

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

PATRICIA DERIAN

*Interviewed by: F. Allen Harris
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[Note: this interview was not edited by Ms. Derian.]

Q: This is supplementary testimony, continuing, and at times repeating and expanding on Patt Derian's main oral history started in 1996 with Charles Stuart Kennedy (<http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Derian-Patricia.19961.pdf>). Today is October 24, 2007. The interviewer was the internal affairs (human rights) officer at the Embassy in Argentina when Ms. Derian was Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and gives significant focus to the application of the human rights policy in Argentina. Ms. Derian was beginning to experience some memory loss at this time.

I'm Tex Harris. This is tape number one side one and it begins at 6:30 p.m. Patt, you were telling us a wonderful story about the Argentine military courting you when you were in Argentina for your first trip in 1977, and taking you to a little fishing shack. Let's start with that story.

DERIAN: Well, that was just about the time I was ready to leave from the first visit. Admiral Massera and I were driving along and I always try to say something nice about the place I'm visiting when I am talking to people about killing and torture. As we passed the waterfront, there was an enormous sailing ship with many masts and I said I was so happy to see something so beautiful. He said if you would like to go on it we will put up all the sails; he said sailors on every one, they hang upside down. I said well, no thanks, I just thought it was a lovely thing. It was really one of those very funny, awkward moments when deadly enemies are facing each other. Anyway, we went to a fishing camp, which was just a little tiny hut with a few wooden chairs and one chair facing the others and the members of the junta and a couple of other men came.

Q: The junta members were there?

DERIAN: Yes. We were meeting privately. And there was no electricity; it was very odd. But their first question was that they wanted to know why their country, which had the same sort of beginnings ours did and the same kind of people emigrating, why our country turned out like it did and their country had turned out like it was. That was a real puzzle for me. I thought of a number of discourteous and rather funny things to say and decided I would not do that since we were by the river and in the hut.

Q: Did they serve food or drinks?

DERIAN: No, no; it was just us. There was nothing to eat, nothing to drink; just a room with little wooden chairs and a window. Just a place for fisherman to come and leave their stuff. And finally, I said the only thing that I could think of was that we had a war which brought us together. And, I was sorry that is what I told them in the midst of a “dirty war.” But what happened was that we then had a conversation about where they were. They gave the impression of being people who were striving for something. We just sat and talked after that, but it was that question, out of the blue. Here are these cruel, evil men trying to look for something positive. It was one of the most interesting places I went. They did not know what to do with me so they had a diplomatic reception. I have a wonderful picture of a settee that was made for two people, a Victorian kind of thing. They put the very uncomfortable head of the Air Force, General Agosti, on one side of me and the head of the Navy, Admiral Massera, on the other. So I am sitting, my knees tightly together, my arms folded in front; they are each leaning away from me. It was a wonderful sight quite a picture. .

So after that was over I thought well, I will just circulate. I saw a group of men talking to this one man who seemed to be about seven feet tall so I went up and we all shook hands and the tall man said, “You will not believe it when I tell you that I believe in what your country is doing.” I said, “Well, why will I not believe it?” He said, “I am the Cuban ambassador.” It was so wonderful. You know, wandering around the world you get a lot of unexpected, wonderful experiences.

Q: Another wonderful tale that you told, Patt, was about your visit to Singapore and your meetings there and a cigarette that you had. [Ed: Derian met with officials in the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand in January 1978.]

DERIAN: Lee Kuan Yew was then, as he is right now, the dictator. He has passed on his official title to his son but he was still in charge. And our ambassador there, a very nice fellow, was briefing me. [Ed: In January 1978 the Ambassador to Singapore was career Foreign Service Officer John Holdridge. Ambassador Holdridge mentions Ms. Derian’s visit in his 1995 ADST interview.] He said that he [Lee Kuan Yew] is very particular, he is very precise, he is not used to being criticized and he essentially was saying that he would be really happy, since he still had to live there, if I would not say anything offensive to him.

So we got in the car. The reason I went there is that Singapore had promised to take a certain number of Vietnamese refugees and it had been more than a year and they had not taken any. That is why I went to Singapore.

And so we went to see the foreign minister, the ambassador and I did. The foreign minister and he talked and talked. The Minister kept talking and finally I said you know, you have talked about a lot of things that are quite interesting, but I am definitely needing to know what your timetable is for admitting the refugees here from the Straits. And he said well, we are not quite ready to do that yet; we do not have enough information; he

had a little list of things. And while he was talking to me I had one of those purses that snapped shut so I opened it very surreptitiously, stood up, snapped it closed and said you are not a serious man; the meeting is over. I came to talk to you about refugees and you have said nothing. I am leaving. The Ambassador - the hand of God passed over him - and I walked out, leaving the Ambassador there, and I got in the car. The ambassador came out and said well, I said well, I am sorry to embarrass you like that. He said, well, it turns out that he called Lee Kuan Yew and he would like to see you. And that is how I happened to see Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

It was explained to me that Lee Kuan Yew was very fastidious and is to be respected; he has a simple office and he lives a very sort of pure life. Perhaps austere, but obviously accessible, inviting somebody who has walked out on his foreign minister. His office was in a beautiful building and we walked up and got out of the elevator into a small reception area. We were ushered into a room that was probably eight feet wide and maybe 11 feet long.

He is sitting behind his desk - he got up and said how do you do? We then sat side by side on a little sofa and started to talk. And oh, I had been told that you could not smoke around him and that was in my smoking years where I smoked everywhere I went. And so he was explaining to me why he was so stringent and it was a period where - you could hardly believe how fit he was; he was neat and tidy. You got arrested if you threw a piece of paper on the floor and smoked and did that. And so we were talking along, he was explaining all of it and I found it quite interesting and we talked a little bit, we got on the issue of just popping people off the street and putting them in jail and not letting them appear in any court for a year. So I said, you know, I really have enjoyed speaking to you and I know that you do not like people to smoke and so, if you will excuse me, I will go out into the hall and smoke. And he said, no, no, I have something to show you, come with me. So we walked out of the office and went to the elevator and he pushed the button and we got in and we went all the way up to the roof, and on the roof was this enormous glass room.

Q: Conference room?

DERIAN: No; sofas, squishy chairs and just a really wonderful uptown place. So he walked over to one of the doors and somehow caused - they were not doors; they were all glass and went over to one of the glass walls, pushed a button and it opened and he walked out and he licked his finger, held it up in the air and determined which way the wind was blowing, and so he said, you sit here, and that was a sofa and facing it was another sofa, so that the wind would blow through and my cigarette smoke would blow out the window. Just fascinating.

Q: What did you talk about?

DERIAN: We talked about the fact that he was not living up to his promise to take a certain number of refugees. In the meantime I had also heard about his system of detention. If you were arrested you were just put in jail. So we had a long discussion

about it. And he also told me stories about his life. You know, he was an enormous hero in World War II; he is really the true father of a place called Singapore. And some Brits had noticed how brilliant he was so he was put through school in England and at the time he finished, with a sterling record, someone came forward with money. He had said that he would like to make a nation out of Singapore and they asked him where he would like to go, that they would like to send him on a trip to another country, and he said that he would like to go to one of the African kingdoms because that was just at the time that African leaders were making countries and governments, leaving their colonial ties, becoming independent.

He was very interested in how all that was going to work. So, I have forgotten where they sent him but he was quite surprised. They took him to their guest area and I think the first part of it was a grass room, grass covered outside but inside it was very luxe; beautiful furnishings, everything there looked expensive to him and in wonderful condition. And he walked out of that room and walked into a dining area and then he walked, you know, into another room just like that; a series of these little rooms way up high in the air. There were wonderful towels and sheets and curtains and rugs and everything a person would want and he was horrified. He said, "I realized that was not what I wanted to do; I want my people to flourish." It is really a wonderful story.

Q: And he was happy to relay that story to you?

DERIAN: Oh, yes. He was very forthcoming and he was certainly nice about my smoking.

Q: Patt, in East Asia you had major human rights problems during your period as the assistant secretary with three countries; Philippines, Indonesia, and Korea. Could you take some time on each one of those countries? Why not start with the Philippines? What were the issues?

DERIAN: Let me see; wait a minute now; yes, let's start with the Philippines. Do you remember the man who came, who was almost president and had been - had come to the United States? I visited him in prison. I cannot believe I cannot remember.

Q: We will find his name and put it in here. [Ed: Ms. Derian was thinking of Benigno Aquino, Jr., former Philippine Senator, who was a political prisoners from 1972- 1980 when he suffered a heart attack and was allowed to come to the US; he was assassinated on August 21, 1983 at Manila International Airport on his return home.]

DERIAN: He was a good friend. Marcos was his enemy, but they were fraternity brothers. They had grown up together and they knew each other and they were vying for the presidency of the Philippines.

But in any case he was brought to the United States. I met him and met his family and we became very friendly.

Now, Richard Holbrooke, who was the assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, seemed to be extremely devoted to the Marcos family. He went sailing with them and was just being a sweetie pie and did not want to offend the Marcoses and was outraged that I had sort of developed a friendship with Aquino. I invited him to come speak at the State Department and it was all posted everywhere.

Q: Without clearing with Holbrooke?

DERIAN: Right. You know, the idea, clearing anything with Dick Holbrooke or his pal, whose name I cannot remember today—well, they played a little trick on me. People came to the place where it was supposed to be and saw a reference to another room and when you got there, there was a reference to another room, and then another room. So, I was pretty angry about that.

Q: So Holbrooke essentially or you think one of his minions essentially-

DERIAN: No, no. He arranged it. He and this other fellow, the head of Policy Planning. Rather bland, pleasant sort of fellow.

Q: Tony Lake?

DERIAN: Yes. Good. They were pals. And so the speech did go on; I think the audience was not quite as big as it should have been.

Much earlier, Holbrooke had made a comment about me in the press having to do with the Philippines and I had marched into his office and we had a wonderful understanding and he planted a story with Evans and Novak about me. [Ed: By 1980, Evans and Novak were among the most widely syndicated political columnists in the United States.] So I went to Evans and Novak and I said I want you to know I know who gave you this story; it is Holbrooke. They said, we do not tell our sources but it was not Holbrooke. I said, yes it was; there is nobody else in the world who could do it; I know it and I have proof for it and do not ever write about me again. They had already written about me once during the election, pre-election campaign. All these funny players like a little chess game. It was wonderful-

Q: Do you remember what the story was that Holbrooke gave them?

DERIAN: No, but it had to do with the Philippines.

Q: Okay we will fill the story in from the Evans and Novak column. We can do a search on that and find that on the Internet. [Ed: see Evans and Novak column dated May 12, 1978:

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1755&dat=19780512&id=YQAKAAAIBAJ&sjid=gWcEAAAIBAJ&pg=6729,5080380>]

DERIAN: Well, Aquino was murdered when he went back to the Philippines [in 1983]. They murdered him when he got out of the airplane, going back home. He was just a lovely, wonderful fellow.

Q: Well, Holbrooke had probably a different policy towards this gentleman than you did.

DERIAN: Yes, because he was already in Marcos's pocket. When later I reminded him of his earlier support, Holbrooke said, Oh, no, he [Marcos] is a piece of trash now and I stopped caring anything about him. Holbrooke was unbelievable. Foreign Service officers to the President were quite surprised to hear that he did not really think they were wonderful people, the Marcoses.

When I went to the Philippines [as Assistant Secretary], Aquino was in prison. He was going to run for president and he probably was going to win so they kept him in an army base and nobody was able to see him. So when I got there the second time we had the meeting at the embassy and I said it is my intention to see him, and the CIA guy said, "I do not think there is a chance of it." I said, it is my intention; that is what I came here for. And so Ambassador - that lovely, lanky fellow who became Under Secretary for Political Affairs after Habib left. Anyhow, he was the ambassador and they were having a party, a formal one, all dressed up in evening gowns; mine was borrowed since I was not prepared for that, and the ambassador's wife... Newsom, David Newsom was the ambassador. [Ed: David Newsom was ambassador to Indonesia from February 1974 to October 1977 and ambassador to the Philippines from November 1977 to March 1978.]

His wife loaned me some clothing, but I did not want to go there bare-armed to the army place and so the CIA man said you know, I do not think this is going to be a good thing; I do not think you really want to go there. I said yes, I am going. He said well, it might be dangerous. I said well, I want to go there; let us not talk about it. So we drove in silence and we got there and we went into what was obviously an interrogation room; it had this fine, big mirror and long table and it was just a little room with windows here and windows here and then this mirror. Then they brought him in and it was unbelievable.

He told about being held in a grave-depth box, lying down; no standing up, just no amenities, and had been there for an enormously long time and they were waiting for him to die. I mean, he is in a grave and -

Q: And he told you this?

DERIAN: Yes. And the windows are open to the outside and I said I do not want you to jeopardize yourself in any way. He said, no, no. So we talked and we talked and we talked and the CIA man was very uneasy.

Q: The station chief was with you?

DERIAN: I do not know if it was the station chief. He was a tall guy and used to having people do what he said and was not included in the discussion, which I think probably annoyed him.

Q: So there are three of you?

DERIAN: Yes. And then at the end of the room, you know, there is a sort of picture frame and you know that was probably a one-way mirror. And, in addition to that, the windows did not have any glass in them so anybody passing by could listen. So we had this long discussion, perhaps an hour, about the country and what he hoped for, all of those things.

Q: My God. So you went from the formal ball-

DERIAN: In the evening gown, with Newsom's wife's little shawl.

Q: Because that covered your arms at the army base where Aquino was being held.

DERIAN: Underground. So awful. So when I got back home, I put a little pressure on - did not include Holbrooke. And so, miraculously, he was released. And when he came to the U.S. I invited him to come to speak at the State Department.

There was a very nice community of Philippine people here in Washington, so you know, it was a wonderful, comfortable milieu to live in.

Q: He lived in Washington?

DERIAN: He lived over on the Virginia side; there is a community over there of people from the Philippines. And so he said he was going back and run for president. And I was really worried, everybody was worried and Mrs. Aquino was, everybody was but that was his - as far as he could see that was his duty to his people and of course they murdered him getting off the airplane.

So later, when [South Korean opposition leader] Kim Dae-jung went back to South Korea, I went with him, and I think that if I had not they would have killed him because they did come and we had a fight right there in the airport. [Ed: Ms. Derian is describing the February 8, 1985 return of Kim Dae-jung to South Korea after two years of exile. She and members of Congress accompanied Kim.]

And a bunch of Korean physicians and lawyers, who lived in California came on the plane too.

Q: And you were on the plane sitting near him?

DERIAN: Yes. And he was very safe on the airplane; it was an American airline. And somebody, one of the men came up to me and said I know something bad is going to happen.

Q: One of the Korean doctors that was accompanying him?

DERIAN: Yes. I do not know whether he was a doctor or a lawyer; they were just all sorts of high rollers. Very serious people. And he said I just know they are going to kill him, as soon as he gets out of here they are going to kill him. And I said well, no they are not; I do not think anything is going to happen. But something might happen and if something happens I will scream.

I hate that all these people I know and love (and now) I cannot remember their names, but one was a very tall man and a Methodist leader. An American. He knew Kim Dae-jung and so he came along too. We got there and they opened the door and there was a long, long tube to walk through and we are walking in front, the two of us, the Methodist minister and myself.

Q: So you are the first guys off the plane?

DERIAN: Yes, we are the first two and then they, the victims. And we were strolling along, things were going fine and all of a sudden these short little men bent over like this, elbow to elbow, all dressed in combat clothes, coming right at us as fast as they could. There were probably 50 of them, knocking us around, and in the midst of it I said oh my God, I promised to scream, so I screamed.

Q: What did they do?

DERIAN: What they did was, we walked out of the tube and turned left and he was being held and his wife was allowed to stay beside him, you know, they had their hands on him.

Q: Soldiers, they charged in the tube and charged past you to get him?

DERIAN: Well, knocked us around, yes. I had all these - what do you call it, those little things that you put the pieces of metal together with - brads or something like that.

Q: Oh, you had all the brad marks on you.

DERIAN: Yes. All down my back and had something else but nothing serious, really. So everybody on the plane got out and they kept with the group of soldiers and they had to wait for the elevator. Actually, the kind of thing that really made me mad and I never reported it was this -- we were on a level of the airport where there was an escalator going down and one going up and here a bunch of Americans, you know, three U.S. people standing there and they would not come up. I said come up here, we need you. Nothing. Just like no words had been-

Q: Were they from the embassy?

DERIAN: Yes. I am really sorry now, but I was so engaged with the fact that there they were, they definitely got pushed into the elevator and were gone. So we went together, about four of us, Americans. We had been invited to their [Ed: Kim Dae-jung's] house for lunch and there was a car there for us. And we got in the car and you know, I raised hell, yelled at people, and shook my finger at them; it did not do any good, but it let them know that we were not going to just let it happen quietly.

So we got in this car, with the driver and we drove out of the downtown part and we were driven around the city, which was a very interesting thing to see because in the city it looked very modern; but out where we were it was dirt roads and people with little garage-like places where they worked on cars and a lot of that kind of primitive industry.

We drove around for a long time. Finally we were driven back into town and people were lining the streets so we were waving and we had a police escort by then. We stopped once, jumped out, went around and told everybody the story - because they were waiting for Kim to come and they had no idea. So we passed the word that he had been taken and we had no idea where he was. And we just raised a lot of hell and there were enough people around so that the people who sent us that way were going to know that we had already spilled the beans. And so we went to their house for lunch and we waited until they finally came back but it was really, really-

Q: Did they release him? So he joined you at the house later?

DERIAN: Yes. And his wife, too. We did not eat until four o'clock. It was really an incredible thing.

Q: Now, what was the embassy's role in this? Was the embassy - they certainly knew you were coming, there were people there from the embassy to meet you?

DERIAN: Yes, we got a lecture later.

Q: From the ambassador?

DERIAN: Yes. In fact, maybe we went there first. Yes, because I think Hodding [Ed: Hodding Carter - Patt Derian's husband] called and it was that time. So we were there for a brief period. I think we went there after; I cannot remember if it was before or after.

Q: Okay. But either before or after you went to the embassy or to the Ambassador's residence and Hodding called. What did he say?

DERIAN: This was Hodding saying to the Ambassador [Ed: the Ambassador was non-career appointee Richard Walker who served from August 1981 to October 1986.] that he had not done his job, he should never have let his wife go without security - he knew that; Hodding just raised hell with him.

Q: How did Hodding know about this? Had you spoken to Hodding on the phone?

DERIAN: It was all on the radio; it was all on the television everywhere in the world. Again, you know later when we got out and I got to the hotel, Joan Baez called me up and said I heard you scream on the radio. She was in California for a concert. And I said, "What do you mean you heard me scream? You recognized my scream?" She said yes, I heard it on the radio. "But I never scream," I said, what made you think I was -? She said, "Nah, I knew it was you." I found this very funny.

Q: Now, was the Assistant Secretary in the loop? [Ed: In February 1985 when Kim returned to Korea, the EAP Assistant Secretary was Paul Wolfowitz, who served from December 1982 to March 1986.]

DERIAN: No, he was out of the picture altogether.

Q: Okay, but probably angry as a hornet, along with the ambassador.

DERIAN: He was angry that I went. He did not have the guts to go. And so we made it plain that we did. The ambassador was furious, thinking that he was just going to read us the riot act but I think he realized after we had had a chat that maybe he would not continue to do that. And then he said, well your husband has called me up. He had called to find out how you were. And finally, after about three hours they (Kim and his wife) both came back, they were brought home, and we all sat down and ate, had a lot to talk about. He is so brave and you never can imagine that these people -

Q: We have been chatting, Patt, for over 45 minutes so I think we are going to take a break now.

Q: We've started a new tape. I want to ask what were the major issues of concern to you and to the folks in the Human Rights Bureau in the State Department with regard to the Philippines? What were the practices that were of concern?

DERIAN: I had several long discussions with Marcos about human rights. When I visited the Philippines, he invited me to lunch in some palace that was theirs and the table was very long and there were two empty seats. The table was so long that I was to be seated away from the double doors and Imelda was to sit across the table. She was not there on time because she was doing something important and so we began our discussion. The doors were flung open by two men and Imelda came in and looked all over the room and said, "Where is she? Where is she?" Blinking her eyelids; "Where is the movie star?" And my picture was in the papers that day; only decent picture- I mean, the only picture I liked of myself since I had a hat on and sunglasses that looked a lot better than usual. So we had this tense sort of discussion. But Marcos was very forthcoming in a very low voice, and he was telling me about it and I said, how do you keep doing this job if you feel that you are being forced to do the bidding of others? And he said, well if not they'd

kill me. But just, you know, matter of fact, he was staying alive. So that was in a part where-

Q: So his argument to you was that he had to do the repression that was necessary because he was doing the bidding of other people?

DERIAN: Right. And it gave me the thought that Imelda was really controlling all these people, and was making certain that money was funneled to him, which also was coming back to her. She was really an amazing person.

So we are sitting there in a lull and I thought, I need to change the subject, I have got to say something different. I looked around and I said, you know, it is amazing to me, everybody I have seen in this country has black hair. Two or three people lighted right up and Marcos said, oh, wait a minute. And he waved over and one of the people leaning against the wall whispered to him, I will show you our secret. So in a little while a fellow came in, gave it to Imelda, who was right at the door, she looked at it and every person that passed through looked at it and handed it to me, a little bottle like this, he says, it is very rare. I turned it over and I said oh. He said we will give you a case. And I said oh, it is made in New Jersey; I can buy it in the drug store. One of those lucky moments in life.

Q: And you just broke the tension in the meeting?

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: How was he compared to other dictators? The theme, I think, of our interview here is talking with dictators, right?

DERIAN: That is really what it is. They are not used to straight dealings. For instance, I was talking to him about the situation and I said why do you do this? What makes you operate like this? Why do you not say if you are not happy with the way your presidency is affecting the people and the country and the world opinion of you? And he said oh, I cannot. And I said why not? And he waved his hand, he said, I just cannot do it. I said why cannot you? He said they will kill me. Just poof. And what happened was, I think Imelda was the brains of that organization; I do not know if it had a name but these were all wealthy people and most of them had been made wealthy by the Marcos plan to take the things they wanted and toss out the owners of manufacturing and banking and leading people. And they received money from the people they put in those positions. They just cleaned out the top rich layer.

Q: And replaced them with his friends?

DERIAN: With hers. She was the manipulator. He was actually very intelligent and knew exactly what was happening and so when I said why do you do it, he just said, they will kill me. What else do you have on your mind?

Q: This again is such an unusual diplomatic encounter and it is one which having a soft spoken female American senior diplomat representing a point of view these guys do not normally talk about, that you got a conversation and a lunch.

DERIAN: Right, big lunch. And also the opportunity to color my hair. But I think if you go in with the points that you want to make you ruin the whole thing. You just let it slide along and you get a lot of stuff much better than what you might have had you stayed up all night making a list of questions. And Aquino was his fraternity brother and great friend, and I said why did you do that? He said well, he was opposed to what we were doing. And I said well, why are you going to kill him? He really just sort of fluffed that off. And I told him that I wanted to go see him and he said well, he is in an army prison. And I said well, I would like to get a chance to go see him. And I said, I would like to get a chance to go see him. So that evening -

Q: So it was at the lunch and conversation with Marcos that you raised the visit to Aquino and he gave you permission then.

DERIAN: No, he did not give me any permission. He said Aquino was in an army base. I did not say is it all right with you? If you put him on the spot they have to say no so I just said I wanted to do it and I felt confident that I would find a way to do that.

So that evening there was a formal reception by Ambassador Newsom and his wife at their house; we were all dressed up. I had on a strapless evening gown that someone had loaned me and I was sitting talking to some of the members of the senate and a great tall fellow came along and said, if you want to go see Aquino I am here to take you there. So I stood up and he looked at me and I said alright. He said are you sure you want to go? He is in an army base. He was talking to a woman in a strapless evening gown on a moonlit night. And I said of course. And I walked over to Mrs. Newsom and I said, do you have anything that would cover me up, a raincoat or anything? And she said yes, I have the perfect shawl. And so she loaned me the shawl and he kept saying, as we walked to the car, he said, this is a bad place we are going, I just do not think you -

Q: And this was a CIA officer who was accompanying you?

DERIAN: Yes, yes, yes. He was fronting for them. So we got there and went through the gates and it was the kind of army base where there is no grass or anything, everything is neatly tidy on top of the dirt, and the buildings are around, there is a small building about- a little narrower than this room (*Q: About 10 feet wide*) and maybe a foot longer, had a conference table in it.

And had a mirror about the size of those windows, obviously the other side was not-

Q: About 12 feet by eight feet.

DERIAN: Yes. And so not only could they see him on the other side but they were also- I do not think they were filming but I think they were taking the audio. It was so obvious

that this was an interrogation room. So they brought Aquino in and we shook hands and said hello and it was phenomenal; he knew that they heard every word. He said, well they are going to kill me. And we talked and I asked him questions about how this had happened to the country and what he foresaw. He was so candid it was just breathtaking. And I said well, somebody told me that they were holding you in a hole in the ground. He said yes, it is a little larger than a coffin and it is really kind of deep. He was not allowed to stand up. There was not any bathroom or anything. I mean, he was just in a hole in the ground. And so I lumbered on about the unthinkable, uncivilized; I could not imagine that..., not that it did much good but they did let him out although they locked the door after I left.

Q: But shortly after you left he was released?

DERIAN: Yes. I do not think it had anything to do with me. But I was thinking about it; Holbrooke was over there sailing with the Marcoses who thought that he was very fond of them and he said terrible things about them and he made fun of them. But there are a lot of pictures of him sitting in the back of their sailboat having a swell time. Just, the whole thing was utterly demented.

Q: Patt, you have mentioned the CIA, from time to time suggesting you were not sure whose team they were on. Do you think that was a matter of opposing the human rights policy or what?

DERIAN: Most of it was pandering. They must have a course in that.

Q: What about the State Department?

DERIAN: I do not know. I saw all those pictures of Holbrooke having a swell time in the sailboat and parties and things and I think, well, if you are an ambassador or you are trying to keep good things going for your country, you do not really have to do a lot of that stuff if you are going to walk out and tell everybody else what rotten people they are, how awful they are, how venal they are. I found it sickening.

Q: Okay, let us finish off on the Philippines here. What were the justifications, do you remember any of the justifications that the Filipinos gave you for their brutality and repression?

DERIAN: No, they did not own up to it. There were guerillas that were fighting with each other.

Q: Okay, so it was a war?

DERIAN: Yes. And it was necessary for them to act to bring peace. But here is Imelda sitting there having conned every industrialist, everybody with any money, passing money to her for her charities.

Q: You mentioned in the earlier tape with Stu describing your first major human rights trip to El Salvador and Argentina that Argentina was really the model for all the dictatorships. The arguments that you heard there were very similar. So returning to the Philippines, you had kind of an Evita character in Mrs. Marcos and the same justification that they had to use these horrible tactics because they were fighting this dirty war.

DERIAN: Exactly. Exactly. But it was so interesting that Marcos's discussion with me was also personal, about how his power had been taken away. And, as I said, I said why do you not do something about it? And he said they will kill me.

Q: Extraordinary for a head of state, for a dictator, to share, I mean Patt, which speaks very highly of your diplomatic skills or style or persona -

DERIAN: Well, a good Foreign Service officer is not going to ask a dictator why he kills those that are bothering him. He has made it clear to me that these are Imelda's people and Imelda is holding all the strings. It was really astonishing; I am sure my jaw dropped. But that discussion in that room with all those men was just between him and me. Life is so bizarre. Here we were, so I tried to change the subject with the fact that everybody has black hair.

You know, I think if you planned how you were going to do it, you know, these are the points I am going to make and you write it all down of how you are going to - I did not ever do that. I just was sort of trying to see what was going on, see how much I could find out. Also, at some point he asked me if everything was alright with my accommodations. And I said oh, I meant to tell you, someone has entered my room. You see, the first thing that happened when I got to my hotel room in the Philippines was that someone had placed an evening gown on the bed.

Q: In your size?

DERIAN: Yes. I did not put it on. I said well, I am very concerned, someone entered my hotel room and left something there and I think I might have to change hotels; I would like to be in a hotel where people do not enter my room.

Q: This is when they put the dress, the formal dress there?

DERIAN: Yes,

Q: They knew you had a formal party and so they gave you a dress.

DERIAN: I know. I did not wear it. I told them- I wanted them to be sure that I did not want anybody walking in my room.

In Argentina, they had a guard sitting at a table outside my door. First time I went I stayed in an American hotel. Next time I thought well, I should do what people who live here do, so I went to a fine hotel, and a man was sitting at a little table right by my door, my guardian. I never, ever kept a piece of paper in my hotel room. All the paper that - all

the notes I took, everything I had was sent back to the embassy for the night, But there my room had been ransacked- the hotel was built around a courtyard so they climbed up and came in the window and what that fellow was doing there was to make sure that if he saw me coming they would have to get out.

You see, you cannot believe how people are.

I was thinking of the first time I went there and I got up in the morning and opened the curtains, it was an American hotel and big plate glass, it was the time that people were going to work, and there was a long, long line and there were soldiers stopping every car and they pulled about seven people out of their cars, bodily, and put them in a truck. That was the period where something I did not see myself but was told by so many people that they had seen people had just been murdered and left in garbage cans around, were thrown in the gutter.

Q: It was a Sheraton so it was right in front of the train station. The Sheraton faces onto the plaza that has the train station in it.

DERIAN: Well, what I remember was that Tex (Harris) found a lot of people, and he found a way to get them into the embassy so that nobody looking at the embassy would see them because he knew the embassy had an underground parking garage. I met a man who came with his young son, and the son was probably 17-years old and told about the fact that they were going to make him go into the army and this tragic, sort of heartbreaking thing with the son sitting there and the father's tears rolling down, just unbelievable. The father was trying to keep him out of the army. Just an awful thing; they just rounded up these kids and dumped them in and made them beat people up and stab them and kill them.

And the other person would have been a leading person in a normal society, I think he was a professor and a lawyer and his son was among the disappeared. They were Jewish and he and another little boy, I think they were about 12 or 13, were in the community, the Jewish community, they were the boys that went around and collected the dues that each little youth group - So they are standing on the corner or standing in the middle of a block at a bus station, a bus stop, and they were just standing there and three of those cars pulled up, they grabbed the boys, they threw them in the back, and nobody had heard anything from them. And everybody knew, Tex was trying to find out. But just a heartbreaking thing.

After I was out of the State Department and had been invited down to Miami, the University of Miami, to speak -- this is years after -- I got off the plane and went to the hotel and got a telephone call from a young man who said, Patricia - so I realized where he was coming from. He said I have a big surprise for you, I would like to come with my family, I am here in school. I said okay, come now. They had let him out that morning, mother and dad went right to the airport, put him on a plane, sent him to Miami and here

is this youngster who said I hope you will forgive me for speaking so slowly as I have not spoken to anyone in - whatever the number of years had been. I think he was about 17 then. So probably in solitary confinement, not allowed to eat anything, not allowed to speak to anyone, parked in a cell, did not get out in the light and stuff.

Q: Every place you went you dealt with horrors. You talked about the earlier story about this woman who reported to you that her daughter had had a rat sewn into her vagina. I mean, how did you keep your balance?

DERIAN: That was the grandmother. Well, the thing of it is that you cannot...it would be taking advantage of it. This is their sorrow; you do not get to fall apart and weep. You have to realize that you are just a conduit and you do not want to try to steal any of their emotion. You cannot really do that to people, sitting there all crying together.

Q: But, so your judgment was that it is their emotion and they need to-

DERIAN: I was a facilitator. It was like picking up a pen on the table. I mean, I was certainly sympathetic.

Q: I had the same feeling when I was in Argentina that my work, and when I talk about it to Argentine audiences I use the analogy that I was the midfielder in soccer; the midfielder is not the person who scores the goal, the midfielder is the person who gets the ball from the defenders and then passes the ball forward. You were the goal scorer. And when I talk about it I said that Patt Derian and others in her office were the people who were fighting the policy battles and I just was providing the information that the defenders of freedom provided me and I passed it on to you and then you scored the goals in terms of changing the policies.

DERIAN: Well, you were really - If you had not been there, because the embassy, with the exception of one young woman; in fact, did she work with you?

Q: Yes, Yvonne Thayer.

DERIAN: Yes, exactly.

Q: Yvonne Thayer and then Blanca Vollenweider was my assistant, who was also wonderful. There were several other people; Tony Freeman was the labor attaché, and then the real inside knowledgeable person there was the legal attaché from the FBI Robert W. Scherrer who later broke the Letelier murder case. He was the key source, because he had great contacts with the police who were angry at the military and their hired ex-criminal thugs for all this murder and robbery. [Ed: Marcos Orlando Letelier del Solar was a Chilean economist, Socialist politician https://webmail.brookings.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=s8KKvYmVm0WZFmgUSd949fOGb9LuD9Eiu-luklNe8txFHedMuGP3_bvNskD6lgbFiD1FHRp6YCQ.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fen.wikipedia.org%2fwiki%2fPolitician and diplomat <https://webmail.brookings.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=s8KKvYmVm0WZFmgUSd949f>

[OGb9LuD9Etu-luKlNe8txFHedMuGP3_bvNskD6lgbFiD1FHRp6YCO.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fen.wikipedia.org%2fwiki%2fDiplomat](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diplomat) during the presidency of Salvador Allende. As a refugee from the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet, Letelier accepted several academic positions in Washington, D.C. where he was assassinated by Pinochet's DINA agents in 1976.]

And so the police guys that the FBI worked with reported to Scherrer all the horrors the military were doing and all the disappearances and whatever. So he validated the horrors of what was going on -- he was the only person in the embassy who had independent sources on the operations. Ron Kelly had some but he was not as important; Kelly's information was a little thinner.

Let us go back to Asia. Let us do Pakistan now. [See also 1996 Derian Oral History with Charles Stuart Kennedy, pp. 98-99].

Q: You showed me that wonderful picture that President Zia sent you which he had cut and glued together. Tell that story, the surroundings of your meeting and whatever. [Ed: visit may have taken place in May or June of 1980.]

DERIAN: Well, what happened was our ambassador [Ed: Arthur Hummel, career FSO was ambassador to Pakistan from June 1977 to July 1981.] was extremely unhappy about my presence even and he really thought that I should not try to see President Zia ul-Haq; he liked to keep things calm. And so we marched in and on the way from the embassy to the place where we were going to meet there was nonstop monologue, sort of like having your mother tell you when you are going to see some august person. I walked into a room that was probably 20 feet long and one side of the room had nothing on it except standing against it were a whole bunch of men who were there for the performance. Across the room was the longest sofa I ever have seen. If we both had stretched out foot to foot there would have been room enough.

At least a 15 foot sofa. I walked all the way over to the end, he was not there yet, and we had - the ones that are the vainest make you wait; the ones who are smart are right there and ready to go, you know, gloves on.

The ambassador just kept saying, do not get him upset, he has a bad temper; that's very dangerous, and I have to be here once you're gone. Just a long string of reasons why I should not say anything I had come to say or ask any bad question. So eventually he walked in and he took a step into the room and he looked all over the room, everywhere, saying where is she, where is she? I did not say anything so he came over and the sofa was low and so I started to stand up and he said no, no. And we shook hands and he said, so you are Mrs. Hodding Carter? I said, I am Patricia Derian and I am here to speak to you about human rights. So there is no breathing in the room, including his, and he just went over and sat at the other end of the sofa, twelve or 15 feet away.

He was far away. It was so bizarre; all these people are just standing there, not participating. They were not there in any menacing way; they were the audience to see his performance.

Q: How many were military?

DERIAN: I do not think anybody had on a uniform. My memory is they were just standing around in civilian clothes. So we talked about all the bad things that were happening and I could every now and then see our ambassador go like this when I asked him something about torture or killing people or not giving them a chance and not having a fair judicial, just everything you have on your mind about people who do things like that. So we shook hands and you could just feel an air of relief in the room. We talked a long time.

And later in the day our ambassador hosted a dinner party.

Q: For you?

DERIAN: Nominally but actually for him, I think. There were people from the government there and the Ambassador was pressing them. There was a newspaper reporter, a writer of some kind, I think he was a newspaperman. They talked about all the bad things that the people they were punishing were doing, very serious about the jeopardy to their nation and democracy. One man spoke up and corrected them several times. He was a journalist and I saw that he ignored the ambassador and certainly the clamped jaws of all the other men there. He was the most forthcoming and not accusatory, just reporting. It was fascinating. I thought he must be part of the group and they do not mind if he gives the lie to everything that was said to me.

And so the dinner party was over. Jesse [Clear – HA/NEA officer] was with me. It was very good and the discussion was quite bizarre. I just let everybody talk about, you know, the evil people who were trying to overthrow the great Zia. You know, I was there just at the time that the new embassy was being built; they were building a new embassy because the old embassy had been attacked and burned [Ed: November 22, 1979].

Now where was I going...? Oh yes, that man was arrested, mistreated.

Q: The journalist?

DERIAN: Yes. Who knew about the dinner party except the ambassador and the guests? Well, the news came to me that he was in detention. I really felt so terrible because he was the only person in that group that had anything useful to say and he was not accusatory; he was just naming things that had happened.

Q: Was he arrested shortly after your visit?

DERIAN: On his way home.

Q: What?

DERIAN: On the way home, in his car.

Q: Oh my God. So there must have been someone at the dinner who fingered him.

DERIAN: Yes. I often wondered who had done that, who would notify the police that he was going to be there.

That was the highlight of being there, that whole day of talking to Zia.

Q: Let us stop. We will finish a 45 minute session now so I think that is really good. Thank you much and we will end session number two now.

Q: This is session number three, starting at 1:00 on the 25th. And the first thing, Patt, that I would like to talk about is how the State Department operated with this new policy of human rights, particularly how the Christopher Committee worked and how your office worked. Why do we not start with your office and first, how you got your job.

DERIAN: Well, I was not looking for a job. I was called up and asked if I would be willing to work in the administration in some way and if so, where would I like to be. I said well, I think it would be very interesting to be in the Carter Administration, but I had no preference at all.

Q: Who called you, Patt? You were on the Democratic National Committee?

DERIAN: Oh, somebody from the campaign called. I was a member of the DNC but what I was doing in Washington in the period before - after the election and before the inauguration was at HEW (Health, Education and Welfare) to study the systems. I was sent there.

Q: Part of the transition team there?

DERIAN: Yes. And Management. And Joe Onek and I shared an office and shared the job because there was an awful lot to learn about HEW. In fact, one thing I learned was that when a secretary of HEW signed off on something it was generally five years before it got implemented. So that is what I did in the transition.

In the campaign I was a deputy. I went around the country saying you can be white and Southern and religious and be a good person. That was essentially it.

Q: So you campaigned very actively with the Carter campaign for how many months or years?

DERIAN: Oh, it was months. And after the convention they approached me, came to Mississippi and said they would like me to work in the campaign

Q: Did you focus on the South primarily?

DERIAN: No, I focused on the fact that you could be a Baptist and a Southern Governor and also a decent person and a wonderful person, you know, because people were afraid of him [Carter] -- that he was a racist and they were worried about his being a Fundamentalist Baptist. It was a wonderful job and there were a lot of skeptics.

Q: Similar to the skepticism about Kennedy being a Catholic?

DERIAN: Yes, yes. In fact, even more passionate. But actually they folded up pretty much once they heard what it was he had done, what kind of person he was. It was a great job.

Q: Yes, it is interesting because you mentioned in your earlier history that you were in a town where you were the only Baptist amongst a bunch of Methodists and in those days the Baptists and the Methodists did not get along.

DERIAN: No, I was never anything but a Catholic.

Q: A Catholic, okay; you were a Catholic in a bunch of Baptists.

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: Okay. So you essentially were a campaign political activist in the Mississippi Freedom Party; what were your credentials politically?

DERIAN: Actually what happened was I moved to Mississippi in probably 1959 and I had never lived in a place where the politics were so openly rotten and so openly racist. And I was astounded to find that black people were not allowed to vote and do a lot of things; even though I came from the south side of Virginia I lived in other places. So Winifred Green and I started a little group called Mississippians for Public Education because the schools were supposed to be integrated and the power structure, which was 100 percent racist, was working hard to make that never happen. So we worked on that and we got a group of women together and went around talking to people, both black and white; a lot of black people were not so interested in doing it because they were fearful for the safety of their children. And in doing that, somewhere along in there, I met Hodding and-

Q: Where were you living in Mississippi?

DERIAN: Jackson.

Q: In Jackson and he was living in?

DERIAN: The Delta in Greenville.

Q: In Greenville.

DERIAN: But we were not working together then; we had just met. And we worked with Aaron Henry and Charles Evers and a group of black leaders but mostly what Winifred and I did for a year or so was go around knocking on doors asking people if they send their children to school and in a greater way trying to persuade them that it was alright to do so. We had a very good group-

Q: This was after Brown v. Board of Education decision had been issued [Ed: May 17, 1954]?

DERIAN: Oh, yes. But more happened after that.

And so we got a good group, we had a lot of meetings and we got a lot done and the schools opened. Oh, the best thing about that is that we did not have any publicity for awhile and we did not want any. My house was assaulted a couple of times, several times, broke our windows out. The head of the Republican Party, which was also opposed to what we were trying to do on the Democratic side, was not in tune with my thinking and so it reached the point where I would call up, since he was our insurance guy, he would say hello, Patt; what happened? I said well, they knocked our windows out. And our windows were like these, one huge long; they just did one at a time and I think they only did about four.

Q: On separate occasions?

DERIAN: Yes, then they stopped. But it was pretty scary because it was on the walkway that went all the way across the house in the front and we had a fence, a fenced in little area, and I was always worried that one of the children would be nearby but it never happened like that.

Q: So then that work led you into the Mississippi Freedom Party?

DERIAN: No. I was never in the Mississippi Freedom Party. Freedom Party was a black party, started by and run by, and that took place later. In the very beginning, in 1959 and 1960 and 1961, the period when Winifred and I were working on the public schools and there was- what was it called? - We had a human rights group, a Mississippi human rights group but I cannot think of the name of it right now; I have 21 volumes of letters up there. But in any case, it was a human rights organization; that is where we began, black and white, working together publicly, working on behalf of civil rights, civil liberties, end of racism and then the school thing came along and that is when Winifred and I started going around asking people if they would send their children to integrated schools.

There was a lot going on.

Q: And people were, I would - sure deathly afraid of sending their kids.

DERIAN: Well, most of them were. We started a thing called MPE, Mississippians for Public Education, and we had meetings with white groups of women and it was not a popular thing to do.

Also, we did not have much money and so the Southern Regional Council sent up some money to buy-

Q: What was the Southern Regional Council?

DERIAN: Oh, the Southern Regional Council, it was a wonderful thing started in, I think, the 1930s by one of the great Southern women writers; I have forgotten who now. And it covered the basic Southern states and it worked on questions of race and had wonderful people working on it. What was that woman's name, great woman writer from the South, she started it, I think, in the late 1930s.

Q: We will research that and put that in here. [Ed: Probably, Lillian Smith, a Georgia writer known for her outspoken views against segregation.]

DERIAN: Actually I have 30 volumes, 23 volumes, this big, of letters from that time.

Q: Had you been active politically before you arrived in Mississippi?

DERIAN: No, not politically but I had been, before that we had lived in Marion, Ohio, and I did work on behalf of recruiting nurses, recruiting students to consider being nurses. But I had just had a new baby, I had all these little children, and we were not there very long -- a couple of years and then we moved to Mississippi in whatever year that was, 1959 maybe.

Q: So Mississippi was a real eye opener for you?

DERIAN: Yes. And an opportunity to really work on something that was worth working on.

Q: Where did this sense, Patt, of fighting the bad guys come from in your upbringing? What in your education, your Catholic training, or otherwise, encouraged you in this spirit of standing up against bad guys?

DERIAN: I asked myself a few years ago when somebody else asked me the question and I said you will have to give me time to think it over, and I realized that I was already a reader when I went to first grade and so I read *The Lives of the Saints* starting for those written for primary schools and making my way up and my favorite one was the queen of an evil king who would ride on her horse and give food and money to the poor. She was followed and when the soldiers caught up, they looked in her basket or bag and the food and money had been transformed into flowers. It is a very dramatic story, a Catholic story, and I thought, well now, that is the way to do it, it was the right thing. I can

remember so vividly reading it over and over again. I was still reading it again in the third grade. So that was the place I started.

Q: Well, I loved Superman and wanted to do good things and help people. That was the age we all grew up in and developed these kinds of aspirations and also my parents. How were your parents? What was their role?

DERIAN: They were young and had a wonderful time.

Q: But not politically engaged?

DERIAN: Oh, well, they voted.

Q: They voted but the dinner table, did they talk about injustice or anger? Did they talk political things?

DERIAN: Oh, everybody - we were living in Washington when I was in grammar school until the first year of junior high and everybody talked politics all the time.

But I was pretty much engaged in my own life. I was the only child of a group of close friends and when I went to school - well, I went to Immaculata boarding school in Washington in grade one through... which is now defunct. And because I could read when I got there they let me... oh, and also I fainted because of the incense when we went to Mass every month in the chapel. There was not enough room so the first graders had to kneel in the aisle and the aisle was made of stone and so I did not like it much, and they used incense every day and every day I fainted. And so, since I could read they sent me across the hall and I read in the nuns' library.

Q: Instead of going into the chapel to faint?

DERIAN: Yes. I am sure they must have had a hard time saying that I did not have to go but it was very pleasant for me. I read a lot of books, many of which I am sure I did not understand but I did read the words.

Q: Let us go back to the political projectory. So you were in Chicago for the convention?

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: So you had been an activist in this women's group trying to organize white and black Mississippians to work together focused on education.

DERIAN: Then I met Hodding Carter. And I met Aaron Henry and actually, Charles Evers called not long after we got there, four years after Medgar was murdered [Ed: June 12, 1963]. Charles had been in either Detroit or Chicago, living the kind of, you know, bookish life. And so I picked up the phone one day and a man's voice said my name and he said that he was Medgar's brother and he had come back down and he was going to

stay there and he would like to be in contact with us. The reason he called was because when Medgar was shot, the next morning I was getting ready to go over to the house, you know, and pay a call and another friend called up and said, I feel like there is something we really have to do. And I said well, I was going over to the house and she could come if she wanted to. And she said, I will do it but her husband, she said, we can never tell George that I have gone there because he is such a rabid racist, and apparently a very mean fellow.

So we went over there; it was quite striking. You could see where the grass was pressed down while this assassin was lying there. And the carport, I do not know if it had a door at all but it was just open.

Q: Where he was waiting to shoot Evers?

DERIAN: Yes. And there were a number of friends and neighbors standing around and all men there; it was just an awful sight, you know, the concrete floor. And we knocked on the carport door, were invited in, and his wife came out. She was just in the worst possible shape but she pulled herself together. They had a new baby; it was just - it really gives me chills to think about this.

So, in any case, Jean and I left and then Charles apparently was told, because I could not imagine how he had my name, and he wanted to know if we could work together. And I said yes, we could. He said, now, they are going to be tapping both our telephones so I am going to think of a name. He said why do we not think of me as Mr. Blue on the telephone?

So that is how I got to know people - I am trying to think - in the Black community. I did not know many people before that. But, what year was that? I cannot remember; did we already have Mississippians for Public Education; I think we were just getting started. I still had a baby in a crib. At that time I had three children.

Q: Now, did you have help?

DERIAN: Sure. Wonderful people. We were building a house, we had sold the one we were living in and we moved into a rental house. Let me see; did Winifred (Granger) and I know each other already? Yes, we must have. We were sort of partners.

Q: So the trajectory of your political life began at grassroots among women, expanded, the murder of Evers brought you into-

DERIAN: The murder of Evers came first actually.

Q: It seems to me there is a progression here from the murder of Evers to your sitting on the couch with Zia, okay. Why do you not just start right now; start with step by step in the progression of Patricia Derian from a housewife to sitting on the couch-

DERIAN: No, no; you start with being a Girl Scout.

Q: With being a Girl Scout and being a Catholic girl.

Q: So why do you not start there and go from Catholic girl to sitting on a couch with dictators.

[Ed: For detailed family history, see 1996 Derian Oral History with Charles Stuart Kennedy, pp.1-23, including her father's message to her of "You live your life so that you can look any man in the eye and tell him to go to hell!" (p 11).]

DERIAN: Okay. Being a Girl Scout, then the war came. Moving from Washington to Danville, Virginia, and let me see, what did I do there? Most of that stuff was social. I was 12 when we moved there and so we were there during the war time. And war ended and my father was injured and very sick and so they could not send him back.

Q: Was he gassed or what?

DERIAN: No, he had jungle rot and all kinds of stuff; he had a really hard - he was in an extremely interesting group of young men. I think there were 20-some years old that were thought of the can-do young people in Washington. And they had a unit and their job was - they were told that there was nothing in the Pacific with which to fight a war and they were going to have to go out to the place and find things and find people. It must have been a fascinating job but he was also in a lot of war; came back really beaten up mentally and physically; very sick for awhile.

So anyway, when the war came we went to Danville where my mother had a house and also one of her sisters. And we stayed there for the duration of the year and I went to high school through maybe tenth grade there, whenever the war was over. And we moved - then when my dad came home we moved back to the Washington area and lived in Alexandria and I went to school at -

Q: What did your dad do?

DERIAN: He was at Anaconda Copper. He was from Butte, Montana; that is where Anaconda had its mines and he went to the University of Virginia and law school and met my mother and then went to work for Anaconda in Washington. He went to law school and two months before graduation he and my mother eloped and he never went back. They went to New York. So anyway, when he came back from the war he was in terrible shape.

And got a medal and - Let me see...he came back and we moved right away to Washington, lived in Park Fairfax, and I went to school at George Washington High School; some great teachers there. And then - Oh, then he went back in the Army. They

wanted him to stay because he had been in all kinds of places and seen things that they wanted to check the records on and so he finally succumbed and we moved to California.

He was in the Army and I remember the trip across the country because my mother had her box of silver in a little platform behind the backseat and every time she stepped on the brake it hit me in the back of the neck.

Q: So you drove across country?

DERIAN: Route 66. And finally I persuaded her that I was just as good a driver as she was and so I would be happy to relieve her.

Q: And she would get hit with the silver.

DERIAN: No, she sat in the front. I was in back with my little sister, who did not get hit by anything.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have, Patt?

DERIAN: Just my sister, whose name was Michael.

Q: Her name was Michael?

DERIAN: Yes, they were expecting a boy. They did not change the name, not Michelle or any of that; her name was Michael.

Q: Michael. Okay, and she is how much younger than you?

DERIAN: Twelve years. Where are we, oh yes, the silver hitting me in the back of the neck. And then we went to Oakland Army Base for a brief period before we found a house out in Orinda. I think that is where it was. I went to high school; we lived in a house that had been designed and pretty much built by an artist, just a wonderful, wild woman. The door to my room from outside had Adam and Eve carved into it. The whole place was fascinating. We would grow up in a Virginia house and then walk into this wonderful California place; it was great.

And then after he got through doing what was needed there, he was still in the military and we went down to Fort MacArthur, just south of L.A. proper, and -

Yes. And a very wealthy man, in fact the man who invented the idea of a national bank had a daughter, they lived in Manhattan, and his granddaughter at the age of 16 and 17 was going around with the trumpet player from a great saloon in Manhattan and the family was distraught so he decided that since he owned the whole Palos Verdes Peninsula already he would start a college and he sent people all over the country, finding distinguished people who were not teaching anymore, great, great professors, and bought a bunch of surplus buildings and opened up Palos Verdes College.

And sent her there. And since we were living close by in the Army base I went there and we became great friends.

Q: As a college student or as a high school student?

DERIAN: As a college student. When we moved from Northern California, I said I am not going to high school anymore. If you have any interest in my going on to school you will have to find a college; I am not going to high school again. So I never graduated from high school.

Q: So you were precocious. You read when you got into-

DERIAN: I do not know how I learned; I just never remember not reading.

In fact, right after he went away to war we went to Baltimore and stayed at Grandmother's house for a few months and I went to school in Baltimore.

Q: Catholic school?

DERIAN: No, once Dad was gone the Catholic schools were out.

Q: Okay. Public school.

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: Well, you went to nursing school; we have to mention nursing school.

DERIAN: Well, that is what happened. I did go to Palos Verdes for awhile and I went to Radford College for awhile, which was the women's division of VPI (Virginia Polytechnic Institute) and then I decided that nobody was being very serious about it so I would go to nursing school, which... Well, what happened - what occurred to me was that discussion that we had, Mother and Father sitting across the room, I am sitting way over here in a great big squashy chair, we were talking about my future after I told them I was not going to high school anymore. I had already called UVA (University of Virginia) about going there and so I did not say I would, I just wanted to ask them some questions. Oh, in the summer, when I was visiting my friend who had the college built on her behalf I met someone on the board or a professor connected to St. John's College and I -

Q: In Maryland?

DERIAN: Yes. And I sat next to him at dinner, I think, and he said do you know about the college? And I said I do, I wish it took girls. And he said well, we are going to start and we would like to have you. And he said, I hope it is going to be right away and I do not think they have done it yet, and he did say there was some big chance they would not.

So instead of depending on that, sitting around waiting for word, I just was trying to figure out what to do.

But my parents and I were having this conversation and we got to college after I announced that I am not going to high school.

They said there are two things you cannot do. You cannot go to nursing school and you cannot go to St. John's, because it would be all boys. Of course, it would not have been.

Q: Why could you not have gone to nursing school?

DERIAN: Well, my father, obviously, had a number of affairs with nurses during World War II. It was the only thing I could figure out. I never discussed it with him but I felt that that might be protection for him or whatever it was. So anyhow, I called up UVA the same day and said I would like to come there to nursing school.

Q: And why UVA? Because of it being your Virginia roots?

DERIAN: Right. And my dad went there; he went to undergraduate and law school.

So anyway, I went to nursing school; I was probably about 18, maybe 19. I had told them I would not have any money, they said they had plenty and so I would not have any financial problems. And the day that I moved into the dormitory this wonderful tall woman came in, I forget what her title was-

Q: So you did not have a high school degree? You had gone to a little bit of school in Palos Verdes for a year? Then you transferred, kind of, to the University of Virginia Nursing School?

DERIAN: Yes. Well, I went to Radford College also for a semester. Then my mother was in desperate straits; they had separated again, she could not make it without me. So I went up to Washington and stayed with her until they patched it up. They got divorced once and I sometimes think they might have done it twice but they were people of the 20s who never, ever recovered from all of that.

Q: The Depression and all.

DERIAN: Yes well, but they did not have much depress in the Depression. They were the ones that were dancing and partying. My grandfather supported them.

Q: What did Grandpa do?

DERIAN: That grandfather was chief of police in Butte, Montana.

Q: So this was Harp?

DERIAN: Harp was my father. My grandfather was called Jerry the Wise; his name was Jeremiah Joseph Murphy.

DERIAN: Well, they did not have instances - their lives were so caught up with each other. There was nothing but a group of friends-

Q: And you were the only child in that group of friends?

DERIAN: No, when I was 12 my sister came along. And it was a bad time for her to come, actually, you know. It was just before the war and after the war their lives were very different. But anyhow, where were we before we went from there?

Q: Well, you were going into nursing school now, and this great big tall woman came up to you.

DERIAN: Oh yes. And said you know, you have no aptitude for the things that are needed in our curriculum and so I am coming to you and saying I will help you all the way. I said well, why did you take me? They said well, your scores are all off the top of just about everything that has nothing to do with mathematics and science and you are going to need a lot of help. And I said thank you very much and I will call you when I need you and then I finished at the top of my class.

Q: That is great.

DERIAN: It was. It was just - you know, my life has been almost - it is like a miracle; a little chunk here and then another chunk. And actually, being an only child for 12 years I think was the secret.

Q: Alright. So you are at UVA, nursing, and then where did you go? Where was your first job?

DERIAN: Actually, I never had a job. I graduated early because I got married in March. My first husband was a resident in orthopedics, Paul S. (Mike) Derian.

His mother was from France; she went from France to Canada, walked into the United States and moved to New York. Voted all her life, never became an American citizen because nobody told her she had to, and she married this heroic genius from Armenia who with his family fled when Armenia was invaded, across the desert on camels, and the whole family went -

His big family, last name Bayenderian, and they crossed the desert, going toward Africa. And they saw a cloud and realized that they were going to be attacked so they put all the money and jewels on this young man - I think he was maybe 14 years old, and left him and ran away, trying to make the people who were chasing them keep chasing them and not find him. So he wound up somehow in Egypt.

Q: This was your-?

DERIAN: Father-in-law. He was really incredible. And he was very young. And so he was a street kid in Cairo for awhile and he got to be about 17, he had learned a lot of ropes, he had learned to speak four other languages and he decided to go to Paris. And he went to Paris - no, he went to London and he met this great man who was a great rug fellow, and he learned everything about oriental rugs and he had a whole bunch that he had brought with him, you know, that had come with him on the camel. So then he went to New York and across the street from Tiffany's he rented two rooms in an office building, got a lot of file cabinets, put his rugs in, and became the leading rug person. And he married this lovely little French lady-

When I went to see him I was expecting a place where there would be rugs hanging around but when you walked in, plain floor, secretary, this wall full of file cabinets containing millions of dollars of oriental rugs. When I went in he was at a big work table working on a tapestry for the Metropolitan (Museum of Art). We were talking-- this is the first time we have really met -- and at the end he stood up and he said, oh my God, I have sewn another tail on this sheep. It was so wonderful -- this tiny, tiny stuff. And so he took it off and he came back after the Met with his head on.

Those were my in-laws.

Q: So how old were you when you married, Patt?

DERIAN: Must have been 20 or so. [Ed: Marriage to Dr. Derian was in 1952.]

Q: Alright. So you married this dashing French-Armenian whose dad was a rug merchant. Then where did you go?

DERIAN: Well, we got married before I graduated and he had finished his residency and decided if he was going to be an academic, which everybody agreed was what he should do, he should go out and find out what it was like to practice. So he went to Pineville, West Virginia, a mining town, a very poor mining town, with a doctor who wanted an assistant. And so I finished school, I did not stay for my graduation, which offended some people since I was the president of the class, but young love, you know, wants to be living together again. So we lived out there. That was the place where I cooked the first meal and almost the last one, actually. My mother called up and she said that she and Daddy were coming and my aunt and uncle were coming, they were going to come and visit and spend the night with us -

Q: In Pineville?

DERIAN: Yes. And we had a little tiny house and outside the kitchen was a porch and underneath the porch was a little river, and I had never cooked anything except a grilled cheese or something like that, and I went to the market and I bought a big chicken. I took

it home and I realized I had no idea how you cooked a chicken. I did not have a cookbook but I knew that they were cooked in the oven because I had seen people take them out of the oven so I put it in the oven and cooked it and it looked like it was ready and as I took it out it dropped on the floor where it bounced a couple of times. So I went out on the porch and threw it in the stream. About 10 minutes later they came and somehow they had intuited the fact that I was not up to lunch and they brought plenty of stuff. So it was very funny.

Q: And how many years were you there?

DERIAN: We were not there years. In the first place, the physician that Mike was helping did not meet his standards. These are coal miners, this is low coal where they get in the coal car on their backs and they are taken by rail inside; lots of accidents. And this doctor who was there had been there for years and had made a fortune but did not practice medicine in a way that Mike felt was appropriate. So we left. And we decided that the next thing to do was to go to another community. There is some way doctors find out where others are needed. So we went to Marion, Ohio, and bought this gigantic, wonderful house that already had 12 rooms taken off of it.

Q: Taken off of it?

DERIAN: Yes. Just this wonderful Victorian house with a library and a dining room and a big other room.

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Q: And when did kids start coming?

DERIAN: Oh, well let me see, we had Mike. We went from West Virginia to the Crippled Children's Hospital in Delaware -- the Alfred I. DuPont Crippled Children's place; a wonderful place. And then back to Charlottesville, to Marion, Ohio and Mississippi.

Q: So you went to Delaware; how long were you in Delaware?

DERIAN: Oh, let me see, I think we stayed there maybe two years. Mike was born there.

Q: And he is now in the D.C. police?

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: How old is Mike now?

DERIAN: We are going on Saturday to New York and my youngest child is having her 50th birthday so then Craig must be 52 so I guess Mike is 54. And Craig is a spinal surgeon.

Q: Here, in Chapel Hill?

DERIAN: Yes. And Brooke is a senior assistant district attorney for the Borough of Brooklyn. Oh, let me tell you how that happened. She went to law school at USC and when it was time to choose where she would like to go she applied to three places: San Francisco, Manhattan and Brooklyn. She called up and I said well, have you heard anything? She said yes, I am going to Brooklyn. And I said, what made you choose that? She said, oh, their letter came first. She was accepted at all three of them and she has been there ever since; she is very senior.

She actually lives on the West Side of New York (Manhattan). And that is because Hodding and I went for awhile to New York. In fact, I was lying in bed, someone had loaned us their apartment, and Hodding's brother, Phillip, called up and said, want to go look at apartments? Phillip loves buying houses and apartments.

And so I said sure. So we met, we went across town, we went to the Endicott, which was an ancient hotel and had fallen into slum hood and been rejuvenated with lots of money, so we went up and we looked at two apartments and we are standing in one of them and one of us said, why do we not each buy an apartment? And we agreed that we would and we went downstairs and each bought an apartment.

Got out on the street and I thought, you know, I better call Hodding and tell him that this is happening. So that was when there were still phones on the street and I called up and he said, what are you doing? I said oh, Phillip called and wanted to go out for a walk and we decided we would come over here. And he said, well what are you doing? And I said well, we each just bought an apartment and there was this unbelieving silence. He said, what do you mean? I said yes, we bought an apartment.

Q: Now where is the apartment located?

DERIAN: Eighty-first and Columbus.

Q: Eighty-first and Columbus; a nice address on the West Side. So that is where she is living now?

DERIAN: Right. And then she decided to go to Brooklyn. She walks one block up and the park is there and the Museum of Natural History is there and right beside that is the place to go downstairs to the subway and she changes somewhere, gets off and walks across the street to her office.

Q: Anyway, back to your story, now we are at the DuPont Crippled Children's Hospital. And so Mike Derian is doing serious orthopedic work there and then he goes to Ohio. And where were the children born?

DERIAN: Well, Mike was born in Delaware, and we lived in this glorious, gigantic house with about nine bedrooms. And Caroline Ramsey, whose father, I guess, built the place, was in her late 80s or early 90s and she was associated with and a supporter of the

Crippled Children's Hospital and she was living across the road; she had four houses there; a big farm, two daughters living there. She said, you all live there, which was really wonderful because it came equipped. But I had never used a washing machine before, and when I went downstairs, I put my hand through the wringer by mistake and so I walked upstairs and Emma's lying on the floor with the bottom drawer of the stove, where the broiler was, cleaning it out, and she said, anything the matter? And I said, "No, no I am fine." I went to the phone, paged Mike, and I said, "I just put my hand through the wringer." This long silence and he said, "Well, how did you get it out?" I said, "I just put it in reverse." What else would you do? I did not unplug it.

Q: Did anything break?

DERIAN: No. It only went in about that far. It looked terrible but he was deeply offended because the view box he was looking in was in the hall at the hospital and there were about six doctors with him and as they came along said, oh, one of the workmen hurt his hand? Well look, you know, most women do not have hands like that; they are huge and valuable.

Q: Where was Brooke born? We bought this great big Victorian house in Ohio and Brooke was born there. It was this gigantic, wonderful house that already had 12 rooms taken off of it.

Q: Taken off of it?

DERIAN: Yes. Just this wonderful Victorian house with a library and a dining room and a big other room.

Q: Brooke was born there, okay. And she is your youngest?

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: Okay. And where was your middle son born?

DERIAN: Charlottesville, when we went back there.

Q: Okay. So from Delaware you went back to Charlottesville, and did Mike teach?

DERIAN: Oh, yes. I mean, he taught somewhat when he was at UVA. But when we went there- his idea was that if he was going to be an academic he was going to have to find out what it is like when you are not in the perfect hospital where everything is done and so he joined a partnership of two brothers whose father had also been an orthopedist and had died.

It was wonderful. The doctors' wives were extremely friendly and sweet and helpful and it was the first time I had been dropped into some social world as an adult, finally. Then

one day at lunch, one of them said, you know, we had a Southern girl here before and nobody liked her. She was awful. And I said, what did she do? She said, she did not wear a slip to church and when she walked out of the church you could see right through her dress. I thought, holy smoke, this is not going to be the life for me.

In Ohio, we bought this great big Victorian house which had had a whole bunch of rooms cut off but was still really huge and the doorbell rang and there was a black woman leaning against the door smoking a cigarette, and she said, I hear you need help. I said, "I do." And that was our marriage; she was so wonderful. When we moved to Mississippi she came with us; we were there about six months, and I said, you cannot bring Danny into this place. That was her little boy. He was just starting junior high. So we cried and cried and she went home.

Q: She went back to Ohio?

DERIAN: Yes. I mean, it was an impossible situation. There was no sign of any kind of change.

Q: So you were in Jackson?

DERIAN: Yes. Living in a VA (Veterans Administration) hospital ward, because the VA was essentially closed for hospitalization there. And so it was a long corridor and off all these wards were filled with doctors.

Q: And their families?

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: That is crazy. So you had gone from this huge house in Marion -

DERIAN: Yes, yes. Well, we had a lot of room and the back half of it was as long as from right about here to that wall and it was an empty room and it was the best place they could ride their little tricycles in there.

Q: So they had about a 40 by 20 playroom. Oh, that is great.

DERIAN: Then we bought a house after awhile.

Q: In Jackson?

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: So then you became interested in and involved with the, I forget the name of it but the group trying to integrate the schools. That was the first political step.

DERIAN: Mississippians for Public Education, yes, it was.

Q: Okay. So you were the activist. If the neighbors were talking about you they would say that Patt Derian, activist, doctor's wife? Were you seen as a Yankee there?

DERIAN: Of course not. In the place that we bought the house, the first house in Jackson, we had two wonderful neighbors and all the rest just friendly, you know. And actually, though, I did not have a lot of black people coming to see me. I had a lot of preachers coming, and priests, because I resigned from the Catholic Church, sent a letter of resignation, which caused a lot of people to come calling. So I had to put a note, because Brooke was a baby, I put a note on the front door that said, if you are soliciting for any church or religion do not ring this bell. And they would walk up the hill and I would stand in the back; our house was built on a sort of little shelf on a little hill and I could stand back and see them plodding. It was really interesting.

But, in fact, it was not just Catholics. The word got around, Baptists came, no Presbyterians.

So anyhow, then we sold that house and rented one while we were building another house and we built a wonderful house right on the edge of the swamp and the river. Oh, it was really wonderful; wonderful to be in that place. And that is where our little boys, much to my surprise, learned how to shoot a gun. Their father decided they were big enough; they were still in grammar school. And so we had - my first callers were, from the neighborhood, four women who came and I thought they were just paying a neighborly visit and they had a grievance that I was paying my maid too much and it was ruining everything.

Q: This is the lady you brought with you from Ohio?

DERIAN: No, no. This was somebody new. And she had been there about four or five months, I think, and so the word had gotten around and you know, one would speak and stop talking and I did not say anything and so finally everybody said their piece, that it was wrecking things for them, it was a terrible thing that I was doing. And I said, good-bye ladies, do not come again. And that was it.

Q: So talking with dictators had some antecedents in Mississippi.

DERIAN: Well, obviously if you have got somebody telling you that you are paying someone that works for you; it is outrageous.

And one day, while we were there, I got a telephone call from a college student that I did not know, a boy. He said well, we were riding, three of us were riding along by Millsaps College last night and we found a burning cross and we knew we had to do something. We did not know what to do so we poured beer on it and put it out and then we decided the only person we could think of is you to take it to. So we had it in our living room. It was - you know, I had never seen one.

Q: Patt, you told me the story of visiting a police Thompson's Tank in Mississippi.

DERIAN: Yes. At the beginning of a very active civil rights movement, Jackson, the capitol of Mississippi, was suiting up the police department for trouble from the agitators; -- a moment of utter madness on the part of the government. They were fearful of the black community and people coming from other places and so they decided that they were going to have to protect the police and brought in a Brinks armored car. They got a big armored truck with glass about probably four inches. I had never actually seen one up close; I was driving home and I looked up on top of the hill next to the forest and that was where the police kept their vehicles so I drove up and I got out and the policeman came out and said is there anything you want? And I said oh, I was just wanting to look at the tank and know what you think of it. He said oh, it was really wonderful. And he said do you want to sit down? And I said oh yes, I would love to get in it. And the glass was at least two inches, say about two inches thick and outside was all metal. And I said well, are you not worried that somebody might break this glass? He said oh no. No, I said, are you nervous about this, something like that? And he said no, no, if anybody throws anything they will never get through this glass; it is too thick. He said we can go through anything. And I happened to glance down on the floor on my side of the vehicle and I saw that same glass all broken up into several pieces and I said, you know, I would be worried; it should not be broken; you just told me you cannot break it. And if something like that broke off and hit you in the head you would be dead. He is sitting there very quietly and he said something like I do not think that will happen. And I said well, I would sure be afraid to ride in it; when you get a chance just say no, you would just as soon go in the car.

Q: Now, was Mike Derian politically active?

DERIAN: No. He voted but...He was a brilliant orthopedist, chief of orthopedics there.

Q: Where is he today?

DERIAN: He is retired, he may be about 85, somewhere around there, and he lives across the line.

Q: In Virginia?

DERIAN: Yes, in the mountains, close to where it bumps up against North Carolina, and he has another wife, stepchildren; a very nice fellow.

Q: Well then, so we have then the Mississippi experience, which we have got a lot on tape. Well, I think we will stop now.

Q: This is the 25th of October and this is at 8:00 at night and this is Tex Harris interviewing Patricia Derian.

Patt, could you start off by talking about the spelling of your first name.

DERIAN: My first name is Patricia and it is spelled in the normal way. However, like most Patricias I was called Pat. My grandfather, when I was born and named, wrote Patricia Murphy and he liked the way it looked and he said, well, we will call her Pat. So he wrote Pat Murphy and he thought that Pat fell off at the end and he added an extra "t," which seemed like to me a valuable gift from a grandfather.

Q: What was his profession?

DERIAN: He was chief of police of Butte, Montana. He was a person born in Ireland and seduced to come and work as a Texas Ranger. After he had been there a short while the man who owned Anaconda Copper, which was mostly at that time in Butte, Montana, came down and finally recruited him to come to Butte to be the chief of police. And he said he would not be - he finally said he would go but then he said he would not start out as chief of police so I think he spent a year - he was about 19 years old and then he became the chief officially.

Q: And how long was he in that position?

DERIAN: Oh, way into his 70s and he was killed in the line of duty. The electric company, which was next door to the police station, was having a robbery and he was quite elderly but he marched right over and disarmed the robber; they then scuffled and he slipped on the floor, hit his head and stayed in a coma for several days and then died.

Q: Now Patt, let us talk about who is who at the State Department and what their interest or disinterest was in terms of human rights. Let us start with the people on your team in the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, abbreviated as HA.

DERIAN: Well, it was a very interesting group because most of the work was focused initially on people who were not where they had the right to be (refugees). So we had a whole team of people who had been in the war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia and worked in refugee places in Southeast Asia and enabled people to come to the United States, and helped them get settled. It was a wonderful crew of people who had been in Vietnam during the war, who had been in Vietnam after the war and had great dealings with this refugee wave.

So first off, HA covered refugee issues. These officers were so competent and knowledgeable I think of myself as a mere figurehead. [Ed: See 1996 Derian Oral History with Stu Kennedy, p. 27 for discussion of refugee operations and staff-- the Deputy Coordinator for Refugees and Migration Affairs was James Carlin; the Deputy Coordinator for Prisoners of War and Missing in Action Matters was Frank Sieverts]. Frank Sieverts had been connected with the International Red Cross and actually did a favor to come and work at the State Department because mostly he was in Europe during his work; a wonderful man.

Q: Sieverts was, as I remember, the roommate of the governor of Massachusetts who ran to be president of the United States.

DERIAN: Yes. And practically every roommate he had was a governor, a member of the Senate; he spent his life - his parents were Swiss, I think, I am not quite sure if they were Swiss or not but he was raised as an American and a very charming and engaging fellow and very, very smart and very tuned in to the problem of people who do not get to live where they were born and who were mistreated in the process, which continues today and he was really wonderful. He was nominally in charge of the Southeast Asian refugee program there. He was so respectful of the men who were already running it that their relationship was fraternal in a way. They had virtually no disagreements.

Q: Well, Sieverts certainly was a treasure as an American in the refugee program, both as a liaison with the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) and also as a key player for many, many years in the refugee program both inside and outside the U.S. Government and had enormous influence in humanitarian assistance around the world. So he was really a strong arm that you had there.

DERIAN: Right, he was. He was brilliant and charming and a marvelous traveling partner. It is funny, he was telling me that in every school that he went to someone was either his roommate and a senator or his roommate and a governor and he had just had fascinating good luck. He also had a wonderful wife and they did not get to live together because she was Sue Hubbard and she was a great bee raiser—bees that make honey and buzz around and pollinate things.

I am sure there is some other word for a person who raises bees but I do not know it. And he had been to universities with an incredible number of people.

Q: Your principal deputy was Mark Schneider.

DERIAN: Yes, for the human rights part. Sieverts for the Humanitarian and POW – MIA work.

Q: And Roberta Cohen was also a Deputy...

DERIAN: Roberta was the most knowledgeable human rights person in America. She had been working for years and years in New York. She headed an organization; she is now one of the most respected and honored human rights people in the world. She has just retired from Brookings.

Q: Tell me about Mark Schneider, because he essentially was a candidate for the assistant secretary job. Tell me about how you got the job.

DERIAN: Well, I was not seeking it. In fact, I was not seeking any job. I had been one of the people at the top of the Carter campaign.

Q: How did you get the position? You were working at HEW (Health, Education and Welfare); I think you mentioned that before, in the transition team.

DERIAN: Right. In the campaign I was the one that went around and said it is possible to be a white, Southern, born again Baptist and be a brilliant and decent man, because that was a real worry, particularly for journalists. It was also fun to go around talking to newspaper editors, those, you know, people that need to be refreshed. And so when it was over I was ready to go back home to Mississippi.

But I got a telephone call from one of the people who asked if I would come and work in the HEW transition team and so my job, in coordination with another person, a wonderful fellow, was to review the systems of HEW, everything about it, how decisions were made, who made them, how the place worked, what the personnel policy was. He and I worked shoulder to shoulder; our eyebrows never left the top of our files. Most shocking thing we found was - I am trying to remember how many years it was, but I think it was seven years when a new secretary of HEW came; and there were two or three secretaries who had been there before and the things that they had sent forward as policies and ways to operate had not it took several years to get any implemented.

Q: And how did the offer to come to the State Department arise?

DERIAN: Well, somebody called up and said somebody there wants to talk to you.

Q: And who was that?

DERIAN: I do not remember who it was; it was a very nice fellow. I did not know anybody at the State Department, except Richard Moose. And so they said that somehow the word had come to this person that someone would like me to work in the State Department if I would like to or not.

Q: Was that "someone," the President of the United States?

DERIAN: I do not know. However, he was the only one I really knew there.

Q: So, your only really senior friend was Jimmy Carter?

DERIAN: No, I knew some other people, too, all the people in the campaign. Somebody just probably spoke up. But, you know, I never indicated that I expected anything, it never dawned on me to say that. So anyway, the man I was talking to said well, "We have two jobs here that you have been recommended for and one is protocol."

And I said, "Well, no thank you, I cannot tap dance, which was a really sort of smug-alecky thing to say."

Q: Because Shirley Temple Black had been there before?

DERIAN: Yes, yes. And I did not really mean to degrade her, since she was a great tap dancer for one thing. And the other thing was something about human rights. They did

not say the word “something,” they said this human rights job. I said well, that sounds like something I would be interested in, having no idea what it was, and I said what is it they do? And they said well, they handle refugees; this was the time when there was a great influx of refugees, particularly from Southeast Asia, and also a monitoring of how governments treat their people, what things were like for people in other countries. I said well, that sounds very interesting and I would think about it, because I had not planned to live in Washington or stay there; I had not planned to do anything.

Q: Now, Hodding previously had been offered the job as the State Department spokesman and assistant secretary for public affairs?

DERIAN: Well, we did not come together as a pair. He was in the campaign and did a lot of the PR [public relations] stuff and so he had - he and I had shared an office in Atlanta during the campaign; mostly I was out on the road.

Q: At that time had Hodding accepted the job, when you went to Washington, had he been tagged already?

DERIAN: I do not know when they tagged him. We were not married then and people did not know that we had any kind of relationship. We did not come as a matched pair.

He was well known and had friends in the Congress. I had a few there too but nobody knew that we were anything but two people from Mississippi who were white people and not racists.

Q: Great. And then, you got back to them and said that you were interested in the job, did you talk to Dick Moose?

DERIAN: No, but I knew Richard and I often thought that he was probably the person who had - I had not known him long; he and Maggie were good friends already although we had a very short friendship up until then and I think that he is probably the person who dropped my name in the pot.

Q: When was the job formally offered to you?

DERIAN: Well, I am trying to think. The transition must have still been going on.

Q: I think Moose was in the transition team, if I recall.

DERIAN: I think he was, too.

Q: So that would make some sense that he would have known you from the campaign.

DERIAN: And he was a Foreign Service officer.

Q: He was an FSO at one time and later a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff.

DERIAN: Oh, that is right. He is really wonderful still. He is a great, great friend of both of ours, he and Maggie are. But in any case-

Q: Now, when you came in to the State Department, before you were confirmed, you were kind of in a limbo.

DERIAN: Right. My predecessor was Jim Wilson. [ED: James Wilson was Coordinator for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs from November 1976 to April 1977.]

And the HA job had refugees, and also had a small unit of two men on people who applied for asylum.

It was an important function. Then Frank Sieverts also did the international organization connections; he was a Swiss person. He was an American citizen.

Q: Well, that explains why he then was qualified to work for the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) because he was a dual national. I did not realize that.

DERIAN: Yes. And he was very highly regarded there and really a delight to have in the office.

Q: Mark Schneider was your principal deputy and he had worked on Kennedy's staff. Tell me about him...

DERIAN: He was very able; he was working for Kennedy and he was doing a lot of really great stuff for Kennedy and I was very surprised about why he might want to come.

Q: But you offered him the job?

DERIAN: I did not even know he was there. Someone told me that he would be a good person to be a deputy and I said fine.

Q: Now, other staff members you had, you had geographic people. I know Michele Bova was one and she had economics and Latin America.

DERIAN: Yes, she was wonderful, just wonderful. She was a regular Foreign Service officer and she came there. We traveled to Bolivia together and Argentina and she was very good, right on top of what was going on, who the players were, and extremely modest. She was a very unobtrusive person; she could do her job, she was friendly, smart, able in every way.

A very modest young woman. And so, one of our people, Heidi Hanson, who appeared as a sort of gopher, not exactly, she was a very beautiful young woman and was offered to the office, and I think it was Heidi that went to some place in maybe Nicaragua, and before she left she asked everybody if they would like her to bring something. And Michele said she would like something. And what Heidi brought back was something like a revealing nightgown or something that greatly embarrassed this wonderful, innocent person. Interactions that took place among the people who were working there were really quite sensational, I thought. The people who were working on the refugee program were real pros; they had been in Vietnam, they had been all over that area through the war, they worked together, they worked on refugees together and there was nothing they did not know about Southeast Asia.

Q: Do you remember your secretaries?

DERIAN: Charlotte Capers was one. She was extremely proper and did not lean back in her chair; she sat on the edge of it with her knees together and her feet together; her posture was perfect. She was a delight and much to my dismay she fell in love and got married and did not work anymore. Then I got another - I did not get her, she was presented, with several other people, someone just absolutely solid gold whose name I do not remember at this moment. But she was swell. Everybody was helpful.

Q: That is great. So you really had a very good team in HA?

DERIAN: Yes. I had one man, a Foreign Service officer, who had been sent there because I think wherever he had been before they did not want him there anymore, and he was a disgruntled person. When we would have our meetings once a week he was always grumpy, growling about things. He never interacted with anyone else or anybody else's program so I went in one day to talk to him about a piece of work he had done, which was not exactly what I had wanted, and he said, I tell you, I do not like working for a woman, I just do not like it. I said okay, get up, take your stuff, get out. I went back to the office and went by the next day and I said what are you doing here? He said well, I am sorry I said that. I said okay, do your work. And that was about it. He was a surprise to me because he was a Foreign Service officer.

Q: Your job was to implement this new Carter Administration human rights policy, this new Congressional human rights policy. Tell me about some of your interactions with the regional bureau assistant secretaries and other personalities, who may have been less committed to the policy.

DERIAN: Well, they were really sort of jealous of the access to leaders in other places, you know; they kind of liked to be in charge. But I thought they were fine. They were not keen about my portfolio; most of them, one or two were extremely helpful. We had so much to do I did not really have time to worry about what they were thinking. I knew what my job was supposed to be and the way I got it, I am sure, was because of (Congressman) Dante Fascell and, oh, who else?

Q: Fraser?

DERIAN: Yes, (Congressman) Don Fraser, two really swell people who were the human rights people on the Hill.

Q: Well they knew you.

DERIAN: Yes. Well, actually I did not really know them but they knew about me and I knew that they were good Congressmen.

Q: One would imagine that your appointment was run past both of them and perhaps Kennedy -

DERIAN: They may have thought of it themselves. They led me to believe it was their idea. They saw that the office mostly doing refugee work and transition of people from place to place had not bored into the human rights area in which the legislation was hoping to be involved.

When I got there, the first human rights annual report had been written and I glanced through it for about an hour or so and I thought, I have no responsibility for this book. I am not going to dispute anything; I am not going to place a hand of acceptance on it. This is the work of other people working sincerely and it went to Congress that way. Then, when it got through Congress, I sat down and read it and that helped, you know, in preparing for the next one. Human rights reports were very important.

Q: And in the early days very controversial.

DERIAN: Yes. And the first one that we did, you know, we sent to the White House and Brzezinski was running the NSC (National Security Council). And so they sent it back with all sorts of changes. And so I called up and said I want you to understand -

Q: Called Brzezinski?

DERIAN: Yes. That this was the job and the work of the Department of State and this office and if you change one word in it I will go out on the corner and I will have a press conference on your meddling in the work of the Department of State. And so, we did not have a friendship for awhile until we went to a dance in the same place and we danced together and we patched it up.

Q: That is wonderful. Most bureaucrats would generally bow to those pressures but you stood up. Now-

DERIAN: That was my job by law. I mean, for goodness sake, who did they think they were?

Q: You also had differences of opinion with some of the assistant secretaries of state, you mentioned Richard Holbrooke, so you were an independent operator -

DERIAN: I was just doing my job pursuant to the law that empowered me to do various things that had been delegated to me by the president of the United States, the secretary of state, and the Congress.

In fact, one time, what was it? I went to the White House and had a very pleasant talk with the president and as I was walking out I saw Holbrooke talking to somebody working in the White House, I have forgotten who it was, and he was making a move to build a little wall between us and -

Q: This was Holbrooke who was working to build a wall?

DERIAN: Yes. He was in charge of everything geographic (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs). And that was one of the things that the geographic heads who were in a closed circle did not understand -- that all these other bureaus had someone to deal with too.

Q: The functional bureaus?

DERIAN: Yes, yes, the little fiefdoms. Anyway, I was talking to somebody, I was doing something in the White House and I walked out into that little ante room where you come and go and I was standing there waiting for the car to pick me up and Dante Fascell came and said, how is it going? I said well, I am having a little trouble about this, that one of the bureaus was trying to take away one of the things that we were supposed to do. [Ed: For discussion of Patt Derian's becoming the State Department representative on the US Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), see 1996 Derian Oral History with Charles Stuart Kennedy, pp. 36, 84.)

Q: Alright. So someone's trying to poach one of the functions of your bureau?

DERIAN: Yes. And Dante picked up the phone, called the secretary of state and I never heard anymore about anyone's trying to take away that position from me.

Q: But I am sure the implications of that story were spread around that if people tried to poach on you, you had very firm and vigorous support among the Democratic leadership on Capitol Hill.

DERIAN: The only person that Holbrooke got to, and I caught him in the room with Mondale when I was in the White House one day, and they were both very surprised, and Mondale did as much as possible to weaken our -

Q: Operation?

DERIAN: Yes. And then when we sent our first human rights reports over they came back all marked up.

Q: From Brzezinski's NSC?

DERIAN: Yes. And Mondale was a helper in that.

Q: Moving to the Latin America Bureau where Terry Todman was the Assistant Secretary, what was your relationship with Todman over the substance of your work?

DERIAN: It was not very good. The person who was there when we came was not Todman; there was another person, a career Foreign Service Officer. I do not know if he retired or what happened and I believe Todman was the next one – they had several during the four years. [Ed: Ambassador Harry Shlaudeman was Assistant Secretary from July 1976 until March 14, 1977, Ambassador Todman was Assistant Secretary from April 1, 1977 to June 1978; then Ambassador Viron Vaky from July 2, 1978 to November 30, 1979, and then Ambassador William Bowdler from January 4, 1980 to January 16, 1981.]

So you see it was a big building full of people and I did not react to everybody because I did not know everybody, although Kissinger asked me to lunch and I said oh, I would love to do that. He said where would you like to eat? I said I eat in the cafeteria. He said I do not even know where the cafeteria is. It was just one of those funny little things.

Q: That is funny. Where did you wind up?

DERIAN: We did not eat lunch. We had a little joke about it; we had another exchange like that at somebody's big dinner party. He was always on the prowl, I think.

Q: Yes, for his clients and whatever. Returning to regional Assistant Secretaries, George Vest was the assistant secretary in EUR (Bureau of European Affairs)?

DERIAN: Yes. And who was the person before George? Because that is the one I was telling you the story about. [Ed: Arthur Hartman was EUR Assistant Secretary from January 1974 until June 8, 1977.]

Q: Okay, he was the one who was trying to get part of your turf?

DERIAN: Yes, to get me to give it away. But George was swell; we had a wonderful adventure. We went to the Midwest together to speak to Hungarian-Americans about the return of the St. Stephen crown jewels to Hungary. The community was extremely angry that we would send the jewels back when the communists were still there. [Ed: The agreement said the recipient was the Hungarian people, not the communist government.]

The room was packed; it was a great big space and behind it was a long porch-like thing, not really a porch.

Q: Where was this?

DERIAN: Cleveland, I think. It was a place that had a whole lot of Hungarians. So we each made a speech and then people were rude and outraged and I always like that but George was not used to talking to people who were really, really yelling at him. I enjoyed it thoroughly; I had never been attacked by anybody while in the State Department, you know, by a group like that. So after it was over it was lunch and some people came over and said how sorry they were and other people came up and said do you not understand? And then we would have a little discussion. George was doing fine at that point; it was a real shock for him. It was just one of those things where it all turned out to be fine.

Now, you know, we did not say anything so far about the Soviet Union. A lot of Soviet officials came to see me, one at a time, a lot, you know.

Q: Was the major issue the emigration of Jews?

DERIAN: Well, no. It was everything – arrested dissidents, Andrei Sakharov, freedom of expression and religion as well as Jewish emigration. The Soviet officials were very curious and did not know why the United States was doing this.

Q: Doing what? Pushing for the emigration of Jews? Or human rights?

DERIAN: All of it. The whole shooting match of it. But they were in general very cautious about saying anything about Jews.

Q: These were Soviet officials?

DERIAN: Yes. And I can remember some of them. I had a high religious figure visit; that was so wonderful, they came in, it was like having the king come. They were sitting in those old brown leather chairs and sofas. Oh, I know one of them who came to visit was the Metropolitan of the Armenian Church. He was visiting in the country and several people came with him. I was very pleased to see them and not really thinking clearly, since my name ended in “ian.” He made a formal statement about how proud the people of Armenia were that an Armenian had such a high ranking job in the Department of State. And you know, it was really a sweet little thing about-

Q: For an Irish girl.

DERIAN: And so I said essentially, I am so sorry to have to tell you that my first husband was an Armenian and I am not really an Armenian. And he said, you do not have to tell everybody that and we are proud of you anyway because you are doing so well here. It was just one of those times when you think, oh do not let me cry, this is so wonderful.

Q: Let's turn to Africa. HA made a number of interventions on Africa human rights issues bilaterally and at the United Nations and to the Congress, including testimony on apartheid. You also traveled there; any unusual memories?

DERIAN: I remember testifying on apartheid and how I managed to mention that there were calls for economic sanctions. (Ed: Economic sanctions did not become U.S policy until 1986 with the adoption by Congress of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act.)

Well, while traveling in Africa, I saw –lots of places, some very poor places. There is one unusual memory. There was a wonderful woman, a professor, at Howard University, a black woman, a brilliant, brilliant woman, who was our ambassador in this one country I cannot think of right now but where I had an adventure. [Ed: Mabel Smythe was Ambassador to Cameroon from May 1977- February 24, 1980].

Q: West Africa?

DERIAN: Yes. She was a tiny woman, maybe five feet tall, maybe weighing 89 pounds; she was a professor at Howard University, brilliant, charming, smallest feet I ever saw; as a very big footed person I was in awe of her whole persona. So we went around to all the places that you go; she brought this great carving out on our screened-in porch; I can almost remember where it came from, that she helped me buy and she- I do not know, she must have spent \$100,000 buying these things. She was a widow and she collected them and she was going to leave it all to Howard University, which I am sure she did. She said, now I am going to take you on an adventure. This country is divided and we will go to see Kumba [Ed: Kumba is a trade center in southwest Cameroon surrounded by waterfalls and a crater lake. It was ruled by both a government appointed mayor and a local chief, the Fon.] And so we went to see the Fon of Kumba and I was made “an honorary man.”

We went up to the top of the mountain, it was very dry. We drove up the mountain, you pass that line I forget what it is called, after you pass so many feet. And there was, it looked like a medieval wall and you went in and to the left was a corridor with arched doors and on each side lived the women who were the Fon’s queens.

And then we walked into a round sports place that had bleachers here and a low wall along there, and there were a group of men who had on great big overshoes and shawls around themselves and next to them was where the Fon sat and behind the Fon was one of those afghans that Baptist ladies used to make all over the world and it was hanging up in a place of honor and several other things made by, you know, people doing good things. And there was a dirt place in front of this bleacher section. The Ambassador then said to me, you are going to have to go down there to meet the Fon. I will introduce you and they will bring out a stool for you to sit on and the Fon will call you up to where he is sitting and you hold out your hands like this and he will pour water in your hands, and you will be made an honorary man. You are supposed to drink that water but, she said, the water is not fit to drink. We were up above the line, I forget what it was called, and it was very dry up there, and she said so, you just tip your hands over a little, the water will run down and it will evaporate. Do not drink it because the water is not good.

So the Fon is sitting on a big chair and he has one of those ladies' sewing circle afghans from church, little squares that are sort of put together, and he had something else; he had a number of things that had taken his fancy and his gentlemen who are sitting against the wall on the stone bench all had on arctic boots. So it was a very colorful and interesting sight. .

So I went over and they brought a little stool out and they gave it to me. And so I sat down on the little stool and then the Fon n came and sat down and welcomed me and invited me to come forward and I held out my hand. Now, you see this? That can hold almost eight ounces of water. Her [the Ambassador's] two hands together were not this big. So he pours in the water and I realized that it was not going to evaporate. And so I did pretend to drink some but I did not get a drop on me, at least I did not think so because I got very, very sick in the next country.

I visited a whole bunch of countries going down Africa. And so I tipped back and slowly, slowly, slowly smiling, you know, like this, hoping that it was all working out alright and it evaporated, because my arms are so long, so I did not spill any and I became an honorary man. And the purpose of doing that is that this is the African chief whose group was known as great, great, great woodcarvers. And one of the carvings had been stolen and taken out of the country and there was a worldwide search for this object and years later, four years later, I think it was, it was found in the state of Washington.

I just wanted to see it because they had gotten it back and it was famous and he was very proud of showing this beautiful thing; it was very pretty. And they gave me a really nice stool too. But you had to be a man to see it. That is why they made me an honorary man.

Q: Now, you mentioned the relationships with the NSC were not cordial, that the NSC was really not -

DERIAN: But they were not un-cordial.

Q: Okay. But you felt you were just doing your own thing?

DERIAN: No. I was part of the system and I knew what my job was and there were a lot of people who thought it was not my job.

Q: In the State Department, the key actor was Secretary Vance; what was your relationship with the secretary?

DERIAN: Excellent.

Q: Had you known each other during the campaign?

DERIAN: No. I did not know him before but we became acquainted. Hodding had known him before I think but I do not think he-

Q: When did you and Hodding get married? I heard it was at your lunch hour.

DERIAN: Let me see. Joe Alsop stood up for Hodding and somebody wonderful for me.

It was March the 7th 1978. And we were married by the bishop, the Episcopal bishop at the Cathedral and he was a wonderful, unbelievably wonderful fellow and he was a black man and we mentioned the fact that I was an atheist and - I mentioned that, and he said oh, that is alright because he married a woman who was something else, like not a Christian or not white or not black or whatever it was; it was a very sweet kind of thing. He was just happy to marry people.

Q: So, when you and Hodding were living together during the time when he was the assistant secretary for public affairs and the spokesperson for the Department of State and someone who had probably as close access to Cy Vance and to Warren Christopher as anyone else in the building,

DERIAN: Yes, that was really his guy.

Q: Did you ever in pillow talk suggest to Hodding to carry a message or suggest something?

DERIAN: Never, no, no. I carried my own messages. No.

Q: Why did you not do that?

DERIAN: He had his job and I had mine. He did not press me on mine. We had a close call, though, of a different kind before we were married. I had bought a little house and we were living together and the house was in Alexandria and it was made of brick. And there were two houses exactly alike and they were separated by an arch that you drove under from the street to a parking lot and you could go in one and come out the other, two houses like that with an arch and over the arch we each had two brooms sticking up. And so we parked in the back of the house. We came out one morning, I was carrying my briefcase, Hodding was carrying his laundry, one sleeve hanging down, and we were going through the arch and a photographer jumps out, click, click, click, takes our picture. So we were somewhat concerned about it—and we have got it somewhere—and we did not know what happened to it and months and months, maybe a year or so went by and I came back from lunch one day, here was a magazine like Look or Life except bigger, and we are one and a half pages, that says Patricia Derian and Mr. Derian leave for work. That was so wonderful.

Q: You remember what the magazine was called?

DERIAN: No, but it was a Spanish one. I have got it somewhere. We ought to frame that picture. It turned out that the man who did it did know Hodding and wrote something, it

was a journalist making his way in Asia and he is the one who wrote the story and so Hodding chewed him out.

Q: Well, it is interesting that a Spanish language publication picked up the Derian angle because in Latin America you were well known. Getting back to the office, how did you communicate with the Secretary, if you had a major problem?

DERIAN: I did go see him with problems. He would call, have me come in and we would talk about how things were going, what was going on. I never asked him for anything; we just discussed issues.

Q: So he would call you up from time to time to come up and sit with him?

DERIAN: Yes, just to have a meeting. You know, Lucy Benson [Ed: Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs – March 28, 1977 to Jan 5, 1980] was very uneasy about me and so I am sure that she would march in, and Holbrooke probably, if Vance could stand to see Holbrooke. In any case, we just had very pleasant visits and if I had a kind of problem -

Q: My understanding was Warren Christopher was really the delegated decider on human rights issues, and eventually set up something that was called the Christopher Committee. It dealt with the issues of loans, ExIm (Export-Import Bank) financing, all the other things that were contained in the provisions of law which the State Department, and your office in particular, was responsible for implementing, and that caused enormous frictions with the geographic bureaus. Those frictions came to essentially kind of a court that Warren Christopher presided over.

DERIAN: It was very interesting in the beginning; the things on the agenda just had people from our bureau and people from the geographic and other bureaus that had some interest in the item.

Q: Sale of airplane parts to Argentina?

DERIAN: Yes. Oh, it is a wonderful story. That is my favorite because it is one I really won.

The Argentines applied for a special helicopter or helicopters, I think it was just one, that would be armed and, you know, it was just a loaded request, to be sent to the South Pole for rescue work. We questioned whether they really needed it. Well, we knew that there was a ruse, that it was really going to be garaged in Buenos Aires and it was going to be ready to go to Antarctica in case of an emergency. And I just smelled a rat from the beginning; I knew it was wrong. And this wonderful young man on my staff – Robert (Bob) L. Jacobs (FSO) was the one that could look up all the weapons and tanks and things that the people wanted in places and he worked so hard and I was trying to find out, asking around, and so it was put off for weeks and weeks and weeks and then finally I went to the Christopher meeting and -

Q: As the issue was being decided?

DERIAN: Yes. And Warren said okay. And all ARA was dancing. I went downstairs on my way out to lunch and I thought oh, I should call my staffer up [Robert L. Jacobs] and tell him we lost and I called from a pay phone down in the lobby and he said, you will never guess what. I said, they passed it. He said no. I said to him they passed it. He said, “No, no. I spoke to the engineer and there is no way that an airplane like that can travel to Antarctica and besides its destination is the police in Buenos Aires.” So I said, you have been so good I ought to let you call Christopher but he might not know it is you so let us hang up. And I put my money in, asked for Christopher, he answered, and I said well, I have some news for you. I know you have some for me but let me tell you first that, and then told all the specifics and things. There was this long silence and a sigh. He said I will have to tell Todman. I said I would be glad to call him for you. Because he knew. You see, those guys were cheating all along and so it is hard to have a lot of respect for a bunch of liars. But I did call back.

Q: What was the process like inside your bureau in terms of deciding which cases to fight and which cases not to fight and who was going to do the fighting?

DERIAN: Just, we would talk about it, whoever was relevant, you know, whose job it would be.

We’d talk standing in the hall, meeting in the office. We were working all the time, people trying to get real information, because there was an incredible amount of lying coming our way. Everybody in HA was really conscientious – just a spectacular group of people except for one person.

Q: Did HA work with Fred Rondon in ARA who traveled with you to Latin America?

DERIAN: I liked him a lot. He was in the Latin American bureau and he carried water for them, but he told me on the way back from a trip that he had never understood Latin America to be the way it was. We went to Argentina, we went all the way over on the other side, went down the coast and talked to people and saw what was happening. You know, if you are working in an office and you do not go to or know the places and all you have is what somebody writes to you and it might be somebody you have a lot of confidence in or you do not know but that is all you have got; you have got to go there.

Q: Well, I have a case in Argentina with the Allis Chalmers turnkey operation for producing turbines and the company was called Astilleros Argentina and the deal involved a major ExIm loan and I just happened to look at the file one lunchtime when just the secretary was in the office; she lent me the file and told me not to get any - spill any of my sandwich crumbs on the file. As I read the file there was a memorandum of conversation which said that this industrial company, Astilleros Argentina, was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Argentine Navy but that fact had never, never been reported to Washington. Now, clearly that was a deal breaker and so pursuant to the agreement that

Fred Rondon had negotiated between the ambassador and I, I sent a letter to Jim Bumpus, who was the desk officer for Argentina, and to Michele Bova, who was the desk officer for Latin America in your office, informing both of them and noted that this fact had not been presented to Washington by the embassy. I also gave a copy to the ambassador. They then withdrew the letters, my letters from the pouch which would have meant that they would not have arrived in Washington had I remailed them --they were classified -- until the following week. So consequently I went back down after they withdrew them and put them back in, had them open the pouches and put them back in and they reached Washington. And then once they got to Michele she got to Mark, got to you and you essentially killed a \$400 million ExIm financing guarantee and the deal with Allis Chalmers was queered. And that then was seen by the Navy as their retirement program; they were going to be multimillionaires with this major corporation building these massive industrial turbines.

DERIAN: Oh, this was going to be for the dam?

Q: Yes, for the dam.

DERIAN: Oh, I have a dam story.

Q: And then some months later, in Rome, that led to the deal between Videla and Mondale because Mondale promised to provide the ExIm financing for the Astilleros Argentina, the guarantee, in exchange for a visit of the OAS human rights commission and because of that the Argentines, with the visit upcoming, had to stop a lot of the killing.

That was kind of the high water mark. Then there were Congressional hearings, the Department of Commerce went crazy, they declared the human rights policy was costing America thousands and thousands of jobs and millions and millions and millions of dollars. Tell me your story.

DERIAN: Well, what happened was, my first trip, the BA (Buenos Aires) Chamber of Commerce invited me to a luncheon. And it was up on top of one of the buildings, a wonderful big room, glass all around, had a wall right along like that and had one of those tables with a creation on it, of the river and a jungle on either side and a dam across it. And so several of the men came over and said they were so proud of it, it was going to bring so much money and it was going to bring electricity. I said well, how are you going to pay for it? And they said well, you know, we have the financing already. And this was at the very beginning of the (Carter) administration.

When I went back to the embassy I said oh, I smell a rat here. The guy I was talking to said well, they are really going to do it. He told me they get so many complaints from the people who live there. They have nothing, they have no amenities, they are mostly Indians and they are just scattered all around, and it is not going to do anything for them. I said well, I realized that when I saw the picture. Everybody I talked to said it was going to be and then you find the proof.

Q: Well the proof of the Navy who were killing people at the mechanical school, that was their pension fund, was this company. And so the politics and the junta were - But that, turning down that financing became a cause célèbre for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and they attacked you -

DERIAN: Oh, they did. I was so pleased. I told them when they came to see me, the whole bunch of them, four or five of those men, who were just furious. And I delivered a little homily.

After they had completed their outrage, it was wonderful. I could not believe, I was so ashamed of American actions like that, where they lie about what they are going to do, they know they are going to hurt other people. I could not believe that these people were coming to look me in the eye and lie about it just because they were going to make some money. It was a wonderful job.

Q: But they amended the act -

DERIAN: They persevered and really that is when Mondale and I fell out.

Q: That was it? Over that case?

DERIAN: That is right.

Q: And my lucky find of the information was the cause of it.

DERIAN: Well, I thought I had a little piece of it too. When I came back I let them know that I did not believe in this project and they just all rolled over and I think that is why they sent Mondale to Rome to talk to them -

Q: This is a characteristic of your style throughout your life is when you see something and it is wrong -

DERIAN: Yes. We try to fix it. That seems like your attitude too.

Q: Yes, absolutely.

Q: This is session number five with Patricia Derian, assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, HA. Interviewer is F. Allen Harris, also called Tex. And the date today is the 26th of October and we are recording this at about 4:00 in the afternoon.

Patt, could we start off talking about Pio Laghi, who you first met as the Papal Nuncio in Buenos Aires?

DERIAN: Yes. I asked to see him, I think; he might have asked to see me. In fact, that probably was what he did. But in any case we went there, I do not know who was with me, but in any case we went into the palace and climbed up the marble stairs and went into his space and he made it clear from the beginning that he had no problems at all with the actions the junta were taking and so I named some of them like dead bodies in garbage cans on the street. And by that time they had picked up those two little boys from the synagogue who were waiting for a bus and they disappeared, and about the grandmother whose granddaughter was thrown - her body was thrown in the front door of the apartment and she called the funeral home and said I want to know what killed her and they came back and said they did not want to tell her, it was too terrible. And she said she had to know and they said well, they inserted in her vagina a rat and then they sewed the rat and the rat killed her. So that was kind of the center of it. I met the mothers, some of the mothers, and you know, they were all so together; it was a wonderful thing to see a group of women sharing this horrible thing of having their children disappear and they were bravely going to the- what was it, you know, the front of the-

Q: Plaza de Mayo.

DERIAN: Yes, Plaza de Mayo, and they had each made a little white three cornered scarf that they wore around their necks- over their head and tied under their necks with the name of their missing child. And the meeting, though, with- was he a cardinal then or was he just a bishop?

Q: He was just the Papal Nuncio. Like the ambassador from the pope.

DERIAN: Right. And so, getting back to him, a year or so later I got a telephone call at the office from him and he said well, I guess you have heard I am here.

Q: As the Nuncio to Washington.

DERIAN: And I said why are you calling me? And he said well, I would like to invite you over to have a discussion and I would just like to see you again. I said I will not see you ever again, do not call me, do not speak my name, and I hung up. I mean, who is going to bother with an ambassador like that? He is probably still there.

Q: No, he is not. He has been in Rome and a very senior figure in the papal government. [Ed: He died in 2009 and his obituary says: "One of the most contentious periods of Cardinal Laghi's career was as papal nuncio to Argentina from 1974 to 1980, when ...the Roman Catholic Church was accused of being complicit with the regime. Responding in 1997 to criticism ...Cardinal Laghi said that "by the end of 1979, I was certain that the violation of human rights had become systematic and I condemned it." See http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/13/world/europe/13laghi.html?_r=0]

Q: I have some questions here which are from a person who is writing his Ph.D. thesis on the period, the human rights period in the Carter Administration between the United

States and Argentina, the battles, and I would like to read some of these questions and then have you respond to them.

DERIAN: Good.

Q: Patt, what role did the Congress play in increasing the visibility of human rights in U.S. foreign policy in the late 1960s and 1970s?

DERIAN: Well, there were three people, two members of Congress and one who was a colleague not in the pay of the U.S. Government, and his name was Spencer Oliver. And he was part of the Young Democrats and one of the leaders in that group and they traveled overseas and they had contacts in the Congress. And Don Fraser, a splendid member of Congress and Dante Fascell were his contacts; they were people who really helped the Young Democrats, and they became aware through Spencer, and they knew themselves about human rights, so eventually the human rights post was created; they worked that out.

Q: They created the bureau of human rights and humanitarian affairs?

DERIAN: Right. do not know, since I never saw their original correspondence, whether they had in mind to add refugees to that or not, although I think that they definitely would have because it was at the height of Vietnamese people being sheltered and most of them being sent to the United States. So they passed legislation creating an office of human rights and humanitarian affairs. I do not know what kind of opposition there was to it. There were other people in Congress, obviously, who were concerned about human rights and what role the United States was playing and who we were supporting who were doing those things.

Q: But Oliver was not a member of Congress?

DERIAN: No. He was a head of the Young Democrats who then took a position working in the Congress [Ed: R. Spencer Oliver became Chief of Staff of the US Helsinki Commission from 1976 to 1985.]

Q: But he played a major role?

DERIAN: Absolutely. He is still doing it over in Denmark, running that thing among all those countries. (Ed. He became Secretary-General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in 1992.)

Q: To what degree was Carter's focus on human rights following the lead of human rights advocates in Congress and during the Carter years how did Congress help shape the president's efforts to promote human rights in U.S. foreign policy? In other words, kind of talk about how folks in the Congress influenced, supported, detracted, helped, hurt the human rights that you were doing in the administration.

DERIAN: Wait a minute. I just remembered somebody's name that is relevant here.

And that is Carter. I know that there was contact with Carter during the transition period. Perhaps one or the other of them [Fraser or Fascell] had gone to see Carter when he was governor of Georgia. I do not know what their long-term or short-term relationship was with Carter. But Carter certainly seemed sympathetic -- all that he had done, all the things about himself, all that he and his mother and he and his wife did. It is the kind of thing [human rights] that he would have endorsed, before he got there, thought that it was an estimable thing to do, thought very highly of it. And yes, they went, they called on him, they talked to him.-

One day, during the Carter Administration, when I was leaving the White House, I ran into Dante Fascell coming in. I told you the story of mentioning to Dante about my problem with Art Hartman and the EUR Bureau, who tried to stop my becoming State Department member of the Helsinki Commission. Well that illustrates the kind of congressional support we received. [Ed: See 1996 Derian Oral History with Stu Kennedy, pp. 36, 84 for discussion of how Patt Derian became the State Department representative on the US Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)].

Q: So there was real support in the Congress and that is a wonderful story to demonstrate the depth of support and anger that you had that you could always call on.

DERIAN: Yes, but I never, ever really called on anything.

Q: That was just serendipity.

DERIAN: Yes. And every other time that we were talking together it was like that, you know. I felt like if they had given me a job like that and thought that I could do it, it was my duty to do it unless I really needed information or big help.

Q: Patt, you were an iconoclast. I mean, people in the Department of State-

DERIAN: Will they make a little statue of me? (laughter)

Q: I think they will but it will probably be in Buenos Aries, not in Foggy Bottom.

DERIAN: Right.

Q: Essentially you did not defer to the primacy of the geographic bureaus.

DERIAN: I thought we were all there together, knew what our jobs were and we did them. We had contact with each other, we discussed things. They would come sometimes and ask me to do something. They were hostile to anything that would diminish their control of their areas and interfere with anything -- like sending a bunch of airplanes somewhere to people who were going to use them for bad purposes.

Q: And you had very clear legislation drafted by the Congress, approved by actually Ford, Gerry Ford signed it, that was your mandate and so if something crossed your radar scope or your bureau's radar scope, you protested the transfer of arms, votes in the international financial institutions.

DERIAN: Or silence when people were rounded up or shot down in the street or the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo were beaten up and put in jail. Those were the kinds of things that were included.

Q: So human rights, which essentially is a policy which expresses that if another country does not treat its own citizens in accordance with international standards, will impact on their relationship with the United States and you were the enforcer of that.

DERIAN: Our relationship with those governments would be to step back. That is, we were not going to help them to mistreat their own citizens; we were not going to give them money that would make it possible for them to do so; we were not going to make the shine.

Q: Did some members of State bureaucracy and these assistant secretaries consider your stand on human rights confrontational?

DERIAN: Well, in the beginning the confrontation came from them to me and nobody really knew exactly what it was I was supposed to do although I had the refugee program; several people knew that I would be really busy with refugees, which our two great guys who knew everything about it really did not need me for except they just needed somebody who could go to somebody else and say well, our bureau wants this or that. Well I figured these people knew what the law was, what it said, what I was supposed to do. And for instance, the human rights reports, I think I told you about that.

Q: Yes. You did not change the first one that was on your desk when you got there.

DERIAN: Right. I did not. I sent it on. The second one, which is the one that we wrote and I had to send over to the White House came back all marked up and so I called up and drew the line.

I sent a copy of the legislation over and I said this is the work of the human rights bureau and this is our view of it and if you change one comma I will resign from this job.

Q: But that is not the way the game is played, Patt.

DERIAN: They did not like it but nobody said anything to me.

Q: But why did they not say something because everyone else is logrolling. It is the whole State Department ethos. I will take your thoughts and considerations into account and then you do the same for me.

DERIAN: I gave them a bargain. They had two things to choose from. We had it right there on the table. You either do what I want to do or I will quit. You know, it is a choice.

Q: You see, the problem in that kind of circumstance, and this is real talk now, okay, is that if that happened, the assistant secretary would generally go and appeal it to the seventh floor.

DERIAN: Well, it would not work in this case because we sent it from our bureau to the White House; we did not send it through the secretary's office. And they sent it back to me and it seemed to me that we were in contact with each other; we did not contact anybody else. And if he had said no, then we would have gone to a higher level. -

Q: This is an incredible moment of bureaucratic history because, as I remember then, they were saying Derian is out of control.

DERIAN: Yes. I never was in control. They told me what the job was, I saw the legislation, I heard the things that had been, you know. I knew they had human rights people lined up for me – I knew what my job was. I also had been, before going there, in a very complex situation (in the South) with real enemies ready to shoot out my windows.

Q: Clearly your involvement in the civil rights movement toughened you up.

DERIAN: Well, actually in Mississippi when I first became really active, it was over the public school issue. There was the law and there were the people who were going to change the law. Right. It is a citizen's duty to try to make that right.

Q: And so you saw your work in the State Department the same way you saw your work in Mississippi in a way that you had a law which said people had a right to send their kids to formerly all-white schools.

DERIAN: Yes but I was also speaking to the people who did not want that to happen. And we went down to the legislature, we would sit there and they would look at us; we would give them the evil eye, catch them in the hall, say what are you thinking, what kind of country do you think your children will grow up in? We learned how to do that.

Q: So in a way there is a real close parallel that you are spinning out here, Patt, between your work in Mississippi and international human rights.

DERIAN: That is right. I remember somebody gave us enough money for three big billboards; we had one sort of in the middle of the top tier of the state, another one in our sort of middle, and another one down by the coast and the Clarion Ledger newspaper published an article saying that we had covered the state with billboards. It was wonderful; it was, you know, a big help. They did not know it was only three.

Q: The fights and the head knocking that you had in Washington were what you had experienced in the kind of fights that you had in Mississippi.

DERIAN: Well, I did not expect to have them in the State Department and I did not think it was exactly the same thing because nobody was getting killed. Between us, of course in other places, people were being tortured, killed, jailed; all of that.

Q: What were the major obstacles that you had in the State Department, Patt, in doing your work and how did this change over time? We talked before about how the decision in denying the EXIM guarantee for the Yacyreta Dam turbines financing changed some of the legislation and attitudes on the Hill and also impacted attitudes with Mondale and others. How was it in the beginning? What challenges did you feel you faced when you first came into the job

DERIAN: When I first came into the job there was a fellow there who was acting and was supposed to go but he was not really wanting to go right then. It turned out that he did not have any place to go; he did not have another assignment and he was looking for one. And so I said look, he has been here all his career; I am perfectly willing to wait and take a desk somewhere else and let him stay there until he found a new post and I will get acquainted with how things were going.

Q: So you got a desk in Christopher's office, in his suite on the seventh floor?

DERIAN: Yes. And the same fellow had a parking place and I asked somebody if they would politely ask him if he would let me park my car there and find another place and somebody absolutely refused. So I gave him a week to think about it and I walked in and I said you are through here, pick up your stuff, go. He said you cannot do that and I said - and he left. [Ed: See 1996 Derian Oral History with Charles Stuart Kennedy on replacing James Wilson, pp. 28, 33-4.]

Q: So that was your first challenge, to get your office.

DERIAN: Yes, that is right. And to get access to some paper and begin to take action.

Q: And then you had a confirmation hearing in the summer of 1977 when your position was elevated from Coordinator to Assistant Secretary. How did the challenges over time, once you began to get into an operating style in the State Department, and then people began to figure out what you were doing and you began to figure out what they were doing, how did things change? Schneider talks about this in legal terms.

DERIAN: He is not a lawyer.

Q: Well, he talked about it in legal terms, he talked about Christopher as a lawyer who wanted to establish precedents and the Christopher Committee had-

DERIAN: I must say Christopher never told me that.

Q: He did not?

DERIAN: No. He said that he knew what the law was.

You are thinking about things in terms of precedents. If you had Argentina coming in and you decided that they were not the right people to purchase military equipment and the next time somebody in Asia comes in, you should be trapped into saying well, we did not do it for Argentina so we are not going to do it for you. It was not like writing a piece of legislation. Everything was *sui generis*.

Q: But after awhile didn't they begin to see the pattern so the bureaus, if they saw someone was going to lose, they did not fight very hard for it?

DERIAN: Well, some of them fought for it even though they lost before and-

Q: And were going to lose again.

DERIAN: Yes. There is a wonderful case, when Argentina applied for a helicopter.

That is a good example.

Q: Yes. Where they should have known, ARA should have known but they tried to sneak it in.

DERIAN: Yes. There was so much sneaking in that was coming out of ARA, even when they changed assistant secretaries.

Q: How effective did you see the Christopher Committee?

DERIAN: I thought it was quite odd. In the beginning we met in Christopher's conference room, he sat in, and there would be an agenda of things we might be discussing; it was not always just a one shot thing. And as far as I was concerned it was useful for me to hear the pros and cons of it in case my decision, whatever it had been, needed to be changed.

The Christopher group was probably four or six people at the beginning and then, all of a sudden they started adding more and more people and people came from outside of the State Department, from other government agencies.

It was a bunch of men. There were three who came every time and sat on the same side of the table I did, having nothing to do with one's point of view, there was no seating pattern. And they never said anything. I asked one time when we were all walking out, how come you guys come to this? They were not State Department people. And they said, I do not know; they send us over here.

Finally I stopped going.

Q: In the Christopher group, when you were going, before you stopped going, were the decisions made by Christopher or was there a discussion and kind of a collegial decision made?

DERIAN: No, not a collegial one. Christopher was the one that made the decisions..

Q: So the view that I had, that Christopher really set this up as a kind of a quasi-judicial case where the HA bureau put in their objections and the regional bureau put in their arguments.

DERIAN: I do not think judicial is the right word for it, actually. He has to decide but it is not like a court procedure; it is like a discussion and everybody puts in their word. He asks questions, he knows everything that is going on in the State Department.

Q: And he knows the law.

DERIAN: And we all know the law; there is no doubt about the law by anybody except those guys who would come from other agencies of government and did not know why they were there. But Christopher decided; it is like going in to Vance and saying would you sign this for me? He decides but it is not a judicial thing, you know. Finally I found it so really uninteresting to go through the same thing over and over again and so I asked Mark to go because I thought he would like it, you know, and be there and given, you know, more power.

Q: There was an article written by an academic by the name of Caleb Rossiter, and he was talking about human rights and he- and I am going to give you the quote here. And then I am going to give you some thoughts that Schneider had on it and then I would like your reaction to both.

The academic, Caleb Rossiter, said, "Christopher's unwillingness to clearly set policy at crucial periods led to the ultimate bureaucratic failure to institutionalize human rights policy."

DERIAN: I agree with that.

Q: You agree with that? Tell me about that.

DERIAN: Well, he did not seem to have clear principles of his own in the matter of human rights. He was there because he was number two and he had to decide but it was not a lifetime thing; it was just something he was doing because it was on his plate. And he would listen and he would just use his own judgment. And I do not think that there were markers from one thing to another. In fact, that wonderful thing about the Argentine helicopter. It was just shocking. It was the wrong thing to do; he knew it was and that got squashed.

Q: Let me continue [from Caleb Rossiter]. “Christopher rejected frequent calls from all sides of the bureaucracy for a clearer policy. To him, Christopher, the search for a policy that could be consistently applied was misguided, given the differences in culture of the various countries and U.S. interests in each.”

DERIAN: That is what I call whistling Dixie. It just does not mean anything at all, except I am not responsible and there are no ironclad rules here.

Q: Mark Schneider, in his reminiscences, in his (unedited ADST) oral history, talked about a case in which, I forget the country but it was a case in which Holbrooke made the argument to Christopher that the agreement should go forward because the Christopher Committee and the U.S. Government, the State Department had not made a clear determination that the country—and I do not know whether it was Korea or the Philippines or Indonesia, was a gross violator of human rights.

DERIAN: Boy, that would have done it- you would not have had to have a Christopher group if they had made that determination - it would have been no, too bad then.

Q: And Holbrooke was corrected by Christopher in what Mark described as a kind of lawyerly way when he said, Assistant Secretary Holbrooke, you do not want me ever to make that determination because that just shuts the door.”

DERIAN: Well, that is it. If the idea is that the reason Christopher is there is because the issue is malleable and there is something to talk about and it was really a pity in a way that he did not have a set of standards.-

Q: But you had a case in Argentina; I mean, you can see where the criticism comes, where here was a country, military junta kidnapped, tortured and killed between 15,000 and 30,000 of mostly their own citizens. Threw their bodies in mass graves or threw them in the ocean to be eaten by fish and a few washed up on the beaches, and that was never deemed to be a gross violator of human rights.

DERIAN: But it was so considered in our bureau. It was a gross violator. They denied it. I told you that story about talking to...to the one who was the head of the Navy, (Admiral) Massera. Did I not tell you that? When I went to see him with one of the people from the embassy who was violently opposed to the United States

Q: Human rights policy?

DERIAN: Yes. I think he was number two there. Yes, Max Chaplain, that is who it was. And I am sitting next to (Admiral) Massera, side by side with a little table between us and we were talking about throwing the hands of the nuns out. You know, they picked up a whole bunch of little tiny French nuns, took them in an airplane, flew out over the ocean, cut their hands off, threw their hands out, later threw them out at a separate place so that when the bodies washed up there would be no way to identify them. It almost makes you

believe in God because the bodies never washed up and all the hands did, with their fingerprints on them.

Q: And what did Massera say?

DERIAN: He said, rubbing his hands together and smiling lightly, "You remember the story of Pontius Pilot." You know, when I went down to the trial I said that. I testified at their trial. They were all convicted, right? [Ed: The trial of Admiral Massera and eight other junta leaders began on April 22, 1985. A total of 833 witnesses testified during the cross-examination phase, which lasted until August 14. Closing arguments were given on September 18. Sentencing was read on December 9: General Jorge Videla and Admiral Emilio Massera were sentenced to life imprisonment. In 1989 and 1990, President Carlos Menem pardoned those who had been sentenced or court-martialed, but in 1998, Massera was again taken into custody pending investigation of serious human rights violations. In 2005, the cases against him were suspended on insanity and health grounds.]

Q: Patt, you said that your bureau considered Argentina to be a gross violator of human rights.

DERIAN: Yes, the bureau did and I did and anybody who knew anything about gross violations did.

Q: But the United States Government, pursuant to Section 502(b) never made that determination.

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: So anything that came up with an Argentine loan or an Argentine sale of subsidized potatoes-

DERIAN: We fought them out every time. Yes.

Q: And so that was, it was just an automatic as far as you were concerned.

DERIAN: It was a disgrace; that's what it was. It was like Hitler on a smaller gauge and a shorter period of time.

Q: But you never were successful in getting Christopher to agree to the same determination that you had made in your bureau, that Argentina and other countries were gross violators because -

DERIAN: He knew. Everyone knew. I never pressed him to say okay, do you think it is or do you think it is not? I did not do that because he was not going to operate that way. He was very protective of his position.

Q: Why, in the face of such overwhelming evidence?

DERIAN: There were powerful big money and other interests.

I am reminded of the time when the CIA invited me to come over. I was so interested in seeing what it was all about, so I went. We sat in a little tiny room with a table that took almost the whole room up and sat crowded, we were all squeezed in there, I was sitting with my back to the door and they started asking that kind of question, all kinds of bizarre questions, and they also wanted to know who the bad guys were. And I said you know, I am not going to answer any of your questions. You are asking the wrong questions. You said you wanted to know how the HA Bureau operates. That is not what you are asking me. You want to know how strong the Bureau is. As far as I can see, you are not going to see me again. Good afternoon.

Q: Madam, you were one tough assistant secretary.

DERIAN: Well, why would I put up with that? Why would anybody put up with that? So they never invited me back again.

Q: How would you describe your relationship with President Carter?

DERIAN: Well, I had a very strong feeling and I was sworn in at the White House Rose Garden with several other women.

One was from Washington [Eleanor Holmes Norton]; I have a great picture of her. I cannot remember everybody's name. One was a lawyer from somewhere in the Midwest who had just done wonderful, wonderful things and the first woman to be something in Washington. No woman had been sworn into any of those jobs before. It was a beautiful day. We stood on the back steps of the White House. I have a picture of it.

[Ed: the State Department Publication Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980: Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs listed Ms. Derian as Coordinator for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs from June 10, 1977, until August 17, 1977 when she became the Assistant Secretary for the HA Bureau]

Q: But Patt, just as a comparison let me ask you, where are most assistant secretaries of the State Department sworn in?

DERIAN: I went to Hodding's and it was upstairs on the seventh or eighth floor of the State Department.

Q: That is exactly correct. So here was Hodding Carter, who was sworn in in the very nice, very elegant diplomatic reception room on the eighth floor; lots of the press corps there, all coming and having a glass of champagne. And you were sworn in at the Rose Garden of the White House by the President of the United States.

DERIAN: Yes. I liked that. Right. It was a homey little event.

Q: Let's talk about your relationship with the President. How often did you communicate, talk with, meet with the President? How many times did you see him during his four years?

DERIAN: Well, when I went there I decided that the worst possible thing I can do is call the President or respond to his calling, asking me if I was doing okay and if everything was going alright. I felt that that would absolutely wreck our group. You know, the whole idea of a human rights policy --

Q: Well you were based on law; you did not need the president.

DERIAN: That is right. And before I was there, there was another woman given a job at the State Department who was (Secretary of Defense Robert) McNamara's sweetheart. On the same corridor where you go into the secretary's office; she had a little office in that corridor. And-

Q: Inside the secretary's suite?

DERIAN: No. It was just across the hall, right there. And somebody was telling me about it. She did not have a window. She had a room with a desk in it and a telephone. She came in; I was told, to look at her mail, answer her phone calls and that is all she did.

But in any case I did not want anything like that, you know, running to Daddy or, pulling strings. I thought, I am here, this is what I am asked to do, I am going to do it and I am not going to play games with it.

And I had a corridor room and I looked at the Lincoln Memorial which sometimes, at night was lit up.

Q: So you were on the seventh floor, on the southwest corner, which is a very key office location.

DERIAN: And somebody told me that the HA assistant secretary does not get to sit there anymore, that they cleared it out and made a different configuration.

Q: I remember your office.

DERIAN: Yes, it was wonderful.

Q: It was beautifully situated.

DERIAN: You walked in and there was a great big leather sofa in front of the window that looked out that way and there were three chairs -and a long coffee table and bookshelves over here; had a great big desk parallel to the window sill I could look out.

Q: Tell me about the relationship that you had and the bureau had with non-governmental agencies who were focused on promoting human rights, such as Amnesty, WOLA and all the other organizations.

DERIAN: The HA office, which we have been describing, is where I met all those people, in those years. Mark Schneider and Roberta Cohen already knew them all and maybe other people in the bureau did.

Q: How often did you see the NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) community?

DERIAN: Well, I saw them any time anybody wanted to come in. My door was open to everybody even if I had to stay out of the meetings, which I did a couple of times.

Q: And how important were they?

DERIAN: We had no differences. Every now and then someone else in the office might come in and complain that one of them had said we had done the wrong thing or something.

Q: How significant a role did Argentina play in terms of the development of President Carter's human rights policy?

DERIAN: Well, we often talk about the Argentine situation now, but it is important to remember, that we had all those other countries with major human rights problems to deal with. Argentina was something that kind of stayed on the calendar like, you know, the car is not doing well and you have to put oil in it every day.

Although I have to say there were many days when I did not give it a thought because there were so many other countries and we also had all these refugees, and dictators that promised that they would take in refugees but did not.

Q: When I asked that same question to Mark he had two answers. He said Patt, in her visit to Argentina, was really touched and moved by the experiences related to her by the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and so she brought back a very vivid remembrance of their suffering and the image of those mothers. Madeleine Albright had the same.

DERIAN: But you could not go see them without being greatly moved - a person with a heart of stone would be moved because they were gentle, they were immovable until they were picked up and carried off to jail or finally dispersed; they were unbelievable and it was very sad. As time went on, there became a schism among the Mothers but much later on, toward the end of the junta, maybe after the junta.

Q Mark noted that the flow of information on human rights coming from Argentina was very, very heavy because I was interviewing people every day down there ...

DERIAN: Oh yes. Sure. That was good.

Q: Was it easier to talk to other countries about Argentine human rights abuses because they all had disappeared citizens-- the French had citizens, the Swedes had citizens, the British had citizens, the Americans had citizens, the Israelis had citizens --, all who had been abducted in Argentina?

DERIAN: I talked to all of them. In Uruguay, at that same time, we had a wonderful American ambassador – Larry Pezzullo. Along came a classified ad in the newspaper because the military was being really, really awful to the people; it said Uruguayan soldiers are, I forget, I think the ad said they were homosexuals. And so the newspaper was closed. A year or so later I was at the UN, and as I was walking along, I saw in the lobby the three big military people of Uruguay standing there. And the Uruguayans called out, “Ah, Patricia.”

And I said what are you doing here? They had come to see Vance. And I said well, what are you doing about the people who were arrested? They were very embarrassed that it was mentioned. And they said well, they had to talk to Mr. Vance about their problems. I said well, now you need to behave yourselves because it is going to be serious here; if you want help from the United States obviously you are going to have to act like a democratic state. And so they said would I come and have tea or lunch or something and I told them no, sorry, I could not. But it was such an odd little thing. “Ah, Patricia,” they said as I walked by.

Q: That is really incredible. I mean, there is a sense of relationship that people have, both the victims and the perpetrators, with you and it is, in a sense -

DERIAN: Yes, it was like the Argentines- the three of them taking me into this fishing cabin. At that time they asked, “How did your country become like yours and ours is like this when we are all the same people?” It was a jaw dropping question.

Q: Well, the story that I relate to was on your second trip to Buenos Aires. I was your Embassy escort officer. And you went with Ambassador Castro to see (General Jorge) Videla in the Casa Rosado, the presidential palace, and I carried your briefcase or bag or something like that, anyway. You went in and I stayed outside in the little anteroom there and you had a long, long meeting with Videla and a number of his staff members and then you came out with the ambassador and as you came out one of Videla’s army aide de camps who had the aide de camp sash on his shoulder came up to me, and we had met, he was a very tall fellow, maybe about six-four and I was about

DERIAN: Somebody looked him right in the eye.

Q: Well yes, I was a little taller than he was and he kind of got a kick out of that; I was about six-six and three-quarters so I was exactly two meters. So anyway, he came up and we shook hands and he said, ah Harris, he said, if we could only have La Senora Derian here one more time I am sure we could convince her of the correctness of what we are having to do. And it was just as if he had taken a knife and stuck it right in my heart,

because I said my God, here he has been in a meeting and I had been in a number of meetings with you and I knew how eloquent and probing and tough and skillful you were in those meetings, and that they did not get it; at least he did not get it and probably Videla did not get it. And I said we are just on different wave lengths here; it was just horrible. They still think that what they are doing somehow, the horror of it has not hit them, and they thought what they are doing is justified. And that was one of the low moments of my time in Argentina and it was with you. I mean, not with you but just associated with your visit.

DERIAN: You know, I have that picture of me with Videla shaking hands upstairs in his office; a man from Time gave it to me. What happened was we went in, I put out my hand, and mine was like this and his was like this, you know, reaching out to just barely shake hands. And, have you ever picked up a baby bird? You know that little thumping heart; his hand was like that. I felt so sorry for him.

Q: Patt, in March 1977, before you were officially sworn in as the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, you visited several countries in Latin America.

How did you choose El Salvador, Bolivia, & Argentina? Talk about the roots of that trip; how did you get down there? Was that your first trip in the State Department?

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: That was in March 1977 and Carter had been sworn in in January 1977.

DERIAN: Right.

El Salvador had this wonderful archbishop there [Ed: Oscar Romero]; horrible, sad things happened to, particularly to the poor people and they had had a big gathering in the central square which had some sort of tall monument. So I was sitting next to the generals as the country was being run by the military then. In any case, they pulled out a bunch of pictures about this high monument. Wait a minute; I saw somebody else first; I think it was a bunch of wives and mothers because there had been a lot of suffering, the men getting killed; it was really an awful time for the country. And somebody showed me a stack of snapshots of the main square and - no, wait a minute; I went to the Chamber of Commerce first, that is where I went. Chamber of Commerce told me how vicious the people gathering in the square were, how destructive they were, how dangerous it was to have people there.

Q: They were claiming these demonstrators were dangerous terrorists and guerillas?

DERIAN: Yes. Well, I am not sure that group was terrorists; the terrorists turned out to be the people I did business with, the government. God, it was awful. And so I looked at

them and there was no catastrophe, no horrible things in the street. So we had this discussion at the Chamber of Commerce and there was an American man there who also stopped in and he said you just do not know how bad it is here. And I thanked him for his opinion and then I went to see the generals.

So they started telling me about the terrible people who were doing awful things; they were tearing the country apart and they masked themselves, people were getting killed, and the other two military people nodding their heads. And he said you just will not believe what they are doing. We have pictures here. And he pulled out the same bunch of pictures and he was saying; now you will not see this anywhere else. I said oh, I already saw them at the Chamber of Commerce; I do not need to see them now again. And he was really shocked.

And they asked me who else I was seeing; I said I was going to see the great priest [Archbishop Romero]. And he said but we are trying to unite the country and we want the church to come in and work with us so we can all have a peaceful country. And he said we have asked the priest to join us and he has not responded and we are really just waiting for him to come and we would be very, very happy if you would urge him to do it. And I said, well I would certainly not urge him to do anything. He said well, will you just tell him what we said, that we want-? I said I will deliver your message but I will not speak on behalf of it; I will simply deliver your message.

And I did. And he [Romero] laughed and laughed; he was wonderful. He was so smart and so close to being dead. [Ed: Archbishop Romero was assassinated on March 24, 1980 while celebrating Mass.] And he said they have been trying to get me for a year to come and play their game and I am not going to do it. And I said well, I am not urging you to do it. I do not think I would do it if somebody asked me. Oh but he was wonderful.

So, the trip was over. I told you earlier about the trip from the airport to the DCM's house or whatever he was.

Q: Right.

DERIAN: And so it is time to go to the airplane and I do not understand why I was by myself in that car. I guess whoever was with me had gone on before. So we had the United States Chamber of Commerce man there, a businessman, and they have a Chamber of Commerce in the country and all the businessmen and he is one of them; we had this limo with a very savvy Salvadoran, and I asked where do people live?

Q: Oh, you told me the story; you went down the back road.

DERIAN: Well no, it is the main road through the slums and the ditches and tire places were, some of them almost a foot deep.

Q: I think you mentioned before that that trip that you took before you became assistant secretary was suggested by the people in the Latin American bureau because they wanted

to show you conditions on the ground and get you to understand what the real threats were in El Salvador and in Argentina. That was your understanding too?

DERIAN: Yes. And it turned out that they did not think that ordinary people had any standing.

Q: Let me do another question here. In a 2006 radio interview you did on The Current—a Canadian radio broadcast,—you mentioned that during your first trip to Argentina, the U.S. Ambassador, Robert Hill, complained that Secretary of State Kissinger had undermined the embassy's human rights efforts. How did the Ambassador characterize Kissinger's actions? And then you said in the interview that when you arrived at the U.S. embassy Ambassador Hill said, "I am going to tell you a secret. You have to promise not to tell anyone. Secretary of State Kissinger," the ambassador confided, "came down and Kissinger said that they did not need to—they the Argentines—did not need to worry about human rights issues anymore."

DERIAN: That is absolutely correct. Fred Rondon was standing there and so was Michele Bova. I never told anybody until after he died.

Q: Recently released documents show that Ambassador Robert Hill felt his efforts on behalf of human rights were undermined by Kissinger's quiet diplomacy. By the same token, Hill complained about the Carter Administration's public approach to human rights. How would you describe Hill's position regarding human rights?

DERIAN: What Hill was doing was setting the record straight. He had this secret about Kissinger and he was not in favor of what was happening. In fact, he said that the place was so dangerous that he had to have an armed guard to go from the door of the residence to his car, which was maybe eight feet. It was before they built the new embassy stuff. And he was staying on and he said he was staying on because his son was getting married there, or his daughter, to an Argentine citizen and he was really, really furious about Kissinger and being in Chile and giving permission to do things. It was an astonishing thing. A very nice fellow, a Republican. His favorite place was Portugal when they had the dictator. But he was a straight arrow, I mean, he was absolutely confident about it and we had three witnesses, his wife, four, counting me. And that was really important for us to know. This is a man who was there, Kissinger came and spoke to him when he visited South America.

Q: Yes, he went to Chile to fly with Kissinger to Brazil.

DERIAN: Yes.

Q: How did the Argentine military leaders perceive the Carter Administration's emphasis on human rights? What did they tell you when you were there?

DERIAN: I found them a very curious group because they were my first real junta; on the one hand we needed to know what they were thinking and on the other, we needed to tell them what we were thinking and what we are doing.

Q: Were they candid to you about the threat and the need to eliminate the people? Did they use those terms?

DERIAN: They did not say eliminate but they said the students and young people were killers and that was their focus in the discussion. And they told all sorts of stories about, especially the one where a girl came home -

Q: Put a bomb under the admiral's bed.

DERIAN: That is the one- everybody heard that story, I think. And that they were no good and they were - you know, just-

Q: But that was focusing on their circumstances. Did they have any discussions about why there was a universal change in America's policy toward human rights?

DERIAN: No, they never asked me about it. From the time that we met in the fishing camp, they did not ask me about that. When

I asked them about the indigenous people, they said there were not any there.

Q: How did the Carter Administration's human rights policy impact on the Argentine situation during the dirty war? Any cases that come to mind?

DERIAN: There was the Jacobo Timerman case involving his newspaper, *La Opinion* which printed the full and accurate news. One of the first things that happened was one of his reporters who had written a story about someone being disappeared or something that was bad that the government had done -- was arrested. And I do not know whether Timerman was called on then or after a few more stories appeared in the newspaper. I think he reported the dead bodies in garbage cans and all of that kind of thing. And he was part of the power society of the place; he was one of the leading citizens. And another reporter was taken and when we got there he had lost quite a few people and he called in his sons. That is when we met, and at some point I asked him if he thought he was going to continue. He said this is my newspaper. I said well, have you been threatened, or maybe he mentioned it, that he might be in jeopardy. I said well, why do you not leave for awhile? And he said my mother and father emigrated from Russia. Argentina is my home; I am never going to be driven out of my home. And he was really part of society; it was unbelievable. I mean, high society; yet he was taken and nobody knew where he was for awhile. Did the Embassy find him?

Q: We did not find him, but raised a fuss, the military government finally acknowledged that they had him.

DERIAN: Well you know, I went to see Harguindeguy. Did you know about that? Well, he was one bad guy.

Q: The Minister of Interior.

DERIAN: Yes. And he was very courtly when I walked into the room and I said I have come to talk to you about the situation here, particularly Mr. Timerman. He said something anti-Semitic somewhere in his first little burst, and that Timerman is in good hands. I said he has been tortured and treated badly; he is in a bad place. He said no, no, nothing has happened to him. And I said I know that he has been tortured. He said no, he has not. I said yes he has. You know, we had that little back and forth. He said I will bring him here right now and he can tell you. I said I do not see people in detention with their jailers; why would he tell me the truth? So I will not see him. He said well, I am going to bring him here. I said I will not see him. So we left, he called Timerman in and he says who was that woman? Was she your sister or something like that? He was furious.

Q: At Timerman?

DERIAN: Yes and at me. And he did not do anything to Timerman. He said no, I was not a relative. It was wonderful. It was really a good thing to hear about. [Ed: Timerman after his release credited Patt Derian as having “made a great difference,” *Washington Post*, 20 May 1981, p. A3; and also in his book *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, Knopf, 1981]

Q: In 1978 you wrote a very positive letter to Ambassador Raul Castro at the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires regarding human rights work conducted by Tex Harris, me. In terms of the work of the HA Bureau, what made our reporting on human rights in Argentina especially significant?

DERIAN: They were the only honest reports I ever got out of that place [Buenos Aires]. Nobody [at the embassy] admitted to anything, nobody worried about the mothers. Remember when Vance came? [Ed: Secretary Vance made one trip to Argentina from November 20-22, 1977.]

And he spoke outside and there was a big crowd.

DERIAN: Well, I told the mothers that he was coming and asked somebody in the embassy, I said please tell the mothers...this was the time I went with Vance but was not doing any business myself.

What happened was I told Vance that the mothers were coming and they would be wearing scarves and whoever was sort of helping them out should place them in front. And I said they should be standing right in front of you but if for some reason they do not

get there they will have these white scarves on their heads and if you will just acknowledge them in some way you might save some lives. And so he was looking forward to it and of course the police, as soon as they got there pushed them way to the back. So Vance told me, I looked for them everywhere, they were not there, then I saw a bunch of white scarves and he said they were waving and I said hello. He was so pleased. He is such a sweet guy.

Q: One last question for this session and we may be running out of tape here. In an interview with The New York Times in 1980, you told a reporter unless things change you would probably resign in a few days over a major policy disagreement. You added there is about to be a major policy shift on Argentina. This resulted from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the need to get support for the U.S. grain embargo and other steps. There was therefore a move to normalize relations with Argentina and to end our official human rights criticism of the regime. I am told that you even kept boxes in your office to show your readiness to depart.

DERIAN: That is true.

Q: Did the new policy review with Argentina remind you of the Videla-Mondale agreement? Did you know anything about the Mondale-Videla agreement before hand?

DERIAN: No, I did not, but I had been pressing for an OAS Human Rights Commission visit to Argentina for some time. And I will tell you something, the State Department and the government do not always announce everything they are doing. So Mondale was sent before I had any idea.

Q: So your feeling was that one of the things that was on the agenda for the Mondale meeting with Videla in Rome was to improve relations with the Argentines?

DERIAN: It was to give them something they wanted and make the sale (the Yacyreta dam). Do not forget that the people who were going to build that thing were not interested in anything else there.

Q: So you did your job?

DERIAN: I did. Early on there were a lot of people who would whisper in my ear in that building, a lot of Foreign Service officers, so I learned a lot of things.

Q: So the Carter human rights policy towards Argentina softened?

DERIAN: Yes. Carter fell for it.

Q: Carter fell for it?

DERIAN: Yes. That was the only time that I know of that he did. I know they went straight to him and that is when I threw in the towel on Mondale. He was somebody I had

known. I was embarrassed by what he turned out to be. That was the end for me with Mondale. Later, we had some major issues in Asia.

Q: Today is October 27, 2007, and Patt Derian is completing this couple of days of oral histories and this is session number six that we have and it is a record rainfall here in Carolina.

DERIAN: We greatly need it.

Q: We have had about six inches in the last three or four days.

DERIAN: I do not want you to leave town. I think you brought it.

Q: Patt, let me start off just with a question that occurred to me last night. Who were your role models growing up? Who were the people that you really admired and wanted to model your life after, who really impressed you as the kind of people who were doing the right thing?

DERIAN: Oh, just a world of people. In fact, there was one young woman, probably in her 30s, which everybody spoke ill of, and I saw her do something very nice. As you go through life you see all these incredibly wonderful people and so I try to learn from them. I have to say that I do not include myself in that audience of wonderful people.

Q: What do you mean? You have done just wonderful things, Patt.

DERIAN: Well actually I have only done things that needed to be done, I thought. Of course, a lot of people disagreed with everything I did, no matter what it was.

Q: Last night, after we finished taping, I said to you that in the State Department and in the National Security system, you were not playing the game. You did not cooperate with other people, you did not listen to their advice, you did not accept their changes in your documents.

DERIAN: I was very courteous with other people. I did listen to everybody talking to me and when there was an error or a better idea I did change. But when there was a matter of principle, which is what you are talking about essentially, you think it over again, ask people you have respect for if you are going to do something dramatic, and no, I do not walk through the world completely encased in myself without asking people, or reading on the subject at hand. A lot of the cases were about people in other places who were in trouble. I found that often there was one person in the geographic bureau who knew that person. Everybody else scorned that person but there was somebody who was really wonderful who documented the case. You go around and you talk to everybody and it is because, you know, if you are in a big outfit like the Department of State or any government office or any kind of place, everybody is making their living, wanting to keep making it, wanting to do better, wanting to be promoted, or wanting to get the hell out of there as soon as they can, and if you are just dropped in there for a short period this

is not going to be your life's job. In fact, you are relieved of a lot of responsibility about keeping your life going, keeping your family going, minding your call, those kinds of things.

Q: So you did not have to worry about a career, you were not going to get promoted in the system.

DERIAN: Right. I was there to do what they asked me to do. They handed me a bureau which was mainly, at that time, dedicated to refugees from Southeast Asia, and that was functioning well.

Q: Well Patt, up to the time of your arrival, the U.S. had many interests in a variety of countries and traditional policy meant balancing those interests. You come forward and said these governments are abusing their people so according to the law I will not vote for this loan; I would deny them this military sale or the handgun sale. Now to balance these interests, the regional assistant secretaries have got to have good relations with the Korean or whatever leadership.

DERIAN: I had good relationships with governments even when they behaved badly although we may have a different idea of what a good relationship is. There is a perfect example. When we went back to South Korea with Kim Dae-jung [Ed: in the mid 1980's after the Carter Administration], we were attacked at the airport, and finally got together with our ambassador at the embassy or in some room where we were all together, and he was furious and impolite. We were a group of strangers who turned out to be utterly united. He was the worst ambassador I ever saw. He was thinking of himself. I mean, talking about himself; he was not talking about the United States Government but he was in the pocket of the guys running the country. That was hard on him after that.

Q: Let me play the Devil's Advocate for a while and ask you some tough questions. By your coming and associating yourself with the return of the opposition leader you made the Ambassador's life a lot more complicated and you made the lives of lots of people in the State Department -

DERIAN: Give me a break. Perhaps, the Ambassador was embarrassed, or perhaps he was in the pocket of the bad guys. I do not know what his motives were or what became of him. [Ed: When Kim Dae-jung was elected President of the Republic of Korea in 1998, he invited Patt Derian to the inauguration.]

Q: I am not talking about just the ambassador to Korea, but I am talking about all the Assistant Secretaries and all the Ambassadors in these thuggish countries, when you showed up or voted against a loan for them, or against a military sale -

DERIAN: Are they there to try to get military hardware and other stuff for awful people who are doing terrible things or disobeying the law?

Q: Well, take the case of Argentina. There was one case that came up which was the sale of new helmets with new microphones for Navy fighter pilots. Ambassador Castro supported the sale because he thought it would help him get closer and be able to influence (Admiral) Massera to stop the killing. And so he recommended very strongly that we make the sale of these military helmets, which they were not going to shoot people with, they were just on their pilots' heads, and you and your bureau stopped that sale.

DERIAN: I do not recall that one. Were those the planes that were throwing people into the sea?-

Q: No, these were fighter planes. These were fighter planes but it was the same Navy.

DERIAN: And who were they fighting?

Q: Well, they fought the British later. [Ed: In 1982, Argentina invaded the Falklands Islands and the UK went to war with Argentina and maintained its control of the islands.]

DERIAN: Yes, they were not fighting anybody.

Q: They were not fighting anybody then.

Q: But there were lots of these sales that your bureau stopped.

DERIAN: Good.

Q: And embarrassed and made more difficult the relationship with the Ambassador in the U.S. Government because they said the Americans are not our friends. The Americans have stabbed us in the back, they sold us these airplanes and now they are not willing to-

DERIAN: Well, we had legislation from our Congress very clearly stating a lot of things the US Government should not do. We should not help human rights violators with military sales or aid where they might use the equipment to make war against their own people. A number of businesses complained about lost sales.

Q: HA and you in particular stopped a \$400 million sale of a turnkey turbine generating plant that was going to be sold to a wholly owned subsidiary of the Argentine navy, which was going to provide retirement, wealth and riches and comfort for the entire Argentine navy. And when you guys learned that the sale was not a private enterprise you stopped the guarantee of the loan and the Argentine navy went absolutely crazy because you were taking the feathers out of their cushions.

DERIAN: The first time I went there I saw the model of the dam. And I said why is it way out there in the middle of nowhere? And they said well, this forest is full of people

who have no place to live, there is no work here, and so we are bringing water and electricity, we are going to make communities; this is a big thing.

Q: That was one of the biggest dams in the world.

DERIAN: Yes it was. And I am no dummy; I mean, I can see a picture of what they are going to build and it does not seem to me that bringing rural electricity is going to require all that. So I kept that in mind. But the thing of it is that there is a lot of lying that goes on; I had a lot of people telling me things that were not true.

Q: No, no, I am not saying that lying is right. But for them they saw that your application of U.S. law in a straightforward way was going to injure the relationships and other more important interests that the United States had. The problem they saw is that you had only one interest and one interest only, and that was human rights.

DERIAN: Actually I had one job. However, I am a citizen, I am an adult person, and I was also interested in good relations with governments. But I think if you have a government that is systematically torturing people all over the country, hidden away from their families, the U.S. government does not owe them any particular regard. The U.S. Government must respond.

Q: So you felt that human rights trumped all the other-

DERIAN: That was my job to advocate for human rights.

Q: That is the law.

DERIAN: That is the law, and it was my job.

Q: You did not play the game.

DERIAN: I told you, I did not go there to play games.

Q: You did not play the game in Mississippi, Patt.

DERIAN: My game is to do whatever the job is, if it is honorable, helpful, and necessary.

Somebody asked what the difference is between Mississippi and what I was doing? And my answer was that there is a difference, but there is always a line that goes through almost everything one does, where you have to make a decision and decide if you are going to throw in the towel or if you are going to do what you think is right or whether you are going to make a compromise;

Q: You are seen today in dramatically different perspectives in different places, which is understandable. I was in Argentina at a human rights meeting and scores and scores of

people came up to say hello to me and I would say about 50 percent of those people asked about you. In Argentina, they ask for you because they love you, because they felt that your work had really changed the situation in Argentina and stood up against the horrors of the dictatorship there. But in the Department of State Patricia Derian is well regarded among some of the oldsters. But to some of the younger generation Patricia Derian stands for the application of a single issue that does not balance all the various interests in United States relationships with countries around the world.

DERIAN: Such baloney. If you're the principal advocate for human rights, as I was asked to be, then you must state your case

Q: I met with Tom Pickering once and I asked him, "What were the major accomplishments of the administration he served [Ed: In the Clinton Administration, he was Undersecretary for Political Affairs from May 1997 to December 2000. And he listed three. The third one, and maybe it was because I was there, he said that we corrected the imbalance that Derian had created in the human rights policy where the human rights policy was too strong. In that administration there was a major fight over China. Most favored nation treatment for China came up in the Congress each and every year and there was a major debate between American business interests and the human rights community.

DERIAN: We were not in that era. We had nothing to do with that in our office.

Q: That is way after your time but the argument is you had established the pattern -

DERIAN: Good, good.

Q: - which energized those human rights people to each and every year fight against the granting of most favored nation treatment to the People's Republic of China. But during that administration that issue was solved. And you know who won? Business.

DERIAN: Right. So we are for sale. The people who are in business are going to push what they are doing but I cannot tell you how many people came to see me from big corporations with things to say like, you upset our apple cart but now that we think about it --. I had a stream of people coming and endorsing it.

Q: Endorsing human rights activities?

DERIAN: Absolutely. And in fact, there was an enormous one, these were Mid-Westerners, I think, and there were, I do not know, I think about five of them came and I was thinking oh God, you know, here we are going to hear the whining and sniffing about losing the business—somewhere I have got notes on that, where they said that they had never considered those things and they did not want to be party to it. They were Mid-Westerners. And I almost fell over dead.

Q: Well for every one of those guys there are 20 or 40 who were angry as hornets that they could not sell their weapons and could not sell their police centered computer systems around the world because of the human rights policy of Jimmy Carter as administered by Patricia Derian.

DERIAN: Good. Good.

Q: Does not bother you a bit?

DERIAN: No. Why would it? You make weapons and China, in those days, wanted to buy them, and now, Al Qaeda wants to buy them. Actually, it turns out they seem to be getting them right now. Somebody is making money.

And so business people come in complaining. Here we are, this is our opportunity to make more money and sell our product.

Q: Patt, last question here, in what ways did you and your bureau attempt to institutionalize human rights in U.S. foreign policy?

DERIAN: Well, the Congress was the real actor in that. Don Fraser and Dante Fascell were the leaders and human rights had enormous backing on the Hill. People I never heard of who were in the Congress would come up to me at a party and say well, we think what you are doing is good. How do you know? Constituents complain to them sometimes. There could have been much better balance towards human rights. At the beginning, I think it was Todman that I talked to. We talked for almost two hours and there was no give at all there. I did not understand who a lot of the people in the State Department were working for.

Q: Well, the Latin American bureau had a vision that there were only two entities in Latin America that were stable. One was the Catholic Church, which they could not influence, and the other was the military.

DERIAN: I could not influence them either when I went to see that papal nuncio in Argentina; he was right in the pocket of the killers.

Q: So they felt that American interests in Latin America - not just in Argentina or in the southern cone but in every country - that the key to long-term successful influence of the United States in Latin America was through the militaries. And fortunately the Defense Department had lots of money to support programs with the militaries, for training, for maneuvers.

DERIAN: That was short-sighted, was it not?

I really was shocked when I found out how many of those countries' dictators were getting material things from us. I think there was probably a better way to make friends. For instance, industries, jobs for people. The value to most of those Latin governments at

the time was that the money came in and went into pockets; it did not go into the general wellbeing. If you would go to a place like Bolivia where we were pouring in a lot of money and see how the people live. Actually, they are pulling out now, by themselves. That was one of the most interesting places.

Q: So your work at institutionalizing human rights was essentially putting into effect the things that were in the law?

DERIAN: Right.

Q: Such as the human rights reports-

DERIAN: That was the job. We were just trying to do our job. Every now and then - The time I sent the first human rights reports, annual reports over to the White House and they came back all marked up, I had to protest.

Q: Yes.

DERIAN: It was not a game. That was the job. When it came to arms sales, the propaganda was put forward by other players, who would come in and say, "Oh no, these guns are going to go for a good purpose." A lot of the times they would tell me things that were misleading – like a helicopter going to go to Antarctica. The Antarctic stuff was really amusing. And there were a lot of lies.

Q: Follow-on question to the last question. It is now nearing the end of 2007. Looking back, how did you do in your human rights work?

DERIAN: I feel very sorry that after the Carter Administration, the incoming president and his group had virtually no interest in it.

Q: This is Ronald Reagan?

DERIAN: Yes, yes. They were wining, dining, selling.

Q: Well he came in and I think under the guise of Jeane Kirkpatrick they said that the focus on human rights has ended and the focus of the war is against terrorism, exactly the same phrase that is being used now, is the watchword of American policy.

DERIAN: Well you know, she and I clashed.

Yet conservatives put me on the Freedom House board when I left. It was very interesting to see how it went. I could not stay long because I had a lot of other things to do. Some of them were trying to interrupt the human rights policy, they did not want it; but in the long run several of them, but particularly Kirkpatrick, came around. I was never offended by them. Do not forget I had been in Mississippi and a lot of people did not like what I was doing there too. It had nothing to do with me; it was always about them.

Q: Well Patricia, I thank you for your time and your effort and also for the work you are going to do in editing these. Okay, it is a promise to edit these.

DERIAN: Yes. How much do I get an hour?

Q: The glory in heaven is enormous.

DERIAN: Oh, I see. You are going to send me the stuff after I am dead so I can work on it up in heaven?

Q: No, I am going to send it to you right away. And I also thank you on behalf of all the people in the next year, 10 years, 20 years, 50 years, 100 years who will be reading this transcript in the Library of Congress or archives. So, it is terrific. We thank you.

DERIAN: You know, when I lived in this little tiny town for this brief period, Pinefield, West Virginia, there was one radio station, and about every hour you would hear, "Conscience has faith in the future." And of course, you heard it just about every 11 minutes. That is what I think about what you just said.

Q: Well, your story will be out there in the future. Thank you so much.

DERIAN: Thank you.

Q: Patt, I wanted to put a little coda on here. It is, and we will put on this tape, as part of the transcript, that you were recorded on the Bill Moyers Crossroads program in the late '70s. And one of the last questions that Bill Moyers, one of the great interviewers, asked you was what Tex Harris was doing in Argentina. And your reply to that, you looked right in the camera, and you said he was doing his job and his job was human rights. And as a coda after these interviews, that is probably the same, I will use those same words right back at you, that what was Patt Derian doing? She was doing her job and her job was human rights and you did it well. Thank you.

DERIAN: Thank you.

End of interview