jamaica is known as a very tough post. It's one of our major visa issuance posts. It's a country that has high fraud, high corruption, active narcotics trade, and high crime, and is just known as a very tough consular post.

Q: I was a Personnel officer back in the '60s and I recall having to deal with a Consul General who had to leave there on a stretcher basically because of the violence, and putting somebody else in.

SWIFT: It was a very tough post, and it's one that people tried to avoid. I think it was a terribly bad rap because I found it delightful, but never mind. At any rate, when they offered it to me, I sort of crossed my fingers because Dick was very, very tempted, but he had problems with his kids. He didn't want to move them, one was almost a senior in high school, had one more year to go. He didn't want to wreck her schooling, so he decided to stay in Athens. So therefore it got offered to me, and I said, "I'll go." So off I went.

Q: You served in Kingston as Consul General from '86 to '89. What was the situation, political and economic, in Jamaica during this period.

SWIFT: The conservative government under Seaga had been in power since '82, I guess. It had come in as a reform government, and had done very well in calming things down a bit, but it had basically, as in any democratic country, it had been in too long. The left had by that time reformed itself and gotten back a lot of respectability. Over the three years that I was there Michael Manley took his liberal party and put it back together, put it on its feet, and won the election. It was an interesting time to be there because our ambassador, who was a political ambassador, felt very, very strongly...it was very interesting, he felt very strongly that an ambassador had a duty to talk to all sides of the political spectrum. So over the period, even when it looked like Seaga was going to stay in power, he had made a real effort to talk to Michael Manley, and to...

Q: Manley had not been persona grata with the United States.

SWIFT: Absolutely not. He had been a real radical in his previous period in charge of the government, and I think that he had seen the light. He had seen that his policies had not helped Jamaica, and Jamaica's economy. And that Seaga's policies really had done a lot better, and Seaga had put the country back on an economic path forward. At the same time, in the way things go in that sort of thing, Seaga had not paid enough attention to things like health care, and to the problems of the lower classes. So when Manley came back in, he had a mandate to try and redress, but he moved a lot more toward the center. And in his conversations with our ambassador, I think that it became clear to our ambassador that Manley really had changed.

There was a great deal of doubt as to whether he had really changed, but I think Sotirhos was convinced that he had changed, and he was right.

Q: Sotirhos?

SWIFT: Michael Sotirhos, and he was right. You actually wonder, as a matter of fact, how much Sotirhos's openness toward Manley helped Manley move back toward the center. It was a very interesting period. Sotirhos was/is a real character, very strong minded. This was his first ambassadorial position abroad and he made lots of mistakes in the beginning, and learned very quickly. His idea, and I always sympathized with it, a lot of people hated it, the ambassador to a country is the ambassador, and he is not to be outshadowed by anybody else in his embassy, that if anybody is going to get publicity, it is going to be the ambassador, and not the Consul General, and not the PAO or whoever it is. He told me flat out before I went down, that he did not want to see my picture on the front pages. I said that was fine with me, I didn't want to see my picture on the front page either, but it was a switch in the way the Consul General had acted down there. Because from the time of Mike Carpenter the Consul General had become really very much of an imperial Consul General. Mike had done some very good things in going out very publicly to explain what the U.S. embassy was doing in terms of visa issuance, or denial, and had, I think, done a very good job in getting it fixed in Jamaican's minds that they did not have a right to come work in the United States, that they had to qualify for visas to come to the United States. Basically speaking Jamaicans felt that our visa process was just a method of keeping them from their God-given right to work in the United States. But Mike had been a very, very strong Consul General, and a very public one. Arlene Render, who followed him, had also been a very public Consul General to the point that the Consul General was probably more popular, or at least more sought after in Jamaica, than the ambassador. Arlene left Jamaica early on her own volition. I think the handwriting was clear on the wall that she was not going to be able to work with Sotirhos. And Sotirhos was not going to be able to work with her.

Sotirhos didn't know me from Adam when I became his Consul General. I'll never forget a conversation we had up in Washington before I went down. I assumed that I had been assigned by the Foreign Service, and here I was in Washington, home leave, and on my way down to this posting, and I assumed that my job was all set. And it became quite clear to me in talking to Ambassador Sotirhos that had I said something wrong, or had I struck him as somebody he didn't want, that he was going to break that assignment right then and there. He was not going to have me be a very public consul general. And this was interesting, because basically the one thing that I had not liked about the job, was that I did not want to be galloping around the country making speeches. It was not something that I really thought would be fun. I was willing to do it, I wanted the job, and I went into it thinking I was going to have to. And when Sotirhos said, "I do not want you doing this, I'm going to make the speeches, you're not going to," I said, dandy, fine, wonderful. I thought that was superb, I was delighted to stay back and run the consular section, and do some Out Reach, but not in the very public way that the Consul General had done before. It took a lot of doing to follow these instructions when I got down to Jamaica.

When I first walked into the country I was being asked every time I turned around to go on talk shows, to speak to the Chamber of Commerce, to do this and do that. And I would take these invitations and send them up to the ambassador's office. And often I would find that they would

say, "No, no, we don't want the ambassador. We want you." And I'd say, "but..." And after about six or eight months of this, what had previously come to the Consul General, started naturally going to the ambassador instead. I thought he was right.

Q: It makes sense if an ambassador is willing to pick this up. Now to follow through on this, did the ambassador take on the very important issue of publicizing how we operated our immigration laws? Did he engage on it?

SWIFT: Not really, but by the time he got there they pretty well understood it. And what he did, which I was ever thankful for, and I was so lucky--I didn't quite realize how lucky I was at the time--was that his attitude was that it was the Consul General's authority to issue or deny visas. And what he did, wherever he went because he got hit for visas all over the place, was he simply said, "Look, my Consul General is in charge of visas. She statutorily has the authority. I do not have the authority, and I will not become involved." And he did not become involved in any visa, he turned it right off. And he ordered all of his embassy officers to also stay away from visas stuff.

Q: I can imagine this pervaded the entire operation.

SWIFT: Oh, yes. It was funny. Sometimes he really almost went too far. I would hear him say to people, "I'm sorry. I sympathize with what you're telling me, but I do not have the authority to make such a decision. You will have to go to my Consul General because I have no authority to do that. The Consul General in this case has the authority, and I don't have it." It strengthened my hand in dealing with things. Now, if he felt that the consular section had made a mistake in the way they handled something, if we had been rude, if he couldn't figure out were we applying the law properly, or something like that, then he would call me and he would say, "Ann, I have had this complaint, or that complaint, could you look into it for me, and assure me that there's nothing in it." And usually the things that he came to me on, and they were few and far between, we would have mishandled, or it would have been strange, or there was a perfectly straight forward explanation for it. But he would always give me the opportunity to look into it, straighten it out, and work it that way. He would never come and say, "You will issue a visa to somebody." He never ever did that to me. The DCM did, who was Foreign Service.

Q: What was his background?

SWIFT: His background was that he's a New York businessman, of Greek Orthodox in extraction. He was a commercial interior design person. In other words, he had done the interior designs of things like Marriott. A big businessman, and close to Bush. He'd run Bush's minority campaign, and had had a great influence with the Greek community, and with a lot of other minority communities.

Q: When you went out to Kingston I assume you stopped by the visa office, what were you getting from that as far as their concerns and problems with the Kingston operation?

SWIFT: It was just the high fraud, and they were just putting IVACS, the computerized immigration processing into place. I got there just after they had installed all the new computer

equipment, and they had gone through a very, very rough installation period. They were then trying to convert the hand-written visa control cards onto the computerized system. They were about a third of the way through that. As usual, I do not think we had done it very well. I had installed IVACS in Athens, and I had had the luxury...I knew we were going to do it, and on the way out to Athens I had stopped by London. Everybody thought I was absolutely nuts, and had gotten this wonderful privilege to go by London, but I knew that London had a big IVACS system up and running, and running well. So I stopped by there, and talked to them about the mistakes that they had made when they installed it, and the sorts of decisions you had to make on screening out the material, what sort of material you put in, what sort of material you didn't, how you got prepared to convert to a computerized system. And then before we ever got the equipment...or just as we were getting the equipment in the training period, I managed to get enough money together actually out of Athens resources, to bring down the head of the IV section in London, and have her sit there with my FSNs, she was an FSN, and with my officers may I point out, and show us how to convert the material to go into the machines. It was a great help and made us go much more smoothly, and made our transition much better. We did a lot of file cleaning ahead of time so that we didn't put junk into the machine.

In Kingston, of course, they had a much greater data base, but they didn't do any cleaning at all. They didn't do any preparation work for the installation. So we spent the next year and a half, after we got the thing up and running, cleaning the data base. I thought that was the wrong way to do it, but there was no way I could tell them to stop in the middle of it, and reconvert.

Actually I think Arlene Render had done a very good job of organizing the section. She had also just gone through a big modernization...my only problem is that I hate pink, and Arlene liked pink, so the whole blasted place...my office was all pink and grays. I mean it was pretty, but I just don't like pink. It was very modern and very nice, but it was my most unfavorable color in the world which I then lived with for three years. At any rate, they'd done a major reconstruction of the section, and done a very good job at it I think. I mean there are a few glitches, but basically speaking it was a very smoothly set up section. I came into basically a very good situation.

Q: Could you describe the immigrant and non-immigrant situation there?

SWIFT: I guess we were the fourth largest immigrant visa issuing office in the world. And we were like the tenth largest non-immigrant visa issuing post. During the period I was there we had just a major surge in non-immigrant visa issuance. I kept being worried about it, why is this happening to us? I calmed down a bit after I discovered it was happening throughout Latin America, throughout the Caribbean, and to a certain extent throughout the world. I think because of the shifting value of the dollar. It was easier for people to find the money to go up to the States. But the NIV section was under heavy, heavy pressure, and of course we had big lines around. The whole idea was to make sure you didn't have huge lines around the embassy--to process visas quickly, fast, and with the minimum of heartburn. And the same over on the IV side.

The IV unit basically was easier to run than the non-immigrant visa because it was easier to control the crowds. It was easier to control your flow-through because you had absolute control over the scheduling. Our problem in the IV section was getting the computer software working,

and getting ourselves so that we could understand it, and then working on fraud which was endemic. But on the IV side it was a flow sort of thing. As we had a steadily increasing visa load, and no more officers, how did you smooth out your procedures and develop new ones so that you could cope with all of this.

Q: What was the flow--the immigrant and non-immigrant flow. Where did you see it going to the United States? What were people after, and how did this work?

SWIFT: The immigrant flow was, generally speaking, families going up to join their father or mother, whoever it was. And then a lot of fifth preference, brothers, relatives. Jamaicans generally speaking, live up and down the eastern seaboard, and to a less degree across into Texas, but basically Florida, the New York area, Washington, Boston, Chicago a bit. They came in, usually fairly simple people from the countryside, with low skills, reading ability. They come in with the advantage that they speak English, and they've all had a certain level of education, not terribly high at the lower economic scales, but they usually could read and write. And they went up to the States and basically, our feeling was, did not go on welfare at all. Hard working and willing to take...typical immigrants...willing to take the lower class jobs. Jamaicans make very, very good immigrants.

The only problem that we were having while I was there, was the whole drug business, which I get incensed about when I look at what we have done to the rest of the world. But at any rate, Jamaica was a high marijuana producing area, and we had a big drug program which was not completely ineffective, aimed at destruction of marijuana. The problem was that many high ranking Jamaicans were involved in the marijuana trade. It was one of the major sources of income for the Jamaican economy, and, of course, it was illegal. There was huge traffic back and forth between the States and Jamaica of marijuana. It was just starting to move over into cocaine. It's not a cocaine producing area, but it was starting to turn into a cocaine transit area, or an area where the big drug dealers were using cocaine to purchase marijuana. In other words, they would come in and rather than paying for marijuana all in dollars, they would pay for a certain amount with cocaine, which was then starting to give Jamaica, at least in the higher levels of society, a cocaine problem. But at any rate this affected us in the visa section because we had to be very, very careful to make sure who we were allowing up, and we had a high percentage of people we would turn down because they were known to be, or suspected to be, involved in the drug trafficking.

And at the time I was down there, it was the time at which there was a big outcry up here in Washington because the crack cocaine distribution rings up and down the eastern seaboard, and across into Texas and Kansas City were run by Jamaicans.

Q: I remember. The word was Jamaican gangs are very dangerous, they kill a lot of people.

SWIFT: And indeed they do. The problem with that sort, and the reason you saw it all disappear off the front pages, was that it's very easy to speak of Jamaican gangs. The problem was that Jamaicans, like any other portion of our society, the Irish, etc., had been around a long time. So that a lot of these so-called Jamaican gangs were in reality Jamaican-American gangs. American citizens of Jamaican extraction. And there were a lot of immigrant Jamaicans, and a lot of illegal

Jamaicans involved in this. But a high percentage of these people were Americans. So the black community in Washington got outraged by the way the press was treating this. It was like that...they turned off discussing the Jamaican drug running gangs still existing.

The problem with the Jamaicans, and the problem with Jamaican society, is for some reason or other there is a very, very strong streak of violence in it. There were a lot of sociological studies of the areas that the Jamaican slaves were transported out of whatever their cultural background was. The Jamaicans are fiercely, fiercely independent. Certain groups of Jamaicans fought the British to a standstill, and never were conquered. The slaves revolted and went up into the hills, and actually in some cases made treaties with the British that gave them hunks of the country under their control. It's as though the American Indians fought us to a standstill. The Jamaican blacks, some of them managed to rule parts of Jamaica without much interference from the Brits. So they are a very, very proud people. Unfortunately when I was there, in the early '80s, the various political factions had armed themselves, and had sort of hired thugs to do their guarding work. And when Seaga came in, they dismantled a lot of these private armies. And what this meant was that a lot of people were left without employment, but with guns. And what ended up filling the breach was the drug trade, where the drug traffickers took these guys on as their runners, and their controllers. And they're very, very trigger happy. So a lot of the shooting, and a lot of the very quickness to go to guns, was in that culture, and was transported into the States.

Now the Jamaicans would say that it is your drug trafficking that is misleading our good Jamaicans who go up there, our poor kids go up there, and get corrupted by your American gangs. And to a certain extent that was true. So it was a very difficult problem to deal with.

Q: From your point of view running the consular section as it impacted on the visa work, how did this drug thing translate?

SWIFT: Well, what it meant was that we had a very close working relationship, both with the intelligence community, and with DEA.

Q: Drug Enforcement Agency.

SWIFT: ...to track, and try to give whatever help we could from the Visa Section to DEA to keep these people from getting into the States. Which meant that they would give us information, we'd enter it into our machines, and try and track some of this stuff.

The other side of this was, that the drug dealers were closely involved with the fake document industry in Jamaica. There were vibrant, charging, document production rings, which had their base in smuggling normal Jamaicans up to the States to be illegal aliens. But the narcotic rings got into that because they needed fake documentation, they needed fake passports, they needed all of this sort of stuff, and they were willing to pay huge prices for it. The Jamaican working class themselves would pay \$3,000, \$4,000, and \$5,000 dollars to get documentation which they thought would get them through the embassy, and get them a visa. But the smuggling rings would pay much more than that. So there was a close interconnection between the narcotics people, and the document rings.

Q: How did you deal with that?

SWIFT: It's very, very difficult to deal with alien smuggling and with document rings. We're not policemen, we're not investigators, although in our consular section we had a fraud unit. It was very hard to keep my fraud unit people from becoming real live police investigators. We had a very close connection with the Jamaican police authorities, and, as I said, very close relations with our intelligence agencies, and with our embassy security people, and with DEA.

Ordinarily at an embassy, for instance like in Athens, your intelligence agencies, and your DEA, really doesn't care much about the consular section, because there's not this close connection between what they're doing, and the visa section. In Jamaica it was very, very close. It was obvious to them that if they could get at the counterfeit document producers, they could stop some of this trafficking. So by convincing the intelligence agencies that it was in their interest to target the counterfeit document producers, I got help from DEA and things that would not be available to me otherwise.

Q: How effective did you think your section was in getting on top of the fraud problem?

SWIFT: Oh, not very effective at all. It's a very, very hard thing to control. When the ability to reproduce documents with all your fancy new modern FAX machines is so high, and when it was so easy for a Jamaican to change his name, change his identity, and come in with a totally new set of documents with very good documents to back it up. What we tried to do was pick out patterns. This kind of documentation is suspect. Therefore, when it appears in front of you, you look at it six times harder. But it was very difficult to do. As fast as we'd crack down and break one ring or scam, another one would leap into its place because the commercial advantage to producing these documents was so high. And the government itself...the other thing was convincing the Jamaican government that fake document production was against their best interest. There was a tendency by the Jamaican government, and should I say by the US government, to regard counterfeiting of documents as a civil offense, rather than a criminal offense. And your fines are low. Even in the United States, how many prosecutions do you see for issuance of fake passports and fake birth certificates? Very few, and the fines are low, and the jail sentences are minimal if you get caught at doing this stuff. It's no different in Jamaica as it was in the States.

One of the leaders of the document production rings was a very, very interesting lady who had a huge following because she was seen as sort of a Robin Hood. She helped all of these poor Jamaicans to get up and join their families. She was very popular, and she'd get put in jail. She was caught two or three different times, I mean by my predecessors. I caught her too but my predecessors had gotten her tossed into jail, and she'd get out, and she'd be treated as a hero while she was in jail because she was...part of their Jamaican ethic is to have the little guy taking on the big guy, and fooling him, and tricking him. And this lady was absolutely seen by the Jamaican people, and I think even by a lot of people in the Jamaican government, as somebody who was very bright, brazen, and fun, and wasn't doing anything harmful really. This wasn't seen as something that was bad...okay, so you fake a visa, or you fake papers. You're just helping some poor Jamaican get around these darn US immigration laws which are kind of foolish in the first place. We were up against that all the time.

Q: There is nothing more frustrating for young officers coming to deal with a situation where they know they're dealing with something that's probably bigger than they are, they're supposed to enforce the law and people are getting by.

SWIFT: Very, very, very tough. It's very tough to keep young officers from getting bitter, and aggressive, and difficult in that sort of situation. They know they're being lied to. They know everybody is running around. They know they can turn visas down, but they also know that they've got to have a decent ground to turn them down on. The Jamaicans will come right on in there, and lie to you to your face, and then they'll get very hostile when you turn them down for a visa. They're very strong minded sort of people. And it's a really tough visa line situation. It's very hard for the officers to keep their balance, and keep their senses of humor which is basically what you have to do. You have to regard it as you are doing your absolute best to administer US immigration law, and that your job is to let people into the States, not to block them from going to the States. But you have to keep the ones out that you think are illegitimate. And that's your job. And they're going to get mad at you, and it looks like they're mad at you personally. But they aren't really mad at you. They are mad at the law, and they're mad at the fact that you're applying the law to them.

Q: Did you spend a lot of time as sort of the section physiologist?

SWIFT: We tried hard. It was really tough, because groups of junior officers take on their own characteristics. And when I got there the characteristic of the consulate was basically us against them. And it was real tough.

Q: Us against them was us against the visa applicants.

SWIFT: It was very, very tough, and it was very tough to change. A lot of the change came not particularly because of anything that I did, but because of a new group of officers coming in who came in with a much more of an outreach attitude toward Jamaican society. And that helped. When they were willing to get out, and get involved in Jamaican society, then they regarded Jamaicans much less as the enemy, and much more as people who they could be friendly with. But it was a very tough thing to do, and even the most involved officers would still lose their tempers and get mad. I had officers who went and married Jamaicans, and still you would find them on the line losing their temper. There was nothing personal in it, it was just that they were losing their tempers. So it was tough. I mean the best you could hope in Jamaica was to have a reputation that you were fair. You couldn't be loved because you were carrying out laws that the Jamaicans just didn't like. If you were fair they would accept it.

Q: What about Congressional pressure? Phone rates were low, and a lot of these Jamaicans would be brought up to be, as we're seeing as of today, the problem of domestic servants at least initially, and there's nothing that gets an American citizen more upset than knowing that they aren't going to have somebody to look after their children, or wash the dishes.

SWIFT: Right. And a lot of Americans would come down on holiday, and would go to these big Jamaican resorts or some place, and they'd have lots of money, and they would meet wonderful

Jamaicans who were just dying to come up to the States with them to help them out with their kids, or whatever it was. The Americans would just simply not understand that our laws would object to this. They had the money to pay these people, they were delighted to have them up and pay them a going rate in the States, and here was this wonderful person who was thoroughly qualified, and we were saying no. Then they'd call their Congressman and we'd get a Congressional...we spent hours answering Congressional mail and telephone calls and all that sort of stuff...hours and hours.

Q: How were you supported by the visa office?

SWIFT: At the time that I was down there the visa office was very weak, and I would say that our support from the visa office was minimal, thank you. Especially during the period that I was there, we had the problem of farm workers where the '86 bill permitted people who were up in the States as farm workers to convert to immigrant status under a very complicated set of laws. It ended up not applying, but it may yet apply, to Jamaican cane workers which was a major amount of people. But we thought that we were going to be flooded, just overrun, with applicants for this program. As it turned out it wasn't too bad, but we were really concerned at one point that we were going to just sink underneath this. And we got very little support from the visa office, and we were not happy about it. I spent a good deal of time screaming at the visa office, and finally gave up and just started talking to Mexico. It turned out to be much better because they were having the same sorts of problems.

Q: That's our embassy in Mexico as far as technical advice.

SWIFT: In order to find out what was going on. Basically we needed information. We needed to know where the bill was, where it was going, how it was going to be applied, what were the various aspects of it. And we were not getting this out of the visa office, so as I say, I started calling Mexico, and they knew a lot more about it because they were dealing directly with it.

Q: How about the protection problem? During this period, and I suppose even now, I would be very dubious about going to Jamaica for a vacation. I hear about violence, robberies. It must have had quite an impact on you.

SWIFT: It was a problem. As long as you were up on the north coast, it was reasonably okay. The north coast being the tourist areas. And as long as you weren't out in the back woods. We had, just before I got there, a very nasty incident of some people who were robbed and raped. Some missionaries that were up there out in the back woods and they thought they were perfectly safe, and they were not. We had a lot of sort of minor incidents. We had not very many major ones. When I was there, there was very little direct robbery aimed at tourists. Now the problem that we had was that there was, and especially in the period just as I got there, there were armed gangs roaming around in the hills above Kingston who were coming down and robbing houses. When I say armed gangs, I mean these guys were armed with M-16s, and heavy weapons.

Q: The M-16 is the standard infantry rifle of the United States.

SWIFT: Yes, a fully automatic, nasty gun. So they were scary people. We had guards but there were some very, very nasty incidents that were going on just as I got down there. And just as I got down there the army went after these gangs that were up in the hills, and simply wiped them out. And that made the situation a little bit better. But just before I left, things started getting again nastier. It was never good. There was a lot of burglary, and that sort of stuff in Kingston. But just before I left, we had some serious murders of people in the American community because they ran afoul of somebody--either a house breaker, or something went wrong with their servants, and their servants came back and simply wiped them away. It was not nice. The head of the Jamaican Chamber of Commerce was murdered, a Jamaican friend of mine--or the father of a Jamaican friend of mine--was shot by robbers in his business. The violence hit the upper classes, rather than simply bubbling down in the ghettos. It came up and struck at the upper classes as well.

Q: *You mentioned that you had not received much support from the visa office at that time, but you came back to at least start off...when did you leave Jamaica?*

SWIFT: I left Jamaica in '89.

Q: *When in '89?*

SWIFT: Summer.

SALLY GROOMS COWAL
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin America
Washington, DC (1989-1991)

Ambassador Sally Grooms Cowal was born in Oak Park, Illinois in 1944. After graduating from DePauw University she joined the United States Information Service as Foreign Service Officer. Her service included assignments as Cultural and Public Affairs Officer at US Embassies in India, Colombia, Mexico and Israel. She subsequently held a number of senior positions in the Department of State, including Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs and Deputy Political Counselor to The American Ambassador to the United Nations. In 1991 she was appointed Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago. Ambassador Cowal was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy August 9, 2001.

COWAL: It was the age of great independence movements, all of the African countries and so on, and the Caribbean was picking up that wind and wanted to do that. The British tried, I think, very hard to make the whole enterprise more sustainable by making it more united, by having one West Indian Federation, which was to seek independence as a single country, with one prime minister and one cabinet, and elections in which anybody from any country could be the prime minister, but they wouldn't each have their own legislative assemblies and so on.

In fact, that fell apart at the beginning, I think largely because the Jamaicans decided if the

capital wasn't going to be in Kingston, which it wasn't – I think the capital was going to be in Port of Spain – and the prime minister was going to be a Barbadian, the initial prime minister, then they weren't going to play cricket on that team. So they took their balls and bats and went home, and the other 12 countries – well, it was at that time 10. A couple became independent subsequently in joining CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market), but the others decided, as the great calypso song has it, 10 minus one equals zero. So if they didn't have Jamaica, which was the largest-population country, and the most resources, then it was not going to make it as a West Indian Federation. I think that's been one of the tragedies of that region. So they all pursued their separate courses at great cost. There are great inefficiencies which would not be altogether overcome if you had them together, but it would certainly be ameliorated.

As it is, you have Jamaica with a couple of million people, Trinidad with just over a million, and it drops off radically after that to countries with 200,000, 100,000 citizens. You've got these, as I call them, *sui generis* little rocks, each with its own mechanisms of government, its own full three branches – an executive, a legislative and a judiciary. Tremendous waste and inefficiency.

Q: When you got there in '89, did we have a policy to try to do anything about this?

COWAL: Well, not really to rewrite history. I think we were encouraging and helpful. There had been some original Caribbean basin legislation passed, which was essentially giving them trade preferences, mainly for assembly industry, for the textile industry, which is important in the Caribbean. We sought to have all of them sort of hang together enough to do one trade agreement with the United States, and then to renew that trade agreement. That was somewhat helpful, then. As drugs became a bigger issue, we certainly tried to provide some of the fiber optic network that would allow the Jamaicans to talk to the Trinidadians or the Barbadians or the St. Kittians by radio and by fax and by phone.

All roads lead to Miami, but the roads aren't very good that lead between Jamaica and Barbados. To sort of foster and to provide the infrastructure for a better law enforcement network, in our own interest – I think it was in our own interest – but I think what we've discovered with the drug business all over the world is it can't be just coming through you. The beginning, I think, of the whole war on drugs, going back to Nixon, probably, and certainly through Reagan, there was a tremendous dialog of the deaf, where the United States of course – still does, to a certain extent – blames the producer countries. The producer countries say, "Hey, it's not our problem. If your young people didn't want to consume it, we wouldn't be growing it, would we? And besides, we don't have drug addicts. It doesn't affect us."

I think the shortsightedness of that point of view began to be addressed in the years that I was there. The Caribbean are not producers, but there are two ways for drugs to get to the United States. One is through Mexico and the other is through the Caribbean, so I was really handling both sides of that portfolio, therefore very drug related. I think that the transit countries, as well as the producer countries, began to understand the terrible effects, how distorting that amount of money to the Caribbean economies. Suddenly somebody is getting paid enormous amounts of money to close your eye when the boat goes through, or as paid mules and shippers.

They began to catch some of the really low-level folks, the poor Jamaican women who would

take a few kilos in their suitcases and go to the United States. Of course, it's much harder to catch the real traffickers, because they're much more clever at what they do. At any rate, I think through our working with all of the countries of the Caribbean, both on trade issues and on law enforcement issues, we have done something to encourage a better dialog between us.

Q: Well, let's turn to the other sort of powerhouse of a place, Jamaica, while you were there.

COWAL: These are all very interesting countries. It's just that they're so in miniature, and despite the fact that they're so close to the United States, we tend not to think about them at all. Jamaica had, I would say, one of the good political appointees of my time, a fellow named Glen Holden, who was a polo player and a very big insurance man from California who made gazillions of dollars and gave significant parts of it to the Republican Party and got Jamaica. He took it very seriously and did a pretty good job. That was through the election of the sort of new Michael Manley. Michael Manley had been the prime minister of Jamaica, not a friend of the United States. He was not a Communist and never a Communist, but certainly firmly in the maybe Francois Mitterrand camp, I mean, a socialist, defined in many ways by his opposition to the United States.

Then we had gone through this period of Eddie Seaga, who was basically a thug, I think, but politics in Jamaica are a homegrown sport. It's such a vital democracy that it risks being a dangerous vital democracy, with two parties, the PNC (People's National Congress) and the JLP (Jamaica Labor Party), who go back to before independence. The JLP was always considered to be more pro-Republican, pro-United States, pro-business, but at the same time has a populist element to it in a quite interesting way. The PNC, which is Manley's party, was socialist but British socialist, run on the rules of we have to operate a government, we have to collect tax revenues, and therefore we have to have private industries which function. And we want to have a tourist industry, and we want to have an export textile industry, and we need to provide some flexibility for business to operate.

What makes politics in Jamaica dangerous is that each of these quite respectable – I think Seaga ranged on being a Godfather type – nonetheless, all the people in his party did not. Quite respectable politicians are each identified with much less respectable elements who will seek in moments of local elections or national elections, to intimidate the followers of the other party by violence in the streets. So street gangs are associated with both of these parties. That all got worse with the drug trafficking also, because drug money inevitably tried to find its way into where it could have some influence. Convicted drug traffickers who spent some time in U.S. jails then got repatriated. When their jail terms are over, they get repatriated back to their country of origin. That's often Jamaica, and they come to little old Kingston, which may have been fighting it out on the streets with rocks and clubs, and introduce real weapons of mass destruction in the neighborhood way – heavy armaments. So the level of violence escalated dramatically.

Jamaica was a dicey situation, but we, I think, stayed out of the election properly. Manley was elected. Bush 41 had a certain knowledge of the Caribbean, and a certain affection for it. I don't know whether this was from his days in offshore oil or his UN days or whatever, but he had

some kind of residual warm feelings for the Caribbean. So one of the things that he agreed to do was a state visit for Manley, and also because his friend Glen Holden was ambassador. That's one of the things a political appointee can do in a place that doesn't matter otherwise. He's got the ear of the president, at least for five minutes at the Christmas party, whatever it is, and he can sometimes get done. I'm sure the State Department could never have brought that off, because it wouldn't have even gotten through the State Department. He's only going to do five state visits this year, or 25 state visits this year, it doesn't matter, Jamaica's not going to be on the list. It's not going to be on the list of five, and it's not going to be on the list of 25, so they're not going to get any hearing.

Instead, and I think because of Holden, they got Manley on the list, so we had a state visit by Manley, and that was a rather positive affair, I thought. It was one of the highlights of my time as deputy assistant secretary. Because you get very involved with the White House and with the higher levels of government, which two or three ranks down, as you are in State, you don't get all that much opportunity to do. Suddenly your guy's coming to town, and so you get to go to Andrews Air Force Base and fly in with him on the helicopter and do all these things that are part of what makes getting to that level of government fun, I suppose. Manley, who's died now, recently, was I think one of these magnificent sort of larger-than-life Caribbean figures. There are a number of them in the Caribbean, who are really the products, largely, of British educations. The new generation is more American educated, but Manley's generation, they were pre-independence, and they went to – I don't remember whether he went to Oxford or Cambridge, but I'm quite sure it was one of the two. His father had been a Jamaican politician. He came to it almost from boyhood. Norman Manley had been a great leader and so on in Jamaica. So he was Caribbean aristocracy all the way through. It was just a pleasure to know somebody like that.

Q: From what you'd heard of Manley before, had he changed, or was he still sort of a Fabian socialist ...

COWAL: No, he had changed quite a lot. He certainly at that point had seemed to make a complete transformation: to believing that, whether it was the Caribbean Basin Initiative or later, the Free Trade of the Americas, an attempt to put NAFTA and the Andean and the Caribbean and all of these various free trade agreements together in a hemisphere-wide agreement, minus Cuba, of course. But he spoke glowingly about those, and he got on quite well in his second term with the private sector.

I once had the opportunity, we were sitting together at a dinner or something, to ask him what had changed his mind on so many of these things, and he looked me square in the eye and said, "Defeat."

Q: What?

COWAL: Defeat. He had been prime minister. He had been defeated. He had analyzed for four years why he had been defeated, decided that he would rather be prime minister than be right, maybe, and that Fabian socialism was not the way of the latter half of the 20th century and wasn't sustainable. He changed. Whether he really changed or whether he changed the rhetoric I would

never have the opportunity to know, but indeed he changed.

HERMAN J. ROSSI III
Economic Counselor
Kingston (1989-1992)

Mr. Rossi was born in Florida and raised in Idaho. He was educated at Gonzaga University and Washington State University. In 1965, he entered the Foreign Service, specializing primarily in economic and African affairs. During his career, Mr. Rossi served in Kinshasa, Blantyre, Rome, Pretoria, Monrovia, Kingston and Libreville, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. He was Economic Counselor at several of his posts. In his Washington assignments, Mr. Rossi dealt with both African and Economic matters. Mr. Rossi was interviewed by Peter Eicher in 2007.

ROSSI: I got an assignment to Kingston, Jamaica as economic counselor. The reasons I went there were mainly personal. First of all, I still had four kids in college, so I needed a hardship differential post with government housing. Kingston, believe it or not, was a differential post due mainly to the crime in the city. It had a serious crime problem, and I think still does which I'll talk more on in a second.

My other reason was I wanted to be closer to my kids and see a bit more of them before they completely grew up. Most of them were in college at that stage. It's a long trip to Africa, so I wasn't getting to see all that much of them.

One footnote to my Africa career is that in my final weeks in Monrovia, well after I had been assigned to Kingston, I was offered the job of DCM in Madagascar. I turned it down. First I wanted to see more of my kids and secondly I was rather burnt out on Africa. I knew something about the situation in Madagascar and another troubled African country run by another ruthless dictator did not seem very attractive at the time. In retrospect, it would have been far better for my career if I had taken that job but I had other considerations.

Q: On to Jamaica. What year was this?

ROSSI: This was 1989. Michael Manley had come back to power a year or so earlier. In the '70s when he had been in power, he was something of a socialist and did not get along well with the U.S., and the U.S. did not get along well with him. The Jamaican economy had suffered a major decline during this period. When he came back to power in the late 1980s, Manley had become something of a born-again capitalist. I guess he's had seen the light from his previous problems and mistakes with the economy. He and the U.S. got along well during most of my tour. Among other things, we were cooperating on drug enforcement.

Jamaica does not produce hard drugs. It does produce a lot of marijuana which is grown up in the mountains. Some of it was grown for the local use, but some is for export. Marijuana is a bulk item, so it isn't a high value thing. One of the major problems was the island and its crime

network was becoming a staging area for hard drugs coming in from Columbia and places like that. We had a large drug enforcement presence there working with the Jamaicans. DEA was there and other agencies.

Let me touch on my job there. I was economic counselor or head of the economic section. It was a period when Jamaica had gone through a long period of economic problems. It was very heavily indebted. Briefing papers would say it was the most heavily indebted country in the world per capita. It had borrowed a lot from various banks and international institutions.

The country chronically lived beyond its means. It wanted to live at a higher standard of living than it could afford to on its export income. The major exports were bauxite and coffee and a few things like that; tourism was probably the biggest single foreign exchange earner. None of that seemed to balance with the consumption on the island. You can see where it was frustrating for the Jamaicans. When I got there, satellite dishes had come into use, so the Jamaicans could get American television and see how the Americans live.

There was a long tradition of immigration from Jamaica to other countries in search of work and opportunity. Previously, much of this immigration had gone to Great Britain. During the period I was there, this had shifted more to the United States, and many of the educated Jamaicans and others wanted to immigrate to the United States. The consular section had its hands full trying to cope with all this. That was not my job. I mention it for general background.

It was an interesting tour. I was impressed with the educated Jamaicans. Having been in a lot of third-world countries, I found the educated Jamaicans—which is perhaps a quarter of the population—very impressive people. You can see where Colin Powell gets his roots in Jamaica because there's a good work ethic there and stress on education.

My job was the normal economic reporting functions. We had some negotiations going on while I was there. The IMF negotiations were a chronic, ongoing thing. We had our own AID program, a fairly substantial AID program which we linked to compliance with the IMF program.

Except for Rome, this was my second experience with a political ambassador. He was named Glenn Holden. In Rome, I had been way down in the trenches from the ambassador I had only rarely contact with him. In Jamaica, I had frequent contact with the ambassador as the economic counselor. The gentleman was very congenial. He had built up a large insurance company—actually several companies—in California and was a political appointee. He wanted to do a good job in the country and seemed to be willing to take advice.

It was interesting for me to work with somebody who did not have a background in foreign service work or the intricacies of overseas economies. He was a very bright gentleman, but he had no real experience in international affairs or international finance. I tried my best to educate him on some of these issues, and he was overall receptive.

Q: Did you meet Michael Manley?

ROSSI: Yes, I did meet him.

Q: What was your impression of him?

ROSSI: Very bright, charismatic guy. He probably had some resemblances to Bill Clinton. He was very much of a people-person. You could see why he got re-elected. Probably a better politician than he actually was prime minister. He did the job fairly well. I think he shrank a little bit from the hard decisions which is easy to do. In Jamaica, if you raise the price of gasoline, you get rioting in the streets. Thus it is easier to avoid the tough calls. Manley made some of them. He shrank from some of the others. I thought overall he was a decent prime minister, certainly a charismatic figure.

Q: Good relations with the United States when you were there?

ROSSI: We had had excellent relations with Jamaica. That side of it seemed to go well which is a complete turnaround from the '70s when Manley was in office before.

Q: How were American relations with the Caribbean in general? Wasn't that approximately the time of the Granada and Panama invasions?

ROSSI: In general, American relations were quite good. After the Grenada invasion, the U.S. made a fairly substantial investment in the Caribbean. A program called the Caribbean Basin Initiative poured in some money in support for investment and development in a whole number of areas.

That was the early '80s. By the time I got there in '89, this was still a republican administration. This was the Bush senior administration, and priorities had shifted elsewhere. All the resources and high level attention that had been focused on the Caribbean in the early '80s had diminished somewhat. The structure was still there, but it just didn't have the priority that it did previously.

Broadly, our relations with Jamaica and with the Caribbean were good with the exception of Cuba and Nicaragua. I'm trying to think of problem areas, but they really were fairly modest. We had a slew of ongoing problems at any given time, but they were problems that arise between two countries that have lots of trade and investment contacts, not countries that are at loggerheads. The level of U.S. assistance to Jamaica was of course a key ongoing issue.

Q: How were relations with Cuba?

ROSSI: Not greatly different than they are now. This was the period right after the collapse of the Soviet Union. There was some expectation in Jamaican circles that without Soviet support, the Castro government would collapse. It had been heavily subsidized by the Soviets so they felt Castro could not last. Therefore there would be great opportunities for investment when U.S. sanctions were lifted. That was certainly the attitude among some of the Jamaican businessmen, particularly those in the tourism area.

I remember trying to tell some of them, "Let's wait a bit. He's got control of all the security forces and a very strong secret police. He might survive this." However a few businessmen wanted to leap ahead with their investments in Cuba to beat the competition and did so. Here we

are 20 years later, and Castro is still alive, if not in power, and his authoritarian regime continues on.

I got to visit Guantanamo Bay during my tour there. The Cuban employees gradually phased out of Guantanamo Bay. The U.S. military replaced them with workers from other neighboring countries, and Jamaica was one of them. There were several thousand Jamaicans working in Guantanamo Bay. I went over for Jamaican Labor Day when they had a celebration for the Jamaican workers. In the process, I got a tour of the base. We spent about two days there, saw what life was like on Guantanamo Bay.

It seemed less attractive than I thought it might be. It's a bleak and rather arid area. It's in the rain shadow of some mountains and gets relatively little rainfall. Even the beaches are rocky there. It's not a sailor's paradise by any stretch of the imagination, but it was interesting to see.

Let me say one thing about the Jamaican economy that I should have talked about before. There is a very big divide in income levels in the Jamaican economy. There is a very large low income group which is a least two-thirds of the country. There is a fairly small high income group, maybe 10% or less at the top. There was also a rather small middle class which was shrinking during the period I was there. This situation is far from unique to Jamaica but it was and is a major problem in the country. Most of the economic reform programs that we and the IMF supported tended to hit on the low and middle income poor sections of the population more than the upper levels.

One of the results was there was a very high crime rate in the city of Kingston itself. It was a bad sort of crime in that it was violent. A lot of the criminals had guns. That was one of the reasons we had a hardship differential there. The typical mode was that armed robbers would attack a house and often not leave any witnesses. Many people were killed that way and houses in the better areas of the city were particular targets.

During the period I was there, we actually had armed guards on the homes of the American officers or, if they were in a compound, there would be a guard on the gate. Because I had a separate house, I had an armed guard, a gate, and there were grills all over the house.

I had been in a lot of third world posts, some rather dangerous. Thus the crime problem in Kingston did not shock me too much. On the other hand, I did not have a family there either. My kids came down to visit occasionally but were not there regularly. The crime was less acute up on the north coast which is where the main hotels and tourism were. Tourists didn't experience it to the degree we did in Kingston although there were occasional problems even on the north coast.

Q: Was it a good sized embassy?

ROSSI: Yes, a large embassy for the size of the country. We had a large AID mission there and several other agencies were present.

Q: Today is August 3, 2007. This is Peter Eicher continuing the interview with Herman Rossi.

This is tape number 4A. Herman, you were talking about the size of the embassy in Jamaica.

ROSSI: The embassy in Kingston was bigger than you might expect for the size of the country. I think it was a legacy of the Caribbean Basin Initiative plus the obvious fact it is so close to the U.S. and there was a broad spectrum of US interests there. There was also the feeling that the U.S. needed to support the Caribbean economies or they would be subverted by Cuba. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990, this threat seemed to have become less acute because Cuba was not getting the kind of the support it had before.

After I left in '92, the embassy was cut back somewhat because the rationale for this heavy effort in Jamaica was less. We had a good size AID mission. We had DEA office. We had a good sized USIA operation there and an agricultural attaché I believe. There was also a large consular section since many Jamaicans wanted to get to the U.S. and visa fraud was a significant problem. Also the many American tourists were often getting sick, having traffic accidents, and even dying. All this required Embassy staff.

Q: This is very interesting what you said suggests that as the Cold War ended, we were scaling back, and so perhaps the Caribbean nations suffered somewhat by the end of the Cold War?

ROSSI: I think they probably did in terms of US assistance. I do not think that at any point the U.S. government stood up and said, "The Cold War is over, so we can do less in the Caribbean," but the area gradually assumed a lower priority for assistance and attention. Other areas came more to the fore than the Caribbean particularly after I left. I think in large measure this was due to a reduction of the perceived threat from Cuban influence in these countries; without Soviet support Cuba could not undertake nearly as much subversion as before.. Most of these countries had somewhat fragile democratic systems. Jamaica was and is a rough-and-ready democracy. The elections would get a little violent, but as far as anyone could tell, the man who won was normally the guy that got the most votes which is not true of many other countries. [laughter]

Q: Did you get a lot of high level attention from Washington?

ROSSI: Not like we had had before. Dan Quayle visited while he was Vice President. I was rather impressed with him. He's gotten a lot of bad press, but in dealing with him during the visit, I found him to be a solid, sensible individual.

I think the Secretary of State came, his name is out of my head at this point.

Q: Jim Baker probably.

There had been a big hurricane, Gilbert, which had swept through the islands about nine months before I got there. They were still recovering from that storm, and the U.S. had come forward and greatly helped the island of Jamaica on recovery. In the period right after the storm, we had sent down repair crews to restring the power lines, telephone lines, and gave them continuing aid to help recover from it. It earned the U.S. a lot of goodwill.

My tour in Jamaica was mid '89 to mid '92, I left in mid '92 and went back to the department

and took a job in the CIP (Communication Information Policy) bureau. It was a very small, specialized bureau in State that dealt with telecommunications issues all the way from frequency negotiations to broader issues of state control of telecommunications. There's a whole series of international organizations that have been set up to deal with various aspects of these issues all of which we were members of. Some people in the bureau had to attend at lot of international meetings.

It's a specialized field. The CIP bureau has since been merged back into the EB—Economic and Business—bureau, so it no longer exists. In years earlier a decision made that telecommunication was important enough that it needed an assistant secretary level head to deal with other countries when negotiations that were going on. Later on in the late '90s this was reversed.

There was a political appointee as head of the bureau and as far as I could tell all the assistant secretaries of CIP had been political appointees. These were rather technical fields so I spent much of my year there learning the turf. I'd dealt with broad policy and communications issues, but these were more specialized issues.

One of the things in the back of my mind when I went there was the possibility of a mandatory retirement looming on the horizon. Thus I thought it would be helpful to pick up some knowledge in the telecommunication field which would help me in a second career.

LACY A. WRIGHT
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1991-1995)

Mr. Wright joined the Foreign Service in 1968 after earning degrees at Mendelien College and Loyola University. His foreign service took him to Vietnam both during and after the War. Other assignments took him to Milan, London and Bangkok as well as to the State Department in Washington, where he worked with International Organizations in matters concerning refugees, and UNESCO affairs. Mr. Wright was born and raised in Springfield, Illinois. Mr. Wright was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: Today is the 13th of August, 1998. You were in Jamaica from when to when?

WRIGHT: '91 to '95, almost exactly four years.

Q: Jamaica has often been a troubled place because some political ambassadors have gone there and were sort of not quite sure what an ambassador would do. I mean they were often more social than not, but they were real problems. Could you describe how you got the job as a DCM and who was your ambassador, and then the situation in Jamaica in 1991, and then we can move on?

WRIGHT: I got the job primarily through the support of Sally Cowal, who was then the deputy assistant secretary in ARA who was responsible for the Caribbean. She recommended me to the then ambassador, whose name was Glen Holden. Holden was and is a very wealthy Californian, a friend of Ronald Reagan, a friend of George Bush, a man who made a fortune in insurance, and he had just lost his then DCM because of disagreements between them, and so he was looking for someone new. Sally recommended me. I don't know how many other applicants there were—I know there were some—and I went through a long series of correspondences with Holden, in which he asked me a number of questions to which I responded. The whole process took several months, but in the end he accepted me as his DCM, and I went there directly from Trinidad in April of 1991.

Q: Obviously you were sounding the corridors to find out what the dispute had been between the other DCM and the Ambassador, just to get a feel for the situation. How would you describe that?

WRIGHT: My gosh, it never occurred to me to wonder about that.

Q: Ha, ha! A note to the transcriber to put down "Laughter and raised eyebrows" on both our parts.

WRIGHT: Yes, of course I looked deeply into the matter. The then DCM, whom I did not know at that time but came to know later, was an economic officer, and this was his first DCM-ship. I believe that several things went wrong. I believe that there was not enough communication between the two. The economic officer went off and did things—this is what it appears to me, I must add—which he was familiar with, talking about economic policy and Jamaica's role in that and in our overall economic policy toward the Caribbean, not always, it seems, coordinating with the Ambassador. And I think that that was the general problem, that is, there was kind of a growing rift between the two. One has to remember that when you have a political ambassador, that person usually doesn't know what his role is, and he doesn't know what his deputy's role is, therefore. So there's a period during which those things have to get sorted out. There's also, or can be, a certain amount of suspicion on the part of a political ambassador vis-à-vis his DCM, who may think that he is trying to encroach on the ambassador's territory. This happens all the time. And so there might have been some of that. Anyway, it's unfortunate that it didn't work out for the person involved, who stayed about a year and whom I have come to know later as quite a good guy and a serious person. But those are the kinds of things that happen in our service.

Q: Can you talk about what was the situation vis-à-vis the United States but also the political situation on the ground in Jamaica in 1991, when you arrived there?

WRIGHT: Well, you have in Jamaica a country with some serious issues with the United States. You have, first of all, a number of Jamaicans who live in this country, and some people are fond of saying that they are either very good or very bad. There are some marvelous Jamaicans here, some of whom have become famous, like Colin Powell—

Q: Barbara Watson.

WRIGHT: —Barbara Watson and others, many who don't become famous but who are marvelous citizens of our country. And then, at the other end of the spectrum, you have a whole group of very violent criminals, who do a great deal of damage in our country. So you have both. And the people at the bottom end of the spectrum also cause bilateral difficulties with our country. For example, we exercise our right every year to deport a number of Jamaicans back to Jamaica. These are often people who are released from prison, and we put them on the plane and send them back there. This, during my time there, reached a total of maybe close to a thousand people a year.

Q: *Oh, boy.*

WRIGHT: And Jamaica, under international law, has to take these people back. But first of all, they don't like it, naturally, because it's causing them and their society increased problems, and they sometimes accuse us of sending back people, number one, who sometimes they contend are not Jamaican citizens, or who may be technically Jamaican citizens but who arrived in the United States so young that they were really formed in the United States and so, it is said, their criminal behavior is really our fault, and not Jamaica's. That is a debate that went on during the time that I was there. We once did a statistical analysis of some groups of these people who were sent back, and I must say, we did not find very many who arrived in the United States at age two and then became violent criminals. Most of them arrived much later, although there were some who fit into the first category. At any rate, this is one of the issues.

Q: *I must say, during this period of time, I was here in Washington, and the papers would make reference again and again to Jamaican gangs who would come in and work from New York down to Norfolk and sort of up and down the Atlantic corridor. They would say "Jamaican Gangs" and then you would have, you know, "Ten People in an Apartment Slaughtered." I haven't heard that much any more, but that was very much in the newspapers during this particular time when you were there.*

WRIGHT: Well, I remember maybe one or two instances of that. I don't know that that—the particular way you've described it—was a continuing feature of these gangs, but there's no doubt that they exist, and there's a tremendous symbiosis in travel between gangs in the US and the same gangs, with the same names, in Jamaica. There's another interesting feature here, and that is that the gangs in Jamaica are generally linked with one of the two political parties in Jamaica. This is a feature of Jamaican political life, which it's hard for us to comprehend. And I can't really think of any parallel anywhere else in the world, but these over the course of the past two or three decades, Jamaican criminal gangs became affiliated with one of the political parties. And one of the things that pops up from time to time is one of the two most renowned Jamaican leaders of the last several decades—and those are two, Edward Seaga and Michael Manley—being caught in a photo somewhere, at some fund-raising event or some other kind of public event, with a bunch of very dubious characters. Seaga, in particular, whose constituency was, and is today, one of the most abject and difficult and violence-ridden parts of Kingston, was often accused of having used these gangs literally to attack partisans of the other side. And the same kind of charges were made against the Manley people. So probably neither side has its hands clean in this matter, and both of them are guilty of having dealt with and used and accepted the violent services of these criminal gangs.

Q: Well, did we try to tell the Immigration Service to cool it or not to send as many, or did we sort of accept the heat from the Jamaican Government?

WRIGHT: The latter. We never tried to influence our own authorities in that way. We explained to the Jamaicans as best we could why this was within our rights and tried to clear up some of the misconceptions. Another problem between us, by the way, similar in nature, was that of extradition. Because of the frequent travel back and forth of people who committed crimes in the United States, they would often end up back in Jamaica. And there were some really clamorous cases of people who were extradited or whom we wanted extradited that occurred while I was there. One of them—I can't think of the man's name, although I will in the written record—was a man who was wanted, I believe, for murder in the United States, a Jamaican. He was extradited, and no sooner was he extradited than his lawyers and others popped up and said that this was done illegally, that the laws of Jamaica had not been followed, and I believe that our case turned on an appeal that they contended was still in progress with the Privy Council in London when the removal of the person to the United States occurred. And I don't remember whether this was totally clear. I remember, at the time, that we believed that we were right. Well, first of all, if any mistake had occurred, it would have been on the part of the Jamaican Government; it would not have been on our part. So there's no question of that. But the Jamaican Government was so concerned about this public accusation and about what they feared the reaction was starting to be. I was chargé at the time, and I was called in by the minister of national security and literally asked if we would send him back to Jamaica, which I duly transmitted to Washington, and you can imagine the attitude of the Justice Department to such a request. Their response was "no way, José, are we sending this guy back to Jamaica." And so this was a request that was repeated to us several times over the coming weeks, that we never sent back, and it faded away.

Another time, or perhaps it was the same time—you know, in extradition, when a requesting country asks for someone to be extradited, it must say exactly on what charge, where it will be—it has to be very specific. So you can't get the guy back to your country and then try him on something else, as you know. And in this case, the person was then tried in another jurisdiction and for a slightly different crime, and this brought protests from the Jamaicans. I believe we could show that there were actually two requests made, the Jamaicans acted on one, we acted on the other—again, I'm not sure if it was totally clear which side was in the right and which side was in the wrong. I think, from a moral point of view, there's no reason to feel sorry for the person in question. Whichever court he was tried on, he richly deserved what he got. And I think the Jamaicans privately were very happy to be rid of him. But again, it's one of those kinds of questions that come up, behind which there's often a lot of nationalistic sentiment.

Q: How did Ambassador Glen Holden operate? How long was he there, and how did he operate, and how did you two work together?

WRIGHT: He was there for, I guess, almost two years while I was there. Ambassador Holden first of all got off to bit of a rocky start—this was before I came on the scene—but even before he arrived in Jamaica he made some remarks in a speech, which I never read and really don't know the nature of, remarks that were taken badly by Jamaicans. I think that he may have not been as carefully talked to by the State Department during this period—that might have been part

of it. But at any rate, he said things which irritated them. So this meant that when he arrived he had this to overcome. Another thing that he had to overcome was that he was a very wealthy man, so he was susceptible to those kinds of accusations, those kinds of resentments. For example, I'm told that he spent about \$500,000 of his own money to refurbish the residence. And he brought down his own armored car, which he drove around in. So all those things were the kind of things that can, if someone wants to be critical, breed criticism and resentment. I would say, however, by the time that he left, he was well liked. I think by then, in a number of ways, he had shown that he really was very fond of Jamaica, that he was willing to put his money, both in a literal sense and in a figurative sense, where his mouth was. And he had become friendly with a number of important Jamaicans, including people like Michael Manley and others. And so I believe that by the time he left he was appreciated. He came back once during the time that I was chargé, after he had left. He was invited back by the Jamaican Government when the Queen and her husband visited Jamaica. He was invited back because he had made some significant donations to the restoration of the governor-general's residence.

Q: I imagine that immigration, running the consular section and all, must have been a considerable burden. In fact, this has gotten some of our ambassadors into trouble, because they did not respond very well to the hordes of people that came in and all. How did the immigration thing work while you were there?

WRIGHT: Well, the consular section was a very busy one, very difficult job. We had about a 50 per cent rejection rate, very high. We were constantly being hit with various kinds of difficulties in that area. It was a difficult job for the junior officers that had to do it, and there were always about 10 or so of them there. They felt under a tremendous amount of pressure, particularly because they sometimes had to take their work home with them, in the sense that in public they would be recognized as consular officers, so that you would call them up at their homes or badger them on the streets or things like this, making life more unpleasant than it would have been otherwise. There were also, of course, hordes of people who called various of us in the embassy, probably me mostly, to get them visas, intervene on behalf of somebody.

Q: These were Americans who wanted, usually, servants, wasn't it?

WRIGHT: No, I wouldn't say so. I'm sure there were some of those. By the way, I don't mean to imply at all that people who called us were supporting something dubious. But the people who called us were often people we knew and who knew also how difficult it was to get an American visa or who had been importuned by somebody that wanted a visa, therefore had to be seen to be doing something for them, though often they were of this nature. The applicant himself or herself, his or her case might not look particularly convincing to a consular officer, but the person was calling, perhaps an employer, perhaps a friend, a politician, to say, "Look, I know so-and-so. I know their family. I know their situation. I know they're going to come back, and here's why." And I think when the situation fits that kind of description, you ought to take it seriously, because after all, what you're trying to do is not exclude everybody; what you're trying to do is make the right decision. And if somebody comes along whom you trust and purports to shed light on a situation that you, of course, know little about, and if you trust that person, that's something that ought to be considered. So it always seemed to me that these were, on the face of it, legitimate interventions on the part of people that ought to be used to help make a good

decision.

Now it's interesting—you know about this better than anybody—that you have certain consular officers who are absolutely determined that nobody is going to influence them, and who regard anybody's call to them, including that of the Ambassador, as at least an implicit interference in their affairs. You also have, however, a legitimate area for participation by other people, first of all, of the kind that I've described, and secondly, I think, when a very important person in the country calls you up and says this is really important to me that this happen, that's something that any ambassador ought to take into account. If the foreign minister calls him up and says, "Look, I don't ask you for many favors, but I want one, and here's what it is," I think that our broader foreign policy interests dictate that that request be seriously considered. And sometimes you have a consular officer or consuls general who recognize that and sometimes they don't.

Q: Well, on the consular side, was this sort of—I won't say a running battle, but was this a theme that kind of ran throughout the time that you were there, with these requests and the varying responses of consular officers and requests and that sort of thing?

WRIGHT: The visa requests were certainly a constant theme. I would not say that we in the front office had a lot of problems of this kind with the consular people. I think that, by and large, the people who were there, both the junior officers and their supervisors, had good heads on their shoulders and could tell the difference between a shoddy case and one that required some extra thinking.

Q: While we're on the consular side, what about crime and protection of Americans and also the staff? Was this a problem?

WRIGHT: Yes, there was a problem. For example, while we were there the French military attaché and a visitor from France were murdered in the man's living room, in his house. Terrible crime. We had, I think, three of our guards murdered while I was there, including two who were actually on duty. We had some very severe cases of American tourists, one in which a man alone traveling in Jamaica was brutally murdered and his body weighted down and thrown into the sea and very probably eaten by sharks, and having to deal with this poor man's family. So these were very difficult cases, and there were two incumbents of the American citizens' services job while I was there, and these poor guys had to deal with the families in these kinds of situations, and they were really gut-wrenching. So yes, there was a lot of crime, and it was a constant problem for us.

One way in which it became a problem, especially between our countries, was in the issuance of what was then the "Travel Advisory." As you know, it's since been changed. But the travel advisory was something which was put out at that time on an *ad hoc* basis and when there was reason, anywhere in the world, to warn American visitors against a particular situation. And we issued a travel advisory on Jamaica during that time. Again, I guess I was out of town, I think, and someone else had to deal with this for about a day until I got back, but I think I was nonetheless the chargé at the time. And we issued such a travel advisory, and the Jamaican Government really went bonkers because Jamaica, of course, depends heavily on its tourism industry for its national sustenance. Jamaica's two big foreign exchange earners are bauxite and tourism, and most of their foreign exchange comes from those two sources. So the government

feared that this would have a severe impact on their tourism, and they were highly exercised about it. And they called us in and said, "How could you do this?" and "Aren't we friends?" and "What are you thinking about?" and "Why didn't you tell us you were going to do this?" and so on and so on. So this was a bit of a mini-crisis in our relations.

Q: Well, how did it work out?

WRIGHT: We, of course, defended our travel advisory. In those days you replaced one travel advisory with another, if you wanted to, and I'll have to do some more recollecting about this, but I think that after a certain period we were able to soften it; but more important, I would say, our travel advisory did not seem to have a big effect on the numbers of people who went to Jamaica, and I think that probably both they and we overestimated the influence that a travel advisory had. In fact, I would say that overall, I believe, that Jamaica, given sporadically the kinds of crimes that have occurred there, and I don't want to exaggerate them because they don't occur every day, but given the several high-profile crimes that occurred there, has, I believe, been very lucky that their tourism from the United States has not been more severely affected.

Q: You were there during '92; Clinton was elected, and that I assume had brought another political ambassador.

WRIGHT: That's correct. Ambassador Holden left shortly after the inauguration, having stayed on a bit longer than most other ambassadors did, but not too much longer, a couple of months, I think, but then, fortunately for me, it took a long time to appoint another ambassador. The first person appointed was a black woman politician, whose name I'll think of in a minute. It took them a while to appoint her, but they did. She eventually dropped out of her own accord because, she said, of her eyesight, which was not very good, and she feared that she would not be up to the demands of the job. This was Shirley Chisholm, from New York.

Q: Oh, yes, a former Congressional representative.

WRIGHT: Yes, and I guess the first woman and the only black woman to run for her party's nomination for the presidency. During this period I did come up and see her once, to get to meet her. I met her at the Hyatt Hotel near the Congress, where there was some kind of a black convention going on, and it was very instructive for me because this diminutive woman was obviously held in huge esteem by all the people there. My talk with her was interrupted constantly by people coming up to her and paying their obeisance.

Well, anyway, she did drop out, and then it took a very long time to appoint another person, and that really surprises me. I would have thought there would be no dearth of people wishing to go to Jamaica as ambassador.

Q: Did someone arrive before you left?

WRIGHT: Yes, and Gary Cooper, who was a black man who became the first black American ambassador to Jamaica, and he arrived about six months before I left.

Q: What was his background?

WRIGHT: It was varied. He was a Marine Corps Reserve general. He had founded and run a black-owned bank in Alabama. He had been an Alabama state legislator. He had been, I think, assistant secretary of the army, and I think he had another Pentagon job. So he had a number of arrows in his sling. His sister is or was married to Mr. Cafritz, here in Washington, a very influential and wealthy family, by marriage.

There were only about three or maybe four bauxite operations in Jamaica. They were all large. And there were, I think, three American companies there: Kaiser, Alcoa. I believe there was one Canadian company, and there was a national company. And there were, therefore, some American resident managers, and there were, of course, labor negotiations and labor disputes. The company's position always was, in the matter of wage negotiations, that they had to pay on the basis of productivity. The Jamaicans would argue that "You're paying so-and-so up in Canada X amount an hour. We're producing the same stuff. You should pay us the same." The company's position always was, "Yes, but their productivity is three times as great as yours." So this was a constant battle, and needless to say, these matters reached very high levels in the government because of the importance nationally of the bauxite revenue.

I'm trying to think of what happened in the one that I got slightly involved in. It was resolved. The company didn't leave, but there were veiled threats that if they couldn't reach an agreement they couldn't sustain their operation. An agreement was always reached.

Q: Well, now, could you talk about our dealings with the government. Who was the prime minister at the time. As I recall, we had a very rocky relationship with Manley, when he was in power at various times, but during this time, where did we sort of stand with the various leaders?

WRIGHT: Well, by this time, Manley was in his second prime-ministership, and he was a very much changed animal. Now how much of that was a change of conviction and how much of it was a tactical change, I think they were both. I think Manley did change his views about socialism. I think he did become convinced that a lot of aspects of socialism didn't work, that Jamaica did need foreign investment, and all that, companies did need to behave like businesses, and so on. So I think a lot of his thinking truly did change; on the other hand, on certain things he never changed. I'm thinking primarily of his stand on Cuba. He always believed that we were terribly wrong in the way that we dealt with Castro's Cuba, and that never changed, even though, again, tactically, he greatly played down, during his second term, Jamaica's relations with Cuba. For example, there was a Cuban ambassador to Jamaica, who had a very small mission, however. There was never, during Manley's time, a resident Jamaican ambassador in Cuba. They had relations. There was a Jamaican ambassador, but he rarely went to Cuba, and he had other duties in the foreign ministry in Kingston. There were no visits between the two. I think Manley must have listened very carefully to what we were saying during his campaign, and he must have taken the very calculated decision that the United States is a lot more important to me than Cuba is. But I can remember, I had, while I was chargé, probably two or three luncheons with Manley, in which I invited him to our residence, and we had various members of the country team there, five or six people, and Manley, just Manley. And I remember saying to him the first time, "Mr. Manley, we thought we would make the sides even here: we would have six of us and one of

you." Manley was a fantastic character, though. He was, I believe, the most brilliant extemporaneous English speaker that I've ever heard. He was a man with a great sense of humor, a man of huge range of interests. He had written one or two books, for example, about cricket. He was into everything. He was also a tremendous—legendary, I should say—womanizer, who was at that time with his... In fact, he was married while I was there, again, to Glynn Manley, who is now his widow. But he was larger than life in many ways, and I will never forget that at one of these luncheons he really unloaded on us about Cuba and about what a horrible botched up job we had made of our relations with Castro.

Q: What were American interests during this time? We had the end of the Bush Administration and the beginning of the Clinton Administration. Did we have any major issues? I guess the whole Communist thing, which was always something there earlier on, that had died. People could be right, left or indifferent, and it didn't make us that much of a problem at this time.

WRIGHT: Yes, I think that's right, and rabid socialism was pretty much dead by then. There really were not very many ideological differences between the parties, and in fact, it's kind of interesting that Seaga, during our time there, was probably more in favor of government ownership of certain parts of the economy than Manley's government was. So that is true. These differences had largely disappeared. One interest—not an abiding interest, but something that came up all of a sudden—provided us a chance to get much closer to Jamaica, or Jamaica to get much closer to us, and that was the trouble in Haiti, when we forced out the leader there and reinstalled—I shouldn't use that horrible word—assisted in the return of President Aristide. During that time, as you remember, there was a huge outflow, out-migration, by sea of Haitians, and this caused us to have to really devise a policy for dealing with this, and as you may remember, we had our coast guard and navy intercept people at sea rather than allowing them to come into Florida. This was a controversial policy at the time, and one in which we needed both some political cover and some real help. And Jamaica kind of surprisingly stepped forward. So this was by far the most significant thing professionally that happened while I was there. Jamaica stepped forward and agreed, first of all, to participate in the force that went into Haiti in order to bring about the removal of—I can't think of his name now—General whatever-his-name-was. First of all, they agreed to participate; they helped us a great deal in persuading other Caribbean countries to participate; and they allowed us to use Kingston harbor to emplace ships to interview Haitian migrants for acceptance as refugees into the United States. And all of those required some heavy decision making on the part of the Jamaican Governments, and so in that instance Jamaica really earned the gratitude of the United States, and that was a very hectic and active time for us. I was the chargé during all this period. It also meant that we had at least two visits by Strobe Talbott while I was there.

Q: Who was Under Secretary of State.

WRIGHT: Under Secretary of State. And the whole thing there really went very well, and we were, as I say, extremely grateful to the Jamaicans for their assistance during this period.

Q: One last question that I have on this, and that is on, during this time, the role of the narcotics trade.

WRIGHT: Jamaica, first of all, grows marijuana, and so our narcotics assistance unit was engaged in trying to encourage the Jamaicans to destroy marijuana and assist them to do so, and we had a DEA office there.

Q: Drug Enforcement Agency.

WRIGHT: A Drug Enforcement Agency office, which had about three people in it, which is a fairly decent-sized DEA office, and they worked with the Jamaican police and the Jamaican drug squad within the police to try to catch traffickers, and they did catch some. We were not very successful in seeing traffickers either prosecuted or convicted in Jamaica, and this was always a weak part of our efforts. We were engaged through AID in trying to assist Jamaica to upgrade its court system with the idea and the hope that—well, first of all it's a good thing to do in itself—but with the hope that it would assist in the prosecution of drug cases. One of the problems was not so much that drug cases were badly handled but that the entire system was extremely slow, was cumbersome, was one in which judges routinely did not behave very forcefully, so that defense lawyers had a relatively easy time of it in arguing for delays and that kind of thing, which disrupted cases, from our point of view. So on that score, we were not very successful. We were probably more successful in the case of marijuana eradication, although that gradually became, in our overall policy, less a matter of importance and urgency than stopping the cocaine trade.

Q: Well, wasn't marijuana or this type of hemp called ganja or something like that that played quite a role in one aspect of Jamaican culture?

WRIGHT: Oh, absolutely. Ganja is just marijuana. That's what it is. That's what Jamaicans call it. Yes, and of course, you have Bob Marley. Bob Marley, by the way, I think, is probably, posthumously, the best known popular musician in the world. Everywhere you go, all over the world, people who've never heard of Elvis Presley or the Beatles all know Bob Marley, so Marley's influence is just tremendous, I think hard to exaggerate. And Marley and all of the people in that culture, of course, were highly identified with marijuana, and one of the results of this is that a lot of people, Americans, tourists, young people, go down to Jamaica to do drugs. And I think some of them probably think that it's okay to do drugs in Jamaica because of all they've heard about it, and one of the things that we constantly had to deal with were a high number of Americans arrested at the airport for drug possession. And the Jamaicans really went after this with a lot of enthusiasm. And so at given times we had maybe a couple hundred Americans, couriers, in jail in Jamaica for drug possession.

Q: What were conditions like and how did you work it with the prisoners?

WRIGHT: I never myself visited any of these prisoners in jail. I don't think it was awful. I think there were jails in Jamaica that were awful, but I don't believe that these people were in them. In fact, I have the recollection now that some of these people regarded being in jail for six months in Jamaica as part of the cost of doing business. On the other hand, you had other really sad cases of young people talked into or cajoled into being a courier, with the promise of some money and a vacation in Jamaica, who ended up in jail to the horrible consternation of their parents, and all kinds of efforts made to get them out. We had both kinds of people. But it was clear to us that the

people who were running these couriers and, by the way, who were often willing to pay a fine to get them out, regarded the losing some of them from time to time as one of their costs of doing business.

Q: *Were there any other issues particularly during this time?*

WRIGHT: Oh, we signed a bilateral investment treaty while I was there, which helped out in the treatment given to American investors and companies there. Let me think.

Q: *Hurricanes? Natural disasters?*

WRIGHT: No, the great hurricane occurred about two years before I came there, and that really was a disaster, and it caused a huge amount of devastation—tore the roof off my house, by the way. It was all back in by the time I got there.

Well, the BCCI scandal occurred while I was there.

Q: *Could you explain what the BCCI was?*

WRIGHT: Well, let's see. The Bank of Commerce and something International, I guess. BCCI was an international bank which in about 1991 or so was discovered to be involved in all kinds of fraudulent activities and over most of the world was closed down, over all the world, I guess. And there was a branch in Jamaica. Actually the Jamaicans claimed at the time that their BCCI bank, because of the strength of their own banking system, no legitimate clients lost their money because of what happened. However, about five years later, right after I had left, the whole Jamaican banking system pretty much came unglued, and there was a general bank scandal in Jamaica, in which it was shown that several of the major banks in Jamaica had been involved in very dubious, or lax, if not fraudulent, loan activities, and several banks were closed down and taken over by the government. And so Jamaica has had its share now of banking problems.

JAMES C. CASON
Deputy Chief of Mission
Kingston (1997-2000)

Ambassador Cason was born in New Jersey and was raised in US Naval bases in the United States and abroad. He was educated at Dartmouth College and the Johns Hopkins School of International Studies (SAIS). He was also the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship to Uruguay. Entering the Foreign Service in 1970, Mr. Cason served primarily in Latin American countries. In his Washington assignments, he also dealt primarily with Latin American Affairs. His foreign posts include San Salvador, Lisbon, Maracaibo, Montevideo, Milan, Panama City, La Pas, Tegucigalpa, Kingston and Havana. He served as US Ambassador to Paraguay from 2005 to 2008. Ambassador Cason was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: Well then in -- you left there in '97. Where did you go?

CASON: Then I went as Deputy Chief of Mission to Kingston, Jamaica.

Q: You were there from when to when in Jamaica?

CASON: '97 to 2000.

Q: What was the situation in Jamaica when you arrived?

CASON: Well, Jamaica is a very physically dangerous environment. It is a beautiful island. Kingston was very dangerous, with shootouts in the areas that we lived. The “posses” or drug gangs controlled the capital. We had a lot of problems with drugs there. Jamaican cocaine mules were bringing large quantities of coke into the US and the UK. Something like 70 or 80% of those arrested at US and UK airports for drug trafficking were Jamaican. The posses were well-established criminal organization. For the embassy, counter-narcotics work was very important. Jamaica is the largest and most important Caribbean country. As DCM I was back again doing the coordination of law enforcement efforts. We worked especially closely with the Coast Guard of Jamaica, helping them professionalize. We gave training and intelligence, and they allowed us to eradicate marijuana within the country. That was a lot of what we did.

Politically, relations were only lukewarm. Superficially they were friendly to us. But they did not vote with us in the UN. They had good relations with the Cubans--even sympathy, because they'd been trained by the Cubans. So we didn't get anywhere with them on countering Cuba. They were standoffish politically and in foreign affairs areas of interest to us, but nominally allied with us on a number of law enforcement matters. In one area, we never saw eye to eye. That was criminal deportees. Many Jamaican criminals, when they got out of US prison, were deported back to Jamaica. The Jamaicans claimed these deportees were the cause of crime waves. They claimed they were not criminals when they immigrated to the US, but learned from US criminals and then we sent our problems back to them. That was not true. I researched all the deportee criminal records in Jamaica (with the help of the police) and found that most of them had criminal records before they left Jamaica. We were able to debunk the charge that they learned to be criminals in the States. They went to the States, lived in Jamaican communities, hobnobbed with Jamaican criminals there, were arrested and came back home they had been convicted and finished their sentences.

The Jamaican gangs were very smart. They penetrated our consular section over time, putting “sleepers” into key jobs over decades. Some of these people printed visas after officers had adjudicated them. Some got jobs as drivers then applied for a job in anti-fraud operations, or in running the section's computers. Deported posse members came back after serving time for cocaine trafficking. Their friends in the consular section would give them a new visa right away and they'd go back with a new identity and a fresh 10-year visa and get back into the drug trade in the US.

An informant told us we had a problem and gave us a Jamaican passport with a new US visa that

had not been approved by an officer. How did this happen? I spent many months pouring over printouts of every keystroke made by anyone in the consular section to look for anomalies to determine who in the consular section was involved. I was successful. It was very sophisticated. I figured out how they did it. I took all the printouts for a year and a half period from each computer home. It was about a 20-foot high stack of print outs. I eventually realized that several locals had gotten access to officers' log-on passwords. When the officer stepped away from their computer or went on vacation, one member of the group would "adjudicate" the visa and a week later an accomplice would print the new visa. I discovered that the bogus visas were in passports that did not have any holes in them where we would staple the receipt for payment for the visa interview. They lacked the normal holes, since of course the "applicant" never appeared much less paid the fee. That was the give away. So we knew we had a problem and eventually figured it out. There were no Americans involved. They were sloppy with their passwords.

Q: Were there any arrests in your consular section?

CASON: Yes. Two members of the group were fired and arrested. I found out that this operation had gone on for years. After a number of successful years, the bad guys made a lot of money and moved to Fort Lauderdale. Their successors continued on.

Q: Who was your ambassador?

CASON: We had Gary Cooper and Stan McLelland. The first was a Two-Star General in the Alabama National Guard. He was also banker. The other was in oil, a lawyer for Valero Oil Cooperation. Both were political appointees who had given big bucks and were rewarded with a posting in the Caribbean. They were there for the prestige and fun, scuba diving or golf. I was very disappointed that neither was interested in working. I ended up having to be the defacto ambassador most of the time. They were in and about, running around spending the post's scarce program money on their golf and scuba diving adventures. This was my first experience with a non-involved political appointee.

Q: Did you have to tread carefully to avoid sensitivities?

CASON: You bet. They had paid well for their positions. Program money was scarce in Jamaica. That pot of money was for consular officers, the Front Office and to fund political section activities. To the extent that an Ambassador used it for his hotel expenses, little was left for post activities. Jamaica was very expensive. The Ambassador could not travel without bodyguards because of the crime. Diplomatic Security paid the bodyguard expenses and the gas, but not per diem for the Ambassador. When an Ambassador went to the North Coast to Negril or to other places to golf or scuba dive local hotels were very expensive, geared to tourists, costing \$500 a night. By definition, when an Ambassador traveled everything he did was "official." The trip would end up just costing thousands and thousands of dollars, which was a program expense, so it came out of whatever little we had for programs.

Q: Yes. It's always a shocker when you think about it--it happens in places like Jamaica I think more often than some other places, where --

CASON: Yes. We had a good Peace Corps presence in Jamaica. The Peace Corps volunteers were fun to work with. As in Honduras, our post tried to get Jamaica to pass stronger narcotics laws-- in large it was thugs and drugs and fugitives. We got the US Marshals to come in and search for US fugitives. They had good success and the Jamaicans cooperated. We worked with the GOJ on joint marijuana eradication efforts and maritime interdictions. That was our focus and those were the kind of things that political appointees were just not interested in. So that was the down side of serving there, but it was a fun post and I learned a lot from it.

Q: Was the drug traffic Ganja?

CASON: Yes.

Q: Marijuana being produced --

CASON: And increasingly cocaine. Marijuana was grown in Jamaica and then shipped by sea out from clandestine little harbors all around Jamaica, which had thousands of miles of coastline. Often go-fast boats would come into Jamaica to bring in fire arms in exchange for coke. A constant stream of vessels sailed to and from Jamaica, entering Cuban waters and running right on the edge of Cuban waters all the way around Cuba, so we couldn't do anything about it. And then they exited on the other side of Cuba, making a dash for either The US coast or to Puerto Rico. Small planes from Colombia hauled coke as well using isolated dirt airstrips in Jamaica. Jamaica needed to have drug agents monitor these air strips but the GOJ had no funds for housing agents. I went to FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and asked them to donate some of the mobile home trailers they used as post-hurricane shelters. INL (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) helped us with expenses of getting them shipped by sea to Jamaica. Drivers drove them down from Tennessee, put them on a ship, and then we had to drive these long trailers on little mountain roads in Jamaica to runways in Port Antonio and places like that. Jamaica then stationed Jamaican anti-drug people there to keep the airfields --basically strips from World War II-- from being used by the bad guys.

We tried to get the GOJ to pass legislation trying to seize drug planes if tests showed the presence of cocaine on board. Modern forensic techniques could reveal that the plane, in fact, had been used to transport cocaine and therefore should be seized. We never got that law because there was so much corruption and so many high level people involved. They knew that law would kill their business. So like everywhere, trying to get the locals to do the right thing in terms of legislation and performance was hard. I constantly engaged with the equivalent of the Minister of Justice and Interior located just across the street from us on all of these matters.

Q: Could you use the visa weapon against the drug lords like in some of the Latin American countries where you've been involved, Mr. High and Mighty, you've been involved with drugs so we're not going to give you or your family visas to --

CASON: Right.

Q: -- the United States.

CASON: Well, remember in our last conversation, that's what we did in Honduras for the first time and --

Q: Yes.

CASON: -- the Helms-Burton people codified it. The problem there was we cancel or deny visas but unbeknownst to us they had been getting visas, fresh visas in different names, for bad guys because of the infiltration of the consular section. We figured out they got 500- 600 people multiple entry 10-year visas, fresh new identities. So the visa weapon wasn't particularly effective when they could just manufacture a new, seemingly legitimate one.

Q: You know at one time we'd had rather bad relations. I think it was under -- was it Manly?

CASON: Manly.

Q: He was anti-American, anti-white and all that. How stood things with the government when you were there?

CASON: As I say, relations were correct if stiff and formal. There was always a racial undercurrent. Jamaicans were subject to slavery for a long time and they harbored tremendous resentment for the way they were treated under slavery--it was particularly harsh. So the white man was, you know, still the enemy. And you would see it in all of the Jamaican songs. You know, the underlying attitude was they were oppressed—you whites did us wrong. Jamaica is a black and mulatto society. It was not easy to socialize with Jamaicans. They thought they were the natural leaders of the Caribbean. They wanted special treatment from the United States, but were not willing to reciprocate. It was always give us, give us, give us. You owe it to us, that sort of thing. They wanted us to stop all guns leaving the United States. We replied that's kind of difficult with 100 million containers leaving the US a year. We offered to help look at containers leaving Jamaica that might contain cocaine, which fed this whole business. They fought to stop us from deporting their criminals. But they had to take them back and we insisted they do so as was their legal obligation. It was not easy dealing with the Jamaicans.

Q: Was there a rather strong very wealthy American presence there that sort of lived on its own and wanted special treatment?

CASON: No. There were lots of tourists but no, there weren't that many resident Americans. The wealthy US tourists stayed on the North Coast which had some fancy hotels. There were a lot of rich Jamaican families whose fortunes stemmed from sugar, bananas, tourism and rum. We knew them and they were friendly. These families had been there for generations and were into exports, shipping, tourism and nickel and aluminum. Those were the major export products. The country's economic situation was bad due to tremendous corruption and vacillating commodity prices. They never could get their roads built. It was a very poor country, beset by the drug trade and the armed gangs that the two political parties had created to fight each other and get votes at election time. These gangs got out of hand. Eventually the army had to go in and take out the leaders at a high price in lives lost.

Q: Yes --

CASON: Jamaican drug leaders knew they were going to die young, so they lived it up, they'd get killed around 25 or 30. Their culture was gangs and ganja. Kingston was a very poor town. Tourists didn't want to go there and there was not much to do. All of the international activity was on the other coast, which was a different world. Cruise ships would come into Dunn's River Falls and Port Antonio. I used to go fishing over. I had a fishing boat. That was my hobby, to go out deep-sea fishing with some friends, and have some fun. But other than that it was work, work and --

Q: Well tell me, did you have a problem as DCM -- You were basically responsible for the personnel there -- was it difficult for Americans working for our embassy?

CASON: Was it difficult?

Q: Well I was wondering, you know, I mean given the --

CASON: It was hard to recruit people for the post because of the fact that Kingston was not a desirable city and due to the danger. We had good schools. But the embassy itself was terrible. It was in a rented office building-- the air conditioners didn't work sometimes and it'd get 100 degrees inside. It was just not a nice place to live-- everybody wanted to live on the other coast. So on the weekends everybody would take off for the other side of the island. It was not a particularly easy place. Nobody really wanted to go to Kingston.

Q: So you were there from what, '97 to when?

CASON: 2000.

End of reader