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Democracy and Elections Diplomatic Discussions

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AFGHANISITAN

JAMES DOBBINS
Department of State
Mission to Afghanistan
Kabul, Afghanistan
(2001-2002)

Ambassador James Dobbins was born in Brooklyn, NY, and raised in New York, Philadelphia, Manila, Philippines and the Washington, D.C. area. He graduated from Georgetown University and served the US Navy. He entered the Foreign Service in 1967 and served overseas in many different regions, including France, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Germany. James Dobbins was interviewed by Dr. J. Eva Meharry in 2022.

Topical Focus: Grand Council on Establishing Afghan Democracy

Q: Well, how did the conference go?

DOBBINS: The conference took place in a large conference facility where all of the participants and at least senior members of the national delegations had quarters. We all ate together in a big dining room. The Afghans and the UN met. The national delegations didn't actually attend the sessions. The sessions were between the Afghans, with Brahimi chairing, which began to develop a document, which ultimately became the agreement and, in effect, the new constitution of the government, or interim constitution. We were all kept apprised of the results and then worked with the Afghans on the fringes. So I had a suite and I would meet through the day with either delegations of people or individual Afghans, and then we would meet again with groups of national representatives or individual national representatives to work out different points, to try to agree on what we want the Afghans to agree on. The Afghans wanted us to do things. They wanted commitments on a peacekeeping force. They wanted things from us. So it was a bit like a mini United Nations, with a smaller number of countries and people, but it was multilateral diplomacy of a fairly traditional sort.

Q: These phrases get bounced around in the papers. I'm not going to pronounce it correctly, but they were all talking about having this loya jirga, or something. What was this called?

DOBBINS: The loya jirga, it just means a grand council, is the translation, and it's been a traditional Afghan device, sort of proto-democratic. It represents the tribal and clan

leaders of the society who periodically get together at a national level to debate and decide on big issues. And in the case of the Afghans, it effectively became a constituent assembly. You had one six months after the Bonn agreement, which endorsed and somewhat extended the government. It made it a somewhat larger government, and the interim government became a provisional government at that stage. Then you had one a few months ago which adopted a new constitution.

MICHAEL METRINKO
Chief Political Officer
Kabul, Afghanistan
(2002-2003)

Mr. Metrinko was born and raised in Pennsylvania and is a career foreign service officer. He started his career serving in the Peace Corps in Turkey and Iran. He entered the foreign service in 1974 and served as a political officer, visa officer, consular officer, and chief political officer at posts in Turkey, Syria, Iran, Israel, Yemen, and Afghanistan. Mr. Metrinko is known for serving the American diplomatic mission in Tehran during the 1978-79 Revolution and for being taken hostage at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Michael Metrinko was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Topical Focus: Grand Council and the First Elections in Afghanistan

Q: Well, then, tell me about this time between January and August, the political situation and what you were doing.

METRINKO: January to August saw the Afghan government had only been in office for about three weeks at this point, three weeks to a month. Among other things that I saw was the raising of the new Afghan flag over the presidential palace, the opening of several new embassies, one assassination, followed later on by another assassination of government ministers. The first one I knew, the minister of transportation. I saw the government starting to form and come to grips with its own problems to realize that it didn't even have a grasp on what the country was like anymore. I was very much a part of the first grand council that was summoned to sort of talk about, discuss, and formalize what the transition government would look like. In fact, I was seconded to the United Nations for a couple of weeks in the middle of the summer so that I could go off and do some election work in the provinces with groups of Afghans.

Q: Was the United Nations supervising this?

METRINKO: Yes. The United Nations agency for Afghanistan. It was supervising setting up the elections and I volunteered. Well, I should explain this. I wasn't the only political officer. I was the political consular, a title that we designated for me, the DCM and the chargé and I. I was there as the person who was going to stay. I stayed January to August. In the meantime we had a full series of TDY people who had come in for three weeks, a month, and come and go and come and go. Sometimes we had three or four officers. Sometimes we had just me. It depended. Most of the time I had deputies. It was difficult because it meant that portfolios kept changing. There was no consistency, no continuity. The DCM also handled a lot of the political work. Everyone did. Throughout this period we had innumerable visits by Zalmay Khalilzad, the president's special envoy for Afghanistan. He came in and would spend any time from a couple of days up to several weeks in Kabul dealing directly with the Afghan government.

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Q: How did the election go?

METRINKO: Well, this was the election, it was when they were choosing the representatives from the towns and villages who were going to represent those regions at the regional loya jirga, grand consuls and then from the regional grand consuls they were then going to select a smaller number to go to Kabul for the major grand consul, loya jirga. It went great considering nothing like this had happened in a very, very long time, that the entire world was watching it, and that nobody knew quite what to do.

To give an idea of how much state work had to be done by the international organizations, my very first day in Kunduz I was out with the regional—representative who by the way was a former Soviet military officer who had done training for the Soviet troops who invaded Afghanistan and he was retired from the Soviet army. I was talking to— It was the day when in a very small town outside of Kunduz people were gathering together to select representatives to go to the larger council down the road. There were at least a thousand people, maybe more, you know, milling around a big field, going into groups and back and forth and up and down and it was taking them forever. The UN man had explained everything. Other people had tried to explain what they were supposed to do, but there was still a lot of chaos. It was a combination of ethnic groups as well. There were Kajiks there, there were Turkmen there and there were Uzbeks there. This was an area where there was a mixture. Of course there were no women there.

One of the men started to talk to me and he said, "We're having a problem doing this because this is the first time in more than fifteen or twenty years when we've been able to get together in a group." I looked at him and said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you couldn't form a group under the Soviets and it was too dangerous under the Taliban

as well. If too many people were in a group they would get arrested. So, we don't know how to talk to each other in a big group." Something as simple as that. Lord knows it would have been much harder if there had been women there to talk to them, too. Although that happened in [cases]. I did several of these. I spent time in Kunduz. I went up to the town of Nahrin where there had been a major earthquake earlier that year.

Driving over the mountains in northern Afghanistan now, everything was dirt of course, driving over the mountains with a rickety old SUV and coming down, literally driving on mountain slopes. There was no real road because people don't use vehicles that much. They use horses or donkeys. There was a kind of track that we called it and coming down off the mountains, it was a plateau surrounded by high mountains. I looked around and thought that it was the most beautiful place I had ever seen in my life. It looked like Shangri-La, that's all I could think of. It was late spring. The grass on the plateau was deep green. There were a million small poppies out and the plain was extremely as flat as a table and it went for miles and miles and you could see herds of horses in the distance and incredible birds of bright plumage. It was just so beautiful.

LAWRENCE COHEN
MEMBER PRT
(2005-2006)

Mr. Cohen was born and raised in Pennsylvania and was educated at Dickinson College, and the Universities of Pennsylvania, Tel Aviv, Chicago and Northwestern. Entering the Foreign Service in 1980, he served variously as Economic, Political and Political/Military Officer at posts in Mexico, Honduras, India, Hungary, Nigeria and Brazil. In his assignments at the State Department in Washington Mr. Cohen dealt with Foreign Assistance and Environmental and Scientific matters. His last post was in Afghanistan, where he had two assignments with Provincial Reconstruction Teams.
Mr. Cohen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Topical Focus: The Limits of Electoral Democracy in Post-Taliban Afghanistan

COHEN: The 2005 parliamentary elections contributed to the current "warlordism." President Karzai decided that in the parliamentary elections there would be no primary or run-off system. Instead, it would be a plurality system with no threshold for being on the ballot. Anyone who wanted to run for public office could run. By law a certain percentage of parliamentarians had to be women. Dozens competed for each parliament seat -- and many candidates represented no more than a neighborhood constituency, a street, or one village. The vote was spilt exceedingly narrowly. The winning candidate

often achieved victory with no more than one and a half percent of the vote! Who were the candidates able to muster one or two percent of the vote to win? Often they were the Jamiat Islami or candidates loyal to IK or another warlord. Even though the vast majority of Afghans did not prefer these candidates, they were usually elected.

During those elections, there were occasional examples of candidates winning with ten or even fifteen percent of the vote. One female candidate in Herat, Fauzia Galani, won with an amazing low double digit percentage. (According to my sources, she won overwhelmingly simply because her campaign posters and election photo showed she had a beautiful face and showed a scandalous wisp of dark hair over her forehead.) Many candidates were elected with less than two percent of the vote. The make-up of the new parliament tilted towards the warlords, Islamists, and hard-line factionalists. Perhaps, this represented a premature birth of the democratic political process.

Afghanistan does not yet have political parties in the traditional western sense. But give USAID credit for its democracy program run by NDI, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs based in Washington. I participated in a few of NDI's events. According to NDI, in early 2006 twenty-nine political parties were registered in Herat alone! That was too many. I urged at NDI gatherings that the parties consider consolidation. Most parties, I observed, shared the same views.

The political process was just beginning. It will take some time to take root. In the interim, many who win elections will be those who represent the existing power bases, including warlord factions.

CAROL R. KALIN
Congressional Liaison
Kabul, Afghanistan
(2009)

Carol R. Kalin was born in Kansas City, Missouri July 16, 1959. She achieved a BA in French from the University of Kansas and later went off to complete an MA in Economics from The New School for Social Research. Carol entered the Foreign Service in 1993 and served as Economic officer in Cairo and Dakar. She was DCM in Beirut and Nouakchott, Public Affairs Counselor in Saudi Arabia, Information Officer in Athens, and Congressional Liaison Officer in Kabul. Carol R. Kalin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2014.
Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Topical Focus: Leading up to the 2009 Afghanistan Presidential Election

Q: Today is the 25th of February 2015, with Carol Kalin. When did you get to Kabul and what was the situation in Afghanistan at the time?

KALIN: My husband and I arrived in Kabul in August 2009 during Ramadan and just a few weeks before the presidential election. So while we were there for just a short time, just a few weeks, it was quite an interesting moment to be there, both in terms of what Afghanistan was going through and in terms of what the United States was going through in Washington and at the embassy. So really quite a moment.

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Q: And so, could you describe sort of what the political/military situation was at that time?

KALIN: In the run up to the presidential election, there was a lot of concern whether it could even go forward. The situation was quite difficult in many parts of the country. As I recall the figures, only about two-thirds of the polling stations were open. So there was natural concern whether any result would be seen as legitimate. In the end, I think, we did a fair job as the United States and in the international community of controlling expectations. Looking back today at the first and second term of Hamid Karzai, we do a good enough job of that. I think that the results of his administrations were substandard, clearly. Nevertheless, that election did go forward.

There was the larger question of our military strategy; should we put more troops into the country and how should they behave? What should our approach be? In this effort General Stanley McChrystal was bringing his famous reassessment to a conclusion around the time we arrived. So that was also an interesting process to observe. There were many phone calls between officials in Kabul and not only General McChrystal, of course, but on our side Ambassador Carl Eikenberry, himself a former military commander for international forces in Afghanistan. While rightly those phone calls between President Obama and Vice President Biden and others back in Washington involved only the principals and not those of on staff, we learned through media leaks and other testimony since that there was a lot of doubt about our new counterinsurgency strategy at the time.

DOUGLAS B. WAKE
Foreign Officer
Bureau of International Organization Affairs
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
(2006-2008)

Douglas was born January 7, 1959. He went to Columbia College in New York and later, to Columbia University School of International Affairs. He entered the Foreign Service in 1981 and underwent Consular training immediately. He served as Political Officer in many regions, as Consular Officer in Sweden, and DCM in Latvia. He worked in the UN Commission on Human Rights, Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office of the Coordinator of United States Assistance to the New Independent States of

the former Soviet Union, OSCE Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and later retired as a professor. Douglas B. Wake was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2014.

Topical Focus: OSCE Observation of Elections in Afghanistan

WAKE: [...]

In April we had this anti-Semitism conference and I would only mention one other issue that the OSCE dealt with that year that I got involved in because it had some serious high-level attention. That was the question whether the OSCE could get involved in observing or at least somehow supporting the electoral process in Afghanistan. I mentioned at the beginning how some people in the administration had tried to get the OSCE involved in Iraq which was a complete non-starter because of the differences in the international community over Iraq. Afghanistan was a little bit different case because there was a practice in the OSCE that neighboring states could have a special relationship to be so-called Partners for Co-operation. You had from the beginning six Partners for Co-operation from way back in 1975, six partners in the Mediterranean Region and you had already established partnerships with Japan and Thailand and South Korea in Asia. The proposal from various countries had been pushed a couple years earlier that Afghanistan could also be a partner for cooperation. This had already been agreed before I came into the office but it didn't have any real significance because Afghanistan was a country at war; there really wasn't anything it could do except attend the meetings and make nice words about how they also would like to endorse democratic practices and so on.

In 2004 there was an interest in seeing whether the OSCE could do something practical in Afghanistan to observe the elections that were coming up. The first reaction from the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights was extremely negative. Their first response was: how could we observe elections in a place that there was a war, how can we deploy our normal methodology which involves having lots of unarmed civilian observers out all over the country?

The political message from Washington, which was supported by a number of our European friends (including those that didn't agree with us on Iraq, like Germany), was yes, it would be good to get the OSCE somehow involved to give more credibility and professionalism to the electoral process in Afghanistan. When I left the office, this was still an issue under discussion in part because it required Afghanistan to make a formal request. Not surprisingly no one in Kabul in the ministry of foreign affairs was familiar with making a request for the OSCE to observe its elections; it had never been done and

never even been thought of before. So the idea was gently suggested to them and there were probably some texts put in front of them that suggested how they might request assistance from the OSCE.

While that was an issue still pending when I left the office ultimately it resulted in agreement that the OSCE would play a modest role in providing so-called electoral support missions to make recommendations on how to better organize elections and to not formally observe the process but monitor some aspects on what was going on in Kabul. That's something that happened repeatedly over all subsequent national elections in Afghanistan even though, as I say, Afghanistan is not a member of the OSCE because of its status as a partner. And it became possible because of the fact that there was a certain consensus on stabilizing Afghanistan that did not divide East and West, did not divide Russia and the United States or Germany and the United States during this time over conflict over Iraq. That was a place that people could agree that we'd like to have the OSCE work. What I know from later experience with this is that, of course, it was always an exercise that would be quite modest in scale and quite expensive because even for a very small team in Afghanistan the security arrangements and the logistics were far more costly and so on than deploying a team to Georgia or to Moldova where you had a relatively stable situation and no particular security risks. So those were some of the highlights of the year I spent in the OSCE.

ALBANIA

WILLIAM E. RYERSON
U. S. Ambassador
Albania
(1991-1992)

Ambassador William E. Ryerson was born in New Jersey in 1936. He graduated from Cornell University in 1960 and entered the Foreign Service in 1961. His Foreign Service career included positions in Germany, Albania, Barbados, and Yugoslavia. Ambassador Ryerson was interviewed by William D. Morgan on June 26, 1992.

Topical Focus - U. S. Relationship with the Albanian Communist Party

Q: We know that we can't spend this whole interview on Albania. We have to bring you up to date from your Berlin days. But nevertheless, tell us, since you have gone there as ambassador, what you have noticed in terms of their reaction to being free, or freer? How has it manifested?

RYERSON: Fear is no longer there. It was manifested in a great vote to throw the rascals out on March 22, of this year, when they elected the first democratic government since 1924, in Albania.

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Q: You can get a visa from an Albanian...

RYERSON: Outside of the United States. They're not issuing visas yet, here. And I hope to persuade them to drop the visa requirement and have been talking with the foreign minister, I've been talking with the President. I've talked with the prime minister. The level of access is unbelievable. In part, it stems from what the Communist Party called my interference in the internal affairs of Albania during the election campaign.

Q: Well, did you get messed up in internal affairs?

RYERSON: So I was accused. I spoke up in favor of democracy, and the Communists chose to interpret that as being favoring the Democratic Party. I got myself really, got mouse-trapped by...

Q: You were already there as ambassador by then?

RYERSON: Yes. This was in the Spring of '92. But in February, early February, I was in Korca. And the day before I called at their invitation on the Communist Party leader, Socialist Party, as it calls itself. And there appeared on that evening's television, a rather partial view of my discussion. In the first place I hadn't expected TV and all the fuss with that. And then, I popped off the next day in Korca, which is in the Southeast, in a public meeting...

Q: A good Albanian...you were understood, in other words.

RYERSON: No, I wasn't understood, I was using an interpreter. And I was asked why I had done this, and this and that, and I said, well I knew I would be receiving Albanian hospitality, and I thought I was dealing with an Albanian and obviously I was wrong. As it turned out, he was not operating in the Albanian tradition. And I added "...as for the Communists, I wish them a long life, good health", and you could see jaws dropping in the audience...

Q: Somewhere else! (laugh)

RYERSON: "And unemployment after the March elections." (laugh)

Q: Oh, beautiful! (laughs)

RYERSON: This got the party very angry, they issued a declaration saying they were sure this was Ryerson's personal view.

Q: And ask Mr. Yeltsin, he has similar views!

RYERSON: Well, they are really stupid; they planted this declaration and my quote on the front page of the party rag, so it went all over the country! And, at my next public meeting I thanked them for printing it publicly. That didn't get reported, as you can imagine.

Q: They're learning! (laughs) And you shared this I'm sure with others, perhaps with our ambassador to Kuwait, who is accused of the same thing! Of speaking out in favor of democracy (laughs) in a country we just made more democratic, supposedly.

RYERSON: Yes, well.

Q: The thing is, this was appreciated I'm sure, ultimately. It was understood.

RYERSON: I'm sure it was, yes. And working as we did to promote political pluralism there, has also given us an impressive degree of access to the current leadership. It's an access which we take care not to abuse. But it is a very friendly open access. I'm back here, as 13 you know, because the Albanian president came to see President Bush, and I wanted to go along!

ANGOLA

CHRISTOPHER MCMULLEN
U.S. Ambassador
Angola
Luanda, Angola
(2010-2013)

Mr. Carner was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania and was raised in Newtown Square. He received his Bachelor's and Master's in Modern European History from West Chester University. He pursued his PhD at Georgetown University and received a Master's in National Security Strategy from the National War College. He worked as a special assistant at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, an adjunct professor at Georgetown University, a senior analyst for the Defense Intelligence Agency, and a foreign affairs fellow for the American Political Science Association before entering the foreign service. He served mainly as a political officer in Nicaragua, Malaysia, El Salvador, Tanzania, Columbia, Panama, Brazil, and Angola and worked for the State Department in Washington D.C. Ambassador Christopher McMullen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2019.

Topical Focus - Angolan Struggles Due to Civil War

MCMULLEN: Angola was further hampered by a dearth of human capital. This was one of the many unfortunate consequences of the country's 41 years of war, which began in 1961 with its struggle for independence and lasted until the end of its brutal civil war in 2002. The bureaucracy also suffered from Angola's system of political patronage; many key jobs were filled by people whose only qualification was their personal ties to a powerful player in the ruling party. I found that Angolan officials often used excessive protocol to mask widespread incompetence in the bureaucracy. On top of this, Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos exercised control over the smallest details of government, which often produced paralysis in decision making.

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MCMULLEN: I arrived in Angola in mid-November 2010, and left there in mid-June 2013. As you suggested, we have an interesting and complicated history with Angola, and it continues to influence our bilateral relations to this day.

In terms of context, Angola fought a war of independence for 14 years and gained its independence from Portugal in 1975. After a coup that ousted long-time strongman Salazar, the Portuguese wanted to get out of Angola as well as their other African colonies. And they didn't want to get bogged down with the knotty question of who was going to run these newly independent countries. As a consequence, Angola plunged into a devastating civil war that lasted 27 years. Initially there were three competing factions:

the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), led largely by members of the Mbundu tribe from the coastal area near Luanda, the capital; the FNLA (National Liberation Front of Angola), led mostly by the Bakongo, an ethnic group based in northern Angola; and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), dominated by the Ovimbundu tribe based in central Angola.

Angola soon got caught up in the Cold War rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The Soviets and Cubans backed the MPLA, led by Agostinho Neto, while we initially backed the FNLA, led by Holden Roberto. However, when the FNLA's prospects flagged, we switched our support to the more militarily capable UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi. He became one of the socalled freedom fighters that formed the core of the Reagan administration's surrogate forces fighting against Soviet surrogates in Angola, Afghanistan and Nicaragua. Our support for UNITA ended around 1988, when we helped broker an agreement that led to the withdrawal of Cuban forces backing Angola's MPLA-led government. As part of the agreement, South African troops that were assisting UNITA forces also withdrew from Angola. The civil war finally ended in 2002, when Angolan troops hunted down and killed Savimbi, marking the decisive defeat of UNITA as an insurgent military force.

Even though we severed our ties to Savimbi's rebel forces well before Angola's first multiparty elections in 1992, our earlier support for UNITA left a lasting legacy that we still have not overcome completely, at least with the current generation of Angolan leaders. Since establishing diplomatic relations with Angola in 1993, we have had our ups and downs, with some of the down periods complicated by continued Angolan distrust of the U.S. I suspect that we are unlikely to shed our historical baggage until a new generation comes to power in Angola.

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Q: What was Washington's attitude towards the Angolan government? I mean, after the long history of bad blood in our relations over the years…

MCMULLEN: I would say there were mixed feelings in Washington about Angola. When I did my initial consultations with other government agencies, I was struck by the wide divergence of views among U.S. officials. Some had a generally positive view of Angola, while others were quite negative. It seemed like this divergence of views was based on the personal experiences of these U.S. officials in dealing with the Angolan government.

President dos Santos had been in power since 1979, so there was understandable concern about his autocratic rule among some members of Congress. Senator Russell Feingold, chair of the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs was one of the more prominent critics of Angola, although he wasn't strident in his criticism. Plus, he recognized the importance of Angola for U.S. interests in Africa. There were other members of Congress who also understood Angola's strategic importance, even if they didn't particularly like the government.

Prior to my Senate confirmation hearing, I met with Senator Johnny Isakson, a Republican from Georgia, and Senator James Inhofe, a Republican from Oklahoma, both of whom expressed support for improved relations with Angola. I think there were ambivalent feelings about Angola among many other members of Congress. They were aware of the country's questionable record on democracy and human rights issues, but they didn't treat Angola as a pariah as they tended to do with Zimbabwe. My sense was that many members of Congress recognized that Angola had suffered a devastating civil war and were willing to give the government some space to hopefully move in a more democratic direction.

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MCMULLEN: The visits helped us get beyond some of the frictions of my early months in Angola, although strains reemerged in the run-up to Angola's elections in August 2012. I was traveling quite a bit throughout the country as the elections approached, meeting with civic and political organizations, including opposition parties and the ruling MPLA party. My meetings with civil society leaders and opposition parties did not go down well with the government. On the eve of elections, the deputy foreign minister summoned me to complain about these meetings. He said the office of the presidency was upset over my activities. I told him, "I'm doing what every American ambassador does in other countries around the world. We travel throughout the country, we talk to the opposition, we talk to the ruling party, we talk to NGOs, we talk to the press, and we report back to Washington our views of the situation."

I pointed out to the deputy foreign minister that Angola's ambassador in Washington was free to meet with whomever he wanted—Democrats, Republicans, civil society leaders. I said, "That's the way we operate." Of course, as I knew, that's not the way Angola operates. The Angolan government prefers the way the Chinese, Russians and other autocratic governments operate. Their ambassadors stay in the capital of Luanda and meet exclusively with government officials or members of the ruling MPLA party. They don't travel much outside of Luanda and they certainly don't meet with opposition leaders or social activists.

JOSEPH G. SULLIVAN
U.S. Ambassador
Angola
Luanda, Angola
(1998-2001)

Mr. Carner was born and raised in New York City. He attended the City College of New York before enlisting in the U.S. Army. He entered the foreign service in 1955 and has worked as a consular officer in France, a labor attache in Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Zaire, the U.S. Ambassador to Senegal, and in numerous positions within the State

Department, specifically in regards to African affairs. Joseph G. Sullivan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Topical Focus - Angolan Independence Conflicts

SULLIVAN: It would have been by that point '75; I would have finished on the Costa Rica desk in about February or March of '75 and would have gone for eight weeks of training in Portuguese. So it was the critical time in that the Portuguese revolution had happened in April of '74. There was already internal conflict within Angola, a lot of fighting and the turnover to independence set for November 11 of '75. So in the lead up to that, certainly my wife began to have great concerns for our then two children and at that point, as I recall, the Department didn't even have a separate maintenance allowance policy. We had a second young child who had just been born and what was that going to be like going out there with two young children. So at a certain point in that process I expressed concerns and they said it didn't make sense for me to go so that assignment was cancelled and soon thereafter, Luanda was closed. At the same time, Frank Carlucci was staffing up Lisbon and he or somebody on his behalf asked if I would like to go to Lisbon.

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Q: And really didn't know what the hell they were doing, I mean they got into it. But then the Stalinist types who had been hanging around and they really were Stalinists, came out of the woodwork didn't they?

SULLIVAN: Yes, there were some military who were influenced by Communists and communists had major influence in several provisional governments over a period of probably about eight months in 1975 before that began to be rolled back. Political types were by the time I got there somewhat more positive. There had already been constituent assembly elections in April 1975 and democratic parties had won about 75 percent in that election. We were fairly confident that the next round of elections for the legislative assembly would be held in April of 1976 and that democratic parties would do well again. So the thinking was that things were headed in the right direction, if they could maintain the track of elections determining the outcome rather than the rule of the street or the barrel of a gun. The Portuguese looked to us, the United States, as a means of support, moral as well as economic and political. They didn't hesitate to ask for other support but for the most part were interested in moral and political support.

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SULLIVAN: But I would say that the problem of denying unpleasant reality became increasingly problematic at the time I went out there. I recall my first meeting with the Angolan President in mid-November to present my credentials. As always in those sessions you listen a lot, but then sought to convey our message that the Angolan Government should not initiate military action. While he was a restrained man, President dos Santos was angry at the United Nations, angry at the guarantors of the peace

agreement, including the US. In his view, based on evidence that he thought he had, UNITA had already rearmed and was preparing to go back to war and the guarantors had not provided effective prevention to prevent UNITA from doing this. Now I should say that the United States and others did support an increasing range of UN sanctions on UNITA over the previous year because of well-founded suspicion that UNITA was not complying with the peace agreement. But these sanctions were not effective because the arms dealers UNITA was dealing with were prepared to act outside international law and deliver arms behind the lines, and UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi was very careful and clever about how he rearmed.

Q: Now who was the president and what type of government and what was your evaluation of its control and effectiveness? SULLIVAN: Well the government has been since independence a government of the MPLA, a once Marxist Party, initially supported by the Soviet Union. As I recall, that was the origin of the conflict at the time when the United States supported the opposition to the MPLA after the Portuguese walked away from Angola in 1974. There were several phases of the war, including several in which we actually supported UNITA several years, covertly. So it was a complex situation and one in which our own historical baggage was considerable. I'm sure that within the Angolan government there were many who, if anything went bad, suspected that the United States was returning to prior policies of seeking their overthrow by supporting Savimbi again, even though the US had renounced that option way back in the Bush I administration in '90 or '91. But the Angolan government was ineffective and corruption was rampant. That notwithstanding, the government had a reasonably effective armed force; kept the coastal areas largely free of conflict and kept the considerable oil production flowing, of which Chevron had a very large share and other American oil companies, particularly EXXON also had a piece as well as French and British oil companies. So Angola was a large and growing oil producer at that point. The Angolan government as well had shown on several occasions that, notwithstanding military challenges, it was always able to arm and train its forces and defeat the periodic challenges that the UNITA rebel forces posed.

Q: Well now did UNITA and other rebel forces was there any other sort of lurking power behind them or was this a self-generated opposition?

SULLIVAN: Well certainly in the past there had been other forces, initially including China under Mao and later the United States and also apartheid South Africa behind UNITA. By the late '90s, the Angolans suspected that now post-apartheid South Africa was taking a benevolent, if not supportive, posture toward UNITA. Post-apartheid South Africa had a not very positive relationship with the Angolan government particularly once Mbeki assumed the South African presidency in 1999. So there was at least some complicity on the part of other African governments. I think most of the East European involvement was at that point for reasons of profit rather than choosing sides. Whether it was the government that actually made the money or the armed forces that controlled the weapons that made the money probably varied. There did not appear to be any particular preference for UNITA in Europe, but individuals and governments certainly benefited

financially from arms sold to UNITA, and in the case of several countries later to the Angolan government as well.

Q: The president of Angola is who now?

SULLIVAN: Jose Eduardo dos Santos and he actually has been president since 1979. He did have one election in 1992 as the outcome of a peace agreement reached. In that election, in a reasonably fair, internationally monitored election, he beat Savimbi in the presidential contest. At that point Savimbi rejected the results and basically went back to a war that took another two years to reach another peace agreement, the last peace agreement, the Lusaka Peace Agreement, of 1994 that was breaking down, as I arrived.

ARMENIA

LOUIS F. LICHT III
Deputy Chief of Mission
Yerevan, Armenia
(1996-1998)

Mr. Licht was born in Maine and raised in New York. Educated at Yale University and the Fletcher School, he served in the US Army in Vietnam and joined the State Department in 1974. Mr. Licht served in Washington, dealing with Latin American Affairs as well as Arms Control and Nuclear matters. His foreign posts were Santo Domingo, Lima, Canberra, Yerevan and Chisinau (Moldova). Mr. Licht was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Topical Focus - Observing Armenian Elections

Q: How was the government of Armenia, at this point?

LICHT: It was a democratic government, but the elections, of which there were three when I was there, were not fairly conducted. The OSCE...

Q: One of our colleagues was an OSCE observer there. I had been with him in Bosnia, and I asked him how it went. He said, "Well, they're a bunch of thugs, and it wasn't very helpful."

LICHT: The first year I was there, when they had a presidential election, it was later acknowledged by them that it was stolen. Baaz Manukian, who was the opposition to Ter-Petrossian, who was the president, shortly after the election, when it was clear that it wasn't being fairly counted, there was a huge demonstration. The embassy was just a little bit down the street from the parliament. The crowd assembled in front of the parliament gate and therefore in front of the embassy, too, as they marched. They weren't angry at us. They broke down the gates of parliament, went in and attacked the speaker, who was upstairs, and three other people, who landed in the hospital. We were in the embassy and as all of this is occurring, all of a sudden, shots were fired.

So, we did the normal thing. We were buttoning up the embassy, and all these people were out front. It was a reasonably exciting night. As this was happening, we were getting calls from the government, saying, "They are at the gate. It looks like they are

breaking down the gate." At that time, the U.S. had not made a statement about the election, not even welcoming the results. One of the things the government wanted us to do was to make such a statement. Eventually, we made a statement that didn't congratulate Levon TerPetrossian that we would work with him, and was satisfactory enough, but we did deplore the violence that occurred. So, that was the reason then.

We had observers out, during the election, of course, and that was pretty exciting. We had an excellent political officer named Susan Thorton, who was in one of the elections in the district, watching the elections when at something like 1:00, the lights went out and a bunch of thugs came in and stole the ballot box. Someone said later they could not have picked a worse place, because one of the most respected observers was right there to see it happen. At that point, the Petrossian government was never very close to the American embassy. When he wanted help, he called us, but otherwise, he pretty much ignored us. Our enthusiasm for him was not terribly high either, after all this occurred, but we did try to work with him.

Q: Well, what happened when Armenian-Americans would come and ask you about the election, what would you say?

LICHT: The fellow I mentioned to you before, where the Americans heard something said about the government that wasn't quite favorable, it would get back to the government. It was instant. You could put your finger on it. It was an instant in which an officer said, "Well, maybe we will never know if Ter-Petrossian was legitimately elected. That's the phrase that got back to the government, and apparently to the president. Quickly, the chargé was called in, and we had to quickly say something. Our answer was that we do not doubt that Ter Petrossian shoulders the responsibility of the president.

Q: So, our basic policy was, I guess, to try to foster development there, and to keep them from getting too close to the Iranians?

LICHT: And also to try to make sure they don't fall completely into becoming a pawn to Russian politics. The importance of keeping the area peaceful had a lot to do with the Caspian oil we had an interest in accessing.

Q: Was our embassy trying to do anything with the whole Azerbaijan conflict?

LICHT: We worked with the OSCE in something called the Minsk Group to help the mediation process. The Minsk Group had three mediators, one from France, one from Russia, and one from the United States. There is still an office in the Department which is involved in this process, run by a fellow who was so important in Cyprus. But, we still

have a negotiator of ambassadorial rank. So, the Minsk Group would check in with the OSCE. The members, the negotiators in the three countries would come through Armenia, go to Azerbaijan, go to Russia, and go other places, to try to come up with a solution. They would come to town, and it was pretty interesting, because we had to read them in, we would deal with the Russian embassies, the French embassy, and we would make the arrangements for these people to come. We would cooperate on how they would meet, and we would exchange information, to the extent we could, and work with them to help them fix things. That's one of the nice things, sometimes it happens in diplomacy. But, it was very hard to make progress. The people in Nagorno-Karabakh had their own government, and they had to be involved as well. Our negotiators would go up to Nagorno-Karabakh, but we who were accredited to Armenia would not go up to Nagorno-Karabakh.

Q: At this point, Nagorno-Karabakh was basically under Armenia control?

LICHT: That's right.

Q: Did you find that you all, at your embassy, were cooperating with our embassy in Baku, or not?

LICHT: Yes, we were. I personally never got to Baku. That is one of the things I'm sorry about. Where you sit and where you stand has something to do with your outlook, of course, but I thought the cooperation between the embassies was pretty good. We also cooperated with the embassy in Georgia. When the negotiators would go from here to there, or from there to here, depending on the schedule at that time, so we maintained contact and we exchanged information, as you would expect. I think they knew the relationships with the ambassadors were good, and the rest of us seemed to work pretty well with them. We might have had clientitis somewhere along the line, but I think it overshadowed the U.S. effort to play a fair mediation role.

Q: Well, now, was official Armenia at that time, nurturing the narrative about the World War I massacre of Armenians, in Turkey, or not? Do they have other fish to fry, at this point?

LICHT: No. It's still on the agenda. Armenia is still awaiting an apology, and still awaiting recognition of the historical facts, that it was a genocide. It will be a long time before it goes away. It's part of national lore now. It is hard to deal with. But they would establish relations with Turkey, if Turkey would establish relations with them despite this. Nevertheless, it is definitely alive.

Q: How about with Georgia? Georgia had this almost subliminal civil war going on. Was that still going on?

LICHT: Yes, it was still going on. It didn't spill over into Armenia so much, but yes. The relationship with Georgia was pretty good. There were Armenians on the southern part of Georgia, which was a potential area of difficulty. It flared up. They had good reason to maintain good relations with Georgia.

One of the things Ambassador (Michael) Lemon [Ambassador from September 1998 to October 2001] was working on and Ambassador Tomsen started working on was establishing better routes between Georgia and Armenia with the notion that eventually Azerbaijan could also be tied in. It could be a region, and as a region, it could be reasonably powerful, economically. Now, as a fragmented region, it's not economically integrated.

Q: There must still be troops in Armenia.

LICHT: There are Soviet troops in Armenia.

Q: What are they doing?

LICHT: They are guarding the border. In fact, many of the Soviet troops are Armenians who are in the Russian army. The Russian army is not necessarily well paid or well maintained, but they are there.

Q: Was there any feeling of threat from Turkey, from our perspective?

LICHT: From our perspective, there wasn't. From their perspective, there always will be, I guess.

Q: Were there cross-border raids, or anything?

LICHT: There was a threat. If you were Armenian, you would feel a threat, because the Turk and the Azer-Arabs cooperated closely, so if there were a conflict again in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenians would have to be looking toward their back. I think, probably, it is fair to say that if you were an Armenian diplomat, you would say, "We just have to do it."

Q: At one point, we had this Armenian liberation army, which was sort of a terrorist group, going around killing Turks. Where were any assassinations during the time you were there?

LICHT: The sting seems to have been taken out of that liberation army group. The good Dashnak versus the bad Dashnak. The Turks are still mad about that. The Armenians are still not apologetic about it, but it wasn't as important an issue...No assassinations of Turks, no. A couple Armenians bumped each other off.

Q: In '98, how did you feel for Armenia? Did it seem to be developing along positive lines?

LICHT: Well, eventually Ter-Petrossian was forced to resign before the next election [March 1998]. Robert Kocharyan, who had been made prime minister [1997-98] by Ter Petrossian ran for election. Kocharyan had been the president of Nagorno-Karabakh, so when he was appointed prime minister, it was quite a spectacular event, and when he finally became president, it was almost like the war party had taken over. Yet, from what I could tell, he made an effort to push the negotiations along, but of course, he was replaced by somebody who was just as adamant as he was when he was in Nagorno-Karabakh. Do you remember the massacre in the parliament just recently [October 1999]?

Q: Yes.

LICHT: The way this played out, I think you had to kind of backtrack, as far as peace negotiations were concerned. When I left, I wished Armenia well, but thinking that it had an immense number of very talented people, and that Armenia will probably always take care of itself. It was moving slowly, slowly toward a market economy, slowly perhaps toward democratic government, but real democracy had quite a ways to go there. It would always have, in some way, to look outside itself. A number of people who had traveled to California and back was immense, and that money had come to be very helpful. I guess the collapse of the Russian rule dealt Armenia a blow, too. They were getting remittances from us, from them. Slowly, slowly, Armenia, I hope, will get there.

CRAIG DUNKERLEY
Deputy Chief of Mission
US Delegation to CSCE
(1992-1995)

Craig Dunkerley attended Amherst College and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He entered the foreign service in 11970 and was posted to Vietnam in the consular office in 1971. He worked in various desks in the office in Washington DC before he was a representative of the United States on a mission to NATO in 1987 and on the US delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1992. Craig Dunkerley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus - United States Observing Armenian Elections to promote Democracy through the CSCE

Q: While you were there, were we sending these observer missions to the Baltic States?

DUNKERLEY: We had multinational missions to assist the governments in Estonia and Latvia. We also had one in Ukraine dealing with national minority problems in the Crimea.

In the former Soviet Union, we had a CSCE mission in Georgia seeking to deal with separatist problems there and then a similar one in Moldova. We had a standing brief known as the Minsk Process seeking to reinforce a fragile ceasefire in a conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia arising out of Nagorno-Karabakh's military effort to break away from the former. Further to the east, we had a CSCE mission in Tajikistan.

In the Balkans, we had for a time – until they were kicked out by the Serb government-- a monitoring presence in troubled areas such as Kosovo, Sandžak and Voivodina where there were significant ethnic tensions. CSCE also had a presence in the former Yugoslav province of Macedonia and in Albania, eventually Croatia and certainly in Bosnia.

Q: Was the CSCE running these posts? Was your organization running them?

DUNKERLEY: These were multinational teams launched by decisions of the participating states and operating under the authority of CSCE (or OSCE as it became), and they reported back to the CSCE as a whole in Vienna. One of the institutional developments during this period of the early 90's were the ever-increasing number of meetings for consultation and, when needed, action on these missions – what became, in fact before in title, a permanent council in Vienna where all of the countries were represented. Its discussions and decisions provided the basic authority and operating mandate for each of these operations.

In the day to day business of supporting such missions and managing the growing agenda of the CSCE, the practice developed of assigning increasing independence and authority

to the CSCE's "Chairman in Office." The formal Chairman in Office or CIO was the foreign minister of a country that would be selected by consensus on a rotating annual basis. At the start, this would usually turn out to be one of the neutrals or smaller countries. The CIO in turn would assign a very senior and experienced diplomat to serve as a standing representative of the chair in leading the Vienna deliberations.
This was, as course, very different from the UN practice where, for example, you have a Secretary General who has a lead on various efforts and is essentially the public face of the organization. In CSCE, by contrast, that role is largely that of the CIO – while the post of CSCE Secretary General subsequently came to be established largely as a chief administrative officer or operating officer in support of the CIO.

This practice of the Chairman in Office had, by the way, the useful effect of providing an early opportunity for a number of the East European and newly independent states to showcase their effectiveness and credibility on the international scene. This was at a time in the early 90's when the whole issue of their prospects for eventual accession to both NATO and the EU was still up in the air. So, for instance, it became very important for the Hungarians – who assumed the OSCE chairmanship in 1994-95 and were still viewed with a certain amount of suspicion by neighbors like the Romanians (given past history over Transylvania) – to be able to demonstrate this role of leading the CSCE in an especially balanced and effective manner.

The Chairman in Office and the Chair's representative in Vienna came to serve as a primary interlocutor for the U.S. To ensure continuity and effectiveness, a useful practice grew up in which the incumbent Chairman in Office would rely on his or her immediate predecessor and successor national counterparts to form a sort of de facto troika. In Vienna they would enjoy frequent consultation with a small informal group consisting of the U.S Delegation head. the head of the EU caucus, their Russian counterpart and those states with a special stake in whatever particular issue under discussion. These actors would consult on an almost daily basis in Vienna.

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Q: What about Armenia versus Azerbaijan? Was there a problem with the Armenian international community particularly because they have a strong lobby in the United States?

DUNKERLEY: Diaspora support was to a certain degree a factor as Nagorno Karabakh separatist aspirations emerged in the late 1980's-early 1990s. But there have been many problems involved in that conflict and a number still continue. At various points over the years, we – that is to say, international negotiators – got close to agreement on certain

points among the parties to the conflict, but were never able to get them the full way to a durable resolution. In my time in Vienna in the early 90's, two major inhibitions to progress seemed to have been: first, we had not yet reached a point where both sides were sufficiently convinced their gains could not be achieved or sustained through unilateral action – at certain moments one or the other side still thought, 'ah if we only do x or y we can win; we can hold out long enough.' They may have reached more of a state of mutual exhaustion later on when tough political decisions might begin to be envisaged, but during this early period they continued their focus on taking, holding or retaking disputed territory.

The other problem at that early stage seemed to be the Russian role. Nagorno Karabakh posed a set of issues perceived by the Russians as very much within their purview. For the first year or two, there was jockeying and elbowing between the Russian negotiators and the international negotiation effort through the CSCE (known as the "Minsk Process"). Of course in such a situation, the local parties concerned were delighted to forum shop and play each effort off the other. That was subsequently eased by a more formal merger of the Russian and OSCE negotiating efforts – by and large a recognition of reality that neither effort had much chance of succeeding without the other.

ASIA

AMBASSADOR WINSTON LORD
Assistant Secretary of East Asian Affairs
Asia
(1993-1997)

Ambassador Lord was born in New York City on August 14, 1937. Lord received his B.A. in English from Yale University, and completed his M.A. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He worked at the National Security Council on a multitude of assignments from 1969 to 1974. Lord was an Ambassador to China from 1985 to 1989 before becoming the State Department Assistant Secretary. Ambassador Winston Lord was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker on April 28, 1998.

Topical Focus - Asian Values Debate and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Policy

LORD: Finally, let's move on to the whole question of democracy and human rights, and the related so-called Asian values. I hate to keep referring to my confirmation statement but I knew that matters of this kind were going to be a part of the intellectual and political debate during my projected four years as Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, or however long my tenure in office was going to be. So I paid considerable attention to issues of that kind. I made promoting democracy and human rights the tenth of my goals, although this did not mean that this issue was the tenth most important. Indeed, in a way, it summarized the intellectual challenge. I couldn't put it first, but putting it in tenth place gave it more visibility than making it fifth or sixth, and it cut across all the other nine issues.

Promoting human rights and democracy amounted to a mixed bag in Asia. There were a lot of established democracies of different types in the region, or what we would call democracies. Among these are Japan, which, of course, is essentially a one-party democracy. In South Korea they have made considerable progress in making more sense of their political system; South Korea had become a democracy, with elections, by the time we entered office. Taiwan is making its democracy take root, making clear that Chinese care about freedom. The Philippines and Thailand are democracies. Mongolia is struggling to become a full-fledged democracy. In Asia and around the world, people have struggled and even risked their lives to vote, whether in Cambodia, where almost 90 percent of the people voted, crossing minefields and facing massive intimidation, or in Mongolia, traveling for miles and miles on horseback in order to vote. All of this, in my

mind, proves that democracy is one of the universal aspirations of mankind and that it isn't just a Western concern. The people time and again showed that it was important in their view.

The field of human rights is not the same thing as democracy but closely related to it. Human rights are most respected and protected in democratic systems. I have discussed at length how we handled these issues with China. With Vietnam, as in the case of China, we had a formal dialogue and raised some specific issues as well as the general matter of human rights, including the release of some prisoners. Burma's repression was a key problem. In Indonesia, there were human rights problems, particularly in East Timor. These were some of the major human rights problems. I have just placed each of them in their own context elsewhere in my interview.

In promoting human rights and democracy, I often took on the so-called "Asian values" question, which I tried to include in some of my speeches. I said that we would promote democratic values without arrogance, but also without apology. By saying "without arrogance" I meant that we had to be careful not to be self-righteous and not to display a kind of missionary zeal. That is, other people didn't have to be like us, because they had national histories and cultures that were different. We had to avoid making this the only issue in our bilateral relations, when with these countries we had many security, economic, political, and other interests to deal with. We had to avoid looking as if were we being overbearing on this issue, hurting other interests by looking arrogant or overly zealous. Sometimes we needed to avoid complicating our efforts by being too public and expressing our views in a way which was too much in other people's faces, as it were. This could make it mighty difficult for them to move, even if they wanted to do so. So we tried to avoid arrogance.

However, on the other hand, we also avoided making apologies, in the sense that we made it clear that we stood for certain things in this country. Americans have always had the view that their foreign policy has some idealistic, as well as some practical realpolitik elements. To maintain support for our foreign policies in Congress and among the American people, we had to express some of these values in our relationships. So this was important in our foreign policy generally, as long as we didn't promote them in an arrogant way. We would do this without apology.

Also, in terms of tone, we tried to promote our democracy and human rights in terms of other nations' self-interests, as opposed to just appealing to human goodness and universal aspirations. For example, in my speeches I continually made the case that, in an age of globalization, of computers, fax machines, cellular phones, satellites, and the Internet, a country cannot develop its economy, certainly over a period of time, without

opening up its society. You need to have pluralism, openness, and freedom of information if you want to compete in today's world. This is just a matter of objective reality and of self-interest. Maybe, if a country has a small economy, like Singapore's, which has the rule of law but still isn't a full democracy, you can get away with some undemocratic behavior for a while. Maybe, as in the case of China, you can have a mixed bag with economic reform and political repression and, for a while, make progress. But this cannot last long.

Over time, open societies are clearly necessary for development purposes. For example, you cannot attract investment, which you need to develop, if there is not transparency, the rule of law, the rule of contracts and honoring contracts, which are elements of democracy. For example, you cannot attack corruption, which is so much of a problem in so many countries, including those countries which have an emerging free market system, unless you have a free press to attack corruption and ventilate these problems. You cannot move forward on difficult reforms where there is going to be disagreement about the proper role of the state, without some free dissent and debate, with different viewpoints freely expressed. You cannot have what can be painful transitions where you have at least temporary unemployment or other problems of adjustment in a global economy, without some political safety valves through which people can express dissent peacefully. If they can't express such dissent peacefully, then the only way that they can do so is to take to the streets. I think that that's going to be a problem in China, which has huge problems of unemployment, exacerbated by widespread corruption. If the Chinese Government doesn't give people the chance to express themselves peacefully, there will be more ominous demonstrations of discontent, especially when it gets into the WTO.

We tried to lay out this self interest line and to say that it was in the interest of the Asian countries to loosen up and be more pluralistic and more open. We said that you don't have to attempt to implement Jeffersonian, American democracy. We said that elections aren't the only yardstick of a free society, although elections are important to hold governments accountable because if they make mistakes, there can be peaceful change and some other government can enter power, as happened in Korea and Thailand. In contrast, the previous government of Indonesia was overthrown because Indonesia didn't have a democracy.

So, as I say, we tried to stress the self-interest aspect as well as specific components like the rule of law, free press, etc.

Furthermore, I believed strongly in another reason to promote freedom which we stressed to American audiences. I often raised this with my old boss, Henry Kissinger and others, who were less enthusiastic about how important democracy should be. The fact is that

democracy and open societies serve our hard-headed national security interest. I read this in a book - I don't know how a person can judge this, but it's stated in this book that there have been roughly 350 wars fought since 1819 and none of them has been between two established democracies. Whether or not this is absolutely accurate, the fact is that people cannot come up with examples where two democracies have fought each other.

BANGLADESH

WILLIAM B. MILAM
U.S. Ambassador
Bangladesh
(1990-1993)

Ambassador Milam was born in Bisbee, Arizona on July 24, 1936, but he grew up in Sacramento, California. He received his A.B. from Stanford University and an M.A. in economics from the University of Michigan. His overseas postings include France, Liberia, United Kingdom, Cameroon, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Ambassador William B. Milam was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – Political, Security, and Religious Issues Emerging From Elections in Bangladesh

Q: And he was considered a neutral figure?

MILAM: Yeah. He [Hussain Muhammad Ershad] was a very good man. I got to know him a little bit just after I arrived. This is one of those fortuitous, serendipitous things. We had sent him on an exchange program to the United States. He had been here for two or three months, visited the Supreme Court and other courts and around the country. His English wasn't the greatest, but he was a great man. He was very appreciative of the Americans. We paid his expenses for this trip. But of course, in the usual government style, we sent him a check afterwards for extra expenses. I delivered the check soon after I arrived at post. Wasn't that lucky?

Q: Yes.

MILAM: So I got to know him that way. Then he became acting president, and I swear, I have had very good relations with a lot of presidents over the years, but I think he is the only president I have ever been able to call directly on the telephone and get through immediately. Ershad was arrested a few days later, and with his wife, thrown in jail. There were some things that I didn't approve of. Moudud Ahmed, the vice president who resigned, had to go into hiding. After he went into hiding, his wife and child were in their house when it was invaded by Awami League Goons. They had to take shelter in a shed out back and hide, then they crawl over a wall into their neighbor's house. Their neighbor happened to be an AID officer. He called me the next morning and said he had Moudud's wife and child in his house. I got a van from the Embassy motor pool, put newspaper

over the windows, went over to this AID officer's house, and took her and the child to her cousin's house. They were safe and never got harmed. Anyway, the election campaigning started very soon thereafter for an election which was held in February. This was the second part of the oppositions two- point program-- the election. The interim government was there to make sure it was free and fair, and it was. There were a lot of foreign observers including our NDI.

Q: National democratic Institute.

MILAM: And in February the election was held. Everybody expected the Awami League to win big, including the Awami League. Strangely enough, the BNOP won a plurality of the seats. It only won the popular vote by a slim margin, a percentage or two. But Bangladesh copied the British and has a first past the post system, and the way that works is that even as slim popular majority if it widespread can give a party more seats that the percentages of popular vote would indicate. So the BNP had more seats, but not a majority that would allow it to form a government. It had to figure out a way to get a majority. There were 30 seats that were reserved for women and appointed not elected. So it agreed with Jamaat-i-Islami, the major Islamic party to elect 28 BNP women and two Jamaati women. So that gave them with 30 seats and made a majority in the parliament. Now the interesting thing then was they had to decide whether they wanted a parliamentary or a presidential system. BNP had a majority but it didn't have enough seats to pass a constitutional amendment. So it needed the Awami League for a constitutional amendment if they wanted to change the system to Parliamentary. Because they had only received a razor thin margin of the popular vote, they realized that if they went to a presidential election they might lose it. Begum Zia would be the presidential candidate, but she might lose the presidential election. In which case all these lucrative sugar plums called cabinet posts would not be theirs. They would go to the other party. Well, just a minute here. Let's get our priorities straight. So they started thinking about this, and concluded that with a majority in parliament, they would be better off with a Parliamentary system. So driven by something that you wouldn't call principle, they formed a parliamentary committee and worked out a political compromise which probably was the first and last time it has ever been done in Bangladesh. They actually agreed on a constitutional amendment that called for a parliamentary system. One of the provisions she wanted in the parliamentary compromise was the right for the Prime 68 Minister to appoint to at least 10% of the cabinet openings technical experts who were not who were not elected to parliament. She wanted this because her favorite advisor who had been finance minister under her husband, had not been able to carry his district in Sylhet but she wanted him in her cabinet. Thank God she did, because he was the best thing that ever happened to that government. So she got that provision in the

constitutional amendment. This all took four or five or six months, during which nothing got done of any substance by the government.

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Q: Was Islam much of a factor while you were there?

MILAM: No, not very much. It is a much bigger factor now. Bangladeshis are not Pakistanis, so for Bangladesh this increasing piety and Islamic self-aggrandizement is coming much later, but it is coming . This probably explains what happened to the two halves of Pakistan when it was a united country. Bengali Muslims were a much more tolerant culture, certainly in terms of religious inclusivity. That may not be because of the 73 cultures per se, because in fact in other ways, e.g. politically, they are not very tolerant. That is what leads to all the friction and strife in Bangladesh, and the problems they have in governing in a democratic system in which they are now because they don't tolerate the other person's point of view very well, so there are still enormous amounts of friction and strife. We can get into that later if you like. But religiously they were pretty tolerant in my day. I think this probably comes more from the kind of Islam that came to Bangladesh. Their Islam was brought by Sufis. The Sufis are a more mystical, more tolerant, and more syncretic kind of Islam. Among other things, Sufism in Bangladesh incorporated the local customs, including shrines to Saints, and local habits including reverence for "Pirs," religious leaders who stand between the ordinary worshiper and God. This was almost feudal in its characteristics, but it is a religious feudalism, in which the Pirs' sway over a large number of people derives from his being an intermediary between the common man and God. The Sufis were also prominent in what is now Pakistan, but their influence has been overwhelmed by a harder edged, less inclusive branch of Islam. So Islam never was not a factor in Bangladesh when I was there, and did not complicate our work very much. But there were plenty of other factors that made for a shaky situation. The main problem then and now was the political culture. The main idea of so-called democratic politics in Bangladesh is, if you lose an election, you look for the first opportunity to go into the streets and unseat the government with street demonstrations. It is a zero sum culture writ large. Nobody ever thought of trying to unseat the government with better policies. That just doesn't occur to Bangladeshi politicians. So in any case Islam was never a problem. There is a historical problem that was not very visible when I was there: during the war of separation some of the Islamic religious parties did not support the idea of an independent Bangladesh. The main one, the Jamaat-i-Islam, a fundamentalist, but not known as an extremist, party is alleged to have had offshoot groups of assassins who murdered many Bengalis in the proindependence movement. After the war, the JI was cast into the political darkness for quite some time. It came back in the late 70's and 80's the military rulers of that time

sought legitimacy by bonding with the Islamists. They made political alliances with Islamist parties. That was true of Ziaur Rahman and Ershad. It was true of Begum Zia, as I mentioned, when she became prime minister in 1991. Sheik Hasina has sought such alliances when she judged the political situation called for it. In the context of Pakistan, I have labeled these alliances with Islamists "Faustian Bargains," in other words, deals with the devil. I am sure the Islamist parties would resent this label, but in fact these bargains have actually strengthened the Islamist parties, made them more respectable, acceptable. Given the general tenor of the times we are in, I think Islam is becoming much more of a political factor in Bangladesh than it was simply because Islamism has become more attractive to many Muslims, whether radical or not, all over the Islamic world, and certainly more anti American. But it was not a factor then, and I hardly remember thinking about it.

Q: Well what about were relations with Pakistan, were they important or had their thousand mile separation and all, and also your connection to the embassy in what was it, Rawalpindi?

MILAM: No, Islamabad.

Q: This used to be one of the great stories of the Foreign Service between our consulate general in Dacca and our embassy in West Pakistan. How were things at that time?

MILAM: Of course relations with Pakistan were warmer with a BNP or Ershad government than under an Awami League one. Now I have never been in Bangladesh under an Awami League government. I am just going on things I know from reading. All the time that I was there, the relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh were correct without being warm, cooperative, but neither side has much to offer the other. If anything, the Bengalis had a lot more to offer Pakistan in terms of intellectual principles. They could have offered the Pakistanis, for example, a method to keep the army out of politics.* Bangladesh managed to do that for 15 years. They could offer the Pakistanis a way to make sure the elections are free and fair and the transition is peaceful, because they have been doing it for 15 years.** And they could offer them a way to develop faster on the social side because they have done so through extensive use of NGOs. Bangladesh really set the example for Pakistan in terms of women's development, social development, family planning. So there are a lot of things Bangladesh could offer

*This became untrue in 2007 when the Bangladesh Army intervened and threw a BNP government out.
**This changed in 2011 when the AL government removed the Caretaker Provision from the constitution. Pakistan in terms of just how to run a government or how to run a

society, but of course Pakistanis are not the slightest bit interested in learning from Bangladesh or from anybody else.

*** But even a BNP government had to tread carefully given the history -- in many ways still an open festering sore because of Pakistani behavior during the war of separation.

BOLIVIA

DAVID COHEN
USAID
Deputy Director and Director
Bolivia
(1982-1987)

David Cohen was born and raised in New Jersey, and attended Rutgers University where he received his bachelors. Kramer went to New York University for graduate studies, and did a fellowship in Fortaleza, Brazil. He initially joined USAID in 1969 to go to Brazil, but stayed with USAID through many assignments such as Bolivia and Guyana. David Cohen was interviewed by John Pielemeier on January 23, 2018.

Topical Focus – USAID's Democracy Policy Strategy for Bolivia

Q: So, these were rather big programs?

COHEN: Bolivia was a significant focus of U.S. policy interest at that time. It was a leading producer of coca leaf and coca paste, a precursor of cocaine. It was broadly understood that final "manufacture" of cocaine mostly took place in Colombia. Despite the emphasis that we in the Embassy and the USAID Mission gave to concerns about democracy and urgent development needs and their relationship with the drug issues, the clear priority for those in the Congress and many of our Washington colleagues was drugs, specifically the cultivation and marketing of coca. It should be recalled that this was the period of First Lady Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign, a very high profile and politically strong anti-narcotics movement.

About half way into my five year tour in Bolivia, the Director, Hank Bassford, was transferred to the Dominican Republic. When I became the Director, I spent a great percentage of my time with the Embassy and the various U.S. agencies that were engaged in implementing anti-narcotics policies and programs. It quickly became clear to me that Washington and the Congress would not give our Mission the funds we needed for our development programs in agriculture, education, health and the private sector, if we could not demonstrate strong engagement and progress in our anti-narcotics activities. We in the field saw the vital interrelationship that existed between progress in drugs, democracy and development; but that was not an easy sell with Washington.

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The U.S. Embassy in La Paz had one of the most coherent, collaborative country teams I ever experienced during my career. An important part of that derived from the good, well-integrated work that we did as a drug subcommittee of the Country Team under the direction of Jeff Biggs, the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). Institutional components of the Narcotics Control Committee included the Office of International Narcotics Matters (State Department), USAID, the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), representatives from several branches of the military, and the intelligence entities.

As individual agencies, we each had our own narcotics control responsibilities. Under the DCM's leadership, all of us also had a strong grasp of the larger picture of the overall USG anti-narcotics strategy and where each of our individual pieces fit into that. Because we as a committee operated as a "big picture" organization, we arguably were much more effective than might otherwise have been the case. On one occasion, the Embassy drug team attended a regional conference in Panama. During that event, an AID colleague from Peru pulled me aside one evening and said that he found it really interesting and noteworthy to observe the Bolivia Embassy's narcotics control group. I asked why. He replied that we all seemed to really like each other and got along well, and said that was definitely not the case in Lima. He was right; the La Paz team worked very well together. It was a very positive experience and made our program much more effective as a result.

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Q: I take it that this aggressive economics program was quite a surprise to you?

COHEN: It really was. Following the military handover of the government in 1982, Hernan Siles Zuazo became President. The economic crisis did not improve under Siles. Indeed, following an abortive coup attempt, he decided that he would resign and call a new election. That resulted in the presidency of Victor Paz.

The experience of that election generated a series of events that had an important and lasting impact on my view of development and the role of USAID. Until the early 1980s, USAID did not get involved much, if at all, in programs related to democracy and governance. Then, especially in Central America, in places such as El Salvador and Honduras, the Agency became engaged in supporting the conduct of elections as a means of ending conflict and fostering peaceful change. When the Bolivia election was called, the LAC Bureau in Washington strongly encouraged the Mission to offer assistance to ensure that what was to take place was conducted in a manner that was free and fair. My first reaction to this possible involvement of the Mission was discomfort. Over the years, especially in the Americas, there had been a stream of accusations that USAID and its

programs served as a cover for activities of the CIA. I was very concerned that, instead of helping the Bolivians in the conduct of their election, we might risk becoming an excuse for hostile political groups to disrupt or block it. I was afraid that if we got engaged in that sort of thing, it could risk tainting everything else we needed to do in the country in the more traditional USAID sectors such as agriculture, education and health.

For a week or more, I thought about this quite intensely. Like many others, I joined USAID because I thought it would offer me an excellent opportunity to contribute to bringing about positive change in the world, and improving the lives of the world's poorest people. In that sense, direct engagement on governance issues did not seem to be consistent with the work of a development agency like USAID. However, after a great deal of thought, I arrived at a conclusion that very much surprised me. I saw that, in the Mission's programs in sectors such as health, education and agriculture, we could provide all the essential training, technical assistance, and equipment necessary for success. However, this, in itself would not guarantee the sustainability of the development changes we sought beyond the horizon of our immediate assistance involvement. If we truly wanted change to be sustainable, there needed to be a decent, stable accountable government – for example, one that supported teachers and maintained quality standards that provided blackboards and books, and had a health minister who actually knew something about health instead of being the son-in-law of the president or some guy who was generous with bribes. Governments needed to be accountable to those who elected them. In addition, violent and/or frequent non-electoral changes of government, such as those Bolivia had chronically experienced through its many military coups, were fatally disruptive to development progress and sustainability, that is, they made poor people's lives worse.

The bottom line of my thought process was that, not only was it okay for USAID to be engaged in activities in support of democracy and good governance, but also it was absolutely essential that we do so. I was truly surprised by that conclusion. It was not what I had expected. I reconsidered it again and again. The clear conclusion was that accountable, responsible, stable democratic governance was a virtually essential precondition to truly sustainable development. While one might point out exceptions to that hypothesis, they would be just that – exceptions. People who have hope for a future where they and their children can live in peace and security, where their children can have better lives, where they know they will have a job, where someone will not arbitrarily seize their property, and where they do not live under constant threat of experiencing physical harm – such people don't get induced into going to war and don't become terrorists. They also don't become illegal migrants. They have a vested stake in a credible future that can be better for them and their children. Generally speaking, people with such hopes and aspirations live in countries with democratic, accountable

governments where people's rights are respected and they can live and be successful on their own terms.

I learned all this in Bolivia. It substantially impacted my thoughts and decisions during subsequent assignments, as well as activities I have been engaged with in the years since my retirement from USAID.

WAYNE NILSESTUEN
USAID
Bolivia
(1998-2002)

Mr. Nilsestuen was born in 1946 in Wisconsin. He attended Wisconsin State College and joined the Peace Corps upon graduation in 1968. In 1974 Nilsestuen joined USAID as an International Development Intern and went on to serve in numerous leadership roles in Pakistan, El Salvador, USAID/Washington, Senegal, Honduras, Bolivia, Paraguay, Guatemala, and Afghanistan. He was interviewed by Marcia Bernbaum in 2023.

Topical Focus – Election in Bolivia

Q: So, Evo Morales at some point became president. Did this coincide with the resurgence of coca production or was that?

NILSESTUEN: Evo Morales ran for president twice. The first time was in 2002. He came in second and the outcome generated a good deal of unrest and violence in the streets of La Paz. There were those in the Embassy who thought that this was the moment to push for Morales' arrest and contain this unrest before it undermined the USG's counternarcotics program. But the ambassador was of the prudent view that Morales represented a political force that needed to be reckoned with and that wasn't the way to deal with it. Over time there was growing support for Evo and the demands that MAS made for more political space and participation of Bolivia's indigenous population. Bolivia had the largest portion of indigenous population in Latin America – 60 per cent. Not only did the donor community (including the USG) fervently believe that indigenous peoples had largely been excluded from much of the fruits of development, but increasingly the voting public of Bolivia shared this view. In 2006 they gave Evo Morales the opportunity to govern. He won that presidential election with a plurality of over 40% of the vote.

BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CRAIG DUNKERLEY
Department of State
Director
Office of European Security and Political Affairs
Bosnia and Herzegovina
(1995-1997)

Ambassador Dunkerley was born in Wisconsin and raised in several states in the Midwest. He was educated at Amherst College and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. In 1970 he entered the Foreign Service, serving abroad in Da Nang, Tokyo, Yokohama, Fukuoka, Brussels and Vienna. During his career Mr. Dunkerley became a specialist in NATO and International Security, Disarmament and Arms Control matters, and served as Special Envoy for Conventional Forces in Europe from 1997 to 2001 with the personal rank of Ambassador. He also had several tours of duty at the State Department in Washington, DC. Ambassador Dunkerley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – U. S. Policy on Bosnia and Herzegovina - Before and After The Dayton Accords

DUNKERLY:...As Dick Holbrooke points out in his book and Ivo Daalder describes in his own, well before we got to the point of an eventual Bosnian peace settlement in Dayton there was a long period during which there was a painful split between the U.S. and its European partners about what to do in Bosnia. We were perhaps more sympathetic than some about the Bosnian plight; we were justifiably skeptical about the UN effort; but nonetheless, we were not initially prepared to make the investment of political energy and military effort that a more effective strategy to end the fighting might require. As a consequence, this was a very difficult and unfortunate time in our CSCE exchanges on these problems.

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DUNKERLEY: I recall that I was RPM Director from mid-95' to roughly mid-'97. Two big sets of issues were coming to a head as I arrived. One was the worsening war in Bosnia. Shortly after I had departed Vienna but immediately before I came on board in EUR and began my new responsibilities, there was the Srebrenica massacre. That set of events came to serve as a catalytic turning point in terms of U.S. policy in the former Yugoslavia.

Q: Please explain what that was.

DUNKERLEY: In early July, the Serbs – the Bosnian Serb forces – shelled and then captured an isolated Muslim enclave around the town of Srebrenica in the eastern part of the country. This had been declared earlier by the UN as a "Safe Area" and was ostensibly protected by a relatively small contingent of Dutch UN military peacekeepers. The Bosnian Serbs under General Mladic took the town, essentially took the peacekeepers hostage, and then, in the days following, undertook systematic killings of hundreds, ultimately thousands of the Muslim men and boys in this so-called safe zone. It took time for the full scope and details to come out, but it quickly became clear something truly horrific had taken place – even by the worsening circumstances of the former Yugoslavia at that time. Thinking back to that moment: For many of us who had been working European issues, Srebrenica seemed to demonstrate in the most painful way the hollowness of the international community's efforts up to that point simply to stop the killing in Bosnia.

Within the USG, there was also a realization in this general time period that NATO – and that would mean the U.S. in a big way – would be in fact very much on the hook if things really got threatening with the UN peacekeeping effort in the former Yugoslavia. There had been an earlier commitment to use U.S. troops as part of a larger NATO operation if the UN peacekeepers needed to be extracted under difficult conditions – something that seemed not unlikely given the course of events in early '95. All this gave force to an evolving realization in Washington of just how seriously U.S. interests might be damaged if things continued along the current direction. It underscored for some the need for a new course.

This was the context of the Bosnian issue when I first returned to the EUR ranks. Events struck as a rush. Just as I was arriving, the Administration was beginning a new round of diplomatic efforts. Holbrooke was undertaking the first leg of what would eventually become his constant "shuttle diplomacy" with the parties of the region.

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DUNKERLEY:...All of these tracks had to go forward roughly in simultaneous fashion and all were starting to get underway even as the U.S. was also trying to handle Bosnia – which involved a sustained NATO air campaign against the Bosnian Serb forces in September '95, and Holbrooke's full-press negotiating effort for the rest of that fall, which came to fruition in the Dayton Peace Accords achieved in November of that year.

There was some interesting interaction between the two enterprises, especially in late '95 and early '96 as the U.S. and Allies drew upon NATO in a major peace-keeping effort in Bosnia in support of the Dayton Accords.

For example: The Bosnian effort demonstrated in a most tangible and timely way the sort of political role we envisaged for NATO in ensuring European stability – rather than simply being directed against the Soviet military threat of the past. It also came to provide a very useful vehicle for "on the ground" NATO-Russia cooperative action. As the result of protracted negotiation between Secretary of Defense Perry and his Russian

counterpart Grachev, we ended up with a structure in Bosnia which, under a very complicated wiring diagram, had a Russian unit essentially operating side by side with the NATO forces.

Q: Let's turn to Bosnia. During 1995-97, what was happening in Bosnia?

DUNKERLEY: When I started at the EUR/RPM – in that initial period marked by the reenergized negotiating effort to bring about a Bosnian settlement led by Assistant Secretary Holbrooke – one of the issues that quickly arose was to develop a better sense of what sort of more effective international presence and process would be needed to support a settlement. It was clear from the immediately preceding years' difficulties and weaknesses of the UNPROFOR effort that particular model had been a part of the problem.

From the start, there was a strong desire to have a militarily effective presence and process that was not subject to the sort of political hesitation and delay that the previous years had seen with UNPROFOR and UN SYG's Special Representative. This meant we wanted a NATO force. But we also wrestled with how one could relate such a military operation to the Russian Federation – which was, of course, both a member of the UNSC and the Contact Group for the Dayton negotiation, and a desirable, perhaps necessary, participant in any sort of settlement implementation.

At the same time: How might we relate this NATO-led force, under the umbrella of UNSC authorization but without the constraints and flaws of UNPROFOR, with the development of a new international civilian presence as part of implementation of Dayton's political terms and reconstruction of Bosnia? There were a number of institutions and European organizations that could have a useful role in supporting and overseeing that implementation – and indeed, there was competitive jockeying as to that division of labor. Throughout that fall and immediately following the Dayton negotiation, all of this was being thrashed out first within the US government, then with close allies and members of the contact group, and then in ever-broadening circles with the rest of the NATO allies and other UN players.

Q: What was your role? Did you have a piece of the action?

DUNKERLEY: EUR/RPM was directly supporting the Assistant Secretary on a variety of the issues. Over time, the structure of the European Bureau evolved so that there were entire offices exclusively devoted to the Bosnia settlement and implementation. But at least at the start, RPM was directly involved in an important part of this.

Q: Were you there when we sent troops in and started bombing?

DUNKERLEY: Yes.

Q: The Europeans at one time said, 'this is a European problem, we're going to take care of this.'

DUNKERLEY: That had been several years before.

Q: At this point was there a sense of relief that we needed to do something? You come back to if the United States doesn't take the initiative, nothing gets done practically or is that unfair?

DUNKERLEY: I think it's a little overly-simplistic, but certainly one thing had become quite clear in the two-three years immediately preceding: to the extent there were significant and persistent divergences between a European and U.S. approach to the many problems of the former Yugoslavia, it became unlikely there would be any progress, any positive resolution. In the pursuit of the negotiations leading to the Dayton Peace Accords, yes – the active engagement, the leadership, of the United States was absolutely critical.

You have to be a little bit cautious about extrapolating from that experience that nothing good happens unless there is a bold and vigorous U.S. lead – or that the Europeans are somehow a largely passive or negligible factor in working such issues. That would be no less mistaken as well. It's all likely to be a good deal more complex than that. But my point is simply that our serious divergence is often a signal of substantially increased odds against solving major issues in European security. Conversely, energetic American engagement alone is not a guarantee of a successful outcome – but it can be critical.

Q: Did your office get involved in dealing with the Bosnians?

DUNKERLEY: Not so much directly with the Bosnians. While Dick Holbrooke's negotiating team, which included several people from our office, was dealing directly with the local participants, RPM helped to provide the back up support in terms of developing the details of what the NATO component of a peace settlement implementation might look like. This was very much part of a major inter-agency effort. Obviously the Pentagon and Department of Defense (DOD) played a key role on all these basic issues related to how the NATO support force would be put together and how the Russians would be related to it. As I mentioned earlier, on the latter point – the details of the lash up between the Russians and the U.S. forces in the NATO force – this went up to Secretary of Defense Perry in his discussions with his Russian counterpart.

Q: Did you get involved in opening up places like Hungary which was not in NATO?

DUNKERLEY: They were not in NATO at the time, but they obviously provided important support – not least in access to the region. Again, the two broad issues of NATO enlargement and Bosnia constantly resonated off of each other. The Hungarians, with an eye towards eventual admission into the Alliance, took pains to demonstrate what a good international citizen and useful prospective NATO member their country could be by providing that sort of support early on.

Q: Bosnia in a way did represent a chance for everybody to say, 'we can do it.' I remember going as an election observer and seeing Moroccan and Ukrainian troops. Indonesian observers were also there.

DUNKERLEY: It was also a validation of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) program of NATO that had been set up earlier in 1993-94 as a way of developing cooperative ties with non-NATO countries. For some countries, this was seen as a stepping-stone to eventually becoming members of the Alliance. Even for those who were not immediate prospects—or for that matter, even distant aspirants – the very fact that they had an up and running PFP relationship significantly added to the ability of countries like Ukraine – or countries even further afield – to be folded into the NATO-led peacekeeping force.

Q: From your perspective how did this work? When we were in Russian occupied territory we were told not to use cameras and it seemed that for this international group of observers we had to be much more careful where the Russians were than in other places. How did this relationship work out?

DUNKERLEY: As I indicated, it was one of the major issues for discussion during that initial period. There was obviously a significant political objective to be served by finding a way in which we could work together and they could participate. On the other hand, we wanted to avoid a situation in which there was a division of the country into specific regions of responsibility for different peace-keeping units in such a way that would hamper unity of command – or appear to legitimize further fracturing of an already divided Bosnian state by seeming to assign the Russians the de facto role of primary protectors of the Bosnian Serbs. As for the basics, what I tend to recall at this distance was that the Russian forces were prepared to operate under the authority, under the command (I have forgotten the exact terms of the OPCON) of an American commander, but not ostensibly under a NATO flag. I believe it was the Russians reporting to an American commander who in turn was part of this larger NATO operation, but it was not Russia directly under the control of NATO. That probably does not do justice to the subtleties of the final structure. On the ground it apparently worked out reasonably well.

Q: I was wondering whether there was any concern about command and control of Russian military forces and their civilian leadership at the time?

DUNKERLEY: I think you will find that, by and large, as one looks back on the history of the first year following Dayton, the military side went reasonably well. There were far more concerns on the civilian side, and far more difficult daily operational problems to address in putting back together a fractured nation where self-divisions remained tenacious. Once the peace settlement had been agreed and once the peacekeeping forces were on the ground, I was not aware of major or persistent problems on the military side. Problems on the civilian side were due in part to basic contradictions inevitably contained in the Dayton settlement: the notion of a unified and sovereign Bosnia when, in fact, the structures resulting from the Accord allowed for the differing institutions between the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosniac Muslims.

There were also issues to be settled in terms of who was doing what on different aspects the settlement implementation. In the early months, this involved, in effect, the creation on the fly of an entirely new diplomatic and military peacekeeping structure, one that would have to reflect the differing capabilities and various equities that different actors and institutions could bring to these issues.

There were, for example, debates about the respective roles of the OSCE in connection with the new post of High Commissioner. We saw the OSCE playing an important role in developing procedures for future elections in Bosnia. That was a critical benchmark in terms of developing a political end state that would enable us to move forward and move out. It was thus very important. For a while there were political differences with the Allies over who should head up the OSCE mission. Eventually it was a senior American diplomat, Bob Frowick.

Q: What about the French? They had a zone where a lot of the hard line Serbs were and they seemed to be unwilling to pick up people like Mladic and Karadzic. Did we see that as a problem at the time? Were the French acting in a different way than we would have liked them to?

DUNKERLEY: I wouldn't overstate that particular angle. In all of this, there were all sorts of contradictions and different points of view, even within the U.S. side. There would be some who would argue that one of the problems at the time was a greater reluctance on the part of certain U.S. military commanders or NATO military authorities to do certain things – as Dick Holbrooke has made clear in his own writings.

Q: When you left there in 1998 was there a feeling that a pretty good instrument was being put together with the expansion of NATO and the implementation and use of NATO? It was not just a test case, but a real case.

DUNKERLEY: Yes. I think there was a great deal of satisfaction about the course of enlargement, rooted in the sense that the decisions flowing from successful Madrid NATO Summit of July '97, and the immediate follow-up with the Russians in the Secretary's subsequent discussions with her Russian counterpart in St. Petersburg, had set us in the right direction. Importantly those sessions were promptly followed by a hardwon agreement in Vienna a month later on basic elements of an adapted CFE Treaty (perhaps I should say more on that later on). Still a lot to be done, but an important foundation…

And yes, by that point in 1997 there was also a fair amount of satisfaction that the Alliance and the US had responded – finally but effectively – in preventing the situation in Bosnia from getting a lot worse. But everyone also recognized that there continued to be profound problems that still had to be worked on a daily basis, not just in Bosnia but throughout the region.

Q: Did you have the feeling that you needed to also look at Kosovo?

DUNKERLEY: Certainly there was a broad recognition that the situation in Kosovo was full of unresolved tensions. But I think there was also a sense that this was one of those issues that might just be too hard to have tried to solve simultaneously with the Bosnian settlement reached with the Serbs and others at Dayton. Others, like Holbrooke, have provided their own arguments in that regard. But there may have been another more operational factor at the bureaucratic level: a preoccupation with immediate, real world problems that had to be solved this week or next in terms of prepping decisions involving the Dayton implementation in Bosnia.

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Q: While you were doing this did the episode of the Russian brigade move out of Bosnia? It seemed they were under no control, but the local commanders.

DUNKERLEY: No, that was part of the late stages of intervention by the U.S. and NATO forces in Kosovo in 1999. The related problem that I got involved at that time – at least in terms of Kosovo – came in the run up to the NATO military operation when there was a dilemma for us as to the application of certain international commitments.

Under the existing CFE treaty regime, the Russians had the right to inspect our air base in Aviano, Italy, which was playing an important role in these operations. That went off reasonably well, as I recall.

But under a separate OSCE political agreement on confidence building measures (known as the Vienna Document), they also had certain rights for receiving notifications with regard to the build up of U.S. and NATO forces in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, bordering Kosovo, once these deployments reached a certain size. This was more problematic as at that point, we were moving into what could soon become a hot war. It brought to the fore concern over preserving operational security – especially on the part of SACEUR and his people – even as there was a political requirement to be seen as meeting our obligations for transparency as required under the Vienna Document (something we had criticized others for neglecting). Reaching an acceptable way ahead took some time and discussion within the USG and NATO.

Q: The assumption being that anything that we divulge to the Russians would immediately go to their colleagues, the Serbs.

DUNKERLEY: Right.

Q: It isn't a good way to run a war.

DUNKERLEY: You're right, but remember that we weren't at war at this point. This was period of pre-hostilities—and in a political situation that presented a difficult circle to square.

Q: How did we work on it?

DUNKERLEY: There were some protracted negotiations in both Washington and then in Brussels, both with the Allies – some of whom were very concerned about the Alliance being seen to meet its established commitments to transparency – and with SACEUR, General Wesley Clark. In the end, we ended up doing some things as required.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JOHN D. FINNEY, JR.
Department of State
Political Advisor to Division North
Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina
(1999-2000)

John D. Finney, Jr. studied at St. Louis University and Georgetown University before entering the foreign service in 1966. He served in many different positions in several countries, including Peru, Vietnam, Thailand, Zambia, the Philippines, and Afghanistan, before retiring in 2004. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – Domestic, Regional, and International Politics of Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

FINNEY: The war criminal issue to me was a very important issue, primarily psychologically. One of the things I did for my commander when I went out to meet with the mayors and the village chiefs and the provincial council members, one of the key questions I would ask them is when do you think our job is going to be done here? When do you think SFOR can go home? One of the key responses I got to this question was when you turn in Karadzic and Milosevic and the others, some of whom are still here. So that was one of the key responses I got. It also seemed to me that when I read about Balkan history, so much of the turmoil seemed to be based on vengeance and revenge and the fact that justice hadn't been done in the past. So if justice wasn't done with one generation, the next generation found a way to settle the score. So for me this was important. I can tell you from my perspective as a political advisor, I wished that my command and my SFOR people, whom I had the utmost respect for, had been much more aggressive. I could not get my American military commanders to take more chances in going after these war criminals. We had a big intelligence operation. We had a very sizable, I mean 30 to 40 person intelligence station down in Sarajevo, which had teams that were focused on this. I tried to be a liaison between very compartmentalized programs the agency had down there with the intelligence we were getting up in our area, so I could encourage my commanders to act on the intelligence that the agency was producing. They would come up and brief my commander about every other month.

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FINNEY: Yugoslavia, even though it was regarded as a liberal regime, was still basically a state run economy. There is plenty of entrepreneurship out there at the local level, but it was still an idea that had to be fully developed. It was slow to develop. They expected Sarajevo, the central government, to build factories and do things for them. No, you have got to do it. This thing about privatization. In our AO (area of operations) I think there was something like 400-600 salt mines, chemical factories, detergent factories, battery factories, light bulb factories, coal mines. Mini light steel mill assembly plants. 400-600 of them which needed to be privatized. The Serbs and the Croats and the Bosniacs working through the process to determine who owned the factories because they were state owned. That was a huge tar baby. Another factor was a commercial code. So that to bring in a McDonalds or to bring in a Deutsche Bank or bring in an Italian design firm or whatever, these investors had to be assured if they had a disagreement with their work force or with their Bosnian management, that they could go to court. So you had to put together a civilian code, a commercial code. You had to put together a banking system which was, believe me, hand to mouth. You had to develop a sense of entrepreneurship. You had to attract foreign investment. Another thing that drove us nuts was establishing a single commercial space. Under the Dayton Accords you had the Republic of Srpska, and then you had what was it, the federation. But you had several customs regimes. You had separate telephone systems. You had separate tax collection, and the railroad that ran from Brcko down to Sarajevo connected with Hungary and then down to Sarajevo, went through the Republic of Srpska and then through the federation, was not going through a single commercial space. I was there from 1999, in effect to 2001, and we couldn't get the railroad going. And what was this, a 200 mile strip, a 300 mile trip from Brcko to Sarajevo. It drove you nuts because they had to change trains. So these were huge obstacles. The Croatian sector upon the Sava profited from the fact that in effect they became a Croatian economic zone.

Q: Croatia was much more keyed to the west…

FINNEY: Yes. And the Croatians had that Adriatic coast, and tourism by the time I got there was starting to come in. That worked for them. But on our Serb side, it was dealing with molasses. Also the politics of the situation. So much of the politics was still dominated by the old nationalist issues. We had a couple of elections from 1999 to 2001, and started electing women, and started electing sort of a new generation. That helped shift the political agenda away from the old nationalist issues to school, transportation, public health, and investment in these economic issues. But it was hard work.

Q: You mentioned a new generation was coming in, but you know, hatreds have to be passed on, but you are moving into an era in Europe where people, kids aren't going to church much anymore. The other thing would be just plain the attrition of young people saying the hell with this and heading for England or Germany or someplace else to get jobs. I am not going to play the game. Were you seeing these happen?

FINNEY: Yes, you were seeing that phenomenon. Unfortunately many of the young, let's take the ages from 18 to 25 in that area, unemployment was high. They were fed up with the slow pace of these governments to get the economy going. They invited me to go

down to the university in Tuzla. Once a quarter they would invite me to come down and talk to these university students, believe it or not, about democracy and things like that. My take on that in encountering them was that at least half of these students, or at least half of these people from 18 to 25, 18 to 30, would be interested in leaving Bosnia and going to Austria, Switzerland, Germany, England, to get work, to have a better future. So a lot of them were extremely impatient and disillusioned. Now some of them were wanting to stay and try to make the country better, but I think there was a great deal of alienation and disaffection within that sector from 18 to 30. So it was very important to get them involved in the political process. It was important to get them decent jobs. It was very important to get them in contact with each other so that they could get past, whether it was through soccer or through youth camps or whatever, to get past the past. A slow process. I think the economic aspect of this was absolutely fundamental. When people have jobs and when people can take care of their families, and when people can have access to higher education and when people can have hope, it changes the dynamic. This has been slow to come.

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Q: Were you seeing any consequences from our bombing of Serbia?

FINNEY: The bombing stopped in mid June. I got there in July. The immediate consequence was that force protection was very strict on our side. Several jets from Belgrade had been shot down 10 miles from our base at Tuzla which they had attempted to bomb. So the security situation deteriorated markedly. The attitude of the Serbs towards us and the implementation of the Dayton Accords as far as I could tell, became even more embittered. And the prospects for refugee return were just absolutely nil at that point. The whole process on the civilian side, of moving ahead with elections, moving ahead with refugee return, ensuring freedom of movement, proceeding with reconstruction, all this in effect was frozen for two or three months until tensions began to subside and we could move ahead with the process. So it set back all those areas of effort for two or three months.

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Q: How did you find the OSCE? Did you find you know, this is sort of a peaceful outfit. You are working with a military outfit. How was the fit there?

FINNEY: Well, two different cultures. Not only was OSCE a civilian outfit, but it was a European outfit. So you had a couple of different cultures there. First of all let me talk about the good parts of it. The good parts of it was OSCE played a pivotal role in the elections. When I was there, retired ambassador Bob Barry was head of the OSCE in Sarajevo [Ed; Ambassador Barry has an oral history interview on file with ADST. He had a number of Foreign Service officers on his staff. The political director for OSCE working for Ambassador Barry was also a Foreign Service officer, and the head of his research department I think was a Foreign Service officer. So they were very key to me in terms of my ability to gather information about the election process to keep my military

commander and his senior staff informed about elections. Was it going to be local? Was it going to be at the governor level? What were the procedures? What exactly was the role of the military? So they were invaluable. Ambassador Barry was always very gracious when I made my trips to Sarajevo every three weeks or so. I always got time with him…

You know our military is planning constantly. We had two or three planning groups in our military headquarters. One was doing daily operational planning. One group looking up 60-90 days and another one was looking out further. So there didn't seem to be any planning capacity on their side. So there were the occasional frictions, but we all understood the pivotal role on the military side. We understood the pivotal role that OSCE played and that we had to adapt ourselves to their planning cycle and to their method of operation, their hours of work, and we just tightened up our belts. We were determined to coordinate. That was the name of the game. At the end of the day the OSCE I thought, backed up by a lot of good NGO work, did a superb job on putting on these whole series of elections. It wasn't easy. Our military leaders understood that, at the end of the day, we were providing a security environment so that this political process could move ahead.

Q: As I mentioned before I took part in two of those as an OSCE employee, I guess.

FINNEY: Yes you were. One of the points I constantly made to our military commanders was that elections were part of our exit strategy. The sooner we have the elections and the more successful they are, the sooner that our military forces will be able to go home. They understood that.

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FINNEY: The intelligence picture was a very mixed one. We had our special forces safe houses sprinkled around. When I was there I think we had nine or ten of them sprinkled around our AO. These were eight teams of ten or twelve folks. They were living in their own houses out in these towns and villages, and they were going around collecting information as they were trained to do. DOD had established a humint (human intelligence) collection program. So they had civilian and military detailed to them, collectors, mostly linked to force protection. So they were out there outside the wire doing their thing. We had a very strong CIA contingent based in Sarajevo. Within that big station, they had a contingent that was going after Serb, Croatian, and Bosniac war criminals, and they had another contingent who was tracking the Jihadist fundamentalists. We also had our CIA intelligence officer gathering information about the general situation and the prospects for the next election and so forth.

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FINNEY: In some areas it was starting to knit together. In other areas we weren't making much progress at all. I'll talk quickly about what was starting to come together. Most importantly was the refugee return. I got there in the summer of 1999. That summer I think out of 800,000 displaced people in the country, not counting the people who had

left the country, I think they had only returned up to that time somewhere between 35,000 and 50,000. So we just scraped. But then we really started to develop momentum. We were much more firm in our insistence to all sides that we were going to implement this accord and we were going to start their refugee return. So the NGOs got active; the UN got active. The international police got more effective, and of course we certainly were pushing as hard as we could. General Wesley Clark was in SACEUR at the time, and you know we had been in Bosnia for almost 3 ½ years by then, almost four years. So the emphasis on results was really coming through. The refugee return really picked up, and that involved an extraordinary amount of work. Number two, the freedom of movement. Freedom of movement was always an issue. The people who wanted to prevent refugee return would put up road blocks or they would snipe at refugees with their rifles when the refugees were coming into an area. So we really put our foot down. That was a big improvement there.

Q: How did you put your foot down?

FINNEY: Well, we put our foot down by putting together very heavily equipped armed patrols, and then going into these towns and telling the mayor, telling the provincial chairman, telling the governor if this kind of incident happened again, that they were going to lose their jobs, and that we were going to start maintaining troops in their particular area on a permanent basis. And in several areas we had to do that. We had to create what we called forward operating bases or FOBs. We started putting companies out in these contested areas. So deploying the troops and you know sometimes with Bradleys armored personnel carrier, a fighting vehicle.

Very aggressive in our engagement with the local officials. Remogin, the first summer I was there we removed about 40 people, 40 officials. The next summer I think it was about 15 or 20. Then by setting up these forward operating bases in the contested areas. Those were all things that I think were starting to come; that was freedom of movement. We are talking about the refugees.

There was another area in which I think we made definite progress. There was another area too that I should mention, and that was elections. We all know that elections are necessary for democracy, but certainly not sufficient. They are one element in the package. We had a series of elections both provincial and national during those times. We got reasonably good turnouts I think in the high 60 low 70 percentile rate of eligible voters. We were able to turn over some provincial and even national bodies, assemblies, parliaments and get new fresh leadership in. It was still a slog, but I think going through that election process was a definite plus. We did make some breakthroughs in getting women and younger people more involved in the process and getting some new fresh blood. But I have to say it was still not enough, and much of the political debate was still along nationalist and sectarian lines. They couldn't escape fully from the dialogue of the past. That was linked to another area where I thought we made the least progress absolutely, and that was the economic revival. Because the economy was still prostrate, and because unemployment was still extremely high, we couldn't get the economic development going. When you can get economic development going you can change the

terms of the political debate. So we couldn't get the national railroad going. We couldn't get one economic space declared. We had very slow going on the privatization process.

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FINNEY: The Croatian hard line nationalist party was very strong in the southwestern part of Bosnia, but they didn't have deep strength along the Sava River in the north. But they were making an effort to do so when we were there.

Q: Was there, I mean, did you have lines into Croatia as far as to cooperate with our ambassador or did we have other observers or anybody there to moderate the Croatian hard liners?

FINNEY: Yes we did. Our ambassadors would come over several times to Bosnia. We would have a meeting up in Brcko and talk about these issues. We dedicated a bridge or two that the Army Corps of Engineers with international financing oversaw to build from the Bosnian side over to the Croatian side to promote movement of people and economic revival. So those were occasions where we could bring the Bosnian and Croatian officials together to try to deal with the crime factor, to try to work out sensible economic arrangements so both sides could have sensible freedom of movement. We also were very concerned about the hard line Croatian element, and there was a lot of dialogue between our embassy in Sarajevo and in the Croatian capital of Zagreb. But the election results frankly showed that the hard line Croatians still exerted strong influence in the south and west part of our sector where they had a couple of toe holds. Now we removed some Croatian politicians, some mayors and were influential in removing a Croatian governor, but it was a hard slog. Up in the north we did a little bit better. There were some moderate Croatians elected, and they sort of kept the hard line Croatians at bay. But it was a mixed picture. The bottom line is we were unable to cut into the hard line Croatian stronghold in the south and western part of our sector.

Q: What about Serbia at this point when you got there? It must have been sort of turning inward because of the devastation that the bombing did. I mean Belgrade was, you know a lot of the stuff had to be done, in a way was it almost removed from being much of a player or not?

FINNEY: They were turning inward. They were bitterly resentful because of the bombing, because of the civilian casualties they took, because of the fact that Kosovo was now being run by an international military and civilian force. But there were still elements in Serbia that were very much trying to help support and influence the Bosnian Serbs on the west side of the Drina. In the Serbian parliament, they were passing resolutions supportive of the Bosnian Serb position on a number of things. Serbian businessmen in Belgrade and elsewhere continued to channel funds to Mladic and Karadzic and other war criminals who were hiding and being supported by a network of people. You have got to have money to do that, and that money came from wealthy Serbian businessmen as far as we could determine. The Serb-Bosnian leadership at the town and village level, where we were in northeast Bosnia on the west side of the Drina,

was constantly going to Belgrade, taking weekend trips, sharing their experiences with the folks in Belgrade and coming back with renewed determination to hang tough and not to give up these towns on the west bank of the Drina to the returning Bosniac Muslims. And, most poisonous of all, they were telling the Serb refugees who were occupying Bosnian apartments and houses in these towns along the Drina, never to go back to central Bosnia where they came from because they would be mistreated. We were after war criminals and every once in a while we would manage. And while I was there, the Serbian parliament was still paying troops and for training, and paying the salaries and making money available so they could get training inside Serbia. It was outrageous.

FINNEY:...So one of the key tensions I saw on our American military side is, hey, we are doing our job. We are getting it done. Why can't the State Department and the international community get the politics and the economics right? We have stopped the fighting. We have separated the forces. We have set up the weapons storage facilities. We are ensuring freedom of movement. We protected the elections. We have allowed a secure environment for the refugees to begin to go back. But why aren't these firms being privatized? Why do these nationalist politicians continue to be returned? So we all have to be prepared for this tension between the fact that as difficult as the military side is, it is much more difficult to restore a society on the political and economic front. That takes a lot of time, and that is going to produce a lot of tension.

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FINNEY:...Just to review why the NSC, through the President, made DOD the lead for stability and reconstruction. I am told it goes back to the Balkan experience where Mr. Rumsfeld and other neo-conservatives who were out of power at the time did not think that our military intervention into Bosnia and Kosovo reflected U.S. vital interests, number one. Number two, they felt that our military was misused in stability and reconstruction activities in the Balkans, because the civilian side didn't keep up. During the Balkan intervention, there was a lot of undercurrent unhappiness on the DOD side because the military felt it was doing its job in the Balkans, separating the forces, cantoning the weapons, and providing freedom of movement. But the U.S. civilian and UN side which had to do with organizing a nation and elections and so forth seemed to be moving so slow. The end result was that the neo-conservatives, I am told, took as their lesson from the Balkans: next time we have an intervention, we are not going to let the presence of our military be hostage to waiting on civilians to get the job done on their side. So they wanted to move towards a MacArthur model in Japan, where the military controlled the military, but also ran the civilian side. That is where they were leaning, so that, I think, greatly influenced the president and the vice president. That is why DOD got the lead.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PETER DAVID EICHER
Department of State

Special Assistant
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
Washington, D. C.
(1995-1998)

Mr. Eicher, son of an American oil geologist, was born in Saudi Arabia and raised in the US and abroad. He was educated at McGill University, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California, Los Angeles. Entering the Foreign Service in 1973, Mr. Eicher became an Africa and Human Rights specialist, serving at posts in Fiji, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Switzerland as well as in Washington and at the United Nations in New York. Mr. Eicher was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Topical Focus – Elections and Election Monitoring in Bosnia and Herzegovina

EICHER: That was probably the ODIHR. For the first postwar Bosnian election, in 1996, a special structure was set up to monitor the elections; the ODIHR was involved, but I don't think it was in charge. Up to that time, it had tended to do very small election observation missions, just a few people for a few days. Within a very few years, however, it was at the forefront of developing the election observation methodology that has now been adopted by just about every serious observation organization, from the UN to the EU.

I neglected to mention earlier that I also monitored a couple of elections in the former Yugoslavia during my time in the Human Rights Bureau, one in Bosnia and in one in Croatia.

Q: What did you do in Bosnia?

EICHER: In Bosnia I was way down south in a little village in the Republic of Srpska. I'd have to think about the name.

Q: I worked out of Tuzla.

EICHER: I was really in the Serb heartland when I was down there on my first mission, in the fall of 1996, and it was quite something. You would have thought it was a perfect election from where we were. Everything was calm and orderly. All the voters were meek and busy voting for their hard-line wartime leaders.

Q: This is it. You know, they voted the way you think they would but they did it nicely.

EICHER: They did it nicely. And the buses of refugees who were supposed to be arriving from the other parts of Bosnia to vote never arrived, for whatever reason. So, everything was calm and fine in the little villages I visited, although it was far from a good election if you looked at the big picture. In fact, the 1996 Bosnian elections were a big bureaucratic controversy within the Department, while I was in the human rights bureau. There was a big dispute over whether the elections should be rushed forward or

postponed. DRL's position was that conditions didn't exist for free elections. There was still no freedom of movement; people couldn't go home to vote or couldn't campaign in areas outside their ethnic group. There was still lots of intimidation. But, we were overridden and the U.S. position was that Bosnia should have elections as soon as possible so there would be new, legitimately elected leaders who could be partners in implementing the Dayton peace accords. Well, we know what happened. The elections went ahead and each ethnic group elected the worst of hardliners to represent it, causing all kinds of problems for years.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR ROBERT BARRY
OSCE
Head of Mission
Bosnia and Herzegovina
(2001)

Ambassador Robert Barry was born in Pennsylvania, and graduated from Dartmouth College before entering the Foreign Service in 1962. He has held positions in Yugoslavia, Germany, and Sweden, and was the ambassador to Bulgaria. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Topical Focus - Democracy Implementation Process in Former Yugoslavia

Q: One of the things that most of us in the Foreign Service or in government really never think about are elections. I mean elections are kind of held and yet there is a major infrastructure in any country that have had these things of people who know how to do it. I mean, when you arrived there, what sort of cadre did you have to put together elections?

BARRY: We had had two elections before I arrived, three actually, so it was under my predecessor Bob Frowick that we built this up. In the first place we created an election commission responsible for organizing all aspects of the election. It was made up of both nationals and internationals. As head of the OSCE Mission I was the chairman of that commission and the rules dictated that if the chairman decided differently than all the other members of the commission, the chairman's word carried. So, we had representatives of the three national groups represented on the commission. When I came I expanded the commission to bring in independent figures from the Bosnian community who were noted for being anti-nationalist. The best known of them probably was Zlatko Dizdarevic who wrote books about the war he was a correspondent for the newspaper, Oslobozhdenija. We altered the balance of that commission. But in on the field on election day it takes about 35,000 people to run an election. The people who sit in the

polling places were organized by our various field offices. We tried to find people who had had previous experience in elections, but as you know Yugoslav elections were noted for 99% pro-Tito votes so we had to find people who were prepared to look at this as an exercise in building democracy. The incentive was that we paid them well.

Q: I was one of the 30,000 for the I guess the '97 vote.

BARRY: Well, these were the international supervisors. I'm talking about the 35,000 Bosnians who ran the polling stations. Whenever we had these elections in the early days we brought in international supervisors in every polling station and that amounted to about 2,500 people. In later days those numbers were reduced, but the international supervisors were theoretically in charge. They could overturn a decision by the local polling station committee if required and they were responsible for making sure that all the rules were observed, as they should have been.

Q: As you were going on this, did you, was there sort of a feeling on the American side was this different from other ones, that somehow if you get people to vote, you know, democracy, then all of a sudden good things would happen?

BARRY: Well, that was certainly the view in '95, but we learned that this wouldn't necessarily happen because the bad guys were voted into office and they remained bad guys. At the point that I arrived we recognized that our task was to try to organize the nationalists out of office. That meant changing the rules under which the elections were held. We had to draft an election law. In fact the idea originally had been that that law would be drafted by the Bosnians themselves, but no progress was made on that. One of the things that we worked on was trying to put into the election law reform elements that would favor the parties that were multinational. Most parties believed in the principle of democratic centralism, as all of these parties were left over from the days of Tito.

So, as we were organizing the elections we were also trying to produce elements of reform. For example, we required by fiat that one-third of all candidates for political office had to be women. Not a natural tendency among Balkan political parties, but we insisted that any party that did not produce one third female candidates would not be allowed to run in the election. We also had the power to dismiss candidates, forbid them from running for office, to remove people after they were elected for noncompliance with rules and regulations which we didn't use too often, but when it came to some of the worst nationalists who were using hate language and things like that we did not hesitate to remove them.

BULGARIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

SOL POLANSKY
Ambassador
Sofia, Bulgaria
(1987-1990)

Sol Polansky was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1926. He received his Bachelor's degree from University of California, went to Columbia University and attended the Russian Institute. He began his career in the State Department in 1955, focusing on Soviet Affairs. In 1987, he became an Ambassador in Sofia, Bulgaria, and aided U.S. interests, as well as Bulgarian issues. Sol Polansky was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Topical Focus – Bulgarian Elections

Q: We are talking about the events of 1989. How were the Bulgarians getting their information? How were they reacting initially?

POLANSKY: Some of them were getting their information from Western news sources, where there was RFE or CNN in a smaller way. A fair amount of Western news information was getting through. For the Bulgarians, they saw the Berlin Wall being pierced, they saw it on their own television, so they knew what was happening there. In fact, the piercing of the Wall and the ouster of Honeker happened almost at the same time. Todor Zhirkov was the Bulgarian dictator or Communist Party leader. For the Bulgarians, who saw what was happening elsewhere in Eastern Europe, they used an environmental movement in effect to become the political opposition. They used again a CSCE conference on environmental issues that was taking place in Sofia as a way of getting their message out to the West and drawing some support and inspiration from it. What happened in October was, when the CSCE conference was taking place, some environmentalists wanted to use the occasion to make their protest known to this international conference. The Bulgarian police were not about to let it happen. There was a confrontation and some of the environmentalists were roughed up. This caused some of the Western governments to let the Bulgarians know that they were not going to tolerate this kind of behavior in the conference. It caused a certain amount of turmoil within the Bulgarian Communist Party and that really became a pretext for the more moderate wing of the Bulgarian Communist Party to overthrow Zhirkov as simply being too rigid. They knew from what was happening elsewhere in Eastern Europe that Zhirkov was not going

to get any support from Gorbachev. In fact, Gorbachev made it plain that he wouldn't. Consequently, we had been suggesting to the Department, it might be appropriate for Secretary Baker to come to Bulgaria at some point, if he was traveling elsewhere in Eastern Europe, because it did seem that at least there was some movement in the Bulgarian Communist Party toward a more moderate view and it was something we ought to encourage and try and take advantage of. In February of 1990, he did come to Sofia from Moscow, for a very quick trip. He basically told the new Bulgarian Communist leaders, who were really the group around Zhirkov, now without Zhirkov, that if they wanted a better relationship with the US, and they had talked about free and fair elections, that would be the measure of what we would judge Bulgaria by. If they really had free and fair elections, we would respect the outcome and see where we could try and improve and expand the relationship. That became the framework within which we operated for the next four or five months until the Bulgarians really did have elections. We wanted to make sure that the opposition really did have a chance to express its views, had access to the media. I had many discussions with the Bulgarian Prime Minister and others about the availability, for the opposition of newsprint. I got all kinds of excuses from them why newsprint couldn't be available in the quantities the opposition wanted. We traveled all over the country talking about the importance of free elections. The USIA and other organizations helped support the development of a public Bulgarian organization to observe the elections and make sure the elections were being held in a free and fair manner. The National Democratic Institute and the National Republican Institute came in with equipment and gave training on how opposition parties could organize themselves and conduct campaigns. All of this was going on with the Communist Party tolerating it?

Q: Had they just lost heart?

POLANSKY: They saw what was happening elsewhere. The Bulgarian Communist Party had been around for a long, long time. I think they felt they might stand a chance to come out better than some of the communist parties did elsewhere in Eastern Europe. They were really the only organized political force in the country with any experience. They ran, in many ways, a more coherent campaign, than the opposition did. The elections were held, there may have been some slight manipulation. We did have, in addition to the unofficial Bulgarian organization that was observing the election, international teams that came to observe the elections, including one from the United States. By and large the feeling was, the elections were free and open.

Q: How did it come out?

POLANSKY: The results were that the opposition had something like forty three percent and the Communists had something like thirty seven percent. You had a new Parliament that had opposition as well as Communists in it. The opposition was able to name a non-Communist person to be President. The Socialists went along with it. You wound up with the first non Communist government in Bulgaria in over forty-five years in August of 1990, with a non Communist President. It was a very gratifying four or five months when we were able to conduct that kind of activity.

Q: What about police control? Were you able to see opposition leaders as this went on?

POLANSKY: At the beginning, in November of 1989, there was one small opposition group, it stood for Glasnost and Perestroika, we had virtually no contact with them. We gave all sorts of signals that we would like to have contact with them, but for their own reasons, they simply felt it wasn't appropriate. It wasn't until about December of 1989 that we were able to work out a very informal, but useful meeting with Zhelev, who was the leader of this club, who subsequently became the leader of this opposition and later the President. That part of it was a hard go. They simply weren't ready at the time. After Secretary Baker came in February of 1990, then it became easier and then you could see people and have access to all sorts of people; they made themselves available. We went all over the country talking to members of the opposition; talking to members of the Socialist party, members of the Agrarian Party, basically just taking the message we had about free and fair elections if they wanted a better relations with the United States. I think we were unique in that, I don't think any other Western Embassy went through that process the way we did. It's not sort of the thing we were trained to do, it developed out of the circumstances.

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Q: Did the concept of "Macegre" or Macedonia show its head at all?

POLANSKY: It has its roots back to the 1930s and even earlier. I don't think, except maybe for a few small minority parties during the election period, the idea of a greater Bulgaria, incorporating parts of Macedonia, ever entered into it. There was a Royalist party, there still is, in terms of return to the King. I think the whole question of Macedonia has obviously become more sensitive and significant in connection with what's happening in Yugoslavia. I think a sense of "Macedonianess" is being created in that part of Bulgaria, that is part of Macedonia. My own feeling is that it is artificial on the Bulgarian side. It can be stimulated but it is not being stimulated from the inside, it is being stimulated from the outside. But it exists and it is becoming something that is a little more worrisome to the Bulgarians. I think that is one of the reasons the Bulgarians

were very quick to recognize Macedonia as a separate, independent state. I think they hoped that that would calm things down. I think Zhelev has stroked the other party a number of times in order to maintain a relationship with them. I think there is some concern. If it keeps up in Yugoslavia, I think the concern will increase and so will the sense of Macedonian nationalism.

BURMA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CHRIS MILLIGAN
USAID
Mission Director
Burma
(1987-1991)

Topical Focus – USAID's Programming Supporting Democratic Governance and Elections in Burma - 2016

MILLIGAN: Yes. It begins with a strategic vision and a theory of change and then figuring out how an individual project can promote that change. I can fast forward to an example from Burma. We reopened our Embassy and USAID Mission in Burma in 2016 during the military government. Our goal was promoting democratic and economic reforms. I often told my team that we did not have a development goal. We were not there as a typical development mission. Instead, our aim was to use the tool of development to leverage political and economic reform. Besides our democracy and economic growth programs, we also had a large health program. I told our health officer at that time, if all we achieve through our health interventions is better health outcomes, we have failed. We 30 need to leverage all our investments, including those in our health program, towards promoting democratic and economic reforms. It was the how, by programming health funds in a way that empowered a new generation of local leaders, that strengthened communities' ability to hold government accountable, that introduced and advanced key concepts of transparency and accountability. When you are in a USAID mission, you often don't receive the kind of funds you ideally require. You are left trying to figure out how the individual jigsaw puzzle pieces can fit together across different sector and functional accounts. You may be caught in a straitjacket but you can create that bigger change.

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Q: Okay. So, you arrived and there was at least one program going on in-country, the community development program being implemented by PACT. Then, you had to decide what else you were going to do?

MILLIGAN: Yes. Besides the PACT program, there was limited work in HIV/AIDs and very limited governance work as well. We didn't have much time to figure out a strategic approach. We had to decide what we were going to do and had to be very quick about it.

And figure out how to get resources quickly. Our budget cycle takes 4 years to get funds to the missions and we needed to respond quickly to windows of opportunity. The agency was so lucky to have Nisha Biswal as the head of the Asia bureau. She was masterful at bringing the agency together and leveraging the right strategic resources for Burma. Back in Yangon, we crafted a strategic approach that incorporated and adjusted the existing programs in a targeted manner to best advance Burma's democratic and economic reforms. There were offers of assistance that we had to turn down, many activities that would have been nice to do, but not essential. We had to stay focused and preserve our bandwidth for only the most strategic interventions. I say this because we did not have a development focus in Burma. This surprised some. As our staff grew, I'd sit our new colleagues down and say, "We are not doing development in Burma." This left them a little confused at first. "What do you mean, we're not doing development work? I explained to them that Burma is still a military authoritarian government, and that we were not doing development work but rather using the tool of development to promote democratic and economic reforms. If and when those reforms are successful, we may have legitimate government to work with and then we could broaden our scope. Opening up the USAID mission was not without controversy in the United States. Quite a few Burma Watchers, human rights groups focused on Burma, opposed reestablishing diplomatic relations and any assistance program. Their fear was that we would be inadvertently legitimizing the military government. They thought we were pawns and that we didn't understand that we were being played. While I understand their point of view, these groups were not on the ground in Burma. Many across Burma cautiously welcomed the reforms as well as the support we could provide to deepen them. We consulted extensively with civil society and local organizations on everything we did. This is why we had a reform strategy not a development strategy.

Q: And so, what were the core elements of the strategy to do that?

MILLIGAN: Our assumption was that Burma's transition to an elected democratic government had to produce social and economic benefits to the Burmese people or the reforms would not be sustained. While we focused on democratic reforms, electoral support, political party development, human rights and civil society/media, our 127 programming also included support for economic reforms and improved health service. Approximately seventy-five percent of the population was dependent upon agriculture. Therefore, an agriculture program should be a key part of our reform strategy. In Burma at that time, farmers had no choice. The government instructed them what to plant and it was almost always rice. If a farmer planted anything else, a government official would have the crops ripped out. Not only did we focus on agriculture to boost incomes and therefore sustain momentum for reforms, but we also ensured the programs strengthened democratic principles. I'll give you an example of what that means. One of the innovative

programs incorporated the principle of farmer's choice of what to plant and when. The program worked with the Rice Institute in the Philippines. The Rice Institute staff would pilot different rice strains in test plots with farmers. Some were drought or flood resistant; others were more salt tolerant. Some produced more rice or had a tasty flavor. The farmers would vote on which rice strain was the best. That idea was revolutionary in Burma at that time, that farmers' opinion mattered. One of the reforms that occurred with our support was a ministerial reform that allowed farmers to plant what they deemed best. This made a lot of sense given that Burma has many different eco-systems, from the Irrawaddy delta to the highlands, from the tropical areas to the Dry-Zone. As I mentioned, farmers in Burma were not allowed to choose what crop to grow in their fields. This was dictated by the government. Burma had a proud history as a leader in Southeast Asia. It was considered the rice bowl of Asia, particularly in the fifties. The military government wanted to reclaim that sense of pride and instructed farmers to grow rice and even what rice to grow. The idea that farmers had a choice was revolutionary. What appeared to be a simple agriculture project had the message that your voice matters. You can vote on what matters. To figure out where to begin on agricultural reforms, we were lucky to have some great minds from Michigan State University to help us and the Burmese think through options. Engaging with the government was not easy at that time. The embassy was in Yangon and ministries were based in the capital of Naypyidaw. That was a five-hour car ride on a very crude and dangerous highway. There were no flights to the capital early in my tenure. Eventually, there would be. Engaging on reforms required spending a lot of time in the car driving up to meet with government counterparts.

Q: Now, how would you have picked that place to work? Was it because there was some receptivity from the military governors there? Is that how you chose to work in that area?

MILLIGAN: It was because it would ultimately strengthen momentum to sustain reforms. Democracy must produce a dividend. We have seen democratic reform movements sputter out when they do not produce changes that improve communities' welfare. A focus on agriculture which employed about seventy-five percent of the population was a no-brainer. Early and key reforms in the agricultural sector could produce a quick boost to the economy and people would feel that change in their lives.

Q: So, now you earlier mentioned that PPL had devised a system of transition strategy planning, but you did not follow that format in Burma. You instead did a strategy framework paper that laid out the priorities of what you would be doing to contribute to democratic and economic reform. Is that right?

MILLIGAN: We developed a strategic framework that laid out the objectives and included immediate results.

We did not have the ability to draft a 200-page CDCS which could have been quickly obsolete in such a fluid operating environment. The elections were scheduled for 2015. This was 2012. We had no idea if the military would reverse course or even if the elections would be conducted legitimately.

Q: Was most of your democracy funding related to supporting the election?

MILLIGAN: Supporting the elections was essential. Particularly since the country did not have the processes and capacities required for credible elections. We moved quickly to place a team of technical experts with the election commission and begin political party strengthening and election monitoring support. Besides this, we initiated a civil society and media strengthening program. OTI worked on important governance issues, with an emphasis on the national peace process. The relationship between the mission's offices and OTI was excellent. It was symbiotic. Many times, I realized that our traditional USAID program needed to incorporate lessons from OTI, such as flexible programming and feedback loops. OTI funding helped fill transition-related gaps that our programs could not support for one reason or another. True teamwork.

Q: Was OTI there before you were?

MILLIGAN: Yes.

Q: Oh, okay. I still don't quite get the notion of both being there at the same time.

MILLIGAN: World-wide, although OTI does operate in a few non-presence countries, most of its programs are in countries with established USAID missions. In Burma, there was a specific need and defined role for OTI, particularly for peace building. As I mentioned, the longest civil wars of our time were in Burma, such as the Karen civil war, the Shan civil war etc. OTI, headed up by Jessica Davey, led USAID's support to the complex peace process as well as targeted support for civil society. This complemented the democracy and governance programming; FHI 360 managed the civil society and media strengthening program, IFES, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems work closely with the electoral commission, IRI's (International Republican Institute) support for political party development, and NDI's (National Democratic Institute) assistance to Burma's parliament and election monitoring.

Q: For some AID missions there often is a lot of contact with non-governmental experts or even diaspora groups in the U.S. I don't know if it's because some countries provoke strong interest or it's the receptivity of AID missions themselves. But I would think it

would have been valuable for you to have that kind of contact whenever you came back to Washington.

MILLIGAN: Yes. It was. Nisha arranged introductory meetings for me with these groups before I even went out to Burma. The story of Burma inspires many people. For them, it is more than a country, it has been a cause. Many have worked on the cause of Burma for their entire lives. They are passionate about it and are quite invested. Sometimes, we need to take a step back and see Burma as a country and not just a cause—as a deeply fractured country that has little experience with effective democratic governance. Remember that Burma was a military empire, the largest in Southeast Asia. Then the country was taken over in tranches by the British and administered as a colony from India. Following independence, it went through successive authoritarian military governments. Burma is still a deeply fractured country that in the past has been held together by military authoritarianism rather than by a process of democratic nation-building. Burmese human rights leaders such as Aung San Suu Kyi are inspiring. I think many allowed themselves to believe that if only she were released from prison, then Burma would be a cohesive and vibrant democracy.

Q: Yes, right, right.

MILLIGAN: Perhaps that is why when the election of Aung San Suu Kyi also revealed the fractures in Burmese society and some were disappointed. They asked how could a human rights icon not speak out on behalf of the Rohingya? How could a human rights icon have a difficult relationship with civil society organizations? As committed development professionals, we can allow ourselves to have a romantic vision for our work, even more so for such inspiring places like Burma, and then, be disappointed.

BURUNDI

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR DAWN LIBERI
U.S. Ambassador
Gitega, Burundi
(2013-2016)

Ambassador Dawn Liberi was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She studied at Hampshire College for her undergraduate degree and University of California Berkeley for her masters degree. She joined USAID in 1980, and served in Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and as the Ambassador to Burundi. She was interviewed by Mark Tauber in January 2017.

Topical Focus: Burundian Student Uprisings and Political Crises/Violence Pre-2015 Presidential Election

LIBERI: Right. It's a bit of a long history, but I'll try to condense it. Originally, Burundi was a kingdom, ruled by a series of kings, and then became a Belgian colony. Eventually it moved to a system of leadership that was variously governed by military, and then civilian leaders. A lot of its history involved the Tutsi minority being in power over a Hutu majority. Eventually in 1993 there was a democratic election. President Ndadaye was the first democratically elected president, and the first Hutu. Unfortunately, about three months later he was assassinated, and that sparked the civil war. There was a big outcry of the Hutus saying, "Our president had been killed."

Q: Uh-huh.

LIBERI: The civil war began and continued for 12 years. Many of the Hutus who were rebels went into the bush (countryside) and began a guerrilla warfare. There were a lot of reprisals back and forth on both sides.

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: A lot of Tutsis were then targeted for assassination because it was felt that they had caused the assassination that sparked the civil war. During this 12-year period there

were atrocities - a lot of atrocities on both sides. Many of the educated Tutsis started leaving because they felt they were being targeted. The Tutsis were the more educated group and they were the more economically prosperous in business. At one point, if anyone was seen wearing glasses, it was just assumed that they were intellectual Tutsis and they got attacked. Reprisals escalated back and forth. It became a very bloody civil war. Many Hutus were killed in the process because they were assumed to be rebels and hunted down. The military was basically governed by the Tutsi at that point.

This is a very synopsized version. The layers and layers of history and background are so deep it would take a while to go into all of it, but that's basically what happened. During this time there were various efforts at peace accords and they kept falling apart. Then finally when Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa, and subsequently stepped down, he became the "eminence grise" on the continent and the broker of peace in different countries. He, and the government in South Africa served as a mediator, and established a dialogue in Arusha, Tanzania, the headquarters of the East African Community (EAC). Burundi is a member of the East African Community and eventually an accord was signed in August 2000, which was called the Arusha Peace Accord. Nelson Mandela and President Bill Clinton were signatories. So the United States helped to mediate the Accord, as a direct response to the genocide in Rwanda. The atrocities in Rwanda left many people - particularly the U.S., and President Clinton - feeling like not enough had been done to intervene in the 1994 genocide. So President Clinton was instrumental in helping to broker peace in Burundi.

After the Accord was signed, a determination was made by Burundi to have democratic representation. There were several transitional governments between 2000-2005 and one of the leading rebel figures at that point - who turned into the key civilian leader - was Pierre Nkurunziza, who subsequently became the Presidential candidate of least divisiveness. He had become leader of the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy) rebel group turned political party, and was a candidate that people could agree upon, let's put it that way.

Q: Uh-huh. The least objectionable.

LIBERI: The least objectionable, that's a good way to put it. Burundi established a constitution in March 2005, which was important generally for the country, and specifically because it established a two-term presidential limit. Local administrative and Parliamentary elections took place between June-September 2005, and CNDD-FDD won both elections. Nkurinziza ran unopposed as a Presidential candidate and was elected to the position by the Parliament. This was subsequently used as an argument to say that wasn't a direct election, and that Parliament had selected Nkurunziza as the leader. In

2005 he had one term, and in 2010 a second term. As 2015 elections approached, he claimed that, “The first election was not direct, so I really have only served one term directly elected in 2010, and 2015 will be my second actual direct election.” All along there had been an interpretation that he had already served two terms, and the western world maintained that interpretation, contrary to what he was now claiming. In fact, Senator Russ Feingold, who by that time had become the Great Lakes Envoy under President Obama, was shuttling back and forth for discussions of the 2015 election. At a certain point he said to Nkurunziza, “Yes, but Mr. President, how many times have you been sworn in as president? Twice. Which by definition means that this would be a third term.”

Q: Right.

LIBERI: That didn’t go well with Nkurunziza. This issue had been brewing for a while, and when I arrived at post, I had to deal with circumstances that had already occurred. The opposition parties had boycotted the 2010 elections, because they thought the elections were not going to be free and fair. They felt they didn’t actually have an opportunity to campaign and that the odds were stacked against them. They claimed that Nkurunziza had blocked any opportunity for a real opposition candidate to campaign and build up a constituency. There were also a lot of parties vying for the election. To counter this proliferation, some in the ruling party claimed, “ Of the 22 ‘political’ parties, there are really only five that matter,” and tried to disenfranchise the rest. They further claimed that not all parties should have equal access to government funds to carry out campaigning and hold rallies – as had been designated in the constitution, to establish a level playing field. Political parties protested. My predecessor, Ambassador Slutz, had correctly pleaded with the opposition, as did many others, to say, “You’ve got to stay in the game. If you boycott, then by definition there’s only one candidate and one party”

Q: Right.

LIBERI: Unfortunately, they protested, then boycotted the elections. So from 2010 on, there was basically one ruling party. The opposition had essentially exiled themselves.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: So in the lead up to the 2015 elections, there was not a level playing field because opposition parties were not really present. There was also a concern that elements of the civil war would emerge because the population felt their needs were not being represented and might start to factionalize. All of this was the background for my four-year tenure in Burundi. I, along with the rest of the international community,

inherited a political situation where there was no sitting opposition, and it was very clear that the organs of democratic institutions were not really in place because there were essentially no checks and balances. Given the lack of opposition parties, the Parliament wasn't fully representative of the population. There were certain elements of 120 representation, but essentially the political process started consolidating to become a oneparty state, and the ruling party was getting used to its control. No one wants to give up power, I don't care where you are. No one wants to give up power.

This was the backdrop to starting my tenure in January 2013. We, the donors, the international community, were trying to establish a political dialogue or "Road Map" that would enable opposition members to return from overseas and start engaging in the political process. The emphasis of the political road map was to establish "terms of engagement." How could political parties come back without repercussions? How could they be reestablished? How could they gain access to some funding to enable them to get out to campaign?

The UN sent the Secretary General's envoy, the senior representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) who was Parfait Onanga-Anyanga. He was from Gabon and had worked with Ban Ki Moon in New York. As the SRSG representative in Burundi, he helped lead negotiations for many of the political issues. We in the international community collaborated to help ensure that a genuine political process would take place. Unfortunately, things started to go awry because the process broke down. First of all, many in the political opposition started crying foul, stating they were being closed down and not able to meet or assemble. Anytime they tried to gather, the police would come and break them up. There was some violence, and candidates of opposition parties as well as their supporters felt like they were being targeted. There was often evidence that targeting was occurring. The government, of course denied all of this, saying that the parties were not adhering to the rules, that they hadn't asked for their assembly permits in time, etc. The usual back and forth.

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: During this time, the international community was trying to convince Nkurunziza that the right thing for him to do was step aside. The argument was that the CNDD-FDD ruling party should have another candidate, since he had served two terms.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: There was a very long excruciating process of Nkurinziza essentially saying, "No, I wasn't elected directly the first time, this is my second election." He got the

Constitutional Court to side with him even though their original vote was to uphold the Constitution and vote against a third term. I'll talk more about that because I had a lot of personal interaction in terms of what really happened and how the decision got changed. The African Union became involved in the issue as well as the East African Commission. One of the reasons this was so important was that Burundi was the first test cast for upcoming elections in the rest of the Great Lakes.

Q: Ah.

LIBERI: In terms of timing, Burundi was the first election. Shortly thereafter would be Rwanda, Congo, Uganda, and then Kenya. Kenya had its own political issues. Tanzania was in the process of going through elections, which turned out to be a good process.

Q: Uh-huh.

LIBERI: In Kenya, there were concerns because of the violence that had taken place in the previous presidential election, so everyone was watching that very closely.

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: In Burundi, everyone was very concerned because of the precedent that it set, and because of the potential for violence. There was a real potential to spark off violence in the rest of the region. We know from our history, the Great Lakes, the civil wars in the Congo, etc. are the longest running civil wars, certainly in sub-Saharan Africa, and in recent modern history.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: The United States was leading the charge to guard against violence. It was very clear under the Obama administration, under National Security Advisor Susan Rice, and Samantha Power, who was U.S. Ambassador to the UN, that everyone was very, very concerned about the potential for ethnic violence.

Prior to my departure for Burundi, when Samantha Power was still at the NSC, she asked if I would work with the Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) to have Burundi serve as the first case study to analyze the potential for mass ethnic violence. I agreed and a team came out to conduct an in-depth analysis of potential triggers for violence and identified elections – particularly Nkurinziza running for a third term – as a key trigger. As a result of this analysis Burundi remained a priority country for the NSC, more so than it would have under normal circumstances. Consequently, we were also able to petition the State

Department and USAID for additional democracy and governance funding. This included support to the Electoral Commission and other election related activities, training for journalists and civil society organizations, and monitoring of violence against opposition parties/candidates, including ethnically based hate crimes. Prior to working with the APB, there had been little to no funding allocated to these activities.

Q: Sure.

LIBERI: The U.S. policy was clear in terms of the two-term limit, and not supporting a third term for Nkurunziza. We weren't saying that the CNDD-FDD couldn't run. Obviously they could, by selecting a different candidate. That would maintain the integrity of the democratic process, and avoid any ethnic violence that might occur.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: At this point the Tutsis were feeling very disenfranchised, and many started to leave the country. Interestingly however, over time the majority opposition to a third term became Hutu. Even within Nkurunziza's party, within the CNDD-FDD itself.

Q: Interesting.

LIBERI: A main reason for internal opposition was that in places like Burundi there is almost no private sector, so the only way to have a job is to work for the government. The only way to have power is to be part of the ruling party.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: The only way to have a patronage system is for you to be in power. So even if you personally want to leave an elected position, your family, your tribe, your clan, does not want you to, since they are on the receiving end of the benefits. There became an internal struggle because at that point many members within his own party thought, "Okay, Nkurinziza and his family have benefited long enough, now it's our turn." We were cognizant of the fact that a lot of the opposition weren't there because they were becoming the George Washington's of the country, favoring democratic representation. They also wanted power. An interesting anecdote is that at one point when I was meeting Nkurunziza I said, "Mr. President, please understand, this is not a personal issue. The U.S. isn't against you. However, you're at a moment in time where there are two models to follow in Africa. Either you can follow the Mandela model (stepping down after one term). Or the Mugabe model (remaining in power for over thirty years)

Q: Uh-huh.

LIBERI: He looked at me and said, “Mandela is dead, Mugabe is still alive and ruling.” (Mugabe was subsequently overthrown in 2017).

Q: Oh my goodness.

LIBERI: I thought to myself “Well, I guess that answers that, doesn’t it?”

Q: Wow.

LIBERI: So that’s the attitude we were dealing with. There was also a real sense on the part of the CNDD-FDD that they were not getting the respect that they deserved. In their minds they had fought the civil war and believed remaining in power was their just reward. Interestingly, even though Nkurinziza became the leader of the party during the peace process, the CNDD-FDD actually didn’t sign the Arusha accords. They were one of the rebel groups that didn’t sign. Their attitude was, “You know what? That wasn’t our agreement.” However, it was the internationally sanctioned peace accord and the agreement that brought them to power. I would point that out to them and say, “Well, technically you didn’t sign it, however it is what brought you to power.”

Q: Right.

LIBERI: We had some very frank discussions about this, which they didn’t want to hear. Of course, all behind closed doors. I would say to Nkurinziza, “Mr. President, the U.S. policy is not a personal issue against you. It is for the process of democracy in your country. If you feel that the party is so strong, and that you have delivered all the benefits to the population that you say you have, then the party can identify other leadership.”

Q: Right, and you’ll contest the election and win again.

LIBERI: Exactly - but no, he didn’t want to hear that.

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: The process of convincing Nkurinziza to step down wasn’t going very well. At one point, Assistant Secretary for Africa, Linda Thomas-Greenfield and Ambassador Samantha Power (at that point U.S. Ambassador to the U.N.) came to meet with Nkurinziza. We discussed the third term and other issues with him for a long time, very diplomatically. At one point Samantha said to him “Mr. President we’ve been here for

two hours listening to your point of view, however, have you heard anything we've had to say?!" He replied "Tell President Obama it was good of him to recognize Burundi's contribution to the AMISOM peace keeping process in Somalia" – essentially dismissing the U.S. concerns about third term issues. It was a diplomatic insult, and they were both furious! I said to them afterwards "Welcome to my world – this is often the kind of tone deaf response Nkurinziza gives when he doesn't want to hear something." I had been reporting on my meetings with Nkurinziza that had similar outcomes, however until they experienced it firsthand, I think leadership in DC thought I may not have been delivering the U.S. policy message forcefully enough. Witnessing his response directly put things in perspective!

Q: Right.

LIBERI: There were founding members of the CNDD-FDD who had been fighting together in the bush. On one hand they had this real bond. On the other hand they all also knew where the bodies were buried, literally, and had a lot of dirt on each other. Things sort of came apart at the seams when members of the ruling party, including founding members started to turn against Nkurunziza. They tried to use their own internal process to move him out, but it didn't work. Eventually they all wound up fleeing, essentially leaving the country, because Nkurinziza saw them as traitors and went after them. His own vice-president and other senior, founding members of the party left.

It became pretty ugly rather fast. It started resembling a dictatorship rather than a participatory process of government. From January to mid-April 2015 radio stations were shut down, the independent press was muzzled, human rights activists and political opposition members were imprisoned, and some even killed. Throughout this period there were mass demonstrations against Nkurinziza's third term. Then a couple of crucial events happened. Nkurinziza was nominated on April 25 as the CNDD-FDD party candidate for President. There was an immediate challenge to this and the case was referred to the Constitutional Court for a ruling.

Q: Uh-huh.

LIBERI: The Court was meeting secretly, however leaks were occurring and we had heard that the initial majority vote was that Nkurinziza wasn't eligible to run for a third term. Even though the decision was "secret," everyone knew. That decision was made on Thursday April 30, and was scheduled to be announced Friday May 1, however it got delayed. The trajectory of events over the next two weeks was extraordinary.

There were demonstrations on Friday May 1 in anticipation of the Constitutional Court's decision and the University was immediately closed. Students started getting harassed by the police and several were arrested. I had Assistant Secretary of State Malinowski visiting from Washington to meet with President Nkurinziza and reiterate Washington's concerns about human rights abuses and the potential for ethnic violence leading up to the elections. He was the head of DRL (the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor).

Q: Wow, just as this was happening?

LIBERI: Just as the student issue was developing I was hosting a dinner for him at the residence. This was all happening very fast.

Q: Uh-huh.

LIBERI: There were various ministers there, and we were discussing democracy and human rights issues with some of the key leadership of Burundi. Then the RSO (Regional Security Officer) appeared in the doorway. She was a former Marine, very professional. I had an all-female RSO security team. She knew I was hosting an official dinner with the Assistant Secretary and would never show up unannounced unless there were a major issue.

Q: Yes, of course, right.

LIBERI: As soon as I saw her I thought, "Oh, this is not good. Whatever it is, it is not good."

Q: Right.

LIBERI: She came in very quietly and said, "Ambassador, I really need to speak with you." I said, "I'm sure you do." So I went outside, and she said, "The students were disbanded and chased out of the university." I said, "Yes, I heard" Then she said, "Well, they are all at the Embassy seeking asylum."

Q: Oh, my God.

LIBERI: I said, "How many?" She said, "Oh, about 600, at least." They had shown up at the Embassy because they were being chased and persecuted and we found out later that some were being followed into their villages, and a few of them had been killed. It was a very unfortunate issue. The Embassy was not that far from the university so they came to

the Embassy for safety. At that point I was thinking, “Great - I have the Assistant Secretary here, and 600 students are outside the Embassy gates all clamoring to get in!” The students weren’t putting a siege on the Embassy, however it was a pretty big gathering. I immediately got on the phone to alert Washington. As I was dialing, the RSO said “The press are also starting to show up.”

Q: Oh, my God.

LIBERI: By this time everyone was starting to report the issue and it was already on BBC, and Agence France-Presse, and then CNN. I went back to the dinner and pulled the Assistant Secretary aside and said, “Look, I have to go to the Embassy.” He said, “Oh, I’ll come with you.” I thought that this was going to be very, very dicey but he wanted to join me so I agreed. I also told the RSO “we have to have increased security. Let the marines know in case we have to get into the Embassy very quickly and close the gates behind us. “I need you guys to be ready.” I told Malinowski, that I had to go immediately, because as Ambassador the best thing I could do now is be with the students.. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, was the first person I alerted in Washington “Listen, so that you hear it first from me, we have 600 students outside the Embassy.” She asked, “What are you going to do?” I said, “I’m going to go meet with the students.” “Well, are you sure that that’s safe?” I said, “No, I’m not sure it’s safe, but I have to do it.”

Q: Right.

LIBERI: I emphasized “I have to do it. I have to meet with the students and listen to them.” I went to the Embassy, and of course by now there were a lot of press, and it was pretty chaotic. I went into the middle of the crowd and started shaking peoples’ hands, and said, “I need to speak with your leadership. Who organized this?”

Q: Right.

LIBERI: I told the students, “No one will be hurt, you have my word. I’ve already spoken to the Vice-President, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Foreign affairs.” I had called the officials and said, “You have a problem on your hands.” Every one of them said to me “No, you have a problem.” I said, “Oh, thanks very much.”

Q: Wow.

LIBERI: Yes. They weren’t happy with the U.S. policy, and they said, “Well, you’re always talking about democracy, so now this is what happens.” “You can have the 126

students on your doorstep." They, unfortunately, were no help whatsoever. I thought, "This is great." So I said, "Well, look, if you're not going to help that's fine, but do not come near the Embassy with police force, military force, or anything." The students were basically on the perimeter of U.S. government property even though they were outside the gates. I told the government "you will have the biggest international incident if anything happens to them." "I'm going to meet with them now, so keep all of the security forces away." Which they did, since I also called the chief of police directly and said, "Do not show up, because this could be a blood bath."

Q: Oh, easily, easily.

LIBERI: At least I got that much of an agreement from the government and was able to let the students know. I met with the student body leadership and said "I understand your concerns. You're safe here, however the U.S. can't offer you asylum, that's not how this works. However, you can stay here while we try to find out what the next steps are." Then I said "You see all these security cameras here? These cameras will make sure that you're kept safe because everything is on film. It's being recorded. At the same time, these cameras will tell me if you do anything to anybody. So the only way that you're staying here is if you are peaceful, if you don't harass anybody, if there are no issues." "Because if there are issues" I warned "The normal diplomatic protocol for this kind of situation is for me to call the military or the police and have you rounded up and arrested."

Q: Of course, right.

LIBERI: I said, "I'm not going to do that, I don't want to do that, but if anything gets out of hand I might have to. So please stay peaceful."

Q: Uh-huh.

LIBERI: And they did remain peaceful. That was the good news. The not so great news was they stayed for about six weeks!

Q: Wow! Oh my God.

LIBERI: Getting back to the Constitutional Court decision, the justices of the Court "got visited" by members of the ruling party over the weekend. We started hearing rumors that the vote had changed and the Court would rule that running for a third term was legal. In the meantime a number of us were trying to find out what was going on. I had heard that the Vice-President of the Constitutional Court – Sylvere Nimpagaritse was in hiding, so I

called him and he secretly came to the residence on Sunday May 3. He said to me "I voted no from the beginning, as did most of the other members of the court. Then members started changing their votes, because they were being threatened by the ruling party. If we did not give the third term a green light, we were going to be in 127 trouble. But I kept to my vote. In my soul and conscience I decided not to put my signature to a ruling, a decision which is clearly not lawful that would be imposed from the outside, and which has nothing legal about it." Eventually he became the only person who voted no.

Q: Wow.

LIBERI: Then he looked at me. He was a very brave man, a very good guy. You can imagine the extraordinary pressure that he was under. He just broke down in tears and said, "Oh, my God. I don't care about my life, but they're going to come after my entire family now." He was visibly frightened.

Q: Sure.

LIBERI: The weight of everything was just overwhelming for him. I told him "You're on U.S. Government property here in my residence. We can't give you asylum or anything like that, however you can stay here for the next few hours until we get this organized and have a plan to get you and your family out of the country." It was like a movie, figuring out how to get him into different cars and whisk him to certain meet up places. That's what you have to do. In the end, he bravely fled late that night with his family and escaped over the border into Rwanda, just before being recognized and pursued by Burundian border guards – it was a close call.

Q: That's a cut and dried case. I mean, I can't imagine anybody is going to say, "No, you don't really sound like somebody who has a reasonable expectation of persecution in your native country."

LIBERI: The case was clear.

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: Even prior to his visit, I had worked closely with Assistant Secretary Malinowski and his staff to assist human rights activists and others who were being targeted. Without getting into all of the details, there was a mechanism in place we could use to help get people out of the country. Since we had a great relationship with DRL, we were able to call on their assistance.

Q: Ah.

LIBERI: Under pressure from the ruling party, the remainder of the Constitutional Court ruled on Tuesday May 5 that it was legal for Nkurinziza to run for a third term. Tensions remained high, violence and protests continued with severe crackdown from the police. On May 13, Nkurinziza traveled to Tanzania for the East Africa Commission (EAC) 13th Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State. While he was out of the country, there was an attempted coup d'état!

The coup attempt was led by General Godefroid Niyombare, who had been a member of Nkurinziza's coalition serving as the Army Chief of Staff, and most recently had been the Burundian Ambassador to Kenya. He was brought back to Burundi to head the intelligence services (SNR – Service National de Renseignement). SNR kept tabs on the population and was believed to be in charge of the Imbonerakure – technically the youth arm of the CNDD-FDD. In reality they were a militia responsible for torturing and killing opposition members and human rights activists. For years, the population feared the previous head of SNR - General Adolphe (Nshimirimana) - which was the perfect name for him.

Q: Beautiful.

LIBERI: He was the muscle, the man behind the scenes responsible for ordering many of the assassinations. Political opposition members and their families were targeted, and either jailed or killed. It became a very difficult environment and the violence went on for months. Shockingly, General Adolphe himself was assassinated, prompting General Niyombare's return.

Q: Wow.

LIBERI: Everyone thought General Adolphe's death would take the lid off and the political situation would unravel, because he had been the enforcer in chief, keeping the political opposition under control. There was a concern about significant ethnic violence erupting. While that didn't happen at the levels anticipated, there were lots of cleavages. Opponents to Nkurinziza , even from his own party, started to go into different camps. Over time, this included General Niyombare who publicly opposed a third term and consequently was fired by Nkurinziza.

Q: Ah. Okay.

LIBERI: Around noon on May 13 staff came running into my office "Ambassador, Ambassador, you have to listen to what's going on – what's being said on the radio." So I went to the lobby and joined the staff who were listening. General Niyombare had taken over a radio station and was saying "I have dismissed the President and the Government has been dissolved. I am calling on citizens to remain calm, and urge all to respect the lives and property of others. The airport and all borders of the country have been closed." I thought, "Oh, my goodness." It was clear what was going on, even though he was not calling it a coup. If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck.

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: When he got off the radio station I called him on his cell and said "General Niyombare was that really you making that announcement? What is this – what are your intentions?"

I said to him very specifically, " General, let me be very clear about this, under U.S. law, if this is a coup of any sort, not just a military coup - any taking over of power nondemocratically - all U.S. assistance will stop immediately. That includes everything. All the military assistance, all the equipment, all the training, all the education, all the health care." I said, "Everything. Our budget will stop immediately. So think very carefully about what you are doing." He said, "Well, um. My sister, I haven't called it a coup…. Yes, this is a movement…" And he said something to the effect that the people would decide. In other words, it would be a popular groundswell.

Q: Hmm

LIBERI: Then he said, "Everyone now knows it was me making the announcement – the military and police are storming the radio station and I'm about to get shot, so I have to go!" He was now on the run, it was a shootout. Then of course, it was chaos. Things can go bad very quickly. At this point it wasn't clear what the outcome would be. From a security standpoint we had to be very careful, and I had to close the Embassy immediately. All security measures had to be taken. I then called the Army Chief of Staff General Prime Niyongabo, as well as the Vice President, and asked both of them "So what are you going to do?"

I added, "You have to be very careful because if you start killing citizens, this will not end well." It was clear they had been caught off guard, and were evaluating what steps to take next. Meanwhile, we could hear celebrations going on in the streets. People were dancing and in fact many were happy to have Nkurinziza overthrown, because there was widespread opposition to his running for a third term. General Niyombare had said he

was advocating for peaceful, positive change in Burundi, hoping to put an end to the violence. He hadn't used the word "coup" at all. I think he thought that there would be popular support for removing Nkurunziza in a non-violent way,

Q: Right.

LIBERI: Because something similar had just happened in Burkina Faso.

Q: Uh-huh.

LIBERI: In Burkina Faso there wasn't a coup, but rather a popular uprising to oust the former president and have a new leader come in. Essentially the popular support was so strong that the military didn't have to crack down. It was a transition process that took place. I think General Niyombare believed the same would happen in Burundi. In fact, for the first 12 hours it seemed like it might have gone that way. However, people still weren't sure, and the Army Chief of Staff General Niyongabo, was quite good and well respected. I think everyone was trying to see where loyalties were going to fall, within the power struggle.

When the dust settled, which side were you on? Everyone knew there were going to be repercussions, one way or another. I also think there hadn't been enough preparation for a popular movement. People were very suppressed and had been living in fear because of the targeted killings. I think the potential coup/takeover took everyone by surprise. Even though there was a lot of jubilation in the streets, I would say the machinery for such a popular movement was not quite there.

Q: Un-huh.

LIBERI: Unfortunately innocent lives are lost in that type of situation, and it is very easy to lose international support. The key issue and priority for me was security. At this point bullets were flying in the city and I had to make sure everyone was safe. As Ambassador you are responsible for the safety and security of everyone under Chief of Mission authority

Q: Sure.

LIBERI: It was very hard, particularly for families with young children because we had to pull everyone out of the schools immediately. We had to literally round up everyone in armored vehicles, do a head count, make sure everyone was safe and accounted for.

Obviously I was on the phone very quickly to Washington waking everyone up because of the seven hour time difference.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: By this time it was all over CNN and the international news. It was being reported as a fluid situation, unclear who was in charge. The international community had hoped there was still an opportunity for the leadership of the East African Community to strike a deal, find a soft landing and convince Nkutinziza to leave the Presidency and not run again. A key purpose of the Heads of State meeting was to outline alternatives that would be better for him and the country. Unfortunately that didn't happen.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: The coup attempt, violence, and rapidly declining security situation called for evacuation of the Embassy ASAP, working very closely with Washington. It was no longer safe for the majority of staff and families to remain in Burundi. A special task force was set up at the State Department to coordinate efforts. We identified Embassy Rwanda as the closest safe haven to evacuate to, and I worked closely with Ambassador Barks-Ruggles to synchronize efforts. Since the airport and all the borders were closed, we had to determine the safest way to evacuate. Working with Washington, we determined that as soon as the airport was open, we would have charter flights come in.

A major concern was the escalating fighting between government forces and General Niyombare's group, which continued between May 13-15. I had closed the Embassy since it was near the epicenter of the fighting and dangerous to attempt going in and out. All families were sheltering in place at their homes, and we maintained continuous security checks. I was conducting EAC (Emergency Action Committee) meetings at my residence as we planned the evacuation. However, the Vice-President lived in the house next to me, so I had to be very careful. My compound was surrounded by military at all times, so I could be very protected or in the line of fire!

Q: Wow. Wow.

LIBERI: We were the first ones to declare that we were evacuating. Everyone follows the U.S., so as soon as we make a determination, everyone else says, "We're evacuating as well." The UN and most embassies were now trying to get their people out too.

Q: Right, right.

LIBERI: The U.S. also has international agreements for evacuations. So, I was getting calls from Ambassadors in surrounding countries. In addition to the Canadians and Australians who we have agreements with, suddenly we had the Turks and the Japanese as well. Many nationalities showed up to get evacuated, after we prioritized getting all Americans out. My team was great, they were just terrific. Because it's exhausting.

Q: Oh, of course.

LIBERI: On Sunday May 17 we took six planeloads of people out on chartered flights, and only one and a half of the planeloads were U.S. citizens. We really worked to assist people to evacuate since it's very disruptive for everyone. There were families with babies and animals, and we wound up driving the animals separately to Rwanda. It was an extraordinary process. If you haven't been through an evacuation I can tell you, this is very difficult - extremely difficult. We were lucky that it went smoothly. I worked very closely with Burundian authorities to ensure security because anything can go wrong, particularly in a fluid situation like that.

Q: Absolutely.

LIBERI: The security situation remained very, very tense as the fighting continued. By this time Nkurinziza had returned from Tanzania and was trying to re-establish control over the country, and arrest the coup plotters. However there was a big black eye for the country, because the international community was evacuating.

Q: And you get a travel warning issued by the State Department.

LIBERI: Yes. The UN and the EU were concerned about the travel warning, since they often use different decision making processes. For me, the biggest issue was the security of the staff and their families and getting everyone out safely, Post-Benghazi, the attitude is very, very conservative. Washington wants everyone out now, that's it. I was on the phone to Undersecretary Pat Kennedy and it was very clear, the National Security Council was very concerned about the situation.. All eyes are on you because even though Burundi was a small country it was very volatile. No one wants, God forbid, a casualty of any sort.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: So it was a very tense and difficult time, particularly after the evacuation trying to run the Embassy with a very reduced staff, where everyone was doing two or three

jobs, and we didn't know how long working with reduced staff was going to last. In addition, we still had hundreds of students camped outside the Embassy gates!

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: I met with the students all the time and they continued to have very unrealistic expectations. Having witnessed the evacuation, they were still hoping I would put them on a plane for the United States, and then their families would join them. They had all these scenarios in mind. I kept saying diplomatically, but clearly, "Read my lips, that is not going to happen. This is not the way the situation works. You all really need to be finding alternatives at this point, because you can't stay here indefinitely." Of course, we sent out water and helped them from a humanitarian standpoint. Interestingly, in the middle of the night people would come and leave them food and help support them. Officially however, I couldn't get the government to do anything.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: We worked with the Red Cross, and our UN colleagues to assist the students. While sympathetic, my ambassadorial colleagues would look at me and say, "Better you than us! How's it going? Oh, we hear you've become the chancellor of the university now!"

Q: Right.

LIBERI: It remained a very dicey situation. Of course when it first happened, leadership in Washington was very concerned and said, "Fix this." I said, "I'm trying to, but I don't have many options."

Q: Right.

LIBERI: It was a very interesting lesson in diplomacy and how to defuse a situation. Several times it could have gotten out of hand very quickly. The main reason it didn't I think was because of the understanding on both sides. I met with the students continuously, reiterating my message: "Look, I'm not disbanding you because I'm bringing in the police and that would result in a lot of violence. Basically they were staging a protest against human rights abuses and Nkurinziza running for a third term. I said, "We understand that you want democracy. But you have to be looking for alternatives to just staying here outside the Embassy." They were young and naïve thinking if they stayed there long enough something would be done for them to be granted asylum – even if not in the U.S.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: They always had a long list of issues, however one was actually very important. They said, "We can't go anywhere because all of our stipends have been cut off. We can't get back to our villages because we have no money and we can't contact our families." So I negotiated with the government to have their stipends reinstated.

Q: Okay.

LIBERI: It took a while for that to happen and when the stipends were reinstated I pointed out they could leave "Okay, now you can go."

Q: Right, you've got your money back.

LIBERI: Yes - you've got your money. Unfortunately, it wasn't that simple. It never is in these situations, because they still felt physically threatened. I was very clear with the government saying, "You will not cause them any harm if they remain peaceful outside the Embassy." So the government did have to stay away. However, once some students started leaving, the security forces did try to go after them – particularly some of the student leaders. They were all being watched, and the intelligence service (SNR) was trying to infiltrate the ranks to get information on them. The students were concerned about their families being threatened, so it was not a pretty situation.

At a certain point registration for the election needed to be done, and the government didn't want the image of the students protesting a third term to continue. I received a call from the Ministry of the Interior and the Chief of Police saying, "The students have to go and tomorrow we're coming to disband them." I replied, "Oh no you're not, I didn't request this" "Oh yes we are." I went out to the student leadership and said, "You have to go, because I cannot protect you and you've been here almost two months at this point. The police are showing up tomorrow." There was nothing I could do if the police were out in the street shooting. I said to the government "Look, if you start shooting, and if it's perceived that any piece of this is against the U.S. government, against the U.S. Embassy, against any of my staff," "we will protect ourselves." By that time we had an additional MSD (Marine Security Detachment) to protect the Embassy.

Q: Oh, woe be tied.

LIBERI: By then there were a number of rumors going around because of the additional Marine detachment that had arrived at the Embassy. Some were saying we had thousands

of Marines and a tunnel going from the Embassy to Rwanda, and Congo, and that the U.S. was bringing in an army. You can just imagine what was being said.

Q: Right. The urban mythology just gets embroidered every day.

LIBERI: Every day, every day. Extraordinary stuff. Truth be told we had about 20 Marines, all of whom were very well trained for the situation.

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: We had a pretty impenetrable fortress in terms of the Embassy. It was a new Embassy, built to the highest security specifications, and we had lots of provisions. We made sure that we had diesel fuel for generators, water, food, and gasoline for vehicles if we had to drive across the border. If we had to be under siege for a period of time, we could do it. That was obviously not my preference at all, however we were prepared if we had to. The following day when the students were to be disbanded, the Minister of Interior and Chief of police assured me that they would not shoot. I said, "Make sure, because as I said, if it's perceived that any of this is against the U.S. government, we'll protect ourselves." It was very, very dicey. My orders to all the Marines were to stand down. I said, "Unless people are coming over the walls with guns shooting and attacking us, the protocol is to stand down. However, be ready."

Q: Uh-huh.

LIBERI: We were all in body armor to be protected in the event of violence. I went up to the roof so I could watch everything along with the Marines and it was a very, very tense situation. The police came with tanks and guns and lots of police officers.

Q: Wow.

LIBERI: The students had already sort of organized themselves. With new Embassies there is an outside perimeter and a parking lot, then there's another fence before entering the inside of the compound. A number of the students ran, while a bunch of them climbed over the first fence to come into the parking lot, and others went under the fence where they had dug fox holes to fit through. They were young skinny students.

Q: Right. Right.

LIBERI: I was watching this thinking, "Oh, this is great." While they hadn't breached the Embassy compound at all, the students were now physically in the public parking lot.

They were lying down and many were wearing white, so there was a sea of students lying down on the parking lot ground.

Q: Beautiful. Beautiful.

LIBERI: All of this was being filmed because of course, the press were there. I'm thinking could it get any better?

Q: Right, right, exactly.

LIBERI: Can it get any better than this? I thought "Ok, once again I have to go out and meet with the students." The police did fire shots in the air a couple of times, however they didn't attack anyone. They did chase some students and there was a lot of scurrying going on. In the meantime my staff and I were calling church leaders and others to see how we could safely place students. I went out and met with them in the parking lot. We had to do some medical treatment for broken bones and dislocated shoulders because some had injured themselves when they scaled the wall. After we provided medical assistance, I said to the rest of them "Okay, look, you cannot stay in the Embassy parking lot. Because now you are trespassing. It was one thing when you were outside the perimeter, but you are now actually trespassing on U.S. Government property. You cannot stay here, so I am beseeching you to go peacefully."

Q: Right.

LIBERI: Quietly we told them, "Look, you can stay here until dark, when it won't be so easy for the police to follow you." At dark, without getting into the details, we found safe havens for them.

Q: Okay, uh-huh.

LIBERI: For instance, churches and other groups were willing to open up their doors, places that they could go to for shelter. I said to the students "We will help you get to these places. I can't give you armed guards, so you will need to use your discretion." I thought, "I will pay for all of your taxis, I will personally do it."

Q: Right, right.

LIBERI: You need to find ways to get people safely to where they need to go. And we did. There were a couple hundred of them left at that point.

Q: Oh my God.

LIBERI: Everyone on my team was exhausted. For hours we had to cajole the students to leave peacefully. Not to negotiate, because I said, "Look, the answer has not changed. There are no visas, there are no passports, there is no asylum. There is nothing we can offer you. You're now putting yourself in a worse situation because you are trespassing. If you don't move I have to get the Marines to come move you. That's not going to be very nice for anybody, but they will physically move you off of the compound."

Q: Right. Oh, you don't want to be moved by marines.

LIBERI: No. I said to them, "This is not a pretty picture if it becomes necessary. It will be done within international law, and we have very specific protocols for this, however you will be moved physically."

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: I continued, saying "At that point you will get turned over to the police because that is the protocol. I don't want to do this. Please help me not to have to do this. The only way that that can happen is if you take advantage of the safe havens that we have quietly enabled you to go to."

Q: Right.

LIBERI: So finally during the night, we got the last students out of the parking lot to safe havens. The students had been at the Embassy from May 1- June 25, 2015 - almost two months, so this was a very long arduous process. The good news is that not one student was hurt by security forces while they were either on the perimeter of the Embassy, or as they left that evening. The safe havens were kept pretty quiet.

Q: Okay.

LIBERI: We did the maximum we could to help save them.

Q: Exactly.

LIBERI: At that point I said, "We have done what we can." That's not to say that a few weren't followed later on as they tried to make their way back to their villages. Some students were picked up by the intelligence service. A few were killed or tortured, which unfortunately would have happened to them irrespectively.

Q: And many more, if you had not organized the departure the way you did. .

LIBERI: We continued working with UNHCR (the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees) because as I had told the students "We can't grant you asylum, but you can go to UNHCR and request assistance - there is a process." We walked them through the process many times.

Q: Uh-huh.

LIBERI: Eventually a number of them did go to Rwanda or Congo or Uganda. They left Burundi and sought asylum.

Q: Oh beautiful.

LIBERI: This incident was another big lesson in dealing with a volatile political situation. This was all happening while running an Embassy, engaging in diplomacy and working with the international community to address the violence and human rights abuses. At the same time, a whole political process was occurring in terms of the elections. I was meeting with all of the political parties, and the Embassy was engaging in training programs for political participation. There were a number of issues we were engaged in.

Q: And a powder keg sitting just within your area of control. It is a powder keg because every single day you don't know what will happen with those x-hundred people sitting there.

LIBERI: Yes, it is a powder keg. It was a big deal. Unfortunately political assassinations continued in the lead up to the elections. Human rights activists, journalists and others sought assistance from the U.S. As I indicated, we were able to use the mechanism established by DRL to assist many of those targeted, to flee the country.

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: . We did this many, many times for a number of people to get them safely out of the country. I believe this was one of the biggest contributions the U.S. made to save people's lives.

Q: Yeah.

LIBERI: The leading human rights activist, an incredible man, had been imprisoned. He was a political prisoner for years and eventually got out, then organized an NGO to help investigate the plight of political prisoners. There were a number of political prisoners, and once you're in the system you can get lost bureaucratically, or something physical can happen to you. The activist was Pierre Claver Mbonimpa. He was targeted by the ruling party, but he was fearless. The man was arrested so many times, but remained fearless, and had strong popular support. During the lead up to the elections, he survived an assassination attempt and was shot through the cheek on his way back from his office. His driver tried to take him to a clinic but he said, "No, I have to go to my home because if I die I want to be with my family." He went home and his daughter called me and was hysterical, "Ambassador, Ambassador, my father is wounded and we need assistance." By that time I heard he had been shot. I told his daughter "You have to get him to the clinic and get him medical attention immediately."

Q: Right.

LIBERI: It was another interesting night. I showed up and poor Pierre Claver was there with a bullet through his cheek. He had lost so much blood he couldn't talk. He was barely conscious, however he knew I was there. It was clear that without intervention the SNR would finish him off. Once it was known I was at the clinic, other Ambassadors started arriving. We had a protection vigil. I said, "None of us can stay here forever, so we've got to get him out." And we did. We made phone calls and worked with our Belgian colleagues to fly him to Brussels for medical treatment and made arrangements to accompany him to the airport the next day. Of course, a number of intelligence agents were hanging around the clinic and I said, "This man is not going to be harmed. He's leaving the country alive. That's the best thing you can do - let him go alive."

Q: Right. Uh-huh.

LIBERI: I said, "We're all going to be there at the airport, so there will be many witnesses if something happens to this man. International witnesses. International Ambassadorial witnesses."

Q: Right.

LIBERI: The next morning we got all the arrangements done, and that afternoon, we went out to the airport.

Q: Wow. You're running a rescue service, basically.

LIBERI: Yes, basically. For a period of time that's exactly what it was.

Q: Good Lord.

LIBERI: So that was the last time I saw Pierre Claver, until this fall (2017) at the Train Foundation in New York, where he was given their human rights award. Every year the foundation gives out a human rights prize. After being evacuated to Brussels, he had to undergo numerous operations to reconstruct his face. It was obviously very hard, but God bless him, he's a survivor. The man lived through all of this.

Q: Incredible.

LIBERI: He became stronger physically and was able to come to New York to receive the award. I was contacted by the Train Foundation to meet with Pierre Claver a couple of days before the awards ceremony. It was a wonderful reunion when I saw him. We were both in tears because of the last time I had seen him. He said to me "Oh, you helped save my life, thank you." Antione Kaburahe was also there, and had accompanied Pierre Claver from Brussels. Antoine was the head of IWACU, the only private press in Burundi. He had also been threatened by the ruling party and came to meet me at the Embassy shortly after the attack on Pierre Claver. It was so dangerous for anyone who was in opposition to the ruling party, particularly journalists who reported anything against the ruling party. Antoine and I were meant to attend a previously scheduled American Corners event that day. However, he said the security services wanted to meet with him. I said, "Antoine you have to leave the country." "I know." I said, "How about this - how about we do our program at the American Center and then you continue on to the border where we'll have another car waiting for you to cross over to Rwanda?"

Q: Wow.

LIBERI: We did the hand off at the border and he called me when he crossed into Rwanda and said, "I'm safe." I said, "Thank God. Get on a plane and get to Brussels fast now!"

Q: Right, exactly.

LIBERI: I said, "You're not staying in the region because their reach is long."

Q: Oh yeah. Absolutely.

LIBERI: So Antione told the Train Foundation and Pierre Claver " The last time we both saw the Ambassador she was getting each of us out of the country." He said to me, "I owe my life to you because they (security forces) were waiting at my house to get me." I didn't know that at the time, but I knew that they would be coming for him. It was only a matter of hours before that was going to happen.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: I highlight these cases because that really is what punctuated my time in Burundi. You can recount all the normal things in terms of diplomacy and running an Embassy, however those are not the priorities during times of political crisis. What I was spending most of my time on was what I was just recounting. My priorities focused on trying to preserve democracy, trying to help people preserve their lives, and showing what the United States stands for. That human rights, rule of law, and freedom of speech are our values. We will risk a lot to make sure that happens. All within law and a legal framework. For me these were the most meaningful events as the U.S. Ambassador in Burundi. Ribbon cuttings, opening projects, giving speeches - all of that is wonderful. However, representing the foreign policy and values of the United States through action, is why we're really there.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: It was very challenging, and there were very difficult times during my tenure in Burundi, however it was a very, very rewarding experience knowing that we had actually made a big difference in many people's lives. Unfortunately, it didn't change the course of what happened in Burundi. Nkurunziza ran for a third term and won, since he was essentially unopposed. He is changing the constitution so there are basically no term limits in Burundi, as there are none in Uganda, Rwanda, and Congo. Unfortunately, in the end while we were able to help people save their lives, it wasn't enough to change the electoral process. That will remain our challenge.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

GLENN SLOCUM
USAID
Mission Director
Bujumbura, Burundi
(1990-1993)

Mr Slocum was born in Washington DC. He was educated at Georgetown University, and attended Graduate School at the University of Maryland. He joined USAID in 1969. Mr Slocum filled a variety of positions in and related to Africa, including being a US representative at the Club du Sahel. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.

Topical Focus – Civilian-Military Relations, Democratization, and Ethnic Conflict in Burundi

Q: In 1972, they returned to be killed?

SLOCUM: Yes, it appears the victims accepted this fate. By the time I got there in 1990, 18 years later, I met young Hutus in their early to mid twenties who remembered that their fathers had left for work one morning and they never returned. By 1990 many of these young men and women had entered the higher-education system, and carried within them the pain of 1972. They told stories not just of their fathers being taken away and never seen again, but the confiscation of their fathers' cars and bank accounts, and of cases where mothers had to take their children back to the farm, because the authorities had seized their houses in town, the surviving widows having no property rights. As you can imagine, there was a great deal of repressed anger about this. For many years after 1972, it was forbidden to talk about any of this within Burundi. Throughout the seventies and eighties, because of 1972, Burundi was a pariah country. Its government was reviled and saw a succession of poor military leaders, and the country received very little foreign assistance. In 1987, the eleven-year rule of a man named Bagaza was ended and a young colonel named Pierre Buyoya replaced him. He began to approve some political reforms and, the following year, in response to a bloody ethnic outbreak in the north of the country, he began working in earnest to encourage fundamental political changes in hopes the two sides could see through their historical enmity and achieve enough common ground to forge a new political approach. He must have realized that the Tutsis couldn't keep the Hutus down forever, because they constituted 84 percent of the population. But his task was tricky: Hutus had to be empowered in a way that wouldn't expose the Tutsis to risk. He undertook to open up the political system to give Hutus a sense of their proportional power. So, he did a number of things.

By the time I got there in 1990, two years later, the international community was recognizing Burundi for the reforms Buyoya was trying to promote. He had realized how close the country had come to another 1972-like conflagration when violence erupted in northern Burundi in 1988, in which several thousand killings took place. Though he managed to limit the area of atrocities and damage, he must have said to himself, "there must be a better way." Somehow he had to change institutions and enact measures that would bring the two groups together and get them to start talking. So, he had a

constitutional commission formed with broad representation. There was a successful referendum on the constitution after I was there, I would say it was in 1991. Then, after opening up the political scene to political parties, he scheduled elections for the presidency. My three years in Burundi were a period of dynamism and hope for the country. Donors reacted positively to these hopeful signs of political evolution and major investments were being developed. A Structural Adjustment Program, which our program supported closely, signified Burundi's "recovery" from its 18-year pariah status. Though a program of support to private-sector reforms, health and agriculture were already in place, we were developing a new strategy to react in tune with the positive changes. It was an exciting time to be in Burundi. At times the President would enlist the help of the American ambassador to encourage leaders of the new political parties to move forward. The American establishment was well regarded, since we had no "baggage" from the colonial period as did the Belgians and the French. We thought we were having a positive impact with our program, and were playing a supportive role in the political liberalization.

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Q: But you didn't find conflicts among your staff or elsewhere?

SLOCUM: Not openly. It was underneath, but it was there, much as we deal with racial issues in our own society. As I said, we had no professional Hutus until my last year; they were all Tutsis. That was also true of the Embassy. USIA had one professional Hutu. To give you an idea of the sensitivity of this, the Ambassador, who was an AfricanAmerican woman, said one day in a country team meeting, "We have to do something to break this. I want all of you, each agency head, to make a considered effort to hire professional-level Hutus." I came back to my American staff and very discreetly said, "Here is the Ambassador's policy. She's right; let's make an effort at the next opening of a professional slot to identify a qualified Hutu. We held this meeting in my office, and this subject occupied perhaps one minute of the meeting. We were successful in hiring a Hutu within a few weeks, something I was very happy about. You know, within weeks word got out to the Tutsi community that the Ambassador had declared that no Tutsi would in the future be hired to work at the Embassy. What had been very quietly touted as an effort to identify some Hutus was interpreted (I don't know how it got out) by the Tutsi community as: "no Tutsi need apply," which was totally false. The fact is, all of the professional-level people were and probably still are all Tutsis. But, that, again, is for historical reasons, a lot of the professional Hutus having been wiped out a generation ago.

That being said, there was a rising "class" of educated Hutus who found themselves in demand. I would guess that, by the time I arrived in 1990, nearly half of the cabinet was

Hutu. Key ministerial posts and the army were all Tutsi-occupied, of course. When political parties got established, there were two main parties and a proliferation of less important parties. It turned out that what had been the only ruling party became a predominantly Tutsi party and the other principal party was predominantly Hutu. The constitution tried to prevent parties from being ethnically identified. A party couldn't form based on ethnicity or regionalism. Despite the best efforts to de-ethnicize the new parties, the fact is that the 10 or 12 that were allowed were considered as one or the other.

In the course of time, things looked quite positive on the surface and the president, although a military man, was clearly trying to lead the country into a new era which would have offered a more promising future of national unity and common purpose. He eventually set the stage, once parties were approved, for presidential elections. Each party came up with a candidate. Some compromised and came up with joint candidates. The candidates of the two major parties were the most prominent and the race was really between those two individuals, and their parties. One was the existing president, Buyoya, and the other was Melchior Ndadaye. Buyoya, we felt, was very popular and the incumbent leader who had brought the country to this point. He looked like a winner. In the meantime, I, because I lived near one of the campuses, had established some relationships among some of the students over time as I often took evening walks up the hillside behind my house. I had gotten so that I could speak a little more frankly with some of that group, some were Tutsi and some were Hutus, though they tended to keep to each group. I noticed they didn't socialize with each other very much. The ones I spent more time with for no particular reason happened to be Hutus. About three weeks before the elections, I was in a car driving with another AID person and three Hutus in the back seat. We were going outside of town to set up a trail for one of our Hash House Harrier runs. The Burundian Hutus in the back seat began saying that Ndadaye was going to be elected. This was the first we had heard this. We in the foreign community felt that the incumbent was so popular he would be a shoo-in. He would win a five-year mandate by the people and consolidate real democratic gains. These fellows kept saying that this was not true, that Ndadaye was going to win.

I took that back to the next country team meeting and said, "Some of my Hutu friends are saying that Ndadaye is going to win." Only the economic officer, who also served as political officer, was prescient enough to realize the situation and, ten days before the elections, she called Ndadaye the victor, but the DCM made her take the prediction out of her reporting cable. He wouldn't let the Embassy go on record as calling it. Well, she was very right. We provided, along with the European donors and the UN, significant assistance for electoral monitoring. The DCM was having a dinner party for the monitors after the elections, and at 7:00 that evening the news was announced on the radio, but in the national language. I was due to be at the DCM's house at 7:30. My household staff,

my cook and my housekeeper were listening to the news on the side porch of my house. Of course, I couldn't understand the announcement, but it didn't matter. At the moment they announced the landslide Ndadaye victory on the radio, I was standing on the porch with my employees, up on a hill overlooking the city. The population of the neighborhoods below broke into screaming and applause. For forms sake, I asked Amas who had won. I need not have, of course. Ndadaye had won 2 to 1. What would happen next? Would the army come on the radio and cancel the results? I didn't know what to do. Do I dare even go out that night, to the DCM's dinner? As I drove the few blocks down to his residence, the streets were bare: no cars, no people. In the total uncertainty of what would happen next, I wondered if I should return home. But I kept going. I had called the DCM and he said he wasn't canceling the dinner; come ahead. So I drove down, nobody in sight, got to his house and about the time I got there the head of the armed services, equivalent to our chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, was coming on TV. We got the cook to come out and translate for us and he was saying, "We accept the results of the elections." We knew that was the defining moment. It didn't matter what the chairman of the elections committee said. As the Embassy political officer, standing beside me watching the military chief's statement, said, "He is the one who has to say it."

A month later, July 1993, five days before I left the country for good, a very moving ceremony marking the transfer of power took place, and Melchior Ndadaye was inaugurated the first democratically elected president of Burundi. Outgoing President Buyoya passed the symbols of authority to the new president. The head of the Structural Adjustment Program, Sylvie Kinigi, with whom I had worked so closely, was named Prime Minister. She was a Tutsi, and a member of the major Tutsi party. She had been at a dinner party offered by the Government the night before for me. She had arrived late, and rumors were rife that she was to be the New Prime Minister. She was very shaken, her pallor ashen, but she had the grace to come to my dinner. Everybody knew, but no one spoke of it. The next morning, there she was on TV at the inauguration, sitting unsmiling and looking very ill at ease. She was the new Prime Minister.

I had three very positive years in Burundi. I haven't talked too much about the program yet.

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So we brought a new strategy in and got it approved. On the democracy side at that point in 1992 we weren't very far along and the Embassy and State wanted us to do more to assist in the country's democratic transition. We asked them to examine whether the stability was going to hold. Their assessment was that the positive factors underlying the opening would hold. I recall at the time that I had asked them to assess the impact of the Tutsi-dominated army: what was its probable impact on democracy? One of the

assessment team, who had lived in Burundi three years while her husband was serving as the U.S. Ambassador, declined to include the military factor in the report. It was considered too sensitive, and the Embassy was very reluctant to open this issue to analysis and debate. These turn out to have been critical mistakes.

This is not to say that the military issue was off the table. Earlier, before political parties had been allowed, President Buyoya had asked the Ambassador for some help in funding and organizing a regional seminar on the role of the military in a democracy. We went back to Washington with that request and the request almost got turned down over the issue. The Democracy/Governance (D/G) specialists loved the idea, but insisted that to be effective, the seminar should be uniquely Burundian, not regional. Negotiations went back and forth, but Buyoya wouldn't (couldn't) budge. The compromise was that other African countries would be allowed to send not only delegations, but also some of their own academic experts on the subject. The African-American Institute was contracted to organize the agenda and the seminar. It was an unusual event, and had little precedence. Although AID's role on the ground was peripheral — the Embassy wanted the money but not our involvement; they believed that dealing with the military was no business of AID's - we did provide the funding, or rather, the Global Bureau did. The event drew much attention. This was a country whose military had been one of the most repressive - of its own population - of any in Africa. Yet its leader, a military officer, had asked for help in having its military leaders and some civilians debate the role of the military in a democratic environment. You get a sense here of how positive the trend appeared to us. By the way, the AAI official opening the two-day seminar was Vivian Derrick, now the Assistant Administrator for Africa at AID. AAI assembled a number of experts. Representatives of about 10 other African governments came, and African experts from countries which had the experience of making the transition to democracy. This included the former military leader of Mali, who had voluntarily ceded power to a democratically chosen leader. It was a French-speaking conference, and came off very well, with extensive local press coverage. The President helped open the conference. But there were curious little things beneath the surface. For example, a Togolese academic offered an analysis of the Togolese military. Togo, like Burundi, had had its military composed of one ethnic group, the president's ethnic group. And over time the military had been reformed to include more ethnic balance reflecting the Togolese population. The point, he emphasized, was that you can't have a mono-ethnic military, it doesn't work because it does not receive the support of the population at large. In the local coverage of his presentation the following day, this last point was omitted. It hit too close to home, in Burundi.

Q: How was that conference received? Did you get a sense of its effect on the military?

SLOCUM: How do you answer that question? If you look at future events the answer is that it didn't have any effect at all. If it raised the military's need to sensitize themselves to what a military's role is in a democracy, maybe it opened up a few eyes.

One thing I didn't mention about Mauritania and I need to mention it with respect to both countries, including Burundi: I came out of my Club du Sahel job imbued with the importance of donor coordination, so I made a strong effort to coordinate our programs with those of other donors in both countries. I was fortunate in both countries in having very good deputies who had good program officer skills, and who were good managers. This allowed me, as the director, to spend some of my time externally focused, which was useful and necessary. I think in subsequent years as AID has progressively downsized there are fewer deputy positions anymore, so it is going to be harder for a director to balance his or her time between those demands.

CAMBODIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR CHARLES H. TWINING
U. S. Ambassador
Cambodia
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
(1991-1995)

Charles H. Twining was born in Maryland in 1940. He received his BA from the University of Virginia in 1962 and an MA from the School for Advanced International Studies in 1964. After entering the Foreign Service in 1964, his assignments included Tananarive, Dalat, Abidjan, Bangkok, Cotonou, Douala, Ouagadougou, and Honolulu with ambassadorships to Cambodia and Cameroon. Charles Stuart Kennedy interviewed Ambassador Charles H. Twining in 2004.

Topical Focus — USAID Programming and the Cambodian Election

Q: Today is Bastille Day, July 14, 2004. Leading up to the election, I heard it was quite an apparatus there. Did you find yourself playing host to an awful lot of observers? Did you get involved with the preparations to the election?

TWINING: With everything that led up to the election. In fact, we all focused so much on the election, that in hindsight, one didn't focus sufficiently on the aftermath. This was the first election the UN had actually run, as opposed to overseeing. It brought in a two million dollar Cray computer that needed special air conditioning. Of course, once the election was over, nobody was even there to take care of it any longer. The election drew in lots and lots of people. Lots of organizations came in. Just on the international side, there was a lot of activity. One of the things we funded and the UN also funded, was election education for the parties and for communities. After all, this was really the first free and fair election Cambodia may have ever had, though it had had elections during the Sihanouk period, which may not have been quite as free and fair.

It was exciting. My staff and I went around the country a great deal. The UN Special Representative went around observing preparations and stepping in unannounced on voter education campaigns and the like. At the same time, the Cambodian themselves who were running for the elections were all excited. They were titillated. What was going to happen? Could they have a chance? Parties you never heard of. which may have consisted of one or two individuals, suddenly came out of the woodwork for the elections. You had elections to choose people to be in the constituent assembly, which as I mentioned before, became the national assembly after writing the constitution. Based upon the number of people elected per party, would you have a coalition government or would one party have control?

About a week before the elections, I suddenly found the two leading non-communists, Prince Ranariddh and the old patriarch of Cambodia, Son Sann, both of them having second and third thoughts about their chances of getting anywhere in elections, fearing that Hun Sen and his people would simply, one way or the other, scoop up all the votes. I had to spend time either individually or with others, trying to talk the non-communists into staying in the elections. Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia office director Chris Lafleur helped me considerably. This was just a week before the elections, when you thought the non-communist leaders would have been at the pinnacle of success. Anyway, we passed through that. There were international observers from all over the place. Many Cambodian observers, and we encouraged all of them—

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The excitement really was on election day. The Khmer Rouge had threatened to blow everything up. A lot of Cambodians thought they well may. You had the non-communists who were up and down. Did they have a chance? Did they not have a chance? Should they stay in? You had nervousness, I think, on the part of the Phnom Penh leading political party, the Cambodians People's Party. How was it going to come out of this?

On election day, May 23, at 6:30 a.m., I heard loud bangs. I was still in a hotel room, overlooking the Mekong River. I looked out because when the Khmer Rouge were finally attacking Phnom Penh in 1974, 1975, they often attacked from the east. The Mekong was to the east of my hotel. I looked out the window, wondering whether the attacks had started. Instead, I was hearing thunder, and there was lightning. I thought then that with diluvium rains, nobody would even come out to vote, and I went back to bed again. Finally, I roused myself thinking, "I should really go to a couple of the polling places to see what it looks like." We had other people from the U.S. mission out in other parts of the country. I went to the national stadium, where I was astonished to find that I had to fight my way through the crowds. People were lined up by the hundreds, maybe by the thousands, to get into the national stadium to vote. I went to another polling place and found the same thing. Voters had turned out in droves.

Later that day, I went with UN Special Representative Akashi and some others in a helicopter to four or five remote provinces to see what the polling looked like. We went to the city of Battambang in the west, for example. I'll never forget walking into a polling place, and an old monk, maybe 80 years old, told me, "I waited all my life to vote. Finally, I have my dream come true. They are asking my opinion, and I will give it."

Old ladies, old men, young people were there, because under the rules the UN established, everyone could vote. In the past, monks didn't vote, and soldiers weren't supposed to. But this time people were voting, and they really were voting en masse. It was a very inspiring day. I think all of us who covered the elections that day were very inspired.

Q: But, did we go in there [Cambodia] with an AID [United States Agency for International Development] program? Did we have AID people, or was that to come later?

TWINING: No. We brought in an AID program, not long after I took over. My office had worked with counterparts in AID Washington for almost two years previously in thinking through what AID might do after a peace settlement. AID wisely had set aside funds in its budget. The AID program wasn't large, but it was large enough. We decided we needed to support some of the things that UN agencies were doing. We couldn't give support to the Phnom Penh regime, but we could support NGO development, for example. When I went into Cambodia, there were no NGOs. Cambodians didn't have non-governmental organizations.

Early on, we started using our AID program to bring in the American Red Cross, for example. Catholic Relief Service was there doing some things on the international side. The international NGOs needed support. We insisted that the Phnom Penh regime had to allow local NGOs to get started. I give Akashi a great deal of credit, because once he got there, he felt, too, that NGOs were an awfully important tool in democratic and other development. One of the things the U.S. did, for example, when NGOs started up, was support a project to train paralegal people who would stand up in courts to help defend Cambodians, the Cambodian Defenders Project. There was no way of Cambodians defending themselves in tribunals, which were pretty puny tribunals to begin with. So, we looked for ways like this to help Cambodia get going.

I must admit, I was overjoyed when by the time I left Cambodia, toward the end of 1995, there were at least 400 Cambodian indigenous NGOs. When I happened to go back in 2001, there were more than ever. Nobody any longer knew how many there were. NGOs provided important ways to get things done. You assisted local NGOs and budding political parties by supporting efforts by the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute to do training of Cambodians. How do you do financing? How do you organize how to run for elections? There were other efforts to help with local development and human rights.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Ambassador Winston Lord
U.S. Ambassador
Cambodia
(1993)

Ambassador Lord was born in New York City on August 14, 1937. Lord received his B.A. in English from Yale University, and completed his M.A. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He worked at the National Security Council on a multitude of assignments from 1969 to 1974. Lord was an Ambassador to China from 1985 to 1989

before becoming the State Department Assistant Secretary. Ambassador Winston Lord was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker on April 28, 1998.

Topical Focus – Cambodia Peacekeeping, Elections, and Coalition Struggles

Cambodia continues to be a land of tragedy, torn by two decades of war and ravaged by the brutal policies of the Khmer Rouge.

After arduous diplomacy involving many nations, the fragile outlines of a settlement.

Finally emerged - cease fire, demobilization, a large United Nations presence and free elections leading to an independent Cambodian government. Even more is at stake here than the fate of that country and regional security. The UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia - UNTAC - is the largest Peacekeeping operation in the history of the United Nations. Thus we face a crucial test of multilateral peacekeeping by the international community.

The situation is Precarious. The headlines are grim. Yet UNTAC has recorded some impressive achievements. The 20,000 peacekeepers have managed a ceasefire for over a year. UNTAC has registered over 95% of the eligible voters for the elections slated for May. Almost all of the 360,000 Cambodian refugees have been repatriated; the detaining and repairing of the country's infrastructure goes forward.

Formidable obstacles remain. The Khmer Rouge refuse to participate in the elections; they seek to disrupt them; they are apparently hunkering down for a long-term struggle to take over the nation. The Cambodian government, installed by Hanoi in 1979, fears repudiation at the polls; it is using violence to intimidate potential voters; it threatens to discredit the election results.

There will be no easy path through this thicket. Working with others, the United States must support the process of free and fair elections and assist the government that emerges. The immediate task for UNTAC is to convince the Cambodian people that their votes will be secret and that their votes will count. The looming policy choices before the world community include the ongoing role of the United Nations; the means to strengthen the future government, and the ways to contain the genocidal Khmer Rouge and others who seek to undermine the settlement.

One of the most complex and central tasks for our Asian policy will be to help provide the Cambodians with a brighter future. No other people deserve peace more.

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LORD: On the other hand, the Chinese were somewhat helpful on North Korea and became increasingly helpful in this connection. On Cambodia the Chinese halted their aid to the Khmer Rouge. They were more helpful there and supported the UN operation and the elections. Our exports to China were increasing, even though the overall trade deficit with China was increasing generally. There was some, slogging progress on nuclear nonproliferation, particularly in the wake of the sanctions that were applied to China. We tried to talk about broader issues with China. We began to talk about developing a new agenda on some of the global issues. So the Chinese-American relationship began to make some progress. It was not dramatic, but clearly it was getting way beyond the level of the Christopher trip, which had gone so badly.

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LORD: Anyway, I came to Cambodia in 1993 with some considerable historical baggage, just as I had with Vietnam. Early in my tenure as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, Cambodia was high up on my agenda. I came into office in March, 1993, and the Cambodians were gearing up for elections in May, 1993. The biggest peacekeeping program in the history of the UN was being implemented in Cambodia at that point. The program was called UNTAC. I don't have the details at my fingertips, but literally billions of dollars were being spent on a very large UN presence.

As I was saying, by the early spring of 1993 the huge UN operation in Cambodia had succeeded in doing many things. First, violence had substantially declined in Cambodia, compared to the Khmer Rouge period and even after that, when there was fighting between the Khmer Rouge and other factions.

Secondly, with UN help, 350-400,000 refugees, most of whom had been in Thailand, had returned to Cambodia and were being resettled. Thirdly, outside influence of a nefarious nature was being reduced. The Chinese were backing away from their support of the Khmer Rouge. The Thai were beginning to crack down on the Khmer Rouge along the Cambodian-Thai border. The Vietnamese were being generally helpful. Elections were being organized in Cambodia. All in all, this was one of the most successful UN operations ever.

So my first task, or rather the Clinton administration's first task, on the Cambodian front was to give as much support as possible to the electoral process and to make sure that the elections were as fair as possible.

I went to Cambodia early in my tenure as Assistant Secretary to show support for this electoral process. This was only about ten days before the elections. There were some outbreaks of violence and some question as to whether all of the various political parties were going to participate. Some observers were not sure that the elections were going to work out, even though 95 percent of the people had been registered. This was quite an achievement. So I purposely went there to urge all of the political parties to take part in the elections. I held a press conference to show American support for this process. Even though I wasn't 100 percent sure, by any means, how it was going to come out, I expressed great optimism and U.S. support for this process. I said that I hoped that it would be a fair election and said how meaningful this would be for the Cambodian people, who had had such a tragic history.

The UN operation in support of the elections was headed up by the Japanese, a Mr. Akashi, who then went on to Bosnia afterwards. He did a fabulous job in Cambodia. Working with him was Australian General Sanderson. Of course, I met with them, as well as with others, when I was in Cambodia. In my various trips to that country I met with many people, including government leaders, members of various factions, representatives of non-governmental organizations and human rights groups, American business people, and so forth.

The elections took place in May, 1993, with 90 percent of the people voting. The process was observed by international representatives and was determined to be remarkably fair. The non-communist third way group, the FUNCINPEC, led by Prince Ranariddh, the son of Prince Sihanouk, won a majority of the votes. FUNCINPEC derived support from its link to Prince Sihanouk, whose popularity was tremendous among the Cambodian people, thanks largely to Sihanouk's name recognition. There was another group which had Vietnamese support, the Hun Sen faction. They were relatively constructive at this point, planning for the long haul. The Hun Sen faction was close to Vietnam, and Hun Sen himself was a former Khmer Rouge leader. Obviously, the Khmer Rouge did not take part in the election. They refused to take part in the elections and were formally banned by the National Assembly in June, 1994. Hun Sen's group came in second in the 1993 elections. I don't have the figures, but it was roughly 60 percent for the Ranariddh forces [FUNCINPEC] and 40 percent for Hun Sen and his supporters.

After the elections Hun Sen began to make ominous noises, in effect saying: "I've got to share power in this arrangement." Then a decision to distribute power between the leading parties was made by the UN. I have to say that we supported this choice with some reservations but we thought that a power-sharing arrangement was the best outcome. People now look back and say: "If Prince Ranariddh won the election, we

shouldn't have let Hun Sen in 'under the tent,' because he was sure to muscle his way forward against the ineffectual Ranariddh forces. Hun Sen didn't deserve to be part of the government chosen by the election." Furthermore, people said that the government set up after the elections was something of a "Rube Goldberg" operation, with "Co-Prime Ministers," "Co-Foreign Ministers," and "Co-Everything."

The arguments for a coalition government of this kind, and the reason that we went ahead, without any illusions about the difficulty of such a coalition, were that Hun Sen controlled the Cambodian Army, in effect, which clearly was a stronger military force than the other military groups. Moreover, Hun Sen controlled most of the government ministries. This was the situation before the elections and still was the situation after the elections were held. It was a very difficult situation. There was a real danger of violence and conflict breaking out again. We calculated that Ranariddh had no power to enforce his position, unless the UN forces would stay on in Cambodia more or less indefinitely. Everybody in the UN had agreed that the UN forces had to withdraw after the elections. Furthermore, Hun Sen had won between 30 and 40 percent of the vote, so it wasn't as if he didn't have some popular support, whether justified or not. For example, it wasn't as if he had obtained, say, only five percent of the vote or less.

So, with some trepidation we figured that the least bad alternative was to avoid possible civil conflict, recognize that in fact the Hun Sen forces had won 30 or 40 percent of the vote, and that, above all, they had the muscle. Even though there was a certain injustice to such an outcome, maybe this would work out. There was set up a coalition government, with Prince Ranariddh "First Prime Minister," Hun Sen as "Second Prime Minister," and the other ministries similarly shared. An effort would be made to meld the armies together. If we had it all to do over again, I think that we still would have done that, but, considering the way it turned out, one could argue it would have been better to have taken the chance of agreeing that Hun Sen and his forces should be excluded from the Cambodian Government. But, I think that we would have had civil conflict again at that point. These were tough choices. We didn’t know at the time that the Prince would be so ineffectual.

Therefore, this new, strange, bifurcated government took over, with the Hun Sen people pretty much in de facto charge of the administrative structure and still dominant militarily, as I said. In meetings I had with the Cambodian leaders Hun Sen and Prince Ranariddh would always both be there. The same thing was true if I called upon the Cambodian leaders with Secretary Christopher in New York. At these meetings Prince Ranariddh would do all the talking, and Hun Sen would just sit there. As I said, he had been a member of the Khmer Rouge organization and he had only one eye. The other eye is made of glass. He had lost one eye due to an injury. Prince Ranariddh reminded me of

his father, Prince Sihanouk. He had a sort of high pitched voice. He was very polite and friendly but he clearly was not a real heavyweight.

Although Hun Sen would sit in at these meetings saying nothing, I had the feeling that he didn't have to say much. He was smart enough to bide his time. I thought that he was probably going to take over the government. Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen were very much an odd couple.

Over the next few years we had a consistent policy of urging cooperation between the factions and giving aid to Cambodia. We promoted respect for human rights in non governmental organizations and the development of a civil society and the rule of law. We also provided military aid to help them against the Khmer Rouge and economic aid more generally. In fact, some reforms did take place. The economy was making some progress, they were beginning to get some foreign investment, the status of human rights was not perfect, but there were ample human rights groups. The press was not entirely free, but, on the whole, was fairly free, and there were a lot of newspapers and magazines. The Khmer Rouge continued to be on the defensive. Refugees had been resettled. On top of this was always this uneasy odd couple I mentioned, and there was an air of tension. However, on the whole, they seemed to be cooperating, and making some progress in the face of immense challenges.

We would keep urging them to cooperate whenever it would look as if a real split in the government was developing.

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Now, at the same time that we encouraged cooperation among the Cambodian leaders, we gave them aid and so on. We also warned them against problems that we saw arising. There was corruption, and there was increasing maneuvering by Hun Sen to gain power. We urged Hun Sen to try to behave himself. There was increasing pressure by the Cambodian Government on NGOs [non governmental organizations] and the press. So there was a balancing act going on. Again, in our Congress and in American public opinion there were some people who probably felt that we should have been tougher with the Cambodians on promoting human rights, on dealing with the corruption problems, and on the Hun Sen maneuvering. We liked to think that we were pretty firm in saying, in effect, "If you don't cooperate, you're going to lose international and U.S. aid." We would raise these issues from time to time. However, as I say, we were doing a balancing act. In fact, there was no good choice there. Above all, we wanted to see the Khmer Rouge wiped out. With our support, our pressure on the Thai, our dealings with the Chinese, this took place over a few years. That was an important goal.

To what extent should we have tried to isolate and pressure Hun Sen? Since I left government service, Hun Sen has taken over the government, essentially by coup d'etat. Now he has won a recent election, which was generally considered fair on election day but which was stacked in advance by intimidation, murders, and exiles. In the new government the "First Prime Minister" was to be Hun Sen, and the "Second Prime Minister" Prince Ranariddh. The issue was whether you hold your nose and try to work with Hun Sen and try to keep the coalition government together and keep some pressure on him, knowing that Hun Sen is pretty brutal. Under his leadership there have been some serious human rights abuses, including some killings of the opposition. However, we thought that by our policy we at least prevented civil conflict from breaking out again. We also knew that if we wanted to isolate Hun Sen and really put pressure on him, we could expect no help from ASEAN or other interested groups. We would be alone and ineffectual. So we have continued to muddle through.

This lack of help from others was a constant dilemma. We were constantly trying to get ASEAN, Australian, and other help to make the points to Hun Sen about behaving himself and to make the points to Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen about corruption and human rights.

Let me make one last point. As I think that I mentioned, the Cambodians were very helpful about the MIA question.

Q: You mentioned that a decision had to be reached, early on in the process, about what we should do. Would we support Prince Ranariddh fully, or would we go for cohabitation, or however you call it? On an issue like this, I think that it's interesting to follow the process. How was the decision made? Was it made by you, or...

LORD: First of all, it was essentially a United Nations decision. Or at least it was a decision made by the countries participating in UNTAC [UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia]. As I recall, the decision was unanimous among the countries involved that, even though we didn't like the way Hun Sen was muscling his way in, he had received some 40 percent of the vote in the election of 1993, and we were going to have civil conflict, so we ought to live with this. The UN certainly made that decision. Indeed, it was a UN and not a U.S. decision. Obviously, having said that, I must add that we were crucial to it. But if we had held out, I am not certain that we could have changed it. We would have stood pretty much alone in this respect.

Within our own government, I don't recall the exact process. At the very least, it would have been a decision approved by Secretary of State Christopher and by Tony Lake, the

National Security Adviser to President Clinton. I don't know whether it ever reached the President. Certainly, it was the kind of key decision that would be dealt with at that level.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

FRANKLIN E. HUFFMAN
Department of State
Public Affairs Officer
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
(1995-1997)

Franklin E. Huffman was born in Harrisonburg, Virginia in 1934. In 1955 he graduated from Bridgewater College and immediately joined IVS [International Voluntary Services]. From 1967 to 1985 he was a Professor of Southeast Asian languages and linguistics at Yale and Cornell. His second career was as a Foreign Service Officer with USIA [the United States Information Agency], where he was posted to London, Rangoon, Marrakech, Paris, Washington, Phnom Penh, and Wellington, with subsequent WAE tours to N'Djamena [Chad] and Phnom Penh. Mr. Huffman was interviewed in January 2006 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Topical Focus – Supporting a Transition to Democracy and Cambodian Elections

HUFFMAN: Our objectives in Cambodia were basically to support the idea of transition to democracy, an independent judiciary, transparency in government and in business dealings and so on…. Corruption was rampant, judges were for sale, and there was democracy in name only.

There was quite a bit of violence, intimidation of opposing parties and there would be some bombs thrown; in one instance a bomb was thrown in one party's political rally and about 18 people were killed. Opposition journalists were intimidated or arrested, so it was pretty ugly. But progressively, during my two years there, Hun Sen, the former communist and the one who had refused to accede to the Royalists victory in the elections, gradually consolidated his power until finally in 1997 he engineered a coup against the Royalist prime minister Ranariddh and sent him into exile. In the next election in 1998, five years after the UNTAC election, the CCP won again, basically by intimidation, and the Royalist party, which had won the first election, was now in a subservient position to the CCP and that's basically what is continuing today—Hun Sen is continuing to consolidate his power. And what used to be referred to as one of the UN's few success stories has turned out to be less than successful in establishing a democracy in Cambodia.

I was sent back to Cambodia on TDY [temporary duty travel] from New Zealand to cover the 1998 national elections, five years after the UNTAC elections. Scores of international observers came in, and they looked and watched the voting in the various districts and provinces, and they decided that, "Well, you know, it seemed like it was basically a free and fair election." But what they didn't understand was that the fix was already in before

they got there. Dictators become very proficient in learning the jargon that they're supposed to use to satisfy the international community and get the donors to give them money. Meanwhile, under the table, they've got the fix in already, and they do whatever is necessary to perpetuate their power.

The State Department has never given credence to the excuse of "Asian values" by dictators such as Lee Kuan Yuu in Singapore to justify authoritarian rule, but in fact authoritarianism and patronage are seen as the proper way to run a government, not only in Cambodia but in Asia in general. The problem for U.S. diplomacy in touting Western-style democracy is that in Asia, harmony between the peasants and the power elite (who are after all powerful because of good deeds in past lives) is more important than the right of individuals to challenge the power structure; in fact to do so is considered somewhat improper in Asian cultures.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MARC E. NICHOLSON
Department of State,
Bureau of INR
Analyst for Thailand, Burma, and Cambodia
Washington, D.C.
(1994-1995)

Marc E. Nicholson was born and raised in California and attended Yale University. He joined the Foreign Service in 1975 and held several different positions at the Department of State, including in Brazil, Portugal, and Thailand. After 25 years, he retired and departed the Service in September 2000. Mr. Nicholson was interviewed in July 2003 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Topical Focus – Political Factions and Attempted Coup d'Etat in Cambodia

Q: Were there any major incidents or problems that you had to deal with?

NICHOLSON: Towards the end of my tour, there was a minor civil war in Cambodia in the capital, Phnom Penh, between the two rival political factions there. Prince Ranariddh's supporters in the FUNCINPEC party and militia apparently attempted foolishly to mount a coup against the stronger government of Prime Minister Hun Sen. The coup failed and, within a day or two, FUNCINPEC forces were driven out of the city after some fighting. The conflict prompted the U.S.-assisted evacuation of the American community in Phnom Penh. Because our embassy there was small – in fact, there was only one officer in the political section – several of us were sent from AmEmbassy Bangkok to assist and augment their personnel. So, I found myself flying by embassy (actually DAO) jet into Phnom Penh about a day, maybe two days, after the fighting had

moved from the city out into the countryside and, in the course of two separate periods, I spent about six or seven weeks in Phnom Penh.

An observation and an anecdote. The situation in the city calmed down rather quickly and indeed was probably safer beginning about two days after the attempted coup than it had been during the months, if not years, leading up to it when both of these political factions were present in the city with armed militia. In the wake of the coup, one faction, that headed by the still prime minister of Cambodia, Hun Sen, clearly dominated militarily and so there was really no likelihood of anybody being caught in a crossfire because he was 100% in control. But images of the first days of fighting continued to be repeated over and over again on CNN and other TV networks back in the United States, which of course got the attention of the policymakers in the State Department who kept pressing our Ambassador in Phnom Penh, Ken Quinn, as to whether an ordered evacuation of embassy dependents and non-essential personnel was called for. Quinn argued strongly that, no, it was not necessary and it was potentially disruptive to families and to the work of the embassy and so on. But eventually he was simply overruled because the powers that be at the State Department seemed to be more impressed with the film footage they were getting on CNN, however outdated, than they were by the reporting cables they were receiving from their own embassy, which is an interesting illustration of the influence of television on perceptions in Washington.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

STEPHEN T. JOHNSON
Department of State
Bureau of INR on Indochina, with a concentration in Cambodia
Washington, D.C.
(1989-1993)

Stephen T. Johnson was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1936. After serving in the US Army from 1956-1957, he received his bachelor's degree from Occidental College in 1960. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961, and his career included positions in Canada, Paris, Vietnam, Laos, Romania, and Kenya. Mr. Johnson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in January 1997.

Topical Focus – Election Dynamics in Cambodia

JOHNSON: There were lots of players. But once the Chinese and the Soviets were no longer in conflict in the area, the Vietnamese agreed to withdraw and were withdrawing from Cambodia. So the Phnom Penh authorities had some reason to try to make a deal. At the same time the Chinese were able to get enough international pressure on the Khmer Rouge for them to get into the deal, and the two non-communists had no other prospects but to get in on the deal. So it was possible then to actually negotiate something.

One of the really fortunate things about the whole process was that they had seen it. One could [assume] that all Cambodians would rally around if they could agree to support...

You could put pressure on all of the factions to move along. He really was interested in a settlement. So they with lots of and starts and sometimes everybody thinking that it wasn't going to happen, they were finally able to arrive at an agreement, very expensive agreement from the point of view of the United States and the United Nations requiring a large U.N. presence in Cambodia for 18 months. I said before that the agreement in October but it must have been earlier than that. It ended in September of 1993. The elections were in May of 1993.

But when all the parties signed the agreement, there was a ceasefire, with elaborate provisions for the demobilization of the various armies and handling the weapons and for a structure in Phnom Penh. A provisional structure that would lead up to elections that were going to be run by the United Nations. But when the first Khmer Rouge representatives arrived in Phnom Penh, they were attacked. I forget the timing of all this, but they really didn't stay in Phnom Penh that long. They were there for several months, but the Khmer Rouge were unwilling to go forward with the agreement as it was signed. They weren't willing to demobilize their army, to bring them into camps, to open up their zone to the process. They gave lots of reasons why that was the case. They really had no choice that the Khmer Rouge really couldn't operate in an open political system. That was the Khmer Rouge couldn't be the Khmer Rouge and operate. So after a while they left Phnom Penh. But the other parties continued though all the demobilization never took place. All four of the armies continued to exist.

The United Nations did go in with a very large presence and controlled affairs, [though] obviously not as well as the agreement stipulated. But pretty well and there was an election. I went as one of the U.N. election officers. I was there for about three weeks in Nee Mouck district [in] Cambodia. You could see the Black Mountains from where we were staying in Nee Mouck town. By coincidence, I helicoptered into Nee Mouck in May of 1970 when we had a famous incursion in Cambodia and I was taking around a congressional staff at the time. I was back at the rubber plantation. I must say both of us were worse for wear. The rubber plantation looked like it had suffered more than I had. But we ran the election, and it went really well. There were some attacks by the Khmer Rouge on the election process but not very many. One friend in a neighboring district, the Khmer Rouge had mortared them after they set up their polling booths after several hours. He thought deliberately, but they didn't actually hit him. They were only about 100 yards away.

In our district, we never were attacked, but there were some Polish soldiers who were stopped and killed up the road a little way. We didn't have any problem. We ran the voting as prescribed. People were tremendously happy to turn out and vote. One of the big problems in Cambodia had been to convince the people that the ballots would be secret. The government was putting it about that they would be able to know if you voted against them. But the U.N. had a radio that broadcast in Cambodia. [The group that ran it] was able to convince the people that they would be able to vote secretly. At least in our district the government went and plucked people in, and obviously thought they were going to vote for the Cambodians People's Party. But they voted overwhelmingly for the FUNCINPEC party.

The province governor was the brother-in-law of Norodou Ranariddh, the prime minister. This province is the biggest province in Cambodia in population so it was very important electorally. The election took place on the basis of proportional representation by province. So when we went back to the province capital to count the votes each of the parties had the right to have election observers and to watch us count. It became evident very quickly that the FUNCINPEC were going to get the majority, and the province governor threatened to attack us.

But there was a company or a battalion of Indian soldiers there, around the ruined theater where we were doing the counting, and the mob thought better of it. But there was great tension. The authorities were supremely confident that they were going to win the election. It was a great shock when FUNCINPEC got more votes and more seats than they did. There was a very brief secession on their part once they threatened not to participate any more. But they all came around in the end.

I thought in a lot of ways the election was the best possible results because the royalists didn't get a majority. They got a plurality. But the government got enough that they had to be included. Heng Samrin did. There were enough votes for what was called the Buddhist's Liberal Democratic Party so that they were included as well. So everybody kind of got a piece of the pie. You had to work through the structures of the Cambodian People's Party to take control of everything. So the result was this coalition, and the war pretty much stopped. Although the Khmer Rouge continued out in the woods kind of withering away. But it was rather exciting times in Cambodia.

CAMEROON

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DEREK S. SINGER
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Chief of Governance Training and Education
Yaounde, Cameroon
(1991-1994)

Derek S. Singer was born in New York City where he earned his Bachelor's degree in world history and foreign languages from New York University in 1952, and later attended the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University. His extensive career in international development began in 1954 with CARE, serving in Colombia and Bolivia. He then transitioned to U.S. government service with the International Cooperation Administration in, serving in Taiwan, Costa Rica, and on emergency duty in the Congo. In 1961, he became one of the original staff members of the Peace Corps at its creation, serving as the first Peace Corps Director in Bolivia and later as Director in Tunisia. After a lengthy period in the private sector and with the United Nations, he rejoined USAID. Upon his mandatory retirement from the Foreign Service in 1994, he continued his involvement through consultancies, notably on DRG issues in Haiti and with the Democracy Center in AID/Washington. Derek S. Singer was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1999.

Topical Focus: AID's strategy for promoting democracy, governance, and human rights through civil society, legislature, and court strengthening, and serving as an election observer

SINGER: In Cameroon, we got into politics more than perhaps anywhere else, because AID's interest in democracy, governance and human rights really evolved during my tour. There were some real problems: Paul Biya, the President, had been reelected, I guess, twice, and, again, each time the elections took place, there were serious questions raised, both domestically and internationally, about whether these were honest elections. There is a good case to be made that if they had been conducted under the most honest conditions, the President might well not have been reelected, even though he got in, probably fairly, the first time. Be that as it may, Cameroon was a (fairly) benevolent dictatorship; hence, it was a pretty difficult place to work. There is no doubt about it. It reminded me more of Zaire under President Mobutu than anywhere else I was stationed.

Now, as Chief of Governance Training and Education, which was the title of my job there, I did design and manage AID activities in the areas of democratization, governance, human rights, education, participant training, and PVOs - Private Voluntary Organization liaison. Most of my work days were spent trying to work with Cameroonian nongovernmental organizations to strengthen them, especially on the civil society side of democracy and governance activities, as well as bringing in a variety of U.S. consultants to Cameroon to work with a number of Cameroonian and regional Human Rights and Democracy and Governance groups. We held in-country seminars for them, selecting people and sending them overseas for training in the U.S., Europe, and, in one case, to Canada. Generally speaking, we were trying to build up the internal institutional capacities, once again, of these groups…

Q: May I ask, what was AID's strategy at that time in dealing with Governance and Democracy?

SINGER: Essentially, to finesse the arguments as much as we could with the government directly. We did have some arguments about that. We tried to finesse such issues as political pluralism and the need for a dynamic civil society with an unreceptive government. We also gave money, as you may recall, I have forgotten the name of the program, to the Embassy, basically, so that AID and the Embassy political officers, jointly, could administer grants which more directly benefitted local democratic political groups. In other words, we didn't get into the political game directly, but we certainly encouraged broader democratic and participative movements and groups.

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SINGER: ...The best explanation could well be the way the Germans run their activities in this area. What Germany does is to work in developing countries through its own political parties backed up by the central government. The parliament (Bundestag) actually appropriates money to German political parties, which then set up shop in the developing countries of their choice in areas where Germany has a particular interest. Cameroon was one of these, an ex-German colony. For many years, the Germans have been quite active in Cameroon. Several German political parties offer political training courses and provide advisory and consulting services to their "adopted" local political parties. They actually pick out local political groups and leaders that they like and find compatible with their own philosophy and objectives. We don't do it quite that obviously, but in terms of these political grants that we jointly made with the political officers at the embassies, we were pretty close. What we did was to find respectable national and regional

political organizations, particularly those oriented towards "good government" agendas, hopefully as close to the League of Women Voters model as we could find. These were groups that were interested in assistance to strengthen their staffing and operations, setting up permanent political election monitoring units, techniques for fund-raising, lobbying and so forth. We would help strengthen them by giving them grants to do that kind of thing, training their people, bringing in consultants to give in-country advice, assistance, seminars, and so forth.

Q: But this was not directly with the political parties?

SINGER: Not with them directly, but sometimes with affiliated "good government" groups. We didn't work as the Germans do, directly with the political parties.

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SINGER: ...We tried especially hard to work with the Parliament, the legislature there. We planned to send a number of people, librarians and other specialists working on documentation, reporting, library storage, and what have you, from their Parliament to the United States with training grants, hoping that they would come back and reform the system and thus strengthen a very weak legislature. I left post before most actually went. I am not sure whether they all actually did, since the decision was made in 1993 to close down the mission (largely because of Biya's undemocratic tendencies and his unrealistic economic policies). We tried to work with the courts as well, in terms of court strengthening. Once again, the plan was to select middle-level staff, career court personnel (rather than political people) and send them for practical training to the U.S. So, there was a good deal of work in the Democracy and Governance field.

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SINGER: ...The highlight of my time there, in Cameroon, was probably serving as an election observer for the Embassy. I was sort of borrowed by the Embassy to do this on two occasions; one was a Parliamentary election, and one was a Presidential election.

Q: What did you do as an election observer?

SINGER: Well, in one case, I went to an area in the far west of the country, and in the other, to an area far to the east. That was near the Central African Republic border, a very remote place. The latter was for Parliamentary or legislative elections, and the former was for Presidential elections. My job, literally, was going

around to the polling places, observing, and then writing up reports on whether the elections were honest, free and fair.

Q: How do you judge what is free and fair?

SINGER: I guess, you see whether or not people have an opportunity to vote secretly, whether there is a secret ballot box, you see whether or not there is a voter registration system in place, checking off names, etc. in other words, that they actually had applied some sort of objective criteria to decide who could vote. You talk to a sampling of people afterwards, and simply ask them "Were you allowed to vote freely and fairly, was any pressure put on you, was there any bribe offered to you?" - those kinds of things. I did that in both my observer assignments. In the far eastern area of the country, I almost got arrested for doing it. It was pretty close. They asked me to come down to the police station and explain what I was doing to the magistrate.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ROBERT JACKSON
U.S. Department of State
Ambassador
U.S. Embassy
Yaounde, Cameroon
(2010–2013)

Robert Jackson was born in Tennessee and raised in Maine. He received his education at Bowdoin College. After working in education abroad, he joined the Foreign Service in 1982. He spent most of his career working in Africa or DC, working on democracy and development. Ambassador Jackson was interviewed on February 21, 2019 by Mark Tauber.

Topical Focus – Early 2010s Cameroonian Democracy

Next, I kept hearing about the state of Cameroonian democracy. Although the country had been a multi-party state since the early 1990s, President Paul Biya had been head of state since 1982 and kept getting re-elected although he was becoming older and older. Whenever he faced a serious challenge, his modus operandi had generally been to accuse the challenger of corruption, try the person, and then imprison him. He has done that with three major opponents. During my Senate hearing, Senator Russell Feingold asked about the potential for violent change and Senator Johnny Isakson asked about corruption. After my hearing, the day before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was supposed to vote on my nomination, I received a call from Senator Inhofe's office. He wanted to speak with me urgently and I wondered if he had more questions about Morocco's expulsion of

American missionaries for proselytizing. I prepared to again explain that proselytizing is illegal in Morocco, putting missionaries in a precarious position even as our embassy worked hard to assist them. It turned out some of his constituents had just been scammed by cyber criminals in Cameroon, and he wanted me to assure him that I would make this a priority; I assured him that I would. The next day, the SFRC voted to send myself and several other nominees to the full Senate for a vote. Only one career nominee, and I can't remember who it was, was not voted out although the person was subsequently confirmed. By early August, I had completed the Ambassadorial Seminar and been confirmed. Not anticipating such a fast confirmation, I had again been asked to chair a promotion board; so I spent the month of August chairing the promotion board for FS-02 political, management, and public diplomacy officers competing to become FS-01s.

Q: So when you say that Cameroon in 2010 was less developed than Burundi in the mid-1980s, that really speaks volumes.

JACKSON: It does, and the statistics underscored the level of development. [superflous information redacted] This situation caused me to take a hard look at our assistance programs and to consider how the United States could contribute to Cameroon's development. I had planned to focus on corruption and democracy, but it became clear that development was a huge priority. Following a disputed presidential election, USAID had pulled out of the country in the early 1990s when USAID closed a lot of its missions; yet the need for aid was very real. USAID had two contractors at the embassy working on HIV/AIDS and other health programs; otherwise our assistance was a modest ten million dollars per year when I arrived. Working with other ambassadors in Central Africa, I began to push for a new USAID mission to serve most of the countries in Central Africa, with the exception of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi, where there were missions. We formulated a request for a development counselor to be assigned for the region and logically based in Cameroon because it had the largest economy and flights to all of the neighboring countries. We began a long and intense effort to lobby USAID Administrator Raj Shah and the State Department, ultimately sending a joint Dissent Channel message when the initial response was no.

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The other big issue that I encountered was around Cameroon's elections. In 2011, President Biya had been in office for thirty years and was up for reelection to another seven-year term. Some people believed that his historic opponent, John Fru Ndi, the anglophone president of the Social Democratic Front [SDU], actually won the election in the early 1990s, but his support steadily declined.

I should note that Cameroon and Canada are the only two countries in the world that belong to both the British Commonwealth and La Francophonie based on both being officially bilingual countries. Whereas French speakers are a minority in Canada, English speakers are a minority in Cameroon, and since the early 1990s, the political opposition has hailed primarily from the two anglophone regions and neighboring Douala.

President Biya was not particularly worried about losing the election, but I still felt that it was important to observe the election and report on it; so we sent teams all around the country—fifty people in all—to monitor the election. What we observed was that the election actually ran pretty smoothly. However, turnout was exaggerated. Although it approached 60 percent, either President Biya or those around him wanted to show that he enjoyed great support from Cameroonians. Consequently, when the official results were declared, they indicated that something like 77 percent of eligible voters had voted, but we knew from our own observations and from observations by other diplomatic missions that simply was not true. Therefore, after consulting with the department, we publicly questioned the turnout numbers.

Some other governments, including France's foreign minister, had quickly endorsed the election results and sent congratulatory messages to President Biya. This was very awkward because the United States made a statement that while we recognized that President Biya had won the election, there had been problems, especially the apparent inflation of voter turnout. The State Department worked with the Quai d'Orsay and prompted the French prime minister to issue a statement building on the U.S. statement, i.e. acknowledging Biya's victory, but declaring that the elections had not been without problems. As you can imagine, the Cameroonian government was absolutely furious, and Philemon Yang, Cameroon's prime minister, convoked the entire diplomatic corps to condemn interference in Cameroon's internal affairs. I was called in separately by Minister of External Relations Henri Eyebe Ayissi, and I fully expected that he was going to declare me persona non grata. Indeed, he delivered a very stern message but stopped short of kicking me out. That was October 2011 about a year after my arrival. I had met with President Biya a few times over that year, but I decided not to seek any meetings until after the New Year.

When I saw him offer traditional New Year greetings, he suggested that we get together. When I went to see him, he did not raise the election at all, talking instead about regional and security issues. Boko Haram was gaining traction in neighboring Nigeria, and there were rumors that it was using Cameroon as a refuge. During my final year in Cameroon, Boko Haram started kidnapping foreign nationals, initially French nuns and priests who had resided in Cameroon for years. Although we weren't sure—and neither government would admit it—we strongly suspected that either Cameroon or France had paid ransoms.

President Biya had long made a practice of buying off his political opponents; so it looked like this was a continuation of a long-standing policy. These attacks worried me; so we recommended that Americans not travel to the Northern Regions bordering Nigeria, and we made a very difficult decision to take our Peace Corps volunteers out of the two Northern Regions. All of them wanted to stay in Cameroon; so we assigned them to what we considered more stable areas. However, the attacks increased, with Vice Prime Minister Amadou Ali's wife being kidnapped by Boko Haram and held for a few months. We suspect that she was kidnapped not only because she was the vice prime minister's wife but also a medical doctor. That was the point when the fight with Boko Haram became regional rather than just Nigerian.

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The Wikileaks revelations created another tragedy. Hamidou Yaya Marafa, the University of Kansas-educated, long-time minister of territorial administration, had told my predecessor in confidence that he aspired to be president of Cameroon. We actually kept a picture of his meeting with President Kennedy in the front office. President Biya, however, has often accused political opponents of corruption, and they have subsequently languished in prison for years. True to that tradition, Marafa was accused of corruption. When Biya reshuffled his cabinet after the 2011 presidential election, Marafa was one of the cabinet members who was ousted. He came to my house on a Sunday just before Easter and told me that he expected to be arrested. He didn't want me to do anything, but he wanted me to know. A few days later, he was arrested. My team and I monitored the sham trial. No evidence that he had been involved in corruption was ever presented although there was circumstantial evidence of corruption because he had a significant amount of Total stock, an apartment in Paris, and nice homes in Yaounde and Garoua. At the end of the trial, the judges issued a thousand-plus page plus judgment, saying that he must have known and been involved in a corrupt plan to purchase a presidential aircraft. First, writing such a long judgment must have required the judges to begin months in advance. Marafa was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison, where he remains, and the United States Annual Reports on Human Rights Practices always label him a political prisoner. Prior to my departure from Cameroon, I went to see Marafa to underscore my concern and solidarity. That visit leaked to the press, which was not my intention, but I wasn't sorry that people found out because it sent a message that we care about our friends. I still think of him often. Ironically, my public statements may have contributed to the early release of another Biya confidant who was tried and imprisoned under similar circumstances decades earlier.

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Q: Were differences among ethnic groups an issue for you in carrying out any of your mission goals?

JACKSON: Not exactly. Of course, we faced the anglophone-francophone divide; it was a simmering issue. However, Cameroon has approximately 275 distinct ethnic groups, and no single group composes a majority or even plurality; therefore, President Biya cobbled together ethnic and regional coalitions in his party and his government. In fact, he actively brought different ethnic groups in different regions together. While the anglophones tend to be largely in the opposition, they and other ethnic groups were represented in government.

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A key reason for going back was Cameroon's legislative elections at the end of September in which USAID financed a get-out-the-vote campaign and a parallel vote tabulation. I am very proud to say that the 2013 legislative elections were the most transparent in Cameroon's history up to that point and perhaps ever. Once the elections concluded, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield prevailed upon Under Secretary Kennedy to allow me to leave Cameroon to become PDAS. As I was leaving, I paid a farewell call on President Biya. He decorated me with Cameroon's highest civilian honor, the Cameroon Order of Valour presented for high services to the state and gave me a stylized peace pipe made of bronze. I am convinced that that was very symbolic and that he wanted to underscore that we had come to respect and value one another. The fact that no other departing ambassador received a peace pipe as a farewell gift indicated to me that he had thought about the gift, and that the choice was very deliberate. To my knowledge, not many other ambassadors were given Cameroon's highest award either; so I left Cameroon in October 2013 on a very high note.

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My team and I had made progress on democracy. Civil society was much stronger than when I arrived. Thanks to USAID, civil society organizations had learned to work together and to be less dependent upon international donors for their survival. We had started phenomenally successful school feeding programs and a great Access English language program. In sum, when I look at my record in Cameroon, I feel that in three years I accomplished a lot.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MOSINA H. JORDAN
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
and State Department
U.S. Ambassador to Central Africa Republic
Central Africa Republic (CAR)
(1995-1998)

Ambassador Mosina H. Jordan was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated from New York University and American University Law School. She worked for the New York City's Department of Social Services as a case worker, high school mathematics teacher, Attorney advisor for the Office of Economic Opportunity Legal Services Program, Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Senate Appropriations Committee, Sub-committee on Labor, Human and Health services, Education and Related Agencies, and USAID Director of Civil Rights Office. She entered the Foreign Service in 1983 and served in the Central African Republic, Jamaica, and the Caribbean .

Topical Focus – Kolingba regime and the U.S. & French Role in the Patassé Election

Q: OK. What was the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) when you got there?

JORDAN: I arrived in Bangui on November 19, 1995, the week before Thanksgiving. The president was Ange-Felix Patassé. The CAR is a landlocked country in Central Africa bordered by Chad to the north, Sudan northeast, Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo to the south and Cameroon to the west. CAR's population was about 3 million. Despite significant resources such as uranium reserves, crude oil, gold, diamonds, lumber, hydropower and arable land, CAR is one of the poorest countries in the world. The majority of the people living outside the capital of Bangui are hunters and gatherers, living as they had been since the beginning of time. The per capita income was $300.

Patassé was the first president in CAR's history to be selected in a free and fair democratic election. Historically, change in political leadership in CAR resulted from a coup d'etat. Ambassadors Dan Simpson and Robert Gribbin, my predecessors were instrumental in creating the political environment for the democratic election. Ambassador Simpson laid the foundation for the democratic election, meeting with political and government officials convincing them that democracy was the future for modern Africa. Ambassador Gribbin also met with a wide array of political aspirants and government leadership and helped organize the actual election process. In 1993 free and fair elections were held and Patassé was elected president.

Patassé was a northerner and belonged to the Sara-Kaba ethnic group. He was an agricultural engineer and inspector in the Ministry of Agriculture under President David Dacko. In 1966, Jean-Bédel Bokassa took power in a coup d'etat. Patassé, the cousin of Bokassa's wife, gained Bokassa's confidence and served in practically every ministry of government during Bokassa's 20-year reign. He was named prime minister after Bokassa appointed himself emperor. Patassé served as prime minister for a little over two years and left to live in exile in France. For ten years, he lived in exile in either France or Togo returning to CAR intermittently to strengthen his political base for the presidency.

The day before Thanksgiving, I presented my credentials to the president. I made a concerted effort to present my opening remarks in Sangho, the local language, and my closing remarks in Sangho. The president in return did the same. He made his opening remarks in English and made his closing remarks in English. The remainder of my presentation was in French, and the president made the rest of his presentation in French. Right away we hit it off really well. First, I was the first woman ambassador to Central African Republic and that created a special relationship between the president and government officials and me. Secondly, the president had a special fondness for America that provided me access to him and his cabinet whenever I needed. Patassé was a very nice middle-aged man in his mid-50s who wanted to move the country forward under his authoritative approach to governance, believing that he was now a democratic leader. He also thought that he was in a unique position to facilitate contact with Libya and wanted President Clinton to use him as his envoy to Libya for the U.S.

Patassé purged many Yakomas from the south, his archrivals and political opponents, from government and replaced them with the Sara-Kabas his tribe from the north. Patassé made a serious tactical error when he removed the Yakomas from leadership positions in the military but didn't remove them from the rank and file. The rank and file was made up of about 80% Yakomas and 20% other tribes. This had a destabilizing effect and led to the series of attempted coup d'etats the country experienced.

Patassé also had very strained relations with France. The French had two military bases in Bangui, one right outside of Bangui and one to the north in Bouar. It was a military force of 2,000 soldiers. Their agreement with CAR to continue the use of these bases was up for renewal and Patassé was reluctant to give approval for that renewal, so the relationship was strained.

We had a very small USAID program in CAR focusing on HIV/AIDS, preserving the rainforest and setting up tourism programs in the rainforest, and an education program, providing audio/video materials and teacher training and curriculum development support through the Peace Corps. My entrée was very positive and very similar to the environment in Cameroon, the neighboring country. This was a unique period in the region, except for Gabon, practically all the countries in the region were in political crisis - Zaire to the south, Congo Brazzaville and Chad.

Q: About Bokassa ?

JORDAN: After losing the 1993 elections to Patassé, Kolingba declared a general amnesty for all the prisoners, as his final act as president and Bokassa was released from prison in August 1993. Bokassa remained in Bangui as a private citizen and didn't get involved in politics. In 1996, his health declined and he died of a heart attack on November 3, 1996. He was given a State Funeral with all of the pomp and ceremony by Patassé. Needless to say, I didn't attend.

In January, I took a trip with my econ officer and his family to the rainforest to see our program with the World Wildlife Fund. What I found astonishing was that the roads outside of Bangui were deplorable. It was a two-day drive to the rainforest on roads that you would consider nonexistent. Much of the time we were driving on two wheels in several feet of sand. Equally astonishing was that there was no place to stay outside of Bangui, no hotels. We were prepared with tents and food, but given the conditions in the savannah, it wasn't reassuring to this "city girl" to camp with the snakes, bugs and animals. Fortunately, my econ officer was astute enough to contact the sawmills on our route run by the Lebanese to arrange housing. They gave us the manager's house and prepared meals for us on two of our stops on the way, which made the trip more tolerable and pleasurable. While I had proper accommodations, it was at the expense of throwing people out of their beds and requiring them to bunk with someone else and I felt guilty about that. The Lebanese managers and workers at the sawmills were genuinely friendly and welcoming and were happy to host a U.S. ambassador. We were happy to tour their plant and visit the fields where they logged the timber to learn more about their operations. The contrast of CAR and its neighbor, Cameroon was striking. No matter how far you went outside of Yaounde, the capital, north, south, east or west, there were hotels. Many were small hotels, but pretty nice ones throughout the country. In CAR there was absolutely nothing.

It was a very unique experience driving to the rainforest. We're in the wilderness and then we come to a town made up of a series of Pygmy villages. When you leave the town what you see is just open savannah with nothing there. Then you come across a little village, and the villages are really that, thatched-roofed huts with families cooking, eating, and caring for their children in front of the hut.

Q: Well, had any effort been made to change the Pygmy way of life?

JORDAN: No. We didn't try to change the Pygmy's way of life. We capitalized on their way of life, by incorporating their hunting and gathering skills and knowledge of the rainforest into the tourism package. The Pygmies would accompany the tour guides who were French-speaking Central Africans, trained by the World Wildlife Fund into the rainforest to show the tourist the various bushes, herbs and wildlife that was in the forest, adding a unique dimension to the tourist's experience. The Pygmies were an integral part of the guide program.

Q: I mean why weren't the French doing something?

JORDAN: The French had a really strained relationship with Patassé because he wouldn't agree to renew their military bases. The U.S. Embassy was instrumental in Patassé's successful presidential election and as a result Patassé was trying to cultivate stronger ties with the U. S. After the Kolingba regime sabotaged the first set of elections in 1992, which Patassé probably would have won, a second set of elections was held in September 1993, Patassé came in first defeating Kolingba, David Dacko and Abel Gouma and took office in October 1993. I don't believe he really liked the French, especially since they supported Kolingba in the presidential elections. The French controlled every change in government since they colonized CAR. If the USG and the UN hadn't been involved in ensuring a free and fair democratic election, Kolingba would have been the president. Washington was able to convince Elysee Palace to free up the money to pay the military salaries and to structure a plan to address the other military grievances. Patassé also wanted to punish the rebels for the mutiny. My job was to convince him that was not in his best interest. The German and French ambassadors and I, all lobbied Patassé to grant amnesty so we could have peace and move forward. We also supported the establishment of a commission to look into the other grievances such as living conditions for the military. Patassé agreed to the amnesty and established the commission.

A month passed, and Captain Soulet and the English-speaking interpreter for the military unit made an unexpected visit to the embassy. The military unit we trained and danced and sang with in joyous celebration was the group that was mutinying. The young officer came back and sat in my office and basically said that they received some back pay, but all the other grievances were not being addressed even though the commission had been established. He said that Patassé was victimizing the soldiers who participated in the mutiny and they weren't doing anything to move forward on their other grievances. He was in my office on Friday morning. Before I could address his concerns, Saturday morning was the first real coup d'etat.

I was in my residence when the mutiny started in April. It was a Saturday. I don't know why they picked Saturdays. My driver came and picked me up and took me to the embassy. I didn't have a bag packed to take with me because I just never thought that the political environment was so unstable. But from that point on we started preparing for the eventuality of several of these events, and we had several. The mutiny lasted four days because of the swift response of the U.S., key allies and especially the French.

After the mutiny, we provided emergency training to the embassy staff. We conducted weapons training so that everyone knew how to use the weapons if we needed them. We had tear gas throwing training. We made sure everybody had a bag packed with basic toiletries and change of clothing by the door in case we had to move quickly. We developed procedures for what to do if we were trapped in our homes and we made sure our radios were synchronized and prepared ourselves for continuing hostilities by stocking up on food and water. As I said, the rebel leader came to see me on Friday morning. Saturday morning was a real coup d'etat. I was in the beauty parlor getting my hair done when my driver came in and told me we had to go immediately. I wrapped my wet hair in a towel and ran out. The American officers and some critical FSN staff were

all hunkered down in the embassy. The American staff was anxious about leaving their families at home alone and unable to help them hunkered down in the embassy. This time, unlike last time when the soldiers were shooting in the air, the political opposition with the mutinied military soldiers was trying to oust Patassé. We were hunkered down for two weeks. The rebels were burning French homes. They burned down the French Cultural Center twice. They looted the stores in the city and burned some of the stores. They looted the hotel and the World Bank director's house. The government forces were shooting rockets at communities that they felt were opposition strongholds. The embassy was in the crossfire. We were three blocks south of the palace and three blocks west of the radio station. The rebel forces established themselves in a strategic position on the perimeter of the embassy to shield themselves from heavy government artillery. The embassy building was getting hit by machine gun fire and other automatic weapon fire. But the staff and I were safe inside. The embassy wasn't being attacked by rocket fire because the government forces knew that they could not take out the rebels who were literally hugging the embassy perimeter without killing the U.S. embassy staff inside.

We had very little water and no food. We were also taking in refugees. Anyone caught out in the city's hot zones came to our embassy for refuge. You couldn't go anywhere on foot or even in a vehicle because the rebels and the government forces were shooting 24 hours a day. We gave refuge to Cameroonians, Lebanese, Chinese, and Russians, and a host of other nations because they had no place to go and the city was dangerously unsafe. Pursuant to an agreement with the diplomatic community, the French were responsible for protecting the diplomatic community in Bangui because they had a military presence in the country. But the French were so consumed with taking care of their own citizens, since their communities were under attack, that we didn't get very much support from the French.

We had two situations where Peace Corps volunteers were stuck in two different hot zones and the only way that they could be rescued was through the French military in an armored tank. We had 10 Peace Corps volunteers who had come in for the weekend and were stuck in their hostel. The rebel forces were in their area going house-by-house raiding the houses, pillaging the houses, and taking whatever they could find. When they were close to the hostel, the volunteers were on the radio with me and they were reporting how close the rebels were to the hostel. We checked-in with them every 20 minutes, and they reported where the rebels were. The volunteers were upstairs locked into a room and the rebels were coming close to the hostel. We also had four female Peace Corp volunteers stuck in another hot spot in the city. The young Peace Corps women were reporting to us regularly on the radio. They said that the rebels had come by a couple of times for money. They had given them money each time and they were now down to their last centime and they were worried that after they gave them the last centime they were going to come back and rape them. We needed to get the girls out of there. The French were not responding to my pleas to go pick up the ten Peace Corps volunteers in the hostel and the four women volunteers. We pleaded with our French contact to focus on rescuing the Peace Corp volunteers, and provided them with their locations. I called the French ambassador, but he was not helpful. I called Washington and pleaded with them to call the Elysee Palace in Paris and ask them to instruct the

French ambassador to pick up the Peace Corp volunteers. It was a horrific, experience. I felt impotent because I couldn't do anything. I couldn't go physically to get them and I couldn't get the French to go get them. It was really a horrendous time. I called the State Department and spoke to the Africa Bureau's principle deputy assistant secretary. I basically had to use some profanity to make it clear to them that if anything happened to these kids it was because they were not taking the action necessary to secure their rescue. The French were consumed with rescuing their citizens. The French and Patassé were the targets of the rebels. They were burning French homes and attacking the French stores, so the French were consumed with moving their citizens out of harm's way and to the airport. I guess, the French were overwhelmed and didn't want to use scarce personnel to deal with our problem. Paris ordered the French ambassador to rescue the Peace Corps volunteers. They were rescued and transported to the airport and then flown to Douala, Cameroon. The Peace Corps volunteers trapped in hot spots in the city was my worst nightmare during this first coup d'etat.

Apparently, the rebels had made some inroads toward capturing the radio station. In the middle of the night, I got an anonymous phone call and the male caller said you need to get out of the embassy because the government forces are now going to send rockets over in your direction to take out the rebels that are around your embassy. There were seven officers and several FSNs in the embassy with me. We couldn't leave the embassy because there was machine gun fire and RPG fire all around the embassy. The only way we could leave would be in a French military armored tank. I called the French ambassador and explained the threat and asked whether they could come and pick us up in an armored tank. He said that they couldn't, they didn't have the resources. I suspect that he resented my reporting him to Paris and he wasn't going to help the Americans at the expense of French citizens. French citizens in Bangui were also complaining to Paris about the long delays in being rescued from hot spots around the city and the way the French military was handling the crisis. Even though, there was shooting and fighting throughout the city, there weren't any attacks on American homes, not one. Clearly the message was they hated the French, somehow the attacks were retaliation against the French, as well as Patassé. While the American officers in the embassy were in constant contact with their families by radio, they worried about their families' safety, it was clear from those radio checks that we weren't the targets of the conflict.

Q: You were receiving the warning about a rocket attack. What did you do?

JORDAN: I told the staff that, it was impossible for the president to send a rocket to take out the rebels on the embassy's perimeter, because he knew that it could hit us. It was crazy, he wouldn't do that. I called President Patassé and I said, "You know what? We just got this anonymous call, that you're going to send rockets over here to take out the rebels that are hugging the embassy perimeter and I know that's not true." And he says, "Yes, it's true and we have to do it because they're getting ready to take the radio station and if we don't do it we may lose this conflict."

I said, "But Mr. President, you guys don't have precision rockets. You can't take the rebels out from around the embassy. They're hugging the embassy! You're going to kill

us in the process." I said, "If you're intent on doing that, then you're declaring war on the U.S. and I don't think you want to declare war on the U.S. I think you need to think about it because we can't get out of the embassy and if you take the rebels out, you take me and my staff out as well. " And I said, "You better think about that and call me back."

In the meantime, as soon as I hung up from talking to the president, I sent a message to Washington of my conversation with Patassé. We were sending several SITREPs (situation reports) a day to Washington. Our command center was on the floor in the communications room of our safe haven. We were on our knees typing so that we wouldn't be in the line of fire or stray bullets through the window. One of the addressees on the SITREPs was the European Command. They were receiving copies of everything that we sent to Washington. I received a call from General Joulwan, Commander-in-Chief of the European Command, asking me what resources we needed. He said that he had been following the events in Bangui and saw that we needed support and offered to provide support. He asked what resources we needed and then rattled off a list of resources - C-130s, troops and Puma helicopters. I said, "General, I don't know what the hell I need. Send it all. I just need to know how fast it can get here." He said, "Well, we can have men on the ground in 18 hours." They were pulling them from a ship off the coast of Liberia. There was a conflict in Liberia at the time. We had troops on the ground literally in 18 hours. The French Military met them at the airport and transported them to the embassy in their armored tanks.

Patassé called me back and said they were not going to send rockets to take out the rebels by the embassy and that they were going to stop their approach to the radio station." While we were awaiting the arrival of the Marines, there were several unsuccessful attempts to breach the embassy wall by the rebels. We set up tear gas canisters by all the windows in the event they would start breaching the wall, we could just launch the tear gas and maybe that would slow them down. We took our weapons out and were locked, loaded and ready until the Marines came. When the Marines arrived, I think there were 25 soldiers, I can't remember, they set up their perimeter on the roof of the embassy and in our courtyard and managed our security from that point on. They brought us MREs and water.

Q: MREs means meals ready to eat?

JORDAN: Yes. We didn't have any food and water and we were taking in people everyday who needed to get out of harms way. We took in a Chinese family who owned a restaurant across the street from the embassy's back gate. Embassy staff and I and the diplomatic community ate at their restaurant frequently. When they came they brought some rice and some kind of meat, I don't know what it was. For at least one day, we had some rice with a tasty sauce and this mystery meat. We all slept on the floor. When the Marines arrived they too bunked down on the floor. There was one bathroom in our safe haven area, a toilet and a sink. We hadn't bathed in over a week.

Q: What about the families that are out in their homes?

JORDAN: The families were all secure. We were in constant contact with each family by radio. As I said, the rebels were not interested in the Americans. They basically insulated us from any attacks. Not one American lost a fingernail as a result of the coup. The coup d'etat was squashed by the French after two weeks of hostilities. The rebels had guns and money and supplies. They had everything they needed to successfully execute the coup. It was alleged that the French were covertly supporting the rebels, but the French suffered the most from the rebel attacks, they lost 50% of their homes and mostly all their stores and their cultural center. The rebels burnt down the cultural center twice, I'm not sure why twice. The U.S. and the other foreign embassies in Bangui and major international organizations supported Patassé, the first democratically elected president in the country, in the history of the country, and we didn't understand the French's inaction and lobbied the French government to put down the coup. In the beginning of the coup the French moved their military troops outside of Bangui into the city and positioned them on the streets. But they didn't lift a finger to do anything. They didn't even stop the rebels from burning down the French stores and homes and looting.

They had a policy of constructive engagement, which meant that unless the rebels were attacking a diplomat or a French citizen, something that they saw, they weren't going to do anything. So they didn't do anything. We had to convince the French that they needed to get engaged otherwise the whole city was going to go up in flames. Once engaged, the French attacked the rebel strongholds and ended the attempted coup. They proposed a program of reconciliation and brought in an African peace keeping mission made up of former colonies, about six or seven countries. The countries sent about 70 military personnel to protect the city while they worked on reconciliation. When the coup ended there was a reconciliation ceremony. They appointed General Amadou Toure, the former president of Mali, to negotiate peace and reconciliation. During one of his visits, he brought with him several presidents in the Central Africa region to facilitate the peacekeeping process. They met with the rebels to get a clear sense of what they wanted and documented their issues. Then they met with the government to work out a resolution. When they reached an agreement, they had another reconciliation ceremony; everybody shook hands and hugged and kissed. As both sides moved forward, the peacekeeping force remained in place. We had a little respite after the reconciliation. We went home, got a set of fresh clothes, and water, and were prepared for the next coup attempt. The second coup took place about three weeks after reconciliation.

The rebels were looting again, burning homes and raping the women in government held areas. The government forces retaliated and intense fighting began. This time they were shooting much heavier artillery and rockets. The fighting continued for three weeks. The French, General Amadou Toure, and some of the presidents from the region, tried to broker peace again, and they were successful. In the meantime, several French advisors that were part of the African peacekeeping operations were killed. The French were incensed and they took out a rebel stronghold with a vengeance. French Puma helicopters shot up the entire neighborhood, killing innocent women and children and non-combatants. The French put down the rebellion again and we had another reconciliation ceremony, lots of hugs and kisses and champagne. The diplomatic corps

was invited to all the reconciliation ceremonies. We had peace for maybe three or four weeks.

Q: Well, let me ask, why were you, the Americans, the Peace Corps, the whole thing, there? Why didn't you get the hell out?

JORDAN: After the first coup, we evacuated all the Americans from the country. We had 96 Peace Corps volunteers in CAR at the time scattered throughout the country. We were able to use the missionaries and their private planes to pick up the volunteers and transport them to staging points where they were picked up and transported to the airport. The French controlled the airport, so we could transport the Americans to the airport and get them out on our C-130s to Douala, Cameroon where transportation to the States was arranged on private carriers. We also evacuated all the families of the American staff. We went to their homes and packed up the families and then evacuated them as well. There were about 200 different religious groups in the country and we evacuated all of the religious groups. I think there was one missionary home that was slightly damaged because they were in an area where there was a lot of rocket fire. Basically, the Americans were protected, we weren't targeted, and we weren't touched by the hostilities. We evacuated everybody: non-essential embassy staff and their families, families of essential staff, private American businessmen and women, and missionary groups. We evacuated everybody except the essential staff in the embassy, basically seven officers, including myself.

Q: Well, why should you stay? I mean, why not just get out?

JORDAN: Washington didn't want to close the embassy. Once you close an embassy it's difficult to reopen it. In addition, Washington wanted to maintain a presence and be able to get some intelligence as to what was going.

Q: What were American interests there?

JORDAN: The U.S. made a substantial investment in the early 1990s to move the CAR toward democratic leadership and a democratic society. U.S. diplomacy in Bangui has focused on sustaining democracy through strengthening democratic institutions, encouraging improvements in CAR's human rights posture, promoting economic reforms, reinforcing international peacekeeping operations, insisting on an even playing field for U.S. commercial interests.

Q: What's the point of putting an ambassador and her staff in harm's way? I mean why not just get the hell out?

JORDAN: We weren't the targets. We were in the crossfire. The embassy building was riddled with bullets on all sides. After a mutiny and two unsuccessful coup d'etats, the conflict escalated to rocket fire. During the mutiny, we consolidated to our command center in the embassy. During the first and second attempted coup d'etats we also consolidated to the command center in the embassy. We were at risk because we were a

special embassy with no Marine support. The third attempted coup d'etat, we established a command center in the residence, which I thought would be out of harm's way. We were not in the crossfire between the palace and the radio station. My residence was close to the palace, but it wasn't in the crossfire, it was in the middle of a hill. At the top of the hill were the government forces and their barracks. At the bottom of the hill were the Ubangi River and the rebel forces. When the shooting started, the rebels now were shooting rockets to the top of the hill and the government forces were returning fire. The rockets were now falling into the yard of my residence. It was then that I informed Washington, that I couldn't protect the Americans under these conditions and we had to leave. Washington didn't want us to leave. We were on a secure conference call with the State Department, and other resources in Washington. We talked about the situation on the ground and whether or not it was to our advantage to leave. I told them that we were leaving whether they approved it or not, because I couldn't protect anybody. My staff and I had enough and it was no longer safe to remain in Bangui. I have a tape of the shooting and you can hear constant shooting and rockets going off around us 24 hours a day. We all left and I set up an embassy in exile in Yaounde, Cameroon.

Q: How did they allow you -- who allowed you to leave?

JORDAN: State Department.

Q: State Department. How'd you get out?

JORDAN: The French military escorted us in armored tanks to the airport. My staff and I flew into Douala and they flew to Washington on private carriers. I was met by Embassy Yaounde staff and driven to the embassy in Yaounde, Cameroon.

Q: Tell me about the embassy in exile in Yaounde.

JORDAN: I established an embassy in Yaounde, Cameroon. Ambassador Charles Twining was gracious and generous in sharing space in his suite with me. I was assigned a room and the support of Embassy Yaounde staff. The embassy in the CAR remained opened and I managed the few FSN staff there from Yaounde. Before the last of the American staff left Bangui, the facilities in the embassy except for the entrance and the lobby were secured to allow access to American citizens that were still in country and in need of counselor services. The FSN staff in the embassy provided counselor services to American citizens before the hostilities began and continued to do so in this new drawdown status. They also conducted intelligence and reported on fast-breaking political and security developments in Bangui and the country. I was in contact with them several times a day.

I flew back to Bangui when the hostilities died down to assess the political and security developments. I met with the head of the African Peacekeeping force, the prime minister, members of government, members of parliament and members of the diplomatic corps. They all assessed that the political and security posture of CAR was still very fragile. The goal was to protect Patassé, the democratically elected president. Pressure from the

international community forced the French to squash the rebel forces and bring an end to the third attempted coup, and find a politically acceptable solution to the conflict. The French and the International Follow-up Committee assisted Patassé in setting up a coalition government, which was difficult to do because there was so much distrust. They brought in the CAR ambassador to Paris, to serve as the prime minister. In the beginning there was maybe a glimmer of hope that the coalition government would function and restore peace and begin rebuilding the damaged properties in Bangui and the damage to the CAR economy, but basically there was just a lot of distrust. Eventually Patassé began to distrust his own prime minister because the French selected him. He believed that the French was controlling him and had some kind of sinister agenda that put him at risk. Patassé left the country to meet with Chirac. While in Paris the tensions in Bangui began to mount again and were ready to explode. When Patassé returned, Prime Minister Jean-Paul Ngoupandé resigned because his relationship with Patassé had deteriorated to the point that he was ineffective. Patassé selected someone that he liked to serve as prime minister, and the fragile coalition government limped along.

I managed the embassy in Bangui from Yaounde for a few months and then went to Washington to brief them on the latest developments in CAR. I came down with pneumonia and was sick for several months. State/Med would not medically clear me to return to Yaounde. So, I managed the embassy in Bangui from Washington for a year. I was on the phone every day with FSNs and checking with contacts in Bangui to learn about recent developments. While I was in Washington, there was a resurgence of violence in the rebel strongholds in the south and southwestern sections of Bangui in June 1997 that stalled the peace negotiations. I was on the phone with key allies in Bangui who were lobbying for constraint and an end to the recent outburst of hostilities. I was so angry, I fired off a searing letter to the rebel leader Captain Soulet condemning the resumption of hostilities. I tried to send a clear message to him and the dissidents that their violation of the January 1997 Bangui Accords and recently brokered cease-fire agreement was reprehensible, irresponsible and dishonorable and had caused untold human suffering. I demanded that they cease fighting. The letter was picked up by the French wire service and “Jeune Afrique”, and applauded by the leadership in the region and our major allies.”

While in Washington managing the embassy in Bangui, I was also assigned to be the senior advisor for Africa to the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations for the United Nations’ General Assembly (UNGA). Bill Richardson was the ambassador. He was the first person I met as I entered the U.S. Mission. It was a U.S holiday and it was very early in the morning. I thought to myself, they work on holidays; this is going to be an intense assignment. Ambassador Richardson greeted me in the entryway as he was leaving. We chatted briefly. He had a great sense of humor and was wonderful to work with. During the 52nd UNGA, I established USUN outreach to the African Permanent Representatives, meeting with all 48-subsharan ambassadors on a wide range of issues, explaining U.S. policy not only on Africa but also on diverse topics as the scale of assessments, Iraq, Bosnia and Security Council reform. I attended many Security Council discussions on Sierra Leone, Somalia, the DROC, Congo-Brazzaville and the Central African Republic. My major challenge was convincing high-level State Department officials of the need to

support the French government's request in the UN Security Council for a follow-on UN peacekeeping operation to the African Peacekeeping Force, as the withdrawal of French troops from Bangui and Bouar would create a security vacuum and rekindle hostilities. This was a difficult sell because of cost implications for the USG through the UN peacekeeping budget and the CAR's low priority profile. After much persuasion, my position prevailed in spite of significant pressure to do otherwise from a number of quarters at the time. It was an interesting and fully charge period and I enjoyed every minute of it.

Even though Patassé was elected president as a result of free and fair democratic elections, he was an authoritative leader. That's all he knew from his 20 years working with Bokassa. I was constantly, meeting with Patassé to address all kinds of human rights violations. I recall, being invited to dinner at his home and discussing the arrest of a journalist that had been beaten in prison. I said to him, "You can't arrest journalists because they're saying things you don't like. You're a democratic president now. You can't do it!" He said, "Well, they're lying." I said, "If Bill Clinton arrested everybody that lied about him in the U.S. we'd have half the country in prison! You can't do that. You have to figure out ways in which you get your message to the people that counters what the journalist is saying. Go on television, talk to the people. Go on the radio, talk to the people. You don't have to arrest journalists and beat them up." The approach I was suggesting was incomprehensible to him. This is a global problem for emerging democracies.

Patassé wasn't interested in helping the people of CAR. Like his mentor Bokassa, he was only interested in helping himself, his family, his tribe and his friends. He thought that because the U.S. supported the democratic elections in CAR and he was the successful candidate, the U.S. could replace the French in prominence and support. That was never going to happen. Patassé wasn't the French's choice for president and his arrogance, stubbornness and pro-U.S. posture strained their relationship and they got rid of him.

Q: How'd they get rid of him?

JORDAN: A coup d'etat. In May 2001, there was another unsuccessful coup attempt that was thwarted by Patassé using troops provided by the Congolese rebel leader Jean Pierre Bemba and Libyan soldiers. In the aftermath, of the failed coup, militias loyal to Patassé sought revenge against the rebels and murdered many political opponents. In March 2003, General François Bozizé, a former general in the army, launched a surprised attack, overthrowing Patassé while he was out of the country.

CENTRAL AMERICA

N/A

CENTRAL ASIA

N/A

CHILE

J. BRIAN ATWOOD
President—National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
Washington D.C.
(1985-1992)
Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

J. Brian Atwood was born and raised in Wareham, Massachusetts. Atwood began his government career as a Management Intern at the National Security Agency after which he entered the Foreign Service in 1965. He served in West Africa and Madrid. After serving in different capacities on the Hill he became USAID Administrator from 1993 -1999. This interview was conducted by Alex Shakow in February 2022

Topical Focus – National Democratic Institute's (NDI) Election Monitoring

Q: How did you relate to the Carter Center, which was also doing, obviously, quite a lot of election observation and work?

ATWOOD: NDI was the first to put together international election observer missions. We asked President Carter to lead our mission to Panama a few years later. After that he and I co-led a delegation to the Zambian election—not that anyone paid much attention to me with him there! Carter loved doing these missions and eventually he and the Carter Center did them on their own.

Q: I see. So, that the initiative started with you people and the Carter Center theme followed on from you and—

ATWOOD: Followed on a few years later as did the UN and OSCE and the OAS. After the Philippines we did Chile. And we brought people from the Philippines into Chile, and brought the Chilean delegation to the Philippines to see their second election. We helped set up a local group that would monitor in Chile. And most importantly, in the case of Chile, the opposition to Pinochet was divided. The conservative opposition wanted nothing to do with the socialists, and the Christian Democrats and the socialists were also divided, but they were closer together. We brought them all to Venezuela, where the president of Venezuela had lived in exile in Chile. And we brought in the Spanish; I brought in the former Franco Interior Minister Manuel Fraga whom I had met in the Spanish transition. We invited Spanish socialists, and party leaders from other countries that had recently gone through elections. Everyone urged the Chilean opposition to participate in a plebiscite and to participate together. We had Andrés Alamand, who was a conservative who was going to support Pinochet in the plebiscite. But we had taken him

to the Philippines so he could see what a parallel vote count was. We did a parallel vote count in Chile. We registered a lot of voters. The southwest Hispanic voter registration people that did a lot of work in the Southwest of the U.S., all Spanish speakers, were sent in to register people en masse. Pinochet didn't know what hit him. I mean, all of a sudden, all these people were registered to vote. He didn't think they would be able to vote. We then brought in experts on communications to help the Chileans develop the right message. The Chilean plebiscite was structured so that those who were against Pinochet had to take the "no" side. The "yes" side would let Pinochet and his system stay in place for another several years.

Q: Yeah.

ATWOOD: So, taking that message, which was a negative message, and turning it into a positive was very tricky. We had American pollsters that worked with their pollsters. We did the whole nine yards because to us, this wasn't a question of staying out of a partisan election; this was the small "d" democrats versus the dictator.

Q: This all sounds very exciting.

ATWOOD: Well, it was. It was very exciting. We asked the former president of Spain, whom I had met at Liberal International meetings, Adolfo Suárez, to lead our delegation. And that was really important because the Chileans respected him. He had been a minister under Franco and he had standing with the conservatives, but he was a liberal and he really cared about democracy. The night of the election, the military, knowing that Pinochet had lost, didn't want to release the results. And Andrés Allemand, who'd come to our suite to meet with Suarez, saw the parallel vote count. He could see that Pinochet had lost. He went to the military and threatened to have his own press conference to announce the results, the parallel vote count results. The military caved in the early morning hours and Pinochet officially lost. A few months later, they had their first election for president and a Christian Democrat won in a coalition with the Socialists. The rest is history.

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Q: Right.

ATWOOD: But we got out and I went to Hawaii, met my wife there and sat there and wrote a report most of the time while she was on the beach. (Both laugh) But anyway, I mean, it was really dramatic. And then, after having gotten away with that, we go into Chile. I went in and met with the Chilean interior minister, who was known as Pinochet's

bad guy. I thought I was going to get assassinated. And I said, “If you’re going to have a legitimate election, you really need foreign observers and we’re here to help you do that.” And damned if we didn’t get away with all the things we did in Chile. And the opposition leaders actually gave us credit. They came to Washington for a celebratory luncheon and gave credit to NDI for what happened. Later they even made a movie or a documentary where they testified that NDI was why Chile had moved back into the democratic sphere.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

GEORGE F. JONES
Department of State
Deputy Chief of Mission
Santiago, Chile
(1985-1989)

Mr. Jones was a former U.S. Ambassador to Guyana and specialist in Latin American affairs. He served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Chile, 1985-89, and in Costa Rica, 1982-85. He was twice Senior Adviser on Latin American affairs to the U.S. delegation to the U.N. General Assembly in New York. His other posts included assignments to embassies in Ecuador, Ghana, Venezuela, and Guatemala, and as political advisor to the U.S. Mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, Austria. Mr. Jones was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Topical Focus – U. S. Democracy and Election Assistance under Pinochet

Q: Oh yes. Well now these initial months when you were there, when you were the Chargé, I'm sure people were approaching you from all sectors saying Señor Jones, please tell me where does the United States stand on things and here you are with no instructions. And always the problem is if you come with an ambassador whom you don't really know at all, you don't want to set any course that he might have to disavow or set it right. Also this is not a benign country, this is not a place where we haven't been seared by the whole Allende thing too, in the American political spectrum. What did you do?

JONES: What we said publicly was of course carefully coordinated with Washington. What we said on the National Accord was in fact said in Washington, drafted by the Office of Southern Cone Affairs and issued by the Department spokesman, and we simply publicized it in Chile. We didn't say anything on our own publicly.

What we said privately--it is a little hard to separate in my mind now what we might have said at various stages because I suspect that some evolution took place over time. When asked what we desired for Chile the answer was always we would like to see Chile return to democracy. You would usually then be asked, "How do you define democracy? Are you going to insist that it be American-style democracy on American terms or are you going to let us design our own Chilean democracy?" So we would debate for five minutes

or five hours how you define democracy and how you can tell when you have a democracy and when you don't. Something had occurred in Chile prior to our getting there which at the time did not seem terribly significant and I'm sure the embassy didn't know the full story at the time either. It only came out later. But in the late 70's, Pinochet had come under a lot of pressure to have a constitution. He'd been operating without a constitution. There was a military junta which issued decrees. The pressure was coming from that same right wing that although perfectly happy with Pinochet and what he had done, wanted more of the traditional trappings of the Chilean republic and wanted to be able to say they were a constitutional republic. They didn't like having Chile referred to all around the world as a military dictatorship. So he finally agreed and a group of his most trusted civilian advisors were selected to draft a constitution. His instruction to them for the first draft or whatever was that on adoption of the constitution, Pinochet would become the constitutional president of the republic for a term of 16 years.

Q: Good God!

JONES: His term would just be coming to an end this year. As this got discussed among his advisors, they got increasingly nervous and finally got up the courage to say to him that they were concerned that this would be a public relations disaster and therefore wouldn't achieve the whole purpose of having a constitution, which was to improve Chile's image, and that it might even endanger approval of the constitution which was going to be via a plebiscite. So they argued with him and finally got him to agree to divide it in half and he would have an eight-year term. At the end of eight years, in October 1988, there would be another plebiscite which would vote yes or no on the question, "Do you wish President Pinochet to continue for a second eight year term until 1996?" That's what was written in the constitution that was adopted in 1980.

When I arrived in Chile, and even before in 1984, the opposition focus was on trying to force some immediate change in the circumstances of how Chile was governed, force him to restore a Congress or permit elections or move in some way toward greater democracy in Chile. As time went on, it became evident to everybody that nothing was going to convince him to do this. The opposition had tried demonstrations; they had tried every kind of rally and strike, all the statements coming from the U.S. Government, nothing was having any effect. The opposition became extremely demoralized by the rejection of the National Accord. After that the spirits of the opposition went into a long decline because there just seemed no hope of anything. As October 1988 came closer, it became evident that there was a potential for forcing Pinochet to do something. There was one lever that he, himself, had given everybody, which was to defeat him in the plebiscite. When we pointed that out to the opposition, many of the opposition leaders said, "You've gotta be kidding. You think Pinochet is going to let us win the plebiscite? You don't know this man. We've lived with him all these years. He had outmaneuvered, manipulated, tricked the United States Government, every United States Ambassador, all of us, the Cardinal. Look how he embarrassed the Cardinal. The Cardinal went to see him and he brushed him off. There is absolutely no way. What you're suggesting is ridiculous. We will boycott the plebiscite. It is a sham and a hoax."

But what our policy became in Chile, in 1986-88, was to encourage the opposition to participate in the plebiscite and to make every effort they could possibly make to win it. We devoted some resources to helping them win it, both through direct grants from AID and grants coming from the National Endowment for Democracy to the National Democratic Institute. We provided funding for a number of different efforts related to participation in the plebiscite. As time grew near for the plebiscite, some of the opposition leaders decided to give it a try: two political leaders in particular who were crucial. The Christian Democrats, who had always been the largest single party in Chile, had an internal election in July 1987, and Gabriel Valdes who had been the leader of the Christian Democrats was replaced by Patricio Aylwin. Valdes had leaned toward those who thought Pinochet was invincible. Aylwin was prepared to do battle. The other key player was Ricardo Lagos who was a US-educated Socialist. One of the things we had trouble with in the embassy was reestablishing relations with the Socialists. The Socialist Party in Allende's time was closely allied with the Communists. There were various factions of the Socialist Party who in the US Government view were still, in 1987, hand in glove with the Communist Party. There were great qualms about dealing with the Socialists. But we established good relations certainly with all the Socialists who were in Chile. The more extreme ones were in exile in any event. In fact the Socialists had their own internal problems in deciding how to proceed, to the point that it proved impossible to get a unified socialist party because of its many splinters, let alone get any agreement on a joint course of action. Lagos then went out and formed his own new party called the Party for Democracy, the PPD. Great choice of name. To do it he had to go through a very complicated and tedious process collecting signatures to get the party legalized. Everybody, both Socialists and other opposition leaders, said it can't possibly be done. Pinochet will execute anybody who signs your petition. Even if people sign the petition he'll find some technicality; he won't recognize it. Lagos went out, did it, got all the signatures, met all the legal requirements, and lo and behold they were recognized.

One of the interesting questions is to what extent did the United States help? There is a very large extent to which these things would have happened anyway with or without our presence. We certainly provided some moral support and encouragement at their very darkest moment when they were most discouraged.

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JONES: [...] As I recall, months went by before we could get Washington to decide anything. Sounds familiar to any of us who have ever been in the Foreign Service. But finally as a result of persistent banging on Washington and a continuing development of our indirect relationship with Fernandez Larios, we began to get some movement. My most dramatic involvement was a time in November 1986, when finally after much hand wringing and soul searching it was decided on both sides, Fernandez Larios' and the US Government's side, that it would be useful for there to be a face to face contact. The Ambassador had put me in charge of the case. In fact he didn't want anybody else in the Embassy, except the station chief, to know anything about this. So I was deprived of the usual staff that might have helped on this. I did all the telegrams myself, because we were so concerned about all these aspects, including the aspect that if somehow word got out,

that Fernandez Larios would disappear into a military cell and never be seen again until you heard the noise of the firing squad. So it was decided that I was the only person that could go and see him.

I talked to one of the Embassy secretaries and said I'd like to use your apartment for a meeting. I'd like to arrange for you to be somewhere else. We wanted to hold it on safe territory and have some reasonable assurance that it was not going to be bugged. It was not reasonable to believe that Pinochet's police would have bugged the secretary's apartment. So I went home, and in Chile as in Costa Rica I had a bodyguard who was with me at all times. So I told the driver and I told the bodyguard, "That's all for today. Nothing else on the schedule for today." They thought it was very peculiar that I was home at that hour of the afternoon and peculiar that I wasn't going anywhere else. "Are you sure you don't want us to stick around?" "No!"

As soon as they were out of sight, I grabbed a bottle of scotch which I always found to be helpful in breaking the ice in a Latin environment and put it into a paper sack and went out and caught a taxi, the only time I ever caught a taxi in Chile in front of my own house, and went to the apartment--the nearest thing to playing cloak and dagger that I ever got involved in. I met with Fernandez Larios and although he was very wary, the ice did get broken. We got a number of things straightened out face to face that hadn't been earlier. There were certain countries he could travel to without a passport, so we went through a stage where we were trying to set up a meeting in Argentina. His contact in Argentina was going to be CIA. I don't recall now why, I guess because the FBI at this point was still extremely skittish about having anything to do with this. I don't know whether CIA work is really like John LeCarre or whether they modeled it on John LeCarre for my benefit. At any rate, I was told to tell Fernandez about the rolled up magazine as a sign of identification and the contact phrase to be used and everything else. But Fernandez Larios decided against Argentina. Another of the complications was that his sister had hired him a lawyer, and this American lawyer came down from New York and was far more nervous than anyone else involved. He had visions of being hauled off 91 by the secret police and never heard of again. I guess he had seen "Missing." He was always giving very nervous advice to Fernandez Larios. The FBI finally sent some people down to Santiago. Once that happened they began to get committed, to say OKAY this is real; it may actually happen. It was finally worked out that Fernandez would be willing to get on board a plane. The CIA station had checked and found out that his name wasn't in the Chilean lookout book. They had someone who had access to the airport computers and established that as near as they could tell, if he tried to leave, his name wasn't going to come up on any kind of screen. So he decided he was prepared to risk it. He got on a plane for Rio de Janeiro. The FBI agreed to meet him.

The most dramatic single meeting that I ever had in the Foreign Service was when I called a meeting of the Emergency Action Committee, which was the group that mainly worried about threats to the Embassy, but included all the senior people, the station chief, the attaché, the political officer, the security officer and so on. I got them all sitting down and told them that a Chilean Army Major on active duty was now in the air on his way to Rio de Janeiro where he would be met by FBI agents and taken to the United States and

placed under arrest and tried for complicity in the Letelier case. I think I had the most stunned audience that I ever had in my career as well. It all worked beautifully, no problems at all. Then the Ambassador and I went to see the Interior Minister, who was not a bad guy, at his home. Within the Pinochet cabinet certainly one of the least far right wing, and we broke the news to him. We had another stunned audience. I certainly hated to do it to him and complicate his life.

Fernandez Larios appeared in US federal court and testified against the Pinochet government. I'm not sure whether he was given any prison time or if he served a suspended sentence. It seems to me it was the latter. And then he went into the witness protection program which was part of the deal. He is presumably still living somewhere in the United States. It was an extraordinary event, and in addition to helping resolve the Letelier case, it helped the return of democracy to Chile. It was enormously embarrassing to the Pinochet government that this had occurred.

Q: As a result of their involvement in this, I would have thought that the senior Embassy officers would have suffered somewhat.

JONES: No we didn't. We suffered a lot more from the Rojas case that we talked about the last time than we did from the Letelier case. The level of Chilean embarrassment over Letelier was extremely high. I mean for all Chileans. Anybody who wasn't totally blinded by hero worship of Pinochet knew perfectly well what had happened. Contreras had planned and ordered Letelier's murder, the only uncertainty in everybody's mind was to what extent Pinochet was personally involved, whether Contreras did it without his knowledge or under some vague general authority from Pinochet. To many of us it was inconceivable that Contreras would have taken this serious an action without checking with Pinochet first. Pinochet controlled and managed everything in his government. But we had no evidence of that; Contreras never said anything of course. As I recall some of Fernandez Larios' testimony was suggestive on that point, but no hard fact. So we never accused Pinochet and Chileans never talked about his possible involvement. But I don't think I ever talked to anybody who tried to argue that Contreras hadn't done this. The argument instead was, if the chief of your CIA was accused of something like this, would you extradite him to another country? How could you expect us to do that? Knowing all the secrets that he knows, would you hand him over to another foreign power? To which we had the very fortunate reply, "Fine, then try him in Chile." We always said that would be perfectly acceptable.

The Fernandez Larios business was in late '86, early '87. The plebiscite was October 1988. There were a number of amazing aspects to it. As part of the deal, as part of Pinochet's decision to permit... I just realized, I haven't said anything about the assassination attempt on Pinochet. Still another chapter. An assassination attempt in September of 1987. It was one of the most beautiful examples of extra sensory perception by a senior State Department official that I have ever seen. Robert Gelbard, who is not universally loved in the Foreign Service, was senior Deputy Assistant Secretary for InterAmerican Affairs. I was due for home leave, and my home leave kept getting delayed for a variety of reasons, but I finally got away. The Ambassador wanted very

much to go off on some leave of his own. By the time I could get off it worked out that toward the end of my leave, we were both going to be away. If he was going to take his leave when he wanted it, and I took my full home leave we were going to have to have the third ranking person in the Embassy in charge. The Ambassador, who was a great believer in delegation downwards, said, " Fine, why not? The world won't come to an end." So I went off on my home leave, and in due course he went off on his leave. I was out in Colorado visiting one of our children, and I got a phone call from Gelbard's office saying that it was absolutely unacceptable for both Harry and me to be absent from Chile. Since the Ambassador had left, he wanted me to get myself back down there right away. So I had the world's shortest home leave. I got on the plane and got back to Chile.

I had barely gotten back, like two or three days after, when the Communists made a nearly successful attempt to assassinate Pinochet. It turned out that they had gotten a substantial arsenal of weaponry from the Cubans, which just like that boatload of arms in Venezuela in the 1960s, had been clandestinely delivered to an isolated point on Chile's long seacoast and stored in a cave. The Chilean Communists had taken the most useful items, notably RPG's, rocket propelled grenades, and planned an assassination attempt. Pinochet had a little farm out in a mountain valley about an hour away from Santiago, which was actually owned by the Chilean army. It had been acquired for his benefit, but was not technically in his name. It was known that he went out there on weekends, and there was only one road to and from the place, so it was easy for the Communists to know that he was going to be returning along this particular road sometime in the late afternoon. So they set up an ambush, and it was very nearly successful. There were at least a couple of people killed. But one of his prudent security measures was that there were several identical cars, identical Mercedes, that were used, and they did not know which one he was in. Also these rockets had to travel a certain distance before they were armed, and they were not skilled in the use of these. The Cubans had not sent down any trainers with the weapons, and they fired several of them too close to the cars with the result they made dents but didn't penetrate. The cars were bulletproofed. Pinochet got a small cut on the hand and that was it. The famous story was that after it was all over, he looked at the pattern in the bulletproof glass of his car that had been made by one of the rockets, and concluded that it looked like the Virgin, which was yet another proof for him of divine protection of his rule.

Shortly afterwards the part of the arsenal that was still in storage was discovered. A fisherman or something ran across it along the coast. We provided some technical assistance to the Chileans in tracking the weapons and identifying where they had come from. It provided a useful opportunity for us to make the point that we were just as much opposed to extremism of the left as extremism of the right. We did not support violent solutions in Chile. I went as chargé to visit one of Pinochet's guards in the hospital, and held a press conference on the hospital steps to make those points. It was the second lead in El Mercurio the next day.

That was sort of the last gasp of the extreme left. I think there were some things that happened much later on after Pinochet left. There was no significant effort against Pinochet after that. It must have been extremely demoralizing to them to have come so

close and not succeeded. Of course he tried to avoid offering them such another easy opportunity.

So along came the plebiscite in 1988. Pinochet made the decision, I'm sure with much reluctance but under heavy pressure from his own people, that at least to some extent, this 94 had to be played honestly and fairly. So an opposition newspaper was licensed for the first time in 15 years. Advertising time was permitted on television, very rigorously limited, but there was to be half an hour once a week, late in the evening, 9:30-10:00, of which 15 minutes would be available to those who supported a vote of yes in the plebiscite for Pinochet to stay on and 15 minutes for those who favored a vote of no. I think the view in the United States is that under no circumstances does a dictator ever play fair. Pinochet is an interesting example that under certain circumstances where there are reasons and incentives, they do play fair. This had an enormous impact in Chile, that for the first time in 15 years political discussion was being permitted publicly. The forces of the "no," who by this time had gained some self confidence and a sense of organization, the forces of opposition to Pinochet, they went to some very good advertising people who worked for Chilean advertising firms and designed a series of brilliant 15-minute political programs. On the whole very reassuring, very moderate. Nothing to give ammunition to those who claimed that the opposition were a bunch of fire-breathing radicals who would destroy Chile if they are ever permitted back in.

Political demonstrations were permitted. Only a very few of them, rigorously controlled. Nevertheless you had the first legal political demonstrations in Chile in 15 years. The rallies, the marches for the opposition were massive. So we were pretty hopeful how things were going to go in the plebiscite, but not at all sure what Pinochet was going to do. As I mentioned earlier we had all kinds of reports of things he was thinking about doing.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR HARRY G. BARNES, JR.
U. S. Ambassador
Chile
Santiago, Chile
(1985-1988)

Harry G. Barnes Jr. was a high-ranking American diplomat and was President Ronald Reagan's ambassador to Chile in the 1980s. Mr. Barnes was also ambassador to Romania and India as well as director general of the Foreign Service, serving as a policy advisor to Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance during Carter's presidency. Mr. Barnes was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 2001.

Topical Focus – U. S. Democracy Policy and the Plebiscite under Augusto Pinochet

Q: So what were your matching orders when you arrived in Chile?

BARNES: What I saw was an opportunity to modify the policy. I thought the policy needed to be modified and taking into account some of the things you just mentioned, but in the context of not ’73 but ’85, so what I did was to develop, what should I say, an outline or a brief list of points which seemed to me needed to be basic in any further American policy dealings with Chile. One was respect for human rights. Second, was support for what I guess we called at that point market economics or at least an open economic system. Thirdly, there ought to be the conscience American policy of encouraging a return to democracy. What I did was essential shop that around both within the U.S. government and up on the Hill and was able to get a consensus that these were reasonable and perhaps important elements in a rethought American policy.

You remember hearing of an article the Jean Kirkpatrick wrote in Commentary about what she in effect said there are totalitarian and authoritarian dictatorships. From the U.S. standpoint, she wrote , “We can live with authoritarian, it may not be all that desirable, but we can co-exist with them. But totalitarian we have to oppose.” Chile was put in the authoritarian category in her article, which in terms of the definitions this was probably accurate. But the question I raised was: was this in American interest to maintain that sort of definition, at least in this particular case. I guess I would say somewhat to my surprise I found a much more receptive audience on Capitol Hill than I might have thought. I would have thought that the question by that time was seen as over or not that relevant. But I found people on the Hill that were receptive to it. Also within the State Department and the NSC I found a willingness to try out this sort of approach.

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Q: Did you have any sense of where Senator Helms and his staff were coming from?

BARNES: Pinochet was a friend. He was anti-communist. He had overthrown a communist regime, the Allende regime. He was a good guy; somebody that needed to be supported.

Q: I take it you weren’t exactly, during the time you were there in a chummy relationship with Pinochet.

BARNES: Here is an anecdote that illustrates this as good as any. There was in Santiago, I suppose once a year, a trade fair. The U.S. usually had a Department of Commerce booth. Local protocol required that the resident ambassador should accompany the President when the President visited the booth of the ambassador’s country. So, one of my rare occasions to see Pinochet was to walk along side of him as he visited our booth; he did not skip it, which was an option I suppose he could have taken. The next day or so in the local press there appeared a picture of Pinochet and me with the heading “until next year.” The other thing I should turn to is the plebiscite.

Q: Before we get to the plebiscite, was there a distinct group of influential people who were anti-Pinochet, a society that you and your officers discovered?

BARNES: We had still very wide access in the country. I think a tribute to the longstanding relationship the U.S. had built up over the years. With the important exemption of Pinochet, we could see much of the time just about everybody else we wanted to see. Even though we may not agree on something, that pretty much ran the gamut of the political parties, except for the communist on one side and one extreme right party which had no interest in seeing us, even if we wanted to see them. Had good entre into the business community, although some of them would have reservations about what we were doing in the human rights business. But since we had as one of our principal planks promotion of free trade and free enterprise, they were content on that score. On what you might call the cultural side of things, the media, again very good access.

Q: What about the economy? The U.S. supported free trade and all, but tell us about the influence of the Chicago boys.

BARNES: The leading Chicago boy had become, by the time I got there, minister of finance, a man by the name of Hernán Büchi who was responsible for the further development of the private enterprise nature of the Chilean government as well as getting loans from a number of international sources. The fact that the country under Pinochet, but I think in good part, thanks to Büchi, had moved in the direction of promoting private enterprise, reducing government controls. This was both to our advantage and to theirs. The exception there was on the human rights side, where were pieces of American legislation, like export import and so on, which had human rights requirements. And you had to provide certification, sometimes we couldn't do that.

Q: Were you under pressure from economic sources in the States or something to certify the uncertifiable as far as human rights was concerned?

BARNES: No, except for that one occasion legislatively where there were some restrictions, but that didn't keep us from making public statements from time to time about Chilean behavior. For example, roughly six months after I arrived, so that was early 1986, there were meetings of the UN Human Rights Commission where Chile was criticized and the U.S. voted – this is a change from the first Reagan term – and the U.S. would vote in favor of the complaints on Chile's behavior.

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Q: Let's talk about the plebiscite. When did this happen and how did it develop?

BARNES: Pinochet had, as I think he himself said from time to time, had made a gift to the people of Chile in the form of a new Constitution, having done away the previous one, the Allende and earlier periods. One of the things the people of Chile had a chance to approve was that Constitution in a plebiscite in 1980. Of course, the plebiscite vote was in favor of the new Constitution. The Constitution provided that after eight years there would be an election in which the people of Chile would have a chance to decide whether they wished to have Pinochet continue or be replaced. If they wanted him to be

replaced there would have to be a competitive election. With 1988 that was eight years later. The 1988 plebiscite was a plebiscite in the sense it was more of Pinochet, another eight years of Pinochet, or go to a competitive election.

This gradually began to snowball in the sense of citizen participation. You had groups of people, one for example which was taking no sides on the plebiscite outcome or not, but was saying it was Chileans' obligations as citizens to vote. How you vote is up to you, but vote. We were able to provide some assistance through the National Endowment for Democracy in terms of how one organizes campaigns, since enough time had gone by 1973 was the last election. The aspect of the plebiscite one worried about was that if some way the government would find a modality for skewing it or if not worse than that. So a lot of emphasis from the standpoint of those of us on the outside, this was pretty much a coordinated effort. We coordinated with the Brazilians and with the Argentinean, the British and the French, and so on, in terms of technical expertise and support.

The effort to persuade people to take part was on the whole quite successful and not interfered with by the government as far as we could tell. But to jump forward a bit, or more than a bit to get to the plebiscite proper. This was scheduled for early October in 1988. By that time it was clear that Pinochet was as convinced as any that the country needed his rule. No doubts on that score. In fact there was an amusing cartoon in one of the papers, which gives a sense of the fact that the media were not completely under control, which showed a chair occupied by a figure which everyone recognized as Pinochet, looking at a television screen with "1988" on it. The idea was clear this was 1988 and Pinochet was going to win. But behind that TV screen was another TV screen which had a "2016" on it and another TV with "2024." The cartoon conveying the happy visage of Pinochet contemplating all these extensions.

The head of the campaign to participate was a good friend of ours. She was very carefully non-partisan. We were also on very good terms with the head of what was called the campaign for the "No," that is to vote no in the plebiscite. Meaning no more indefinite eight year terms. We were also on pretty good terms with the campaign for the "Yes" although they probably rightly suspected that we were no in favor of Pinochet's continuation. But that was not a formal statement on our part. In any event, the head of the campaign to get out the vote and her husband, a couple days before the plebiscite was to take place, came around to our house one evening, we were very good friends, but they didn't usually show up in the middle of the evening.

It turned out that the wife had been contacted by the general commanding the garrison of Santiago who was a family friend. They both had kids in the same school. He told her that there was a possibility that the troops would be called out on the plebiscite day to quote put down disorders unquote. We took that very seriously just knowing her, knowing that she would not exaggerate or falsify anything. Her advice was that I go talk to the head of the opposition, that is, the group campaigning for a "no" vote, and see what he thought about how to react to that and whether to take it seriously. She thought we should, but she wanted us to get a political judgment, as she was a non-political person.

I went around to see this individual, who parenthetically became the next president of Chile a year to two later, and he took it very, very seriously. So what I did was to get in touch with the people in the Department and urged them to call in the Chilean ambassador and say we've heard these reports and we trust they are not true, but just in case, you ought to know how seriously we take them. That was on a Sunday night that the Chilean ambassador was called in in Washington. By chance the Press Spokesman the next day at the noon briefing mentioned that the Chilean ambassador had been called into the Department on Sunday, the concern expressed was about the outcome, procedure, of the Chilean plebiscite. The Chilean government denied it and I can't be sure to this day whether this was a commanding general's mistaken impression or what it was, but in any event there were no demonstrations by the military.

Q: Prior to the plebiscite, how did we see the vote going, provided there was no military interference?

BARNES: We thought it could be quite close, because Pinochet had and appealed still to people old enough to remember the Allende era and some of the problems of that era. We guessed, I guess is the way I would have to put it, based on the polling that had been done by organizations we confidence in, including people who were, what should I say, were very much non-partisan, as well as those inclined one way or the other. Combination of those sources, our judgment was that the no vote would probably win some margin more than a narrow margin. It wasn't a huge margin, but it was an adequate margin.

The P.S. (postscript) to that story which I got later from the commanding general of the air force, whom I've mentioned…let me back up a moment. The night of the plebiscite what was very strange was that state TV ran only one report about seven o'clock in the evening and the results at that point should that the "yes" vote, the government vote, was ahead . After that they started running old sitcoms (situation comedies). One sort of had to wonder what was going on. The Catholic Church sponsored, probably still does, one TV station at that time and they had a panel discussion going toward the end of the evening. One of the panelists they had on was one of the leading supporters of the "yes" vote. During that panel discussion probably around eleven o'clock or so the panel came on and this particular individual who had been a minister in a previous government years back and had a good reputation, he said, "I think the "no" vote has won."

Still nothing on the government channels. But the TV showed a little after that, a half an hour or so later, were pictures of the other commanders of the armed forces, that is, the air force, the carabineros, the navy going toward the presidential palace and obviously a meeting of the junta with Pinochet. (Fernando) Matthei, the air force general was stopped by a reporter and was asked what had happed. He said, "I think the "no" vote has won." He's very outspoken in general and not liked by Pinochet for that reason. He told me later that when the four of them had assembled, that Pinochet had already prepared a draft of a proclamation extending the state of emergency in effect annulling the plebiscite. As a result the other three refused to go along, which one could not have predicted at that time. So it was a fairly dramatic evening.

Q: What happened afterwards from your perspective?

BARNES: If you can have flood gates that are good things, the flood gates opened. People knew that Pinochet had given up. They knew he would be around for a year or two, before the first free elections in 20 years would take place. No violence, however.

Q: How long after the plebiscite did you remain in Chile?

BARNES: I left a couple of months later at the end of the year. Q: So you really weren't there for the election. BARNES: No, but I went back for the inauguration of the new President, who was chosen by the subsequent election.

Q: This much have given a feeling of satisfaction, joy and all to you and the embassy.

BARNES: Yes, we were all trying to be, what should I say, appropriately impartial (laughter), but I'm sure we did let our prejudice show. Also the fact that a lot of Chileans expressed to us their appreciation. That meant a lot.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CHARLOTTE ROE
Department of State
Political Officer
Santiago, Chile
(1985-1989)

Charlotte Roe, a human rights and wildlife advocate, is a retired U.S. diplomat who served as political officer in Chile during the last four years of the Pinochet regime. Roe was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Topical Focus – U. S. Democracy and Election Assistance under Augusto Pinochet

Q: What was the situation in Chile when you got there in '85?

ROE: It was gloomy, conflicted. Though Bolivia was also in turmoil, by comparison this felt like stepping into a cauldron. Augusto Pinochet had been in power since the coup he led as army commander on September 11, 1973. President Salvador Allende committed suicide that day in La Moneda palace. Pinochet ruled with an iron fist. He outlawed the political parties. Tens of thousands were tortured, disappeared, killed or exiled during his campaign against the pro-Allende communists and socialists. The military government planned to implement a provision of the 1976 constitution to recognize certain political parties in a formal process, but few Chileans believed this would take place or lead to positive change. The 1980 constitution imposed by Pinochet further concentrated his powers. It promised an eventual return to electoral "democracy," beginning with a plebiscite in 1988 in which voters could say "yes" or "no" to the junta's sole candidate.

The opposition to Pinochet made itself felt through massive street demonstrations. Some mainstream political parties joined in, but those in charge were mostly the trade union vanguard, students and the radical left. The police would douse the protesters with water canons, spray tear gas, and start shooting with little provocation. The middle class was unhappy about the repression but also weary of these futile confrontations. Chileans felt frustrated and depressed. Beggars held out their hands at every street corner. The crisis over foreign exchange triggered a sharp recession.

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Q: Well, when Barnes came, did he come out and say we are going to be more supportive of the opposition?

ROE: His actions spoke that message. The Embassy no longer echoed the right's criticism of the opposition. That's why the first Barnes-Valdez meeting was such a profound shift. We opened up close channels with the democratic socialist wing of the opposition, which the U.S. had previously tended to equate with the Allende left. The outgoing cultural attaché, Peter DeShazo, opened his house to democratic socialists as well as to Christian Democrats and other opposition leaders, but Ambassador Theberge strongly discouraged these ties. I made contact with a myriad of political groups. These included socialists, the Radical party, and the Humanists, a left-of-center international organization founded in Argentina that advocates non-violence and the development of human potential; the National party, an older conservative grouping; and Renovación Nacional, a new moderate conservative party with an engaging leader, Andres Allemand, a former national soccer hero of Chile.

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Q: What was your piece of the action as a political officer?

ROE: I was liaison with the political parties. I reported on political developments from the provinces. I worked with the National Electoral Commission (CNE). The Commission was directed by Juan Ignacio Garcia, whose brother was Interior Minister. Juan Ignacio, an experienced civil servant, had been in the government from the time of Frei and Allende.

As we approached the plebiscite, the U.S. provided 1.5 million dollars in assistance to ensure that the plebiscite would have a level playing field. Cívitas, one of the main civil society organizations, ran a nationwide campaign to re-register all the Chileans who wanted to vote. Pinochet had destroyed all the registration rolls and established a national identification system. To register, people had to pay the equivalent of nearly 5 dollars to get an ID card and then get on the electoral rolls. It was an onerous process. Under the leadership of Monica Jimenez, the head of Catholic University's School of Social Work, Cívitas mounted a non-partisan voter education campaign to convince people their vote would be counted and to assist them in registering. The Pinochet regime undercut their

efforts to get public service announcements and paid television advertising. I helped convince Juan Ignacio Garcia that Cívitas and Monica Jimenez did not have a political agenda and were legitimate actors.

As the 1988 plebiscite loomed, Washington was hungry to find out if there really was any chance for a fraud-free election. I briefed the news reporters on that issue. I analyzed the implementation of political laws under the 1976 constitution, the emerging civil society organizations and political party dynamics. I helped promote emerging women leaders through IVs and lunch sessions hosted by PAO Marilyn McAfee.

Q: It sounds like we were meddling like hell in Pinochet's country.

ROE: We were engaged, but more subtly than during the Allende period. And that experience left a big debt to pay. U.S. assistance to the opposition was non-partisan, because there were no candidates in the plebiscite, just a vote to say "si" or "no" to the regime. As for Cívitas, somebody had to go out and help register people. Ambassador Barnes kept the lines of communication open to both sides, playing such a deft game that Pinochet had to think twice before openly attacking the U.S. Pinochet's military junta was a quasi-cabinet that also doubled as his legislative counsel. Two of the four junta members were asserting their independence from Pinochet – Air Force Commander Matthei and Carabineros Commander Stange. They resisted Pinochet's moves to undermine his own constitution. That was a key opening.

Meanwhile Pinochet's government was making political parties into legitimate actors, while demonizing them in its propaganda. The PDC, PPD, the radicals, conservatives and eventually the Partido Socialista won recognition. Within a year of the plebiscite, key opposition forces moved from raw confrontation politics to a willingness to work through the political process. Pinochet hated and mistrusted us, but some elements in his government were moderating their stance, either to make a more presentable case to the world, or because they understood the imperative for change.

Q: What about the Letelier case while you were there?

ROE: It was a constant concern. The '76 car bombing in Washington that killed foreign minister Orlando Letelier and his U.S. aide Ronni Moffitt transformed U.S. relations with Pinochet. It triggered a cutoff of military aid and a decades-long investigation of the role of top officials including Pinochet himself in the assassination. At one point Juan Gabriel Valdez, who later became Chilean ambassador to the UN, offered to provide sensitive information on the case and I connected him with Ambassador Barnes. The Congress and the NGO community kept up pressure in the effort to develop credible information for the Justice Department. The case stayed red hot. In the end it was a major element in Pinochet's downfall. And speaking of interference in another country: sending hit men to assassinate a foreign minister in the U.S. capitol was about the limit –

Q: That had quite an aftershock. Turning to another subject – there are many who maintain that Allende was not a pristine figure. Meaning, they were getting ready for

their own sort of People's Republic. This was not an overthrowing of the savior or something. Did you get a feel for the Allende types and where they were coming from?

ROE: Allende inspired great passions pro and con. I didn't have direct contact with the communists, but I knew some Allende supporters. Many were romantic socialists, some neophytes, others real Marxist zealots. In the early 1970s, the collapsing social and economic system and the political fanaticism of Allende's supporters drove many progressives, including Christian Democrats, to feel that Pinochet would be a lesser evil. The CIA's machinations were idiotic and damaging, but they didn't create the wave of revulsion toward the regime. Allende didn't understand the nature of the Soviet system or the way the economy worked. He set in motion some dangerous forces that caused real hardship and desperation among the population. The radical takeovers of factories and farms and the government's nationalization policies led to a precipitous loss of agricultural and industrial production. There were long food lines and acute shortages. The majority of Chileans were fed up.

Q: Sort of what is happening today in Zimbabwe.

ROE: The climate was more circus-like and less violent in Chile, but still it was over the top. The chaos helped precipitate an army coup. Unfortunately, nobody expected that Pinochet would then seize dictatorial powers. Speaking about my contact with the Allende people -- something happened early in my tour that gave me a curious perspective. In December '85 we learned though back channels that one of the Embassy officers had been targeted for kidnapping by local terrorists. Immediately they thought it must be a male officer. Well, who would be important enough to kidnap? Must be a man.

Q: But of course.

ROE: First the station chief, the political counselor and then the labor officer were put under heavy guard. The profile was someone who had a lot of political contacts throughout Chile. By that time I took my postponed annual leave, we learned that it was a female officer. So they put extra security on an intel officer in Santiago -- I was in the U.S. and had just left upstate New York for a week in Puerto Rico. Then headquarters called me while I was vacationing in San Juan saying I'd been curtailed because I was the terrorist target! A two-month tug of war ensued.

Ambassador Barnes opposed the curtailment decision. We knew that the terrorists had dropped their plan, as they didn't have safe houses or other infrastructure to make it work. But I was unable to return until ARA (Inter-American Affairs) and DS (the Diplomatic Security bureau) fought it out. Finally DS asked me what I thought. I said heck, yes, I want to go back. I had a dog, a parrot, a house in Chile. I had no winter clothes, since I had sent them back to Chile after my home visit. Washington in winter was cold, unyielding. I had no checkbook and this was before the age of bank cards. DS said, "Well, you haven't read the information carefully though. They knew all about you." I said, "This says that Joe Fozo followed me a few days and they decided they couldn't hold me safely." The security people were trying without success to put the fear

in me. The Department eventually had a shoot-out. Michael Armacost, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, made the final call that I return.

In the meantime I volunteered on the Haiti taskforce that was set up as Duvalier's government collapsed. I took the language exam and got a 4/4 in Spanish. I asked for training in counterterrorism techniques. The course was in Florida. After it ended, I was about to board my flight and return to Chile when I got a call from Assistant Secretary Bob Gelbard. He said "You can't go yet." I replied, "What do you mean? The desk told me it was a done decision." He said, "Well, don't go, we're still in negotiations." I had heard that Bolivia urgently needed help because the labor attaché was on extended sick leave. I said, "You need to get me to La Paz or somewhere where I can work, or I'm going to go to Chile and get my checkbook and look after my dog on my own ticket." He was not used to being talked to that way, but the next day I got my orders to go to Bolivia. After two more months the Department allowed me to return to Santiago, but I had to remain under constant guard for five months.

During that time, on two separate occasions distant Socialist Party contacts approached me. With a great air of secrecy and concern, each said, "Charlotte, we have very troubling information. Did you know you've been targeted?" I said, "Possibly, but that was then."

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Q: The Beagle Straits?

ROE: That was the issue. Chile and Argentina finally accepted the Vatican's mediation, and in '84 they signed a peace treaty resolving the Beagle dispute. During the Falklands war, Argentina suspected that Chile favored the Brits, and apparently they had quietly supported the British task force in the Southern Atlantic.

Our main focus was to ensure that Chileans had a chance to have their votes count in the plebiscite and the capacity to make the transition to democracy. Pinochet had committed to an open plebiscite, but few believed his words. We thought the procedural instruments the government had put in place could create the framework for a free and fair election, if the military regime didn't abort the process. Chile is a legalistic, constitutional country that prides itself on respecting the law. The opposition gained strength when it abandoned the strategy of social mobilization in favor of an electoral strategy. Another turning point came when Ricardo Lagos challenged Pinochet directly. In 1984, a year before the plebiscite, he gave a speech in Antofagasta, a bleak, troubled industrial port about halfway between Iquique and Valparaiso that used to be a mining center.

This was one of Lagos' first rallies as president of PPD, the center-left party he founded in 1987. He was faced with a disruptive group of Communists. The Communist party believed that only armed conflict could end the dictatorship. Few in the opposition knew how to best them. Lagos talked back without hesitation and subdued the hecklers. He also held up his finger to Pinochet and said basically, "J'acuse, I accuse you, Pinochet, of

years of torture, murder and violence; I accuse you of not telling the truth." Nobody had dared to stand up to Pinochet as an equal. The effect was electrifying.

After that encounter, the parties supporting participation in the plebiscite began recruiting en masse. The Cívitas campaign gained ground. The plebiscite was in October of '88. Three months before the vote, Pinochet's own Supreme Court overturned the junta-approved election regulations saying, "This doesn't meet the fairness test. Your own constitution mandates better rules." Pinochet would allow opposition voices to have television time, but only for a few minutes at midnight. The courts mandated fair, equal time and changed the rules of the game. That decision built confidence. The opposition had coalesced into what was called the Coordinadora, eighteen political parties under one tent running a single "no" campaign for the plebiscite. The conservative parties remained apart, but some also supported the no vote. The Coordinadora's TV ads were brilliant. They were like political cabaret, with great music and light-hearted lyrics. They rocked people with an upbeat message.

Lagos, who was elected President of Chile in 2000, visited the U.S in the pre-plebiscite period. He asked me to arrange a key part of the trip. We set up a voluntary visitor program through USIS to facilitate his goal of meeting with Wall Street people. Lagos wanted to let them know that when the "no" vote prevailed, it wasn't going to hurt the economy, that the opposition leadership was committed to keep the basic economic framework in place and work to humanize it. That was a very effective message. A transformation was underway. Our policies and actions had deep resonance, but they were not the main story. The evolving national consensus and the eventual plebiscite victory grew out of tremendous suffering that Chileans had experienced. They found a way to come together and recover their democratic ethos.

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Q: Now what information was the Embassy getting as we approached the plebiscite? I imagine that Pinochet with his police and all figured he had it made.

ROE: Oh, Pinochet was very confident. Losing the plebiscite completely stunned him. The polls were pretty imprecise. People would tell different things to the pollsters based on whether or not they trusted them or thought the balloting would be fair. So it was a confidence game. But we saw hopeful signs with the banding together of the democratic opposition, the soul searching that led to them presenting a more credible alternative, a team that could Chile to the rule of law and manage the economic transition. Pinochet was trying to say, "after me chaos" in the style of Louis XIV, "Aprés moi, le deluge." That was his constant theme, but it was falling flat because the country was deeply divided under him. It was becoming ungovernable.

As hope rekindled, the opposition lightened up, making fun of Pinochet as a doddering old man. Talking with people in the provinces, I saw a tremendous groundswell of support for the "no" side. We thought the opposition could win as long as elections proceeded as planned. But I got wind of something that would have completely thrown

the election. One of my close contacts was Jorge Jimenez, the brother of Monica Jimenez, who ran Cívitas. Jorge, a medical doctor, was the opposition liaison with the military. Five days before the plebiscite, Monica called me in Valparaiso where I was doing a pre-election assessment. She said Jorge had solid information that Pinochet intended to stage a mini-coup the night of the election. The plan was to provoke violence and claim it came from the left. They would bring out the soldiers and there would be massive confrontations and bloodshed. The election count would be called off. It would be the last opportunity to fix the results.

Ambassador Barnes corroborated this report and determined that it was a plausible threat. So on the Sunday before the election he had the Chilean ambassador to the U.S. called in. Our officials in Washington told the envoy bluntly that if anything happened to disrupt the election, the U.S. president would denounce it in the loudest possible terms around the world and that nothing of that kind would be tolerated. Apparently, our counter-threat was effective. We later heard from members of the junta that the stop-the-election plan was real. Another decisive moment happened when the first election results came in. Sergio Jarpa, the leader of the conservative National party and a previous supporter of Pinochet, went public and stated that the no vote had won. Junta members Stange and Matthei also said so publicly.

Q: I'm told this screwed up the plans at Pinochet headquarters.

ROE: That killed any possibility of them subverting the process.

Q: Well, then what happened after that?

ROE: After the election? There was a joyous feeling of release and celebration nationwide. People felt that Chile had been saved from a terrible path of social and political warfare that would permanently scar the society. The talk turned to reconciliation -- what would happen when they finally return to democratic government, could unearth the truth about the dirty war, and take steps to heal the wounds. Pinochet conceded in a dazed, semi-defiant, somewhat disoriented speech.

Chileans began planning for the national elections in December of '89. Concertación candidate Patricio Aylwin (Christian Democrats) won decisively, heading the first democratically elected government in 16 years. At that point you had an outpouring of positive energy. People felt they had begun to overcome the darkest part of their recent history. The opposition leaders wanted the world to know they were not about vengeance or divisiveness. They didn't act triumphant, because no one, not even the old-line communists, wanted the country to suffer more suicidal feuding. Pinochet had received forty-four to their fifty-six percent in the plebiscite. He remained as army commander. His constitution set strong limits on the democratic process. A portion of the Congress was appointed, and the President could not remove the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

COLOMBIA

N/A

COSTA RICA

N/A

COTE D’IVOIRE

N/A

CROATIA

N/A

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

N/A

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Democracy and Election Subject Reader

SUSAN FINE
USAID
Director
Office of East African Affairs
Washington, D. C.
(2011-2013)

Susan Fine was born in New York City and attended Colby College before joining the Peace Corps and receiving her master's degree from the Harvard Kennedy School. She joined USAID as an intern in 1992 and served in several different positions thereafter in Uganda, South Africa, Senegal, Washington, and Sudan. Mrs. Fine retired from USAID in September of 2019. Susan Fine was interviewed by Carol Peasley in 2022.

Topical Focus – Election in Democratic Republic of the Congo

Q: You had quite a few of those in your area that you were covering there, including the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo). Interesting challenges.

FINE: Yeah, DRC, there was an election while I was there and there was a lot of interagency interest on that and how we were providing support to the electoral process through IFES and IRI and NDI. I think that would have been maybe 2012. I'm not sure of the date, but around there. And you know, there were some issues because whenever the agencies for the U.S. government are supporting an electoral process, you always have to be careful to ensure that the support that we're providing isn't seen as endorsing a bad process. And so, there were—I don't remember the details, but I do remember there were some tricky calls around whether or not we should provide certain kinds of support to the elections commission because we knew that it was going to be flawed and we didn't want them to be able to say, "Oh, but we got assistance from USAID and other international donors and so, what are you worried about? They supported us. It's their fault." So, there were some tricky issues around that.

Also at the time that I was in this position, the U.S. government had made a real commitment to help Uganda get Joseph Kony, you know, the head of the Lord's Resistance Army. Of course, by this time he was no longer in Uganda and a small band of his supporters were running around an ungoverned area, thought to be sort of Congo and maybe a few of the border areas of other—DRC and Republic of Congo and I think sometimes maybe the border areas of South Sudan. Anyway, so the U.S. was supporting this big campaign to—on the military side to help the Ugandan Defense Force capture Kony. But on the civilian side, we were also developing a plan to help communities who were in the vicinity of where Kony was operating to be better prepared to prevent attacks or at least be warned if there was an attack coming. USAID gave funding to a couple of

small non-profit organizations that were working with some of these communities on communication tactics and things like that. And so, yeah, there was a whole interagency working group around the Kony campaign. And there was also—of course, there was some humanitarian assistance when there were inevitable attacks on communities.

Democracy and Election Subject Reader

JENNIFER HASKELL
Department of State
Chief of Mission
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Kinshasa, DRC
(2017–2019)

Jennifer Haskell was born and raised in Roseburg, Oregon, in 1961. She attended the University of Oregon, where she graduated with a degree in International Relations and Political Science. Before joining the Foreign Service, Haskell worked briefly in the private sector and received her MBA in International Business from the Thunderbird School of Global Management. Her first assignment in the Foreign Service was in Manila, the Philippines, as a Consular Officer. Her subsequent assignments included: General Service Officer in Prague, Czech Republic, a Watch Officer in the State Department's Operations Center, a Duty Officer in the White House Situation Room, a General Service Officer in Tel Aviv, Israel, Deputy Director of the Narcotics Affairs in Mexico City, Mexico, Management/Deputy Management Counselor in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Pretoria, South Africa, and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She was also Director of the Office of Science and Technology Cooperation, Minister Counselor for Management Affairs in Pretoria, a Senior Project Leader at Climate Interactive, and finally Chief of Mission in Kinshasa, DRC. She retired from the Foreign Service in April 2019 and now works as an Executive and Leadership Coach at Haskell Leadership. Jennifer Haskell was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2019.

Topical Focus – U.S. Assistance in the 2018 Election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Q: Today is February 4, 2020. And we are resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell. Let's resume with the year that you were in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC].

HASKELL: I was posted in Kinshasa from August 2017, and I curtailed in February of 2019.

…All this makes for quite a big mess. The U.S. foreign assistance at the time was about six hundred million dollars a year. About half of that was humanitarian assistance. And

the other half was primarily health and education development aid. And if you factor in the amounts that the United States contributes to international organizations, primarily through the UN, our annual contribution to efforts to basically keep people from dying was about a billion dollars a year, and it's still probably close, if not the same. MONUSCO [United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo] is the biggest, longest, and most expensive UN peacekeeping mission that they've ever had. And its main mandate is protection of civilians. It's not to separate warring parties because there are so many and sometimes unidentifiable. We worked very closely with MONUSCO all the time. If we wanted to move around the country, very often we had to rely on UN-provided planes and helicopters. As you can imagine, with that amount of aid, even just from the United States—the Europeans also have enormous amounts of aid going into the DRC—there was a huge international NGO [non-governmental organization] presence.

So, that's the backdrop. I arrived in late August 2017 when their democratic journey wasn't doing very well. Their constitution mandated elections every five years and a two-term limit for the president. Joseph Kabila was installed [not elected] in 2001 by the political characters around him when there was a constitution. They've had six constitutions since independence. And then in 2002, they began trying to figure out how the country could move forward. There was a conference held in South Africa, in Sun City, where the framework for a new country was defined, in terms of what should happen. And that's when they decided there would be elections every five years. The conference took a couple of years, and then it took until 2006 to organize the first election, which was organized and managed by the UN.

So by then, Joseph Kabila had already been in power for about five years. But they didn't count those five years because he hadn't been elected as president. The second election was in 2011, which Kabila kind of won. There were so many voting irregularities, ridiculous voting irregularities, but he was declared the winner. The next election should have been held in 2016, but the government and the CENI [National Independent Electoral Commission] failed to organize elections. The CENI was created under the Sun City conference mechanism. It was supposed to be independent from the government, but it was not.

When I arrived, there were three things, aside from the general running of the embassy, that were important to work on: 1) push the GDRC [government of the DRC] and the CENI to organize and hold elections, 2) resolve issues with the new embassy compound project, and 3) push the GDRC to solve the murder of two UN human rights investigators. Even in the last few months of 2017, CENI had not issued an electoral calendar. Keep in mind the elections were supposed to be held in 2016. There was quite a bit of civil unrest, starting in 2016, because the GDRC and CENI had not organized the elections. In the last three months of 2016, there had been two different stakeholder dialogues held to try to come to an agreement between the GDRC, opposition political parties, and civil society on how to move forward with elections. The first dialogue failed. Then they immediately started another one. By the end of the year, on the last day of 2016, they signed an agreement, known as the St. Sylvester Agreement. That

agreement indicated that Kabila could continue as president until the new president was inaugurated. That provision was upheld by the Constitutional Court. There was also mention that elections should be held in 2017, kind of. It was already September 2017, and there was no sign of elections being held.

Prior to all of this, Kabila had made efforts to consolidate his place in power. In 2015, he had a plan to hold a referendum to change the constitution to eliminate the term limits. That caused enormous civil protests. And in the DRC, people are usually killed by security forces during these protests. They're never peaceful. The security forces are pretty trigger-happy, which is why there were a couple of ordered departures in 2016; They were related to this issue. There were demonstrations, and in one instance, the main opposition party was demonstrating at their party headquarters when the security forces came in. They started a fire, and well over a hundred people were probably killed. I think the official estimates are something like forty or fifty killed, but it was probably really more than a hundred. There were people inside the building who were killed in the fire. It was pretty nasty. So the electoral environment was the biggest foreign policy push at the time. The GDRC and CENI simply had to get the electoral process underway. We were waiting for the electoral calendar, which would, of course, include a date for elections.

…Those were the three primary issues we were working on, along, of course with all the usual work. But the electoral calendar had become sort of all-encompassing in a big way. Shortly after I arrived, I realized that the two recalcitrant occupants of the NEC site were the electoral commission and a maternity clinic. It became clear that I couldn't press the GDRC to set a date for the elections at the same time I was demanding they move the main CENI warehouse. I could see the headlines, "No elections due to U.S. Embassy's demand for CENI Move Warehouse." Also, the second headline, "Maternity Clinic closed by U.S. demands." We were not in a good position. OBO was not happy with my prioritizing the elections over the NEC.

We simply were not going to make any positive steps if we tried to accomplish both of those things at the same time. We did keep pushing on the investigation of the murders, though progress was pretty weak. I'll talk a bit more about that and the NEC at the end. I'm going to move now more into the electoral calendar and the elections because it took up the vast majority of my time.

The international community was pretty united that the DRC must hold elections, including the African nations. I shouldn't say "even." That makes it sound like we wouldn't anticipate that the African nations would be on board. Certainly, those who had diplomatic representation in Kinshasa were on board that there should be elections and that Kabila should step down. So the main points of agreement were that there must be elections and Kabila should not run. Most of the international community was pushing on this. I don't think the Africans were pushing very hard, but the African Union was pushing. They had a fabulous ambassador there. He was excellent to work with, and he was pushing on it.

The chronology was long and somewhat convoluted or complicated. The way that Kabila

was still running things was called "*glissement*," which means "slippage" in French. He was using all kinds of tactics to try to stay in power. He claimed they couldn't have an election until they completed a census. But that would clearly take years. He would come up with reasons they couldn't have an election until X, Y, or Z was done. The one that stuck was that they had to accomplish a new voter registration drive, i.e., they had to have every eligible voter register. They already had an electoral roll, but instead of just updating it, they decided they had to start over from scratch, again, taking years. They spent over four hundred million dollars to register voters. And, the CENI decided to use a system—in a country with no reliable electricity in most of the country—that was completely computerized and required ten fingerprints as well as a photo, among other data points.

This was a mess. And then there was the saga of the electronic voting machines. This took a lot of time and effort, but let me just say this and then set that aside for the moment. It was one of our talking points that using voting machines, as they were called, was a recipe for disaster. How could it work when the number of machines they were planning to buy would require each voter to complete the process in three minutes? They showed me a sample of the machine they said they were buying. I couldn't vote in three minutes. How could a man or woman who has never seen a computer and can't read go to vote in three minutes? Not to mention the prospects of voter fraud.

Kabila's insistence on conducting a census led to civil unrest, back in 2015 or 2016, before I was there. Protests and demonstrations that nearly always turned violent. That's how Kabila got from 2016 with no elections through until the end of 2018, when elections were finally held—something that was definitely never a sure thing. He kept up a steady stream of reasons and actions that would or could result in his remaining in power or running again. He had the Constitutional Court ruling that he could stay in power until there was a new president was inaugurated. So it was in his interest, if he wanted to stay in power, to keep putting the elections off.

…From the beginning, I had little guidance from the Africa Bureau. As I mentioned, there was no assistant secretary, the PDAS [principal deputy assistant secretary] was acting and getting ready to depart on his next assignment. The DAS for central Africa had shifted from person to person, all acting. So after asking a couple of times for guidance and being told simply that they were there to support me, I decided, okay, fine. I could take a hint, and I decided I would just do what I was supposed to do. I knew that our policy was to get the DRC to have elections, and I would just decide myself how to do that. Fine with me. Obviously, we reported what we did, and I talked with the desk officer every couple of weeks or so. But the question some people might ask is, why was this so important to us, for the DRC to have elections?

Well, there were really four big reasons that DRC elections were in the United States' interest. One was the six hundred million to one billion dollars in foreign assistance, humanitarian assistance. If there were no election, nothing was going to change. We would not see any chance in the foreseeable future to reduce the amount of aid. And it was in our interest to continue the assistance for these same three reasons that it was in

our interest to get them to have elections. Kabila did not have an iron grip on power. He had no one he trusted. He did not rule with an iron fist. He was not the director of violence. He stayed in power by giving people a position where they could find something to enrich themselves, by giving them a potential source of corruption and power. It wasn't that he was pushing down the power or the corruption, necessarily. I'm not claiming Kabila wasn't corrupt, but it was more about keeping people on his side by giving them these opportunities, not because they were really his loyalists. There are nine countries bordering the DRC. The Republic of Congo has had its own problems with democracy. And civil war comes and goes in the Central African Republic, which is a governing disaster. A lot of violence in South Sudan—we know what's going on there. Uganda is probably one of the most peaceful of the neighbors right now, but they have armed groups operating in the DRC whose stated goal is to overthrow Museveni. Rwanda, where, of course, there was this incredibly complicated relationship between the Tutsi and the Hutu due to the genocide. Many Hutu escaped/were chased by Kagame's Tutsi forces into the DRC, and they still live there. Some formed armed groups. Plus the DRC has its own indigenous population of the Tutsi ethnic group, which is of course, in power in Rwanda. So there are Rwandan refugees who come in and disrupt things. And then Burundi has all kinds of problems, too. And then there is Angola, where there are also problems. And so if you look at all of these countries, if the DRC is not peaceful, successful, and economically viable, it creates problems for all the neighbors as well. So that is to say that if you want to have a reasonably stable central Africa, one that doesn't keep involving us and the UN, which we contribute vastly to, if we want to stop all that, we need to have good governance and a successful DRC. That can only start with an election.

The third big reason an election was in the United States' interests was that a change was needed, and progress toward democracy was imperative to get the DRC economy moving—to foster economic opportunity. If the DRC couldn't produce some sort of economic opportunities for its citizens, violence would continue because people were desperate and would do whatever they had to do. And the fourth reason really was wrapping the other three up together. The DRC needed to have its citizens be healthy and educated. They must have livelihoods. We needed to reduce the number of internally displaced people and refugees. That's been a U.S. foreign policy goal for a very long time. [I'm not sure where we are right now with that, though.] Our bipartisan policy has been that stable democracies around the world are in our national interest because then we don't have to engage in resolving conflicts, and the ongoing conflicts in central Africa center on the DRC, for the most part. So it was a really big thing for us to try to do this. I want to make one point now, before I start going into a lot of the specific things that went on. And that's when you lived in the DRC, you learned very quickly that it was virtually impossible to know the truth.

People there are absolutely convinced of things that are garbage conspiracy theories, but it's not just a couple of conspiracy theories, or three or four main ones that people believe. Every person has their own conspiracy theories and believes them wholeheartedly. No matter how good your sources are, you're not going to really know what's going on. And to be honest, some of our sources were pretty darn close to Kabila,

and they did not really know what was going on. He kept everything very close to his vest. He didn't share, and he didn't trust people.

In September 2017, I decided not to pursue the NEC site problem until after they had an election. So my promise to OBO was that after they had an election, we would get the site vacated. We would get those entities still on the site off within maybe three or four months. They did not like that, but it was too bad. I mean, there wasn't really much you could say about it. While I was doing my consultations, I had heard that US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, was planning a trip to the DRC for October, which seemed strange to me, but it was interesting. I haven't read her book. So I don't know how she addresses this in the book or if she does. So why was she coming to the DRC? It was April or May 2017, Embassy Kinshasa had sent a cable to the department, and the subject line was something along the lines of "Preemptive Killing of Children."

…So she had become very personally taken with stopping the violence and the status of what was going on in the DRC. She understood the necessity of having the election. So she made a trip to the DRC. We took her first to the east because that's where most of the violence was occurring. We couldn't travel to Kasais. She would have loved to go to the Kasais, but that was just too dangerous. We weren't going to do that. So we took her to the east, to Goma, where we took her to an IDP [internally displaced persons] camp where she could talk to the women who were there and hear their stories. We took her to a child soldier reintegration center, and she heard the stories of some of those children. She got a briefing from MONUSCO [UN peacekeeping force]. And then we flew back to Kinshasa, where she had government meetings. For maybe the first time, all four main opposition parties were brought together to meet Haley at my house, at the DCR [deputy chief of mission residence]. And she met with CENI, the electoral commission. She met with President Kabila for about two hours. I will say that none of us knows what was said in those two hours. No one else was in the room, and we got no readout. The best I got was that it was nothing I hadn't already heard.

Her meetings with CENI, the electoral commission, were key. And with the exception of the meeting with Kabila, I was not cut out or a backbencher, which I've seen happen before, even with chiefs of mission during VIP visits. She had me sit at her side, and she listened when I passed a note. She clearly had her own mission and her own ideas of how things were supposed to go, but she didn't push it against advice. And in the meeting with the electoral commission, she told them in no uncertain terms that they need to have elections in 2018. And she made it clear. She started with pushing for elections no later than June of 2018.

But to be honest, we did not believe they could get elections organized by then. It was a country that had no logistics mechanisms. Organization of national elections was just a very daunting thing, and nothing had been done except for the voter registry. With something crazy like ten thousand polling stations, with most people dispersed outside of Kinshasa across thousands of tiny population centers, and no transportation network even to distribute election materials. As she was pressing for June, I passed her a note that said

I didn't think that they could actually do it by then, but they could by August. And she took that on board. Then they pushed back against August, but she told them they had to have the election in 2018, and she did not mean on December 31. Less than a week later, they published the electoral calendar with an election date of December 23. I want to add here that I also felt it was important that the DRC pick the date. Had they capitulated and scheduled the election for a date pushed by the international community, they would have blamed us for any failure, actual or manufactured.

The calendar they published was very detailed. We had known that they had the calendar ready. I had been very careful not to be trapped into looking at their calendar before publication because I knew they would have publicly stated that I had seen it and implied—whether true or not—that I had agreed to it. They had tried it a few times when I was meeting with the director of the electoral commission, Corneille Nangaa. He would call me for a meeting and then invite me into a room where they had the electoral calendar laid out on a conference table. I would avoid it and insist on changing rooms because if I had said anything or if they had taken a picture of me with it, they would have tweeted it and implied that the United States agrees with or approves it. So I had to be really very careful not to be drawn into those sorts of games. So whenever Nangaa talked about showing it to me, I would demur and tell him it was not for me to decide or approve, that it was for him to put out there and for the population to comment on. And I think that was actually really important that we were not seen as the arbiters of what was the correct calendar.

Now, I don't know if the rest of the international community necessarily agreed with that, but I think we all did understand that we had to be very careful to avoid tweets that claimed something we didn't really do because it would have been impossible to address it effectively after the fact. And then people would have thought it was true. The whole conspiracy thing would start up, and it was really difficult.

Q: Did you ever find out what leverage Ambassador Haley used to get them to more or less agree to an electoral calendar in 2018?

HASKELL: Well, I tried very hard to get a real read-out of her meeting with Kabila, but there was just nothing I hadn't heard before. So, no, I don't know what it was. I know that for myself, we developed a strategy based on sanctions against individuals. There were quite a number of Congolese citizens who had been sanctioned as individuals, mostly for human rights abuses. In fact, there are U.S. executive orders specifically for the DRC. That's how bad their record is. They have their very own executive orders for sanctions. And so I developed some terminology that was clear enough that they knew what I meant, but was not overtly threatening. I didn't think overt threats would be helpful. It was a fine line.

And so I had developed relationships with several people—the chief of the national police [Dieudonne Amuli Bahigwa], the governor of Kinshasa [André Kimbuta Yango], Kabila's chief of staff [Nehemie Mwilanya], the senior diplomatic advisor to Kabila240 [Bernabe Kikaya Bin Karubi] working out of the Presidency, the head of the Directorate

of Immigration [Francois Beya], and with different ministers, including the foreign minister [Leonard She Okitundu]. In fact, I had hosted a representational table at the Marine Birthday Ball in early November, after the Haley visit. Up until then, my relationships were still pretty superficial. On the advice of my acting DCM/Pol chief, I invited the Okitundu, Kikaya, and Beya to join us at the ball at our table. It was a masterful move in terms of relationship-building. They had never been invited to such a thing and were really impressed. They stayed for hours. After that, we had collegial conversations.

It doesn't work to threaten people, and it's necessary to have a working relationship, even with individuals in a corrupt, violent government. Otherwise, you will not get meetings and can have no influence. You can't make your points. So I just reminded them periodically that anyone impeding the democratic process would be held accountable. That was one of the "offenses" for which someone could be held accountable under our sanctions regime. And they were very smart people. They knew exactly what that meant. And so whenever there was going to be something, like a scheduled anti-Kabila demonstrations, we would remind them. We tried to be preemptive rather than punitive. We tried to use the sanctions as a way to change behavior, as opposed to punishing past behavior.

I don't know that it was ever used quite like that before. It worked; I will say it worked very well. So maybe Haley did the same thing. Somewhat by coincidence, we were helped in our strategy. Let me go back a bit. Maybe less than a week after Haley's meeting with Kabila, they issued the calendar. The calendar was very complicated. It was a huge, long document, the length of a conference table. And it had election day, December 23, 2018. It wasn't December 31.

At the time of publication, the opposition and civil society were angry with the date being so far in the future, and they wanted to boycott. Many members of the international community were also unhappy with the date. That takes me to another thing I need to bring up, which is that there was this movement at the time for a "transition san Kabila," which means "transition without Kabila" in French. This was an idea held out by the opposition and civil society that a commission or council would be set up [by whom was never clear] that would take over from the Kabila government [nothing about what would happen to Parliament] and run the country while organizing elections. Very undemocratic. It was nonsense that had been dreamed up, I think primarily by this guy, Martin Fayulu, who will show up later in the narrative. He was a member of some opposition party, but not necessarily a well-known, well-respected politician. Although he had had a career as an international civil servant working with the World Bank or the IMF [International Monetary Fund], and he should have been a really good guy—he was not a bad guy—but then he just went off the rails a bit towards the end.

Anyway, so, there were these three things that people were pushing back against. 1) The transition sans Kabila idea was out there. We didn't like that at all. 2) Many did not like the date. And 3) Moises Katumbi. Katumbi had been the governor of Katanga [a province that was eliminated when the eleven provinces became twenty-six], the location of much

of the industrial mining industry. He had been a successful governor, and his citizenry loved him. And it seemed the West loved him.

Katanga was the part of the country that included the city of Lubumbashi near the border with Zambia. It is the hugely rich copper belt. And along with copper comes cobalt. So Katumbi was really close to Joseph Kabila for a long time. I think he may have served as a minister in Kabila's government. At some point, something happened, and they had a serious falling out. I was never able to find a single person in the DRC—not that I asked them all—who really knew what happened between them. We don't know what the falling out was about.

Kabila turned on Katumbi big time. Katumbi resigned the governorship and from Kabila's party, the PPRD [People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy]. To be honest, much of the West assumed he was the rightful heir to be president. Many thought he would be a really good president based on his performance as governor of Katanga. He was accused [likely trumped-up charges] of real estate fraud, tried and convicted in absentia after he had convinced Kabila to let him go to Brussels for medical treatment. All that was before I arrived in the DRC. I disagreed with the premise that Katumbi was somehow entitled to be president. I didn't think the United States or the international community should be picking the next president for the DRC. And frankly, I didn't think he would do any better than anybody else. I never met Katumbi as he was not in the DRC while I was there, though he often claimed he would be returning imminently. He didn't because he was afraid he would be arrested and thrown in jail. Possibly, the real guilty person might have been his brother. We don't know because again, conspiracy theories. He did not want to go to jail.

He didn't come back, but he was sort of running as a politician by tweet from Brussels for at least a couple of years…There were a lot of discrepancies each time. He seemed to be giving them reasons to stop him from coming back, to say no. Even towards the end, when it was the end of the period to register as a candidate for president, he said he was coming back to register. He tried to come in from Zambia by car near Lubumbashi. Of course, conveniently, there were no border agents there that day to let him in. He had film crews and everything. It's just that every time one of these things happened, it seemed a little contrived, and he probably could have found a way to return if he had really meant to. He could have come back anytime he wanted to, but he was really afraid of being arrested. I think if he had come back, he probably would have been arrested, but I don't think anything bad would have happened to him in jail. That is, that was not something Kabila did. He was not ordering people to be killed, which doesn't mean some of his cronies probably weren't—Anyway, so that was the third thing. Some in the West really thought that no election without Katumbi could be considered a legitimate election.

So we had these issues. We had the transition *sans* Kabila. We had the date that many thought was too late, and we had the Moises Katumbi issue. And all of these things seemed to me a little hokey—not serious. First of all, when I met with the leader of the main opposition party [Felix Tshisekedi, who is now president!], he told me about the idea for a transition sans Kabila. To him, this was the solution. He told me that Kabila

should step down even though he had a Constitutional Court ruling that he could remain until a new president was inaugurated. And, then "they"—the big "they" that no one could define—would form a committee that would run the country and organize elections. I looked at him, told him that it was crazy and undemocratic. I told him I thought that sounded like a civilian coup d'état.

He was visibly taken aback. He was so taken aback when I said that. Over the next couple of months, I made it very clear to everybody concerned that a transition sans Kabila, as described by the opposition and civil society, was not a democracy. I didn't see how anybody who saw the time as a chance for the DRC to take some steps toward democracy could support it. I simply didn't think it would change anything and probably would result in violence. But some of the international community sort of clung to it for a bit, at the same time, they were complaining about the date and insisting that Katumbi had to be a candidate.

Within maybe two or three weeks of the electoral calendar coming out, we decided to publish a statement that welcomed the calendar and noted that we would hold accountable anyone impeding the democratic process. We urged them to allow peaceful assembly and freedom of speech. We implored them to avoid violence. We, the international community…So we were always trying to do these things as a group.

…By now, it was around December of 2017, and the Catholic Church appeared to be divided. The Church had always been active in social issues and supportive of the people of the DRC. In the case of the election, there was a division between the local church leaders [the bishops] and the Vatican. The Nuncio, the senior representative of the Holy See, was very careful in his statements. We had a good relationship with the Nuncio and his staff. We met as needed and worked well together. That specific Nuncio left very suddenly and rather secretly. It seemed that he felt threatened. The Church had enormous reach throughout the DRC with tremendous access to the people. The bishops' group was known as CENCO [*Conférence Épiscopale Nationale du Congo*]. CENCO was quite influential. We also had a good working relationship with them. They were not always on the same page. One of them was named to be the next archbishop. There were usually at least three people in the room when I met with the leader.

Importantly, the laity sometimes didn't agree with the bishops in terms of strategy or tactics. Basically, the laity was more activist. They wanted to do all kinds of things that the Vatican and, really, even the bishops didn't really agree with. The bishops were in the middle. So we spent a lot of time going to them to ask what they were doing. What were they going to support in terms of elections, candidates, protests/demonstrations? Could we count on them for support in our goals? They would ask us what we were doing. They asked me to speak at one of their conferences. I declined, but I did tell them the direction I thought they should lead their people. The leaders of the Church wanted to be involved in another dialogue, a more peaceful sort of intermediary role, as facilitator between parties. But I felt that that ship had sailed. Mediation was not the answer. The DRC should just have an election.

…So, there was another demonstration coming in January, I think, January 21. So in the lead up to that date we tried to think of what we could do to get the government and the security forces to understand that they really shouldn't shoot people who were demonstrating more or less peacefully.

I went to visit Kabila's chief of staff and the chief of the National Police to remind them that anyone impeding the democratic process—including the right to peacefully assemble—would be held accountable. I mentioned that they shouldn't shoot people, that no one deserves an extra judicial death sentence for picking up a rock and throwing it. I asked them what their plans were for responding to the demonstrations. This was a way to put them on the spot, to get them to say they would do the right thing and then hold them accountable. And we decided to put out a statement. This one we were able to join forces with the UK. Even though they were still part of the EU, the ambassador in Kinshasa got permission to make statements outside of the EU process.
The UK ambassador, with whom I worked closely, one of his political officers, my acting DCM/pol chief, and I huddled around a computer and started writing a statement. We knew that we wanted to say that we didn't believe that a transition sans Kabila wasn't democratic. That was aimed at the opposition and civil society. It would not make them happy, and it would make Kabila's team happy. We didn't want anyone to think we were on their side. We wanted to support the electoral process. So we knew we also had to come up with a positive for the opposition and civil society.

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Q: For your purposes of promoting the election, were there any particular, I don't want to call them warlords, but you know oligarchs, or parliamentarians you had to play as well as the president's office?

HASKELL: One of the interesting things about the DRC is that if you really wanted to make money, you didn't go into business. You went into government. Well, that's not a 100 percent. There were exceptions. Of course, there were definitely exceptions. But, for example, there were state-owned enterprises. One of the state-owned enterprises was for mining. They had a Ministry of Mines, but it was much less influential than the state-owned enterprise. And the guy running the state-owned enterprise was "making" millions and millions of dollars. I don't know where he was stashing all his money. Interesting anecdote—he had a Tesla. And he had a fair bit of control over the copper industry that produced as a byproduct the cobalt needed at the time for those electric car batteries. Yuma was a businessman. He was not a government person before Kabila made him head of Gecamines. Yuma claims he was doing Kabila a favor. We did know him. That's another story, which maybe I'll go into later if you want to remind me. So we did know, kind of, who was into what. But I'm sure we didn't know everything, and we didn't even know enough, believe me. And, you know, there were several INGOs and human rights organizations tracking these things in microscopic detail. Aaron Sampson also had excellent connections with many of those people—including a few journalists who shared info.

Q: Okay. Because your principal mission at this time was managing democratic elections with as little violence as possible, I just wanted to ask if moving forward there were other major players that you had to, I don't know, bring in or—?

HASKELL: One of the interesting things about our sanction regime that applied to the DRC is that you didn't have to be in the government to get sanctioned. I didn't probably make this clear when I mentioned it before, but the reason Gertler was sanctioned wasn't for his activities in Israel. He was sanctioned for his activities in the DRC—money laundering, corruption. People knew that we were serious about the elections. I would say that what we did was we focused on several groups—the government, the CENI [the independent electoral commission that was certainly neither independent apolitical], and even the opposition.

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Q: Yes. All right. We're recording. So we can go back to where you left off. I haven't been asking questions mainly because you're providing every single detail. And the only thing I wondered about was were there other significant players, but you've explained that.

HASKELL: So when we got cut off, I think for once I didn't keep going on forever without knowing the recording had stopped. Do you remember where I was?

Q: Yes. It was worldwide Magnitsky. And the Israeli who had been sanctioned for his activities in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

HASKELL: Right. So I guess my point there was that while we were trying to hold all sides accountable, including the opposition, we also made it clear to the electoral commission that they could be impeding the democratic process. We were pretty evenhanded, I think, as we did that. And because as I mentioned, there were a lot of Congolese who'd been sanctioned for other things, and we had not sanctioned the government of the DRC, as a whole, only individuals and the companies that were associated with the individuals. With Gertler there was a list of companies that were designated, as was one of Gertler's associates who I think was Belgian, who was designated derivatively.

I left off when we made that statement where we made it clear that we weren't going along with the transition sans Kabila and also that we would hold the opposition accountable, too. During this, maybe, three-month period that I've just covered, we had a group of about twelve that was meeting every week. And it was, you know, the chiefs of mission of the EU, the African Union, Canada, Switzerland, UK, Sweden, France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, and the senior representative of the secretary general, who is in charge of MONUSCO. And then I was also part of the group. So there were twelve of us. And occasionally maybe every few weeks we would have meetings where we also included some of the African chiefs of mission who were more active, like the ambassadors from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Angola, and Zambia, and Uganda [although

he never said much].

There were a number of them, but the African Union representative came to all of these meetings. He was an important part of our effort both listening and contributing to the conversations in quite a big way. I met with the South African ambassador on my own periodically. He was one of those sort of guys who'd been in the "Struggle" and had all kinds of, you know, sage-like wisdom about how to deal with Africans. And I'd frequently ask him what he thought was going to happen. He would usually tell me to breathe, "Jennifer, just breathe." Then he would commence asking questions; he would ask me what I thought it meant when I said X, Y or Z. I would object and press him to tell me what he thought was going on. We were friends. But through this time, I mentioned before that even some people in the international community were still thinking that the date set for the election was bad and that they had to include Moises Katumbi. So during this period of time, I managed to convince them that we had to stop trying to change the date. As I mentioned we were able to convince them of that pretty quickly since it meant we would have a harder time holding them accountable to a date they didn't choose.

Their own calendar gave us the benchmarks to hold them to. We, in the international community, briefly discussed creating benchmarks. I didn't think we had to come up with any benchmarks on our own because they had them all right there for us. And also the part about Katumbi. I just constantly made the point that we were not there to decide who was or should be the president. I often made the point that if Katumbi wanted to run, he needed to return to the DRC. If he came, he came. If he didn't, he didn't. If he came and won, he won. It would be however it was. And Katumbi would tweet something and it would be brought up in our meeting. And basically we'd just mention that we doubted he'd come back unless the charges or conviction were lifted or something else happened to make him think he wouldn't be arrested. He did eventually come back, but not until after the new president was installed. So we were on the right track. We agreed—the group of the international community. We were there to support the electoral process. That was our goal, and it was what our stated attempts were about. It was about helping them meet their goals in the process.

Political space was a big issue, as our focus on protests and demonstrations indicated. Political space was a big talking point. The opposition and civil society, the people, the citizens didn't have a way to express what they felt about what was going on in their politics. And so the statements kind of helped that. I also think the even headedness and the effectiveness of our insistence that the security forces not shoot people, and that we would hold people accountable. Those interventions were key in moving things along. During this time, we were also meeting with the head of the electrical commission. He was friendly, and he continued to be friendly for a long time.

We, the group of twelve, met every Tuesday morning for months. We used the time to learn what we knew, and get as much as we could in an agreement so that when we all went out and had our conversations and tried to be influential with the different players, the different stakeholders, that we were speaking from the same page. We had an on-

going discussion about what an acceptable election would look like. And yeah, everybody wanted to talk about credibility. It had to be a credible election. I pointed out that "credible" was just an election-related buzz word that organizations around the world used. And I asked if any of them really thought there was any way on God's green earth that the DRC's election was going to be credible. No one did. So I suggested we stop using the word.

So it was no longer a point. But still, occasionally someone would mention that the process or the election didn't look like it would be credible and therefore we should all disassociate ourselves from it. Then we would discuss not looking for credibility and instead look for acceptability. Semantics, I know, but it was important to our effort. So we constantly worked to stay on common ground. On any given issue common ground was proposed and then collegially agreed upon. There were no minutes or findings or signatures. It was more about how we could move forward together to positively influence an electoral process. How could we make this work? What could we agree on?

They should have an election. That was the first thing we all agreed on. That Kabila should not run. We all agreed on that. There should be no violence. Everybody agreed on that. And the population should accept the result. As I mentioned before, those were the four things that we had informally agreed upon.

As we had pretty much come to agreement, we changed the meetings to once every two weeks or more often if needed. We didn't feel the need any longer to have them every week. [Let me add here that we also talked about other issues, not just elections, at these meetings, like activities of armed groups, increases in IDP numbers, Ebola, the MONUSCO budget, various VIP visits, et cetera]. However, there were times when one or more of us would feel discouraged about some activity. In the DRC, there was no rest. It was not a place where too many days went by where nothing changed. As soon as you thought you understood something or thought you knew what was going on, something changed. Every other day it seemed there was a new wrench in it, there was a new wrinkle, there was a new problem. And when things changed, it required a new effort to try to discover what it meant. Sometimes it seemed to point to things getting worse, that the likelihood of an election was lower or that it looked like Kabila was plotting a way to stay in power. And people would feel discouraged and voice concerns that we needed to get out, to distance ourselves from the process.

Q: One quick question. You had mentioned that there were sort of general agreements on the most basic elements of what would be required for elections in those discussions. Did you have any decisions or allocations of work in terms of election observing?

HASKELL: Well, first of all, people weren't convinced it was going to be an election at all. So we weren't talking about that yet. It was too soon to talk about observer missions because that was like putting the cart before the horse. Occasionally we would talk about the various foreign assistance programs underway that were about democracy and governance. USAID had a democracy and governance program at our embassy and they worked on at least one such program together with the UK's DFID [Department for

International Development]. It was very small in terms of the money, but you know, over a number of years, it amounted to a few million dollars. They were using it mainly for voter education, voter awareness, you know, how does one place a vote? Why is it important to vote? These kinds of things.

So by coming forward with our worries, we could uplift each other and remind each other of how important our work was when people would get discouraged. We could deconstruct what the perceived problem was. It was usually something related to what the DRC and/or CENI was doing or not doing. So we would look at the benchmarks, and we would discuss how they might be implementing something a week late, or just barely, or something. We would try to find the positive way to look at things rather than searching for ways to criticize the government or CENI or the opposition. Which reminds me—after the electoral calendar was published, Washington was focused on having benchmarks, similarly to our Kinshasa international group. They wanted to identify benchmarks and assign immediate consequences to not meeting them. We pointed out that we didn't need to do a bunch of interagency work, that CENI has given us reasonable benchmarks. And the problem with immediate consequences was that it wasn't possible to designate sanctions in a day or even a week or a month, and anything else we came up with [disinviting the DRC to an international event or meeting?] wasn't really meaningful to the people responsible. It takes a long time to affect something that matters to them, like sanctions. Also, to be honest, I didn't want to sanction anyone who actually had work to do to get the elections organized. That would have delayed the elections even more.

There was some work going on in Washington about this. The NSC was involved in it, the State Department—different bureaus, the Human Rights Bureau, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, as well as the Africa Bureau. The whole idea was that we would come up with some other benchmarks, other than what they themselves had created made no sense. So eventually that effort died, much to our relief as post wasn't really engaging in it. We didn't refuse, but we weren't working on it. It didn't seem worth the work to me when we had the calendar.

We wanted to see if they kept to their own calendar. How many times could they/would they meet the deadline. Sometimes, they were a week or so late. We didn't think that was a big deal. And we usually knew they were working on something and that they intended to complete whatever it was. Or sometimes the result wasn't done very well, just kind of slap dash. But if they were making the effort to make it at least appear that they were going along with the calendar, we interpreted it as a good sign. They weren't just completely blowing it off. It seemed to me that the Congolese themselves—even those who were responsible for organizing it—didn't know if there were going to be elections. No one really was certain whether or not Kabila would find a way either to change the constitution and run again or just dissolve the whole thing and become a dictator. I suppose there were equal chances of any of those things happening. So every time something didn't quite go perfectly, there was this sort of oh-my-God feeling that he was going to run and that he was going to find a way to do this. And many were absolutely convinced that he had no intention of stepping down, especially as things went along.

The four things we were trying to influence—the election, Kabila not running, no violence, a result acceptable to the people—were, frankly, quite a low bar as far as elections are concerned, generally speaking. And yet, few people believed it could be done. I think most, or at least some of us, really wanted it to be true, that it could happen. But we acknowledged that it would be only a small step in what would be a long, long democratic journey to get anything like democracy. But this country had never had a peaceful election before. They had never had a peaceful transition of power, ever. So they were more or less meeting the benchmarks, which was good. But it was still too soon to know if it would happen and it was still too soon to call it a bust. There were definitely times of doubt and some of the times of doubt were big. For example, I think it was in June, it might've been May, but I think it was June, Kabila replaced four judges on the Constitutional Court, as was his prerogative.

…So that takes us up to—still in June. We had our official Independence Day event at the end of June in 2018. And I thought hard about my speech, about what I wanted to say. I had this great entry-level officer who did the first draft, Lisa Akorli. She interviewed me to find out what I wanted the theme to be and she wrote the first draft. She did a good job. We made changes to it, but she did a fabulous first draft. I talked about George Washington and how he'd decided on his own to have his own term limits, to sort of self-term limit and to go off and be a gentleman farmer and how the subsequent presidents did that, too. This was a very pointed message because the people very close to Kabila often told me that Kabila didn't want to be the president anymore, that he just wanted to live on his farm. Kabila had a huge land-holding in the east, near Kalemi. That was a common refrain, Kabila just wanted to go live on his farm. So I talked about George Washington and his self-limiting and going off to be a gentleman farmer and how Thomas Jefferson and others did the same thing.

The speech went over really well. People really got it. They really understood that my words were aimed at Kabila. Occasionally I still run into somebody who reminds me how much they like that speech, how important they thought it was.[Click here to read the speech included in the full interview]

…Another thing that we did that I think was really helpful was we repeated as often as possible, in private with people close to him, that we thought that a former president should be able to live in this country in peace and security. We said this because Kabila was known as somebody who didn't like to travel abroad, and didn't travel often. We knew he didn't want to go live somewhere else, in exile, but that he was afraid for his safety. So we would bring it up with various people who we knew could pass the message. We felt that this was a big issue for Kabila and a huge factor in his decision-making about whether or not to stick with the constitution or abandon all pretense at democracy to save his own neck.

They never pursued anything official. There was no dialog or anything. If they had, of course, we would have had to bring in Washington to do it. We had made no secret of what we were saying to Kabila's right-hand men. It was better that they didn't ask about it formally. I think they just appreciated knowing that we did not have any plans to go

after Kabila. I know there were and still are many who think that is what should have happened—he should have been arrested. But if we want to foster democracy in places like Africa, it is important to get office holders to decide on their own to step down and to feel reasonably safe. Otherwise, they simply will not leave office for any reason other than in a box. Given the context of the DRC at that time, it may well not have been the right thing in another country or in another time in the DRC.

So the Fourth of July speech was a success…Also, they were starting to open registration for candidates for Parliament. Remember this is not just a presidential election. It was also an election for seats in Parliament. But not for local elections. They hadn't had local elections in many, many years, but that was one of the things they tried to use as an excuse for not holding any elections. It was a delaying tactic. We would just tell them to go ahead with the presidential elections and National Assembly and hold the local elections after that. And they had it that way on their electoral calendar, but frankly, we knew that was not going to, at least not for years. There have been no local elections so far. One of the things that Kabila did was to call many political parties together. He had a big conference with dozens and dozens of political parties. There are literally hundreds of political parties in the DRC. There are 602 registered with the Interior Ministry. Some of these parties literally have fewer than ten members.

A lot of the parties are closely aligned with others. It's unclear why they bothered to have so many separate parties, but I suspect it was because they could then negotiate with a larger party, like Kabila's PPRD [*Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie*] to exchange some level of loyalty for a position that allows for enrichment. Kabila called a big conference of hundreds of smaller parties plus a few relatively bigger ones and created a coalition of sorts called FCC [*Front commun pour le Congo*]. It seemed very shaky. And in our contact work, after this creation, it seemed like it was just in name only. It was more of a public relations move. And there was an ongoing conversation about who would be the PPRD—e.g. Kabila's—candidate. If he was not going to run, who was his candidate going to be. Because clearly he was going to have a candidate, and clearly his candidate was going to win. That was totally the conventional wisdom. And it was impossible to figure out. There was so much speculation. And people were just certain of whatever tidbit of information they got and stuck with their own guess.

…Kabila had seen virtually no diplomats since December or January. I was told by his close associates that he wasn't seeing any diplomats because he was tired of being lectured by diplomats, and he didn't want to hear from them. And I think part of that was that he didn't want to be lectured. He didn't want to be bullied. He didn't want to be told what to do, which was all well and good. But also if he had met these people during the period of registration as a presidential candidate, whatever decision he made would be compromised in some way as not his own. If he decided not to run, people would think he was doing the bidding of the international community or the United States. If he somehow decided to run or cancel the elections, those who met him would be supremely annoyed by his defiance, which would definitely not put Kabila in a good light regarding possible sanctions.

…But in the meantime John Pierre Bemba, head of the MLC party [*Mouvement de Libération du Congo*] had registered as a candidate for president. I haven't mentioned him before. Bemba was a politician. He was one of the four vice presidents under Kabila in the beginning. He ran against Kabila in the elections in 2006. When he wasn't declared the winner, he got his thousands-strong private army and brought them to Kinshasa where they engaged in open warfare in the streets with automatic weapons and even tanks against Kabila's forces. In fact, a lot of the buildings, even the buildings across the street from where I lived, were still bombed-out shells from that street fighting. And let's just say that he wasn't on the right side of Kabila anymore. Basically Kabila gave Bemba up to the International Criminal Court [ICC] and he was arrested in Brussels in 2008 on260 charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes [mostly vicious massive sexual violence and looting] committed by Congolese [his] troops—billed as an armed group by the ICC—in the Central African Republic while there to put down a coup.

…So before I tell you what actually happened on the great reveal day, August 8, I need to mention that Katumbi didn't manage to register as a candidate. Also, I want to talk about the opposition a little bit. There were many opposition parties, not as many parties as Kabila had enlisted in his new coalition, but there were enough. But really only two, maybe three or four parties mattered for the opposition. At different times they would be so disgusted with something that the electoral commission did or that Kabila's government did that they would announce to us that they would, henceforth, boycott the election and the election process. There was a steady stream of boycott threats. We told them that boycotting was, in fact, impeding the democratic process, that if there were no opposition, Kabila and company would win and the opposition would be to blame.

Even if Kabila were running illegally, he could get elected. We asked them what good could come of that? It felt a bit like constant hand holding, in a way, with the opposition to keep them engaged. Our acting DCM/Pol Chief Aaron Sampson had a good relationship with Felix Tshisekedi who was the head of the main opposition party, the UDPS [Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social], and when Tshisekedi wanted to throw his lot in with the transition sans Kabila, Sampson explained to Tshisekedi that he should look at the power as he would an apple. The transition sans Kabila people were trying to seize power by swallowing the apple whole. When you do that, you choke and die, or in the case of DRC politics, you get shot by security forces and you lose.
On the other hand, he continued, if you eat an apple one bite at a time, i.e. go step by step through the electoral process, you can still eat the apple but you won't choke. And if Kabila was not on the ballot, really, anyone could win.

It was funny because after the election, Sampson went with our new ambassador, Mike Hammer, who had arrived not too long before the election, to greet Tshisekedi, and he took an apple to give him. Tshisekedi and his close seconds still remember that and now call Sampson Mr. Apple. Our policy had been to encourage all sides to participate and to discourage any boycotting. Sampson's work with Tshisekedi was instrumental in keeping the opposition in the election. When Kabila didn't put his name on the ballot, Tshisekedi realized he might really have a shot at winning. That was part of our support for the

electoral process. I don't think anyone thought anyone but Kabila's anointed one could possibly win. We assumed that the Nangaa of the CENI would commit the type of election fraud that would ensure a Shadary win.

So on the last day of registration for presidential candidates, they had it all on TV. They made it very suspenseful. And really, no one knew for sure. Who would be Kabila's candidate? I think two people knew—Kabila and one of his cronies. Even the guy they announced didn't know it was him until about five minutes before. It ended up being Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, who was a former minister of interior. Kabila had moved him from that ministry to be secretary general of the PPRD, Kabila's party. He was not really a politician. He had been a minister, but he wasn't a member of Parliament or a senator. He was about the only person Kabila thought of as a loyalist, but he wasn't powerful. He wasn't rich.

I think, as Kabila would figure out in time, Shadary wasn't much. It took everybody by surprise. Kabila had held that big conference, as I mentioned, to form the loose coalition called FCC, but also at that meeting, at some point, Kabila asked "everyone" [not really everyone] to write down their top three choices for who should be president. Many put Kabila on the list. Many put their own name on the list. There were a lot of very ambitious people working for Kabila. They were not loyal to anyone but themselves, and they wanted to take over from him. Consequently, Kabila didn't trust them. And I think he worried about having anyone not loyal to him.

Many of them wanted to take over from Kabila. They saw themselves as an heir apparent. Kabil was worried that he would be turned over to the ICC, even if only to get him out of the way. And he was worried about his own safety and that of his family. That's why he didn't trust anybody. So, he picked somebody, I think, that he thought he could control and that was Shadary. This was early August of 2018.

Q: All right.

HASKELL: I think we can finish on Thursday.

Q: Okay. And, um, okay. And the registration. Okay. So that closes the issue of the registration for the moment.

HASKELL: Right. It closed, though only for the moment we thought, the issue of Kabila being on the ballot. This was an enormously positive sign in terms of the electoral process, which if you remember, was what we were supporting. We were supporting the DRC to make it through a reasonably democratic electoral process. That was the best we could hope for. And at that point, nobody could really say that Kabila would still be trying to find a way to run again because he had announced a presumed successor. Now, don't get me wrong, no one thought the actual election would be "free and fair." But, we hoped for a reasonable facsimile of a democratic process.

Q: Okay.

HASKELL: There were still a lot of enormous logistical issues to resolve in order for the election to happen in December, and that was what the next stage became about. But next session I'll discuss Ebola a bit.

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HASKELL: Okay, thanks. I'm taking up where we left off before, when we had just talked about the registration of the presidential candidates, but I wanted to step back a minute because there was another event that happened that was very interesting and helpful in meeting our strategic goals using these different tactics that we had. So, going back to the sanctions discussion. There are different authorities under which we could designate individuals [and entities] for financial sanctions, but there is also at least one executive order [maybe two?] that allows us to place visa sanctions on Congolese individuals who have engaged in various and sundry bad behaviors, some of which can be corruption or impeding democracy. I already mentioned the GloMag incident with Gertler and how that was helpful in getting things moving forward. And then there were more United States sanctions at the beginning of 2018 in alignment with UN sanctions against Congolese individuals whose crimes had nothing to do with the elections. But, both were helpful to us in getting the Congolese government and opposition, and even the electoral commission, to understand that we were holding them accountable for impeding their own democratic election process. So, in June of 2018, together obviously with concurrence from Washington, we had decided to go ahead and place a visa sanction on an individual for impeding the democratic process. The justification had to do with some of the ways they were preparing for the elections.

Before I further explain this visa sanction, I need to go back to the electronic voting or the voting machines [known as "*machine à voter*" in French]. The electoral commission had decided they should have electronic voting, which we thought made no sense at all in a country with such a low level of electricity coverage across its entire landmass. We had tried to convince them this wasn't a very good idea and that it was surely a recipe for disaster. We pushed hard on it. We did figure some things out about how they were trying to buy these machines from a South Korean company and how much they were paying for each machine versus how much they normally sold for. There was a lot of money spent that had nothing to do with the actual price of these machines. There were other indications of significant corruption. So we went ahead and placed some visa sanctions, but using one of the executive orders, where we were not allowed to publicly name the people that are being sanctioned. There was some leeway as to whether or not we could or couldn't publicly name people, depending on which E.O. was cited. Normal procedure is to name everyone publicly. But in this case, we did not want to name who was being sanctioned because we knew that lots of people would assume it was they who were being sanctioned, or people would assume others were. It would increase the effectiveness of the deterrent, by creating a guessing game of who was sanctioned. It would deter more people.

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HASKELL:…Now, we can go back to the election, where it's still August. There were things happening to review the presidential slate, the registration, to see who paid their hundred thousand francs and to make sure everybody who registered meets the criteria for running for office.

Q: I'm sorry, what date at this point, what date had been given for the election day?

HASKELL: It's still the same day, December 23, 2018.

From the electoral calendar that had been published early in December 2017. No dates had changed. They, the Electoral Commission [CENI] and the GDRC, had been more or less keeping to the dates. Sometimes some benchmarks were missed by a week or something, or maybe they didn't do a particularly good job of it. Benchmarks included things like determining which political parties were eligible to participate and getting all the voters registered. There were all these technical aspects that lead up to an election that are part of the benchmarks, which I could talk about more, more precisely and succinctly a year ago, but now it's two years since. So, there are fewer details in my head.

It was up to CENI to look at the registration documentation of the people who are running to make sure they ticked all the boxes to register properly and to ensure they were eligible. There were a couple of people who were not eligible, along with Jean Pierre Bemba. I can't remember lesser characters who didn't play any role but who had registered as candidates but had convictions for certain crimes on their record. But those ineligibilities were within CENI's purview. Those were pushed a bit later to the Constitutional Court for review.

Remember that back in, I think June, Kabila had changed out four of the Constitutional Court justices to be more right-leaning and less independent, shall we say. The independent-thinking ones had been convinced to retire, and Kabila put in four more of "his" people. At the time we weren't sure what Kabila was up to, but we were sure that, at the least, he was keeping his options open. Now, one of the main contenders, Jean Pierre Bemba, had quite a following although not as many now as before and, unlike in the 2006 election, he had no army. When he did arrive back in Kinshasa to register to run for president, thousands of supporters showed up for him.

I think I mentioned already that Bemba had been convicted by the International Criminal Court [ICC] of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and witness tampering, but he had been acquitted of the war crimes and the crimes against humanity just a few weeks before the registration period to run for president. He was, however, not acquitted of witness tampering. Now, interestingly, there had been a change in the law at some point.

Q: Sure.

HASKELL: I think it was after the election in 2011. They have a new law, an electoral law, I think in 2015. The electoral law specifically excluded people from running for

president if they have been convicted—found guilty of—corruption, a couple of other things and, importantly, witness tampering. So Jean Pierre Bemba's name was taken off the register. Amazingly, they took it—he and all his supporters—took it very stoically. There was no violence associated with it. He kept a lid on it. It's interesting because I did not personally know Jean Pierre Bemba at all, although our acting DCM did know him and did meet with him the one day he was in town to register as a candidate.

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HASKELL: I think I mentioned that after the accord of December 31, 2016—it was called the Saint Sylvester Agreement—about two months later, the long-time opposition leader of the UDPS, biggest opposition party, Etienne Tshisekedi, died in February of 2017. His son, Felix, took over as leader of the party. Felix was a candidate with no experience at anything but with his father's legacy to carry him along. There was another guy who was not considered a real contender. He had only a tiny little political party of his own. His name was Martin Fayulu. There was also Vitol Kamare who was the head of his own political party which was a serious party. He was a guy who knew how politics worked in the DRC. Those are sort of the four people to watch. In November weeks before the campaign period was to start. [Like most countries, the DRC didn't have a campaign period that starts as soon as a new president is inaugurated.] The electoral calendar provided for a thirty-day campaign period leading up to the election. So, before the campaign period started, there was a meeting in Geneva with the heads of the most serious parties not affiliated with Kabila. It included Moises Katumbi, Felix Tshisekedi, Vital Kamara, Bemba party leaders, and others. The goal, which was a good goal, was to come up with one candidate that a united opposition could support to oppose Kabila's man, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, so as not to split the vote.

The result of this meeting came out as a big press release. They had chosen this guy, Martin Fayulu, to be their candidate. This was a strange outcome. It seemed bizarre because Fayulu wasn't really someone the population would get behind. No name recognition, no political history.

So, but this was agreed to, with signatures and all. Then literally two hours later, both Tshisekedi and Kamare changed their minds. They'd signed the agreement and then they changed their minds, deciding nope, they didn't want any part of this coalition. They decided they would run their own campaign with Tshisekedi as their candidate. The assumption was that with Felix as president, Kamare would be prime minister. That's the way they were going to run, and that's the way they did run.

Q: Okay.

HASKELL: In Geneva.

Q: Oh.

HASKELL: We, at the embassy, actually didn't think that Felix should have signed that agreement. It was the reaction of Felix's supporters back in Kinshasa that convinced him to withdraw his support for Fayulu. It didn't make any sense to support Fayulu. But we were not getting involved. People were calling the embassy because the acting DCM who was also the political section chief was very tuned in, with close connections in several political camps, including Kabila's. But he quite rightly refused to tell them what to do. But, as soon as that press release came out from Geneva, the UDPS rank and file had freaked out. They couldn't believe that Felix had signed that agreement. That is why he pulled back. And it was good that he did that.

This is when the international community came back into the picture. We really hadn't been meeting very often, and we were no longer sort of on the same page. We didn't have any reason, really, to be on the same page anymore, as long as the DRC made it to the election. Going back to our goals [had to be an election, Kabila couldn't run, no violence, and the population accepted the outcome], there still had to be an 281
be peaceful with an outcome the population accepted. And we all had agreed on that and we'd continued to push that message. But you could now see where, you know, some embassies from different countries went slightly different ways. Even on the electronic voting, different countries had different thoughts about it. The United Kingdom [UK], who had been solidly with us, the crazy idea, they started to embrace the electronic voting machine.

They had a UK minister come, not a minister of state, but a lower level, came in June, I think it was, and was meeting all the usual Congolese we take our VIPs to see. She met with the head of CENI, Corneille Nangaa, who mentioned that they wanted someone, some outside organization, to evaluate their voting machine. The minister jumped right in and said they would organize that. We, at the U.S. embassy, thought that was a bad idea, a losing proposition because the problem was not really if the machine worked. The problem was more about the capacity of the voters to use it [lack of familiarity with using electronics of any kind] and the logistics in a country with little electricity, nationwide. But after that meeting, the UK ambassador had no choice but to take that on. They had the Westminster Foundation, I think, do it, which was supposed to be an independent evaluator of election things.

They pronounced the machine to be quite fine. But again, that was not our point. So there started to be a change in the solidarity of the international community of not supporting the use of electronic voting, never mind that the electoral law prohibited electronic voting. So CENI didn't call it electronic voting. They called it a "voting machine" (machine à voter). And they tried to call it a ballot printer. But, we knew it wasn't just a ballot printer because it was capable of transmitting the results by Internet and the company that makes them actually makes a different machine that is only a ballot printer. The machine CENI bought did print a card with the voter's choice on it, which was then to be deposited into a box, but there were no receipts for the voter to take.

…Oh, I want to mention another important point. I think it was in October 2018, the Electoral Commission made a decision that because of the Ebola outbreak, they were

going to postpone the election in North Kivu. Actually, I don't think it was all of North Kivu, but it was in certain parts of the province. The election would be delayed because of
Ebola.

Q: Oh, Oh.

HASKELL: This was because voting brings people into close contact with other people, both in line and in transportation to the polls. Some people felt that this would be a legitimate reason to postpone the entire election, and while the decision was a little bit questionable, there have been many countries that have held legitimate elections even though the entire country couldn't vote. Maybe not Western countries, but I think Nigeria had a big election where people couldn't vote in the northeast or northwest due to insecurity caused by Boko Haram. Also, I believe that Boko Haram may have had control of the local government there. That election was basically a democratic election. So it wasn't the first time such a thing had happened. From a public health perspective, the decision wasn't silly or even suspect. But some people said it was just because that part of the country probably wasn't going to vote for Kabila's guy. The conspiracy theories really were out there that there were other reasons besides public health for canceling the election in that area. There were political conspiracy theories about it.

In terms of delivering election materials to the ten thousand or so polling places around the country, MONUSCO did help with logistics—in the beginning, in the east—at the request of local leaders. They used their airlift capability to deliver some of the election things—things like the folding cardboard paper booths and other supplies. But Kabila got mad about that and told them they had to stop. Kabila was adamant that the DRC could manage the election without any international help whatsoever, including from the United Nations. We offered assistance to get paper ballots printed. CENI kept saying it was too late to get paper ballots printed. But we felt that there were a couple of vendors that could have done it. But they steadfastly refused help.

They went on about their business and figured out how to get materials out there to the polling places, and it seems like they succeeded. In terms of observers, none of the Western countries were sending observers. To be honest, CENI would not have283 accredited them. By this time in the process, Nangaa, the head of CENI, had become very dependent on the president's pretense of impartiality. He had become unfriendly to say the least. He didn't want to meet with us really, although he still had some of our USAID elections experts working with his team. USAID had a democracy and governance section at the embassy. They were excellent. Those experts were a huge help to us in the front office in being able to tell us what they thought was really going on inside CENI or in different places around the country.

Back to observers. The Catholic Church had said they were going to send out some ridiculous number of observers, something like forty thousand, because there were ten thousand +/- polling stations. They wanted to have four observers per polling station. That would have been great! Some were getting training, some probably with our USAID

democracy and governance funding. Remember, these would not be international observers. They were local observers. Supposedly, all these observers were going to have a cell phone, so they could take pictures of the documentation of results and send it back to a central collection point. This documentation would serve as a check on validity of the vote. There was supposed to be this kind of preparation and deployment of observers to ensure a fair and democratic vote. But, in the end even the Church in the DRC, CENCO [the council of bishops] reported that they had only ten thousand observers, which is not forty thousand. We found out later from sources inside CENI that fewer than five thousand people had been issued observer credentials. So, relatively speaking, there wasn't really much observation going on. And I need to note that a new U.S. ambassador arrived at post the third week of October 2018.

Q: Uh, huh.

HASKELL: Going back a bit, in September I had been told I had to take my home leave or I would lose it because I had arrived at post on direct transfer. I thought that sounded crazy since we had no ambassador in the midst of the election lead-up and the Ebola outbreak. But anyway, they told me that I had to take home leave before the end of September. I scurried around and made plans. Got travel orders and tickets, made arrangements with my family back in the States. The double absence [meaning post would have no assigned ambassador and no assigned deputy chief of mission at post] was approved by the Africa Bureau [AF] and by the under secretary for Political Affairs [P], per protocol. Then it came back that the under secretary for Management [M] refused to approve it. It was really annoying to me because M was not responsible for approving the double absence, but rather was only responsible for approving my days out of the country. As chief of mission, I wasn't allowed to leave my country of assignment for more than twenty-six days for personal leave, twenty-six business days. I had, of course already taken an R&R, and it is mandated that home leave be at least twenty business days. So, I would go over the twenty-six days and needed M approval for that. It should have been pro forma. But instead, M decided I couldn't take the home leave I'd been told I must take and had been approved by AF and P, because he didn't think there should be a double absence. For the record, every time I left the DRC it was considered a double absence.

So I had to cancel my trip, but at the same time, the Bureau of Human Resources [HR] in Washington was insisting that I had to take home leave. I felt that M had basically usurped AF and P's authority. But no one wanted to stand up to M even though they had already agreed to the double absence. It was not a sign of the department caring about people. Kinshasa was definitely a place everyone needed to get out of fairly often. But HR continued to tell me I needed to go. They even offered to get a waiver to take less than the required twenty days. I had over two hundred home leave days on the books, days of paid leave I had earned over the years and been unable to take. [There is no compensation for home leave upon retirement or resignation.] So getting me special permission to take LESS than the requirement was not attractive.

Q: Cool.

HASKELL: I thought about it and tried to find a reasonable solution—a time to take the home leave when it would be better for post. I kind of agreed that my taking home leave at the time was not ideal for post. It made sense to me that I should take my home leave in March because that would be after the elections, after the inauguration, after three big meetings outside the DRC that either the ambassador or I were required to attend. I had no personal reason to want to go in March. But that would have meant that I would have "lost" my final R&R, also not an attractive option, unless Washington approved an exception. So, I asked for that exception.

In the end, I didn't get any exceptions. The new ambassador finally scheduled his arrival. I got new plane tickets and left for my home leave a week after the new ambassador arrived. I scheduled my arrival back to be just before the elections. However, in December, CENI pushed the elections back a week to December 30, due to a suspicious fire at the main CENI warehouse in Kinshasa, which, coincidentally, was located on property that the GDRC had agreed to trade to us to build a new embassy on. Many believed the fire was likely set intentionally by or at the request of someone in either Kabila's crowd or in CENI in an attempt to have a valid reason for a postponement of the elections. That didn't work as Kabila himself told Nangaa that the election must happen before the end of the year, which, as you might remember, was what Ambassador Haley had demanded. So, I arrived back from home leave about a week before the vote. There had been many things going on in my absence. The new ambassador was only able to present his credentials to Kabila the same day I arrived back in town.

…But we had, a couple of months earlier, decided that, based on the history of the DRC with election-related violence, we were going to request an ordered departure in advance of the elections. There had never been a peaceful election or peaceful transition of power in the DRC's history. While from what we knew about the current situation, we didn't think there was going to be violence, we also knew better than to think we knew what was actually going to happen. Washington supported us on this. The election is supposed to be on December 23. So, we knew that we would need to get everybody out [family members and non-essential personnel] probably a week or two before election day. We tried to make sure the kids could finish their school before the holidays. While I was gone, they finalized the ordered departure dates.

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[Haskell did not end up going on her home leave as she was called back to Kinshasa]

… And why was it necessary? I'm going to get some of this wrong. But it seems that the day before, someone—might've been Fayulu—was coming back from campaigning, arriving at the Kinshasa airport. There were many supporters at the airport and along the single route from the airport back into Kinshasa. It was normally anywhere from a one- to five-hour excursion to get to or from the airport to Gombe, the section of Kinshasa where embassies were, where diplomats lived and where many high-level government officials lived and had their offices. It was an hour at four in the morning. Every other time it took longer. It was really not very far, but there was only one road, and it went through a

densely populated part of town, just chock-a-block with people and trucks and buses, and everything you can imagine in a huge African city. It was a true African commuter nightmare. And there was no other way, except theoretically one could get on a boat and by the river, but then you need a car at the other end to get you from wherever you got off the boat to get to the airport. There was no dock or anything. It was more or less wading ashore.

So, whenever somebody wanted to create problems, they created problems on that road very often. And the UDPS [Tshisekedi's party] headquarters were on that road, along the way. Anyway, the day before there had been big crowds, not demonstrations or confrontations, but just a lot of people. I guess we had some people, maybe one of our assistant RSOs, at the airport at the time that had happened. This was the day before I was supposed to arrive back in Kinshasa. That A/RSO felt very threatened. Also, our defense *attaché* was in a car coming back from the airport during this particular time. She had felt threatened, even though no one was attacking anyone. It was just a lot of people. Frankly, it was probably uncontrollable if something had gone amiss. So, I guess they thought that that might happen again. So, they pulled me off the plane. But I made it back to Kinshasa and resumed duty as DCM. I had been DCM for a week before I left.

Q: Okay.

HASKELL: There was a lot of talk about the fire at the CENI warehouse. It was very suspicious. And Nangaa, head of the Electrical Commission, went to Kabila to tell him they had to postpone the elections because of the fire. Kabila told him there would be elections and that they would be that year. Remember Ambassador Haley said, "—and I don't mean December 31." They had the elections on December 30. Meanwhile, all of our families and non-essential personnel were on ordered departure.

Q: Wow.

HASKELL: So, they have the elections, and we're all waiting for the results. I am pretty sure that there was no one in that country who thought anyone but Shadary would come out of that election as the president. I think even the other candidates themselves thought that whatever they wanted to have happen was not what they thought would actually happen. I think they all thought that regardless, in some way the outcome would be manipulated so that Shadary would win.

Q: Right?

HASKELL: The elections happened; the people voted. But CENI didn't announce any results. And they did announce results and then they didn't announce results. And we think the Iowa primary was bad. There were all kinds of things going on. Everyone was trying to find out what was happening. There was a rumor that Fayulu had won. Remember we were in a country where you never know what the truth is. And everything that I'm telling you about how this went down in the end, is not complete. There are still many pieces, key pieces, of this that we don't know for sure.

Q: Right.

HASKELL: Nangaa, the president of the Electrical Commission went to Kabila and asked what to do. He went to others and asked what to do. He wondered if he could announce that Fayulu had won. All of this was very, very quiet. Nothing was coming out. Nothing was happening. There was no announcement. This was all just very quiet, little rumors. Everybody was scrambling, you know, clamoring for the results. Meanwhile, Fayulu was claiming success.

Time was moving along and there was still no result. Eventually the Electoral Commission announces that Felix Tshisekedi had won the presidential election, which might have been true [laughs], or not. Fayulu made quite a hullabaloo. But, interestingly, he did not have a lot of supporters shouting for him.

Q: Okay.

HASKELL: The Fayulu supporters were not really freaking out. I mean, there was a lot of social media yapping and other media. Yap. Yap. But really there was no violence. There was nothing happening, yet Fayulu was yammering on, just really making a lot of noise because the election had been stolen from him, he claimed. The inauguration was slotted for maybe January 11 or something like that. But in the meantime, Fayulu files a claim contesting the result.

He contested the result to the Constitutional Court. He went to organize his papers as evidence and gave the documentation to the Constitutional Court. So the court met. Everyone was on pins and needles. And so far, no violence. This was political officer heaven. We were waiting for the court's decision. They were meeting; they were hearing this or doing that. They met some more, and then on Saturday—I don't remember the date—we are all still on pins and needles, and we didn't have families at post and a lot of the mission was still on ordered departure. We were kind of hanging out. And that evening we suspected there might be an announcement and several of us were at the ambassador's residence waiting to hear what the decision would be. It got later and it was put off. It was delayed by hours and hours. Eventually, the court came out of their chambers and read their decision. They did not accept the contestation, they didn't agree with the contest and Tshisekedi was the winner. Okay. So the process has been followed absolutely.

Q: Okay.

HASKELL: The DRC's own electoral process has been followed. Now,
Fayulu was still mad, and he was still making a lot of noise. Even now, years later he is still mad and making a lot of noise, and still claims he's the rightful president. But he's saying that now into a very small room, so to speak. Whatever energy, whatever juice he'd had before died very quickly. Not his own energy, but that of most of the people who have been supporting him. So it was a question, you know, a lot of people in

Washington really felt that the result as announced was a travesty and that it wasn't a "real" election. Some people in Washington thought that it was clear that Kabila had stolen the election by giving it to the opposition. Let that sit a minute.

I didn't understand, you know, I didn't really understand what they were talking about, given the history. But they were very angry, a lot of people in USAID. There were many contentious conversations, a lot of problems in the interagency as they tried to agree on a U.S. government statement about the results of the election. We, post, of course, had drafted something that we'd sent back to Washington. Normally, if we wanted to put something out locally, we didn't need State's approval, but you don't do that in this situation. This was an election. And if they, in Washington, have an interest, they get to craft the statement. So, the NSC was having interagency meetings with the interested agencies to figure out what to say. In my experience, USAID likes very long press releases, one, two or even three pages. The State Department is more about one-page press releases. Personally, I like a one paragraph press release, but okay. So, we had written something very carefully. Our draft was not congratulating Felix.

Our draft statement welcomed the process. We said something like, "Yay!" I don't remember verbatim what the draft said. But essentially we said, "Yay, the court made a decision. They had followed a process." That was sort of the first paragraph. And in the second paragraph we congratulated Joseph Kabila for being the first DRC president to peacefully hand over power. And he really rated that. No matter what you think of him, he did that. Okay. We were still trying to get a statement out. I was getting closer and closer to inauguration day and there still hadn't been a statement from the United States. This meant that we had yet to influence a final outcome; it meant that anything could still happen, even no inauguration. Things could have suddenly gone upside down.

Q: Okay.

HASKELL: At this point, I have to say that some people in the State Department that maybe I don't always agree with really turned out. They stepped up and did the right thing. They got tired of the interagency blah, blah, brouhaha and wrote a statement that was virtually what we said, but shorter and frankly, better. They said exactly what we wanted it to say, and they published it. Here it is:

> "The United States welcomes the Congolese Constitutional Court's certification of Felix Tshisekedi as the next President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC]. We are committed to working with the new DRC government. We encourage the government to include a broad representation of Congo's political stakeholders and to address reports of electoral irregularities. The United States salutes the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their insistence on a peaceful and democratic transfer of power. We also recognize outgoing President Joseph Kabila's commitment to becoming the first President in DRC history to cede power peacefully through an electoral process."

Q: Beautiful.

HASKELL: And wow, was USAID unhappy. The statement did not include what USAID had been insisting on in the interagency meetings. And really I agreed strongly with what State did. This was done at the under secretary/deputy secretary and secretary of state level. This was truly a foreign policy issue, not a foreign assistance issue. Secretary of State Pompeo, decided in the end, as he should have, and it was a perfect statement. Maybe I shouldn't use those words. USAID in Washington was convinced that Fayulu had won. We at the embassy were certain that there was no way to know the actual truth of the vote count. There were already fraudulent ballot counts circulating. The statement came out the day before the inauguration. I strongly believe that our statement was instrumental in making Kabila feel comfortable in handing over power on inauguration day.

Although I had done so much in the lead up to the election, getting the international community on the same page, keeping us all on the same page when it really counted, managing Washington with regard to sanctions, to benchmarks, to communications—all, of course, alongside our acting DCM/Pol chief and some fabulous USAID people [who I don't think agreed with their Washington colleagues]—I wasn't invited to the inauguration. Our new ambassador went. And because he knew the opposition, Felix Tshisekedi and his closest advisors quite well, the former acting DCM—now back to being just the Pol Chief Aaron Sampson, was invited. I would not have pulled that back from him for anything. His contributions to the success of our policy were amazing, and he deserved to go. So they went in person—the ambassador and the pol chief. But I have to say, I was watching it on TV in the embassy, and I had a better view than they did. I was WhatsApping them throughout the ceremony to let them know what was going on, telling them who was arriving, where were people sitting, et cetera. They couldn't really see those things from where they were seated. I was doing a sort of play by play. When Kabila arrived I reported that he looked happy to be there, that he was doing this. And then there was Felix Tshisekedi. I thought he looked weird. He looked really fat. He looked like he had gained forty pounds. I wondered what was happening. He's a big guy anyway, but it was crazy. His clothes were too small. And then I realized he must have a huge bulletproof vest on under there.

So, okay. The ceremony started, and I have to say it was really well done. And I know some people think I'm crazy, but I believe that Kabila was very happy doing what he was doing, giving it away—the symbols of the office, the power. In the DRC, they actually have accoutrements they give away, almost like royalty. You know, they have a scepter and a sash. Just the way he was transferring these things to Tshisekedi said to me that he was happily doing it. You know, he'd already had his last review of the troops and all of that. And he just, his demeanor seemed different than all the other times I'd seen him on TV or speaking or whatever. [I had only one meeting with him.] It was just very good. Then Tshisekedi gets up there to make his speech, right? So he's speaking, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I'm thinking, Hurry up, already. And he keels over. He had collapsed! Oh my God, how could this be? What was happening? Well, clearly this vest he was wearing was too tight.

So Tshisekedi was down for like five minutes or something. People rushed to help him. No one informed the audience or anyone what was happening. I'm sure some people thought it was all over, that he'd been poisoned or something. Congolese really believed in poisoning as a means to get rid of adversaries. We all wondered what was going on. Tshisekedi gets some water and he pops back up and finishes his speech. Believe me, the rest of the speech did not need to be made. The end of the speech was useless. It was all so bizarre. So, he was president and I think he was completely and utterly astonished by the whole thing, absolutely astonished. I don't think he thought in a million years, nobody thought in a million years that what was happening would or could happen. A peaceful transfer of power through a democratic process. Meanwhile, people in Washington were still convinced that this election had been stolen from Martin Fayulu. It was a conversation in local social media for months. But really in the immediate aftermath, there were all kinds of people swearing that they had the true vote count. And Moises Katumbi provided to the Catholic Church some documents he claimed were actual ballot tallies. It was a ploy to continue the uncertainty, to not embrace the concept that they had an election, the opposition won, and there was no violence. And notably, Kabila handed over power after refusing to hold elections for two years.

Q: Wow.

HASKELL: You know, Tshisekedi was sort of stunned for a few weeks while he was trying to get a grip and it took them a long time to form a government. I left post. Okay. I left on February 22. I told the ambassador the day I arrived back, December 22, that I was going to retire and that I would leave on February 22. He was not too happy about it. He decided that the way to try to convince me to stay was to tell me that he needed me to be the bad guy, because he needed to be the good, friendly guy. He needed me, as his DCM, to be the bad guy. And I told that I had been a management counselor for many years and that I was done being the bad guy.

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HASKELL:…I had originally thought I would retire in 2015, after my tour in the Office of Science and Technology Cooperation. I lasted four more years of service. Just to be clear, though, about the DRC elections. I think that there is still a lot of chatter about Kabila being the puppeteer of Tshisekedi. I really want people to understand that Kabila's party [PPRD] won the majority in the Parliament. So that party has a say in who fills the cabinet, who will be prime minister, et cetera. That is politics. And interestingly enough, it took them about four, five, six months or more to agree on who should be prime minister. In the end, it was someone that Tshisekedi had put forward early on. This says to me that Tshisekedi was holding his own in those discussions.

Q: Hmm.

HASKELL: Tshisekedi did not just acquiesce to Kabila. And they didn't form a full government until August, eight months after the inauguration. That was because there was so much negotiation about who would get what ministry.

So, then people will say that Tshisekedi is meeting with Kabila. Again, that is politics. Kabila's party has the majority in the Parliament. The PPRD had maybe four more seats [don't quote on that number, I don't remember if that is correct] than the UDPS, Tshisekedi's party.

Q: Yup. Yup.

HASKELL: Now, does Tshisekedi have a hope in hell of changing the world in the DRC? No, he does not. He doesn't have the power. His power base is not strong enough to get much done.

He, a year ago certainly, was really wanting to do the best he possibly could to cut down on the corruption. I think he still honestly thinks that, although I'm not sure that some of his close compatriots do. But he can't jettison those people because they will go over to the Kabila camp, and then he'll be in trouble. It really is a game of survival for him. In fact, literal survival. So, he's not probably going to make huge changes in the DRC, but it's this tiny, tiny step of going in the right direction on what's going to be a very long journey towards democracy. Before I left post, I was speaking with Kabila's senior diplomatic advisor, who was a very educated and astute person who I don't believe was corrupt or is corrupted to this day.

I agreed with him that—and many of us that were in the mix of it believe this—that if somehow the world had insisted on Fayulu, if somehow Fayulu had actually somehow been pushed on Kabila— Let me rephrase that. There was no way it was going to be Fayulu as the next DRC president. Fayulu was Katumbi's guy. And if you remember from before, something happened between Katumbi and Kabila that created an enormous problem between them. And there is in my mind, no way Kabila would have allowed Fayulu, Katumbi's stooge, to become the president. And if so, the choice was not Fayulu or Tshisekedi. The choice was Tshisekedi or an annulled election.

Q: Yeah. Okay.

HASKELL: I firmly believe that if Kabila had not had the option for Tshisekedi, he would have annulled the whole election. And if that had happened, there would have been massive civil protests and a lot of bodies stacked up in the streets.

Q: Yup.

HASKELL: And to boot, nobody really knows the correct vote.

Q: To this day. They still don't know—

HASKELL: And it is not reproducible.

Q: Yeah. Beautiful.

HASKELL: So that's my story on the DRC elections.

Q: So there was a change of power, a peaceful change of power. And although he doesn't have much of a following or much of a base on the government, certainly not yet, Tshisekedi, by the mere fact that he occupied the office and was directly subordinate to Kabila, managed to make, you know, a small step.

HASKELL: Well, one thing to keep in mind is that Tshisekedi was never subordinate to Kabila, not any more than any other DRC citizen. His party won the second largest number of seats in parliament. Only four fewer than Kabila's.

Q: Interesting. Okay.

HASKELL: Now some people who don't quite always understand the nuances of the DRC will say that Tshisekedi's party did not come out so closely to Kabila's party in the parliamentary elections. They will say it was not true because the FCC [Common Front for Congo], the big coalition that Kabila tried to form back in June 2018, that I mentioned before, had a lot more seats altogether. When you add all those parties together it was far more than Tshisekedi's party. But that coalition was and is really loose, and not a single one of those candidates campaigned under the FCC banner.

Q: Oh, okay. Yeah. So the FCC is out there if ever someday they might decide to use it.

HASKELL: Well. Yeah. Sort of. Or, I think that the people who decided to sign on felt like it was in their best interest at the time, when they thought Shadary was going to win.

Q: Okay.

HASKELL: So will Kabila come back and run again? Maybe. He can. Nothing says he can't. So, that's another thing people will say, that Kabila will just run again and come back into power. Well, it's the rule that he can. Okay. We have to stop trying to choose people's leaders for them.

Q: Yeah. Well, quite a story.

HASKELL: It was an amazing tour. It really was. I mean, the extent to which I probably showed up there, very naively thinking that the United States didn't have much influence there. And what I discovered was that we have influence, but you had to know how to wield it. You couldn't be a bully. That kind of influence didn't work. It really was about figuring out how to give them a message that would accomplish what we wanted, yet that wasn't telling them what to do. And we had to figure out to tell them why it was in their interest to do something, not in our interest, but in their interest, which, in the end could be in our interest. We went over that earlier, why was it in our interest, the United States' interest, for there to be elections in the DRC. Elections where Kabila didn't stand, there was no violence, and the Congolese population accepted the outcome. So, I don't know if

I have anything else to talk about on this country, on my tour there, but it was quite a culmination of my career.

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Q: Yeah. I already sort of heard it was not being as promised. And we've already talked about your time in Kinshasa and the period going up to the elections, the transition. Looking back on that now, since you're still in the region, and you're still going back and forth to Kinshasa, is the DRC, the Democratic Republic of the Congo a little more stable now, given that they did have a relatively peaceful transition?

HASKELL: I would say yes. Does that mean things have changed significantly? Not so much. Conspiracy theories are still a dime a dozen. There is still violence in the east, not as much violence in the east, but unfortunately the violence in the area of the Ebola outbreak is still ongoing. That's a place where some of the violence has historically been pretty bad. It was quieter for quite some time. And then lately it's really erupted to be much more violent again. And it does impact the response to the Ebola outbreak. Sure, it's interesting.

…But, back to your question. What I hear when I am in Kinshasa is that everything is worse. Everything is more expensive, that Tshisekedi and his cronies are more corrupt than Kabila was/is, and that Kabila is really still in charge. But these things don't make sense, though it is more expensive. The prices have gone up. I'm not entirely sure why. It is true that there are going to be people who are corrupt.

And I think I mentioned before, I don't think that Felix Tshisekedi is a horribly corrupt person. He certainly wasn't when he took office. And I think it will be very difficult for him to remain completely non-corrupt, and that's just going to be a fact of life. I do not believe that Kabila is the puppet master of Tshisekedi. Many people think that. It's not true. I don't have secret sources; I have only my instinct and my experience there. And what I find through the grapevine is that I'm right. That, in fact, Kabila's crowd is not as powerful as the general Congolese population thinks. Not as powerful as the outsiders who think they know everything. It's not necessarily true. But people are worried about things. There are lots of problems for the everyday person and even for the rich people, too.

For whatever reason Tshisekedi's Administration has decided to improve the transportation network all at the same time, over much of Kinshasa. Well, in Gombe anyway, where most of the government ministries and international community lives and does business. They're building flyovers and doing other roadworks. You can imagine that has caused horrific traffic problems. Our embassy people who live in certain neighborhoods are enduring four-hour commutes. That has caused problems. The embassy has tried to institute flex-time and shuttle systems to try to alleviate some of the impact. It's not perfect over there, but it's also not awful. And I think that from the perspective of their step forward in democracy, which was the whole policy goal for the time I was there, it's kind of working, which is the only thing you could hope for.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

N/A

EASTERN EUROPE/EURASIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ELIZABETH SPIRO CLARK
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(1993–1998)

Elizabeth Spiro Clark was born in New York City, New York in 1937. Before joining the Foreign Service, she practiced operatic singing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and London, United Kingdom. In 1980, she joined the Foreign Service and her postings included Iceland, South Africa, Norway. After her career in the Foreign Service, she joined the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and Bureau of Democracy from 1993 to 1998. Elizabeth Spiro Clark was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 12, 2011.

Topical Focus – Democracy and Elections in East Asia and Bosnia

Q: In Indonesia, what were you looking at?

CLARK: Well Suharto had just been kicked out, so my job there was to interview all of the political actors to make some judgment on how we could best help in the transition to democracy. I can remember one conclusion I reached after meetings with a range of political actors. My conclusion was that in a situation like that many of these emerging forces are tremendously weak and one should look for where the strength is -- where is the strong line. The strong line was elections; they all wanted elections. You know, there's a slight tendency back in the State Department to poo poo elections but that's where you should absolutely get on the train and I mean. That was my main report. This conclusion did not find favor in USAID. Everybody knows within the government there are differences between different entities. AID tended to want to shy away totally from elections, not only in Indonesia but elsewhere. I think the main reason for this is, A, they didn't yet have any cadre of experts in the area of democracy, and B, an election happens as a one day event. You can't fudge it with language on how you have this pilot project and you are working on this and in five years you will have all these good results. In addition the AID bureau in Indonesia had just been criticized in a "New York Times" article and they were determined to play things safe. When I got back to Washington there were some meetings that came out of my reports aimed at hammering out that we were going to take a strong democracy program in Indonesia.

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Q: Did you get involved in the election process in Bosnia?

CLARK: Not directly. As I say, there was a person that worked for me that went to Dayton and in that sense we were very involved. The framework that Holbrooke set up created the three member council or presidency. Nothing really in the structure that would encourage true nation building, as I am afraid we have seen. The Serbs are as eager as ever to get out of this.

Q: Did- Were there any other sort of hot spots?

CLARK: Well I'm trying to think. I went out to Burma, I went out to Indonesia.

Q: East Timor?

CLARK: No, but I thought that was a fascinating case. I didn't get personally involved but I have thought about in terms of a focus on how you build global democratization, which I've written about since I've retired. East Timor was a fascinating example because it demonstrated that through the UN you can create requirements for political participation. I think this is alive and well as an issue in the Middle East right now. There is a lot of agreement in principle that you have to up the ante for parties that want to participate in elections, requiring them to make a commitment to periodic elections in the future. They have to make commitments that maybe they break but they have to be held to. Well in East Timor you did have the UN for the first time getting into setting requirements for parties to participate in elections. You weren't allowed to have religious campaigning materials and I thought that was perfectly appropriate to have these kinds of requirements. For it to have a UN imprimatur I thought was very important. I also thought, and have written about, that the State Department and other foreign ministries governments just can't stand the idea of partition. In my view you are actually going to have to say okay to South Sudan or East Timor and for my key example, Somaliland.

Elizabeth Spiro Clark was born in New York City, New York in 1937. Before joining the Foreign Service, she practiced operatic singing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and London, United Kingdom. In 1980, she joined the Foreign Service and her postings included Iceland, South Africa, Norway. After her career in the Foreign Service, she joined the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and Bureau of Democracy from 1993 to 1998. Elizabeth Spiro Clark was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 12, 2011.

Topical Focus – Political Climate in Norway and Eastern Europe

Q: What was sort of the body politic of Norway like?

CLARK: Well it was very interesting. I had been in Iceland so I knew about the parliamentary system. I thought it was a good idea because you would have elections with five parties, let's say, and let's say nobody got the majority, you'd have to go into negotiations with a potential coalition partner and I thought that was pretty good because it moderated the views of the different parties. I saw that the three years I was there. Although at least at the beginning of my tour there Gro Harlem Brundtland and the Social Democrats, just completely dominated politics, partly because of her outsize personality but also partly because of their history and their strong roots in the labor movement. They had other powerful figures who've gone on to be major figures, including Stoltenberg's son, who's been prime minister and Thorbjørn Jagland, who I knew when I was there, who was their general secretary, so it was a dominant party. Interestingly, in Iceland it was the Conservative Party that was dominant. In Norway they had political parties that were very specialized and one of them I've been very surprised at the developments. You know the terrible shooting in Norway, the massacre of students, of Social Democratic Party.

Q: This is just three or four, about two months ago.

CLARK: Now, the assassin had been connected with a party on the right of the political spectrum and when I was there it was quite a small and considered rather eccentric party. As I believe I have mentioned they modeled themselves on American libertarianism but what's been interesting is that they were a very minor party in the '90s and they have grown, pushed by the anti-immigrant feeling that has clearly grown in Norway. At the time they were a very small, eccentric party but obviously has produced at least some people aligned with terrorism and-

Q: Well did you feel that the fact that by this time Norway had already achieved a lot of sort of oil independence and a lot of excess income at this point but this was changing Norway's stand in Europe and all, that it was trying to distance itself?

CLARK: I think so. I mean Norwegians had always had an inferiority complex vis-à-vis the Swedes but I think because of the oil wealth they had a decrease in the feelings of inferiority. Norwegians have prejudices, they're anti-Catholic. I was told anti-EU feeling was partly based on that: an aversion to going into the European Union with all of those "Southern Germans who are all Catholic." I mean they were very negative about Southern Europe.

Q: Well did- How about the Soviet Union? It was falling apart while you were there.

CLARK: It was interesting, the change from the Soviet Union to Russia because as an American diplomat all of a sudden I could invite over the Russian political counselor to a dinner party in my house and I took immediate advantage of this because it really was very interesting. One dinner party I would like to spell out a little bit more maybe when I get a transcript because it was just so interesting. The far left in Norway and even just regular Social Democrats thought, "oh, the poor East Germans getting crushed by the West Germans." My dinner party didn't have any of those, although I knew some. A newspaper editor, Jan Egeland, who's gone on to all kinds of major UN positions was there. Popo Molefe, who I'd known well in South Africa, the United Democratic Front leader who is now the president of Transvaal Province was visiting because they got a lot of money from Norway for the anti-apartheid movement. I'd known him quite well when I was there. The Russian political counselor was a dinner guest.

Molefe was asking the Norwegians how can we -- the South Africans -- become a good social democracy and he was asking the Russian about all the great things about communism. The Russian said we can't wait to become capitalists and don't ask me about communism at all, we never thought about that. Obviously the conversation was all over the place -- not really a normal dinner party, but fascinating. When Jan Egeland tried to pull out the line that Norwegians are superior, I did throw in the statement, "Jan, tell them about oil." One can afford to do a lot of good things if you are 4.5 million people with buckets of money. I thought this assembled group was quite an amazing moment in time.

Q: How were relations with Sweden?

CLARK: I had practically nothing to do with the other Scandinavians, except for a great interest in all of these Baltic and Nordic councils and committees. They coordinated

policy, particularly their foreign policy, very, very closely. And at the breakup of the Soviet Union I would report back to the State Department that Sweden, for example, is going to take Estonia and Norway is going to take Lithuania and move in and help. They were very sharply coordinating their policies and had a special network to communicate back and forth with each other.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Nadia Tongour
Department of State
Soviet Desk Officer
Eastern Europe
(1991-1993)

Nadia Tongour was born in Turkey, but raised in South Carolina. Tongour attended William and Mary University, along with Stanford University, before entering the foreign service in 1980. She worked at the State Department in many positions, including the Board of Examiners, Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Europe, and a Soviet Desk Officer. Nadia Tongour was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 15, 2007.

Topical Focus – Civil Society, Elections, and Governance in Post-Soviet States

Q: How about, while you were there did you find yourself dealing with the nongovernmental organizations? Because the former Soviet Union was awash with all these groups that were coming out to do good or do well or something.

TONGOUR: Some. I have to tell you that in recent years I have worked with NGOs so much more that by comparison that particular period did not seem to be as rife with them. In the beginning stages of state formation, much of the outcry, to the extent that outcries regarding who did what to whom existed, centered on what the Russians collectively were doing in a particular area. For example, there was considerable pressure from human rights groups regarding individuals arrested by Transnistrian authorities, persons languishing in jails, or complaints about mistreatment of civilians (both Georgians and Abkhaz) in Abkhazia, primarily by Russian-backed elements. At that juncture, the bulk of such criticism was not leveled at the "host" Georgian or Moldovan governments. .

Q: Well, were you involved in supporting our efforts in nation building?

TONGOUR: Yes, but we did not call it that then. That terminology seemed to emerge a few years down the pike. That was in fact what we were doing. We were seeking ways to aid civil society, promote elections, combat corruption -- all the things that we think of today when we speak of governance and nation building, and that we continue to do. However, at that point we were still at stage one, namely how to build a government or some sort of political entity that was not simply a throwback to the old Soviet system. Even more basic: how to stage elections in these regions, how to secure the elections and ensure non-interference by the Russians. Another focal point was how to foster a modus vivendi with a former giant in a now newly diminished status and help it move forward in a positive way and forestall its devoting too much of its energy on the "Near Abroad". A few years later, the orientation would shift, and we would focus more on providing "concrete assistance" -- giving grants, building schools (including business schools) and other practical support as well as opportunities for their people to come here for training. In some ways we felt as though we were helping to give birth -- delivering countries rather than individuals.

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Q: Well, you are an old Moldovan hand; did Moldova, was that part of your portfolio?

TONGOUR: It was. But in the case of Moldova, we focused on more traditional aid programs, including democracy promotion and educational projects. The key question for us was how best to build civil society. AID had a number of educationally oriented programs which unfortunately really didn't address the problem of how to build a democracy in a divided war-torn country. In truth, theirs were the more traditional assistance programs. We did visit Moldova and tried to carve out new niches for our assistance. But the country in the region that we attended to least, at least in a positive sense was Belarus, which was still too much of an old line state.

EASTERN SLAVONIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR PETER W. GALBRAITH
U. S. Ambassador
Croatia
(1993-1998)

Ambassador Galbraith was born in Massachusetts, the son of a renowned economist and ambassador. He was raised in the U.S. and abroad and educated at Harvard and Oxford Universities. He joined the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1978, where he served until 1993. There he became closely involved in Middle East matters, particularly those concerning Iran, Iraq and the Kurds. Conflict among nations of the former Yugoslavia later became a major issue in which Mr. Galbraith became closely involved and where he developed expertise. In 1993 he was named United States Ambassador to Croatia, where he served until 1998. In the course of his assignments, Ambassador Galbraith played a major role in resolving the conflicts among the Balkan nations. After this assignment, he was appointed to the United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor, where he served from 1999 to 2001. Ambassador Galbraith was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Topical Focus – Local Elections in Eastern Slavonia

Q: Now, was there as your focus, I mean there had to be a time I guess where you wanted to get Croatia or Zagreb from controlling the Croatians in Bosnia so that they were acting on their own. Were we trying to sever the ties?

GALBRAITH: I think in truth we were a little schizophrenic on that point. One the one hand we definitely wanted to sever those ties because the Bosnian Croats were citizens of Bosnia, not of Croatia or at least in our view they shouldn't be citizens of Croatia and they should play a role in the government of the Federation where they had an outsized role compared to their population. They were one quarter as numerous as the Muslims and yet they had a nearly equal power 178 sharing arrangement. Croatia gave these people Croatian citizenship. Tuđman allowed them to come in fact encouraged them to come and settle the Krajina region from which the Serbs had departed because he wanted to make it impossible for this to become a Serbian area again to settle it with Croats. Of course the result was that these people then began to acquire, the Bosnian Croats began to

acquire multiple houses. They had some in Herzegovina or central Bosnia, then they would get a house in Krajina that had belonged to a Serb and the husband might have one house, the wife might have another, the father would have one and each of his sons would have a house. Undoubtedly there was also significant corruption in all of this. There were many signs that Croatia did not respect Bosnia as a separate state. The Croatian banks operated in the Croat parts of Bosnia. The Croatian Kuna was used as the currency in the Croat controlled parts of Bosnia. In 1997 Tuđman ran for reelection and his slogan was, what was it, Our Country, Our President, and they had the Tuđman billboards all up in Bosnia. Our joke was right president, wrong country.

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Talbott, so they referred everybody that they'd investigated to the Justice Department which so far as I know never did anything on it. They released their report the week before the election announcing they'd made these referrals to the Justice Department. In fact at the press conference, Hyde was pressed on it as to whether he thought anything criminal had taken place and he couldn't bring himself to say that so even he didn't stand behind their letter of referral. And of course it had no impact on the election whatsoever. The irony was the next year Lake was nominated to head the CIA and this became the major issue against him. The Republicans who perhaps just before the election had wanted to portray me as the Oliver North of the Clinton administration all of a sudden a couple of months later decided that I was really the honest person and Tony Lake was the one who had lied because it suited their purposes. I think the people basically were trying to undo the results of the election by using the investigation process. This was really in my view the greatest abuse of it. Through 1996 it certainly caused me a lot of grief. I think a word about the Los Angeles Times gives an interesting insight into journalism and I must say a lack of professionalism in it.

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We made period trips to Eastern Slavonia to monitor the progress of the agreement. The critical test for the success of the agreement came in April of '97 which was the elections that were held in Eastern Slavonia, local elections. Jacques Klein very rightly made it a condition of the Serbs being able to vote in the elections, that they should take out Croatian citizenship. The number of people getting Croatian documents was very small in '96 and early '97 and then the Serb political leadership took the decision that they would contest the elections. So, they all took out Croatian citizenship and the population took out Croatian citizenship. Those elections produced I think of the 27 municipalities in Eastern Slavonia it was roughly that, 14 had Serb majority, 13 had Croat majorities, or maybe it was the other way around and Vukovar had a slight Croat majority because the

people who had been driven of course were able to vote there. In the end these municipalities had to work together and the process of election was the key to the process of integration. I had a number of public meetings in Eastern Slavonia explaining the agreement, advocating tolerance. I found myself often feeling like I was a preacher and citing the bible, citing Woodrow Wilson and the bible as I advocated tolerance. In the end that agreement was a success. I came back on the 15th of January ‘98 when the turnover took place. In other words when Croatia assumed full authority over the region and the fact is that Croatia did take over full control of the region and the Serbian population that was from the region almost all remained.

ECUADOR

N/A

EGYPT

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

FRANK PAVICH
USAID
Supervisory Special Projects Officer
Cairo, Egypt
(1993-1996)

Frank Pavich grew up in San Francisco, California, before attending the University of Southern California for his undergraduate degree. He served two years in the US Marine Corps, before eventually joining USAID in 1966. He has held positions across the world, including in Bulgaria, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Ghana. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.

Topical Focus – Improving Parliamentary Efficiency in Egypt

PAVICH: My title was Supervisory Special Projects Officer. I was in the office of institutional development support, which was the democracy office. They called it institutional development support because you could not say democracy in Egypt at that time.

Q: This was not a rural development program?

PAVICH: This was different. Back in Pakistan I realized that the old rural development was rapidly becoming a thing of the past and there were other things developing that were also interesting and have parallels to everything I had been doing up til then and democracy was one of them. It was new and AID was trying to establish itself in this field. They had begun to do some things in Pakistan which I tried to get involved in but the mission wasn't really pushing it too hard. However, it became clear to me that this was an area that had growth potential and required certain kinds of skills that I had many of. For example, working with local government, working with local groups, understanding the basics and principles of government from my Public Administration background. The only areas I didn't have experience in at that point was the political side, the development of political parties and things along that line. But, I thought that there was an opportunity in Egypt to do that, to become a democracy officer.

Q: Was this a big program?

PAVICH: Yes. Moneywise it was probably the biggest democracy program in the world. We had a number of activities that we were just starting. We had an activity that was to work with the Ministry of Justice to develop the justice system and improve the judicial process, to reduce the caseload burden and upgrade the skills of judges and advocates and make it work and user friendly. We had a lawyer, Ana Klenike, on our staff who was in charge of that.

I was responsible for two activities. One was with the Parliament and the other was Civil Society. We had a project that had been designed that needed to be tightened up, more focused. That was when I got there and worked with a young woman, Connie Peraskova, to develop a request for proposals, an RFP, for bids on this project. In order to do that we had to go back into the project and define more clearly what the mission wanted. That was one part of it.

The other part was negotiating with the Parliament, the Speaker of the House and the two Secretaries General. They have the Parliament and the Shura assembly which was a religious group that worked with the Parliament. I was to work with the Secretaries General and basically educate them about the USAID programs and procedures. They had never, never had any kind of bilateral program. This was high profile for the Egyptian politicians, they didn't want to have very many meetings with USAID and we couldn't use the term democracy. It was a very delicate process. In the beginning, and I think all throughout, it is still going on now, to tell them what AID does and assure them this wouldn't infringe in any way on their sovereignty, and to help them in whatever way we could to persuade the political powers that this was okay to do. There were lots of stops and starts, advances and retreats. The Egyptian press was taking pot shots at the project saying the Americans were coming in to run the Parliament, etc.

Q: Did you get something done?

PAVICH: We did eventually.

Q: What were you doing?

PAVICH: Eventually we got a project together to work with the staff of the Parliament, to upgrade their skills, to work with the Library of Parliament to develop the capacity of the library to provide the kinds of information decision makers needed. To introduce information technologies by establishing a network of computers so people in the Parliament could connect with the web and get information that way. We brought people in from the outside to discuss Parliamentary procedures, political processes and a number

of things like that. We had the U.S. Library of our Congress involved in a project. We had Syracuse University involved in the program in bringing in people and training them. We brought people to the United States and other places to see how Parliaments work and our Congress. In fact, I just talked to someone who works on the project just the other day and they had been doing well, but now they have another political problem so things have sort of stopped for a while.

Q: Political in the sense of sensitivity towards American organizations?

PAVICH: Too much American influence. People don't understand that we are not into politics but involved in the organizational development. But, how can you not be involved in politics?

Q: Hard to separate them.

PAVICH: Yes, in that case. We made some good relationships. I think everybody in the Parliament we worked with were converted. But, by now a lot of them have moved on and there is a new bunch in there. They are the ones who are asking the questions.

Q: You were working with the elected people rather than the staff?

PAVICH: We weren't working directly with the elected members, but they were working with the staff. It could be they have a new Speaker of the House, that could be the problem, but I'm not sure.

EL SALVADOR

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

TERRENCE GEORGE LEONHARDY
Department of State
Deputy Chief of Mission
San Salvador, El Salvador
(1968-1972)

Terrence George Leonhardy was born in North Dakota in 1914. After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of North Dakota, he received his master's degree from Louisiana State University. His career includes positions in Colombia, Denmark, Spain, Mexico, and El Salvador. Mr. Leonhardy was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in February 1996.

Topical Focus – Election Irregularities in El Salvador

Q: Well, tell me, other than having the Presidential visit, what were the main sort of issues in
Salvador during this '68 to '72 period?

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LEONHARDY: The political thing was... They had several elections when I was down there. They had an election for the legislature, the "Assemblia," and elections for mayors, and so forth. I went around to the polls with a political officer, an assistant, and so forth, and I thought it was pretty orderly, pretty well run. But anyway, they finally got to the point where the existing president finished his term. Then Duarte was running for president, as you may recall, against a colonel in the military or something, sort of hand-picked by his predecessor; his name was Molina. They asked me to stay on until the electoral process was finished and that was in the spring of '73, early '73, January, February.

Anyway, that election was... They tried to have a sort of U.S. way of presenting the vote over TV. We sat up and watched these returns coming in from the city and the province. It was well known that the city would vote for the Christian Democrats. It would come out with a pretty big majority, but the provinces and the smaller towns would probably be held by the government party. Well, the vote coming in—they counted up until midnight—showed that the PDC [Christian Democratic Party] had a big margin in the

city, and they were taking quite a bit in the country. So the next morning I went over with the political officer to the head of the electoral commission, who was known to be a crook. First thing I told him, I said, “You guys lost this election.” He said, “What?” I said, “Yes.” Well, they suddenly cut it off at midnight, I remember; when it started looking bad, they cut it off. He says, “Oh, no, no. We're going to win it.” I said, “Well.” He says, “We still got a lot of votes coming in from the provinces.” And I said, “Well, you're not going to be able to make up for the huge margins that the PDC got in the city.” He says, “Oh, yes,” he started fishing around, “Yes, we're going to make it up.” Well, they were stealing votes, of course. But that's the only time I ever saw any irregularities.

Well, after the election, of course, there was a rebellion of sorts and even the military were involved, some of them. But it didn't catch and Duarte was put in jail. He was enlisted, sort of, when the thing looked like it was going to go, the rebellion leaders got him in on it. But he wasn't the leader of it. So I left Salvador about that time, but anyway, he later became, as you know, became President of Salvador but he was a firm anticommunist and that's why the rebel element down there later didn't like him at all, of course, they considered him a traitor.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR ALAN H. FLANIGAN
U. S. Ambassador
El Salvador
San Salvador, El Salvador
(1993-1996)

Ambassador Alan Flanigan was born in Indiana in 1938. He graduated from Tufts University in 1960 and served in the U.S. Navy from 1960 to 1966 as a lieutenant. After entering the Foreign Service in 1966, his assignments abroad have included Lima, Izmir, Ankara and Lisbon, with an ambassadorship to El Salvador. Ambassador Flanigan was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 1997. Democracy and Election Subject Reader

Topical Focus – U. S. Assistance for the Election in El Salvador

Q: Now, in terms of the responsibility for the mechanics of the election, I suppose there was an electoral commission; the UN had a role. Did we play a particular role?

FLANIGAN: We played a very active role. We tried to exercise our role largely through the United Nations. There was an electoral commission, yes. What we did was work

through the United Nations ninety percent of the time with our political pressure and our money. We put several million dollars into that election trying to see that people got registered, that it was free, fair, and inclusive. Not easy, because although it is a small country, the way their electoral law was written and the way their elections took place, unfortunately there were a lot of opportunities not for fraud so much but for inefficiencies and difficulties for people to participate. For example, in the city of San Salvador, the polls were organized in alphabetical fashion so individuals would have to go all the way across town to vote. So it was very awkward. We did what we could to make sure that the registration system functioned. I recall right after I arrived, one of the first things I did was fly out to one of the northeastern provinces and actually participate in a registration drive, actually giving a voting registration card to a gentleman. A gentleman who had lived in the United States for 10 years, I believe, and worked a double shift at Blackie's House of Beef for nearly all that time. He said he sent back a lot of money as Salvadorans do traditionally, but he had saved enough money to buy a bus and was in business for himself—happily transporting people to register to vote. It was always very heartening to see this kind of thing happen and sort of amazing, too.

Q: You mentioned before that several elections were actually taking place at various levels from municipality on up. Did these all take place on the same day?

FLANIGAN: Yes they did. They all took place on the same day, the third Sunday of March, and for the municipalities and the legislature, they were definitive. The presidential election required the winning candidate to get an absolute majority of votes cast. The leading candidate, Calderon Sol, got only 49 percent of the vote, so there was a runoff election the following month.

Let me just say a few things about the runoff. You asked about who was responsible for the electoral process. The electoral commission had immediate responsibility. The peace accords provided that the United Nations would have oversight responsibility. We sort of fit in only as friends. Nevertheless, I think it is fair to say that we played a key role in the process. Early in the year, I think it may have been as early as December when the campaign was just beginning, the political counselor at the embassy, Jim Carragher, proposed to me a very useful device, and that was that we regularly have luncheons with the three leading presidential candidates. So I invited them to the residence—the three together—and the political counselor and the deputy chief of mission would sit down on the terrace of the residence and have lunch and discuss how things were going. We had maybe four or five of these during the campaign and a couple between the first round and the runoff.

Q: Which was only a week, right?

FLANIGAN: It was a month. These lunches were fascinating because these men were political enemies, but also while they were not exactly friends, they were acquaintances, had been for years. They all knew each other, but they didn't have a venue where they could talk to each other or complain about one another or say, what you are saying is just not fair, or what you are doing in this particular instance is wrong. You know, they could say those things publicly or make the accusation or complain, but they couldn't in a neutral territory, confront the other. It was very useful. There were times, obviously the person in the catbird seat was the leader of the ARENA Party. He was the mayor of San Salvador; he had more money than anybody else; he was representing the government. He was generally identified as the one who was sort of running things, and was also the front runner. But, when confronted with complaints in the context of these luncheon meetings, he was always without exception, responsive. "Yes, we can work that out," he would say. Whether these were things he had been involved in or not it was difficult to know, but generally speaking these were complaints about functionaries or systems that were in place that just simply made things difficult for the other parties. I recall for example, there were discussions about things that were said publicly about the other candidate, or themes that one party or the other was using in the campaign, or the location of ballot boxes, little things. But, little things that had the potential for discrediting the whole process. Everybody worked together. It was inspiring to see these three men working together make sure this process really worked even though only one could win.

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I remember when the second round [the runoff] occurred. I remember that within a few days following the first round, there was a move, not initiated by Caldron Sol, to forgo a second round. The argument was that it would cost a lot of money and effort. There was no question who was going to win. After all, Calderon Sol got 49 percent in the first round. There were people in the FMLN [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front] that were saying the same thing. I quickly made it clear that I did not think that was the right thing to do. I pointed out that what was needed more than efficiency was a process that had credibility. Skipping the second round would undermine the credibility of the process. I wasn't alone in that view, but certainly once I had said it, we were able to kill that little boomlet. Then when the election actually occurred, the day of the election, participation was about the same level, and Calderon Sol won about 67 percent; Ruben Zamora won about 33 percent, which wasn't bad for either side. They both came up rather handsomely, and they were both pleased. There was, however, some unhappiness within the FMLN, some elements of it. There was some question about whether or not there would be full acceptance of the process now—the results. I recall some rather

heated and emotional comments made on television in the evening by a couple of the FMLN leaders suggesting that they weren't going to accept the results. They asserted that the elections had all been a sham and the results were tainted. There were some people on our own side who were willing to accept that because as I mentioned earlier—I'm not sure it is on here—but Nancy Pelosi in the first round said that it had all been very fair but unfortunately the wrong side had won. So, a lot of people felt that it wasn't really a good election because the FMLN hadn't won.

I had a reception that evening for the observers that had come down for the second round, a much smaller group, but still consequential. I remember distinctly that there was some tension building as a result of these televised statements. At about that time, I received a telephone call from Ruben Zamora, which was very helpful. He told me that he had just called Calderon Sol and conceded. He said he was not happy at losing, but it had been a fair process, and he had lost fairly. His concession effectively completed the process and ended all consideration by his supporters of challenging the outcome. So, the next morning I remember Brian Atwood and I (Atwood observed the second round as well) called on both Ruben Zamora and Calderon Sol and congratulated them.

Q: Was there talk of boycotting participating in the legislative body?

FLANIGAN: Not serious talk. I think there was maybe some; it could have gotten out of hand that night had Ruben Zamora not taken the initiative to say look, "I would have preferred to have won, but I didn't. This was a fair and free process under the circumstances and I concede, and I wish Calderon Sol the very best."

Q: And then to call you and you could convey this to some of the observers.

FLANIGAN: Exactly. No, it was very useful, and I think once again it was part of the product of those luncheons being held that established relationships of trust and confidence, which worked.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

THOMAS REEVE PICKERING
U.S. Ambassador
El Salvador
(1983-1985)

Ambassador Pickering was born in Orange, New Jersey on November 5, 1931. Pickering attended Bowdoin College, and then received a master's degree from the Fletcher School

of Law and Diplomacy. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship, and attended the University of Melbourne to receive his second master's degree. Pickering was the ambassador to El Salvador, Israel, United Nations, India, and Russia. Ambassador Thomas Reeve Pickering was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 18, 2003.

Topical Focus – Political Transition and Elections in El Salvador

PICKERING: Deane Hinton. Deane did a superb job and left me in a very strong position. (He went on the Pakistan where he did the same.) What had happened in El Salvador interestingly enough, because you can't look at beginning a tour without looking at some of the history, was the history in the period up until 1979, probably since the end of the nineteenth century. The country was essentially controlled through a set of activities that historians talk about as involving the control of the fourteen families who were in effect the rulers and shakers in El Salvador. They occupied dominate economic positions -- coffee planters, bankers, lawyers, entrepreneurs, industrialists and others who were really at the top of the heap. Their role was basically to make sure the country ran politically in a way favorable to their interests. The used the military -- made a colonel the president. While nominally always elected by the system -- with a state -run political party -- but always chosen by the Oligarchs. The system interestingly enough had as early as 1933 a campesino/peasant revolt in the countryside by people who were very under communist influence It was led by a man by the name of Farabundo Marti who then later lent his name to the armed liberation movement of the five organizations.

In '79 an event happened which was important. The military in El Salvador interestingly enough came out of the national military academy. They came in the main from the lower middle class. They were all young men on their way up and this was a way to fame and fortune in El Salvador for lower middle class young men. They competed to enter the academy and it was an extremely rigorous training institution. The academy had been very heavily influenced by the Chileans and the Chilean army, it was tough, it and rigid. It was highly competitive and produced a group of military officers who were very close each in their class year, called "tanda" in Spanish. The tanda groups of military officers were in the main a team, close knit and if they did well and handled their relationships with the Oligarchs well, some of them could even get to be president. A few among the military had been influenced by liberals who came from parties like the Christian Democrats. Others who had gotten into the outside world, may have even had some education in the United States. There was a coup by a military junta in 1979, that dissolved the old government and tried to set things on a different more open and liberal course. In the meantime the left had grown even more radicalized and so between '79 and '82 when there was an election, you had three or four things happen. You had a right backlash, you had the movement of left liberation theology, the growth in labor unions

and the campesino (agricultural small holder) unions and a movement into the hills in the north to take up arms. You also had relationships with Nicaragua (and Cuba) and the world communist movement helping those taking up arms to do this. You had this reforming movement in the military which actually had control of the government for a while but it was loose and not very effective in creating real reform.

In ’82 as I remember we proposed and they agreed to have elections for a constituent assembly which would both write a new constitution and act as a national assembly until something else could be elected. This they did. People were very concerned that the radical right would emerge with the presidency. The junta and the new assembly had trouble agreeing on a candidate. Deane in effect got a fairly distinguished Salvadorian banker acceptable to most factions appointed by the Constituent Assembly as the President in the interim, Alvaro Magana. He was a very decent guy but a man without the necessary political power. He had to be careful in what he did and where he tried to take the country. So I started to work with Magana, with other people when I came, but it was not a situation where you would say that they had an enormously powerful government and where they had unity of views. They had the hard right wing represented by a party called “Arena”. You had an’ officialista party’ which was gradually losing its strength but which prior to the Junta in ’79 had been used as the method of electing the colonels as presidents. There were the Christian Democrats who were in the left and center opposition. The rest of the left was underground. These three groups played the major role in political life in El Salvador and continued to contest elections.

Before I got there, the U.S. had agreed that there would be presidential elections to follow the elections of the constituent assembly. I can recall fascinating meetings in George Shultz’s office with a large number of people present, in his big outer office, and question being posed by some of the folks present. They were not wrongly worried that basically an election in the near future, maybe January or February, March of 1984, would produce a result with which we really couldn’t live. They saw a bad result would be a win by the hard right or some fractionalization of the country leading to even greater civil war. George Shultz looked everybody in the eye and said, “Look, we are trying to establish democracy in El Salvador. I’m not prepared to consider our role should be postpone or negate elections.” He was quite firm on it. It was a tremendously interesting insight into the secretary because when he got his back up he could be really tough. He was prepared to take the risk.

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Q: What about the Senator’s staff, I mean they Senator Helms, I mean this was both Helms and his staff were major players in all this?

PICKERING: They were significant players. They visited frequently. They did not ask not ask to visit me, but they all came frequently down to Salvador. They were folks who were extremely sympathetic with our president's deep concern about the left and the guerilla groups. They played on that with some of the folks in the NSC and the White House. They were concerned about this. They had adopted the notion that in order to defeat the guerrillas, we had to build up a very strong ideological right-wing element either in the military or outside. D'Aubuisson was the centerpiece of that effort. I think that they had to know about the violent actions of the right-wing organizations -- we certainly tried to impress upon them that these people were out of control and were acting in ways that were unacceptable. They preferred to ignore those uncomfortable facts. Their counter argument was that guerrillas were equally bad and therefore you had to fight fire with fire. So we had in a sense in that group a very strong sense of advocates for, if not devotees to, the fact that D'Aubuisson was the right man to be running El Salvador. In their view, he would be closest to the president's policies and he would do it right. It was his charisma and organizational skills and his fairly simple approach to this problem, a zero-sum game, that would provide the answer and that we were wrong in paying attention to the other people and ideas.

It became apparent as the process unrolled, and we talked frequently with many of the parties and many of the players, that the election would be close. The campesino unions, the American Labor Movement, which played a big role, with Duarte and his people, saw that it would a close fight. D'Aubuisson and Arena were well funded by the business community. The election commission, which had some difficult decisions to make, was made up of representatives of each of the parties. We had no idea whether they would play fair, but attempted in our contacts with them to convince them to do so and to make sure they knew we would back them if they did.

One of the issues that came up very early was the question whether D'Aubuisson and his group were going to in a sense out-finance by many, many times the Christian Democratic center-left -- whether the election could be bought in that fashion -- whether the Christian Democrats under those terms would be able to compete as a result of financial weakness. We had very quiet, very limited conversations inside the USG. I made a recommendation that if we wanted to be sure to have a level playing field, we had to play a role in some financing of Duarte. That we did in a limited way; obviously everything leaks. It leaked to Helms even before the election was over. We weaved and bobbed for a while on the subject. After the election was over, this all came out. As I remember it was all in the press so I don't think I am telling anybody any secrets here. It was a reasonably proportionate amount of money we thought. It came through the labor movement support and via the campesino union. I think it played a role in Duarte's

success but I don't think it was the critical role. Our feeling was that people of Salvador had to have a choice and they had to have that choice on the basis of a level playing field rather than on a skewed or biased basis.

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Q: Did you find as you were trying to carry out a policy, did you find various groups in the United States from the left and the right, Senator Helms, the Catholics, the Marymount people or something under cutting you all the time? Or is this part of the…?

PICKERING: I think that people in El Salvador understood that I represented the government, that I spoke for the president, that what we were going to deliver we had to get from the Congress and that depended heavily on the president. We were determined to do it and we had a rather good record of doing it. The U.S. military were working closely with this. We stayed in touch with organizations which sought their own objectives and where they made sense and fit our policy -- human rights and clearing up the cases of murdered Americans -- we strongly supported them in Salvador. Ken Blakely also made another outstanding suggestion very early on in the time. He suggested that we have a monthly meeting that would get the U.S. general up from Panama and his immediate staff dealing with the country. They would come to a meeting with the senior Salvadoran officers. The morning would be open to the Salvadorans to complain, ask questions and seek information on what we were doing. The afternoons would be our turn. We would do it in Spanish since more of us spoke Spanish than they did English.

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Q: How did the election go? Did they have two elections, one for Duarte and one for the other fellow?

PICKERING: I think that Duarte had a run off. Elections were difficult. They had a national electoral commission composed of the parties led by someone from one of the parties which had little prospect of winning the election. We spent a lot of time with them. We put a lot of effort into the elections because we thought they would be extremely important and I think indeed they were. One of the problems was getting registration. I thought they did a reasonably good job with that. Another was basically conducting free and fair elections and we observed that. As I said, the first time there was an election in my time there, we had 1,300 foreign observers so it was extremely interesting to the rest of the world. They used a solution of indelible ink that dyed people's skin blue or purple for a while so they couldn't vote again.

Q: Infra red, you can take a look at it.

PICKERING: Or this was just potassium permanganate or India ink or something that stayed on and which you couldn't wash off. I think that we recognized there would be a little hanky panky but there was not a lot of fraud. The ballots all had to be counted at each polling place and they were all subject to full observation by the watchers from each party and then each party got a copy of the tally. Each party could have an observer at each polling place and each observer could have a tally of the votes at each polling place. They couldn't easily change the totals on the way out to the central counting place or at the central tallying. I think generally speaking they were good. The exit polling was very strong. That was also closely aligned with the outcome so we had reasonable confidence that things were run pretty well. In the areas where there was heavy fighting what they generally did was to bring into the main town the polling places from small towns around the capital of the province, close the main street, set them all up on the main street. It was like a national holiday and everybody could come in and vote.

ESTONIA

N/A

GEORGIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DENNY ROBERTSON
USAID
Mission Director
Caucasus
Tbilisi, Georgia
(2003-2006)

Denny Robertson was born in Detroit in 1955. He was educated at University of Michigan and Michigan State and volunteered with the Peace Corps. He joined USAID in 1983. He served abroad in Pretoria, Mongolia, Bangkok, Bucharest, and Tbilisi before retiring in 2007. Robertson was interviewed by Mark Tauber in July 2018.

Topical Focus – Georgian Election and Election Fraud

Q: Right, yeah. So you get to Tbilisi in 2003. It's a pretty attractive city, even though it didn't work because it is on that river, and there are hills and so on. But you're there to help Georgia. Wow, what are you going to do to make things better in Georgia, given the multiple problems?

ROBERTSON: Of course, by that time, the Armenia mission had grown due to the politics. The Armenian diaspora drove that car where they wanted that car to go, so they had a sizable USAID Mission that was pretty independent by the time I got there. But I was responsible for the Azerbaijan program and the Georgia program. Frankly, there was more traction in Azerbaijan at that time. There were resources in Azerbaijan. We were probably doing more in Azerbaijan at that time than we were in Georgia, just due to the lack of political will. I was there literally at the very tail end of the Shevardnadze period. During that short couple of months, I went to one meeting with Shevardnadze and the ambassador, so I kind of got to see this global icon. One could sense that he was tired and frustrated. Then the Rose Revolution happened in November, and all hell broke loose. The beginning of the Mikheil Saakashvili and Zurab Zhvania period of government.

Q: Right. I'm very curious, what sort of areas did you work with Georgia on that you could accomplish things?

ROBERTSON: You're talking about post-Rose Revolution?

Q: Yeah.

ROBERTSON: Because prior to the Rose Revolution, most of our assistance was only modestly effective at best. Post-Rose Revolution, the Georgian government reconvened itself with 25-year-old ministers who had been to university in the United States, were fluent English speakers, and so this thin, thin, thin superfice of the government was made of people everybody could talk to. They were exposed to many of the concepts of capitalism and democracy. It was a fascinating period. And Misha was a force of nature.

Before I get to that, I think it's important to say that one of the things that happened in those few months that I was there before the Rose Revolution was, I was an election monitor at the last failed election, which led to the Rose Revolution. I was in an election monitoring group in Adjara, which was the region that was tightly controlled by a little tinpot dictator. We were doing what election monitors do. We were watching. There was nothing else but just watching. Naïve as I was, I just assumed that it was going to be kind of a waste of time, but I witnessed the most egregious and transparent election fraud that I've ever seen in my entire life. We went to a polling station for the vote count. Everybody was sort of doing the needful. They were opening the ballot box, and dumping the ballot box on the table. They were counting the ballots, and everyone was following the protocols. At a certain point one young (and skinny) gentleman walked out—presumably one of the vote counters—to go to the bathroom or whatever. It was winter. He came back in his black leather jacket, and he had grown in size two or three times. It was this bulging black leather jacket bursting at the seams. He sat down at the table, and then the lights went out for about a minute. The lights came back on, and suddenly there is a large pile of 'new' ballots strewn around the table - and he is skinny again. Of course, we couldn't do anything more than observe. We remarked, "You've got to be kidding!" They said, "What do you mean?" It was such a blatant example of the type of election corruption seen with my own eyes. So they counted and of course Shevardnadze won. It was no surprise, I guess, that people were fed up.

Working under the new government, it was fast. It was action packed. Obviously, Saakashvili had lived and studied in the United States. He knew the United States very well. The prime minister, Zurab Zhvania, was the leader of the civil society movement in Georgia—incredible credentials, wonderful human being and a civil society leader. They did their best to staff ministries with people who understood reforms. We worked with them closely and did our best to support their efforts rather than imposing on them. They basically came to us, the State Department and USAID, once they had kind of gotten their sea legs and said, "You know, we have nothing. The coffers are bare. There is no money. We have nothing." And I think it was probably largely true. The U.S. cobbled together money where we could and came up with a package to kind of get people

started. The best part of the experience to me was, we knew what needed to be done, but they knew what needed to be done, and they were the ones that set the priorities. They knew that energy was crucially important to attracting foreign investment, so we finally got serious about energy sector reform. They understood the importance of the banking system. It was a pleasure in that sense to be able to work with them. Not that there weren't lots of problems, but given what we had experienced in Romania trying to deal with the corruption of the ministry, it was a pleasure to at least give it a fair shake. Saakashvili, to his credit, did a lot. And the United States, we were partner number one. Misha often told people that he had George Bush on his mobile phone speed dial.

During that time, the prime minister mysteriously died. I was somewhat close to the prime minister and shocked as was the entire country. Although married he was known pretty widely to be gay and the death had some sensitive rumors surrounding it which made it more difficult to address in the press. Yeah. Georgians are not without their intrigue by a long shot, in their clan mentality, in addition to just politics. Operating in such a small context. It's a very small country, so you could almost know everybody. I think as I mentioned, when I arrived, we were more really focusing on Azerbaijan because we got more traction there. Well, once the Rose Revolution took place, Azerbaijan became the stepchild, and the ambassador in Azerbaijan was resentful of Georgia getting all the attention. We still ran a pretty robust program there, but it was so obvious that you were dealing with a Georgian government that was doing its best to work honorably as partners, and an Azeri government that was just corrupt beyond anything you could imagine. It was very difficult to make even small dents in the reform agenda in Azerbaijan, where we actually made big progress in Georgia.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR RICHARD M. MILES
Department of State
Tbilisi, Georgia
(2002-2005)

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: February 2, 2007
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Richard M. Miles was born in 1937 in Little Rock, Arkansas. He received his graduate degree from Indiana University. He entered the foreign service in 1967 and was posted to Norway, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union (at both the consulates in Leningrad and Moscow),

Azerbaijan, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Georgia. He retired in 2005 and was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Topical Focus – Election, Corruption, Shevardnadze Government, and U.S. Aid to Georgia

Q: You mentioned the fraudulent election of 2003. How did we see that at the time and what happened?

MILES: That is what brought the Shevardnadze government down, basically. This was the regularly scheduled parliamentary election. I forget the exact term of the parliament, four or five years, and it was time for the parliament to be re-elected. And it's a real parliament; it's not a rubber stamp in Georgia. Well, we felt as the Georgian felt, that the November 2003 parliament election was a rehearsal for the presidential elections in April 2005 and so we wanted to do everything we could to get the Georgian authorities to run an open and honest and decent election. It didn't have to be perfect but it should be something like our own elections, except for Florida I guess, and we really went at it hammer and tongs. We spent a lot of U.S. taxpayer money on this process—I'll give some examples. We set up an election advisory committee of all the ambassadors who were interested in this issue and we included the Russian and the Chinese ambassadors if they wanted to come. The Russian ambassador would come from time to time, never did anything, but he'd attend from time to time. I never saw the Chinese ambassador but he was invited. You know, we wanted to make this a—this wasn't an American thing, in other words. We involved the EC, we involved the UNDP, UN Development Program people there, we had the European Commission representative, we got the British and the others to provide a fair amount of money; we ourselves put up a lot of money through USAID mostly in the form of grants to various non-governmental organizations.

We organized a massive campaign to rectify the voter registration list. In Georgia this had all been done on pretty much a precinct by precinct basis across the whole country, over a million and a half voters. Again, the total population of Georgia is four and a half million: total voters about 1.5 million, something like that, a little bit more maybe. And the voter lists were all organized on a precinct basis, often on the basis of a handwritten list. So you can imagine there were a lot of dead people on there and, maybe even more important, there were a lot of people who were not on there who should have been. That list was just a bloody mess and so through USAID we rented a huge, vacant building, like a gymnasium; we filled it up with tables and chairs, computers, of course, and then we hired a small army of young people who would sit and type these lists precinct by precinct into the computer in a way in which you could cross-check names. So you could eliminate duplicate names, not always on the computer but you would see where the

duplicate names were and then a human being would go and sort it out with the appropriate local election commission. And these corrected lists were then posted on the internet and were available in written form, available in the election commissions all around the country so that individuals could go and see whether their name was on the list or not or could say, wait a minute, you listed seven people with the same name and there is only one such person living in our village so six names are fraudulent. Or this person is long since dead, his name should be removed. Whatever. So the result was a pretty useable list. That cost over $1 million; I think $1.8 million or something to do all that. Now, I have to confess that, in the end, these lists were often ignored by the various election commissions—they preferred "their" lists which were easy to manipulate. But where you had a more progressive set of local election officials or a certain balance in the local electorate, then the lists were a wonderful asset.

We provided training, which we do in a lot of countries, but we did a lot of it in Georgia. It didn't matter which political party, the government party, the opposition parties, the radical parties—we would provide training for them, for election workers, even for people working in the political campaign. How do you run a political campaign? How do you organize a political rally? And so on. How do you do media? We organized working visits to the United States but we also had U.S. experts coming to Georgia.

We had a leading American expert on exit polls come to Georgia and help set up a professional exit polling system for Georgia so everyone would have a rough count of how the election was looking as the day went on. This proved quite valuable when I had my conversations with Shevardnadze after election day.

Oh my, it just went on and on, anything we could think of that would make this a good election, we would do it. I went around and of course talked to the government people a lot but I also went around and talked to the opposition leaders and even to some of the more corrupt regional members of the government to say, you know, this is very important, we are putting a lot of stock in this, you could lose your reputation in this election or you could make your reputation, depending on how you run the election in your little part of Georgia, whatever. And they would say, yes, we understand, we'll do our best. Now, no one is going to say to the American Ambassador, "No, we're not going to run an honest election. We're going to employ every dirty trick in the world to steal this election. Well, I'm not naïve. I was cutting my teeth on shady election antics back in South Carolina decades ago. But I figured, nothing ventured, nothing gained. I'm going to make sure these fellows know that we'll be watching on Election Day and that, maybe there will be a reckoning depending on how things work out.

Meanwhile, the ambassadorial election committee had been meeting once a week for almost a year and there were subcommittees, by the way, which would meet on more technical issues. For example, there would be a subcommittee of the different countries' representatives who would meet to work on problems of the voter registration list. Another group would work on the issue of training. But the icing on all this huge cake of preparation for the election came because of an impasse in the selection of the members of the Central Election Commission, which was to oversee the whole election process. The CEC had to name members of the regional election commissions and had to certify the results of the election. There was an impasse caused by the inability of the government and the major opposition parties in the parliament to agree on the composition of the Central Election Commission. Certain follow-on steps couldn't be taken until the Commission was formed and we were approaching a point at which the election itself might have to be postponed. That would not have been good. And so in talking to Washington about this we agreed that we needed a hired gun to come out here and bring some sense to this because time was running out and so, very wisely, Washington decided that they would ask Jim Baker to do it. Baker had been the U.S. Secretary of State during the time when Shevardnadze was the Foreign Minister and they had worked very closely together. They knew each other well, they respected each other, they were on a first name basis. Shevardnadze had been to Baker's ranch and Baker had been to Georgia, so on and so on. He was an excellent, even a perfect choice.

Well, he came out with a very small entourage. He met twice with Shevardnadze and twice with the opposition. Baker has got a very good mind and he himself had figured out a compromise on the trip coming over which would get them over the obstacles they themselves had created. Final resolution was reached at an 8 o'clock in the morning meeting on a Sunday which is something that Georgians don't do; they aren't early morning people and damn sure on a Sunday they're not morning people. But anyhow Baker got the opposition members and the government to agree to this compromise. Now when Baker had talked to Shevardnadze he emphasized the importance of having an honest election. Shevardnadze said, and I'll never forget his words—I was sitting right there with Baker and Shevardnadze—and Shevardnadze said, "Well, Jim, in sum, the quality of our relationship with the United States will depend on the quality of these elections?" And Baker said, "Yes, Eduard, that's it, exactly." And that in fact did sum it up.

And off Baker went, having accomplished quite a lot, and we continued our work. Then Election Day came. And actually the first returns on election morning indicated that things were going smoothly but then it got worse during the day and it was clear that the election wasn't going well

Q: Was this anti-Shevardnadze?

MILES: Yes; well, partly. The exit polls showed that the opposition parties were winning the majority of the seats in the parliament, not one opposition party but two or three opposition parties, which all together would have developed a majority in the parliament, and Shevardnadze's government party was coming in third or fourth and so they would have been relegated to a minority position in the parliament which they controlled up to that point.

Well, the situation got worse during the day and meanwhile there were 600 foreign observers there in a country of four and a half million people; that's a lot of observers. And they issued a scathing report. My own people reported some of the weird things which they had seen. I went out and looked at a few polling places myself; it was just a debacle. I don't know what Shevardnadze was thinking but I was told by one of his own people later, I'd rather not say who, but he was well placed, that Shevardnadze thought this fuss over the election would blow over and that he would be able to get away with this. Well, he couldn't. It was too obvious, too massive, too well documented by the foreign observers and the Georgian observers, too much at odds with the rather scientific exit polling which had been done, and he ran up against a very determined and dedicated and intelligent opposition in the form of Saakashvili, the current President, but also backed up by Nino Burjanadze, the Speaker of the Parliament then and Speaker of the Parliament now, and by Zurab Zhvania, who later became Prime Minister, who had been in the government before and had fallen out with Shevardnadze. And the three of them called for a rally of their supporters down in the main city square of Tbilisi. A lot of people turned out, and to make a long story short they stayed for a month down there during very bad weather; this was already November. Tbilisi has relatively mild winters but it does snow and blow and it can get pretty damn cold and unpleasant. And the people stayed through all that. The organizers were very good at changing the venue slightly, bringing in entertainment, declaring, "Okay, we're going to take a day off. Everybody go home and have a shower and a hot bath if you can and drink some tea and come back the next day and we'll do this again" and so on. And Shevardnadze just wasn't willing to compromise. I know I did and others, I'm sure, suggested various things he could do to recount—

Q: You'd seen him afterwards?

MILES: Yes, sure, immediately.

You could have a recount, you could have a rerun of the whole election, declare the whole thing null and void, rerun the election; you could have a recount in the more corrupt provinces where it was quite clear that the numbers were totally skewed in the

wrong way. You could just throw out the results from the provinces where the results were egregiously fraudulent. You could declare—you could rerun the election in just those provinces, you could declare the election in those provinces null and void and just rerun them. However, it quickly became clear that the opposition leaders and the demonstrators on the street were more interested in forcing Shevardnadze's resignation than in correcting the results of the parliamentary election. Now this was not something which Saakashvili or anyone else had ever talked to us about. Saakashvili, in contrast to the other leaders of the opposition, had immediately called for Shevardnadze's resignation. Now, this was a parliamentary election and, logically, the Georgians really should have focused on correcting the parliamentary election and worried about the presidency later, because after all the presidential election was set for April 2005—only a year and a half away. But Saakashvili saw the moment and in an astute, if demagogic, political move, began immediately to call for Shevardnadze's resignation. It's interesting to note that the other opposition leaders didn't themselves echo this demand. In fact, for them, the whole exercise became something of a tar baby. Neither Burjanadze nor Zhvania had planned to appear continuously at the demonstrations downtown. They wouldn't discourage their followers from attending the demonstrations but they, themselves, would take a step back from them by not appearing at every opportunity. But they simply couldn't break away—the demonstrations were simply too big and too enduring—so they began to reappear more frequently than they had planned.

I should mention for the historical record that several of the major opposition parties stayed away from the demonstrations: the Labor Party, the New Rights Party and the Industrialists Party all boycotted the demonstrations.

Well, people were already fed up with the Shevardnadze administration. They were unhappy over the poor collection of revenues, the abysmal state of the infrastructure, the failure to pay salaries and pensions and the increase in crime and corruption, and they responded to Saakashvili's repeated demand for Shevardnadze's resignation and so there began to be increasing pressure on Shevardnadze, not just to rectify the election but to resign. And we ambassadors talked to him about various possibilities, but he was simply unwilling to admit that the election had been flawed, let alone to talk about steps to make it right. I really believe that a compromise could have been found rather easily but Shevardnadze's intransigence only fed the anger of the mob.

Well, all during this considerable Sturm und Drang, violence was avoided and if I did one thing during that post-election period, it was to try my best to keep both the government people, especially those who had authority over men with guns, and the opposition leaders committed to non-violent measures and counter-measures. And I spoke to everybody from the President on down; I spoke to the ministers of internal affairs and of

defense, to the leaders of the intelligence organizations and to the various SWAT team types; the head of the internal troops, the President's protective detail, whatever. I spent hours talking to them about what was going on and an almost equal number of hours talking to the leaders of the demonstrations about the importance of keeping down hooliganism. I would say, "You don't need a lot of broken windows; you don't want police cars overturned and burned and that kind of thing. This wouldn't look good on television"—and, by then, all the international print and TV media was represented in Tbilisi. And, in the end it was quite non-violent, quite bloodless.

Q: Is this the so-called Rose Revolution?

MILES: Yes, this was the Rose Revolution. It was a major political development and all achieved bloodlessly.

Q: Why roses?

MILES: It was a kind of a gimmick, actually the idea of Mark Mullen, of the National Democratic Institute. I expect he was as surprised as anyone to see the way in which this became the symbol of the democratic movement in Georgia. But it was designed to demonstrate the non-violent nature of the opposition. Amazing, the over-sized role such gestures can assume. In the last days just before Shevardnadze resigned, the opposition leaders called on their supporters to march on the parliament building. Shevardnadze had decided to open the parliament based on the fraudulent returns. Predictably, the opposition declared this an illegitimate parliament, refused to attend the session and had then marched on the parliament in a demonstrative way, carrying roses as a symbol of non-violence—you know, "We're not carrying guns, we're not carrying clubs, we are carrying roses." There were rings of uniformed police and internal troops around the parliament building and with corresponding levels of weaponry. So you first would have policemen with linked arms and then you'd have policemen with shields, plastic shields, and then you'd have policemen with clubs and batons and then you'd have guys with guns. And as the opposition leaders approached the parliament, and Shevardnadze was already in there speaking, the ranks of the uniformed policemen opened like Moses parting the Red Sea and the demonstrators poured into the parliament building waving their red roses and declaring that this is an illegal parliament and people should disperse and go home. And Shevardnadze was—

Q: This is tape 11, side one, with Dick Miles. Yes

MILES: Shevardnadze was hustled out by his security guards, Saakashvili took the podium, the rostrum, and ceremoniously drank the tea out of Shevardnadze's glass that

had been left sitting there on the rostrum and declared that the people have taken power, or whatever, and then everybody went home. They actually stayed around the building for a while but basically they went home.

Then began a peculiar round of "non-talk" between Burjanadze and Zhvania and Shevardnadze about what to do now. Saakashvili had refused to meet with Shevardnadze anymore because he felt Shevardnadze was living in some kind of political Never Never Land and wasn't being realistic and, in turn, Shevardnadze refused to meet with Saakashvili because he felt he wasn't being respectful enough and was rude and impertinent. And they both were right, of course, but still life has to go on.

I had been meeting with Avtandil Jorbenadze, the State Minister, something like a Prime Minister, and I remember the last time we met. He was in one of the rooms of the President's Office Building in the Presidential Compound. Due to the demonstrations, the President and his people could no longer use the Presidential Offices in downtown Tbilisi. Shevardnadze was not available, and Jorbenadze asked me what was going on in the talks between the opposition leaders and Shevardnadze. I thought it was a peculiar thing; here is the number two person in the Georgian government asking me what's going on, and I said, "Well, you know, you're up here where the meetings are going on; I'm down there in the Embassy. So, I'm asking you what's going on." And Jorbenadze said he had no idea. And about that time Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov decided that he'd come to Tbilisi to see what he could do to help sort things out. The Russian Ambassador and I arranged for Secretary Powell to call Ivanov at the airport as he landed. The Secretary used some talking points that we had provided, suggesting things that might be helpful in this situation, noting that the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church had been a very useful player in this process, trying to keep the situation non-violent. The Patriarch had to mediate and had offered the venue of the Patriarchate. If Shevardnadze and Saakashvili couldn't meet at the President's office, maybe they could meet at the Patriarchate. The Secretary told Ivanov that if he needed any help from the American Embassy, he should just let the Ambassador know and we would be perfectly happy to help. It was quite a friendly gesture, I thought, and I think it was taken in that way by the Russians although they then totally ignored it.

Ivanov was able to convince Saakashvili to join in a meeting with Shevardnadze. And when the three opposition leaders went in to see Shevardnadze, Ivanov went to go in with them and the opposition leaders said this is a Georgian affair now; we thank you for bringing us all together but we won't need you in this meeting. That was really a great Georgian put down.

Ivanov then flew off to Adjara, the autonomous province of Georgia on the southern Black Sea coast run by a little tin pot despot down there named Abashidze. It's important only because that's where Batumi is, the historic oil port where a lot of the Caspian Sea oil has historically arrived, and still arrives, by rail and is then pumped into tankers bound mostly for Mediterranean markets. Abashidze had turned Adjara into his personal fiefdom and he was very close to the Russians. So Ivanov flew down to brief Abashidze about what was going on and while he was down there the news came that Shevardnadze had announced his resignation. Now we all thought that that was an increasing possibility but I don't think that any of the foreign diplomats, much less Ivanov, thought that was going to happen at that moment and so we were all taken by surprise.

That evening, as usual for the past month, there were tens of thousands of people out in the streets of Tbilisi. This was late at night; I was at the Embassy with the team, and you began to hear this roar. We were close enough to where the people were to hear the roar of the crowd and at the same time they were broadcasting the news on the TV and on the radio and simultaneously, and I don't know what insightful civil servant had thought about this, but fireworks broke out. I mean, I'm talking about the kind of big fireworks that you have on the mall here on the Fourth of July. So some guy in the parks department had somehow managed to get his hands on some very serious fireworks and the instant that resignation was announced, poom, off into the air went these fireworks. It was a pretty amazing thing, really.

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Q: So what happened when that happened? I mean, we may be duplicating it but I can't remember—I take it our response was that we were delighted this happened?

MILES: I think we would just as soon have seen Shevardnadze continue until the end of his second term, which would have been April of 2005 but only if he would finally get off the dime and institute some of the reforms to deal with issues that absolutely were crying out for resolution, like raising the taxes, I mean gathering the taxes, paying the salaries, paying the pensions, beginning to repair the infrastructure and ending some of the corruption. But frankly there wasn't a whole lot of chance of that.

Q: Were we looking at it—was this a medical problem do you think?

MILES: I think, having talked to people who know him better than I and who have spent years working with him, that the second assassination attempt against him, which occurred shortly before I arrived there, took an enormous toll on him, both physically and psychically.

Q: Was he hit?

MILES: It was an explosion underneath his armored car. I saw pictures of the armored car, it was just—it was an armored Mercedes, which is a good armored car—and it just looked like a twisted mangled mass of metal. It was hard to believe that anyone could have survived that blast, armored car or no armored car. And I saw pictures of him also that were taken in his torn tee shirt with blood on his body and on his face and he looked shocked then, as anybody would be. People tell me that before he had been reasonably aggressive in pursuing his policies and I think he was something of a democrat at heart, certainly not a tyrant or a despot. There were some of those around in Georgia, but I don't think Shevardnadze was one. I think he was a small-D democrat and wanted to bring Georgia into the 21st century but he didn't really know how to do it. And then when the assassination attempt occurred, I think he lost the will and even the ability to do it. And his wife, to whom he was devoted, always had the reputation of nagging him to do more for the family, which is a Georgian tradition; it's not considered really corruption in their society. You know, if you can do it, you make sure that Cousin Georgi has got a good job and that your Uncle Irakli is taken care of and so on. It's just what you do in Georgia. It's almost a requirement. After the assassination attempt, maybe with an eye to his own mortality, Shevardnadze began to pay more attention to the welfare of his family than he had in the past and so a certain degree of corruption began to set in at the top and began to be widespread throughout the country.

I don't believe there was any aggrandizement on his part personally. I never had the impression that he was particularly motivated by or even very much interested in luxury or money. But the corruption certainly involved family members and relatives and that would have been all right in Georgia; I think people would have even accepted it as sort of normal under Georgian circumstances if, repeat if, the government had been actively trying to improve the lives of the people, trying to pay the pensions, raise the employment level, trying to reform the society; but it wasn't doing any of those things. It sounds like a simple thing to say that there's electricity for only three hours a day, but remember, without electricity, the water isn't pumped to the upper floors of apartment buildings so you can only cook, wash or flush the toilet with water you have stored, and if you've forgotten to store it, you're out of luck. Virtually all the services that we've come to expect, at least in an urban environment, had ceased to function normally in Georgia in 2003. People really were fed up, and so when the flawed election occurred in November 2003—and there is no question but that it was flawed—the opposition, led by Saakashvili, began immediately calling for not just a rectification of the wrongs committed during the election but for Shevardnadze's resignation. It was a rather bold political move and one might say it was just hyperbole and rhetoric but I don't think it

was ever just rhetoric to Saakashvili and the people, because they were so fed up with the lack of activity and organizational ability on the part of the government. The constant and continued corruption was piling up minor and major irritations every day; traffic police were notorious for the bribe taking and to get anything at all done, to get the necessary permits and all that, you had to pay innumerable tiny, tiny bribes—only a dollar maybe, but it was a dollar every time you turned around and everyone knew that that sixty cents of that dollar went into the pocket of the bribe taker while the other forty cents was passed up for his bosses to take their share. People were just fed up with it and so they responded to Saakashvili's sloganeering and, in the end, they not only didn't go away from the demonstrations but their numbers even grew, and Shevardnadze's rather feeble efforts to rally his own supporters, so few as they were, but anyhow to rally them, didn't take hold either, and so in the end he decided the best thing was to resign and I think that he was wise to do so.

By that point we weren't sorry to see him go but it was certainly never our intent that he go and it wasn't one of our policy goals that he go. Our goal was to have a decent, honest election for the parliament in November of 2003 and we expended a lot of time, effort and money to bring that about. Not just we—I say we, I mean the international community—but we certainly did use a lot of U.S. taxpayer money to try to bring it about. We saw the parliamentary elections as a rehearsal for the all-important presidential election which would take place in the spring of 2005. So that's what we wanted to do. But in the end, and I know this is a very long answer to your short question, I think we weren't displeased with the change of government despite the messiness of the process.

Q: Alright. When the new government came in, this was when?

MILES: Well, it came in in December/January of 2004. The parliament election was in November of 2003; there was a hiatus while the protestors were on the street and Shevardnadze then resigned. I don't recall exactly but I think it was in December—either late November or early December of 2003. And then, by Georgian law, and they actually did this pretty well I'd say, by Georgian law under unusual circumstances of that sort an interim president is appointed for a short period and then a special presidential election is held to fill the office of the president. The interim government had to tidy up the results of the flawed parliamentary election as well. So the three primary leaders of the opposition organizations, that is, Nino Burjanadze, who had been Speaker of the parliament, Zurab Zhvania, and Saakashvili formed a kind of a troika, a working troika, and they decided among themselves, probably wisely, that Nino Burjanadze would become the interim President and they would propose Saakashvili as their sole candidate in the special presidential election that would be held at the end of the interim period. There were a couple of other almost throwaway presidential candidates from other

organizations or individuals who just wanted to run for president but it was quite clear that Saakashvili had the popular mood and the popular vote in his hand and indeed he won overwhelmingly when the election was actually held.

During the period of the interim government we had sent out Deputy Assistant Secretary Pascoe with an interagency group from Washington to see what the immediate needs of the Georgian government might be and to try to meet those needs. In the evening of the first day when the interim government took over from Shevardnadze, I was called by Zurab Zhvania and told that the coffers of the state were virtually empty and they needed immediate financial support. Now, I sent that request off to Washington and I was told to tell the new authorities that we would be helpful. We didn't know exactly how much we could provide; we would have to sort that out. We would first assess their immediate needs and then we'd do what we could on an emergency basis. So a team was hastily assembled in Washington, held a couple of meetings there to determine what might be done and then came out to Georgia. In the end we were able to come up with, I believe it was in the neighborhood of $21 million of bridging assistance and much of that was direct budget support, which, of course, is usually just anathema to the U.S. Congress. But consultations were held with the appropriate congressional leaders and they understood the special circumstances and so they didn't have any problem with our doing what we were doing. And that meant a considerable infusion of money for the Georgian government to simply pay the back pensions, pay the police salaries, pay the army salaries; provide just a modicum of money to various state institutions so they could simply function. And then there were some Agency for International Development programs which were already in the works. These programs were strengthened and accelerated. Anyhow, all that made a package of about $21 million which they didn't have before and I think that really was a big morale boost for them and gave them a little breathing space.

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Q: Well then, were we playing any role other than supplying this money once they got on the—you know, the new government came in and they were going to reform things, what were we doing?

MILES: We did two basic things. First of all, Secretary Powell, who was then Secretary of State, came out for the inauguration and had good conversations with the leadership including Saakashvili. Powell promised to do what we could to help—as long as they continued on a genuine reform path, we would make a good faith effort to try to help support them. So that message was well received.

Second, we already were doing the GTEP military training and so we continued that. We hadn't done police training before because the police were so corrupt that it just would not have been practical to try to do it and maybe not even permissible under American regulations. You know, we control the assistance to the police maybe a little more strictly than we do other forms of assistance and rightly so. But one of the things that Saakashvili did early on with the police became one of the most popular moves that he ever instituted. In Georgia the traffic police had gotten completely out of control. I mentioned they were notorious for taking bribes. Make that a "Notorious" with a capital "N". I mean, you could hardly drive a kilometer in Georgia anywhere without being pulled over and being subject to some silly bribe of a dollar or whatever. It was almost like feudal Europe where you couldn't go 10 kilometers without paying someone to lift the toll gate to let traffic through. It was just awful and people were just fed up with it. I remember speaking to the Director of the Tbilisi Symphony Orchestra. He had just driven his Mercedes back to Tbilisi from the coast, a distance of no more than 200 miles, and had been pulled over constantly. In the end, he had paid almost $200 in petty bribes during that short trip.

Well, Saakashvili first tried to talk to the leadership in the traffic police—they are a separate branch from the ordinary police and they are a nationwide service—and tell them that they had to reform, that he would pay the traffic police officers adequate salaries but that that they had to stop taking bribes. To make a long story short, he worked with them repeatedly on this issue but none of it worked. So, within a pretty short timeframe, he sacked the entire lot. I mean, he sacked, I think the number was about 6000 traffic police, and he didn't hire more than five or six people back from the old traffic police. Now this was a big shock in Georgian society because people simply don't get fired in these former communist places. I mean, it just isn't done. And people in Georgia who have very close family ties and connections, you know, for that to happen was a big shock. But it was a very popular move with the public. And Saakashvili not only did that but he raised the salaries of the traffic police, he gave them new uniforms, new weapons, new equipment, new radios and new VW Passat police cars and he put up Georgian and English billboards around the country saying if you believe you have been unduly harassed by the traffic police, please call this number. It was the equivalent of a 1-800 number and there was somebody at the other end to answer it. Well, that was an amazingly popular act.

And so with that and other things which the new government did, we began to provide a fair amount of assistance to the police. We provided I think about four and a half million dollars to help rehab their police academy, which was in God awful condition, I mean unbelievable. You know, rooms where even the parquet on the floors had been stripped up and sold off to light fires for barbecue or whatever; windows totally taken out of their

frames, I mean even the frame missing, just a hole in the wall; just ghastly. Well, we provided four and a half million dollars to do everything from a little bit of rehabilitation of the building to actually training the instructors and buying some audiovisual equipment and that kind of a thing. The French did a bit of that also. And we brought over—through INL, the bureau in the State Department that deals with law enforcement cooperation—experts, retired police people basically, who oversaw this and who also taught some classes at the academy. And that was just one of the things that we did which we hadn't been doing before.

The other thing which took a little longer—and I don't recall the exact timeline on this; I'd have to go back and check it—but you're familiar with the Millennium Challenge program in which democratically inclined countries which are below a certain poverty level can become eligible to work with us to develop a special long-term assistance program, a new program of economic assistance, which once agreed upon provides multi-year money rather than the traditional USAID year-by-year funding. The Millennium Challenge Corporation provides money over a period of three to five years and the money is given to the host government to carry out the program rather than to American contract organizations as is the case with USAID. We, of course, audit the MCC operation in country, it is taxpayer money after all, so we audit it. We work with the host government to develop an agreed program and we make sure that they continue to meet the criteria. But basically the money for the multi-year program becomes the money of the host government. It's their money to carry out their programs which they had proposed rather than the usual way we do assistance which is to maybe coordinate with them, maybe not, but to set up programs which we think would be helpful and which are usually carried out by American partner organizations. So MCC represents quite a difference in our way of doing business. The Georgians did qualify for the Millennium Challenge program and as a result they signed what is called a compact. They signed a compact, the terms of which would provide them several hundred million dollars over a multi-year period and in theory, we were told, that was supposed to be in addition to the ordinary economic and military assistance programs. Well, you know what happened; you've been around the government. As was inevitable, the U.S. economic assistance funding did decline in Georgia after they signed on to the Millennium Challenge program although it wasn't supposed to. I was really annoyed at that but in a way it was predictable. But we still do have a separate economic assistance program for Georgia and of course we've continued the military training program for Georgia.

GERMANY

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ROBERT STEVENSON
Department of State
Political Officer
Dusseldorf, Germany
(1952-1957)

Mr. Stevenson was born in Dallas, Texas and raised in Shreveport, Louisiana and Connecticut. He attended Princeton University, joined the Navy during the Korean War, and attended graduate school at Tulane University. He joined the Foreign Service in 1957. He worked in various positions in Sudan, Washington D.C., Ivory Coast, Vietnam, France, New York City, Lebanon, Zaire, Somalia, and Pakistan.

Topical Focus – U. S. Support of Democracy in West Germany

STEVENSON: We were interested in how democracy was settling in, so to speak, in West Germany. North Rhine-Westphalia was a very important state, Land, and we watched the politics there and reported on them, because a number of figures there became active and important on the national scene. [Konrad] Adenauer, of course, was Chancellor then.

One of our very good contacts was with Wolfgang Duering, who later was in the Bundestag and died of a heart attack while defending himself in the famous Spiegel scandal that came up some years after I was there. Also, Walter Scheel was a very good contact, who later became President of Germany. So in a sense, North Rhine-Westphalia was a political nurturing ground for German politicians who later went on to higher things. And actions taken in the state government were of interest. So we found ourselves pretty busy on the political front.

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Q: How did we view the SPD and the CDU? Those were the two major parties. How did we view the SPD at that time?

STEVENSON: We were perfectly open with the SPD and had contacts there, not as good as with the Christian Democrats, and also with the FDP, the Freie Demokratische Partei, (Walter Scheel and Duering and Willy Weir and several others). We had especially good contacts with the FDP, which more approached our secular party system, I'd say. But they were sort of a make-weight party. We knew that then. They could kind of go either way, and have gone either way. They've made coalitions with the SPD and with the Christian Democratic Party. I would say we were very open in that respect. We were in no way hostile to the SPD, as later we certainly were in Chile. The Socialists in Chile, of course, were much more doctrinaire Marxists.

Q: SPD being the Socialist Party.

STEVENSON: Yes, of Willy Brandt in Germany and of Allende in Chile. We certainly were not friendly in Chile and made no bones about it. But in Germany at that time, we had very open contacts with the SPD. The Communist Party was declared illegal while I was in Dusseldorf. Well, not illegal, but they were non-registered because they didn't make five percent in one of the elections, as I remember, so they were then barred as a party.

Parker Wyman and I went to their last rally and reunion in Solingen. We got on a train from Dusseldorf one Saturday morning and went over to Solingen. We got right out in the crowd and listened to the communist leaders, Max Reiman and--I've forgotten; there was a younger one, Gup Angenfort, I believe. Everything was going along fine until finally we noticed that one of the speakers was talking about, "Watch out for agents provocateurs in the crowd," and we noticed these women were looking at our shoes. You know, American shoes were a dead giveaway. (Laughter) I got nervous. I said, "Parker, let's get out of here. I'm getting awful nervous."

"Nah, that's all right," he said, "there's a lot of kids here." (There were a lot of children in the crowd). "They're not going to make any trouble." So we stayed until the end. But I was kind of relieved when the rally ended about noon and we went off to get some lunch. Just around the corner were about 500 heavily armed German riot police, just out of sight around the corner. So if anything had happened, I think they would have moved in on it.

GHANA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Ambassador Robert Jackson
U.S. Department of State
Ambassador
U.S. Embassy
Accra, Ghana
(2016–2018)

Robert Jackson was born in Tennessee and raised in Maine. He received his education at Bowdoin College. After working in education abroad, he joined the Foreign Service in 1982. He spent most of his career working in Africa or DC, working on democracy and development. Ambassador Jackson was interviewed on February 21, 2019 by Mark Tauber.

Topical Focus – Mid 2010s Ghanaian Elections

As Ghana prepared for national presidential and parliamentary elections at the end of 2016—at the end of my first year there—I engaged the religious leadership, many of whom were members of the National Peace Council, a uniquely Ghanaian institution that promotes peace and reconciliation and works with youth in particular. I was very pleased that the religious leaders became strong allies in our efforts to promote free, fair, nonviolent elections. One of the concerns that I had heard repeatedly in Washington prior to going to post was that the potential for violent elections was high. Although Ghana does not have a history of violent elections, many opposition supporters believed that the 2012 election had been stolen. Ghana's Supreme Court ruled that President Mahama had won that election fair and square, but that decision came eight months after the election. Much of the rest of my first year was devoted to doing what we could to promote fair and peaceful elections.

Q: I want to go back one second. The National Peace Council is kind of unique in Africa. Could you give another example of that kind of thing?

JACKSON: Let me give an example of the kinds of things that we were doing in the run up to the election because I think they underscore the National Peace Council's activities. They organize meetings with youth from both major political parties to highlight the importance of getting out the vote, but doing so in a way that encourages voter participation and reduces fears about going to the polls and expressing divergent opinions while exercising their democratic rights in the run up to an election or thereafter. 98 The U.S. mission worked with the National Peace Council, particularly in the northern regions where we believed the potential for violence was higher based on competition

between the two parties in those three swing regions. The National Peace Council and USAID organized lots of seminars, inviting other nongovernmental organization partners. The participation of Methodist, Anglican, Evangelical, and Muslim leaders in the National and Regional Peace Councils, as well as other leaders from civil society, was a real catalyst for discussions about how to ensure that Ghana's elections were free and peaceful.

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Visiting these castles is a very moving experience. You hear the stories and imagine the conditions under which people went through the "door of no return." Several recent American presidents have visited these castles. President Obama's visit in 2009 is one of the most memorable. That visit was also when he talked about the importance of Africans building strong institutions, and he picked Ghana for that trip and that message because it has become a successful democracy with a multi-party system where control of the executive and legislative branches has peacefully changed between political parties multiple times. That happened again as a result of the 2016 election.

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Q: Okay. You had mentioned the election; so I want to give you a chance to talk about how you organized and deployed people as the election approached.

JACKSON: American taxpayers invested about seven million dollars in Ghana's elections. USAID provided one third of the seven million dollars to the election commission, primarily for public education and for its computer system. In fact, we provided personnel to help with the setup and administration of the computer system. We also sponsored voter education, which Election Commission Chairperson Charlotte Osei and I rolled out in a joint ceremony. USAID also invested in civil society programs, working especially with the Center for Democratic Development, which administers the Afrobarometer, to conduct polls and to field over seven thousand Ghanaian observers to conduct a parallel vote tabulation [PVT]. Finally, as we discussed, we invested in the National Peace Council's activities.

Other international partners, including the British and the UN, were tremendous. British High Commissioner Jon Benjamin and I ended up making some joint statements about the election. UN Resident Coordinator Chris Evans-Klock organized numerous meetings, and UN Secretary General's Special Representative for West Africa Mohamed Ibn Chambas came to Ghana several times to promote peaceful elections. He gave a very

powerful speech shortly before the elections about how to have free, fair, and transparent elections.

In late October, roughly six weeks before the election, opposition candidate Nana Akufo-Addo's house was attacked by thugs from the ruling party. The British high commissioner and I decided to make a joint statement about the importance of a peaceful election, threatening visa sanctions on people who committed electoral violence or electoral fraud. The statement was extremely effective because Ghanaians love to travel to the UK and the U.S. We both received a lot of criticism from the ruling party for the statement, with the ruling party alleging that we had taken sides, which we had not. In fact, we did not make a judgment about who was responsible for the election violence. Then, we looked at opinion pieces that had been issued by the secretary of state and the British foreign secretary for the Nigerian elections; we redrafted those for Ghana, got them cleared by our respective governments, and published an op-ed just before the elections. It was a full court press.

For the actual election, we sent about fifty election observation teams around the country, coordinating closely with other diplomatic and international observers. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield and I visited polling places around Accra, and the overall observation mission was hugely successful. The International Republican Institute conducted training in the run up to the election, and it joined with the National Democratic Institute, which sent a large delegation headed by former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson. We also had a tremendous control center at the embassy, and we invited people from other embassies to participate in the effort, utilizing the Foreign Affairs Network so that no non-USG employees had access to the embassy computer system.

CDD's seven thousand observers and their parallel vote tabulation gave us a great sense of the results the morning after the polls closed. The PVT predicted that opposition candidate Nana Akufo-Addo had won the election with 53.4 percent of the vote. Meanwhile, the election commission's computer system was hacked, slowing down its vote tabulation. To her credit, Election Commission Chairperson Osei soldiered on. When we shared the PVT results with her, she told me that she truly did not know who had won and she was not going to make any premature judgments or announcements.

The ruling party started claiming that it had lost control of the Parliament but had retained the presidency; so the British high commissioner and I sought a meeting with President Mahama. The afternoon after the election, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield, High Commissioner Benjamin and I went to see the president. Instead of meeting with us, he sent his vice president, national security advisor, and

minister of interior. When they persisted with their claims, we presented the PVT results and urged that the Election Commission be allowed to do its work. We underscored that the international community was convinced that President Mahama had lost the election and that the ruling party should not encourage the idea that it had won. Thomas-Greenfield, having confidence in me and my ability to manage the situation, went back to Washington after the meeting.

I spoke with President Mahama and with opposition leader Akufo-Addo over the next twenty-four hours, emphasizing the results of the parallel vote tabulation. In fact, Akufo-Addo's party had done its own PVT and was certain it had won a resounding victory with 170 of the 270 seats in Parliament and a comfortable margin of victory in the presidential election. About forty-eight hours after the polls closed, President Mahama called me to say that he was going to concede; then, the election commission announced the results, declaring that Akufo-Addo had won with 53.3 percent of the vote; so the PVT was within one tenth of 1 percent of the final tally, which is amazing. It showed how well CDD had done its work. In the end, the election was a real model of transparency and peace in spite of all of the fears expressed in Washington, London, Ghanaian cities, and other parts of the world.

My team and I celebrated. Political Chief Tom Lyons, USAID Deputy Mission Director Steve Hendrix, DCM Melina Tabler-Stone, and many others played key roles. I had met Vice President-elect Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia before he was ever elected, but I met with him again to intensify that relationship. We also began to meet with leaders whom we expected to become ministers even before they were formally named in order to educate them about the U.S.-Ghana relationship and bring them up to date. Many of them had served in previous New Patriotic Party [NPP] governments prior to 2009 and had participated in International Visitor Leadership Programs. Utilizing those contacts, we got off to what I thought was a good start, but there were serious issues to address, including things like the status of the ex-detainees; the energy compact; development programs in health, education, and agriculture; trafficking in persons; and Ghana's role in international peacekeeping operations. We were implementing thirty-two U.S. Presidential Initiatives in Ghana; so keeping all of those initiatives moving forward was a major undertaking. USAID managed many but not all of these activities. Making certain that the new Ghanaian administration understood these programs and how we could work together to advance them became the next priority of my tenure as ambassador.

The inauguration occurred in early January 2017—just before President Trump was inaugurated in the United States. Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield and Representative Karen Bass led the U.S. delegation to the Ghanaian inauguration, and presidents from many West African countries flew in. Managing the transition in The

Gambia was on everyone's mind, and Akufo-Addo wasted no time in achieving consensus on the way ahead, reprising his role as Ghana's foreign minister during Liberia's transition. [superfluous information redaction]

Because our military cooperation has expanded enormously over the years, the United States wanted to negotiate a new defense cooperation agreement that covered all of the military exercises and other training that the United States and Ghana conduct. Chargé Melinda Tabler-Stone had presented a draft text to the Ghanaians before I arrived in Ghana, but negotiations were derailed by the ex-detainees and the Ghanaian elections; so 105 one of the issues on which I educated the Akufo-Addo government was this proposed agreement. Our military cooperation was roughly two decades old and was based upon an exchange of diplomatic notes signed when Jerry Rawlings was president of Ghana, i.e. under a National Democratic Congress [NDC] government. Two subsequent agreements had been signed—one by an NPP government and one by another NDC government. The accord that we proposed was designed to bring together all of the elements of the previous agreements and address the tremendous increase in the size and volume of military cooperation, including Ghana's training of U.S. troops at its Jungle Warfare Center. In fact, as far as I know, Ghana is the only African country that trains U.S. forces outside attendance at military schools.

The first half of 2018 was consumed with selling this agreement to the government and the public. The fierce NDC opposition caught me off guard. After a round of negotiations and some clarifications about taxation and immunity, the Ghanaian government had presented the unsigned agreement to Parliament for approval. Unfortunately, the Ghanaian government had done a poor job of preparing the public for this agreement. Although Parliament approved the agreement by a very narrow margin, the now opposition NDC used the same arguments that have been used to attack Ghana's acceptance of the ex-detainees from Guantanamo, claiming the accord was an attack on Ghana's sovereignty and that Ghana was getting too close to the United States. This was in the context of Ghana having refused to host U.S. Africa Command [AFRICOM] when we were seeking a home of it in 2006–07.

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By the time I left in July 2018, U.S. and Ghanaian investigators had identified the perpetrators of more than a hundred million dollars in cybercrime, particularly tax fraud, by people based in Ghana, Nigeria, and the United States. The effort led to several arrests and prosecutions. Thus, this modest investment yielded a huge success in combating cybercrime in a sub-Saharan African country that has a pretty high internet penetration rate and fast Internet. I am very proud of that investment. The other SGI success was under the rule of law rubric where we developed a case tracking system for the police, Ministry of Justice, judiciary, and prison service. In 2018, Ghana was still relying on

paper files for all of its police and court records; so we agreed—initially using SGI funds and then supplementing those with USAID democracy and governance funds—to allow police, prosecutors, and judges to input information and follow cases through the judicial and prison systems. The idea was to allow officials to track people who were in detention, who had been sentenced, and who were serving time in prison. The contract had been awarded by the time I left, embraced by the attorney general and chief justice, laying the groundwork to vastly improve the administration of justice in Ghana.

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Q: Given your experience in Africa, can Ghana export its relative success to other countries? And if so, how?

JACKSON: Ghanaians have successfully exported their security model, with more than a third of the armed forces deployed in international peacekeeping operations either under the aegis of the United Nations or the African Union. Ghana has also shown how to have free, fair, transparent, and peaceful elections very successfully. It is a good model for other African countries in many ways. However, I would like to see Ghana do more to improve the business environment and combat corruption and trafficking.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DENISE ROLLINS
USAID
Ghana Program/PD Officer and Office Director
Washington, D. C.
(1992-1998)

Denise Rollins studied at Howard University and Johns Hopkins SAIS before joining USAID in 1987. She served in a number of different countries including Jamaica, Uganda, Nigeria, South Africa, and Bangladesh, retiring in 2014 before being called out of retirement in 2015 to serve as the Senior Coordinator for the Ebola Task Force. She fully retired in 2016. She was interviewed by Carol Peasley in 2023.

Topical Focus – USAID Electoral Assistance to Ghana

Q: Right. And can you say a bit about what the Ghana program was like in those days? Because it was, as I recall, an increasing program during that period.

ROLLINS: Well, it took a while so—because remember, I was there six years total. But when I got there, Jerry John Rawlings was president. And he had just agreed to elections, the first time in over twenty-five years. So, we didn't have much of a DG (Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance) program because there was no DG, frankly. Rawlings' focus was on socialism and primarily agriculture. I remember seeing him in old photos, where he was in the rural areas, planting crops and digging trenches and wells. He expected everybody to do that. Of course, the economy was just—it was nothing. We would travel to Lomé, Togo, to buy meats, cheeses, bread, fruits, and vegetables because there was little or nothing you could buy in Ghana or was of poor quality.

Q: Yes. I had not known that the USAID mission had such an important role in that. That's fantastic.

ROLLINS: Well, it was Joe's way of managing. And it's because we got to know each other. The Ghanaians got to know us, we got to know them. We could pick up the phone, call, ask questions, and we began—we trusted each other. Because that's the key, isn't it?

It's trusting that you are—you want the best for them. And that you're willing to do, you know, the necessary to make sure that happens. So, when MEASURE, a USAID Project that collects Demographic and Health data, completed their annual surveys, we ensured that they presented the data to Ghana's Ministry of Health to help them understand where the health challenges existed in the country. Ensuring that the country government, at all levels, had sufficient data to make strategic decisions to impact the future was the ke to Joe Godwin's leadership.

The other area that Ghana has benefitted from is elections. When I arrived in late October 1992, the first elections were held after 25 years of military leadership. Rawlings won the election but the opposition called it the stolen verdict. They wrote a book about it. We brought in IFES (International Foundation for Electoral System) to begin working with the election commission.

Q: So, when the next election in 1996 took place, there'd be better preparation for it.

ROLLINS: Yes. We brought in IFES to work with the Ghana Election Commission. We had a seasoned election chief-of-party, Joe Baxter, who was fabulous. He sat with Dr. Afari-Gyan, a university professor, who was the head of the election commission, and they strategized on how to clean the voting rolls, produce the paper for the ballots, and purchase the voting machines; it took time. However, the most crucial part, in addition to the mechanics of an election, was the involvement of the political parties. Ghana's democracy started with some twenty-five political parties. Everybody wanted to get in

the game. And then, what Joe and Dr. Afari-Gyan said was, “Okay, so let’s—what we need to start doing to make this whole process transparent is we need to start having monthly meetings with all of the political parties.” That had never been done. Once a month, a representative of all the political parties began to meet at the EC. I think it was probably about twenty in the end and now, it’s only about three. Dr. Afari-Gyan led these meetings and explained to everybody what was going on in terms of the election mechanics, the ballots, the ballot boxes, and the strategy behind the mechanics of elections. And I think maybe it was two years when the president’s party decided to withdraw from the meetings because they could not get their way. Dr. Afari-Gyan was transparent and open to the process and continued to hold meetings with the other parties until the election took place in 1996. Dr. A-G would find the answer and report back to everyone if he didn't. So, big room with, you know, a lot of people, but it began the process of talking, you know, and sharing—

Q: And transparency

ROLLINS: Transparency, sharing information. The parties always had a series of questions about every aspect of the elections and campaigning. Dr. Afari-Gyan would get back to them as soon as he had a decision from his colleagues on the EC. The most contentious part of the political party discussions concerned the president's visibility versus the other presidential candidates. Rawlings was on TV and the news daily too obviously, already can go on television all the time, right? He is flying all over the country at groundbreakings, openings of new buildings, and dedications. However, the other political parties did not have an opportunity to go on. So, it was the biggest issue for the other candidates: would they also have equal time on television? And of course, the main party was, oh, no, the president has a right to showcase his policies and governance. About nine months before the election, Rawlings’ party walked out and refused to attend any more meetings. The others stayed, though and we continued. Dr. Afari-Gyan continued holding these meetings, coming up with a schedule for the candidates to have twenty-minute speeches on television or on the radio. Many candidates had dropped out by this time. Those remaining needed time to organize themselves and learn how to speak to the people. It is not easy for the first couple of times. Rawlings was a professional. Rawlings’ party came back at the very end of the election season, about two months before the election. His party objected to many of the new election procedures, but by the time they returned to the meetings, it was too late for changes. Rawlings won the election again, but it became clear that it wasn’t stolen.

Q: Yes. So, there was trust in the process?

ROLLINS: There was trust in the process. And everybody, just like we do here in the U.S., our political parties, you can stand at the polling station and make sure that this person is who they say they are and all of that. So, we just—we kind of—we modeled it, you know, on the U.S.

Q: I had heard through the grapevine from someone at one point that a large part of this IFES effort was, as you'd mentioned, registration and cleaning up the voter rolls and that there were some people in Washington who were critical of that. But that ultimately, after that election took place, there was a better appreciation for the way the mission did it.

ROLLINS: Yes. There was opposition in the US because they did not understand what we were doing. When people don't understand something this big and monumental, it always starts out messy, right?

Because you've got to bring everybody on board, you've got to figure out what you're trying to do, and then you have to ensure everybody else understands it. So, it's just—it's messy until people start to realize, okay, this makes sense, and I trust you. Okay? That is critically important, that trust.

Q: Yes. And I assume that there was very close coordination with the embassy on all of this DG work.

ROLLINS: Oh, yes. And Washington. But you know, Joe Baxter had been the elections commissioner in New Orleans for ten years, and he had been election commissioner in DC for fifteen years. So, he had—and somewhere else. And he had worked all over the world.

So, he was just—he was a Southern boy, you know, with that Southern charm —

Q: Charm. (Laughs)

ROLLINS: Charm and he was just easy, very easy. And he didn't get upset about anything. Nothing bothered him. And so, he just trusted the process, trust the process.

Q: Right. That's great. Maintaining those meetings with everyone there and transparency are important lessons.

ROLLINS: Oh, absolutely. So, they didn't win that time, the opposition, but they won the next time.

And the president now, who I knew back then because he was a lawyer then, Nana Akufo-Addo, and this is his third term. He was in opposition to the Rawlings regime.

Q: Yes; what's evolved, I think, is probably one of the stronger democracies certainly in Africa and maybe globally these days. Democracies aren't doing so well. (Laughs)

ROLLINS: I know because in so many places, it seems like they're on the right path and then suddenly start backtracking. And I think USAID, USAID needs to pat itself on the back for this one because we stuck with it and the Ghanaians, and when people ask me "Well, you know, if we put all this money, why isn't it better?" And I'm always saying, "You have to have political will." People have got—we can come in and work with people who want change. I have friends who have been contractors, and they'll complain about USAID: "Well, you know, we're not doing this, and we're not doing that—" and it's like, development is complicated. You can come in with all the ideas you want, but again, it's building that symmetry, and people have got to want to make it happen. And with Ghana, out of all the countries I worked in because I worked in six, well, not including the UK, and they were really, you know—the other thing was with the economy —they wanted the economy to get better —even Rawlings—

Q: Yes. They turned it around. At the same time, I think the aid was instrumental with its policy reform dialogue.

ROLLINS: Oh, absolutely. Because even President Rawlings understood the country was not on the right path.

And I remember the first time I arrived in Ghana, they had these old Lada vehicles from Russia and these claptrap wooden trucks called tro tros. There was nothing modern in Ghana at the time. I remember, it was around 1995 when I had gone into a dress shop with some girlfriends and we came out and we looked to the left; there was a powder blue convertible Mercedes. (Peasley laughs) It was—we just stood there; our mouths open. Where in the hell did this come from? There was nothing like it there. Nothing. And it's powder blue? Oh, my God, that was the first sign that the economy was changing. Because we began to see American or German cars on the street and fanciful cars. You know, I had an old Land Rover, but those have been around a long time. Most of us had that kind of vehicle but not something cute. (Laugh) Like this convertible. It was around 1995.

USAID had a big export development project that put Ghana on the map. What's disappointing is that they have significant financial issues, and in 2023, they had to take

out an IMF loan to bail out the country. While Ghana has grown by leaps and bounds, it has not managed its economy effectively.

I returned to Ghana in 2015 when I was Senior Coordinator for the Africa Ebola Unit, I stopped in Accra for a conference, I didn't even recognize the place anymore.

GRENADA

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

NADIA TONGOUR

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: November 15, 2007
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NADIA TONGOUR
Department of State
Principal Officer/Chargé
St. George's, Grenada
(2001-2004)

Nadia Tongour, born in Turkey in 1947 and immigrated to the U.S. when she was three to South Carolina with her family, entered the Foreign Service in 1980 as a General Officer in Mexico City, Mexico. She served in various countries such as Brazil, Barbados and Grenada. She also worked many posts in Washington, such as country desk officer for the USSR, Hungary, and to the Balkan Countries. Tongour was also a senior staffer to the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Editor in Chief of the Annual Human Rights Report, and Director of the Human Rights Bureau/ Office of Asia/Western Hemisphere Affairs. Tongour retired from the Department of State in 2007.
Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Topical Focus — Elections in Grenada - 2003

Q: Well, let us talk about some of the aspects of the political life up there.

TONGOUR: When I arrived the word on the street was election would occur shortly, and they did occur about a year or so later; more recently, another round of elections were held this year (2008), and the opposition party took over the government. In terms of which parties were in existence then, it's probably worth mentioning that the "oldest" party, or the one that had been ousted by the New Jewel Movement and its more radical followers -- whose activities eventually triggered our intervention -- was the party headed by the late Sir Eric Gairy. As I mentioned earlier, he had initially been perceived as an early national leader and a key figure in events leading to Grenadian independence. However, over the years, he came to be regarded as somewhat eccentric, if not crazy, due

to his claims of seeing flying saucers and so on. He had formed a political party called the Grenada United Labor Party , the GULP, which for many years had been the leading vote-getter in the country. More recently, it had fallen on hard times, and Prime Minister Keith Mitchell (in office until 2008) was one of the early leaders of a breakaway group called the New National Party (NNP). He was in power for three five-year terms, but the NNP lost out to a rival party in the 2008 election. Mitchell spent many of his earlier years in the United States, attending Howard University and obtaining a PhD there. He owned property in Maryland and prospered in the U.S. On his return to Grenada -- after the intervention -- he was regarded as a national figure, not actively linked to the preceding revolutionary movement. But after a number of years in power, certain less savory aspects of his administration came to the fore, including his support for offshore banking enterprises, some of whom were deemed less than clean. Then, too, there was the economic citizenship program which our Treasury Department officials deemed, if not corrupt, somewhat inappropriate. Plus sums of money seemed to disappear or alternately "appear", as in a much heralded case wherein the Prime Minister was videotaped accepting a suitcase filled with cash in a hotel room -- an incident which has resulted in legal action. The case was rather bizarre, though I'm not sure exactly how or whether it has as yet been resolved. This type of incident over time leaves a bad taste in peoples' mouths even though many businessmen and community leaders traditionally supported Mitchell and his NNP in part because he was smart and capable and secondly was not perceived to be a leftist.

Now, you might wonder, why is this significant today? Because over the years, a number of the more intellectual types, you might say the island's intelligentsia (some of whom had earlier been associated with the New Jewel Movement) gravitated to the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC). The names of these two main parties , and to some extent their policies might be seen as interchangeable. However, during my tenure, Prime Minister Keith Mitchell and his NNP was the government and the NDC represented the principal opposition party. By 2003, there was a widespread sentiment that the government might conceivably lose the upcoming election; if not, it might still lose the overwhelming majority of seats it had held for many years. The main issue of the day was corruption and the need for change. Whatever else the opposition was, it was for the most part not judged to be corrupt. The key problem for the NDC was the fact that some of its members were former "revolutionaries" who were still regarded as leftists. So elections were held and the outcome resulted in an eight-seven split, and frankly there was considerable controversy surrounding one NNP seat. While the NNP retained the seat and won the election, the results could easily have gone the other way. An Organization of American States (OAS) mission monitored the elections which came down to the wire on the sister island of Carriacou, where the recount went on for several days, but in the end Foreign Minister Elvin Nimrod held on to his seat. And Mr. Nimrod

himself is an interesting man. Married to a South Carolinian who lives in New York, he went to college and law school in New York and owns a law firm in Brooklyn that continues to function and is now operated by his wife as a family business. When he returned to Grenada and joined the government, he had to give up his American citizenship.

Now (2008), Grenada is facing another round of elections, and the opposition is expected to win. Today, when you drive around the island, you can see a veritable building boom, with gigantic houses popping up which neither you nor I could ever afford. The roads have been repaired since hurricane Ivan and there are directional road signs all over the island -- something I promoted during my tour. I remember pushing the idea that road signs would be very helpful if the government wanted tourists to visit. In any case, most of the buildings in the downtown area have been repaired or rebuilt, except, interestingly enough, for the churches and the Parliament building. Were you to visit Grenada today, you might well wonder why Parliament and two or three major churches don't have roofs yet; otherwise, you would not know that there had been a devastating hurricane a few years before. So, with a lot of help from their friends, the Grenadians have done a good job.

However, the government apparently has been selling off national assets such as prime lands and national parks without exactly informing the public -- basically the national patrimony. The corruption level is high, and there are many who claim the place is totally bankrupt. Individuals are certainly buying and building homes, but the government is reputedly broke. Elections are due any time now, and as I mentioned the opposition has a good shot at winning. What makes the upcoming race especially interesting is the fact that the leader of the opposition is considered by be a very decent, honorable man, who is not only widely respected but is also known for having spent three years in jail during the revolutionary period thanks to the very New Jewel Movement, many of whose members are now in his party. In fact, his leading deputies, the so-called second and third in command were both active members of the revolutionary regime who are now both lawyers. They have modified their views of the world somewhat since then. (Note: Since the aforementioned was recorded, the opposition NDC won the 2008 election, with Tillman Thomas named the new Prime Minister; Keith Mitchell, however, retained his parliamentary seat and is the new leader of the opposition.).

Q: I would think it would have been a prime place for drug money to go to.

United States Embassy
Principal Officer/Chargé
Grenada
(2001-2004)

Nadia Tongour was born in Turkey, but raised in South Carolina. Tongour attended William and Mary University, along with Stanford University, before entering the foreign service in 1980. She worked at the State Department in many positions, including the Board of Examiners, Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Europe, and a Soviet Desk Officer. Nadia Tongour was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 15, 2007.

Topical Focus – Electoral Uncertainty and Governance Challenges in Grenada

Q: Well, let us talk about some of the aspects of the political life up there.

TONGOUR: When I arrived the word on the street was election would occur shortly, and they did occur about a year or so later; more recently, another round of elections were held this year (2008), and the opposition party took over the government. In terms of which parties were in existence then, it's probably worth mentioning that the "oldest" party, or the one that had been ousted by the New Jewel Movement and its more radical followers -- whose activities eventually triggered our intervention -- was the party headed by the late Sir Eric Gairy. As I mentioned earlier, he had initially been perceived as an early national leader and a key figure in events leading to Grenadian independence. However, over the years, he came to be regarded as somewhat eccentric, if not crazy, due to his claims of seeing flying saucers and so on. He had formed a political party called the Grenada United Labor Party , the GULP, which for many years had been the leading vote-getter in the country. More recently, it had fallen on hard times, and Prime Minister Keith Mitchell (in office until 2008) was one of the early leaders of a breakaway group called the New National Party (NNP). He was in power for three five-year terms, but the NNP lost out to a rival party in the 2008 election. Mitchell spent many of his earlier years in the United States, attending Howard University and obtaining a PhD there. He owned property in Maryland and prospered in the U.S. On his return to Grenada -- after the intervention -- he was regarded as a national figure, not actively linked to the preceding revolutionary movement. But after a number of years in power, certain less savory aspects of his administration came to the fore, including his support for offshore banking enterprises, some of whom were deemed less than clean. Then, too, there was the economic citizenship program which our Treasury Department officials deemed, if not corrupt, somewhat inappropriate. Plus sums of money seemed to disappear or alternately "appear", as in a much heralded case wherein the Prime Minister was videotaped

accepting a suitcase filled with cash in a hotel room -- an incident which has resulted in legal action. The case was rather bizarre, though I'm not sure exactly how or whether it has as yet been resolved. This type of incident over time leaves a bad taste in peoples' mouths even though many businessmen and community leaders traditionally supported Mitchell and his NNP in part because he was smart and capable and secondly was not perceived to be a leftist.

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yet; otherwise, you would not know that there had been a devastating hurricane a few years before. So, with a lot of help from their friends, the Grenadians have done a good job.

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GUATEMALA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES MICHEL
U.S. Ambassador
Department of State
Guatemala
(1987–1989)

James Michel was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He attended Harris Junior College and graduated from St. Louis University. After completing law school, he joined the U.S. Department of State's Office of the Legal Adviser and later served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. In 1987, he became U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala and, in 1990, Acting Administrator for Latin American Affairs at the United States Agency for International Development. He subsequently served as U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Throughout his career, he focused on democracy promotion and economic development in the Western Hemisphere and beyond. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 21, 2005.

Topical Focus – Political Instability, Coup Attempts, and U.S. Support for Democratic Governance and Economic Development in Guatemala

Q: Can you describe two things: the situation in Guatemala in October when you arrived, and then we'll talk about what were American concerns.

MICHEL: There were two things going on in Guatemala. One was there had been a constitutional convention, a constituent assembly, and they had adopted a new constitution. There had been an election. The winner of that election, a Christian Democrat. Vinicio Cerezo, is somebody who had spent a lot of time in the Washington area, knew a lot of people in Congress, and in his campaign promises and in his discussions in Washington, he talked a lot about human rights, democracy, opportunity for poor people. A lot of this and a lot of his government was viewed with cynicism by established powers in Guatemala both in the private sector and in the military who had left not like Argentina, a defeated army. They had won their war.

Q: Their war being against the...

MICHEL: The poor people in their country. And there was still a small force of armed insurgents out there in the countryside when I was there. I think was '96 when they finally signed the peace agreement. But it was hard to find a thousand of them, and I think there were just enough of them that the army could retain power and resources and it wasn't a serious threat to the country. So you had this internal fragility politically with an elected government. There were jokes like, "The president's mother was very happy when he was elected president because at last he had a job." That was one of the jokes they told. There was not a lot to building on here, and the people

who came into government included some who were very good and others who were more part of the political party apparatus rather than people who had real capability at governance. So it was a pretty mixed picture. Good presidents in the central bank, you had a good minister of economy, finance minister was pretty good, agricultural minister was pretty good, but some not so good, and some of the immediate staff, pretty political, less public spirited you might say. There was weakness in the performance of the government that justified some of the criticism, so this was an ongoing situation. The other situation was the *Contadora* process of the Central Americans under the leadership of Oscar Arias in Costa Rica at the time, saying, "Let's, we Central Americans, get together and see if we can work for peace in this region because it's not in any of our interest to have this conflict going." By that time it was largely Nicaragua, a little bit El Salvador, but mainly Nicaragua by that time. So Guatemala was very interested in that, and you had one of the meetings in this process had just occurred when I got there. It was Esquipulas which is a town in Guatemala where they drew up some ideas about peace in Central America. Washington wasn't too keen on all of this.

Q: Yea. I was going to ask about that. It's one of these things, "Well, if it isn't our idea, it should be." Typical Washington response.

MICHEL: "We're not in control. We don't know what these guys will do." There was that in Washington. Fortunately for me, we then had a series of people who were regional ambassadors that the president had named.

Q: This was...

MICHEL: This was President Reagan at the time. But just a small aside of how we can confuse people, my predecessor in Guatemala was named Piedra, and *piedra* is "stone" in Spanish. President Reagan appointed former senator from Florida, Dick Stone, to be the Central America ambassador to the utter confusion of some Guatemalans who had to deal with Piedra and Stone! [laughter] Anyway, so there was that regional diplomacy that was done, and I didn't have to be too responsible for that dimension of it and could concentrate more on bilateral issues trying to encourage the strengthening of a democratic state and a diversifying economy that created some jobs and expanded health and education systems. We had a hundred fifty million dollar aid program. There was no World Bank program because they were in arrears to the World Bank. There was no IMF program because they had not fulfilled their commitments to the IMF. So we were the economic policy dialogue partner about issues of exchange rates, interest rates - macro-economic policy issues. We were big in Guatemala.

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Q: Tell me about the two coup attempts. What happened, and what were our reactions?

MICHEL: In both cases you had some people in the private sector and some people in the army who had delusions that everybody was going to rally around and this civilian government was so weak and corrupt and unreasonable that it didn't deserve to stay in office. I'm sure that there were promises made and maybe payments made to some of the military officers who led these adventures. The military command—the high command—and the minister of defense held firm.

In the second one it was nasty because the coup plotters came to the Defense Minister's home and took his wife hostage. A nasty thing to do. They didn't have to go after families. And then they released her. But both failed. I was out there very visible with TV cameras and making absolutely clear where the U. S. stood, working the phones with Washington to get an OAS resolution adopted on the second one. The first one was over so fast. I remember some critics and analysts in Washington speculating that the first one was not a real coup but it was something that people wanted to get attention, that they were feeling neglected, that they didn't expect to really take over the country, but they were like the missile tests from North Korea: Pay attention now, please. I don't know. I have no knowledge of that. We had no pre-knowledge in either case that these were happening. These were both surprises to me, and I wondered about why that was, but we had no inkling that either of these was coming, and we reacted immediately and firmly and clearly and publicly, and I think that was a useful thing in making that go away. One of the...

Q: This is Tape 4, Side 1 with Jim Michel.

MICHEL: One small irony relates to the invitation to the heads of the democratic political parties to come to breakfast with the vice president of the United States, an invitation that added to their stature a little bit. One of them turned out to be the next president of Guatemala who really perpetrated the most serious constitutional challenge when he tried to dismiss the congress following the lead of his Peruvian counterpart. The political forces rallied around and asked him to leave, and that was the end of it, but he did, unfortunately, create a more serious constitutional challenge than either of the coup attempts had caused.

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MICHEL: Right. If you are a career person on the inside, you have the opportunity within the bureaucracy in the State Department to contribute to the statement of the U. S. objectives for the country to which you are being assigned and, indeed, to draft those objectives and offer them up to people who send them up through the chain of command. If you're informed and reasonable, you pretty much will see back in the letter from the Secretary of State the objectives that you suggested. In Guatemala we had a very extensive list of things that we were looking at in a country that was going through a very difficult transition. The military had left; the civilians had arrived. But it was in a very unstable situation: two coup attempts while I was there. I went back, and I looked at the checklist that I had prepared after I returned that tried to reduce the country team action plan to an unclassified document I could keep. It is a generic document that just lists the subjects without saying what we were doing about any of them, but I thought it might be useful to mention the main headings of what we were trying to address as a country team. It illustrates a couple of things. One is I think it was somewhat intrusive of us to be interested in all of these things, and the other is that I think it was done in the best spirit of advancing U. S. interests by finding common interests with our neighboring countries where we have something of a shared destiny. Let me read off a couple of the main headings: One was "Preservation and Institutional Development of Democracy." This is from 1987, not last week, which had several things in it: Improved performance by the public sector. That's electoral process, legislative, judicial, executive, military, local government; two, support for democratic process from various sectors of society and moderation of distrust between sectors—business, labor, etc., religious

community, political party, media. And third, under that heading of "Preservation and Institutional development and Democracy" was respect for and protection of human rights. Second main area was equitable broadly based economic growth. We wanted to encourage adherence to sound economic polities, expand non-traditional exports, increase access to and effective use of capital (domestic and international), efficient and effective provision of social services, infrastructure, and preservation of the environment. So these were all things that we were interested in. Agricultural activity. Growth of tourism. Access to land. The third area was to encourage the local government to support democratic values and objectives in relations with their neighbors including the United States, to have a positive image of the United States, to persuasively inform and explain U. S. government positions and seek agreement on similar way of looking at these issues, to eliminate the capacity of the conflict to impede political, economic, and social progress, to work on supporting local efforts to eliminate narcotics, trafficking, and cultivation and, of course, finally, to manage the mission in an efficient way and in a secure environment. So this was a very broad agenda!

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM STACY RHODES
Mission Director
USAID
Guatemala City, Guatemala
(1994-1998)

Mr. Rhodes was born and raised in Tuscon, Arizona. He received his Bachelor's at Occidental College and his Master's at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia, attended U.C. Berkeley's Law School, and worked in the legal field before entering the Foreign Service. He worked in various positions for USAID in Haiti, Washington D.C., Morocco, Nepal, Guatemala, South Africa. After retiring from USAID, Mr. Rhodes did NGO work for the Institute for International Education and Save the Children, worked as the Latin American Managing Director at the Millennium Challenge Corp, and the Chief of Staff for the Peace Corps.

Topical Focus – Democracy-Strengthening in Guatemala

RHODES: Yes. USAID had a large program in Guatemala, though over the years it had been declining as their civil war continued on and on into the 1990s. While some progress had been made under the first (since 1954) democratically-elected government of Vinicio Cerezo, the government of Guatemala after the election of President Jorge Serrano had been something of a "fracaso" (disaster). In 1993, when I was still in Washington DC, Serrano got fed up with the difficulties of democracy and actually pulled off his auto-golpe. Although he had been elected, the Congress and Supreme Court had angered him with their actions and rulings, and President Serrano decided he'd had enough of this electoral democracy stuff.

Usually a ‘coup’ comes from outside the presidential palace; this time it was from the inside! The constitution was suspended, the Supreme Court was dismissed, and the Congress closed. Serrano tried to rule by decree, but the Guatemalans viewed this as an insult and further embarrassment to the country. Their ‘democracy’ was young but a matter of pride, given the difficult past, and the people came out into the streets. The popular protests were huge, and the Constitutional Court (separate from the Supreme Court) held a special session and declared all of Serrano’s dictates unconstitutional. Serrano also did not have the unified support of the military, which past dictators had depended on, and the crisis ended without much bloodshed, when Serrano negotiated his quick departure and exile.

The Congress then selected as “interim president” Ramiro de Leon Carpio, a highly respected lawyer who had been the independent human rights ombudsman. USAID/Guatemala had been supporting the foundation and development of the human rights ombudsman’s office for years, and the mission had a very close, effective working relationship with de Leon Carpio. He was courageous, energetic and active, fortunately able to get broad support across the political spectrum. As a result, Guatemalan democracy was restored in 1994, with much support from the U.S. Embassy and USAID programs. In spite of many imperfections and often weak and ineffective administrations, Guatemala’s democracy has done well since, with numerous consecutive elections.

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RHODES: Looking back, though, I would probably have to say that the highest priority focus in our Guatemala programs were the democracy-strengthening portfolio of projects. We were fortunate to be well-funded in this area. Ambassador Jim Michel and others had established the earliest programs in the administration of justice (AOJ) programs, later to be called rule of law (ROL) programs, as they expanded from strengthening courts and court systems to strengthening prosecutors’ offices, investigative processes and some defender services. The program area expanded further into supporting efforts to improve the functioning of the Congress with efforts to establish committee systems and a things like a ‘research service. Further, our democracy programs also evolved to do a great deal to enhance the electoral process through extending the franchise and assuring fair/transparent voting. Finally our program worked very closely with and provided support to a substantial number of Guatemalan of civil society organizations and human rights groups. The is clearly still an area of relative weakness for Guatemala, to this day, but I think it is fair to say that we did make a significant impact on the capacity of the courts, the effectiveness of the human rights ombudsman and on the public ministry’s investigative and prosecutorial and trial processes. This was perhaps less due to material assistance than with the extensive training programs for judges and prosecutors, along with the staffs of these institutions.

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RHODES: I have to say that while the overall program in Guatemala was very strong, funding had definitely leveled off as many in Washington were growing impatient with

the very long, drawn-out peace negotiation process. But following de Leon Carpio's time as Interim President, there was a very important national election, resulting in a "reformer", the respected mayor of Guatemala City Álvaro Arzú became President in a clear and open democratic election. This was in late 1995, and when he became president in early '96 he promised to make the peace negotiations his highest priority and get it done within one year. He achieved this with the long-awaited, heralded signing of the peace accords just after Christmas 1996. It was an amazing achievement, really. It took one year of banging heads and making significant concessions that no other president had been willing and able to achieve. Arzú was also able to rein in the Guatemalan military to a greater extent than any earlier elected civilian President, utilizing his enormous popular support. So while the new democratic 'tradition' in Guatemala had started earlier, Arzú followed up on de Leon Carpio's initiatives and built on them (and adding his own) to significantly solidify it. And while there have been ups and downs, certainly some poor presidents and some weak ones (including a couple of former generals), the military has never again taken power in Guatemala, and a civilian has been popularly elected there ever since. That is progress. And that Arzú was also able to finalize and reach closure with the URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) on far-reaching peace accords, this made an enormous difference for the entire population, but especially the Mayans – it was the first real official statement or 'codification' of the rights and privileges of the Mayan majority, which had not been established constitutionally or legislatively. Now it was there in black and white. There were 10 separate 'accords', six of them were 'substantive' accords – and these were historic documents, with the force of law, laying out the policy objectives and programs the government committed itself to, in order to address social exclusion and improve the socioeconomic situation of the Mayan people.

GUINEA

N/A

GUYANA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DENNIS HAYS
Department of State
Deputy Chief of Mission
Guyana
Georgetown, Guyana
(1988-1992)

Ambassador Hays was born into a US Navy family and was raised in the United States and abroad. He was educated at the University of Florida and Harvard University. Entering the Foreign Service in1975, he spent the major portion of his career dealing with Latin American, particularly Mexican and Cuban, Affairs. He also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Burundi, and from 1997 to 2000 as U.S. Ambassador to Surinam. Ambassador Hays was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2001.

Topical Focus – Elections in Guyana

HAYS: The country had invited in the Carter Center for the election process, and there was a lot of concern because of prior electoral fraud. People can be very creative when it comes to electoral fraud, and there was zero trust between the two sides. There had been violence in the past, certainly around elections, but also ethnic cleansing in the sense of driving people out. You would have an Afro village and an Indo village and people would overlap. Someone would say no, you, whichever side it is, need to get out of here and move, and there were campaigns of rape and beatings and things to enforce this over the years. So there was lots of hostility built into the system on top of mistrust. What it came down to was the voters' lists and IDs. Both sides were convinced the other side was going to pad the vote in their stronghold areas. And so they had to come up with a system of identity cards that would be foolproof or close to it, and a system for voting so people could only vote once and you couldn't bring in ringers or what have you. That took a real long time. Carter came down a couple of times. I have great respect for his negotiating skills, because I sat there in the room and watched him. Hoyte, to give him credit, realized that the country needed to get out from under this cloud. The only way that was going to happen was to have an election that would be accepted by us and the Brits and the international community by extension. So when it came down to the hard questions he went ahead and did them much to the distress of the hard wing of his party who said, "Hey it's worked for 25 years, why are we changing it now? Why are we arguing with success?" So again I don't think he gets enough credit. Buyoya, for his many faults, took the country through an election, he lost and he stepped aside. What more do you want from somebody under these circumstances? Q: What year was this election? HAYS: The process started in 1990, and then it picked up in 1991. They were scheduled for the fall of 1991, and then they were postponed again and again and again. I left in June 1992. They finally took place in October of 1992.

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Anyway, Hoyte wanted to have the election, but he wanted to win it obviously. The trick was to get him to actually have free and fair elections, and then accept the results.

Q: How did the Carter Center become engaged?

HAYS: At the request of the Guyanese government. They were looking for somebody to authenticate their efforts or lend legitimacy to them perhaps. They didn't want the Commonwealth at that point even though they were obviously a member of the Commonwealth, because the Commonwealth had been beating up on them regularly and had taken a side that they were wrong and bad and at fault. The Carter Center, to the best of anyone's memory, had never commented on Guyana one way or the other and so they came in with a clean slate. Pastor was still at the Carter Center in those days and was the action guy for this. They sent down a number of people including Amy Beale, the young woman who was killed in East Africa some years later. Carter made it clear that he would not put his credibility on the line unless they actually did move to free and fair elections. The big issue was voter identification cards and how you determine that the people who vote, only vote once. The election was postponed several times, and Carter came several times to break through the log jam and keep the process moving. There were a couple of occasions where I thought from sitting in on the meetings that that's it, there's a rupture here, and the Guyanese aren't going to come back from this one, but they did, they kept coming back. Hoyte, in particular, felt that to win a disputed election would send the country spiraling further down. They weren't going to get international resources, they weren't going to get investment and so they had to do something. They had to satisfy Carter. I was quite impressed. He insisted on concrete results and not the sort of thing that you release a statement and get on the plane and fly away and then they give you another statement.

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Q: You were there when the elections actually did take place?

HAYS: Actually not. They postponed them beyond that. I kind of regretted that. I left in June 1992. The elections had been scheduled; the last one I thought I would make was in April 1992 but they were postponed too.

Q: Why were they postponed?

HAYS: Continuing problems over voter identification and registration. They were postponed until July and then they were postponed until late October when they finally did take place. Hoyte lost, and Cheddi won and they had a change of power. Whether Cheddi was the best thing for the country was another story, but they did have an election and a good result.

Q: What sort of relationship did you have with Cheddi Jagan?

HAYS: Reasonably good. When I first got there, he was referred to as a "spent force", as one of the British politicians referred to him. There was a sense that he would never come back. In fact, the best thing he could do would be to step aside and let a younger, weaker, more charismatic leader come forward. Nevertheless, he held on and his party, the PPP which was very much his creation so the inner circle were all people who had been with him forever and stayed loyal. So he was there. There was criticism occasionally based on "hold your own", in other words a racial appeal when he would go off into the rice country where it was basically 100% Indian population. But he was willing to talk to us. I didn't see him all that often because there wasn't really any need to for most of the time I was there. His wife, who was American by birth, was also an interesting character, sort of your urban grandmother. A nice little old lady, but she was by far the tougher of the two, both in terms of ideology and also in terms of ruthlessness in exercising political power. And she ended up being Prime Minister when he died.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR GEORGE F. JONES
U. S. Ambassador
Guyana
Georgetown, Guyana
(1992-1995)

George F. Jones was born in Texas in 1935. He graduated from Wabash College in 1955 and received a Master's Degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Stanford University. His postings abroad have included Quito, Accra, Caracas, Vienna, Guatemala City, San Jose and Santiago, with an ambassadorship to Guyana. Mr. Jones was interviewed in 1996 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Topical Focus – Political Dynamics in Elections and Violence on Election Day

Q: At that time, what were American interests in Guyana and what was the situation in Guyana?

JONES: There were some interesting parallels to Chile. Major differences of course, Chile was a much larger country. Certainly relations with Chile under Pinochet loomed much larger in the State Department's eyes than Guyana. But Guyana also had had a long period without a free election. At the time the British were thinking about giving it independence, in the early '60's, the two major political leaders were Cheddi Jagan, a

Guyanese of Indian descent who had studied at Howard University and then taken a dental degree from Northwestern University, and Forbes Burnham, a Guyanese of African descent who was a lawyer. While in Chicago, Jagan had met an American, Janet Rosenberg, and married her. Janet, if she wasn't a card-carrying Communist, was the next thing to it and certainly converted Cheddi to Communism. Cheddi returned to Guyana with Janet, went into politics, and won all the elections that were held under the British colonial administration except for the very last one. The British who were initially very reluctant to turn an independent Guyana over to him were clearly coming around to the view that there was no alternative. No matter how many elections they held, he kept winning them. But then Cheddi paid a visit to Washington in '61, I guess, met with Kennedy at the White House, and gave a famous speech at the National Press Club. Kennedy of course was very concerned not to have another Fidel Castro in Latin America, not to have a second Cuba. Although Cheddi said lots of things about wanting good relations with the United States, he didn't give quite the right answers. He wouldn't forthrightly deny that he was a Communist or assure us that he wouldn't have anything to do with the Communists. So the Kennedy administration decided that it should pressure the British to prevent him from coming to power. The Foreign Relations volume with all the documents on this is supposed to be coming out within the next few months. Their publication has been approved.

The methodology that was eventually arrived at was to change the Constitution to provide for proportional representation instead of first-past-the-post elections. So an election was held on that basis in 1964. There were three forces in Parliament, none of which had a majority: Burnham and Jagan and a smaller conservative pro-business party led by an important businessman. He had the same view as the United States, that at all costs, Jagan must be prevented from coming to power. So he threw his support to Forbes Burnham. Burnham was named prime minister and the British granted independence to Guyana. A number of other things were done as well to help insure Burnham's election. But ironically, after a number of years of getting along well with the United States and Britain, Burnham began turning increasingly toward the Communist Bloc and toward dictatorship and state socialism internally. Something over 80% of the economy was controlled by the government at the time of Burnham's death. My own view is that Jagan could not have possibly been as bad a leader for Guyana as Burnham turned out to be. A spectacular illustration of the risks we run when we try to choose who is best for another country. The uncertainties of that calculus are such that time after time we have been burned, and we were certainly burned in Guyana. We pulled out the Peace Corps, closed down our AID mission. Relations were absolutely at the zero point. Gerald Thomas, Reagan's first Ambassador to Guyana, a political appointee, met with Burnham only once his entire time there, relations were so bad. Burnham died on the operating table under Cuban doctors in 1985 in what was supposed to be a routine operation. They sent his

body off to Moscow to be preserved the way Lenin's body was. It was supposed to be viewable in a tomb like Lenin's. Somehow it didn't quite work. The Mausoleum is there but it had to be closed, not for open viewing. Burnham was succeeded by a man named Desmond Hoyte, who was his prime minister. Burnham in the meantime had converted himself from Prime Minister to President, and Hoyte was his Prime Minister and became President on Burnham's death and was confirmed as President in an election held in December of 1985. All of the elections that were held after 1964 were highly suspect. They were not free and fair by any standard. So Hoyte's term of office was supposedly up in 1990, just as I was getting ready to come to Guyana. Hoyte looked at the situation Guyana was in and concluded that the only hope for the country was a 180 degree turn. Up to that point, he had been a faithful follower of Burnham's and still talks about him with great affection and nostalgia and so on, but he reversed his policies totally. He began to let foreign investment in. He sold the telephone company to American investors. He cleared up Guyana's arrears to the international lending agencies. He began to give indications that he wanted the 1990 elections to be regarded as free and fair. He told the State Department, I sat in on some of these meetings as Ambassador Designate, that he planned to invite the Commonwealth to send observers to the election. Well, the Commonwealth had observers at previous elections, and they hadn't filed a very credible report, the obvious supposition being that they didn't like having to criticize another Commonwealth member. So the State Department said that's fine but we think you also ought to invite the Carter Center. A bit to everyone's surprise, an invitation was extended to President Carter. Carter went down there in September of 1990 and did the kind of negotiation that only Carter can get away with. He only spent 24 hours in Guyana, but he had done his homework beforehand, and he knew what had to be changed to prevent the election from being stolen once again. It was absolutely clear that whatever Hoyte's intentions were, and there was some doubt about that, it was clear that there were members of his party who had been in power for 26 years and had no intention of giving it up easily. So Carter, just before the end of his visit, and just before a scheduled press conference, told Hoyte that unless Hoyte agreed to do the following things, he was going to announce at the press conference that he was not going to be able to accept the invitation to observe the elections because he couldn't have anything to do with elections that were questionable. So he had Hoyte over a large barrel, and Hoyte agreed to everything that Carter asked. My own view is that Hoyte knew that from the moment he invited Carter, Hoyte was no fool, he didn't know everything he was going to have to concede, but he knew there was a damn good risk that he was going to lose the election, and that he was putting his Presidency on the line by inviting Carter. I think he did it with his eyes open. He did it because he could see no choice for Guyana. So Carter agreed to observe the elections. The various changes that were agreed to began to be implemented, but in best Guyanese fashion with stops and starts and twists and turns. So the elections did not in fact take place in 1990. They still had not taken place when I got there in

January of 1992. Hoyte's term just got extended. They wound up being held on October 5, 1992. Which to my private amusement was exactly four years to the day after the plebiscite in Chile in which Pinochet had been defeated. The delays were caused by trying to get a clean voters list and all of the hassles related to that. But we finally got a list that was reasonably accurate. The chairman of the elections commission was changed and an honest man was put in charge of it. The counting of votes had in the past been done according to the British system, at a central counting places. They don't count votes at the place of poll. Carter got Hoyte to agree to count at the place of poll because the big mechanism of fraud had been between the polling place and the counting place, boxes had mysteriously disappeared, and been replaced by others. So my first nine months in Guyana were spent preparing for the elections.

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Q: You are talking about '92 when Marxism and Leninism was really falling apart in the Motherland and elsewhere.

JONES: That was the one and only time I ever talked to him about it. I didn't think it was very productive to rehash the past in terms of accomplishing my mission. But other people, journalists and historians, were always asking him about it. He didn't like to talk about it particularly. He was annoyed that it was brought up with such frequency. But when compelled to talk about it, he would say Communism had never really been properly tried. The Soviet Union had messed it up. Stalin had gotten off on the wrong course so that if you could have true socialism, that would work a lot better than what had been tried in the Soviet Union. But, he would add, this is all irrelevant because this is not the issue of the moment. Guyana certainly needed foreign investment, and he wanted the best possible relations with the United States and with foreign investors. He never apologized; he never retracted anything. In fact I don't think that in his mind he ever changed his views, but he adapted to circumstances. He was enough of a politician to be a pragmatist. He saw clearly that there was no further assistance coming from the Soviet Union, that he had to work with the West. He also saw that the West, not the East, had helped him at long last get back into power. It was the West that was guaranteeing a free election; it was not anybody from Eastern Europe. I think he was really very grateful. He awarded a decoration to Jimmy Carter after he got to be President. He was very grateful for the assistance that the United States in particular had rendered.

Q: This period leading up to the election, nine months or so, I imagine there was some attention. It obviously wasn't on the front burner but there was some attention. What was your role? What were you doing?

JONES: We were monitoring the process and reporting on it, trying to do everything that we could to ensure that it would be a free and fair election. I think that everyone who knew anything about Guyana thought that Jagan was the overwhelmingly likely winner for demographic reasons if for nothing else. The East Indian section of the population was the majority, somewhere between 50 and 55%. The African descent, 40-45%. The rest were mixed and assorted other ancestors. Everything indicated that the East Indians had a fanatical loyalty to Cheddi and always had. He won his first elective office in Guyana in 1947. By the time of the Bush and Clinton administrations, the shadow or the specter of a second Marxist leader in the hemisphere didn't worry anybody anymore. We no longer had a security concern that Soviet bases would come to be based in Guyana. That was not going to happen in the world of 1990-92. What we wanted to do is keep this process building of converting every country in the Americas to a democracy, for a variety of reasons including the reason that this would isolate Cuba and identify it as the odd man out in the Americas, which it is today. During this first period in Guyana, that was my overwhelming interest. There were little obstacles on the road, but on the whole, all the preparations went well. For the elections in October, a huge number of foreign observers came down. The Carter Center brought 66 observers for the election; the Commonwealth had another 20 or 30 I think, and then there were various other smaller groups that showed up.

We also had the Deputy Assistant Secretary who was responsible for the Caribbean, Donna Hrinak. On election day she and I visited a polling place, and things were going smoothly; voting was taking place in an orderly fashion. Everything seemed to be going just fine. I was giving a lunch in her honor. Our guests had arrived and we had sat down to lunch. Then the phone rang. There were a couple of Americans who were working at the elections commission. In order to get a clean voters list and an efficient voters list that was computerized, foreign technicians had to be brought in. Actually the UN provided the computer programmers to put the voters list into the computers and set up the computers for receiving the results of the election as well. The senior person was an American named John Gargett. Gargett called me and told me the elections commission was under attack. There was a large crowd outside and they were stoning the building. He was very concerned; they had a couple of policemen there and that was it. They were unarmed, as Guyanese policemen, like the British, normally were. John was very fearful that at any moment the crowd was going to storm the building, run right up the stairs to the computer center and wreck the equipment and threaten the lives of all the foreign programmers including his own. He asked for help. I went to Donna and told her, sorry, I need to get down to the election commissions building. She said I'll go with you, so we piled into the car and headed off to the commission and found conditions exactly as described. There was indeed a sizable crowd outside the door in a very bad mood, as I found out by trying to talk to some of them. In this three story building every pane of glass in it had been shattered. So we worked our way through the crowd and into the

building and found the chairman of the commission holding a press conference with mostly foreign press on the ground floor of the building. Gargett and the other technicians were also down there. The press conference broke up, and Gargett and the others said, "get us out of here. This is totally unsafe." Donna and I led the way out of the building, and just as we came out, the mob began to throw stones again. Some of the glass cut me on the hand and scalp, but we made it out of the building and back to the cars. One of the Commonwealth observers was there, a remarkable lady from New Zealand named Dame Anne Hercus. She said why don't we go see the police commissioner. Some of the cars took the technicians off to the hotel. There was no major problem anywhere except right there in front of the elections building. Dame Anne and Donna and I went off to see the police commissioner, and after some delay got in to see him. He was talking on about four phones at once; there was further delay until he could give us any attention, and in effect made no promises. He said he thought the building had adequate police protection as it was. He did in fact send a few additional policemen to the building. And the technicians, at our urging, went back to the building. Things quieted down. One of the things that happened, the chairman of the elections commission made the very... the complaint of the crowd was that they had not been able to vote. Well, as I had determined by talking to the people, the problem was that they thought all they needed in order to vote was their national identity card. I don't doubt that in past elections that was all they needed. But in 1992 they were supposed to have registered to vote and to be on the voters list. They had not found their names on the list and they were very upset. So the chairman of the elections commission decided to set up a special ballot box and let all these people vote. An absolutely brilliant idea. Their votes were not counted so it was sort of a smoke and mirrors thing, but it got them calmed down and gave them the feeling of satisfaction. So the atmosphere had calmed down and the technicians had gone back to the building. But around nightfall I got a call from them again saying there were still just a handful of policemen in front of the center. They could see there was looting going on and people running up and down the street, there were still a considerable number of people outside the building, and they were still very concerned about their safety. Carter had been out of town during the day. He had flown off to the interior to watch the voting, but by this point he was back in town and we briefed him on what had transpired. He went to the elections commissions building, and then picked up the phone and called Hoyte and said, "I'm a former president of the United States and I'm here in this building. I'm not concerned about myself because I have the Secret Service here with me, but I think that if any kind of mob got into this building it would cause very unfortunate press for Guyana." So Hoyte at that point gave the order and suddenly miraculously, lots of policemen appeared and some army armored personnel carriers were quietly moved into place a few blocks away.

Q: the mob that was outside there were they distinguished as being black as opposed to being Indian or...

JONES: Yes. Of course the population of the city was overwhelmingly black. The East Indian population was overwhelmingly rural. If you had a crowd in Georgetown, the odds are that it would be black. The looting that was going on was looting of Indian stores with Indian names. There is a real racial factor in Guyana. As soon as I heard that Carter had gone to the Commission, I joined him. Later in the evening the British and Canadian High Commissioners cane as well. We stayed there for several hours just to give the technicians some moral support and make sure that nothing further went wrong. In fact nobody ever did enter the building. Who knows why they didn't. I mean they could have easily done so and destroyed everything in the building during almost any point in the day but they didn't. We came within a hair of losing the election, that is, of not having had one. If they would have destroyed the computers it would have been very difficult to have continued with the election. It certainly would have given a perfect excuse to those who didn't want to continue with the election. But the votes were counted. The Carter people did a quick count, a selection of precincts that were representative of the entire vote. Carter went to see Hoyte and Jagan the next morning and told them the results of his quick count showed Jagan ahead by 14 points. The actual vote was 11 points, but Carter said their margin of error was three points, so it was within the margin. So the results were announced; Jagan had won.

Q: From our perspective were there any important changes when Jagan came in? We're talking about really the late '92 up through '95 period. Did things change particularly?

JONES: Well, yes. In several contradictory ways. On the one hand, I found access to the President much easier. I found the relationship with the President much easier. I had no trouble getting in to see him and it was always a very relaxed and friendly situation when I did see him. His cabinet was a funny mixture of some very competent people and some much less competent people. There were clearly great debates within the government on just how far to go with this private enterprise nonsense. The election was the high point of my tenure. A very emotional moment, a very satisfying moment to have seen another country through to democracy. There is no question Jagan is going to run an honest election the next time they come up, next year, October of '97. Hoyte had done a lot but he hadn't done everything. The atmosphere in the media was still very controlled when I first arrived. Jagan opened up the media. There was no longer any sense of intimidation or pressure. He gave no indication of having any problem with, well that's a little too strong. There was one occasion when not he himself but his party issued an angry statement about one of the independent newspapers. But on the whole, the whole atmosphere of the country changed to a genuinely free one following the election. So that

was very satisfactory. But from that point on the main issue I was concerned with, the main thing the US government wanted me to do during the remainder of my time there, was to try to persuade them to privatize, to get rid of these highly unprofitable government enterprises that were causing their budget deficits, and open the door for foreign investment, in particular American private investment. We were able to restart the AID program. We were able to bring back the Peace Corps. Of course our AID program was tied to compliance with the IMF. The IMF and the IDB and the major Western powers were all trying to get them to privatize. Success in this area was virtually zero. Those remaining two and a half years were on the whole quite frustrating. I had the sense of having a lot of chips that we had won by astutely and honorably playing in the poker game and yet never succeeding in cashing any of them in.

Q: I would have thought that with an Indian population, along with the Chinese and others, these are entrepreneurs from their fingertips. I would have thought that no matter what the proclivities of Jagan and his immediate entourage, he would be dealing with a bunch of small shopkeepers.

JONES: And some of them not so small. There were some very substantial, not substantial in US terms, although there was one family in particular that was substantial even by US standards. The Indians dominated the business community. The blacks were the civil service, the army, the police. The middle class Indians dominated the business community and they had financed Jagan's campaign, plus the communities overseas. One of the remarkable features of Guyanese election campaigns is that both Hoyte and Jagan went off to the US to hold campaign rallies and collect money from Guyanese living in the US and Canada. But in spite of that, the Indian businessmen expressed time and again their frustration at not being able to get through to Jagan. He had all kinds of concerns. He was genuinely worried about the poor. Jagan was somebody, it's hard to say this about a politician, in whom there was hardly a devious bone in his body. What you saw, what you heard from Jagan was it! He was very sincere, I mean the reason he had become a Communist was that he became convinced that was the way to help people, the poor, to raise up the masses. For example, one of the worst run of the government enterprises was the electric company. He was very concerned that if he privatized the electric company, what would happen to the electric rates, people would have to pay more. I and dozens of other people said to him, "Okay, you can skew the rates. You can make the rates high on your Indian businessmen friends and low on the average consumer." He shot back immediately, ah but the businessmen would simply pass it along and raise their prices in order to make up for their increased electricity costs.

SALLY GROOMS COWAL
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin America

Washington, DC (1989-1991)

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

Topical Focus – U.S. Policy Towards Guyanese Elections

COWAL: It had gone on for some time. During my time as deputy assistant secretary, we began to achieve a more balanced look at Guyana, in part because our views on who was a nationalist and who was a Communist began to change. The PNP had simply been there for so many years and it was obvious that they were stealing elections and bankrupting the country of whatever little it had. The jobs were for the boys, and the boys were party members. During my time we took a more balanced look at Guyana. And through the efforts of non-governmental organizations, like the Carter Center, preventing the ballot boxes from being whisked away with no supervision, there was finally an election in which Jagan came to power.

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Q: I pay scant attention to Latin American politics, but, boy, his name came up and his wife's name came up all the time. So I would have thought entrenched in our bureaucracy would be people who had been fighting this battle.

COWAL: Yes, I think that was probably true. Maybe it was more of an accomplishment than I thought at the time to simply say, "Let's give up on that. Let's look at reality today and not get ourselves caught in this time warp." I must say, Jagan gave me personal credit for it more than I probably deserved, years afterwards, when I was ambassador in Trinidad and there would be some regional meetings, and he had been elected prime minister after I was already in Trinidad. But those elections came about, and his party got the votes and he was chosen prime minister, and from whatever podium he was at, he would say, "Oh, I see Ambassador Cowal is in the audience, and she's responsible for the fact that I got elected, because the United States stopped being in opposition."

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MOSINA H. JORDAN
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
and State Department
Director of the Regional Caribbean Program
Mission to Guyana
Guyana
(1995)

Ambassador Mosina H. Jordan was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated from New York University and American University Law School. She worked for the New York City's Department of Social Services as a case worker, high school mathematics teacher, Attorney advisor for the Office of Economic Opportunity Legal Services Program, Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Senate Appropriations Committee, Sub-committee on Labor, Human and Health services, Education and Related Agencies, and USAID Director of Civil Rights Office. She entered the Foreign Service in 1983 and served in the Central African RepubliC, Jamaica, and the Caribbean .

Topical Focus – Addressing Intimidation Threats and Fraudulent Elections

Q: OK, well let's talk about the program in Guyana. I mean what was the situation? What was the government and what was going on there in '95?

JORDAN: Guyana is located on the coast of South America, with Surinam to the east, Brazil to the south and southwest and Venezuela to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the north. Although Guyana is part of the Anglophone Caribbean, it's one of the few countries that's part of South America. The official language is English, although the majority of the population speaks Guyanese Creole. Guyana has a population of approximately 765,000 people, 51% Indo-Guyanese, 42% Afro-Guyanese, 4% Amerindians and the remainder, Europeans, Chinese and Portuguese. Guyana was originally colonized by the Netherlands, and later, it became a British colony.

The 20th century saw a rise in consciousness among the country's ethnic groups and a struggle for political power between the disenfranchised, non-white class and the old plantocracy. The British responded to demands for reforms by establishing suffrage in 1950 and allowing the formation of political parties. Rival parties emerged based along ethnic lines, the People's Progressive Party (PPP) led by Cheddi Jagan, a Marxist Indo-Guyanese, and the People's National Congress (PNC) led by Linden Forbes Burnham, a leftist Afro-Guyanese. Burnham was the first prime minister at independence in 1966, winning a contentious election in December 1964. I read that Cheddi Jagan, the prime minister at the time had to be forcibly removed from office, because he wouldn't accept the election results. Burnham's two decades of authoritarian rule, firmly established control over Guyana's political and economic life. Intimidation and threats accompanied fraudulent elections. As opposition to the government increased, the

government responded with retaliation and violence. Nationalized industries and financial institutions led to decline in productivity and economic stagnation and decline. Quality of life deteriorated - there were frequent blackouts, shortages in rice and sugar, basic staples and unprecedented emigration of skilled professionals. Three factors that kept the economic decline from becoming a disaster was the flourishing illegal economy, remittances that Guyanese citizens received from relatives abroad and Guyana's near self sufficiency in food production. In 1981, USAID under the Reagan Administration terminated its development assistance program in Guyana.

Burnham died in 1985 and Desmond Hoyte, vice president became the new executive president. In 1980, a new constitution shifted power from the prime minister to the executive president. In the 1985 elections, Hoyte won by 79% of the vote. Hoyte developed an economic recovery plan, negotiated with the IMF and World Bank new loans in exchange for free-market reforms and reversed Burnham's nationalization policies. Hoyte expecting to win the 1992 elections based on the improving economy and free market reforms, lost to Cheddi Jagan who after 40 years renounced his past Marxist policies and embraced elements of the free-market economy.

A new Guyana program was developed to support Guyana's free-market reforms. We started initially in Barbados looking at ways to re-engage in Guyana by exploring improvements in the justice system, in the management of their trade and export program, and in constructing a new drainage system in a section of Georgetown, and in constructing a new power supply grid. In January 1995, I relocated to Guyana, selected an office building, staffed the office, bought and installed equipment and furniture, and implemented the program. Three months after my arrival, I became very ill. The doctors at the Guyana Hospital misdiagnosed my medical problem and after a month of tests and re-tests, my condition became severe, and I was medevaced to a hospital in Miami with pneumonia. I remained in Miami for three weeks and retuned to Guyana to pack out and depart for Washington, D. C.

HAITI

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DAVID COHEN
USAID
Mission Director
Haiti
Port-Au-Prince, Haiti
(1990-1994)

David Cohen was born and raised in New Jersey, where he attended Rutgers University for his undergraduate degree. After graduating with a masters degree from New York University, he joined USAID in 1969. He has held positions in Brazil, Panama, Haiti, and Sri Lanka. He was interviewed by John Pielemeier in January 2018.

Topical Focus – USAID Assistance to Haitian Elections

Q: So you mentioned a coup d'état. What exactly happened?

COHEN: Let me set the political scene. Incredible for some to know, Haiti was the second country in the Americas – after the U.S. – to win its independence from a European colonial power. In the case of Haiti, that power was France. This happened in1804 following a successful slave revolt led by Toussaint L'Ouverture. Between 1804 and 1915, more than 70 different dictators ruled Haiti. US troops occupied the country between 1915 and 1934. From 1957 to 1986, the country was under the brutal dictatorship of Francois (Papa Doc) Duvalier and, following his death, his son Jean Claude (Baby Doc). Life under the Duvaliers was brutal and enforced by the vicious Tonton Macoute, while the level of corruption was incredibly high. Jean Claude's ouster in 1986, helped along with some assistance from the USG, provided an opportunity to put Haiti on a more solid political, economic and humanitarian course. In the aftermath of Jean Claude, there were a number of interim governments. Setting up a credible election proved challenging, as interests, including many from the Duvalier past, vied for advantage. About two months before the election itself, there was an attempted coup that was aimed at thwarting the candidacy of the leading candidate, a charismatic ex-Catholic priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. As a priest, Father Aristide was a high profile champion of the poor. He ran for the presidency on an agenda of what he would do to make their lives better. If elected, the masses of Haiti's poor, for the first time, would have a president who would represent and care about them.

Fortunately, the coup, carried out by elements of the Haitian Army, was put down by other elements of the military, along with some strong words and effective diplomacy from the U.S. Ambassador, Alvin Adams. Adams, also known by his Haitian nickname Bourik Chaje – the loaded donkey, had been in the country for about a year. [Note: Adams was quite fluent in Haitian Creole. On his arrival in country, he quoted a Creole proverb: Bourik chaje pas kampe – a loaded donkey never stops, alluding to his (Adams') singular focus on bringing about a successful Haitian election.] Adams was quite high profile, very effective and extraordinarily impassioned about achieving a better future for Haiti (that is, a smooth democratic transition). From day one in the country, I admired the passion and drive that defined Al Adams. He was an interesting man, fueled by large quantities of cigarettes and coffee. This coup attempt had a profound, enduring impact on Aristide. He had run a good campaign up until then. When the coup attempt took place, it seemed clear to me that Aristide had concluded that he would not survive it. Once the coup ended, he became a lot more guarded and defensive, much less democratic in orientation and quite a bit more threatening to his enemies. The reason I am mentioning these things is because it was this more defensive and threatening Aristide who was elected as president of Haiti.

Q: And that brings us up to the election. Was USAID engaged with that at all?

COHEN: In the run-up to the late 1990 presidential election, the USAID Mission staff was very focused on working with the donor community which was then, in this particular context, led by the UNDP. The shared goal was to assure a high quality free and fair election. The multilateral component of the donor group included elements of the UN, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank, the IMF and the Organization of American States (OAS). The prominent bilateral components included the governments of France, Canada and, of course, the U.S. Each donor brought different or complementary resources to the table. USAID provided technical assistance through grants and contracts with such entities as IFES (the International Foundation for Electoral Systems) and the international assistance programs of the U.S. Republican and Democratic parties (IRI and NDI, respectively). For one politically sensitive element, USAID provided a grant to the UNDP itself for something that it could uniquely accomplish. Among the areas addressed by USAID assistance were: voter registration, political party building, Election Day observation, ballot printing, and logistics. The good news was that the election was a great success. Turnout was high; violence and intimidation were minimal; and observers from all around the international community were pleased with what they witnessed. I, myself, spent part of Election Day as an observer. I cannot remember ever seeing people as happy and jubilant as the hordes of Haiti's poor that turned out to vote that day. Some people danced while waiting in the

very long lines to vote. Others carried roosters, a symbol of Aristide's Lavalas (Creole for "flood") party. Aristide won with 67 percent of the vote.

Q: What happened following the election?

COHEN: When Aristide was elected, donors in general, but especially the United States, were extremely forthcoming in trying to provide the support that would be needed to ensure the success of new government and democracy. Our program budget soared. However, President Aristide seemed less focused on moving forward with the kinds of things that would make the economy grow and maximize benefits to the poorest than had been the passionate agenda of Father Aristide, the poor parish priest. As a candidate, he been very effective at running against the sins and corruption of the past. His vision of the past was very clear. But now, as president, he offered very little in terms of a plan of action for a better Haiti for the future of its people. That malignant vision of the past, that aggression towards the individuals and institutions involved with that were a centerpiece of his "dialogue" with the people. Aristide, a man who was so articulate and soft-spoken in the many meetings we had with him, would become a raging demagogue when out speaking with his constituency. Increasingly, the military and the rich, who had prospered greatly under the Duvaliers, saw Aristide as a threat that needed to be eliminated. And that, I believe, was the core of what generated the coup by the military that overthrew him in October 1991.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DAVID ECKERSON
USAID
Health Office Unit Chief and Office Director
Haiti
Port Au Prince, Haiti
(1987-1992)

David Eckerson was born and raised in New York. He attended Hiram College for his undergraduate degree, and the Christian Theological Seminary for his masters. He joined USAID in 1984, and has held positions in Haiti, Nicaragua, and Uganda. He was interviewed by Carol Peasley in September 2022.

Topical Focus – U. S. Post Coup d'Etat Activities and the Aristide Election

ECKERSON: I was out of the country from around Halloween of 1987 to February of 1988. It took a while for my retina to heal and the pressure inside my eye to return to normal. But, my recovery was excellent, and my sight got back to normal. I returned to Haiti at about the same time that the new Ambassador, Al Adams, arrived in country. Al Adams took the country by storm with the first words he spoke as Ambassador. As he descended the steps of the plane, a reporter on the tarmac asked him what he thought about the upcoming elections. The previous elections that I was supposed to be a part of never happened, thanks to a coup by the military. There was a concern in the country that the next try at elections wouldn't happen either. Al Adams stopped at the bottom of the stairs, turned to the reporter and responded in Creole with a classic Haitian proverb; "*Un burique charge pas ka campe*". A loaded donkey going down a hill can't stop. All the papers and radio broadcasts the next day labeled Ambassador Adams "Burique Charge", a moniker he kept throughout his time in Haiti.

The press loved Al Adams. He spoke fluent Creole. He was constantly in the news. He was a no-nonsense diplomat who spoke bluntly and to the point. Soon after he arrived, Ambassador Adams requested a one-on-one meeting with General Prosper Avril, the leader of the military coup. In the meeting Ambassador Adams issued Avril an ultimatum. The military needed to step down and let Haitians decide their future with free and fair elections. He basically told the General: "You need to get out of here. We will give you safe passage to Miami, Be a hero for your country. Step down. Send the coup leaders, your other general friends, out". Later that night, Ambassador Adams got a call from Avril. The General asked Ambassador Adams to come over to his house to discuss some issues. So, at midnight, Ambassador Adams goes over to Avril's house, and they're sitting in Avril's kitchen with the General and his wife. Avril asks: "If I go to Miami, can I take my dog on the plane?" Ambassador Adams told him that would not be a problem. With that assurance, General Avril said he would go to Miami.

The next morning, the U.S. military sent in a plane that picked up General Avril, his family and his dog, and flew them to Miami. The two other Generals who were part of the coup fled to the Dominican Republic the same day. With the ouster of the coup leaders, the stage was set for the elections. It was a classic matchup between Marc Bazin, a former legislator and member of the rich Haitian elite, and a barefoot priest named Father Aristide who stood for all the poor and downtrodden Haitians. The campaign unfolded, and Aristide drew throngs of people to his rallies. On election day just about every direct hire in the Embassy and USAID went out as observers to witness the electoral process. I went to a small village north of Port au Prince. Everything transpired calmly and without incident. The polls closed at 9 PM. It was very dark when they opened the ballot boxes. Under the light of kerosine lamps, the electoral officials began counting the paper ballots one by one. They would open the ballot, say who it was for,

and then place it on a table either in a stack of ballots for Aristide, or a stack for Bazin. The pile of votes for Aristide began to accumulate far more ballots than Bazin. It was a magical moment. The observers felt it. The Haitians felt it. We were watching history unfold.

Just to go back a bit. I returned to Haiti in February 1988. The elections finally happened in December 1990. Aristide was sworn in as President in February 1991. The USAID program in Haiti previous to the election strictly prohibited any support to the Haitian government. Mike White designed a health program centered on child survival called the Voluntary Agencies for Child Survival (VACS) that was implemented by local NGOs. Funding was provided to the NGO through an umbrella grants program managed by an American contractor. This was the child survival era in the donor world, when all health programs focused on vaccinations, diarrhea control, and nutrition in children under five years of age. Family planning was coupled to the child survival movement as well, to address maternal needs and population pressure. There was a Congressional earmark and separate account for child survival funding worldwide at the time. Haiti had one of the largest child survival budgets in the Agency.

Q: And Aristide won. People were probably feeling optimistic at that point. These were all or mostly international NGOs?

ECKERSON: Aristide won, and that meant we needed to shift the focus of our program to support the government again. It became a huge issue, since the Ministry of Health was totally dysfunctional. The VACS program was huge and covered the entire country. All services were delivered by local NGOs. A U.S. contractor provided grants to local organizations and provided financial management and institutional strengthening to help them attain sustainability. But, there was a problem. Because the Ministry of Health was so dysfunctional, our contractor and the local NGOs sucked all the best health care staff in the Ministry into the VACS program. But, it was an amazing program. The Child Survival Office in Washington sent a high-power evaluation team to Haiti in early 1990 to evaluate the VACS program just before Aristide was elected, Robert Clay led the team in a rigorous data centric exercise that showed the VACS program was directly linked to significantly lowering the infant mortality rate in children under five throughout the country. Haiti became the poster child for child survival around the world.

Once Aristide was elected, we had to flip the switch and begin working with the government. But all the key Ministry of Health staff were working in NGO programs. The government could not compete with the salaries of the NGOs. To bridge the gap, we basically got the Minister to agree to create public private partnerships between the Ministry and NGOs in the VACS program. So, if there was a dysfunctional Ministry

clinic in an area served by a USAID-supported local organization, then support from the VACS program would be given to the clinic to become operational again. If that was not possible, then local ministry staff were merged into the local NGO health clinic.

AMBASSADOR LESLIE M. ALEXANDER
U. S. Ambassador
Haiti
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
(1999-2000)

Ambassador Leslie Alexander was born in Germany of American parents and grew up primarily in Europe. He was educated at the Munich campus of American University, after which he came to the United States and, in 1970, entered the Foreign Service. Speaking several foreign languages, including German, French, Spanish and Portuguese and some Polish, he served in Guyana, Norway, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Haiti, where he twice served, first as Chargé, and later as Special Envoy. From 1993 to 1996 he served as Ambassador to Mauritius and from 1996 to 1999 as Ambassador to Ecuador. Ambassador Alexander was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Topical Focus – U. S. Department of State and President Aristide's Election, Overthrow, and Return

Q: I mean here, in Washington.

ALEXANDER: Baby Doc had left and things were very unstable and we were trying to move them towards elections. Alvin Adams had just gone down there about the time I arrived here in Washington and had done a masterful job in getting the body politic there to come together and agreed to have elections and do it in a transparent, democratic way. He had to find someone to run the country in an interim basis and he managed to convince them to appoint a former judge, Madam Trouillot, as the interim president until they could have elections. They went to elections in 1990 and they voted for the former priest, Jean Bertrand Aristide. In the run up to the elections and the time after Aristide was elected there was a crisis. People were being murdered, killed, tortured, run off, it was a country gone mad. That took, without exaggeration, probably 70 percent of my time, which now in retrospect makes me ask myself, why did I go to that post immediately following my two years in Caribbean Affairs? I went to Haiti as DCM in ‘91.

Q: Well, how did we view Aristide at the time?

ALEXANDER: With great suspicion. Contrary to what we were accused, of being antiAristide and frankly, Washington, and I say this with total, absolute conviction, was agnostic. We had no candidate. Everyone says we wanted this guy Mark Bazin, who was a former IMF World Bank official and we didn't want Aristide. This is absolute nonsense. We did not have a candidate. I think if you were to ask policymakers in Washington privately, independently, "who would you like to have?" Of the two names I mentioned I think all of them would have said Bazin because they knew Bazin. He was a known quantity. Aristide was a former priest with a record of having denounced the U.S. for all kinds of things. People weren't terribly comfortable with the notion that this priest was going to be the president, but there was no program to advance one over the other. There was no money given under the table to help a candidate. This is all fiction. When Aristide was elected I think that the State Department bent over backwards to work with 84 him. I remember this as clear as I remember anything. The then-assistant secretary, Bernie Aronson, said this man was democratically elected, it is our responsibility to work with him, to help him to help his country and that's what we're going to do. That was our policy.

As a person I don't think anyone was particularly warm and fuzzy about Aristide, but we were determined to work with him and we just couldn't. He was elected in 1990, in December of 1990. I went down to Haiti with the then assistant secretary, with, among other people, Congressman Porter Goss, now the head of the CIA, and Congressman Jim Oberstar, who was the only Creole speaking member of the U.S. Congress. We were the official Washington delegation to observe the elections. We met with all the major candidates, including Aristide, right before the election and I'll never forget this, we were going in to meet Aristide as President Carter was coming out of his meeting. He led his own delegation from the Carter Center, and we stopped and we asked the president a few questions, "well how'd the meeting go?" And he said, "well you know, it's not all that easy." One of the members of his delegation made the observation and the president didn't disagree with him, he said, "this guy is a little strange." And Barry Aronson, the assistant secretary asked the president, "what happened," and the president said, "we asked him two or three times, listen, if you don't win, will you respect the outcome, the election result if you're not the winner? And Aristide had replied well, if the elections are free and fair I will win." President Carter is reported to have asked again, "well if again you don't win, will you respect the outcome?" And he repeated the same thing, "if the elections are free and fair I will win."

My sense was what bothered the president was this view, this absolute conviction that he was going to win. He did win. He obviously knew something we didn't, but I think it was troubling, nonetheless, that he wouldn't even entertain the notion that there was any other outcome possible. There were other remarks that he made to us that I think made up

uncomfortable and left us with the feeling that the man was, again, strange. Some of his detractors said that he was mentally unbalanced. I don't think he was, but he certainly wasn't an easy man to understand. He wasn't an easy man to speak with, and he didn't seem to have any affection for North Americans, that's for sure.

Q: Well then, what about boat people? What were we doing while you were on the desk?

ALEXANDER: We didn't have a major problem with boat people. Major in the sense, I'm talking in terms of numbers. There were always boat people, you know, 10 here, 20 there. As they were picked up, they were returned, much as they are now. The boat people became an issue when I was actually in Haiti when the numbers went from 10, 20, 50 to literally thousands. At one point we had thousands and thousands of people bobbing around in the Caribbean and the Atlantic trying to make their way to Florida. This was after Aristide's ouster, and it reached its peak in 1992. It was a major headache. They were being picked up and sent back, because that was the policy of the United States. They didn't want to encourage people to take to the seas. We'll never know how many of them perished, certainly several thousand. That was a major problem when I was in Haiti, not when I was on the desk.

Q: Alright. I was just looking at the time, this might be a good place to stop. We'll pick this up in 1991.

ALEXANDER: Okay.

Q: When you're off to Haiti as DCM.

ALEXANDER: Okay.

Q: Today is the third of November, 2005. This is tape five with Leslie Alexander. We left you the last time, you're off to Haiti; you were in Haiti from when to when?

ALEXANDER: From August of 1991 until May or June of 1993. End of May, early June. End of May, let's say. Q: And you were DCM?

ALEXANDER: Well no. Yes. I went to Haiti as DCM. I emphasize the August because that's somewhat significant. I arrived in August and one month later there was the coup against the then-president, President Jean Bertrand Aristide. All hell broke loose. It's not that I had been at post for several months, was prepared to deal with this. Fortunately, because of the job that I came from, I had the background and the knowledge to be able to deal with what was going to be a very, very, very tough tour.

Q: Could you talk a bit about what happened? I mean, sort of the events?

ALEXANDER: At the end of September, the evening of the 30th, 29th-30th, the military decided that Aristide had to go. This was based on months and months and months of what the rank and file, what they called the petit soldat (little soldier) perceived as Aristide eroding their privileges, their position in society and other provocations, real and imagined. In any event, he had to go. So with the collusion of some NCOs (noncommissioned officers) and relatively junior officers they decided that they needed a change of leadership so they threw him out of office. There was no evidence at the time; certainly we in the embassy had nothing to warn us that this was in the works. We knew that there was a lot of unhappiness but not just in the military. The bourgeois segments of society, the middle class, the upper class certainly were unhappy with Aristide, not so much because he had eroded their privileges; in point of fact of he hadn't. I was always confused by this. His supporters in the congress and elsewhere said that this was a coup instigated by the wealthy, the morally repugnant elite, the MREs as they called them, against Aristide because he was trying to help the poor. That was the most nonsensical allegation because, number one, he didn't help the poor, but at the same time he didn't really do anything to change the privileged position of the elites. He was an incompetent, as simple as that. He didn't do anything.

Q: While he was there, did sort of his strangeness, come across?

ALEXANDER: Yes, yes. That played into, I think, part of his problem. He gave provocative speeches. He encouraged horrendous deeds, the worst of which was Pere Lebrun. To make a long story short, without getting into too much Haitian history, this was necklacing. It was a buzzword for putting a tire around someone's neck and setting it on fire. It was a horrible way to kill people, but it was done on more than one occasion. Aristide would give speeches in Creole, and those of us who understood Creole would hear them and we'd say, "I can't believe the man has just said what he said." Basically he would say it's okay to go out and burn people. If you find that people are not with the program, if they're not with the people then you know what to do. You have the instrument; you have the tool that you need to set the record straight, do the right thing. This was alarming to a lot of people, and it was done on more than one occasion. I think the straw that broke the camel's back was when a very prominent politician – well known, widely admired, a moderate, was a victim of this Pere Lebrun. Even the military stood up and said, "If Aristide is going to go after a guy like this he'll go after anybody. He's putting us on notice that we might be next."

I think the fear was exaggerated. I have no doubts that had Aristide been able to get rid of the military, he would have done it in a flash, but there was little that I could see, this is just that he was in a position to do that. After months and months and months of provocations, of inflammatory speeches, no puns intended, of actions that suggested that he was moving in an anti-democratic direction, taking on or using the Duvalier's playbook, creating his own personal gang of thugs, his political opposition, the military and the elites, began to become increasingly concerned about where this was going to end up if unchecked. Washington was becoming increasingly concerned, because we found that his voice was not one of moderation and certain things were going on in the shadows that made us very uncomfortable. I think one of the more egregious cases involved the murder of two or three young men, one of whom had a girlfriend who was the object of the desires of one of Aristide's killers. These guys were found dead, I can't remember now whether there were two or three of them; it was pretty clear from the information that we gathered that they had been bumped off by some police guy who was closely in line to Aristide's people. He had killed these kids essentially because he wanted the girlfriend. The ambassador spoke with President Aristide two or three or four times, said, "listen, you've talked about justice. This is a horrible case and we need to get to the bottom of this, because it's really gotten a lot of attention and people are suggesting that if boys like this, decent boys, can be killed under very funny circumstances then anybody can be killed." Aristide promised he would look into it and do something about it; it was never done.

Anyway, come September, Aristide had been in office for, well since February, so how ever many months that is. Come the end of September, the military is feeling very, very threatened by Aristide, and they decide that it's time for him to go. So at the end of September they run him out of the palace and take over the country and the generals, the senior military, find themselves in a rather un-tenuous position. They have a revolt on their hands, among their own troops who are saying the president has to go. The head of the army, ironically, was the man who headed up all the security for the election that Aristide won, and made it possible for Aristide to become president, Raoul Cedras, who was later vilified and accused of being the ringleader in this whole coup thing, and there is absolutely no evidence that we had to suggest that that was true, woke up much as we did at 11:30, 12:00 at night when it became clear that this coup was well underway to be told, the army's gone berserk and they've kicked out the president and they've taken over.

So, he gets dragged into this thing and we have this crisis on our hands because Haiti's first democratically elected president in anyone's memory has just been run out of office and is in exile. Aristide eventually winds up in Washington, where he starts stirring up the Congressional Black Caucus. He convinces them that this is Black thing, that this is the Black masses against the light skinned elites of Haiti, which again is absolutely nonsense,

but it was something that Aristide, being the clever man that he was, understood what buttons to push in the Black Congressional Caucus and he used this race thing. We in the embassy were bemused by this, because anyone who knows Haiti, Haitians and Creole, their language, when we got Black congressmen coming down to the country, Haitians, well, the Haitian word for them was blanche, which means, in French, white, which means in Haitian Creole foreigner. Foreigners were blanche. You could be Japanese, you could be Asian, you could be Black, but if you a foreigner you were a blanche, you were a white. Of course, they didn't understand this, they had ways of saying he is a Black white person or an Asian white person. The point I'm trying to make is that Haitians' view of race and color is very different than an African American's view of race and color and it goes back to the history of Haiti. Haiti didn't have the generations of slavery that we had in the U.S. Haitians never developed this selfloathing. Haitians never developed this attitude that whites are better than me, and you might not admit such a thing but this deep ingrained belief in the superiority of Europeans or white people. The reason why Haitians didn't have that was because they kicked them all out. They killed them and threw them out very early on in the game. So you didn't have this slave generation, slave mentality that was bred into people. Slavery didn't exist long enough in Haiti for that to happen. Moreover, what army was it that they beat? They beat Napoleon's army. That was the best army in the world at the time. This was like the Vietnamese beating the U.S. The Haitians, quite to the contrary, didn't see white people as being superior. On occasion they saw them as being inferior. Hey, we kicked your butts, but at best they saw them as just other people with a different skin color, no more, no less. That's the end of it.

Aristide, of course, knew this. He had certain fixations about the way he looked. There is a correlation in Haiti, often, that the lighter skinned you are the more likely you are to be higher up on the totem pole. That, again, wasn't an absolute, and all you had to do was look at Duvalier and all of his cronies to see that wasn't the case, it wasn't etched in stone. Aristide, in exile in Washington, used his race card with the Congressional Black Caucus to convince them to convince the administration that he had been wronged and we had to do something about it. There was a change in administration: President Bush Senior left office, President Clinton took over and this desire of the Black Caucus to support Aristide suddenly had resonance in the White House, while under Bush Senior it wasn't. We in the embassy, in the meantime, were caught in this nasty Washington game of what do we do? On the one hand everything we knew about Aristide, from every source, from intelligence we gathered, from conversations, from his own speeches, indicated that he was not a good president and that his policies were not going to be beneficial to us, it wasn't in our national interest to have this man as the president of Haiti. Yet on the other hand we had others, and I think legitimately so, saying be that as it may, this man was democratically elected and we have to support the principle of

democracy. This was our policy dilemma and I'm sure Haiti was not the first nor the last country where we had this problem. How do you support a person who was democratically elected, but doesn't rule as a democrat? Who is the antithesis of the democratic leader. While Washington was debating this, we in the embassy were sort of stuck trying to figure out what do we do? We had thousands of boat people who seized the opportunity to take to the seas screaming, "we're political refugees, you've got to take us in."

Q: In a way, wasn't it the boat exodus that began to dominate political thinking?

ALEXANDER: Yes. I think so. I think that the boat exodus was the catalyst for the White House's eventual decision to take on Haiti as a major foreign policy issue. It has been suggested, I have no evidence to support this other than comments that were made by people, as I never saw any intel that actually supported the notion that Aristide himself provoked the boat people exodus. In fact, it was called the Haitian nuclear bomb expressly to get Washington's attention and force Washington's hand, the argument being that this looks bad for you, you've got all these Haitians, these very visibly Black people washing up on these white beaches on Florida being filmed on CNN. The contrast was stark. There they are, being rounded up and told they have to go back to a supposedly murderous military regime, while at the same time you have these fair skinned Cubans washing up on their rafts and they're welcomed and embraced and oh, they can stay but these poor Black Haitians can't. Well they can't because they're Black and you're racists and the whole nine yards. Aristide and his supporters used that imagery very well and again, I don't blame them. I would have done the same thing. You know, you play the cards that you've been dealt, you use the weapons at hand and the boat people were the perfect tool for Aristide to garner the kind of support that he needed to return to Haiti. Again, my life was made miserable. I was dealing with this issue at the same time that we were in evacuation status. We had a skeletal staff.

Q: Why were we evacuated?

ALEXANDER: Well, for two or three reasons. Number one, we couldn't support the size staff we had before, because the first thing that the Bush administration did, around November of 1991, was to impose an economic embargo on Haiti. Economic embargos usually don't work, but they can have ferocious impacts, especially in a country as poor as Haiti. We were under an economic embargo. For the embassy what that was meant was that we no longer had supermarkets that could feed our staffs, where we could go and buy food and things of that sort. There were certain everyday realities that we had to deal with and couldn't, so we had to cut down the staff. There was also the fear of violence. Again, you had a military regime in power and they killed people and we were concerned that if

they got upset with us they could turn their guns on us. So, for a host of reasons, we were in evacuation status, principally because we couldn't support the families and the staff that we had and also because of fears for their security. One of the consequences of being under this embargo was that we were not allowed to make payments to the de facto government for anything which also made things difficult because there was the state electricity monopoly, and a state telephone monopoly. If you wanted to have phone service, if you wanted to have electricity, you had to deal with the government, because they owned these services.

I was sitting in my office one day and I get a phone call from someone in the Treasury Department, the head of the embargo office, who says to me, basically, that I had to stop paying the bills, the light bills, since I was supposedly directing this. I said, "well, that's fine and dandy but what do I do? If we don't pay them we're not going to have electricity. If we have no electricity we don't have an embassy." He says, "well I don't care about that. Executive order whatever-itwas says that, Haiti's under embargo, so you have to stop paying these bills under penalty of so and so." Well I blew up and I said, "is this a joke or are you serious?" He says, "do you think this is a joke? Do you think this is amusing? You're violating the law." I said, "well I don't know whether it's amusing, I think it's absolutely insane, because the law also requires statutorily for me to provide for the protection and welfare of U.S. citizens in this country of whom there are several thousand and I can't do that if I don't have electricity. So we have a dilemma." And he says to me, "no, I don't have any dilemma. You have a dilemma. I'm telling you that you are going to" – I can't remember what I was threatened with – "if you continue." So I said, "fine, fine, fine," and hung up the phone and immediately called the principle desk, Bob Gelbard, in Western Hemisphere Affairs, what was then ARA, and I said, "Bob, I've got this problem, I've got this lunatic at Treasury from the embargo office" or something, I can't remember what it was called, "telling me that I can't pay the light bill and the phone bill. If I can't do that; I'm not going to have the services which means you're not going to be able to call me up 40 times a day as you do with all of your bizarre requests and instructions." He said, "don't worry about it; we'll take care of it." A day goes by, two days, a week, a month, the guy calls me again from Treasury, all upset. I'm still paying these bills, he has evidence to suggest stuff and they're going to have to take some kind of drastic dramatic action. So I call Gelbard again. I said, "hey, I thought you guys took care of." "Well, it's not as simple as we thought." And I said, "come on, don't do this to me." I said, "this is the kind of thing that you read about in novels, you see in movies, but we've got thousands of boat people that you want to repatriate and I've got officers running all over the country following every single one of the repatriated boat people to ensure that they're not being killed, tortured, abused or anything else as they're alleging they are and I've got my own government threatening me with legal action,

because I'm trying to carry out the government's business. I don't want to deal with this. This is a Washington problem, you deal with it."

They never solved it. State was never able to get Treasury to back off on this notion. I mean, we continued to do what we did, but I suppose if someone really wanted to do something bad to me, they could have. This is the kind of insanity that we were dealing with. Even more insane was the number of human rights organizations, media, Aristide people, boat people advocates who were screaming and yelling that people were being slaughtered by the thousands in Haiti and how could we send back the boat people to certain peril? The fact was people weren't being slaughtered by the thousands. The best we could figure is 300-350 people were killed during the coup itself. That's a lot of people; I'm not going to argue that, particularly if it's one of your loved ones, but after that things settled down. That doesn't mean that this was paradise on earth, but the military was not out slaughtering thousands of Haitians. For one thing, there were 7,000 soldiers in the entire Haitian army in a country of seven million with little or no gas, little or no ammunition. They just weren't out killing people; there was no reason for it, just no requirement for it. We were reading these tales and being told that thousands of people are being massacred, so we had people running all over the country to the sites of these supposed massacres asking the locals "can you please take me to your massacre?" And they would respond, "what massacre do you want? There was a massacre, as they say, in 1803, when we killed 200 French people and cut off their heads." "No, no not that massacre. The massacre from the petit soldat that happened last week" and everyone would start laughing. Anyway, after two or three or four months of chasing down these so-called massacres, we said, "listen, this is BS (bullshit). There are no massacres." Aristide's people insisting that the embassy's in collusion with the military and they're blind and they're stupid and this. We said, "listen, send anyone you want. We'll go there together." Jesse Jackson came down. We went with Jesse to the site of a so-called massacre so he could see there was no massacre. We couldn't find a massacre. There was a suggestion that they covered up the evidence really well, but again, you can't hide thousands of bodies. The point is, we were being challenged by our own people. "You sure there's no massacre?" "Well, I can't state categorically. I can't prove a negative, but I can tell you if there is one there's absolutely no evidence that there has been one, so what do you want us to do?"

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ALEXANDER: Yes, and they were feeling enormous pressure and some of it I saw and some of it I got myself, especially from the Hill. There were senators, congressmen, staffers, who were absolutely convinced that Aristide had been ousted by murderous thugs, that he was a good man who needed to go back and this was going to solve the

problem. I had staffers in my home in Haiti accuse me, basically, of being a human rights abuser, because I tried to explain to them, that this could be a problem. Great, Aristide comes back, but you have to realize there is this resistance to this notion here in this country by people with the guns. You've either got to come and kill them, and I don't hear anyone yet talking about an invasion, or convince them, and you're not going to be able to convince them and this is why. This is what happened when Aristide was in office. They didn't want to hear it. That's a bunch of propaganda, that's a bunch of crap; you don't know what you're talking about. And I said, and I would say to them, "do you speak Creole?" "No, but you don't need to speak Creole to understand this country." I said, "do you think someone could understand the United States if they didn't speak English?" "Well that's different." I never understood why it was different. You know, people have their agenda. I got this firsthand so I knew what my masters were going through in Washington; they were getting tremendous heat. Again, this became a very popular cause. When you've got people standing up accepting Academy Awards at the same time, you know… They appointed a prime minister, Marc Bazin, but he was viewed as being a puppet of the military and to a certain extent he was. What I didn't know at the time was that there were people behind him. One of his own military officers, Michel Francois, who was a major, was probably the mastermind or the leader of the coup that ousted Aristide. He was a very ruthless man. He is now hiding out in Honduras. He's been indicted in the United States for drug smuggling or something or another. But Cedras, even though he was the head of the military, wasn't a free agent either. He had to respond to these forces within the armed forces and those forces said absolutely and categorically Aristide does not return, that's just not an option. He's just not coming back or over our dead bodies. So the military leadership found itself in a position that it frankly didn't want to be in. I don't think that Raoul Cedras was a conspirator. I don't think he knew about this coup. I don't think he would agree with it. I don't think he would have supported it. As part of the evidence for my feelings I would offer up his magnificent job of providing security for the presidential election that Aristide won. He provided that security mindful, as was everyone else in Haiti, that Aristide was the probable president. Had he not liked Aristide, I don't know if he would have done such a good job of ensuring a peaceful election.

Again, this is in a country where during the previous election in '68, they massacred people at the polling stations. So this is a big thing to provide absolute security. It was never my sense that Cedras had any interest in being the president of Haiti. He was quite pleased being the head of the military, and I think that's all he wanted to do, but politics, forget it. It just wasn't his cup of tea. Be that as it may, he as the head 96 of the army stayed as head of the army and I told him on more than one occasion, "I'm sorry, but the rest of the world's convinced that you're the dictator." "Well I'm not, you know that I'm not." "Well then, why don't you have someone else run things?" "Well, that's what we're

trying to do, we're trying to find." I said, "or you could have Aristide come back." "No, no, no, we can't do that." I said, "okay. You can't have your cake and eat it too. You can't on the one hand try to convince me that you're a decent guy and even though you had nothing to do with this coup, you won't let the democratically elected president come back." "Well, we can't let him come, because he'll kill us." I said, "well, maybe not. Maybe you can strike a deal." "No, no, you don't strike deals with Aristide." Well eventually he did strike a deal. But we'll get to that later. I think that the rank and file were the ones who basically told their own leadership no Aristide. Aristide comes back we kill you. So there was this stasis. No one knew what to do. The country was under an embargo but somehow they were surviving. And they could have survived for years probably.

HEADQUARTERS, BUREAUS, & DEPARTMENTS

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES KUNDER
Congressional Staffer
Washington D. C.
(1974-1984)

Mr. Kunder was born and brought up in Rochester, Pennsylvania and came from a Serbo-Croatian and Italian background. After receiving his Bachelor's from Harvard University, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps before pursuing his Master's at Georgetown University. He worked as a staffer for various offices across the Senate before joining USAID. He worked in various positions in the USAID Bureau of External Affairs, Asia and Near East Bureau, and as Acting Deputy Administrator. He also worked in the private sector. Mr. Kunder was interviewed by Ann Van Dusen in 2022.

Topical Focus – Pennsylvania Congressional Politics

Q: Talk about your Hill experience. Where did you work? How did you get the job?

KUNDER: I was a registered Democrat at that time. And there was a long time congressman from my home district near Pittsburgh. So I applied in his office. His reaction was, "well, help out in the campaigns, we'll see what happens after I get reelected." He had been there twenty years or so. And as it turned out that very year he got upset by some upstart young Republican, which was odd in those days in that area. It's now a heavily Trumpist Republican area, in those days it was very union because again, this all had to do with the economics for the steel mills closing down, and then the mills were booming. Everybody was a Democrat. Everybody was a labor guy.

Q: That wasn't _____ Morgan. I was just trying to remember the Democrat from that area.

KUNDER: Oh, at that time it was Frank Clark. He got upset; that would have been in the election of 1974. I had done a lot of research on working for the congressman from that district. And even though it ended up being a Republican. I applied in the new congressman's office as well. And it's ironic; what they were looking for. It was a Republican from a rural area of the district who had just won a narrow election. And for them, I was sort of the ideal steelworker's son from the most heavily industrialized portion of the district. It was good to have me on the staff for political reasons. They hired me and then I stayed with that Congressman for four years, a junior Congressman named Gary Meyers, from the Pittsburgh area. He had made a campaign pledge to only stay for four years to restore some decency to the office, in his terms. And then he actually, in an oddity for a congressman, actually kept his vow and actually retired after

four years, and he was succeeded by another democratic congressman, and I stayed with that Congressman for a year. So, I had basically five years working as a legislative director in the House of Representatives.

Q: And what kind of legislation was he interested in or did you get involved in?

KUNDER: Like all House-side legislative assistants, I had an enormous portfolio. National defense, foreign policy, labor issues, environmental issues, social security, etcetera, etcetera. He got active in some highway safety issues. He was on the Public Works and transportation committee, that was a pipsqueak issue in national terms but highway safety in western Pennsylvania which is mountainous and slippery in the wintertime with the large number of trucks on the road that are hauling coal and steel, a very treacherous combination. And so highway safety issues were a big issue for him. Got involved, ironically, I'm not sure how he ever did it; He got involved with Senator Scoop Jackson on an issue dealing with sanctions against the Soviet Union. And that was his one foray into the international relations field, dealing with Jewish emigration to Israel, and I think it was mostly sort of like most junior members, he was sort of tending the home fires, constituent service activities, and did a lot of visits. And ironically, in all these cases, I was working for my home district. So I got a chance to really immerse myself into the politics of the twenty-fifth Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

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Q: Interesting. Was that when you decided you'd try to run for Congress yourself?

KUNDER: Exactly. The Democrat who succeeded the Republican that I worked for, even though I worked for the guy for a year was a real dud. And I just thought, it's embarrassing. I thought I could do better. I guess I was a little idealistic and a little bit eager to get ahead in life. I thought there was an opening here. So I moved back to my home district, having worked for the district in Washington for five years, and now understanding it, and its politics a lot better. I moved back and took a crack at running for office.

Q: Well, talk about that experience.

KUNDER: I mean, I used to joke that everyone should run for office one time. I ran in '82 in the Republican primary. It's very convoluted that the Liberal Democrat who succeeded to the congressional seat that I worked for. You may recall, there was a movement by Ronald Reagan at that point, he was so popular in the early parts of his first term, that he actually started recruiting some Democrats, converting some Democrats and this particular Congressman, a liberal Democrat who had actually supported Ted Kennedy against Jimmy Carter in the Democratic primary earlier. It was also simultaneously a redistricting year. The Republicans who control the State House were almost assuredly going to do a hatchet job on him, because Pennsylvania was losing congressional seats because its population was static. And so he made a political calculation to join the Ronald Reagan wave, and he became a Republican in the middle of

his term. And I ended up running against the incumbent. I thought I had a clear path to the Republican nomination but ended up running against the formerly Democratic incumbent in the Republican primary and lost in '82. So then I ran again and in '84 won the Republican primary. At that time the Democrats in that area were so outraged that this guy had switched parties that they nominated a different Democrat and I lost a close election in '84. [Wikipedia: The 25th CD boundaries were redrawn in 1944 and then 1972. The 25th district was eliminated in 1983. The redistricted constituency became the 14th Congressional District of Pennsylvania.]

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ELIZABETH SPIRO CLARK
National Endowment for Democracy
(1998)

Elizabeth Spiro Clark was born in New York City, New York in 1937. Before joining the Foreign Service, she practiced operatic singing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and London, United Kingdom. In 1980, she joined the Foreign Service and her postings included Iceland, South Africa, Norway. After her career in the Foreign Service, she joined the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and Bureau of Democracy from 1993 to 1998. Elizabeth Spiro Clark was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 12, 2011.

Topical Focus – Experience at the National Endowment for Democracy

Q: So then you moved over to what, the-?

CLARK: I moved over to the National Endowment for Democracy.

Q: How did you find the- it as an organization? Was it different than what you'd been used to?

CLARK: Indeed. I mean I was there in the '90s. The people who were encumbering their positions then are still encumbering their positions now. I mean there is basically no rotation and not much moving up either. I had met the director, Carl Gershman, when I was in South Africa. At that time NED had been just established, and he came down to South Africa to see what kind of money they could push out to help democracy or to help the opposition movements in South Africa. And I had a lot of time for what they were doing and still do. As you may know, there are four institutes that get money from NED: the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, a labor organization and a business organization, CIP (Center for International Policy). So there

are four NGOs that get money from Congress through NED and I've had a fair amount since retirement to do with them as a consultant and as an election monitor with NDI (National Democratic Institute). I thought a lot of their work.

Q: Are you still there?

CLARK: My last sort of assignment with NDI was observing the elections in Jordan in 2010.

Q: What was your impression?

CLARK: I wrote a long piece on this as an essay for an organization I am a member of, the Literary Society of Washington. You have to be very skeptical of the briefings and presentations that you get when really you don't have democratic institutions. They are trying to get international legitimacy by running elections. External independent monitors played an important role in this goal. NDI is much better than other election observation institutions and governments and regional organizations, but the process in election monitoring has gotten down to administrative stuff, universally applicable procedural standards. If you're a smart government you can sit there and figure out that all these independent monitors really care about are standards like transparent ballot boxes so you just make sure they are transparent, and just make sure that this or that on a purely administrative basis is going right and they will give you a gold star. Well too many of these election observation organizations buy into that and that's a whole big subject. There are elephants in the room. In Jordan, for example, the king has all the power. As another example: mean, NDI observed the elections in Morocco. They had some leftover money so they ran some focus groups to find out why there was such a low voter participation. The answer was people know the king has all the power. However NDI is really pretty good at writing reports saying there were transparent ballot boxes and not saying too much else. The trouble is the international press picks up on anything positive said by these international monitors and tells the world that it was a free and fair election. That is a problem. And of course I'm very interested in Tunisia; I write a blog for the Women's Democratic blog and I wrote one on the Tunisian-

Q: Now Tunisia's going to have its first election.

CLARK: It did, Sunday.

Q: Sunday, that's right.

CLARK: It will take another couple of days for the votes to be counted. But it looks like a good first election.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MARK SILVERMAN
USAID
Senior Deputy Assistance Administrator
Central America Finance Chief
Washington D.C.
(1989-1992)
(2006-2007)

Mr. Silverman was born in Boston, Massachusetts and moved to Los Angeles in his childhood. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the California Air National Guard in 1965. He was educated at San Fernando State College and Ohio University. He volunteered for the Peace Corps in Afghanistan before entering the U.S. Foreign Service in 1976. He worked in various positions for USAID. Mr. Silverman was interviewed by Marcia Bernbaum in 2023.

Topical Focus – Humanitarian Efforts and Democracy Reform in Central America

SILVERMAN: Thanks Marcy. 1989 was an extremely busy year for USAID in Central America because of the significant political issues in Panama with the leader of the military and de facto ruler of Panama, Manuel Noriega. Panama was devastated by several years of his mismanagement and was under sanctions imposed by the U.S. that focused on the flow of drugs and drug money. Noriega shut down much of USAID's program by demanding a significant reduction in U.S mission staffing. The challenge faced was how to help the Panamanian people and not work directly with the Government of Panama (GOP).

The AA/LAC asked me to conduct a field assessment of the Panama program and recommend a set of procedures to implement the program without a USDH presence in country. I spent several weeks in Costa Rica with USAID Panama and state department staff, including key FSNs to work this issue. We recommended a series of guidelines that were agreed to by the state department and USAID/W that called for a senior embassy officer to coordinate USAID work through private and voluntary organizations, thereby excluding any assistance to the GOP. An interesting fact worth mentioning; Embassy Panama's economic counselor who was selected to coordinate USAID assistance was John Maisto, a talented officer who later became Ambassador to Nicaragua during my assignment there. He would often kid me about his experience "working like the USAID Director" in Panama.

In the meantime, there was an election in Panama and Noriega's thugs threatened and then beat up the vice president elect whose battered face was pictured on the front page

of Time magazine. Noriega wouldn't allow the winning opposition to take office. The relationship with the GOP worsened which led to the USG invasion of Panama in late 1989. After the invasion had ended, Panama was in desperate need of assistance since during the invasion a section of Panama City near the military headquarters was destroyed. As I recall there were about 4,500 people without a place to live and that was where I met Bob Gersony, a great humanitarian and consultant with considerable conflict related experience. With Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance [OFDA] help, Bob led USAID's effort to provide food and temporary shelter for the people who lost their homes from collateral bombing damage.

During a long temporary duty trip to Panama, I worked with the new Director, Tom Stukel, to develop an emergency program which included promotion of low cost housing solutions, temporary food and health assistance and small business reactivation. In a very short period the agreement was finalized and negotiated with the newly elected GOP leadership, the emergency recovery agreement was signed, conditions precedent to disbursement were met and counterparts rapidly began implementation. However, one of the most unusual experiences I had during my USAID career took place at that time. As I noted we rapidly put this program together and Dean Hinton, a legend in the state department, was the new ambassador to Panama. Did you ever meet Dean Hinton?

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SILVERMAN: After the agreement was signed work began in earnest to help generate low-cost shelter solutions for these people who were angry about having to stay in gymnasiums and other buildings with minimum privacy. We ensured that the Panamanians had food and shelter and access to basic medical services. At the start of the emergency assistance program there were only two USDHs in place; Director Stukel and yours truly. Every day many U.S. Army National Guard officers would visit our office to offer their troops assistance to carry out small scale construction activities. While the military wanted to be helpful the Army wouldn't authorize any funding from their budget; their legal staff was clear. They had no authority to spend funds on projects, and they hoped USAID would finance their proposed activities. There were hundreds of Army National Guard staff available but not a dollar of funds to do any work. I thanked the many officers who would visit the office for their interest and told them that USAID wouldn't be able to provide funding for the U.S. military because we weren't authorized to do so by Congress. The majors and the many colonels were not happy with my answer and were unsuccessful in their attempt to find USAID financing for army projects.

When the GOP shut down the program USAID had to reduce FSN staff to a bare minimum and while most of the USAID FSNs were still in Panama, they weren't knocking on the door to return to a complicated work situation. Fully reestablishing a mission in Panama in 1990 was a challenge, almost requiring a complete reestablishment of the mission. I hoped we learned a good lesson; before closing down a program and shutting off the lights, consider developing a plan for what would be needed to re-establish a USAID mission and program sometime later on. Prepare a plan!

As the new Panama mission and program was ramping up, the LAC bureau needed to

support the mission's efforts to recruit staff and rapidly put into place the structure required to accelerate implementation of the $420 million program through field visits and backstopping in Washington. The LAC bureau received a lot of White House oversight during that period, and I was heavily involved in helping address obstacles affecting the implementation of local credit programs that weren't moving funds quickly and helped the mission address several design flaws under the $350 million cash transfer program. The Mission requested LAC assistance, and I went to Panama and helped redesign an environmental initiative and subsequently we finalized the Washington approvals of several key initiatives under the new program.

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SILVERMAN: While the reform process was underway the interagency was busy addressing different foreign policy priorities in the Western Hemisphere. For example, the executive branch and congress were focused on Colombia and the need for a new strategy to address the drug and violence issues in that country. I worked closely with Embassy Bogota, with State's Western Hemisphere Affairs [WHA] bureau and other interested agencies to help refocus and increase resources for a Plan Colombia strategy and along with State department leaders briefed relevant congressional oversight committee's staff. I accompanied Under Secretary of Political Affairs Burns and Assistant Secretaries Patterson of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs [INL] and Tom Shannon of WHA on a major interagency visit to Colombia, which in part highlighted USAID's $130 million a year program. Together we provided key input to the USGs new five-year strategy for engagement and support of Colombian democracy. Teaming up with the Department of Justice and the State Department we were able to convince President of Colombia Uribe to commit more funding to justice reform and human rights efforts. Undersecretary Burns thanked USAID for its work in support of Plan Colombia. The Principal's committee approved the new strategy for Colombia.

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SILVERMAN: In visits to Bolivia and Colombia I helped these missions advance our foreign policy through extensive outreach with local media and in discussions with host governments. In Bolivia, the major coca producer Evo Morales was president, and his party controlled the legislature. In a meeting with the equivalent of the leader of the lower chamber of their congress, I had a lively discussion about democratic processes, and the leader told me he was unhappy with the Bolivian senate. He said that the lower chamber had more people than the senate which also had opposition politicians, and the senate was stopping his chamber from moving forward with proposed legislation that favored the ruling party. His answer to this problem was to eliminate the senate and he was proposing legislation that would do just that. The Bolivians were implementing their own brand of socialistic democracy. I had several opportunities in secondary cities of the country to meet with mayors and with the media and spoke at length of USAID's work to support the Bolivian people. In Colombia we had a terrific USAID team led by

Liliana Ayalde who worked with me in Nicaragua. The trip provided several opportunities to support USAID's role on the country team and its work in promoting alternative development and new democratic principles with both the government and with NGOs. Liliana went on to become Ambassador to Paraguay and then Ambassador to Brazil.

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In Nicaragua I led USAID's 2006 election observation team and noticed with interest that Ortega's campaign had softened the Sandinista image, eliminated their famous black and red colors and advertised his candidacy with soft colors that could have been developed by an advertising agency. With a young population many Nicaraguans had limited direct experience with the Sandinista led government of the 1980s. Ortega won the election and went on to change the constitution and jail his opponents, and unfortunately, he is still president, eighteen years later.

HONDURAS

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR FRANK ALMAGUER
Department of State
Ambassador
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
(1999 - 2002)

Frank Almaguer studied at the University of Florida for his undergraduate degree before entering USAID in 1979. He served in many different positions in several countries, including Panama, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Honduras. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – 2001 Honduran Presidential Election

ALMAGUER: One of the big highlights of my time in Honduras was the election in November 2001. Even though this was the fifth democratic election in Honduras since 1981, when the last military regime left office, it was not as easy as that. First, there were a number of legal technicalities, which can happen anywhere, as we learned a year earlier in the U.S.! [Laughter.] Elections don't come easy.

Q: Yes.

ALMAGUER: Second, there was in Honduras in 2001, and you see it all over Latin America today, a sense of "So what?" I think many voters were saying to themselves and even publicly, "Look, we've already been through four cycles of democratic elections, and my kids are still not going to a good school, and after the fifth or sixth grade they can't even go to school because there are no middle or secondary schools nearby. The public hospitals are in shambles and all I see is the politicians getting richer and the poor continue to be left out." These voters also lived with higher crime rates, higher cost of living and unfulfilled promises of better roads and more reliable access to water and electricity. In other words, the public mood was becoming skeptical that democracy would lead to positive changes in their lives.

Honduras has multiple political parties, but for most of the 20th Century two parties have dominated the political landscape. The Liberals and the Nationalists. Their origins went back to the 19th Century. While in the early days these two parties reflected ideological differences, by the mid-20th Century in Honduras, the two parties had few ideological distinctions. Both would today be seen as center or even center-right parties. Their appeal

tended to be based on family political affiliation (e.g., "if my family was Liberal then I am a Liberal.") or whom you knew on either side. Both parties relied heavily on patronage (e.g., government jobs and contracts) to get out the vote. In Honduras, presidents are limited to one four-year term with no possibility of re-election. The incumbent, Roberto Flores, was a Liberal and his predecessor had also been a Liberal. The Nationalists were convinced that 2001 was their year to win back the presidency.

The Nationalist candidate, Ricardo Maduro Joest, was a successful, well-to-do businessman who was U.S. trained and very well disposed to the U.S. His views were closely aligned to those of U.S. President Bush and they shared friends from the business community. The fact that the Nationalists had aligned themselves with the Conservative Union, an international grouping of like-minded parties, including the Republicans and the British Conservative Party, helped to create a positive view of the Nationalists within the Bush Administration. Maduro was well known to us and was a frequent visitor at the Embassy and Residence events. As a former Central Bank president, he earned a great deal of respect among bankers and economists in the region. A big tragedy in his life – the assassination of his adult son in 1997 in a kidnapping for ransom gone badly – added to his appeal among those most concerned about rising crime. Becoming the nominee of his party seemed natural - but only after a long legal battle. Maduro was born in Panama and derived his claim to Honduran citizenship from his mother. The opposition took this to court, arguing that Maduro was not eligible to run for the presidency. In fact, during his party's primaries he had a "stand-in" (his close friend Luis Cosenza, who won the primary with over 80% of the votes) while the matter was being adjudicated. The decision in his favor required mediation from Brazilian jurists tapped to help unlock a deadlocked Honduran Supreme Court. When he was cleared to run, Cosenza stepped down as the surrogate and Maduro's road to the presidency was cleared.

The Liberals were clearly divided and in the end, through a primary process, chose a lackluster candidate, Rafael Pineda Ponce. Pineda was an aging party patriarch who was serving at the time as President of the Congress. His provincial background and limited exposure to the complex economic issues of the times made him a very weak candidate. Even the incumbent, while giving pro forma endorsement to his party's candidate, did not do much to support him. Privately, President Flores maintained lines of communication with Maduro and more than likely voted for him. The bottom-line was that it was a mismatch. At one point I invited both of the major candidates to come to the Residence, separately, to meet with a visiting CODEL who shared an interest in the political landscape of the region. Both candidates were peppered with similar questions, which Maduro handled beautifully and Pineda flubbed in a big way, unable to articulate coherent views on economic issues.

During that election cycle, I personally spent a great deal of time with the political parties and their leadership. In addition to the two major parties, there were three other parties running for both the presidency and legislative seats. One of the tools I used was to invite each of the parties' leaders to attend, at separate times, working lunches at the Residence to get to know them and to reiterate to each that the U.S. did not endorse or favor anyone. What we wanted above all was free and fair elections and the acceptance by all parties of the results. This was not easy to convey since everyone understood that Maduro's worldview was closer to that of the U.S., but everyone appreciated being given the attention they received from us. In fact, the Democratic Left Party leadership (the closest Honduras came to having a Marxist-oriented group) were particularly pleased that we were willing to listen to them. These lunch events were ideal for the reports we submitted to the Department.

Q: How did Election Day go?

ALMAGUER: It was a very peaceful election. International observers from the OAS, the Carter Center, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, among others, were very pleased with the process. Several members of the Embassy community, including staff and spouses, and I joined the observation teams, monitoring events throughout the day. By 8 p.m. that night, the defeated candidate, Pineda Ponce, went on television to accept his defeat. I tried to visit with him that night to congratulate him on his magnanimous concession but he would not see me. I think that to this day he believes that his candidacy could not get off the ground because the U.S. allegedly favored his opponent.

By 10 p.m. that night, with the victory rally behind him, the Political Counselor (FSO Paco Palmieri) and I went to visit with President-elect Maduro, who graciously took almost an hour of his time to reiterate his interest in working closely with the U.S. on all issues of common interest. As early as that night, we agreed on a process that would bring members of my Country Team to his Transition Headquarters over a period of days to review in detail issues of U.S. interest, such as the USAID portfolio of projects, counternarcotics cooperation, military-to-military engagements and so on. This first meeting with Maduro as President-elect was followed two or three days later by a congratulatory call from President Bush, as I recounted earlier, and the latter's invitation for Maduro to visit Washington in December. It was an excellent beginning of a fruitful relationship.

HONG KONG

N/A

INDONESIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DESAIX "TERRY" MYERS
USAID
Mission Director
Indonesia
Jakarta, Indonesia
(1998-2003)

Desaix "Terry" Myers was born in Washington, D.C. and raised in Pasadena, California before attending UC Berkeley and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Myers joined USAID as an intern in 1968 and went on to serve across Asia and Africa, specifically in Pakistan, Indonesia, Senegal, India, Russia, and others before retiring from USAID in 2010. He then became a professor at the National Defense University, retiring in 2016. Desaix "Terry" Myers was interviewed by Alexander Shakow in 2017.

Topical Focus – USAID Democracy and Elections Programming

Q: So in the middle of all that, what did you decide to do? What did the Indonesians decide? I mean, you had not unlimited resources.

MYERS: Well, actually we had more resources that I would have expected. By the time I left Washington for Jakarta, we had promises of millions to help the elections and democratic transition. Once I got there, we began to tap into funds from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. In terms of priorities, we focused first on the humanitarian crisis. Bring in food, help maintain supplies in critical areas; then jobs—public works, food for work, get something happening in the cities. Work on the financial recovery. Rebuild confidence. Public messaging. Then begin work to prepare for the elections.

Q: That was part of the democracy project?

MYERS: To work on the elections we provided grants to IRI (International Republican Institute), NDI (National Democratic Institute), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

There was a range of things that we were trying to do almost simultaneously against a backdrop of tremendous political and social change. With Suharto's fall, it was if the lid had been lifted on a pot of bubbling unrest. Aceh, always vulnerable, began to get more restive; Papua grew uneasy; tensions mounted between Dayaks and Madurese over land in Kalimantan and between Christian and Muslim villages in Sulawesi. In some instances, such as Kalimantan, it was the problem of failed policies such as transmigration coming home to roost. In others, like Aceh and Papua it was long-standing desire for greater autonomy and independence. Indonesia's remarkable diversity became

a threat with simmering ethnic, religious, cultural conflicts aggravated by the financial crisis, economic collapse and political change.

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Q: OTI?

MYERS: The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), a unit within USAID, launched in the mid-'90s to allow us to respond swiftly in countries in the midst of conflict, stabilization, and transition. It was designed for countries in need of a quick fix, where we thought we could go in and do something flexibly and effectively to produce meaningful impact in a limited period of time. OTI came in with additional staff and funding to help us deal with the crises. They were invaluable.

One of the earliest things they did was to help respond to urban unrest and calm fears stirred by attacks on minorities. I can remember a meeting at the Borobudur Hotel, organized by one of our local employees, which brought together key media people from television, film, radio and newspaper. We must've had 30 Indonesians in the room, talking about what we might do to calm the waters. There was a threat of ethnic violence across the country; was Indonesia falling apart? They committed to form an NGO (non-governmental organization) that could create messages emphasizing pride in diversity, celebrating Indonesia's remarkable ethnic and religious mix, promoting understanding and bringing people together.

With OTI's funding, within a matter of weeks, Indonesia's most famous movie director, Garin Nugroho, had produced six public service announcements, running constantly on television, celebrating Indonesia's diversity and helping to restore a sense of community.

But that was just one thing that OTI did.

Q: How did—How does that fit within the USAID mandate? It sounds like the kind of thing that the U.S. Information Service (USIS) would be doing. This was OTI?

MYERS: Yes, the Office of Transition does a lot of work with the media. For instance, they brought in teams from Internews to train Indonesian journalists on conflict reporting, in Ambon and Poso, for example, where there were outbreaks of Christian-Muslim violence. How do you report events in a way that you don't aggravate the violence? This was an effort quite different from what USIS or USIA (U.S. Information Agency) or the (embassy) public affairs office had experience in doing.

Q: But was this something that was part of a program agreed upon with the government?

MYERS: We reviewed it with the government, we had government people in the training sessions, and the messages OTI developed ran as public service messages.

Your question on role or approval of government in our programs is important, particularly for programs dealing with civil society, political activities, and human rights. It is not one always easy to resolve. In Indonesia, it was easy in terms of elections work.

We had approval of the government, and we worked, all donors coordinating, under the aegis of the UN Development Program. It was more difficult when it came to human rights organizations that had felt persecuted by security forces under Suharto and were concerned that if the government knew they had US funding, it might jeopardize their programs, or, liberal Muslim groups worried about what their own communities would think about their taking US assistance.

On the elections, we were training political parties on polling constituents to identify issues important to them, developing platforms, and supporting a range of activities related to the elections process—communications, observation, and monitoring. We worked directly with the Indonesian election commission—the KPU (Komisi Pemilihan Umum) on the logistics of conducting and reporting on the elections themselves.

In one interesting effort, NDI (National Democratic Institute) and IRI (International Republican Institute) helped Indonesians establish a cadre of trained poll watchers. The logistics were impressive. Indonesia, because of its size and spread on 13,000 islands across an area the reach of the United States, needed some 250,00 polling places. And in each of those polling places, there were to be three or four trained observers. The rectors of a number of Indonesian universities got together to set up a consortium called, if I remember correctly, the (Indonesian) Rectors Forum—and enlisted students from their universities for the training sessions being conducted by NDI and IRI on what goes into an election and how to observe it.

IFES, for their part, helped the Indonesians develop an educational campaign with a series of messages for TV, radio, and print on what elections should look like and what voters should expect when they went to vote. These began to run well in advance of the elections but blanketed the airwaves in the last week running up to the vote and gave Indonesians an idea of what the process entailed and their part in it.

Finally, much work needed to be done on the voting itself, the tabulation and reporting. Donors, and for us, NDI, IFES, and IRI, worked with Indonesians on everything from getting the vote boxes and ink to the polling places to establishing a media center to coordinate information on the elections and set up a quick count process that could give the country an accurate idea of the results long before the final tabulation was completed.

Indonesia had about a year to put all this together. The NGOs coordinated their roles, as did each donor. We worked closely with the Indonesians and other donors, operating independently but collaborating and meeting regularly as part of a donor consortium under the UNDP's aegis. It was an effort that included, ultimately, close to $90 million in donor funding.

Q: Was this program ever evaluated to determine what its impact had been and what the overall assessment was of its—?

MYERS: You know, one may well have been done, but if so, I've never seen it. It was a remarkable effort, which culminated a year after Habibie had announced it, with the first truly open parliamentary election in more than 40 years, and followed by a surprising but

truly Indonesian, selection of President when the newly elected Parliament selected Gus Dur over Megawati. TV in the parliament—a sort of Indonesian CSPAN set up by IFES—recorded each vote as it was made on a blackboard at the front of the room, replicating the process that have been followed in villages across the country in the parliamentary elections.

Given the logistics, it was a very lengthy vote count for the parliamentary elections. But NDI had helped the Indonesians set up a separate vote count system based on polling so the—

Q: Fast.

MYERS: —the fast count (Parallel Vote Tabulation), and that reassured people. Plus the fact IFES had ensured widespread film reporting on the polling places on television reassured Indonesians that it had been a relatively free and fair election. Jimmy Carter and a host of international observers supplemented the waves of student volunteer observers teams across the country and testified to the elections' success.

Q: I wonder whether anybody did the evaluation, because I can attest, myself, that when I went out as a Carter Center poll, I mean, observer in 2004, that it was amazing the number of—how the Indonesians ran that election, as you say.

I mean, they had these small polling places all over the country. It was absolutely remarkable what they were able to do, and I saw it first-hand. And I guess I was in Flores, or some place. But, in any case, it was quite an extraordinary—

MYERS: It was wonderful to see: A small village, a white board being set up, and somebody standing in front of a crowd, as the votes are counted, putting scratch marks on the board in a way that was both transparent and comprehensible.

Q: Very transparent. Anyway, well that was—and that was all something that emerged through the network of, initially, from OTI?

MYERS: Actually, OTI was working not so much on the elections, but more on responding to the emergencies, the emerging crises. NDI, IRI, and IFES were the major US actors working on the election, and then we supported a host of Indonesian organizations like the Election Commission and civil society organizations like the Rectors Forum which had organized university students—trained by NDI and IRI--around the country to serve as observers.

Q: So the response was in the form of training media, or things like that. It was not shipping in—

MYERS: But also, on civil society organizations. OTI was helping a number of groups, doing training on inter-ethnic decision-making.

When a village in Poso was burned, for example, they would be there within days to provide—

Q: Poso is in Sulawesi?

MYERS: Yes, a town in Sulawesi where there were serious Christian-Muslim conflicts. OTI would provide material aid—bamboo, materials for rebuilding, and humanitarian assistance, food and medical supplies, with support for local groups doing inter-ethnic counseling, to try to help communities begin to rebuild as quickly as possible while, at the same time, restoring some semblance of understanding.

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Q: If you look back now on the four or five years you were there, and you look at the various activities you had underway, many we haven't talked about of course, which are the ones that stand out as being the most effective, the most significant in your mind as to what you think had the most impact on the Indonesians? What they may be considered to be the most effective—

MYERS: I think the elections were an incredible homerun. And the development of institutions that have survived. The fact that Indonesia's had four, now five, peaceful transfers at the top. In a four-year period, they moved from Suharto to Habibie to Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid), who was impeached and replaced by Megawati Sukarnoputri who was then defeated in a free and fair election by SBY (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono). The establishment of resilient democratic institutions has been a real victory for the Indonesians.

I think economic recovery was faster than people expected, and it included long-standing institutional changes.

Q: That AID was involved in?

MYERS: We and lots of other donors.

Decentralization has been remarkable, laying the groundwork for peace in Aceh and the transformation of the liberation movement into a political party after the 2004 tsunami. Progress has been made in Papua.

East Timor's transition was a tragic ending to Indonesia's presence there. It didn't have to be that way. The process moved too quickly. Indonesia's military hadn't been consulted and didn't support the transition. They encouraged local militias, largely gangs, who, after the 1999 plebiscite ravaged East Timor, pushing a third of the population into the hills or across the border into West Timor, and destroying close to 70 percent of the country's infrastructure, homes and commercial buildings.

This was a major sideshow for us because we were working on Indonesia's own transition, but intense international interest and the depth of the humanitarian crisis forced us to become involved in the gestation and birth of this new country, East Timor.

IRAQ

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES "SPIKE" STEPHENSON
USAID
Mission Director
Iraq
Baghdad, Iraq
(2004-2005)

James "Spike" Stephenson was born in 1946 in Atlanta. He completed his undergraduate education at the University of South Carolina. He enlisted in the Army and served in Vietnam. He joined USAID in 1979. During his career at USAID he served in Egypt, Barbados, and El Salvador, and was the Mission Director in Lebanon, the Philippines, Serbia, and Iraq. He retired in 2005 and was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2017.

Topical Focus – U. S. Support for Elections in Iraq

Q: Today is June 21st and we're concluding our interview with James "Spike" Stephenson as he looks back on his tour in Iraq. When did your Iraq tour end?

STEPHENSON: My Iraq tour was supposed to end in February, actually February 20th, in 2005. This was shortly after the elections, which were held in January 31st. The elections had become the defining moment for us. USAID had obligated an enormous amount of money to support the elections—it was the major donor for the U.S. government. We by agreement stayed in the background; the UN had a special team out there and they led the process of elections support, but we were flying planeloads in with ballots and voting machines, plus we were training people. We were working with NGOs to educate people on the democratic process and so forth.

We did not get involved in selecting candidates, though without going into detail I was approached by an individual from Washington (not USAID--another agency) who I had known well in a previous post, "So, Spike – tell me, how do we get the people we want to win elected?"

My response was "Don't even try it." One, it doesn't work – it often backfires; you don't necessarily get what you think you're getting. The other thing is, you always get found out and that's even worse. There was a fairly benign response, but I'm fairly confident there was no attempt covert attempt to elect the people "we" wanted to be elected.

When the day of the election came, it was an amazing thing. The rockets and mortars started before daylight. We didn‘t know if people were going to turn out. The military had security cameras set up in various places. They had set up a cordon system to allow people to pass through several cordons, but American troops were not visible at polling places. Because of all of the hype from resistance forces that people would be killed going to the polls, we really feared that no one would show up. It looked to start that way. We started getting reports at 6:00 in the morning that some polls were closed, but people had showed up. Others were open, but people were not showing up.

Then, from the 1st Cavalry Division (we were in close contact with General Chiarelli and his staff), which was filming from helicopters, we began hearing that in Baghdad there was an almost universal act of defiance. Iraqis came out onto the street and just by force of numbers defied insurgents who wanted to keep them away from the polls. The election turned out to be a great success. In our own case, staff working directly for us inside the Green Zone came to us in the middle of all this (we were monitoring it, getting reports from our people) and said, “We didn‘t register to vote because we thought it would be a farce. But we see what is happening on the street; all our relatives are calling us. Is there any way we can now register to vote?”

Jennifer Link, our democracy officer – my deputy and I had basically turned the whole process of bringing about these elections over to Jennifer because we trusted her. I asked Chris at one point, “Do you actually know what she‘s doing?”

He said, “Not really.”

I said, “Are you worried about it?”

He said, “No.”

As I said, our success had come to be defined on whether the elections came off all right. That wasn‘t just from AID, that was the State Department, the military, everybody.

So these employees came and asked how they could get registered. Jennifer said, “There is a polling station here in the Green Zone, polling station #1. I can get them registered.”

So they all went off to register and vote, and came back with the inked fingers and the tea and the makings of an impromptu feast. I remember a conversation I had with one of our employees, who didn‘t vote. He was one of our best; educated, thoughtful and articulate.

I believe he‘s a U.S. citizen now. He was at the celebration, but not celebrating. I asked him (he was looking very sad), “Why didn‘t you vote?”

He said, “I can‘t.” Those guys are all Shiite. I don‘t have a problem with that, but I do have a problem with having a Shiite government, and that‘s what we‘re going to get.” He was right.

Q: How in the problem with the Shia government – you assume you know the reason. Is it simply because they’re now the majority and there will be payback, or are there other issues?

STEPHENSON: That was the fear – and as it turned out, he was justified. All of the sectarian killings started after that and it was done by both sides, no question about it. But I think more than anything, to paraphrase, he was saying you want a democratic government; what you‘re going to get is an elected sectarian government. I think it would be going too far to say now the payback begins, but it was certainly that “I as a Sunni am going to be disenfranchised.”

Following the election what we immediately saw was the bickering and jockeying for power. They couldn‘t form a government; they couldn‘t elect a prime minister. That didn‘t happen until after I left Iraq.

The first question, you said when did you leave Iraq? Election was January 31st; I was supposed to leave February 20th. When I went to Iraq, we had practically no Foreign Service officers there in February of 2004. The mission was still being formed – we had to staff up in terms of local nationals. We had great difficulty in getting Foreign Service officers to bid on Iraq, until the Administrator Andrew Natsios decreed, “Nobody goes anywhere until I get bidders for Iraq.” We did get some, but it had to be bid three times. Though we got some good people in, we got some people who for medical reasons or others really had to leave immediately. So, before I even left Serbia I recruited people I had worked with in other posts.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR JOHN D. NEGROPONTE
U. S. Ambassador
Iraq
Baghdad, Iraq
(2004-2005)

Ambassador John D. Negroponte was born in London in 1939 and raised in New York City. A Yale graduate, he joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1960, serving in Vietnam, Greece, and Latin America before becoming U.S. Ambassador to Honduras, Mexico, and the Philippines. He later served as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (2001–2004) and Iraq (2004–2005), where he played a key role in supporting Iraq's first democratic elections. He became the first Director of National Intelligence (2005–2007) and later served as Deputy Secretary of State (2007–2009). After retiring, he remained active in academia and international affairs.

Topical Focus – U. S. Support for Elections in Iraq

Q: I think-- relations with the United States, was John McCain a fairly constant factor There?

NEGROPONTE: … The other thing, we talked about the reprogramming the reconstruction program. We talked about restoring order, which was a big issue. Issue number 3 was organizing
elections for national assembly which took place January 30, 2005. The preparations for that were definitely a major preoccupation of the embassy working with the United Nations and with the Iraqi government.

Q: Well now with this, what role did we play? I mean did we have a…

NEGROPONTE: I would call it, we were like a director of a movie. We weren't actors on the stage, but we played a very important supporting role in mobilizing and encouraging the Iraqis in the form of their political process. The Iraqis had an election commission with which we had a very good relationship. The U.N., I mentioned Mr. Valenzuela, and the IFES, which did a lot of training, which is the NGO. I forget what those initials stand for, but between those actors we got the election organized.

There was some doubt whether there was enough security in the country to conduct the election. It turned out that in Al Anbar and in the Sunni areas we weren't able to set up polling places in some of them, but in most parts of the country we were able to set up polling places. You remember everybody walking with the ink stained thumb. Now here is the important point about that. I don't think the elections would have been as successful as they were had it not been for a master stroke by General Casey. When he actually carried it out I questioned it, but it turned out to be absolutely right. He decreed that for two or three days before the election and for two or three days after there would be no vehicular traffic in Iraq. He was dealing with the issue of car bombs and the fear that car bombs might be used against polling places. So basically the 48 hours before and

the 48 hours after we had no vehicular traffic in Iraq except for official vehicles. The result was there were enough polling places so that people could walk to them. I took a helicopter the morning of the election. I woke up with great trepidation. I asked myself, "what is going to happen today?" The first thing I heard was a loud boom, and then another boom. I heard about five or six booms. Well apparently those were all the booms that occurred that day. There were about seven or eight of them in the morning, explosions, bombs here or there, and then after that it was peaceful. The country was essentially peaceful for the entire day of the election. I got in my Blackwater helicopter about 11:00 in the morning and flew all over Baghdad, all the different streets, and it was really an impressive sight to see the people going to vote. The women in their robes. The men and the turnout, the word got out. Cell phones really made a difference. At the beginning hardly anybody went to the polls but as the word got out that it was safe, then people started calling each other, so we had a very good voter turnout. I felt that was a real feather in our cap that we helped get that election organized and got Iraq back on the path towards democracy. So it was great. I wasn't there much longer because after the January 30 elections I got called by the White House, by Andrew Card who was the President's chief of staff. Andy Card asked me if I wanted to be the first Director of National Intelligence. I told him I didn't know much about that. I hadn't followed the debate much leading towards the legislation. I would have to think about it. If he would give me 24 hours, please, and I would call him back. Of course, I intended to say yes, but I at least wanted to call my wife so that she wasn't too surprised.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR DAWN LIBERI
USAID
Mission Director
Baghdad, Iraq
(2005-2006)

Ambassador Dawn Liberi was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She studied at Hampshire College for her undergraduate degree and University of California Berkeley for her masters degree. She joined USAID in 1980, and served in Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and as the Ambassador to Burundi. She was interviewed by Mark Tauber in January 2017.

Topical Focus – Preparation for the 2005 Iraqi Presidential Election

LIBERI: A key event that happened during this time was the election. A main focus we were working on was getting educational materials out about elections, particularly “Why participate in an election?” People hadn’t had an election in years, so there was a whole generation of folks who really had no clue about what an election was, or what participatory democracy was, including who was being elected , and how elections were conducted. There was a huge educational process to get people to understand the process, what ballots were, how they were supposed to be using the ballots to vote, etc. Then physically to get the ballots out to polling stations in a conflict environment, get the election monitors trained. (It was) a huge deal.

There were a couple of key elements of the elections that we were dealing with.. One was trying to get the government and the population ready for the elections. People were very excited. They were excited just by the concept of being able to “elect” leadership. A lot of them weren’t quite sure what it fully meant, but they really wanted things to change, at least feel like this was a participatory process, etc. We wanted to make sure that they were educated and knew what the electoral process was. However, I think in many ways there was too much of a high expectation that things would change overnight and that “Boom!”--everything would just be rosy and fully operational - all services would be there, the budget would flow, etc. It was difficult in many ways, because there were many unmet expectations--some of it was very unrealistic.

The other issue on the U.S. government side, was that everything was focused toward the elections. From a policy standpoint, I think we were erroneously thinking, “Okay! Great! We help Iraq have elections, and then we can turn the country over to them, as we try to exit.” So then it would become Iraq’s issue to take over the institutions of government, provide services, security etc. as the U.S. started to retreat. We could focus our efforts on advising the Iraqis, but start making our way out…all of which didn’t happen.

In terms of the political situation, things were evolving particularly in terms of candidates, etc Don’t forget, this is when Ahmed Chalabi was still a player. He was trying to influence things. I think he thought he was going to become the next president, and that didn’t quite work out. We also had the Kurds who were obviously pushing for their seat at the table. There were a lot of different factions vying to ensure that there were Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish (representation.) That power sharing was a very important step, and frankly, very tenuous at times.

So fast forward and what often inevitably happens is that the least controversial person gets elected. In this case (Nouri) al-Maliki was the candidate they could agree upon, however he did not have a lot of experience, in fact almost no experience at all. Basically (he) was put there because he caused the least amount of waves, which is not a great

harbinger of terrific leadership, because he really didn't have the experience and he didn't have the personality for it either.

The first time I met al-Maliki he was answering his own cellphone as we went into a room to meet with him. He was confused, like he didn't really know what this meant, how he was supposed to act, who was doing what to whom. There was no infrastructure. There was no set up for him. He had his family members surrounding him because these were the people that he could trust; he really was floundering. We, the heads of agencies, were there with Ambassador Khalilzad. We were one of the first delegations to go and meet with him, and I went as head of USAID. I remember at one point during the conversation al-Malaki got really flustered and confused because the phone kept ringing and he kept having to answer it. He finally just handed it to his cousin who looked like he was about 12 (years old)! All the rest of us were sitting there dumbfounded saying, "Okay, this is the new leadership! We have a lot of work to do here to help him with the governing process!" Needless to say, there were a lot of fits and starts to begin with and it was not a smooth, well-oiled machinery.

At that point, now moving into 2006, the insurgency really started heating up. The level of violence, the level of attacks we were coming under, the shelling that occurred--mortars incoming every day--was really, really intense.

Q: Before we get too much further, the actual election itself. To what extent did USAID support it? In other words were there programs of _____ education and so on that AID was responsible for or was that more a State Department…

LIBERI: No, it was almost completely USAID. We had the program to do voter education, voter registration, training of election monitors, and then many of us went out and actually participated in the international election monitoring process. That was actually one of the most satisfying activities, to go out and actually see Iraqis vote, leave the polling booth with their fingers that had been put into the purple ink. There were many scenes of that sort--"I Voted"--and people brought their families with them. I went to the polling stations in and around Baghdad and a little bit further up north. I got to about ten different polling stations that day. What was just heartwarming was to see people bringing their families, their children, to show them that this is what democracy is about. This is how you elect and choose your leadership - to really see the parents trying to give their children a lesson in civics. That was great, really heartwarming.

Q: And based on your experience with democracy programs in other countries, were you more or less satisfied about the outcome of at least the education and the outreach that you did before the election.

LIBERI: Yes, I think that our teams got out--again with the help of the U.S. military-- to transport materials around the country. In fact, getting the ballots out was a huge logistical process, because ballots had to first be printed up. The process of who's running, who were the candidates, what are the party logos, all that had to be sorted out ahead of time. That was an involved process to say the least--lots of politics. Then just the sheer logistical element of getting ballots printed, and distributed to each of the polling stations, was enormous. Those logistical issues, frankly, in many elections--as we've seen even in our own--make or break the process. I felt that at least we were able to get (election) educational programs distributed throughout most of the country.

Q: The contractors that did it, were they IRI (International Republican Institute) and NDI (National Democratic Institute)?

LIBERI: Yes, all the above. We needed lots of people to get out and to help with the process. We had a huge election portfolio.

Q: And the sense before the election was that you had pretty much reached…. …a critical mass of voters, and maybe not every single one, but that the feeling in Iraq was that enough people would get a chance to vote that they would feel that it was legitimate.

LIBERI: Right, and I think people were generally pleased with the process, if not with the outcome. I think most people thought that the process went reasonably well, and it was deemed by the U.S. and the UN to be "free and fair" and that there didn't appear to be major irregularities. There was concern, of course, that there would be ballot stuffing, particularly in certain areas. I'm not saying that nothing happened. There's always room for issues to occur and I think logistically a couple of errors occurred where some ballots didn't get where they needed to be. I think some people felt that the election register wasn't complete in many places, etc., but there didn't seem to be any massive fraud. Logistical issues and errors, yes, but no grand manipulation of the outcome.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES FRANKLIN JEFFREY
Department of State
Chief of Mission
Ambassador
Iraq
Baghdad, Iraq

(2004-2005)
(2010-2012)

James Franklin Jeffrey was born on August 1, 1946 in Melrose, Massachusetts. He completed his undergraduate education at Northeastern University and his graduate education at Boston University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1977. During his Foreign Service career he served in a variety of posts including Tunisia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Germany, Kuwait, Albania, Iraq, and at the National Security Council. He retired in June of 2012 and was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy and Mark Tauber in 2014.

Topical Focus – Iraqi Elections, U.S. Troop Removal From Iraq

Q: At this moment had the exile Iraqis basically everybody that was expected to play a role in the government basically melted away?

JEFFREY: No, no, they were basically foreign exiles but they were dominant among the Kurds and the Shi'a, but of course they weren't dominant among the Sunni Arabs. Because the only Sunni Arab element that had been part of the anti-Saddam coalition were the Muslim Brothers. The Islamic Party of Iraq was what they recreated themselves as and Tarik Hashemi was their leader and later vice president of Iraq and later on the run because Prime Minister Maliki accused him of being an Al Qaeda agent in 2011. I am not so sure that was totally wrong. In 2005 I had gone out to see him in his compound and we had been hit by an Al Qaeda suicide bomber as we left so my feeling is I wouldn't rule it out but he was also not particularly strong and he couldn't bring the Sunni Arabs with him and neither could Sheik Gazi so we didn't really have Sunni Arabs. That of course was a problem because Al Qaeda and various other groups under Hareth Al Dhari who was head of the Islamic Scholars which is what the clergy called themselves. He was an Islamic cleric. His grandfather had led the revolution against the British in 1920 and his son was a leader of something called the July 20th brigades which was one of the insurgent groups out near Fallujah.

So, we had lots of bad actors on the Sunni side. Much of our political work was trying to find Sunni leaders and Sunni people and bringing them in. That is what Stu Jones was doing out in Ramadi. That was what we were doing up on Mosul, trying to find Sunnis who would play a role because they were at least 20% of the population. Then of course they were most of the insurgency.

Beyond that we had other problems in this July-January period. One is that Iraqis insisted on elections so we had to have democratic elections. Allawi the prime minister who we

worked very well with. He was a very strong leader, A Shi'a Arab but very secular. More popular among the Sunnis because he had great connections in Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Beirut and such than he actually was among the Shia because he was known for being a hard drinking very secular guy. And a very effective prime minister. Sheik Gazi was an effective president. We had Hoshyar Zebari as foreign minister, he was very good, a Kurd, relative of Masoud Barzani, and several other really good people in key ministries. Finance in particular. Defense and interior alas were weak. That was always a problem as was the new Iraqi military that stood up. So, what we did was try to focus on the election but then we ran into upsurges in insurgency from both the Shi'a side and–

Q: Oh the Shi'a side you have Muqtata Al Sadr you could just read international media on him because every day he had something negative to say. Up to no good. Was Sistani in the background doing anything helpful?

JEFFREY: Yeah Sistani, I will get to that. Sistani actually ended the rebellion but it was a little bit of a complicated story. Muqtada was getting support from the Iranians. That was very troubling. The Iranians also had their claws into the Badr Corps which was another paramilitary organization that was allied with the supreme council which is one of the more important Shia groups from the Hakim family, one of the great religious families of Iraq. So, there were lots of Iranian connections but there was lots of pushback too, particularly from Sistani. Muqtada was not really in the Iranian camp permanently as we have seen since then. But in 2004 he was getting support from them. They encouraged him to launch another insurgency that summer and he seized the golden mosque in Najaf the most holy of sites analogous to the grand Mosque in Mecca where you remember in '79 radicals seized that. So Muqtada seized that and started a reign of terror in Najaf. Local Iraqi security forces melted away as usual and we had to send in the marines and then backed with the 1st Armored Division heavy armor. There was very heavy fighting. Negroponte had gone on a leave before the fighting had begun so I was stuck with trying to deal with this.

Finally, the U.S. troops had fought their way through much of Najaf and Muqtada's force was besieged in the Golden Mosque with about 500 people. He wasn't there, he was in another city. He avoids violence. He is not a particularly courageous fighter, but his people were very good fighters and we brought in every sniper team in the country that we could to take these guys down but there is still going to have to be an assault. So finally, the military was planning this and Casey called me and it was just Casey and me. Casey said, "Look this is the plan." And the plan was to have the 36th commando battalion which was a largely Kurdish unit but a very good Iraqi force go into the Golden Mosque with about 70 American advisors dressed up in commando uniforms in Marine amtracs. Well Marine amtracs are very large amphibious personnel carriers much larger

than the normal personnel carrier. It would look like an American assault on the Golden Mosque. The other problem was with all the shooters you would still have only about 400 people so once they got in there they would be outnumbered; you couldn't use artillery or helicopter gunships or anything on the Golden Mosque because it was the Golden Mosque. So, I looked at the plan. Casey looked at the plan and said, "What do you think?" I said, "George, it is your call it is a military decision but this plan ain't going to work." He said, "I know, so what are we going to do.?" Then Sistani saved our bacon so to speak but it almost didn't work. Sistani knew that we would probably assault the Golden Mosque.

Alawi had sent down Mowafuk Al Rubai who Jerry had appointed the national security advisor with a five-year term. Nobody liked Mowafuk but the Americans because he could speak good English and he was a very high cultured buy but he was kind of a flake. So, Alawi gave him a list of 12 demands to negotiate with Muqtada. He went down there with the 12 demands. And came back with a 12-point plan that was basically Muqtada's. So, Alawi was actually beating him up physically in the backyard of his place where we met most evenings where we tried to figure out what would be the next day's plan.

So anyway, Sistani was off in Beirut for medical care and he decided he would fix the whole thing. So, he wanted to fly back. Well Alawi was in a fury at Muqtada and at Mowafak and he wanted to have the 36th Battalion go in and just kill everybody. Then he wanted to find Muqtada and personally kill him. We spent months and months beating down the persistent rumor that Alawi had walked into one of the prisons with his pistol and had gone from cell to cell shooting people. As I said this is an apocryphal story but it gives you an idea of his reputation.

I get a call. I won't say who because it was one of the many guys planted in Alawi's office from the U.S. side, saying we have got a problem. This was 3:00 in the morning. Sistani is flying back to end this thing. What he wants to do is to organize a million-man march, march from Basra to Najaf and persuade Muqtada to pull his people out. Alawi had just gone to the U.S. military and told them to close the air space. The military said yes. I was furious. It wasn't that George Casey had undercut us. This was done by some colonel. There were a bevy of colonels who were Alawi's advisors just like we have a bevy of Arab Americans and Arab Brits who are his advisors on the other side. I mean they travel in his entourage protected by Navy Seals.

So, some colonel called another colonel in the ops center of the U.S. military and was listened to, yeah it was routine. I talked to the air force guys. So, I went into the military command center at the palace and confirmed the story, called Casey and got this thing

reversed. So that was my one contribution to success if you can say it of Iraq if I had to put my finger on it.

So, Sistani lands, organizes his million-man march, goes up to Najaf, and you have to understand that Muqtada is from one of the great Islamic clerical families of Iraq, not just Iraq but of the whole middle east. The famous missing Imam of Lebanon is a member of the Sadr family who went to Qadhafi's Libya in I think 1979 and we think was killed on the order of the Iranians. So, this is a family with great status. There were many more senior clerics. Muqtada was not even a baby ayatollah; now you have Grand Ayatollah Sistani who has all of this credibility meeting with him, my son and all of that, and basically negotiating the withdrawal of everybody. So this whole crisis was ended.Muqtada stood down. We actually had an arms turn in program in Sadr City that Ron Neumann organized that was the biggest joke. Rusty arms probably from the 17th century. We were handing out money and anything to keep people quiet for the moment.

Our real problem was Fallujah. Al Qaeda had dug in deep there and was extending its roots all through the Sunni areas. It would be clear that we couldn't even attempt a vote. We didn't think we would get a lot of Sunni votes but we couldn't even attempt a vote in the Sunni third of the country as long as these guys were operating out of Fallujah. So, Alawi agreed we are going to have to put an end to Fallujah. Well he didn't have troops to do it. We actually ended up using about six Iraqi battalions and they all did fine but they were in supporting roles and we had to use the better part of our U.S. marine division with some U.S. 1st Cavalry reinforcements. I mean all in all we threw including in blocking mission about five brigades. So, we are talking about one third of the U.S. force. We brought a British battalion up into what was euphemistically known as the triangle of death to the south of Baghdad between the Euphrates and the Tigris to block the bridges. We pulled our troops out to put them closer to Fallujah. So, this was a huge operation much bigger than our job within it. We had to work with Washington, with the UN and with the international community to try to sell this thing. We had all kinds of problems in the Arab world, us going after Sunnis and fortunately that was the week Yasser Arafat died. So, every Sunni news media outlet, every Arab journalist was focused on this and we were able to go in and do it, but it required an awful lot of diplomatic work and all of that.

So, the operation was a total success but was very costly, almost 100 Americans killed in action and thousands of al Qaeda guys. Fallujah never really recovered. As we saw it was the first city to fall to ISIS in 2014. One of my jobs both in Najaf and then later in Fallujah was to coordinate all of the efforts to try and do humanitarian recovery. That is unlike the rest of the country that was below third world standards these places were just rubble and people didn't have water.

So, you need to get primary assistance from the military but with a lot of help from us, basic essentials in medical care, water. As I said the Iraqi authorities, the Iraqi military had no ability to do that. So that was much of our focus during that time. Finally, the election. The elections were quite controversial. Because quite quickly it was very clear that Alawi wouldn't win. Most likely the way things were shaping up one or another Shia party would win. We were nervous about the Iranians and who that would be, so we were trying to figure out ways to help Alawi win. We had a SVETS a video SVETS to brief the president in late October early November.

Q: And this was still 2004.

JEFFREY: It was still 2004, yeah. We were briefing on the elections which were to be held in January, 2005. Anyway, we had come up with all kinds of plans cooked up with our intelligence community partners to make sure that Alawi gets elected. We started briefing them to the president and the president said I can't believe what I am hearing. I don't want an American hand on this election other than election monitoring and support for Iraqi and international organizations that will help organize it. There actually was an organization, this was the famous purple finger election and it was organized brilliantly.

Aside from pumping oil, the one thing that was working in Iraq when I got there was the food distribution system which had been part of the Iraqi structure for many decades, taken over by the UN during the embargo period and then we took it over when we got there in 2003. Then the Iraqis executed it. It meant that every morning they baked enough bread for 30 million people and how that happened I didn't know. They said wait there is one thing that worked that gets down to every neighborhood and that is the food distribution system. So, let's use the food distribution system to do the elections. So, it worked like a charm. This is the kind of thing you get to do in total chaos.

But getting back to the larger issue, Bush made it clear there would be no American role in this. Of course, we weren't used to that even in Western Europe. You know we would pick our favorites in our own minor ways. And so, it was really a. hands off election other than logistically and administratively helping make it happen. It was a very fair election as I said it got a lot of good media attention which was important.

What we had tried to do was to bring in the Sunnis. So, this led to me going out to see Hareth Al Dari the head of the Sunni clerics and essentially the religious leader of the Sunni insurgency. Zakawi was the leader of the Al Qaeda resistance and this guy was the religious leader if you will basically Sistani's counterpart. Sunni Islam doesn't work that

way but basically speaking he was the most influential cleric and also totally in the insurgency.

He was camped out in the huge Sunni Mosque in the area known as the "Mother of all Battles Mosque." So anyway, General Chiarelli didn't want me to go out there. He claimed it was too dangerous and he didn't want me dealing with Hareth Al Dari. He was a bad guy. So anyway, I kept pushing. I said, "Negroponte wants me to use this guy to get the Sunnis to vote to get him to come in from the cold. That is what we do as diplomats, da, da, da."

So, he kept on coming up with more information on why Hareth Al Dari is a bad guy So I said, "Hey let me see this information. Let me see the raw copies". I am looking at it and after reading a couple of minutes I said, "Wait. These are from the weekly reports from some colonel on your staff who is going out and seeing Hareth Al Dari." He said, "Yeah, I got a liaison officer." I said, "Look, that is my job." I am a civilian. He is a civilian. If you can have your colonel see him I sure as hell can see him. Anyway, he yielded but he gave me a whole battalion to go in there with because they were really nervous about this because we had to announce in advance. It was under a lieutenant colonel who was under a brigade commander. The brigade commander who went out there and who insisted on going with me was a colonel by the name of Milley who is now the chief of staff of the U.S. Army. Milley is a New England guy like me. Very tough guy, hockey player at Princeton. He didn't like this mission. He didn't like Hareth Al Dari. So, he had a very large tank heavy force push through this Sunni area and was very nervous about the whole thing.

Anyway, we got out there and it did look like the Mother of All Battles mosque. It was the biggest mosque I have ever seen other than the ones in Istanbul. Anyway, we went in there and we argued with Hareth Al Diari for several hours. Milley had a solution to the Harweth Al Dari thing but to be fair to Milley I won't discuss it. I thought it was amusing. But at the end we agreed to sort of disagree and his continuing on being an insurgent and we would continue on with the election.

I then tried to do the same thing with Muqtada Al Sadr's deputy. So, we went to southern Baghdad which was less dramatic. It was not as dangerous an area, and it was being brokered by a Shia cleric who Robert Ford knew. So, Robert Ford came with a friend from Najaf. He was not part of Muqtada's party. I think he was Dawa, but he was a really interesting guy and he was running in the elections.

Now the elections of course Zaqawi had to declare them to be a violation of Islamic principles and anybody who participated in it would be killed. They started killing

election workers and filming them and running them in their propaganda. It was like so many other things, absolutely terrible. But we were happy if we couldn't get Hareth Al Dari we could at least get Muqtada and his people to go out.

Unfortunately, we had a military escort although it was a small one. But then one of the Humvees cut a car in half outside as we had a little incident. So, Moktada's guy was hiding upstairs and wouldn't come down. So, we were left with this cleric who spoke good English. I thought this would be interesting because although he was a Shi'aMuslim, he studied Islam in great detail and he certainly is risking his life to run for office in these circumstances. Maybe he would answer my question.

So, I asked him and I will never forget this because it tells you so much about the Middle East. The single most brilliant observation anybody has ever made to me in all my time there. I said, "This Zaqawi guy says that holding elections is a violation of Islamic principles. You are a cleric and clearly believe in elections. What do you think about Zaqawi's position?" Remember Zaqawi by this time had already shifted from targeting us to targeting Shi'a as heretics. So, there was already this very bad blood, although Zaqawi had started it off a couple of years earlier in something called Ansar Al Islam which was a Kurdish Jihadi movement operating out of Iran. That is where Zaqawi came from even though he was a Palestinian Jordanian. It was a very murky arena in the Jihadi connection there. But anyway, certainly by this time Zaqawi was adamant that the role of the Al Qaeda movement in Iraq was to kill Shi'a.

Despite that, I will never forget this guy when I asked him the question. He took a draw on a cigarillo, took it out, looked around, and then looked at me and smiled and said, "You know Zaqawi has a point. " Anyway, that is the Middle East.

So, we wound up doing the election and the election was a logistical success. The Iraqi people voted. In the Sunni area we got between 10% and 15% of the vote but at least we held the vote. Then we had to work our magic. First John Negroponte and then me trying to put together a government because of course you had many parties in parliament and you had to coalesce. Now we had one negative development that shaped the entire political future of Iraq. Masud Bazani the leader of the Kurdish KDP party and his longtime comrade in arms but also rival and at times enemy in combat Jalal Talabani and the breakaway PUK party decided they would run on a joint list. So that all the Kurds would run as one party. This much irritated Ayatollah Sistani who dictated OK only because of that should the Shia parties form a coalition which they did. This we saw as really bad.

So anyway, at the end of the day the Shia won about 65 % of the votes. And we had no one party within this coalition of Shia who won so we had this huge battle over finding a prime minister, first finding a president and then a prime minister. Now the way the Iraqi system works is you are supposed to have a president first. Actually, you are supposed to choose a speaker of parliament. Then the Speaker of parliament organizes the parliament. Then they have to vote on a president. Then the president charges the party with the most votes to find a prime minister. OK that is the constitution but that isn't the reality. The reality is nobody would vote on who would be the speaker until they knew who the others would be. So, you would have to try to get some kind of a package. In all future elections this is what we basically had to do or they had to do with a lot of help from us.

But this time we tried to do it the right way. So, we got a speaker of parliament. Then we need a president. Sheik Gazi they decided would be the president. But that opened the way to a Shia prime minister like Lebanon. It took us months to get Sheik Gazi confirmed but even then, and then just as John Negroponte left we got as prime minister Abraham Jafari who wasn't a cleric but who was a very mystic Islamic politician who had spent many years in London, who was a doctor, but did not speak good English and was a very head in the clouds kind of guy. Everybody liked him because he spoke brilliant Arabic and would finish number one in all of the polls. So, he wasn't particularly pro-Iranian and he wasn't too anti-American. He was the lowest common denominator. We were particularly worried about his effectiveness, and it turned out we had good reason to. Anyway, we got him appointed but then nobody could agree on his cabinet. Before you could really form the government, you had to have a cabinet.

So, John Negroponte had left and I spent my last three months negotiating with everybody position by position to get them all to settle on who this would be. Now that seems to be a weird job for a foreign diplomat but this is what we were trying to do and this was constantly under watch by Washington that was trying to make sure about every single thing that happened because Washington obviously had an interest in a stable government. This was why we were trying so hard to put together any government. Second, they were trying to put together a government that would be pro-American and effective and both were very hard to come by. Thirdly they wanted government services and the economy and everything to start kicking in so that would dry up the swamp of the insurgency. That was the theory. Nation building was the answer to insurgency. Government building to insure they were favorable to us. Both of these things I have some trouble with but I mean it was not my job to question; it was my job to execute as best I could.

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The Gulf War was an example of how to do things right. And Holbrooke in the Balkans, but most of the time we do a variant of this and thus if you have the most important job the President is trying to do then you will be spending more of your time dealing with bureaucratic absurdities than the normal person does and that is a lot for the normal person. So that is severe turbulence. The other thing is and this gets into something have worked on through my whole career and have put a lot of effort into since I have left, and I am in a more academic or analytical way now — which is the military's misconception of how to deal with population in internal conflicts.

The problem is while the military once knew this, the Philippines, the Confederacy after the Civil war, the Indian Wars, the military once was used to internal conflicts and dealing with populations. It basically had become a big constabulary, the military. There was some occupation duty after WWI and a hell of a lot after WWII led by the military in both cases. But in all of our conflicts in the Cold War and such while the Cuban Missile Crisis was nestled inside an internal conflict over Cuba which the Bay of Pigs was supposed to solve, and the conventional war in Korea was nestled within a civil war between the North and South almost everything we did was a civil war, including Berlin, a split between East and West Germany; northern Greece and the whole thing are an internal conflict or an insurgency or something else. It involves inside a country, inside a population as either the accelerant of the violence the military had to deal with, kinetics…

Or else the excuse for the Soviets or some other elements of the Communist world to intervene. Therefore, the military over time came to think that they couldn't win these things on their own, Vietnam being the best example and a very searing example. But their conclusion wasn't maybe we shouldn't get into these things or get into them with a big army on the ground or big Marine Corps on the ground, but rather we got to find a civilian secret sauce that can change these societies. Michael Mandelbaum came out with a book two years ago called "Mission Failure" which analyzes this after the Cold War from 1989 on when this really kicked into higher gear. Not just with the military thinking of it in Somalia and the Balkans and the Middle East. But frankly the civilian side. The responsibility that you have to go in and violate the sovereignty of people who are butchering their own population. Nation building, state building all of this. There were left wing variants of this with the kind of USAID tree huggers and there were right wing versions of it, the Neocons were all about this with the freedom agenda and working through this to influence Bush. So it was a very common theory.

The problem is it didn't have any real legs. When you ask people, cite where it works you would get Germany, Japan, the Marshall Plan. My response would be 1945, 1945, 1948. We are now in 2004 or 2005. Gee that is 50 years later. What am I missing here? That is

60 years later. What am I missing here? Who says that this stuff is going to work? In fact, looking back now the only really good example is Colombia where A, we didn't have boots on the ground, B, we had three decades to do it. C, we had really good local leaders and a lot of luck, and D, there was no other power in the neighborhood who was trying to mess up plan Colombia.

None of these things attained in any of our various internal conflicts or in very few of them which is why they didn't turn out very well. The military did not analyze very well. One of the major problems of the Department of State and here I will fault the sainted Colin Powell is that we embraced this. We were all in on what we could do because we wanted to help Bush. We were so shocked at this absurd misuse of our military capability to take down an entire country. What were we thinking about with the Powell pottery barn phenomenon and such? And we knew we were the people who were going to have to own it because that is the reality of things,

Don Rumsfeld did not want to own it. He mainly wanted to get out. But the main thrust of the U.S. government is we owned it and we have got to clean it up. We were cleaning up all the pottery but more importantly we have got to have a vision for the pottery barn store. We have to have a new dawn which is one of our military phrases, the New Dawn operation or something. And we have got to make this all right. We never said there is no record of us doing this. This is again since the 1940's where it was mainly the locals doing it particularly the Marshall Plan. All we did was hand out money. In the case of Japan and Germany since the locals didn't do it gee it was the U.S. military which first of all had bashed them so hard they knew they had no choice and secondly it was on the ground working with them through Clay and Macarthur. That is not what we got. We don't do this. The government people and USAID is sort of long term development assistance. What are you talking about here? PRT's? That isn't part of our core mission. Well the military was adamant. In fact, they worked with Zal to set up the PRT concept. I can say because I was getting a lot of pressure before I left Iraq that we would have to do something like that. As I said we did have three outposts of the embassy in Hillah, Basra, and well actually we had four, Hillah, Basra, Kirkuk, and Erbil. We had some people out sort of as Polads, so we started turning them all into quasi-PRTs and when Zal came out they actually became PRTs the only difference being that unlike Afghanistan they were under the embassy. But they were under the security of the military and they cut the deal that way. That was one of my jobs when I was back in Washington. So, the whole Kicklighter thing was a pain and cry of angst from the military that Rumsfeld magnified for his own reasons to get those damn civilians to do their job. If they won't do it I will set up a guy who will. So, we had to deal with Mick Kicklighter but fortunately he didn't know enough about the subject and he was a good guy.

Q: But what led Rumsfeld to think the civilians weren't doing their job?

JEFFERY: Well that is a good question and I should have started with this. Here is the strategic situation in Iraq in the summer of 2005. We had been on a roll since the summer of 2004 after an awful year of everything going wrong in 2003 to December of 2004, the first Fallujah battle and things I have described. Then we started winning. Najaf, the destruction or at least the dismantlement of the Mahdi Army at least as an active threat. Fallujah pushing Al Qaeda back on its heels, the purple finger election and we were able to actually stand up a democratically elected government. Just what George Bush had promised and we could assure hey everybody would see that and the Sunnis we could eventually work in. We were making slow progress actually getting the country to function as I said trying to reach the almost unattainable heights of your normal run down third world country. We weren't there yet but we were making some progress. There were some things the Iraqis could actually start doing on their own. As I said the exception being they had a wonderful food distribution system that worked perfectly, and while we provided money they were largely in charge of their own oil field development and that they were good at too. So, we had a few things going for us.

But by the summer of 2005 the blinders had come off as we realized we are still in a long-term insurgency and it ain't getting any better. The underlying fissures in the society between the three major groups were there. Within the groups they were divided. The Kurds you would say were the least divided. The Sunnis you can't even say were divided, there were not groups large enough to identify as on either side of the divide and the Shi'a were divided into five major factions. And we didn't have any Abraham Lincoln because that was one thing that Ibrahim Jaferi would never do. He was kind of OK but he was ineffectual. You could meet with him and he would sign the right things. So, we knew we were in for a long-term problem. We had 100,000 troops there. Rumsfeld wanted them to do other things. Because he knew and he was right, that we would have long term threats yet we were pouring money into this thing. The best example and this was after Rumsfeld Bob Gates did the right thing. This isn't a criticism of Gates but Gates canceled the F-22 program at 187 fighters. One of the reasons he did that was to put more money into deploying equipment on the ground most notably the deployment of the MRAPS. To deal with both mines and particularly the Iranian EFP shaped charge IEDs. This was the right thing for him to do to save lives but the long term strategic consequences of not having a large number of fifth generation fighters as we face North Korea, face China in the South China Sea, face Russia in Syria and in the Baltic is very dramatic. That is just the tip of the iceberg of the U.S. military. The U.S. Army is still equipped with the heavy equipment it had in the 1980's. It is good equipment but it is very old. Because all the money went into operations and equipment designed for Iraq.

Q: Just a quick strategic question about Rumsfeld. At this point in 2005-2006 you are saying he did see the need for a long term commitment even though he had been the big voice for get in get out.

JEFFERY: He hated this whole thing. The problem is he worked for a president who truly believed in it. Again, his January 2005 Freedom Rings speech. Rumsfeld knew he couldn't take the president on in that. All he could do is fight a guerilla war against the State Department and the civilian side to make them take on more, to make the Iraqis take on more and let him get his troops the hell out of there. That is what he wanted. That is the tension that we faced. There was a huge impact on the civilian side of the system. He was constantly nudging the system. Kicklighter was one example, there were numerous other ones. Dissing Condi at NSC meetings and other meetings about the failure of the State Department to do this and to do that and she could give as good as she could take and she would snap back on the military because we were following them closely and I will get into that.

So, by the summer of 2005 it was Houston we have a problem. Not an emergency problem like a year before or eight months before but still we don't know how to get out of this. This is beginning to look like Vietnam. So, what do we do? We have four lines of effort as we used to say in those days. One was the military effort which I will come back to. The second was the diplomatic. Aside from a lot of State Department officers assigned there was a lot of system maintenance and hygiene of Iraq and the UN, Iraq and its debts, Iraq and Kuwait. Border disputes all of these things which took up a lot of my time as the guy who has to pull it all together.

The main thing was to get the Arab Middle East to embrace Iraq even though it was a Shi'a Arab led country. This was seen as critical because they were doing nothing other than to some degree funding and arming and letting their Jihadis support the Sunni Arab insurgency. That was a big thing and I will come back to that too. The third thing was the internal politics. There Zal had the lead. He was trusted by Bush and obviously he knew the people, he knew the region. Zal had this portfolio for years as our emissary to the opposition before 2003 and then afterwards he had done that on the ground. He came from the region; he understood Arabic. He was a Muslim. He understood the culture. He had been ambassador in a similar situation in Afghanistan. He was perfect for this. That was his focus and he did it very well. But he didn't care about the rest of it. We had a great deputy out there named David Satterfield who did manage the rest of the embassy but it was a big job and Zal's main priority was to get a constitution. That took an awful lot of work because of course aside from the disunited Iraqis everybody in Washington wanted to put in their version, people like Newt Gingrich and many congressmen and

senators and great thinkers and Bernard Lewis and all these people were pinging on us on how to make Iraq a true democracy.
Zal had to field all of that. He did it very well. He and the Iraqis did actually come up with a constitution that by the fall of 2005 was sealed and delivered and it is still functioning today in 2017 and it is basically being used on how to work out the latest crisis in Kirkuk, essentially those things that were in the constitution. The Kurds took those things that weren't in the constitution and the Iraqi army is in the process of taking them back. And that shows you the value of the constitution. Also, they have had a whole series of elections and have gotten rid of two prime ministers. Where else do you see that in the Middle East. So that part of the whole operation was working.

Q: Just one quick question about the constitution. As it was approaching the completion there was lots of noise back here in the media and somewhat in Congress about when the constitution would have the expression Islamic republic or Islamic nation. How did that play out in the background?

JEFFERY: Oh, that was the single biggest thing because of course this didn't fit into the freedom agenda. We were all about weaning these people away from political Islam. Except that it was the Iraqis' constitution. So Iraq is an Islamic state but it used language that was not reminiscent of Iran as an Islamic Republic. The thing we did the most fighting over was the judicial system because the Iraqi judicial system of course was a little bit of Ottoman law which was very watered-down Sharia law. A lot of British law and a lot of law since the 1920's by a very secularist Baathist Iraq that had nothing to do with Sharia law. But you had one of the major Sunni factions, the Islamic party, the Muslim brothers and of course all of the Shi'a groups were more or less Islamic so there was a major push to put in there, and we had good language that it would draw upon Sharia law but it would be separate from it. That was deemed OK, but boy it was a lot of fighting back and forth about this because our boys are dying for Sharia law. This is the kind of idiocy we get into when we get into these things. You are so close to it working every day and the manifestation of that was the letter Condi has to write to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on why we are betraying our values and on and on. It is a lesson in not getting involved in these things. But anyway, so that was the political side.

Then the fourth thing was the whole civilian effort, ministry to ministry, province to province to make this place look like Denmark. That was the thing that obviously wasn't working well and again the military in general had the attitude of "we are doing our job. We are out there shooting the terrorists and shooting the insurgents but people are complaining. I mean I spent all day talking with sheiks and talking with mayors and talking with people and they had all these laundry lists and America isn't doing all of these things."

Well I am sorry I have dealt with the same things visiting mayors and political leaders in Eastern Turkey in the 1980's. We had no troops other than at Incirlik and a few other places in Turkey. We weren't responsible for building that country now and they still wanted me to fix their sewage problems and such. I am used to that because I am a foreign service officer. These guys weren't because they were military. They thought there was some plan B that we people in the foreign service had on the shelf but for some crazy bureaucratic reason we weren't reaching up and pulling it down and deploying the right people and deploying the right things. So what did we do? We created a whole bureaucracy in the state department. I think it was the reconstruction bureau. It actually became a bureau at one point but Carlos Pascal started it and who picked it up? As I said it became basically civil affairs and community-building and all that, and of course the military had their whole bureaucracy to do this stuff too, but we still weren't getting a lot of traction with the Iraqis because this stuff was really hard and we were foreign. We didn't understand the people. We brought in Iraqi Americans or Palestinian Americans they didn't really know. Even the Iraqi Americans tended to be from the cities and we were mainly working out in the big muddy. So, this was a huge effort and again Rumsfeld saw this as a way A to put the blame on somebody else, and B to suggest that let's get the military out of there.

The only way the two came together was building up the Iraqi military. We had Petraeus for a year who did great work. He had left and we still had good people in there. Who is it, Dempsey replaced him. We were putting a lot of money and a lot of effort into that with mixed results because of the nature of the Iraqi military as we saw against ISIS in 2014. Essentially the underlying divisions and the ineffectuality of the country was mirrored in its military forces and still is. So that effort consumed much of our time, but two others were very important.

In the diplomatic effort I led a delegation, an inter-agency delegation around the region to pitch support for Iraq. We went to the Egyptian government and saw Mubarak, we saw the Arab League chief, went and saw King Abdullah of Jordan, saw King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and that was a key meeting because we needed him to bless Iraq as Arabs and forget about that they were Shi'a so they would open their coffers, they would provide political support they would stop supporting Harith Al Dari and the bad Sunnis which they were doing, etc.

It was an awful meeting. First of all, it was during Ramadan, and the king gracefully gave up the fast, well he didn't give up the fast but he came in anyway. We spent two hours going over this with him. His message was very clear. Look what you have are not Shi'a Arabs. There are no Shia Arabs. These are Persians. There are five million Persians who

have come into Iraq. They need to go. This was an extremely tough line. It was clear he saw them as interlopers into the Arab world. There is a little bit going back into the history. I understand some of this. He would really know it because it was his family involved. When the Ikhwan which was a Salafist movement that swept out of the Arabian Peninsula and at times were at odds with the Saud family and at times was allied with them around the turn of the 19th to the 20th century They devastated southern Iraq and the cities of Najaf and Karbala two major Shi'a centers, and the cities of the south wereShi'a. So in defense, they reached out to the tribes in the region, some of which were local tribes and some of which like the Shammar and others were tribes that stretched all over Iraq into Syria and Saudi Arabia. Those tribes basically formed an alliance but as part of the process they converted because there isn't all that much difference between Shia and Sunni Islam if you separate out the role of Ayatollahs and such. At that time, you didn't have, you didn't have an aggressive Iranian variant of it. You had a quiet version. Everybody was fine with it but this of course was anathema to the Sunni Arab world so we got very little traction with the king and we saw no follow up action. I went back out with Bob Kimmitt at the time he was Deputy Secretary of Treasury to do the same thing, to do some financial aspects and King Abdullah was absolutely as adamant. This time he was really angry at Malaki who had become the prime minister and claimed that Malaki had lied to him so it went from bad to worse. So much for the diplomatic pillar. We got no support from the Arab world for an Arab country. So, the argument, the opinion, that we went in and got rid of Saddam and let the Iranians take over there is some truth to that but the point is the Arab world did nothing. Turkey at least while it often did the wrong thing knew that it was a neighbor that it had to figure out how to deal with all three factions and it came up with solutions concluding particularly with the Kurds but also with the Sunnis and even to some degree with the Shi'a. With a few exceptions Jordan and in some respects Kuwait and in some respects not, nobody really put any effort into Iraq. They basically declared it a lost cause and we have had that basically burdening us since then.

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Iraq was not totally peaceful in 2009 and 2010 but the violence levels were down significantly. The confidence level was way up, the economy was improving and thanks to the engagement of international oil companies and a massive engagement by U.S. firms Exxon and Chevron and others in the north and in the south, beginning in the south and later in the north the oil sector was just booming and within a few years it would become the number two oil producer in OPEC and on a good day everywhere in the country produce almost 5 million barrels, almost half that of Saudi Arabia. That was really impressive. It was mainly Iraqis doing that with some American help with all the various sectors we had put a lot of effort into. Oil was one we put less effort into actually because the Iraqis had the money to do it. And they knew how to do it. And of course,

they got the international oil companies in so they got tremendous investments at a good price with cost plus contracts which are controversial from several standpoints but from the standpoint of Iraqis they were paying one to two dollars a barrel and at the time our oil prices were $100 a barrel so the country was in pretty good shape and Obama didn't want to shake that up. He realized that the American military, and he needed the American military, was very committed to basically declaring Iraq a victory, so Obama was very cautious.

In March he gave a speech at Camp Lejeune. He talked about his vision for Iraq which was in his usual glowing terms, not all that different from Bush talking about Iraq, that is a partner of the United States in the war against terror, that is a democratic liberal society that takes care of its people. But also, Obama then went on, which is not usual for a president, saying this does not mean that America can take care of every problem in Iraq whether America is responsible or not; basically the Iraqis have to pull up their boots and their socks themselves. That limitation of America's responsibility for Iraq rang obviously in my head as ambassador going out a year later. I had it in my head and it basically summed up Obama's view.

He didn't want to tinker too much with the society; he didn't obsess over the political parties and such and he was perfectly happy with prime minister Maliki whom Bush had been happy with. The problem was that as time went on Maliki turned from an asset to a liability. Very much so by the time ISIS came but he was beginning to turn by the time I got out there. The main watershed event was the elections of 2010. Maliki ran on the State of Law coalition of Shi'a parties but not all Shi'a parties, there were several others, and he competed with Alawi who is actually a Shi'a but who identifies with the Sunnis both in Iraq and among Sunni deep pockets sheiks and business people in the Gulf and in Lebanon and who had been the prime minister in 2004 and early 2005 and had done a very good job under very difficult circumstances as I explained earlier. He was heading this eclectic party that was mainly Sunni Arab. Under his leadership he got the Sunnis to vote in large numbers for the very first time which was a major American goal. In a parliament of 325 seats Alawi and Maliki both got about 29% of the vote but Alawi got slightly more seats. Alawi got 93 to Maliki's 91. Well Maliki was furious. He did recounts and everything. He thought he was going to win after he had gotten the Americans out, defeated the Sadrists, all of the things that happened in 2008. But at the end of the day the numbers were still 93 to 91.

Now where this is significant, because obviously this is nowhere near a majority in a 325-seat parliament assembly, was the way Iraq really works. Under the constitution whoever gets the most votes gets the first chance to form a government including if necessary a coalition government, that is the president grants authority to try to form one.

But the new parliament after new elections has to first elect a president and a speaker of parliament and you needed both of them before you could go through the constitutional process within parliament to form a government. The Iraqis in an informal way like Lebanon had already come up with a deal among themselves which is that the Sunni Arabs would provide the speaker, the weakest of the three. Kind of like in Lebanon and that is provided by the Shi'a although they are not the weakest any more. The president would be a Kurd like in Lebanon it is a Christian, and the prime minister, most important would be a Shi'a Arab where as in Lebanon it is a Sunni Arab. But again, in Lebanon this is etched into concrete in their system. In Iraq it was just informal, it was the way things had been since the first election in 2005.

So, it made forming a government complicated because it has to be done as a package even though in the constitution it is done in seriatim. First you elect a speaker of parliament and then you elect the president then he tasks a party to attempt to get the votes for a prime minister. You need the president to give the nod to the person with the most votes. So, the first thing Maliki did was he formed a coalition with the remaining Shi'a parties. Now he is up to about 130-140 members. Then he went and got the supreme court, the constitutional court to rule that the constitutional provision to give the mandate to the person with the most votes is based on the most votes in Parliament when that is to be seated, not most votes in the elections . So anyway, Alawi felt really cheated and claimed this was his election being robbed from him. Now again he only had 29% of the vote and 29% roughly of the seats in parliament and though he was a Shi'a Arab and was qualified to be under these informal rules the prime minister. In fact, he was seen as the champion of the Sunni Arabs and in the camp of the Sunni Arabs. As many Shi'a would say, of the Baathists. That is unfair to Alawi but that is simply how many of them saw that.

So, we are not going to turn the country over to the Sunnis who they associate with Saddam and the Baathists. So, there was a real opposition to that. In terms of the constitutional decision I knew Judge Midhat, who was the head of the constitutional court, well from my earlier tour. I think he is a fair guy. Was he under the influence of Maliki and the Iranians because the Iranians wanted Maliki very much to become the prime minister not Alawi. Possibly but he also interpreted the rules in a logical way because the constitution is not clear and the point is Maliki had a coalition of 130 some odd seats and Alawi did not. So, you could say the biggest group was obviously Maliki. Anyway, Alawi never got over this and felt that the election was stolen. He blamed the U.S. especially Joe Biden because Biden was Obama's point man for Iraq and Biden had developed a friendship with Maliki.

So, the situation in August when I arrived was, the election had been four months earlier. There was still no prime minister because everybody was still arguing about this and Maliki could not get votes beyond the 130-140, that is he couldn't get a majority which was about 164-165. He was not there yet. Of course nobody would move on anything until you could move on everything. That is not how the constitution looks at it, so you had to get an informal deal to pledge for the prime minister before anybody could go and vote for the president. I mean it was pretty obvious that Talabani would continue on as the president and Najafi was the Sunni's guy for the speaker of parliament. So therefore, those weren't the questions, but nobody was going to vote on these things until they knew what the vote would be for the prime minister. Nobody was really going to vote for the prime minister until they knew what jobs they would get in the new administration so all of this was behind the scenes and it was very active when I got out there.

There were also a lot of problems between the U.S. military and the embassy. This was in my view nobody's fault. I knew both of the people there. First of all, Chris Hill was the ambassador and Ray Odierno the commander. It was just that they had different perspectives about where Iraq was going and they had different perspectives about Maliki. Odierno in particular was not very fond of Maliki. So, I was sent out with the task of finishing this off and getting a government formed. By this time, it was clear that the Obama administration was informally warming to keeping a troop presence beyond 2011. He basically could read the tea leaves and he didn't want troops to leave and Iraq to be abandoned and then something go bang in the night just before the 2012 election. I am reading a little bit into this but the point is people were now warming to the idea but we still hadn't accepted that idea and the plan was still, to the Iraqis and to ourselves, that we would not stay on, but nonetheless if we were going to stay on we needed a government to negotiate staying on with which meant we needed a government period. So, there was a real pressure to get a government underway. We also didn't want that because Maliki was the interim prime minister but very little was happening. He did not like the Iranian influence in this whole thing as they were playing a very murky game with Muqtada al Sadr and the Hakim family which was another political party that was very prominent. There was really bad blood among everybody.

Q: This was the moment in this uncertain political scene. Was there in your opinion a general view that the American military should stay, that there was enough uncertainty in the region and perhaps in Iraq that they still needed an American military presence?

JEFFREY: There was a strong view that the Americans needed to stay on by every political leader in Iraq other than Muqtada al Sadr. I don't know what his personal opinion was but his public opinion was that we should go. As I said the Obama administration was warming to that. Those of us in the field, military and civilian,

certainly believed that. So that was the situation when I got out there and mission one was to form a government. Mission two was to simultaneously see if we could keep the troops on because that was certainly my own personal goal and I had enough informal encouragement to do this and I knew that was Ray Ordierno's view and I knew that was Lloyd Austin's view because I had met with Lloyd before I went out and he took over from Odierno a month later. So, this meant that there was real pressure aside from the general issues, to get this job done, to get a prime minister in. The third mission was if we don't keep the military on I would be stuck with an embassy that was looking like a mini-version of the military minus the military with bases all over the country, a $14 billion FMS program and somewhere between 15 and 18 thousand personnel. I had to figure out how we would operate on that because ever since we had come in in 2004, as I had mentioned I was on the ground when we did that, we were a wholly owned subsidiary of the U.S. military for all the logistics and overall security and other things.We would have to do this all by ourselves in a very chaotic and still very violent environment.

So those were my three missions actually four missions because the first one was to have a good relationship with the American Military. Fortunately, I knew Ray Odierno. We had good points and bad points. I had gone out to Texas when he was the corps commander before he deployed in 2007. I had gone down to Texas and met with his staff. So, we were on pretty good terms. The first thing I did was to reach out to him. And Emma Sky who was a Brit and a long time Iraq expert, she spoke Arabic. I knew her from years of experience. She was his de facto political advisor and I immediately reached out to her and in every meeting I had in Iraq she was with me as Ray's representative, and I did this later with Sadi Othman whom I had done this with before. It is a good example of why to send people back to post, he became Lloyd Austin's special advisor on Iraqi politics. So very quickly we restored the relationship between the two agencies and were ready to focus on the other three missions, getting a government put together and keeping the military on and then having plan B.

The next thing that happened was as part of the Obama, well on the one hand and then on the other approach, he very wisely halted the troop drawdown in 2010 at 50,000. He decided we would keep the 50,000 on until the very end. This was a very wise move but Obama being Obama he had to do something, so he decided that the six combat brigades who made up the bulk of the forces had to be re-designated train and advise brigades. Or advise and train brigades. I don't know what it was but nobody took him seriously. So thus, we would be ending our combat role. They had already been spending most of their time training and advising their counterpart Iraqi units so this was nothing new. But they were also from time to time getting into firefights and battles. Nothing like before but I mean this was not a peaceful environment. By this time Lloyd Austin had arrived and he

was going to execute it, Biden decided to come out to celebrate. That was fascinating because as the military always says the enemy gets a voice and they decided that they weren't sure what that was, us going from a combat to a non-combat role. So by smearing our embassy with rocket fire just as Biden got there, including a very serious 240 mm rocket that fortunately landed in one of our containment areas, but it buried itself in about six feet of mud before it exploded. So, we had a lot of wounded people. But this was at night so it was a typical chaotic Iraqi situation with rockets coming in, folks running around, lots of guns, lots of people, medivac helicopters coming in and of course the Secret Service was in the middle of this with Joe Biden.

Now the Secret Service are extremely well trained but none of these guys had been under fire before. We had all the time, so we knew what to do. They were quite nervous about all of this. In the middle of it all I decided I had to talk to Biden. He was calm himself. So, I decided it was better just to participate in all of this, so I told him, "Mr. Vice President, you really earned your combat pay," because anybody including the president who spends an hour in Iraq gets a day's combat pay. Or hazardous duty pay as a civilian government official. So, he said, "you really mean it. Do you think they were really trying to get me?" I said, "Yeah you are lucky to be alive Mr. Vice President." So, he was just happy as a lark but the Secret Service were really frightened because they really didn't have control. We knew what we were doing. We were getting the medivacs in; we were getting people deployed. We were moving around reinforcing in case there would be a ground assault, the typical stuff that would be just second nature to us. So, we got through the famous no longer in a combat role ceremony all in one piece. As I say we had a lot of people wounded, several seriously but fortunately nobody killed that day.

Then we focused on a government. By this time, I had spent enough time with Maliki who was about the only senior politician whom I didn't know from my prior tour. I had met him first when we had gone out with Gates on a prior tour. I had met him a couple of times when I had gone out with Condi and President Bush and I really didn't know him but I concluded pretty soon that he was a problem. Now Lloyd Austin warmed to Maliki more than Odierno did because Austin had been with him in Basra in 2008. Austin was the guy we sent down with Marcie Ries to reassure him when Bush decided yeah, we are going to back this guy. So, he trusted Austin and Austin basically trusted him, and I think correctly. But I still could see there was an awful lot of opposition by both the Kurds and obviously the Sunnis to this, but also other Shi'a particularly Hakim's Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution and that was a powerful force. But the Iranians meanwhile were working behind the scenes to get Maliki elected. That was a good example, a good reason for me to resist Maliki because I didn't want the Iranians' influence. I had seen before what that could do. Al Hakim, Amal Hakim who was the son of the Hakim

brothers who had basically created that movement in the 1980's in Iran and they were all clerics from one of the two senior clerical families in Iraq, the other being the Al Sadrs.

Anyway, he went to Tehran and met with Khomeini, the supreme leader. It was a very bad meeting of one black hat that is Saheed, one descendant of the prophet religious leader talking to another and it was a very tough conversation. He did not yield and he did not want Maliki to be the prime minister. The problem was the Badr Corps which should have been the military wing of the Supreme Council under Hadi al Amry, bolted and made common cause, with Iranian influence, with Maliki. So now basically you had Amar who only had about 10-11 seats in parliament and the Sadrists who were off on their own. They had 40 seats. They didn't like Maliki but they certainly didn't like us and they didn't like Amar. They were not somebody we could play with because they wouldn't talk with us and we obviously had problems with them. So, we were trying to find one of Amar's people. Adil Abdul Mahdi was someone we were trying to work with. He later became the finance minister. He later became in the Maliki years, no in the Allawi administration the oil minister, one of the senior figures in Iraq. A very good guy, former communist who then had become a member of an Islamic party but pro-western and much liked and he had been the candidate of certainly some in Washington in 2005 when we got rid of Jafery after the 2006 election and got Maliki. So, I tried with him but in the end, we tried all kinds of things including getting the president to urge Barzani and Talabani not to have Talabani remain as the president so that Alawi could be the president and then Allawi would get the Sunnis along with the Kurds to vote for Adil Abdul Mahdi.

But Talabani would not leave. I thought it was a good idea of mine that Obama went along with but turned out to be a bad idea and blew up, but to Obama's credit he still listened to our ideas. I was given a lot of running room to drag this thing out to see if I could find an alternative. There were people in the State Department who were absolutely opposed to Maliki, people in the military were also concerned, I think Robert Gates in particular. I don't quite know where Clinton was and again the vice president was basically positive. Tom Donilan was trying to balance all of the balls. So, I had the option to keep the discussion open which I tried to do. Finally, however, I sat down with Barzani after we tried this ploy with Talabani, and Barzani said, "Look, I have been talking with Maliki. I have come up with an 18 to 22 point agreement between us that he will put into effect if I support him and I am going to support him unless you can tell me why I shouldn't. I said "Well I am still working;" Barzani said, "Look here is the thing. It is all set up. You tried, and you realize the Kurds get the president, the Sunnis get the speaker, and the Shi'a get prime minister. That is the deal we all agreed to and we encouraged you but the Shi'a are 70% of the population. That is the deal we agreed to when we liberated the country in 2003 and I can't change this. I like Allawi, he is a close friend of mine (and

they really were close) but he is not going to become the prime minister. I would support Adil over Maliki because I don't trust Maliki but Adil doesn't have the votes. He has been trying for months." So basically, he was going to move off on his own.

Then at the same time I was up in Kirkuk, somebody in civil society, and I don't think this was made by some party but a civil society group. They challenged Fouad Massoum who was acting speaker of parliament and thus supposedly was responsible for getting the process going under the constitution. They charged him with violating the constitution because what happened was on the first day the parliament meets after an election they are supposed to elect the speaker, elect the president and then the president tasks whoever got the most votes. Well knowing this was complicated by Fouad Massoun who was a Kurd from Talabani's PUK but a very clever guy. He is now the president of Iraq. He decided not to gavel the meeting closed that day in April of 2010 when it first had opened so it was still supposedly open on its first day so he was not technically violating the constitution by not voting for the president and the speaker. So, somebody took him to court and the court found against him, and I remember I was shocked because I knew what this meant. The court found he was guilty and fined him $20.00.But Fouad Massoum was incensed with this so he said that within two weeks he would summon the parliament again and that they would vote.

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KENYA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

STEPHEN HAYKIN
USAID
Mission Director
Kenay
Nairobi, Kenya
(2005–2007)

Mr. Stephen Haykin, born in Omaha, Nebraska, and raised in Seattle, joined USAID in 1986. He began his work as a Program Economist in Kenya. He then went on to serve in Zaire, Guinea, and Ghana in the same role. After working at USAID's Asia, Near East and Europe and Eurasia Bureaus, Haykin was a Mission Director in Madagascar, Kenya, the DRC, and the Caucasus region. He also worked as a Liaison with the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, and then had his final posting as Mission Director in Nigeria before he retired in 2020. Stephen Haykin was interviewed by John Pielemeier in 2024.

Topical Focus – Aftermath of the 2007 Kenyan Election

Q: All right. It's a fascinating country. I think we have time to move on to Kenya.

HAYKIN: I was in Kenya for two years. I did travel around the country a fair amount. I remember we were preparing for the elections, which unfortunately, shortly after I left just, went really terribly. There was a lot of post-electoral violence. That would have been 2007 when the elections occurred. But we were very optimistic during the time I was there. Sheryl Stumbras was our DG officer, she was working very closely with the head of the Electoral Commission. Things looked like they were headed administratively in a really good direction. It was very sad when things didn't work out.

Q: Explain what happened.

HAYKIN: At the end, there was basically ethnic warfare after the outcome of the election.

Q: Who was doing that?

HAYKIN: I knew you were gonna ask that. It was Raila Odinga and Mwai Kibaki.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NEIL A. LEVINE
Director

Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Kenya
(2008–2013)

Neil A. Levine was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and raised in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from Earlham College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Edward Feighan and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he joined USAID in 1993, where he held senior leadership positions including Deputy Director for Central American Affairs, Chief of the Governance Division, and Director of both the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Democracy and Governance. Over his career, he focused on democracy promotion, governance, anticorruption, and conflict management across Latin America and beyond. This interview was conducted by Carol Peasley on February 21, 2022.

Topical Focus – Conflict Prevention and Electoral Violence Mitigation in Kenya

Q: As I recall from the early days when they were first setting up the office, they were trying to identify the countries with the greatest risk of conflict. In some cases, this could lead to modifying existing USAID country strategies. Was that still a part of your work?

LEVINE: Exactly. This was an orienting charge that I inherited. And again, Elizabeth had set that up by developing an open-source data that was related to the same sort of analysis that was done at the intelligence agencies by what was called the Political Instability Task Force. The intelligence community was talking to the same academics to understand which countries were most at risk for conflict, but their own materials were all classified. But because the academics' databases were not classified, we could produce our own analysis in a non-confidential form. We used it in a Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) way in that we did not publicly release our AID list, but we did make it widely available within the agency and the interagency, and it guided us in just the way you suggest.

We shared the analysis with the regional bureaus and missions so they were aware of outside, independent, academic analysis of which countries were more likely to fall victim to conflict. We could then work with the missions to see what might be done that wasn't already being done. A lot of it was awareness raising and making available what tools and programming advice that we had developed. What I always said was that it was a pretty good bet that the countries that scored highest on those lists were already in the headlines -- Afghanistan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali. I was always interested in the second tier of countries where they were out of the headlines and there might be scope for preventive action that really was within AID's wheelhouse to program upstream of conflict before conflict would either start or recur.

Q: Could you give us an example of a country, perhaps, where that might have been the case?

LEVINE: Kenya was a country that had a full-service AID program and democracy program, but experienced spasms of violence around the time of what were seen as transitional or crucial elections, both in 2008 and 2013. We asked, "Is there anything more that we can be doing to protect the programming and protect the country from the onset of violence?" In 2008, it was much more of a surprise that it occurred and so, there was a lot of additional resources and programming that was done in advance of the 2013 elections to avoid a repeat.

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Q: Could you talk a little bit about the interagency aspects of this, because obviously you were dealing with a lot of key political issues. How often did you coordinate with the State Department and others? Were there any particularly difficult issues that you had to deal with?

LEVINE: At our best, at the working level, we would undertake joint conflict assessments with the State Department regional bureaus, and first the coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (State/CRS), which later became the Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO). We enjoyed more unity of effort in terms of the analytical role of getting a whole-of-government or at least State and USAID congruence around countries that were at risk and how we might move both USAID and State programming together once we got a willing country team that would allow us to undertake an assessment. Again, Kenya would be an example along with Burundi. I participated in a needs assessment in Nicaragua with a joint interagency team.

Where we had problems was when the State Department attempted to do parallel funding of programs where they really didn't have the expertise or the country platform for programming. They weren't set up to do the kind of work, even those bureaus that were set up to do programming, like the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau. INL colleagues were often shopping ideas to AID or taking advice from AID on things that they should do because, by virtue of the AID mission their very textured understanding of the country, could suggest things that they might do. It's the programmatic area where there is a danger of duplication and a challenge of coordination. So, in the conflict area we were able to form a strong alliance with State on the analytic side of the house, but it would tend to be much more of a turf fight in terms of programming and who got resources to do work there.

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Q: Were there times when country strategies were being reviewed in Washington and you all thought they had not looked carefully enough at these potential conflict issues and might need to rethink their strategy?

LEVINE: Yes. We would recommend the use of "crisis modifiers" or interim strategies that had to be developed because it was evident to everybody that the steady state strategy was no longer operative. Returning to the Kenya example, where an election can become a triggering event, we'd call for campaign codes of conduct, hate speech monitoring, security and training and deployment of areas that are likely to be flashpoints for violence. On the technical side, developing and collecting best practices and being able to disseminate that to missions that are experiencing those situations became kind of what we did in partnership with the DRG office at the time. Because that's where the agency expertise really was.

KOSOVO

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

LEON WEINTRAUB
Department of State
European Affairs Bureau Coordinator, OSCE
Kosovo
(1998-2000)

Mr Weintraub was born and raised in New York City, educated at Hunter College, Brooklyn College and the Universities of Pittsburgh and Wisconsin. After service in Liberia with the Peace Corps he entered government service, first with the Navy Department and then with the State Department Foreign Service. His service in Washington and abroad involved him with a variety of countries and issues including African Affairs, International Organizations, Narcotics and Peace-Keeping operations in Africa. His foreign posts were Bogotá, Tel Aviv, Lagos, Quito and Geneva. Mr. Weintraub was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Topical Focus: OSCE Election Monitors Deployment Schedule in Kosovo

WEINTRAUB:...We had some of these people but of course, you know, the election monitoring period for OSCE monitors is usually only a week or two. But these requirements were for longer periods, these people would be there maybe for three or four months and under more difficult conditions, as there was a certain amount of tension in the countryside. So I had to try to staff up that monitoring function at the same time as we were staffing election monitors for elsewhere in Europe, particularly in the new emerging democracies in the post-Soviet countries . We needed to-- that was another one of my responsibilities with a staffer in my office -- to try to recruit a certain number of U.S. election observers to take part.

KYRGYZSTAN

N/A

LATVIA

N/A

LEBANON

N/A

LIBERIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CHARLES H. TWINING
International Republican Institute
Head of Delegation
(2004)

Ambassador Charles H. Twining was born in Glen Arm, Maryland. He entered the foreign service in 1964. His career focused heavily on Southeast Asia and Sub-Sarhatan Africa. He served as ambassador to Cambodia as well as to Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – Election Observation in Liberia

TWINING: Finally, I led an international delegation to Liberia on behalf of the International
Republican Institute to observe the November 8 Presidential run-off election. Liberia has been unsettled since Sergeant Samuel Doe overthrew and killed the elected leader, President Tolbert, in 1980, and was in turn deposed a decade later during a vicious civil war that began in late 1989 and only ended with a peace agreement in Accra in 2003, the exile of ruthless President Charles Taylor, and the introduction of a peacekeeping force similar to that I had known in Cambodia. The run-off election was as professional and peaceful as any I have observed. Every Liberian queried leading the polls referred to hopes of a new era of peace, stability, and prosperity. With the election of an experienced international civil servant, Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, as the country's President, one departed Monrovia with optimism that Liberia may now be on the path to recovery.

LIBYA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR DAWN LIBERI
USAID
Senior Assistance Coordinator
Tripoli, Libya
(2011-2012)

Ambassador Dawn Liberi was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She studied at Hampshire College for her undergraduate degree and University of California Berkeley for her masters degree. She joined USAID in 1980, and served in Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and as the Ambassador to Burundi. She was interviewed by Mark Tauber in January 2017

Topical Focus – Libyan Civic Education and Election Preparations Post-Gaddafi

LIBERI: Because I had been in Iraq and Afghanistan, I was attached to the Middle East bureau in USAID. I was working with the AA (Assistant Administrator) and the senior deputy. I was advising at that level, and USAID was going into Libya after Gaddafi had fallen and been killed. The U.S. was helping with some of the rebuilding and reconstruction. So USAID was there essentially to handle all of the assistance programs. The Assistant Administrator asked me if I wanted to go initially on TDY (temporary duty). They needed a senior person to set up the whole USAID mission apparatus. At that point we had OTI (the Office of Transition Initiatives), who were the first ones on the ground as they often are in these situations, who were assisting with training and some governance programs.

One of the big things we were trying to do was help the Libyans prepare for elections and to do training of the electoral commission. We were also helping to set up NGOs (non-governmental organization) focusing on community development. So I was asked to go out and to help start that process. I went out in the late fall October/November, for a six-week TDY. Part of it was to meet then Ambassador Gene Cretz, before Ambassador Stevens came in. I outlined what USAID's role would be, how the assistance program was going to work, etc. I then came back to the U.S. for the holidays, and subsequently was asked if I would go out for a longer term TDY, about nine-months.

The timing was in anticipation of setting up the program there, and then, assuming I was nominated to be Ambassador, to come back for my hearings. Frankly, I had always wanted to go to Libya, and I thought it would be much better than "walking the halls" back in headquarters.

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Q: You know, I was about to ask you, how did you determine what the need was? Because in essence, now you were lifting the top of the box after it had been closed for so many years. But you've just described basically that the situation was that they needed everything.

LIBERI: They needed everything, they did. They needed everything, and they were impatient for everything too, as people would be. Because let's face it, the thought process was "Okay, we got rid of the bad guy, now everything will flow. Now we'll have jobs, now we'll have the infrastructure. Now we'll have water, and electricity, and transport, and this and that." When it doesn't happen in six to nine months, people get impatient saying "Well, what's happening with the new government? And why?" In the meantime people were preparing for elections for the first time in years. So again, similar to Iraq, it was a very galvanizing force because it was the sheer act of being able to vote that galvanized people at least a brief period of time. It pulled the country together to focus on the elections.

Q: Interesting.

LIBERI: Particularly a focus on getting the ballots out, and making sure that there were candidates, and that candidates got vetted to a certain extent. The whole point was just to be able to vote for a representative. So people voted and put up their finger showing they got the ink to indicate they voted, and there was a national ululation, if you will. Everyone just being so happy that yes, finally, they were able to participate in democracy. As usual, the system wasn't perfect, and there were inconsistencies in places, etc. However on the whole, people were so focused on having the process of elections that they were willing to overlook some inconsistencies. I don't think there was major fraud. Given it was the first election in 30 years, there were issues because the machinery wasn't set up.

Q: Right.

LIBERI: People sometimes don't know what they're supposed to be doing to vote. A lot of people were still basically not that literate, and so they didn't know what a ballot was. Who'd ever seen a ballot before?

Q: Right.

LIBERI: They didn't know the different parties - what are parties? What's the party symbol? So there was a tremendous amount of education that took place which USAID helped to fund to train people, and to train workers in the electoral commission.

Q: A very quick question here. Was there enough literacy in the country to be able to read ballots?

LIBERI: It was a generational thing. Basic education was there. There was basic literacy however it was interesting. There was a whole older generation that had missed out on education because under Gaddafi many could no longer go to school, so they had missed out on basic literacy. A lot of that also fell along gender lines, so you had many women, particularly older women, who hadn't been out of the house who didn't really know how to read or write. But I have to tell you, they were determined to go to the polls. You couldn't hold these women back. It was great. We would go into polling stations on election day and they would say, "I'm voting." They were just incredible! You knew they didn't quite understand everything. They knew that they were voting, so there were a lot of people at polling stations who had to explain the ballot to them, without trying to influence them. They didn't ask "Well, who are you going to vote for?" or "Who did you want to vote for?" Basically they helped them understand what the various symbols were.

It was an imperfect process in terms of wanting things to be as accurate as possible, but it was a wonderfully participatory process. 90% of everyone who was eligible to participate, participated. So in that way, it was a huge success because people felt that for the first time in their adult life, that they were actually able to make a choice about representation. So that was really great.

However, it set up the expectation that okay, now things will happen. So when things don't happen, that becomes a real issue. Unlike Iraq, the U.S. government had a very small presence and not a big budget. In Iraq I had a $5.2-billion-dollar USAID budget for 18 months. In Libya there was a USAID budget of a few million dollars. We were among the major donors, and we had our coalition partners, so it was a combination of resources. The UN (United Nations) was there, along with the British, the French, and so on. Together we were a presence, but the U.S. was by no means dominant. So that was interesting and a big change from Iraq and Afghanistan.

What wound up happening was that we all focused on activities that were in our respective, comparative advantage. So the U.S. did a lot of work in post-conflict transition issues through OTI (Office of Transition Initiatives). We did a lot of work in the electoral process, training election workers and helping them get the ballots out. We worked very closely with the UN because it was really the UN that was overseeing the election process with the government. We worked a lot with the planning ministry and the finance ministry, along with our UN colleagues, to get a five-year plan established.

LITHUANIA

N/A

MALAWI

N/A

MALAYSIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

GERALD F. HYMAN
Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
Malaysia
(1969)

Gerald F. Hyman was born in Chicago in 1942. Hyman has a B.A. in philosophy and a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Chicago and a J.D. from the University of Virginia. He is a senior associate with the Office of the President at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, as well as a member of the Advisory Council to the Center for International Media Assistance of the National Endowment for Democracy. He conducted democracy and governance assessments for USAID in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Jordan, Serbia, South Africa, South Sudan, and Ukraine. Gerald F. Hyman was interviewed by Ann Van Dusen on November 16, 2016.

Topical Focus – Ethnic Riots and Violent Elections in Malaysia

Q: So, you actually became more of an economist.

HYMAN: Well that was the focus of my dissertation. I still did a lot of political stuff and religious stuff.

Q: Right.

HYMAN: So, one of the political parties in this country was a so-called Islamic Party. Now this was 1967 so this was way before Iran, which was 12 years later, let alone Osama bin Laden and stuff like that, right. So, my original intent was to go to the part of the country where they controlled the state government and see what they were about. But this was a completely esoteric topic, Islam and politics. I mean, nobody was interested in that except a couple of academics. So, I went up there and there were just too many anthropologists in that little area.

Q: Tripping over each other, yes.

HYMAN: And so I thought we're going to all talk to the same people about the same thing. So, I went to the other side of the country where all these Chinese were. One of the reasons I went there is because the real appeal of this Islamic Party to the Malays was not

about Islam, it wasn't about sharia. It was "we're Muslims and they're not." All the Malays were Muslims and very few of the Chinese, if any, were. And the same thing with the Indians because they were Hindu mostly.

Q: So, it was a proxy for something else.

HYMAN: Exactly. So, I was interested in okay, how do these guys, how do they deal with each other in these districts where there's a lot of Chinese, not just a couple. So, that was another part of what I did.

So, it happened to be that there was an election. I'm sorry to keep going on here but there was a horrible election at the end of my stay there, it wound up in a big race riot in 1969. May 1969. And I was in my village. And just one last snippet on that, so another advisor working in the area that I stayed away from partly because he was there, came through Kuala Lumpur so I drove to see him. And I said to him (this was as the election was getting closer), and I said to him, now I may be wrong about this but I think there's going to be big trouble here in this election. Because these rallies were getting more and more vituperous and more and more emotional. And these are people living side by side together, with Chinese living across the street. And I said to him, I think there's a potential here for a real blowup. He said no, no, you're just imagining these things, you're just pessimistic, etcetera, etcetera. I said I don't know; I go to these rallies, you know, and I hear what people say and I talk to people afterwards. And there's just a growing polarization between these communities, particularly the Chinese and the Malays. And on the day after the election the place blew up. It blew up in Kuala Lumpur. They expected trouble in Penang, which is another town, and so the then prime minister had the Sarawak Rangers called in and they were fierce. Sarawak was part of Malaysia too. So, Malaysia has East Malaysia and West Malaysia so I was in West Malaysia. East Malaysia has Sarawak and Sabah and Borneo, on the island of what used to be called Borneo.

And so there was a curfew, which they imposed after this riot, these guys were going to enforce that curfew and they were going to shoot to kill. Not great but they were equal opportunity shooters. So, unlike in Kuala Lumpur where they called out the army, which was a Malay army. The army in effect took sides and did a lot of rampaging in the Chinese area but not in the Malay areas. Anyway, that was a big turning point in the country, the roundup of Chinese, affirmative action program for Malays, a lot of things can be said about that which I won't burden you with.

Q: No, it's hardly boring. But weren't there a lot of Chinese who left?

HYMAN: There were some Chinese who left; not so many. Actually, a lot of people left, but what they really did was hedge their bets, which is exactly what the Chinese are doing in China today. So, buy a house in Vancouver, send your kids outside for university, stay back there and run the business but if you have to leave make sure you have some money you grab, make sure you have a house to go to, make sure you have a visa to enter abroad and that's what they did.

MEXICO

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

RICHARD DRISCOLL
Department of State
Position Unclear
Tijuana, Mexico
(1988-1990)

Richard Driscoll was born in 1959 at a U.S. Military Base in Japan. He completed his undergraduate education at the University of Virginia. He joined the Foreign Service in 1988. He had a variety of posts during his career including Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil. He retired in 2015 and was interviewed by Robin Matthewman in 2022.

Topical Focus – Assessment of the Gubernatorial Election in Baja California

Q: So, did you get to go out, go to the beaches and do other—?

DRISCOLL: We did get to explore Baja California. The towns of Ensenada and Rosarito have spectacular views of the ocean plus offer delicious lobster tacos. Sadly, both San Diego and Tijuana have very cold water at the beaches, which kept me out of the ocean. We would have to go to Cabo San Lucas in Baja Sur or to the Sea of Cortes to find water warm enough to swim in. We would drive to San Diego for much of our shopping, which anybody living in Tijuana did if they could. The land in Baja California is very rugged and mountainous. Since we left Tijuana, a wine sector has sprung up near Ensenada, called the Valle de Guadalupe. It produces nearly 90 percent of all the wine that comes from Mexico. The highway to Tecate, where the famous beer was made, was called La Rumorosa and offered incredible views, but it was quite narrow and dangerous as it wound through the mountains. Much of the area in Baja California was desert, both beautiful and harsh.

We had good timing to be at post during the 1989 state elections in Baja California. A man named Ernesto Ruffo was running for governor from PAN or Partido Acción Nacional. The Mexicans that I met thought that PAN would win if there were a fair election. PAN had never officially won an election anywhere in Mexico. In fact, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) had been declared the winner in every single Presidential and state governor election since the Mexican Revolution. When PRI supposedly won the state governor election in Baja California in 1984, enraged PAN activists burned down the election office.

Officers from the Consulate General went to monitor what was happening at the election center this time. On the evening of election day, the PRI candidate announced right after the polls had closed that she had won. People knew that the PRI couldn't possibly have won if the votes were counted honestly. Then a surprising thing happened. Mexico City announced that there were no results yet for Baja California, and the votes were still to be counted. I went down with other officers to watch the voting center in Tijuana. The military had sent a unit to guard the election center. I could see hundreds of young Mexican soldiers with their rifles staring out at the tens of thousands of PAN supporters who were encircling them. The PAN leaders kept making announcements for their people to remain calm and not to use their guns against the soldiers. We waited to see what would happen. In the end, the PRI allowed a fair election and PAN won its first ever state governorship in the history of Mexico.

Q: Right. The PRI, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional had won all the elections since the revolution of 1910.

DRISCOLL: Yes, from the time the PRI took power back during the revolution. They held a monopoly on power that lasted longer than that of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. There were celebrations throughout Tijuana when PAN won. I was struck by these elections. I had taken for granted that votes would be counted honestly, rather than having politicians decide who won or not.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

KATHERINE CANAVAN
Department of State
Position Unclear
Tijuana, Mexico
(1985-1990)

Katharine Canavan was born in 1949 in Pasadena, California. She completed her Undergraduate education at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She joined the Foreign Service in 1976. During her career in the Foreign Service, she served in a variety of posts, including Lesotho and Botswana. She retired in 2011 and was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2013.

Topical Focus – Assessment of the Gubernatorial Election in Baja California

CANAVAN: No. I was at FSI July of ’82 through, through the end of February, beginning of March ’85. And then I was in Overseas Citizen Services from March ’85 to March ’87. I took 12 weeks of Spanish in preparation for my assignment as the American Citizen Services (ACS) chief in Tijuana. That was a wonderful assignment. First of all, I had a great boss, Larry Colbert. I was promoted to FS-01 only a few months after I arrived, but even though it was an FS-02 job, I decided to stay for three years. And it didn’t hurt my career at all.

We did so much more than ACS work. Thanks to Larry, we made sure that all of the officers had reporting portfolios, because we had no reporting officers at post. And we made sure that everybody was cross-trained throughout the three consular functions, NIV, IV (immigrant visa), and American Citizen services so that they could take time to do their reporting and somebody else could fill in as needed for them. We had very good morale and we did some really interesting reporting. In 1989, the first PAN (Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)) candidate for governor of Baja California not only won the election but was allowed by the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party) government to take office. Other places PAN candidates previously had won their elections, but the PRI ignored the election results and declared themselves the winner. I knew the new governor very well because we had an outreach program with Ensenada, which was a big destination for American tourists who got in trouble (laughs) . I worked very closely with then Mayor Russo and his staff. So right after he was elected, I called up and asked if I could come over to meet with the new governor. Larry Colbert, the consul general, wasn’t in town, so I offered the acting consul general the opportunity to meet with the new governor. He declined, so the public affairs officer, Anne Callaghan (currently consul general in Vancouver) and I went to Mexicali, the state capital. We saw the governor and we drafted a detailed reporting cable. It apparently impressed Washington quite a bit. Fortunately, Ambassador Negroponte and his DCM did not require us to clear our reporting with them before it went to Washington.

At the beginning of the year we submitted a post reporting plan to the embassy in Mexico City which indicated that we intended to write 12 cables, primarily on the election but on other issues as well. We were advised by the counselor for consular affairs that our plan was probably too ambitious. Well, that year, with all the election-related reporting we did, as well as our reporting on other issues, we sent in 172 reporting cables.

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Q: Oh boy. Well, this is probably a good place to stop. Oh, one other question. What was your impression of —was there much difference in the PRI and the PAN, or the elect -- I mean their goals and all, or?

CANAVAN: Oh yeah, the PAN was much more a free market, capitalistic oriented party. And the PRI was much more socialistic oriented. Yes, there was a big difference in what the parties espoused. And I think the PAN was particularly successful along the border because the maquiladoras, which were factories that were built on the border and used a lot of local labor. There was an emphasis on free enterprise, business and free trade that the PAN supported. The PRI represented a more centralized economy, which ironically made the development of a significant middle class more difficult.

Q: Was there much American interest in this election?

CANAVAN: There was actually. Again, it was the first time a PAN candidate had been elected governor and allowed to take office. This was a huge change for Mexico and certainly the Bureau of Latin American Affairs was very focused on it.

Q: Well, you say, you had alluded to the PAN having stolen the election. How did that come about?

CANAVAN: The PAN didn't steal the election. There were elections when a PAN candidate won in other states, but the PRI wouldn't let them take office. They would claim fraud or would disallow votes, so it was the PRI that stole elections, not the PAN.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PAUL WHITE
USAID
Mission Director
Mexico City, Mexico
(1998 - 2002)

Paul White grew up in Brazil, Indiana before graduating from Valparaiso University for his undergraduate degree. He joined USAID in 1970, and served positions in Korea, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Panama, and Mexico, among others. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Topical Focus – USAID Involvement in Local Mexican Elections

WHITE: USAID funded other programs in Mexico as well. Our most sensitive area was in the area of Democracy. There, we were able to work directly with the key players in Mexico's congress and judicial systems while channeling funding through nongovernment groups. The program addressed freedom of information by promoting a new freedom of information law similar to the U.S. law, and it worked with the Mexican Congress to strengthen their capacities to conduct and utilize research and staff work.

In addition to TB, AID supported population programs through a number of different nongovernmental groups and also had a large HIV/AIDS initiative. It was a full-service and vibrant assistance program. In the end, rather than being the person to shut the AID office in Mexico down as was originally intended, I increased the program in size and quality, and established bilateral agreements that were the first of their kind in our foreign aid relationship with Mexico.

Q: Now, you talk about democracy programs. This is just about the time when the PRI (Spanish: Partido Revolucionario Institucional) lost a real election [July 2000]. Did we have our fingers in that pie?

WHITE: There was support from our program. We worked with NGOs and others by training election watchers. I think that AID also funded President Carter and other election observers to come down and observe the election. The PRI was swept out of power after sixty or seventy years of power. President (Vicente) Fox came in with a real desire to improve relations with the United States. That opened the door for a while but the forward momentum was perhaps shut down a bit after 9/11 as U.S. interests turned elsewhere.

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WHITE: In our democracy program we funded a lot of exchanges of mayors, for instance. We focused on identifying key people working on similar issues and facilitated putting them together to compare approaches and to learn from one another. On the Caribbean coast area, municipalities were working on flood control keeping the bay from flooding the city. AID would fund local mayors and their environmental committees or local NGOs working with them on that issue to visit a town in Florida of a similar size and make up. The mayors would develop a relationship; the technical people would observe how the problem was approached; and perhaps an idea or two would surface that could be used in one or the other location or in both. In some cases, a North delegation would then visit the local counterpart in Mexico with a technical team. In the early days

of our Democracy program, when we were trying to establish our bona fides and good intent, we funded many such exchanges, with mayors, with governors, with judges and others.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR JAMES R. JONES
U. S. Ambassador
Mexico
Mexico City, Mexico
(1993-1997)

James R. Jones was born in Oklahoma in 1939. He received his bachelor's degree from University of Oklahoma in 1961 and law degree from Georgetown University in 1964. His career included being Deputy Appointment Secretary to the White House from 1965-1969, being a congressman from Oklahoma, acting as the president of the American Stock Exchange, and an ambassadorship to Mexico. Ambassador Jones was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in September 2002.

Topical Focus – Election Monitoring in Mexico

Q: Was there a feeling that this was a party that had been ruling for 40-50 years that was on its last legs?

JONES: In fact, the Mexicans themselves...one of the first things that I had to do on the political side was to, there was the general feeling that the U.S. ambassador had a cozy relationship with the PRI and one of the U.S. ambassador's objectives was to make sure the PRI, for stability purposes, never lost. So one of the first things I did was to go out in a public way and meet with the leadership of the opposition parties and to assure them that we believed very strongly in democracy and an open political system. We were not going to take sides and our only interest is that there be fair and honest elections. It was hard for them to believe at first. We really proved ourselves in 1994 when Carlos Salinas did not want elections observers. So we went around and around, I forget what we finally called them, but to get a name for them to do the same thing. We put some money into some of the NGOs, a couple of NGOs there that were fledgling NGOs, and we brought lots of observers down for the 1994 Presidential election. We did our own polling. We convinced them to do exit polling on election day, and it was perceived as an honest election…

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There was an immediate push among the PRD to challenge the elections and to disrupt and what have you, and it was either the next day or a few days afterwards, they were going to have a big rally in the Zocolo, which is the big old part of the city, the square. Cardenas was leading this. It could have gone either way. It could have either disrupted and caused the new government to not be legitimate and to be severely weakened or not. It was interesting, because he was leading the march to the Zocolo and I called him on his cell phone and I said to him, "Cuatemoc," because I had become a friend to him, became a friend to all three of the Presidential candidates and really tried to understand where they were coming from, let them understand where we were coming from and why, and they all asked me advice on politics because I had been a politician myself at one point. Anyway, I said, "Cuatemoc, I've won elections and I've lost elections. The main advice I can give you is don't burn your bridges. You're a young man. You still have a future. I can tell you that if you challenge these elections, we did everything possible to make sure those elections were honest and we believe they were honest. There were some discrepancies here or there, but not enough to change the outcome, and we certainly will not back you up on that. So I hope that you will not cut off your political future by doing something that does not make sense, that maybe you're emotionally responding to." He thanked me. He went down. He made a good speech. He didn't incite a riot or anything and it broke up and that was it. So I think that an ambassador, if you work your way quietly, you can still have an effect…

So we worked with them a lot on a lot of different things. We got some money for them to have different kinds of educational programs. How to conduct elections and what have you. We provided some money, what were then some very nascent NGOs, because the concept of a Ralph Nader or Common Cause program was just totally alien to them, so we tried to put some resources in to getting NGOs involved. We put money into election observers. We had a lot of education programs on how to conduct elections, etc. But ultimately, it had to be the Mexicans themselves that wanted them. A few other things that we did was, when Jesus Silva Hertzog was the Mexican ambassador to the U.S. and I was U.S. ambassador to Mexico, we did a program on reform of democracy and whatever in Mexico. Once I was speaking first and I had made the comment about the enormous strides that Mexico had made. This was after the '94 elections. I had pointed out how we had worked with Mexico to have election observers, which we had to change the name, because election observers were not that politically, they were not viable in Mexico, so we called the visitors or something like that. We worked out a different name for them, but it was the same thing. How we had encouraged them and how they had implemented a system of exit polling on election day. I said that we had these different exit polls in Mexico and within 30 minutes after the election they could call the results of the election. Jesus Silva Hertzog got up, he was the next speaker. He said, "That's not so impressive. As a member of the PRI all of these years, we used to be able to call the election six months before!" But Mexico did a lot of things like that and we kept the pressure on them. In '94, Zedillo won, but it was less than 50%, which was an unusual situation. The election was indeed called in the first few hours after the polls closed, which was also unusual.

WILLIAM JEFFRAS DIETERICH
USIS
Public Affairs Officer
Mexico
Mexico City, Mexico
(1992-1995)

William Jeffras Dietrich was born in Boston in 1936. He received his bachelor's degree from Connecticut Wesleyan University in 1958 and then served in the US Navy. His career included positions in Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Italy, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Mexico. Mr. Dieterich was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Topical Focus – USIS' role in monitoring Mexican elections

Q: Had the unrest started in Chiapas when you were there?

DIETERICH: The election itself was observed to the hilt. I talked about how in El Salvador during the last days of the Jesuit trial, and my perception that the NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) were rapidly shifting their focus to Guatemala. I think during my time in Mexico it had begun to shift out of Guatemala to Mexico, because of NAFTA. All of a sudden the nature of Mexico, and Mexico as a proper ally of the United States became a debatable thing, and the NGOs could see a lot of the things that were wrong in Mexico, a lot of things they didn't like. That meant the Mexican elections were filled with observers. The Mexican government started out, especially under the naive influence of the foreign ministry, trying to control who was going to be an election observer. I think a major accomplishment of the embassy, in which USIS had a role, was convincing the Mexican government they didn't have to control everybody.

If you cannot control it to the point where you only get the observers you want, what is your next best course? The next best would be to throw it open to everybody, then you could say you didn't control the observers. That serves you well there, and also here, because you don't have to take responsibility. All you have to do is offer the facilities you offer to the press, and you already know how to do that. I attended a number of briefings for NGO and election observers where the Mexican government very patiently laid out a very complicated electoral system, and it was unassailable. The elections came out looking pretty good all over the country. There were a few instances where people could say the lines were too long, and some people didn't get to vote down in Oaxaca, but nearly everybody said it wasn't on purpose. Mexico came out of that looking pretty good.

THEODORE WILKINSON
Department of State

Chief Political Officer
Mexico
Mexico City, Mexico
(1991-1994)

Born in Washington, DC in 1934, Theodore Wilkinson received a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree from George Washington University. In 1961, he joined the Foreign Service, serving in Venezuela, Sweden, Belgium, Mexico, Honduras, Brazil, and Washington, DC. Mr. Wilkinson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Topical Focus - NAFTA's Impact on Electoral Reform

Q: You left in '94. Had NAFTA taken hold by then, or was it still in the sort of implementation stage?

WILKINSON: Another impact of the NAFTA, somewhat indirect, was on the Mexican elections of 1994. The Mexican Government, although NAFTA was signed, sealed, and delivered, in effect were still in a mode where they were sensitive to the demands of the NAFTA, both political and economic. And for that reason, they not only were pressed by us and others, but felt themselves that they ought to have clean elections and they ought to have a better, more transparent electoral system. And there were many efforts to achieve constitutional and legislative electoral reform in '93 and '94. The Mexicans passed a series of laws. Each time they were told it's not enough, that's a step in the right direction, but you need to do more. And they kept going back to the drawing board and doing more things, with the end result that the elections of '94 were demonstrably clean, and fraud was practically nonexistent, certainly in the national elections, even to a major extent in state and local elections that took place at the same time. Now there are state elections at various times for governors and state legislatures that since then have taken place with some allegations of fraud, but basically I don't think even in those subsequent elections anybody's been able to prove that there was substantial fraud. One of the many reasons for this was the fact that the Mexicans for the first time began using state-of-the-art photo ID cards, which have 14 different types of identifications on them. They have thumb-prints, they have holograms, they have photographs, they have bar codes, they have all kinds of stuff on them so you can't possibly falsify them - I guess you can falsify anything, but it would be very difficult to falsify. They were designed by Xerox and IBM, if I recall correctly, at a cost of almost a billion dollars. Most of it was paid, I must say, to American firms. It was a nice export package that we put together from a trade standpoint to do these ID cards. Another important reform was to place the supervisory electoral commission under independent authority, to provide, for the first time, for the election of the Mayor of Mexico. This is a highly political and important post, always appointed previously by the president, and now elected, elected for the first time in 1997 and won by the left, by the former presidential candidate of the left, the son of Lázaro Cárdenas, who just yesterday announced himself as candidate for the presidency in the year 2000.

MOLDOVA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NADIA TONGOUR
Department of State
Soviet Desk Officer
Washington, D.C.
(1991–1992)

Nadia Tongour, born in Turkey in 1947 and immigrated to the U.S. when she was three to South Carolina with her family, entered the Foreign Service in 1980 as a General Officer in Mexico City, Mexico. She served in various countries such as Brazil, Barbados and Grenada. She also worked many posts in Washington, such as country desk officer for the USSR, Hungary, and to the Balkan Countries. Tongour was also a senior staffer to the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Editor in Chief of the Annual Human Rights Report, and Director of the Human Rights Bureau/Office of Asia/Western Hemisphere Affairs. Tongour retired from the Department of State in 2007.

Topical Focus – Elections in Moldova

Q: Yes. Of course, this is a very big deal. Let's stick to Moldova for a bit, the government? Was it a relatively responsible government?

TONGOUR: At that time, very definitely. In a way, attaining power sort of hit them by surprise, too. Their leadership ranks included a group of young energetic types who seemed genuinely committed to Moldova. When I went there to visit, I recall meeting all kinds. I do not want to imply that everyone at the helm was a saint but in general there seemed to be a fairly decent group -- especially when compared to some of the other former republics -- then. But again, that was the early period. I have not followed Moldova closely in the intervening years, so I do not know what the current leadership represents.

Q: But at the time, I mean, these were-

TONGOUR: By the time we began to focus seriously on Moldova, the Moldovans were just having their first election and picking some fairly forward-leaning representatives who sought to assure us they wanted to maintain their independence and neither return to the Russian fold or unite with Romania.

Q: Did they have an embassy here?

TONGOUR: Not at the beginning, but, yes, by the end of my tour. All of the former republics did.

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Q: How about, while you were there did you find yourself dealing with the non-governmental organizations? Because the former Soviet Union was awash with all these groups that were coming out to do good or do well or something.

TONGOUR: Some. I have to tell you that in recent years I have worked with NGOs so much more that by comparison that particular period did not seem to be as rife with them. In the beginning stages of state formation, much of the outcry, to the extent that outcries regarding who did what to whom existed, centered on what the Russians collectively were doing in a particular area. For example, there was considerable pressure from human rights groups regarding individuals arrested by Transnistrian authorities, persons languishing in jails, or complaints about mistreatment of civilians (both Georgians and Abkhaz) in Abkhazia, primarily by Russian-backed elements. At that juncture, the bulk of such criticism was not leveled at the "host" Georgian or Moldovan governments. .

Q: Well, were you involved in supporting our efforts in nation building?

TONGOUR: Yes, but we did not call it that then. That terminology seemed to emerge a few years down the pike. That was in fact what we were doing. We were seeking ways to aid civil society, promote elections, combat corruption -- all the things that we think of today when we speak of governance and nation building, and that we continue to do. However, at that point we were still at stage one, namely how to build a government or some sort of political entity that was not simply a throwback to the old Soviet system. Even more basic: how to stage elections in these regions, how to secure the elections and ensure non-interference by the Russians. Another focal point was how to foster a modus vivendi with a former giant in a now newly diminished status and help it move forward in a positive way and forestall its devoting too much of its energy on the "Near Abroad". A few years later, the orientation would shift, and we would focus more on providing "concrete assistance" -- giving grants, building schools (including business schools) and other practical support as well as opportunities for their people to come here for training. In some ways we felt as though we were helping to give birth -- delivering countries rather than individuals.

Q: Well, you were doing this in what, '91 to?

TONGOUR: To ’93. In the summer of '93, I embarked on my next assignment, which was Pearson Fellowship with the Asia Foundation in San Francisco.

MONGOLIA

N/A

MONTENEGRO

N/A

MOROCCO

N/A

MOZAMBIQUE

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR MELISSA FOELSCH WELLS
U. S. Ambassador
Mozambique
Maputo, Mozambique
(1987-1991)

Ambassador Wells was born in Estonia and raised abroad and in the U.S. She was educated at Mount St. Mary's College and Georgetown University. In 1958, she joined the Foreign Service and served in Washington and abroad. Her foreign assignments include posts in Brazil, France, United Kingdom, Trinidad-Tobago, and Switzerland. She also served in senior positions at the United Nations in New York. Her ambassadorial assignments include: Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau (1976-1977); Mozambique (1987-1991); the Democratic Republic of Congo (1991-1992); and Estonia (1998-2001). Ambassador Wells was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002..

Topical Focus – U.S. Engagement with FRELIMO

Q: A Marxist/Leninist slant to everything?

WELLS: Let me give you an example. Two things. Shortly after I arrived, I was, of course, making my calls and I met with one of the leaders, what you would call the theoretician for the FRELIMO party; in other words, in terms of where they've been, where they're going. It was a bit of a stiff meeting at first, and he was definitely what one would call a hard-liner. As we started to talk (I had prepared this ahead of time), I said, "You know, I'd like to try out on you some of the questions that I had to answer for the Senate of the United States to be confirmed." And I trotted them out. He smiled. [Laughter] He realized. But the point I was making was that they were hanging onto language about Marxist-Leninist dogma which they weren't implementing, which they weren't using. Eventually we became very good friends during my stay there. I remember before the FRELIMO party congress in 1989, he put the question to me, saying, "Look, Melissa. If you could write it out, what would you like to see come out of this congress?" I came back immediately and said, "Remember the first time we met and I tried out those questions on you? Why do you need all these references in your charter to Marxism, Leninism, and all? You're not doing it. You're trying to privatize. The churches are open. Is this a monument that you need for sentimental reasons? This is your past. You're shooting yourself in the foot. It's time that you gave all this up." Now, I cannot say that I'm personally responsible for this, because there was a general trend in this direction in any event, but I'm pleased to report that as a result of that congress, there were no further references to Marxism or Leninism in the party's thinking.

Q: They've dropped it?

WELLS: They've dropped it. They've dropped it totally. Of course, at this stage they now have a new constitution. They have a new electoral law. They have several new parties registered. They're very small parties, but they are definitely committed to a multi-party system. But again, to go back to that important question, what was different were two things. One, the fact that there was a deep involvement in terms of the local people and their dissatisfaction with many of the things that FRELIMO did. Why it had to be counteracted in such violent fashion and with the use of terror against civilians is another question.

NAMIBIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

STEVEN WAGENSEIL
Office of UN Political Affairs in the Bureau of International Organizations
Africa Expert
Namibia
(1988-1990)

Steven Wagenseil was born in Danbury, Connecticut in 1947. He attended Le Collège Cévenol in France, completed a post-graduate year at Gresham's School in England, and received his B.A. from Yale University in French. He entered the foreign service in 1974, and had postings in Spain, Mali, Zimbabwe, and Senegal. After his work in the foreign service, he worked at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor as the Director for Multinational Affairs, and the Office of Democratic Institutions of Human Rights as the Acting Director. Steven Wagenseil was interviewed by Peter Eicher on January 15, 2008.

Topical Focus – International Oversight and Democratic Transition in Namibia

Q: And what exactly were you trying to do in these negotiations?

WAGENSEIL: Well the negotiations were basically to bring about the implementation of Resolution 435 and the transition to the UN-supervised independence for Namibia. So it was to arrange the modalities of the UN Transition Assistance Group, UNTAG, which would come into South-West Africa and take over certain supervisory functions from South African authorities, which would bring in UN civilian police who were there to monitor the South African police force and to monitor the South African preparations for and conduct of the referendum, the elections- it wasn't a referendum, it was elections- it was agreed that there would be independence but there had to be an electoral process and so there was, I guess there was a census exercise of some kind, voter registration, and then the elections themselves, which were in November of '89.

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WAGENSEIL: So, went down to Namibia, went back to Namibia with the presidential delegation, which featured Congressman Donald Payne and a couple of other congressmen; Howard Wolpe I'm sure was on it, and people from the Department and

from the NSC (National Security Council) and I don't know who all and we traveled around for, I think I was there for at least a week with them.

Elections, the voting was spread over five days and the place was swarming with journalists because this was a big story, this was The Independence of Namibia, and of course everybody saw this -- as they had seen in Zimbabwe -- as the predecessor to the downfall of The Racist Apartheid South African Regime, so there was a lot of media attention, international attention, and the UN was running it and so they're looking at how the UN's performing and of course the U.S. was heavily involved so we were getting a lot of visibility -- so forth and so on.

There had been an incident back in April, beginning of April, where, I think it was just as voter registration was starting or something like that, and SWAPO had sent hordes of people across the northern border of SouthWest from Angola, an armed incursion, in effect. And we heard about it as it was happening that morning. It was a Saturday -- of course -- and I was in the office -- of course -- and we got this news that SWAPO was making an armed incursion into Namibia.

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One thing that we found out kind of funny -- when they were organizing the elections, the UN was bringing in people from all over the world to work on the elections alongside the South Africans who were actually doing it. And there were people from Poland and from Russia, from the Soviet Union, and I remember people in the State Department and elsewhere in the Reagan Administration saying "You're getting Russians to run these elections?" And the argument that we got back was "Well, they've had elections. They know the mechanics. The Poles have held municipal elections and local elections." And I remember visiting one polling station where there were two Soviets and a Pole on duty and in comes the U.S. delegation with a couple of Congressmen, and there was some nervousness at the beginning; but it all worked out fine, we had a nice little visit. But as for real problems, there was no fraud that we knew of or anything. And the results, as I say, were certified by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General as reflecting the will of the voters, and so that was the end of it.

NEPAL

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR JULIA CHANG BLOCH
Department of State
U. S. Ambassador
Katmandu, Nepal
(1989-1992)

Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch was born in China and raised in San Francisco, and went to the University of California, Berkeley. She held positions in the Peace Corps, the Senate, USIA, and Harvard University before joining USAID in 1981. She served as the ambassador to Nepal from 1989 to 1992. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

Topical Focus – Nepalese Democracy Movement

Q: *There was a revolution there when you were there. When did this happen?*

BLOCH: It happened in February.

Q: *How did this impact on you and the Embassy?*

BLOCH: We were working around the clock. We called our Emergency Action Committee together. From all that was coming out of Washington, my first priority was that all Americans in Nepal were safe. That is no easy matter because Nepal is a tourist destination. But our EAC committee worked very well. My Deputy at that time, Al Thibault, was really terrific. We became the information center for all the western Embassies because most of my colleagues were out at Kathmandu. That's not so much February, everything came to a head in April.

Q: *How did this develop? How did this revolution come about? Was it foreseen?*

BLOCH: It was certainly not foreseen in terms of the results, not even by the protagonists. The Congress Party had been in opposition for a long time, they were either in exile or banned. Many of them were in prison. But at the beginning of February they started marches and demonstrations. Most of the leaders were under house arrest. And things started sort of placidly. Nepalese are not violent people. The demonstrations gathered steam. Partly aggravated at that time by the Indo-Nepal dispute. Where India cut

off all but 2 access points or transit points. So goods were scarce, the middle class was getting somewhat disgruntled because of that. I think part of the problem was the way the government handled the protest because they were making no concessions. And by the time they began to realize and talk to the opposition, to take the opposition more seriously, it was getting too late. And that's what happened. About 50 people were killed. And for Nepal that was a horrendous act, to have people killed. The momentum just built. I remember Solarz came in December, Congressman Solarz. And we had a breakfast with the Congress Party leaders. Certainly at that time none of us, including the Congress leaders, predicted that they would in fact, not just succeed but actually win. Because what the Congress Party, even as the momentum gathered, had sought was essentially participation in the upcoming election. They wanted to participate as a party in the coming election. They were not after taking over the government. Partly I think also what was happening around the world.

Q: *We're talking about the fall of the Soviet Union.*

BLOCH: Exactly. Word was getting into Nepal, even the Uhmaru Kingdom of Nepal, and people wanted more say, because it was a very closed society. And the professional began to get involved. Professionals in the medical field, professionals at the Universities, professionals even in the civil service started demonstrating. And as more people were killed, more of the professionals came out.

Q: *Was the Embassy taking sides?*

BLOCH: We maintained a very clear dialogue with both sides. We were one of the few places where there was clear information because we talked to both sides. And we made sure that our message was: Minimize violation and open dialogue. We were perceived by the revolutionaries as having helped their movement. Congress sent a letter again espousing support for democracy.

Q: *Our Congress.*

BLOCH: Our Congress. But at the same time we never lost access to the government. So again it was a question of balance.

Q: *How did it play out as far as American, your Embassy was concerned?*

BLOCH: Tremendously. Because when the dust settled, the government really sent us all kinds of appreciation letters. And with the new government we had complete access, even with the communists.

Q: *Did this help at all, I mean, United Nations votes are always a big problem, were you able to, how was Nepal united?*

BLOCH: Nepal, of all South Asian countries, I think they supported us more than any others. But that's only one gauge. I think we were able to help them consolidate their democracy. Democracy is very fragile, it's still very new. Still a lot of work remains in the consolidation process. But I think we built probably a model democracy support program. I wrote a paper by the way and USIA commended us for doing that.

Q: *Were they coming to you for advice?*

BLOCH: Absolutely.

Q: *I just came back, I spent the last month, 3 weeks, in Kyrgyzstan where I was one of the many people helping them, my thing was as a consultant on how to set-up a consular service. Many of these countries that are sort of coming out of a different era have found that we act as a sort of honest*

BLOCH: Honest broker.

Q: *A national Peace Corps.*

BLOCH: More than a Peace Corps.

Q: *We only give advice.*

BLOCH: We developed and established a program for what we considered the transition phase and the move into the consolidation phase. We were there immediately because we started work, we had people on the ground helping with the constitutional reform process in May. The revolution succeeded in April, they came to us because we had complete access. They asked us for help. We helped with the constitutional reform phase, we then worked up a program to support the development of the parliament. And we looked at the judiciary because that's another anchor of democracy. We stepped up our exchanges. I got AID to fund USIA's International Visitors. Because we had to get the leadership out, to see the world and broaden their horizons. Because they had no experience, no experience in government.

Q: *As the Mission goes, I take it that because we had a Mission in Kathmandu that we played a much greater role than many others.*

BLOCH: Absolutely. Because I ran an integrated Mission. It was not easy to get AID to support USIA activities. I had to make them see that it was not an AID activity or a USIA activity. It was a democracy support program for Nepal. It was a US democracy support program for Nepal. And we had a task force which I chaired, I think only the Ambassador can chair. Because you've got to make all your components work together.

Q: *Were you getting good support from Washington on this nation building?*

BLOCH: Fairly good, except of course Nepal was never a priority. We could never be considered in the same plateau as any other democracies. You know, money was no problem for Russia or the Soviet Republics or for Eastern Europe. I will never forget that the sort of quasi-governmental institutions that set-up to support democracy, what was it called now, the Democratic, it was a net, do you know what I mean?

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

LEON WEIL
Department of State
U. S. Ambassador
Katmandu, Nepal
(1984-1987)

Leon Weil was born and raised in New York City and studied economics at Princeton University, pausing for a brief stint with the U.S. Navy before returning to graduate in 1949. He worked in the securities industry in NYC prior to being appointed by President Reagan as Ambassador to Nepal, a position in which he served from 1984 until 1987.

Topical Focus – Democracy Movement in Nepal

Q: What was the political situation in Nepal when you got there?

WEIL: In 1980 there had been some disturbances and as a result there was a referendum on whether or not Nepal should continue under the party-less Panchayat system with reforms or switch to a multi-party type of government, which they had experimented with 20 or so years before. The referendum turned out to be about 55 percent to retain the present system with reforms and 45 percent to go with a multi-party system.

The principal reform was that the people could now elect directly the members of the National Assembly. The Assembly would then select the prime minister. There was an election in 1981 under this system and a prime minister was selected. Now this was before my time. In 1983, for the first time in the history of Nepal there was a vote of no confidence in the parliament and the prime minister was dismissed and a new prime minister was installed.

But the system, this party-less Panchayat was in effect and these changes came about as a result of reforms that the king had put in.

There was a certain amount of unhappiness because Nepal was a very poor country. You didn't hear too much about the opposition. Political parties were banned. While they could meet without too much interference, they had to identified themselves as banned parties. The strongest was the Nepali Congress Party. As long as you said, "I am a member of the banned Nepali Congress Party," you were okay.

So things looked all right in Nepal. There were the usual grumblings. You couldn't tell what the opposition was. On the 19th of June, 1985, I was sitting in my office and I heard what sounded like a loud thud and within 20-30 minutes we got the news that five bombs had gone off in Kathmandu. Two of them were outside the Palace. They were very small and didn't do too much damage, although one of them did scatter bricks all over the business end of the Palace. Another bomb went off in the Anapurna [ph] Hotel and killed three hotel employees. Another one went off in the doorway of the Parliament building, killing one person and injuring another. Then there were several other bombs that went off in towns outside of Kathmandu. This was the first inkling as to the extent of the opposition movement. It turned out that this particular group that set off the bombs was a real extremist group. They really didn't have too much political clout. The political clout from the opposition came much later.

As a matter of fact, came after I had left. The revolution that brought about the subsequent changes and a new constitution for Nepal occurred about two years after I had left. So while I was there there really was not too much evidence...in 1986 during my tour there was a parliamentary election because there was one every five years. They elected a new parliament and interestingly enough, now that I think about it, there was quite a lot of turnover among the people elected. A lot of the prominent people were defeated; leftist groups did gain about 13 seats and people were quite surprised; and nobody really realized the extent of the Communist Party activities throughout Nepal. It was all illegal and it was done underground so that it was very difficult to get a handle on it. But they were starting to work and it all came to a head in 1989.

Q: When you were there, there were a considerable number of people put in jail weren't there?

WEIL: I wouldn't say a considerable number of people. There were some political prisoners, but I don't think that there was a large number in jail. The father of the Nepali Congress Party spent about 16 years in jail, and was not in jail during my tour. As a matter of fact I went to his house to attend a wedding reception for his daughter, so he couldn't have been in jail at that time.

Q: Were you under any instructions or if not instructions were their any media pressure from the United States to have the American Ambassador try to put the Nepalese on a course more in line with the way we saw things? Was this a problem for you?

WEIL: Well, one of our objectives in Nepal was, in typical State Department language, to encourage the king to continue the democratization process and urge him to make additional reforms. That was the way we put it. We wanted to encourage him. We wanted to say to him, "Look you are moving in the right direction. We want you to continue to move in that direction as fast as you think you can go."

Q: Sounds rather presumptuous. What did it mean in actual fact? How did you and your staff interpret this?

WEIL: I don't agree with you that it sounded presumptuous. I think it would have been more presumptuous if we were to say to the king, "Now look, this is the way we think you should run your country." We didn't do that. We wanted to encourage him to continue what we felt he was trying to do. Now, as it turned out he didn't do it fast enough. He got behind the curve and never caught up. But that is another story. Our official policy was to encourage further reforms and move the country towards democracy. We basically wanted to insure Nepal's sovereignty and stability. We, of course, have a great deal of interest in Nepal's welfare, just because they are such nice people. We have a humanitarian interest in Nepal. But aside from that our interest in Nepal was to preserve its sovereignty and stability because it is an important buffer between two giant neighbors--China and India. These two neighbors have fought several wars and Nepal occupies a 500 mile border between the two countries, so basically we wanted Nepal to exist and we thought we would help them by: 1) assisting in their economic development and 2) encouraging them to develop their political system and encourage democracy.

Q: Well, how does one encourage democracy?

WEIL: Well, it is very difficult when you have to maintain your relations with a government. But then there are lots of ways you can encourage them to become more democratic. You do this through your contacts, and through any way you want. I, for instance, had public contact with the Nepali Congress Party which was officially banned as were all parties in Nepal. I invited them to the residence for lunch. I attended the leader's reception. As a matter of fact we had a little meeting...the State Department didn't instruct me to do any of these things, it was just my own way of carrying out the goals and objectives. There is certainly a lot of leeway in letting you do what you want to do. We had a meeting of the Ambassadors from the UK and Germany and myself to discuss whether or not we would attend this very public wedding reception for the daughter of the leader of the Nepali Congress Party who had been in jail. The present king's father put him in jail. King Birendra may have had him in jail, too, in the late 1970s, I don't recall. We decided that we would attend the reception and along with the Ambassador from India, we were the only members of the diplomatic corps to attend the reception and it was so noted in the press.

Q: In the first place how did you deal with Nepalese officials to get the normal government things done and were they taking due note of what you were doing?

WEIL: As far as the Nepalese officials were concerned you have to understand that there were two parallel governments in Nepal. There was the elected government and then

there was the Palace. I used to joke that the system of government in Nepal was a absolute monarchy operating the government through an elected bureaucracy, which in effect was what it was. Now the government, which I considered to be the prime minister, the foreign minister and the various secretaries who ran the government, who were my contacts on a day-to-day basis, they were not the ones to talk to as far as democratization was concerned. The ones to talk to on that subject was the Palace because the king in those days created the constitution. He gave it to his people. He could take it away. He could amend it. That is not true today under the new constitution. But that was the way it was during my tour. So it was useless to talk to the so-called government about democratization, but I did in talking to the king in my private audiences encourage him. You can't tell a king what to do, obviously, and that would be presumptuous anyway. But you certainly went out of your way to pat him on the back whenever he did anything that could be interpreted as encouraging democratization.

Q: You mention that the German, British and American Ambassadors--I would imagine that if you add the Chinese and the India Ambassadors, these would be the countries that probably had the greatest role, you might say, of interest. Was the fact that Nepal has always had very close relations to the British, was he sort of the first...?

WEIL: No, the British had an important role, but the most important ambassador as far as the Nepalese are concerned is the Indian Ambassador, because this is the country with whom they have the trade. This is the country with which they have a 500 mile open border and the majority of the economic activity was between the two countries. That has to be Nepal's primary diplomatic relationship. A funny thing is that when the ambassadors used to have meetings...for instance if there was a crisis like a famine or an earthquake or various things that would come up where the government would want all of the ambassadors to get together because they were going to make an appeal to us, the Indian Ambassador rarely showed up, because the Indian Ambassador never liked to become one of many in its relationship with its neighbors. This was true in many other areas of relationships with countries in South Asia. India always liked to deal one on one with their neighbors. So the Indian Ambassador rarely showed up at these meetings.

But the most important ambassadors were the Chinese, because it was an important neighbor; then the US and the German and the British for different reasons were important to Nepal. After that came their other neighbors in South Asia, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka. Then the others were much less important like Thailand, Egypt, Israel, Italy and the countries like that. In my tour there there were 19 resident ambassadors. Most of the ambassadors were actually domiciled in New Delhi and were ambassador to India from their respective countries and also accredited to Nepal.

Q: Obviously you had your political section, CIA, Defense attachés...were you getting the feeling that either the Indians, the Soviets or the Chinese were meddling in Nepalese affairs? You mentioned the Nepalese Communist Party, was this internally driven or externally?

WEIL: The communist situation in Nepal is a little mixed up because you have the Chinese and their affiliated communist parties; you have the Soviets and their affiliated

communist parties; and you had the West Bengal and their affiliated communist parties. So actually you had a lot of communist organizations and even today, now that they are all legal and some of them are quite strong, there is quite a diversity of them. They have controversies among themselves. The Chinese supported communists and the Soviet supported communists and I do know the Chinese and the Soviets did give active support to their respective communists. It was always a source of great concern of the Palace. They were definitely anti-communist. As a matter of fact the worse thing you could call somebody in Nepal in the days I were there, was a communist. Today the communists are a major force in the political life.

Q: How about Nepal's role in the world--the UN and things? Were you running to them all the time asking them to vote this way and that way?

WEIL: That was a very important part of my job. We were constantly getting requests from the Department to go over to the Ministry with a demarche on one issue or another. We would always receive a visit from USUN--one of our ambassadors to the UN would come out on a tour to South Asian countries and call on the Prime Minister and review the issues that would be coming up in the General Assembly and the Security Council. It was one of the more important parts of my job to inform the Nepalese government of the various issues and hope that they would see things our way. Fortunately, they did. Nepal had parallel views to ours on many important issues in the UN. We were always very proud of that. They had a much higher voting record as far as we were concerned than India, which had one of the worst.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM STACY RHODES
Deputy Mission Director
USAID
Kathmandu, Nepal
(1986-1990)

Mr. Rhodes was born and raised in Tuscon, Arizona. He received his Bachelor's at Occidental College and his Master's at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia, attended U.C. Berkeley's Law School, and worked in the legal field before entering the Foreign Service. He worked in various positions for USAID in Haiti, Washington D.C., Morocco, Nepal, Guatemala, South Africa. After retiring from USAID, Mr. Rhodes did NGO work for the Institute for International Education and Save the Children, worked as the Latin American Managing Director at the Millennium Challenge Corp, and the Chief of Staff for the Peace Corps.

Topical Focus – Monarchy to Multi-Party Democracy in Nepal

RHODES: Finally, let me mention one other small area of work, because of its ultimate importance to the political development of Nepal. By the 1980s USAID could access modest funding for human rights programming through something called 116E funds.

This was thanks to President Carter's foreign policy and it was carried on during the Reagan administration. The State Department had established a bureau for human rights, which provided modest funds to USAID for small rights-related projects. Now, these were small amounts of money, but since we didn't yet have a democracy/governance program or office, I got to manage these funds personally, and developed quite a few good contacts with the legal community in Nepal. I'd been a lawyer, and we had a wonderful USAID lawyer, Steve Allen, who had been a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal and spoke fluent Nepali. Steve came frequently to Nepal from his post in Bangladesh, and we worked together to cultivate the mission's links to a number of progressive organizations. You couldn't call them human rights organizations per se during this era, but they were pro-democracy and citizen participation groups. One was called 'Leaders', which worked in developing leadership skills for young university-educated Nepalis. Another was the Nepal Law Society, an association of the most distinguished lawyers in Nepal.

Steve actually spoke the Nepali language so well, he was the only American up to that date ever admitted to the Nepali bar; he legally could appear in court in Nepal! I worked with him and we made some small grants from the human rights funds to these organizations just to help strengthen the hand of people who valued and promoted democratic governance, greater freedom of expression and the expansion of citizen participation. While these organizations were not outwardly "political" in nature, they were to become very influential. In 1990, there was a true popular uprising in Nepal. It began as a series of street protests led principally by Nepal's 'communist parties' against the monarchy. These were initially largely nonviolent though very disruptive and bold in their civil disobedience, until there was a violent police/military response. Things took off from there, and it developed into a mini-revolution, with several hundred people killed in the streets of Kathmandu through skirmishes with police/military. The numbers of people involved and being injured or killed grew rapidly, and King Birendra, though he did not 'abdicate' the throne, agreed to negotiate a truce and an agreement to dismantle the so-called "Panchayat system", and to reestablish a constitutional democracy, with a greatly reduced governing role for the palace. The Panchayat system was a Palace- established and controlled political process which basically resulted in a pre-approved congressional body which supported the monarchy. The King agreed to allow democratic elections and to re-establish a multi-party constitutional democracy.

In the aftermath, many of the contacts USAID had developed through the small human rights grants proved very valuable to the U.S. mission, and to the new government of Nepal. The Embassy had been heavily focused on its relationship with the Palace. And as the democratization process went forward, quite a number of the senior, respected lawyers and young leaders that we had worked with became involved in developing the structures for and the content of a new constitution. USAID was asked by the GON to provide international experts in the process, and we financed several highly respected international experts to help them write a new constitution for Nepal which restored multi-party democracy, significantly diminishing the roles of the King and the Palace.

I was very proud of that effort, which significantly grew out of our small human rights grants program. By this time, Kelly Kammerer, who had been both the general counsel and then director of legislative affairs in USAID/Washington, had arrived at post. Needless to say he was extremely enthusiastic about supporting this initial big step in the democratization process in Nepal. In my last six or so months at post, I worked with him on this process, utilizing my fairly extensive contacts with the legal and NGO community. And Kelly went on to grow this early "democracy program" at the Mission.

One of the little-known things about USAID assistance is that sometimes just small amounts of financial and moral support to the right people in non-governmental organizations and the "private sector" can have a major impact on the development of a country. I left Nepal by August 1990, but USAID/Nepal went on to become a major supporter of democracy and governance programs in Nepal, and helped strengthen the new constitutional, democratic government significantly. Nepal remained a "constitutional monarchy" for some years, but later became a more modern constitutional democracy, after a second revolution in which the King was deposed altogether.

NICARAGUA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR RICHARD H. MELTON
U. S. Ambassador
Nicaragua
Managua, Nicaragua
(1988)
Department of State
Assistant Secretary
Mexico, Caribbean, and Regional Economic Affairs
Washington, D. C.
(1988-1989)

Richard H. Melton was born on August 8, 1935 in Rockville, Maryland. He received his BA from Cornell University in 1958. He later attended Wisconsin University where he received his MA in 1971. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961 and served in many countries throughout his career including Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Portugal, England, Uruguay, and Costa Rica. Mr. Melton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 27, 1997.

Topical Focus – U. S. Support of Democratic Elections in Nicaragua

Q: So you served in Nicaragua from May 1988 to July 1988.

MELTON: That is right. It was a short tour of 90 days. I was declared persona non grata in July.
As I said, my focus was on the holding of free, democratic elections. I presented my credentials to Daniel Ortega in the old Nejapa country club, a Somoza favorite, which had been converted by the Sandinistas to a convention center and was used for a variety of ceremonial occasions. I made a brief statement in Spanish about our intent--the strong support for democratic institutions in Nicaragua. After that Ortega and his Foreign Minister sat down and we chatted. I sat between the two Nicaraguans. That was the beginning of a dialogue. My unsuccessful efforts at dialogue with the Sandinistas. I followed up this initial conversation with efforts to make the usual calls on government officials that a new ambassador makes. I asked to see Cabinet Ministers. I had one scheduled and several requests pending when we received word that all my requests for calls had to go through the Foreign Ministry. I resubmitted my requests via diplomatic

note, but weeks went by without any meetings being scheduled or any response at all from the Sandinistas.

I did go around to see leaders of the democratic opposition from all parties. I also saw the press and other elements of society. But the government officials refused to see me. It was obvious that a general policy had been established--I would have to show "good behavior" before contacts would be established. The exception to that rule was a friend that I had made during my previous tour in Nicaragua. By 1988, he had become the head of the Social Security administration and a relatively senior Sandinista official. I had asked for an appointment to see him, which he granted. Later he found out that he had made a mistake. He was a very strong Sandinista, a doctrinaire Marxist; he had been a Christian Democrat, but his views became radicalized--in large part because he had not been able to make much headway under Somoza. So he joined the Sandinistas to fight Somoza. But our old friendship stood the strain between our governments, and we were able to establish a person-to-person dialogue.

I had several meetings with the Foreign Minister, but the other Sandinistas gave me a wide berth. This was a unique situation which contrasted sharply with the relatively cordial relations the Sandinistas maintained with Ambassador Quainton and Ambassador Bergold. They were received regularly and had no problem conducting business with the government. I think the Sandinistas made a judgment that that was the way they would conduct business with the U.S. at this time. Their assessment of the individuals may also have been a factor, but I would not make too much of this. It is likely they would have treated any US representative in much the same manner.

I was increasingly vilified almost from the first day. The tone in the media became increasingly strident. I was associated with all sorts of Somoza crimes; I read in the Sandinista press that I was virtually Somoza's right hand man during my previous tour--when I was a junior officer. My role in fact was quite the opposite; I was certainly not a fan of Somoza. I think anyone who knew me then--as did my Social Security friend--understood that and knew that I did not sympathize with the Somozas one iota. But the Sandinista press vilified me daily. If this campaign was intended to intimidate me, it missed badly. I continued my efforts to get in touch with the Sandinistas, even as I continued to meet with leaders of the opposition. After my initial meeting with the Foreign Minister, I was referred to the head of the Americas division of the Sandinista Party. I was told that my contacts would be more fruitful with the Party and not the government. I said that would not do; that as representative of a government I would have to deal with the elected authorities and not party officials.

I did, as I said, see leaders of the democratic parties and I did everything quite openly. As is true in all countries, the host government is responsible for the security of all diplomats accredited to that country. I had several guards riding with me in my vehicle plus a follow car. These guards were provided by the government. The only American guards were the Marines at the Chancery. It would have been very difficult to do anything without the Sandinistas knowing about it. In any case, I wanted to conduct my business quite openly. That transparency became an important factor after the Sandinistas decided to declare me persona non grata and, at the same time, to crack down on the opposition. I was expelled along with six members of my staff. The action that the Sandinistas took was part of a series of actions which they took to crack down on all opposition elements.

Most of the personal vilification took place in Nicaragua, although occasional anti-Melton pieces appeared in the American press as well. There were daily attacks in the Managua press and weekly demonstrations in front of the Embassy. These demonstrations were part of a regular tour given to visiting Americans by the Sandinistas, who also organized visits to communes and other Sandinista show cases. Some of the Americans would spend time in the rural areas chopping cane, working along side their Sandinista comrades, but on Wednesday they would join the regularly scheduled demonstrations in front of our Chancery. Periodically, we would meet with these Americans, if they asked for appointments. During the demonstrations, I became one of the favorite targets.

The unwillingness of government officials to see me, unless I was willing to accommodate to norms laid down by the Sandinistas, was part of their approach. I would on occasion be asked why I didn't conduct myself as some of my predecessors had. I frequently spoke with Sandinista officials at receptions and other public events. In group settings, if the Sandinistas said something critical about the US, I would not hesitate to take issue. So I did have some access, and sometimes they would try to bait me. It became almost predictable.

I think the Sandinistas viewed my activities as qualitatively different from those of my predecessors. The circumstances were different since we were in a pre-election period and the opposition was accorded a degree of toleration. The main issues in the Nicaraguan political dynamics were: would there be elections? If so, would the anti-Sandinista parties stand together?--which they had to do if there was any chance of winning. They had to present a unified slate of candidates; multiple slates would have ensured a Sandinista victory. Historically, Nicaragua had divided between liberals and conservatives. But following the Sandinista takeover, traditional alignments had fragmented, and in 1988 there were literally dozens of parties. The Sandinistas of course benefitted from this situation and tried their best to keep the democratic opposition

parties divided. The Sandinistas held most of the cards. I urged the opposition to work together as the only way for the democrats to win at the polls; I made no secret of my interest in these democratic parties participating in the Nicaraguan political process. In the end, that is the policy that these parties adopted; they did field a unified slate and won the elections, much to the shock of the Sandinistas and the surprise of most foreign observers.

As I said, early summer 1988 was still in the pre-election period. The Sandinistas had not even made the decision to hold elections. There were some signs that they might agree, but the final decision had not been made. When they finally reached their decision, many factors obviously were weighed. One of them, I believe, was the Sandinistas confidence that they would sweep the elections--without much difficulty. They did not think that the opposition could come together. Agreeing to elections would, moreover, give the Sandinistas a major public relations victory by eliminating one of the major arguments against their regime--that they had not been voted into power in democratic elections. The legitimization of the Sandinistas would, according to this view, at the same time erode the support for the resistance--particularly in the U.S. Congress.

I had contacts with Violeta Chamorro. She was then and is today a very courageous person. In many respects, she was the essence of Nicaragua. She had the ability to bring factions together--she was unique in that skill. There was very broad spectrum of views within the democratic opposition. Almost every leader had a different approach to political organization and objectives. The U.S. government had divided views as well--even the desire to hold democratic elections was an issue. Not everyone agreed that elections organized by the Sandinistas were a good idea. There was deep skepticism that the elections would be held or that they would be fair even if allowed. There was concern that flawed elections against a divided opposition would just legitimize Sandinista rule--the mirror image of the Sandinista expectation. In the Embassy, we became increasingly convinced that democratic elections should be supported; there was a continuing role for the resistance, but that was primarily to force the Sandinistas to hold elections which would eventually resolve the outstanding political issues. That was our view which we communicated to Washington.

There was also the probability that the resistance, if victorious, might shun the democratic approach and claim the spoils of victory. The resistance had not produced a political cadre; it was a Campesino-based guerrilla army. Some of its commanders and leaders were impressive, but no single leader had emerged--Enrique Bermudez, the top military commander lacked the political skills required. Some of the resistance "stars" had been killed at the beginning of the fighting, including prominent civilian figures. It seemed to me that the political future of Nicaragua, if it were to be resolved through

elections, would have to be tackled and decided by local leaders, not by Washington. There were a few potential people, still in Managua, who were not formally part of the resistance, but were associated in people's minds with that movement. These people held the key--they would be the ones to contest the elections.

The Europeans went through an evolution. I had close contacts with all of the diplomatic corps. The major players--the Germans, the Italians, the Spanish, the Brazilians and some other Europeans--were also anxious to find solutions. The Brazilian Ambassador, Sergio Duarte, was one of the most effective diplomats; he was a perceptive observer who became a good friend for many years, including those I subsequently spent in Brazil as Ambassador. I think that the assessment of the Sandinistas by diplomats who had been in Nicaragua for any length of time surely had evolved. With some exceptions, I think most of the major embassies had become disenchanted; they were seeing the same abuses by the Sandinistas that we had observed. Life was not improving for anyone in Nicaragua--except perhaps the Sandinista top echelon. It was becoming increasing apparent that the Sandinista cadres were behaving very much like the old Somoza cliques. The Sandinista party was a cadre party; at its foundation, there were a hard core that continued to be subsidized by the government. The number of these hard core adherents directly or indirectly on the government's payroll--perhaps as many as 200,000--was almost large enough to ensure that elections would be a foregone conclusion. So the Sandinistas were very much a vanguard party, despite protestations to the contrary. The evils and excesses that flow from an ingrown political system were certainly evident in 1988 for foreign observers and increasingly to the Nicaraguans.

This disenchantment was felt by the diplomats almost regardless of their personal ideology. The living conditions in Nicaragua were not improving and not all of the problems could be blamed on external forces. The assistance that was being provided by many of their countries was not being used effectively, Sandinista management of the country left much to be desired, corruption was growing, vehicles and machinery were rusting from disuse. Countries that had active projects in Nicaragua, like the Germans, were becoming disillusioned and concerned; they were not willing to provide additional assistance when much of what they had already given was being wasted.

Shortly after our July 4 reception, at which I made a brief, but general pro-democracy statement, I was declared persona non grata. So I was in Nicaragua for 90 event packed days. I must say I was somewhat surprised by the Sandinista action. The Sandinistas had accepted me to be the U.S. Ambassador; they knew--or should have known--what they were getting. My views and positions, and those of my government, were no secret. The Sandinista decision to expel me and members of the Embassy staff, I believe, was a part of a broader crack down on the opposition: closing of La Prensa, the main opposition

newspaper in Nicaragua; shutting down the last major private enterprise, a large mill; imprisonment of opposition leaders. The immediate cause for these repressive measures was an opposition demonstration in Diriamba, a small town near Managua. The Sandinistas alleged that the U.S. Embassy had orchestrated that demonstration. We had heard that the opposition would gather there to hold a demonstration. We had also been told that the police would be there in force, which suggested that there might be some clashes. At the time, there was a Congressional delegation visiting Managua. I advised them against going to Diriamba--I was concerned about their safety, but several members of Congress went nevertheless. Since they were insistent on going, I sent the Embassy security officer with them. They went in Embassy vehicles. The photographs that were published the next day in the Sandinista press prominently featured the security officer, arm raised in front of him. The caption stated that he was orchestrating the demonstration. What he was actually doing was motioning to the Congressional delegation trying to get them back into the vehicles to get away from the confrontations. The caption under the photograph read: "US official directing opposition demonstration in Diriamba." That was manifestly untrue and an outrageous distortion. The Sandinistas must have known that this was a complete fabrication, but they seized upon it as the protest for their expulsion action.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR LUIGI R. EINAUDI
U. S. Ambassador
OAS
(1989-1993)

Luigi Einaudi graduated with his bachelor's degree in government from Harvard in 1957, he got his doctorate at Harvard in 1961. He joined the foreign service in 1974 and served in multiple positions in Washington, D.C., including as the Ambassador to the Organization of American States from 1989-1993. Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy and Robin Matthewman in 2013.

Topical Focus – Election in Nicaragua

Q: OK, Today is 28 January 2014 with Luigi Einaudi. The Sandinistas were in power in Nicaragua; we were trying to get them out. An election was coming up, but how did we view the situation there?

EINAUDI: By 1989, the issue for the United States was to somehow get out of the box that it had put itself in through support for the Contras and counter revolution in

Nicaragua. It isn't that the Contras were untouchable mercenaries. Most Contras actually represented the popular classes and the peasants better than did the Sandinista leaders, who tended to be alienated and radicalized middle- and upper-class youths and intellectuals. But in aligning themselves with the Contras, the United States was perceived to have chosen the path of arms over the path of diplomacy, the path of force over the path of dialogue and reason. This had alienated the United States from the major Latin American countries, which had banded together in what was being called the Rio group. Of the many fronts on which Secretary Baker organized diplomacy instead of war, the key was naming Bernard Aronson as Assistant Secretary of State. Aronson was a lifelong Democrat whose ties in Congress softened some of our domestic polarization over Central America.

My role was to help establish a multilateral framework that would gain support of the Western Hemisphere countries who felt their foreign policy principles had been violated. All of this came together in support of the elections in Nicaragua in 1990. The Sandinistas were sure they would win. It was a little like what happened to Pinochet in Chile. He thought he was going to win the referendum, allowed it, and lost it—to his and to his wife's disbelief. In Nicaragua, we decided to go along with the Costa Ricans and the South Americans who felt this thing should be resolved with elections. The difference was that we were mainly looking for an exit strategy. We were faced with a growing mess. The Contras were not being defeated, but they were not winning, either, and the collateral damage was growing. I think that most Americans still do not realize that in the streets of Los Angeles among the exiles from Nicaragua and other young arrivals from Central America and Mexico, tensions and gang warfare were growing and volunteers were being enlisted to go and fight on both sides in Nicaragua. So the Central American and Contra wars were poisoning aspects of U.S. life as well, although it was not widely reported or understood at the time.

We went into the Nicaraguan election thinking of it as an exit strategy. Nearly everybody thought the Sandinistas would win. A few days before the election the Sandinistas held a fantastic rally. More people participated in their rally than ultimately voted for them. In other words, mass psychosis and pressure led some people to demonstrate for Ortega and the Sandinistas, who then did not vote for them in the privacy of the voting booth. Before the election, Bernie Aronson was rather isolated in the U.S. government. In an ARA bureau staff meeting, the question was asked what do you think the outcome of this election will be? I think that Bernie and I were the only two who believed that the winner would be Violeta Chamorro, the widow of the newspaperman who had been assassinated by Somoza's thugs.

Q: And the OAS played a role?

EINAUDI: The election was one of the first occasions when the OAS put together an electoral observation mission that had real impact. The Secretary General of the OAS was Joao Clemente Baena Soares, a very experienced and canny diplomat out of the Brazilian noninterventionist school. He was not a favorite of the United States. In 1988, before my time as Ambassador, we had opposed his re-election until it became evident that we were the only ones who did; at that point we caved and voted for him. Baena didn't like the Sandinistas any more than we did. But he also knew that the big symbolic conflict had become Nicaragua versus the United States. So he said, OK, we are going to observe this election, but we are not going to involve any U.S. citizens. Our observation is going to be a professional observation done by Latin Americans.

Being, as some critics have said, a conjury of governments, the OAS has to work with the agreement of the government of whatever sovereign state in which it wishes to operate. Which in Nicaragua meant that the OAS worked so closely with the Sandinista-controlled electoral council that many thought the OAS was losing its independence and would wind up whitewashing a Sandinista victory. Separate American observers, including those associated with former President Carter, were militant and aggressive. But Baena stuck to his position that U.S. participation would undermine the credibility of the OAS with the Nicaraguans and with many others. The OAS fielded its first observers seven months before the elections, monitored the campaign throughout the country and deployed 433 persons on election day, helping to collect tally sheets from nearly all the 5,000 voting tables. As it turned out, the Sandinistas didn't get the votes, and the fact that the OAS was in the knickers of the electoral council meant that the Sandinistas had no wiggle room. Convinced they would win, the Sandinistas had allowed the OAS so much inside institutional access they could not rig votes after the event to deny Violeta's win. Carter, being American, got a lot of credit. But the OAS proved key.

Q: What about the disarming of the Contras? That sounds more like a job for the UN.

EINAUDI: That is just what everyone thought. But that involved several surprises. The Contras were not going to win a war, but they were still in control of territory, and they needed to be brought in. Honduras had become the operational base from which the Contras were organized and supported. Many Contra fighters were camped in Honduras near the Nicaraguan border, but some were also operating in rural Nicaragua where there had been a real war going on. It wasn't just an ideological war; it was also a class war. Most people have never figured out that while many of the Sandinista leaders were middle class intellectuals and professionals, the Contras were mainly peasants who didn't want to have their lives reorganized by people from the capital.

When it came time for demobilization, the general assumption was that the central job of disarming the Contras would be in Honduras, where most of them were encamped. So that job was given to the UN. The disarming in Nicaragua was given to the OAS. What happened in practice is that the Contras in Honduras went home with their arms to Nicaragua. There was no longer any fighting. They were just going home.

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Q: What had caused the optimism on the Sandinista side that they were going to win the election?

EINAUDI: They controlled the standard levers of power. But most of all they were overconfident, thinking they were the vanguard of history. This is one of the weaknesses of Leninist thinking. If you think you embody history, you are blinded to the fact that how you rule also matters. The strengths of democracy and democratic procedures is that they tend to be inclusive. They are not perfect, but they give more people a chance to be heard. From the standpoint of cognitive awareness, a person raised in a pluralist and democratic tradition is much less likely to think of himself as always in the right and always expressing the will of the people. In political theory this debate goes back to J.L. Talmond and Hannah Arendt's focus on Rousseau's "popular will" as the root origin of what they call "totalitarian democracy." The Sandinistas were convinced that they were on the side of history and that they could not lose. But they did not account for the fact that they had not been able to develop the block committees and other coercive foundations of Castro's Cuba that Chavez copied later in Venezuela.

Q: Earlier you talked about Pinochet leaving office as a parallel to what happened in Nicaragua. Do you want to flesh that out more on what actually happened and what the U.S. position was?

EINAUDI: What I said was that Pinochet and the Sandinistas both thought they would win. The parallel stops there, other than that the counting of the ballots was reasonably accurate in both countries. In Chile the vote was a referendum, Yes or No whether Pinochet should stay in office. In Nicaragua, it was an election for president. Those are two totally different societies. Chile had a literate population, a diversified economy, and developed institutions. Nicaragua was a traditional agricultural society. Pinochet had been in power sixteen years, had grown the economy and marginalized the political far left. The Sandinistas had succeeded in displacing the Somozas and their supporters, but had been in power half that time, and faced a society their rule had divided and a ruinous economic situation. It is true that in both countries, their opponents coalesced to the electoral center, and were able to harvest support from a broad spectrum of groups. And

in both cases, the opposition had considerable outside support. In Chile, U.S. policy was ambiguous. Largely supportive of Pinochet at first, it moved toward official impartiality, allowing for both support and opposition in individual cases. In Nicaragua, despite some support for the Sandinistas in progressive circles, U.S. policy was so hostile that the OAS Secretary General did not allow U.S. citizens to participate as election observers for fear of compromising the observation.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ALEXI PANEHAL
USAID
Office Director
Democracy Office
Managua, Nicaragua
(1995-1999)

Alexi Panehal was born in Cleveland. She attended Georgetown University. She joined USAID in 1983. During her career at USAID, she worked in Thailand, Tunisia. Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic amongst others. She retired in September 2018 and was interviewed by Carol Peasley in 2023.

Topical Focus – U. S. Support of Nicaraguan Elections

Q: So, you went off to Nicaragua in the summer of 1995.

PANEHAL: Yeah, and it was a very exciting, stressful period. We had two elections coming up. In 1996 we had a presidential election, which pitted Daniel Ortega against Arnoldo Aleman, affectionately known as Gordoman. And municipal elections.
So, the issue for the U.S. government at that time, and an issue expressed by many people in Nicaragua, but certainly in the U.S. Congress, was that there could be significant segments of the population disenfranchised because they didn't have the opportunity to register to vote. Specifically, U.S. Congressional staff and members of Congress were concerned that the contras and the indigenous populations on the Atlantic coast would be underrepresented on the voter registration rolls.

So, in conjunction with the Consejo Supremo Electoral (CSE), the Supreme Electoral Council of Nicaragua, we worked in tandem with them to design a voter registration program throughout the country that USAID fundamentally financed. We opened up all of the polling stations that would normally be open on election day and opened additional polling stations in those areas that were determined to be underrepresented.

We ran this massive nation-wide registration campaign for at least two weekends prior to the 1996 elections. And the Embassy and USAID were in the field monitoring the whole process. When we did field trips, there would be one Embassy person paired with one USAID person. They would go out as a team, sometimes they would go out on horseback or in canoes to get to their sites. Some were out in the field for three days trying to get to their polling station to observe what was going on with the registration process. One team actually found a dead body in a forest they were going through. Pairing Embassy and USAID staff turned out to be a great team-building exercise. For all of us, voter registration and election observation were unforgettable experiences.

Q: Did everyone have to re-register? Was it a universal re-registration process or was it just for new registries?

PANEHAL: It was primarily new registrants. But we were also reconfirming people who had been registered before. So anyway, it was a massive registration process.

We also helped the Supreme Electoral Council with their publicity, producing and buying air time for radio and TV spots, billboards and pamphlets. Then after the voter registration drive, in the 1996 election we did the same thing, but this time in conjunction with a whole group of donors.

With the other donors, we mounted a nationwide electoral observation effort. All the donors agreed to issue a single statement issued on election night at the appropriate time, summarizing our collective observation effort. So, it would not be just the U.S. government expressing its opinion about the elections, it was a consortium of donors. To coordinate this multi-donor effort, we set up a command center in the U.S. Embassy, staffed by Embassy and USAID staff. USAID and Embassy staff also developed all of the forms that the donor observers used to assess how free, fair, transparent and inclusive the election was. There were three forms we developed, one assessed whether the polling station opened on time, another we used during the day, and a final form we used when we observed closing the poll at night and observing the vote count.

All of the forms assessed whether there were political signs close to the polling station, any intimidation, whether the polling stations had sufficient staff and material, that kind of thing. During the day, the donor observers called into the command center with their observations so the ambassadors had real time information on how the election was going. Then once the polls closed, we consolidated all of the information extracted from the individual polling observation forms and the donors collectively issued a statement election night about the quality of the electoral process.

Q: On the U.S observation side I assume that there were USAID and Embassy staff themselves who were observers, but I would assume that there were organizations like the Carter Center and NDI and IRI that had observers.

PANEHAL: The Carter Center had been very involved in Nicaragua as well.

Q: Right, so was this coordinating those three? NGO observation teams as well as the official ones. Was there a difference between what the donors were doing officially and what the non-profit organizations were doing?

PANEHAL: Well, I would say that we shared information with the non-profit organizations that were observing the election, but for a variety of reasons, they preferred to issue their own statements about the quality of the electoral process. But we were in regular contact with them throughout the electoral process. The pre-electoral process for all of us was just as important as what happened on election day.

Q: So, you all were observing from the registration process right through the election. So even during the campaign period you were also observing? Were you going out on weekends as well?

PANEHAL: Yeah. We may have to censor this, but we had such a close working relationship with the Supreme Electoral Council that when our folks were out in the field, especially the technical group, CAPEL, Centro de Asesoría y Promoción Electoral, the Electoral Advisory and Promotion Center, that was coordinating the USAID assistance that was going to the Supreme Electoral Council, these technical advisors were calling the president of the Supreme Electoral Council saying, OK we need the military to get a helicopter out to this polling place and deliver this much electoral material.

George Carner, the USAID mission director, was also out observing and constantly calling in to the Consejo Supremo Electoral staff, including the Consejo president, on what he was observing on election day and advising them of any problems.

Q: I think that shows a strong partnership, as well as their respect for the assistance they were getting.

PANEHAL: Yes, forging that close working relationship with the Supreme Electoral Council was even more remarkable from our perspective. We had a very close working relationship with the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE), not only at the highest levels on policy issues, but throughout their organization, at every technical level you can imagine,

CAPEL staff were providing them with expert technical assistance that USAID funded.CAPEL staff really integrated themselves into the CSE operation and worked side by side
with the staff of the CSE. The CSE accepted our assistance, in part because at that time they were very interested in demonstrating that they could effectively hold elections. For us at least it was heartening, if not remarkable, that the president of the CSE was a Sandinista. But we still had an excellent working relationship with her.

Q: That is excellent.

PANEHAL: Other members of the CSE Board were from the Liberal Party. The Board was politically balanced, I believe three Sandinistas and three Liberals, but the president was Sandinista.

Q: OK that is a very positive thing to report. Given Jimmy Carter's long-time involvement with Nicaragua, did the Carter Center play a unique role and was USAID supporting the Carter Center or were they doing this on their own? Can you talk a little bit about that. And if Jimmy Carter came, what it was like having him as an observer.

PANEHAL: Well Jimmy Carter didn't come because he didn't need to come. In 1990 he did need to come, but in 1996 he didn't. USAID was subsidizing, but not fully funding the cost of the non-governmental organizations that typically do electoral observation, including the Carter Center. IRI because of their connection to Congress was also deeply involved in the pre-electoral and the electoral process. We also financially supported IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). I think there were five or six international observation groups that we supported. There was also a domestic, Nicaraguan observation group that we funded, helped train, and deploy, called Etica y Transparencia, Ethics and Transparency. They were also very effective. OAS also mounted an electoral observation effort.

Q: Were there any professional Congressional staff people themselves who came to observe?

PANEHAL: Roger Noriega was there pretty frequently. He worked for Senator Jesse Helms at the time of the 1996 elections. Dan Fisk, who worked on both the House Foreign Affairs and the Senate Foreign Relations staff, was also deeply committed to and involved in Nicaragua elections.

Q: Was it difficult managing this election support effort because this was a country in which there was a long history of U.S. politics involved with our relationship with the

country? Was that something that affected you at your level in the office? Or, was that something that George Carner as the mission director handled? Can you talk at all about the great interest of Nicaragua to many political figures in the U.S.?

PANEHAL: Yes, Congressional oversight of Nicaraguan elections, and USAID's electoral support was constantly under scrutiny by Congressional staffers. The most important thing I think that the Embassy and the USAID Mission did was to forge a relationship with the CSE at the political and technical level. That didn't happen overnight. It was a combination of everyone working towards a common objective of trying to make this work in their own organizational interest and Nicaragua's interest.

But we were all very cognizant of what our appropriate role was and then George Carner, as mission director of USAID, and John Maisto, the U.S. ambassador at the time, deftly managed the relations with key U.S. Congressional and Nicaraguan political party figures and candidates.

They were very adept at managing the relationship with both the Ortega folks and the Aleman folks. We were strictly non-partisan, trying to make sure that the elections were free, fair, transparent and inclusive. That was our motto. And they had every opportunity to talk with either George or Maisto about their concerns, I think both the Embassy and USAID consistently kept open lines of communication with both of those camps and I think they appreciated the fact that we were trying to be frank with them as well as sharing information that we had that we thought was appropriate. Yeah, it was very politically sensitive.

Q: It sounds like it was also very well managed because you had the full cooperation of all sides within Nicaragua?

PANEHAL: Yeah, it happened because George and Maisto made the overtures to make sure that at the Nicaraguan political level people were willing to buy into the process.

Then I think one innovative thing that George did, that drove us crazy but in retrospect was a super smart thing to do, he required all of the staff, all of the offices in USAID/Nicaragua to develop a results framework.

We had to identify and define what objectives we were trying to reach, how we were going to measure it, what inputs we needed to accomplish those objectives, when those inputs needed to be delivered, what the options were for organizations to deliver that kind of assistance. Those frameworks, it took us a while to hammer them out. This was the first time most of us had tried to do something like that and it was very complicated. In

many instances, for us at least with elections, we were establishing goals and objectives that were beyond our manageable interests to deliver, and that is never a comfortable position to be in.

But we recognized that we had to have an objective that was higher than just our delivery of assistance. Simply delivering assistance wouldn't achieve our development objective. It did take a lot of thought and a lot of discussion to finalize those frameworks.

So once we were able to finalize the results framework, we were able to say to folks, OK here is the framework. What we said in this framework is very ambitious, so we can't go beyond this objective. The results framework also served to underscore that we can't achieve our objective if we don't have the resources, both human and financial, to implement the programs we outlined.

The Mission and the Embassy were all brought into these discussions and bought into this process. It recognized the critical path we all agreed to follow. The framework thus helped to avoid being overcommitted...other initiatives that were proposed that were peripheral, tangential and distracted us from our primary objective were more easily vetoed.

Q: Right and this enabled you to focus and not get distracted by external people proposing things. Did Washington have to weigh in on that process because you would be creating some potential tension in shutting some people out?

PANEHAL: Well George in particular was and Mark Silverman, who was deputy mission director then, they were very adept in making sure that the interested parties on Capitol Hill were fully briefed on what we were doing. They would send me up to DC periodically to brief the staffers on technical aspects of our program. They always had a lot of questions and they had tons of their own contacts in country, so they were always very well informed. USAID in Washington was also brought on board early on and they were very helpful in answering questions from the Hill. From my perspective, it was more of the Capital Hill folks that needed reassurance that we were moving in a direction they were comfortable with.

Q: It seems like this was an important lesson to recognize that in such a political program you really had to work very closely with Congressional staff and make sure that they fully understand what you are doing and why.

PANEHAL: And half the time they still wouldn't believe us, so they would come down and we would take them out to the field because they had to hear firsthand from the

beneficiaries and their contacts that the program was working. When they got feedback from their contacts that we were doing ok, then that is when they started to believe us.

Q: I assume there were Congressional staff from both parties with slightly different perspectives coming at you or was it only from the former contra side.

PANEHAL: I would say that there were Congressional staffers from both sides of the aisle but they shared the same perspective and desire, which was to ensure that the Contra and indigenous groups were fully brought into the electoral process.

Q: OK, really fascinating. You said that you did have to go up and brief Congressional staff from time to time. How often would someone, either you are George or someone else from the Mission, be on the Hill briefing staff?

PANEHAL: I think we would be up there every three to six months. And the Congressional staffers would come down to Nicaragua every three to six months. And I would say that either George and/or somebody in the Embassy or USAID would be in contact with someone on the Hill every other day.

Q: Wow; that is a very close relationship. But you also then were able to do what you wanted to do.

PANEHAL: I don't think we could have done what we thought we needed to do without having established that communication bridge so closely with folks in Washington.

Q: Yes, that is very important.

PANEHAL: And we were in the field all the time. We would get a call saying we heard so and so and this happened. We would be able to say, we were just there yesterday so I can report to you what we saw and heard yesterday. That sort of calmed them down.

Q: And this went on after the election as well, that same sort of interest and frequent travel to Nicaragua?

PANEHAL: Well, we had elections again in 1998. We had the Atlantic Coast elections, which was another group that Capitol Hill folks were concerned had been disenfranchised too and so we put a lot of effort into the elections there. Getting folks registered. We would go down rivers in the middle of nowhere on pangas (locally made wooden canoes). It was really fun. The Embassy staff would all tell us they never had any experience so interesting as when they were doing electoral observations with us in

Nicaragua.

Q: Yeah, well I am sure it really forged strong working relationships.

PANEHAL: It did.
Q: Was that primarily with the Political Section or did others in the Embassy, such as the Econ Section get involved also?

PANEHAL: Almost all sections in the Embassy were involved in the observation effort because it was a massive undertaking. But our coordination was mostly with the Political Section.

Personal relations helped! It helped that USAID's PSC Democracy Officer was married to the second in command in the Political Section. And the head of the Political Section, his wife was the head of the Embassy's Public Affairs Section. They both had three year olds. I also had a three year old. Our kids all went to the same day care and they were inseparable playmates.

Q: Ok, so the three-year-olds brought you all together?

PANEHAL: Yes! We all became good friends. Sometimes that is how it works, you know.

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Q: I have heard George say before that it also helps to show the value of greater focus on implementation, and not just design and strategic thinking.

PANEHAL: Yes. It can be uncomfortable though. Having objectives that are beyond your managerial capability.

Q: Right. Were there cases when you realized they were beyond your capability and/or some assumptions turned out to be incorrect? Did you have to make adjustments to your frameworks?

PANEHAL: Yeah, from a financial standpoint and an outcome standpoint we had to adjust them. From the financial standpoint, periodically we realized we were not getting the money that we had programmed to achieve our objective. So now how do we make adjustments? Do we scale back the objective or do we try to find additional resources to help us achieve the original objective?

Q: Yes, democracy governance money was usually not the most plentiful of resources.

PANEHAL: In that respect we were fortunate there was so much scrutiny from Congress.

Q: Right and the Congress would protect you. I suspect you were given priority in the budgeting process.

PANEHAL: We were certainly scrutinized.

Q: OK are there other things to say about the time in Nicaragua that were important to note because you were there at a very critical time. When was the next presidential election. It was after you left. Who won that one? Ortega?

PANEHAL: Ortega.

Q: Were you beginning to see signs that the Sandinistas might be gaining favor while you were there.

PANEHAL: At the tail end of the time I was there, there was a possibility that they might make a comeback. Many of the local mayors that were elected in 1996 were Sandinistas. But it wasn't really clear that they would take over nationally...besides, the country was still recovering from Mitch when I left in 1999.

Q: But the working relationship with the government sounds like it was quite strong throughout the time you were there.

PANEHAL: Yes, and we had a very strong relationship with the municipal governments as well, many of whom were Sandinistas. But they shared an interest with the Liberals and USAID in delivering services, so when we talked to them about municipal management improvements, they were all ears. It didn't matter whether they were Sandinista or Liberal. We had a very good working relationship with them in that respect.

Q: Were there elections at the municipal level as well?

PANEHAL: Yes, and in 1996 too.

Q: So, we were involved in supporting those as well?

PANEHAL: We were more involved in observing what was going on in the presidential

election, but we were also interested and aware of what was happening at the municipal level. If I remember correctly, we were working with local organizations to create and promote debates between the candidates at the municipal level. We had been encouraging the mayors to be transparent in the way they discussed and approved the budget and to allow the public an opportunity to listen to and comment on what the mayors were doing and proposing and to allow the public some input into how the municipalities formulated the budget and set goals. We were trying to forge a closer relationship between the Mayors and the municipal government and their constituency.

Q: Was this done with Development Assistance money you had for democracy and governance. Or did it come through the housing program?

PANEHAL: No, it was done through democracy funding.

Q: Other things about Nicaragua that we should be sure to cover?

PANEHAL: I will think about it a bit more, but for me the elections were all consuming. And then Mitch.

Q: Between elections and Mitch, you were kept pretty busy.

PANEHAL: We also did a lot with OAS/CIAV, which is a human rights organization. We funded a lot of their programs in Nicaragua. They were trying to pacify the northern part of the country and the Atlantic Coast, where there were still conflicts between the Contras and some other people who were living there. So, we financed a lot of their efforts to build bridges between them.

Q: This is sort of an off the wall question but given the long history of political turmoil in the country and the role the Catholic Church sometimes played, did you see any role of the church? Were religious groups involved with election observation or any of these areas?

PANEHAL: I don't recall the churches being involved in election observation. But OAS was also involved in conflict resolution through CIAV. CIAV (International Commission for Support and Verification) was part of OAS and they operated in areas where it wasn't safe for us to be, like in the northern part of Nicaragua, so they were our eyes and ears. But I don't recall any involvement with the major churches and our program.

Q: OK, I was just curious. Did you ever meet Ortega or see him?

PANEHAL: Yes. We crossed paths a couple times. When we had folks from the Hill in town, for example, Ambassador Maisto would have everybody over for a reception at his house. He made a point of always inviting all the political parties and all of the politicos. Ortega came to several of the events where we talked with him.

It was all about maintaining open lines of communication, so that when something did come up that was of concern to one party or another, they weren't reluctant to pick up the phone and say, hey what is going on? Then hopefully they would be able to work out a solution.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR JOHN P. LEONARD
Department of State
Deputy Chief of Mission/Chargé D'Affaires
Nicaragua
Managua, Nicaragua
(1988-1990)

Mr. John P. Leonard was born and raised in New York, and educated at Harvard University. He served in the U.S. Army prior to entering the Foreign Service in 1965. His work took him to Luxembourg, Korea, Spain, Paraguay, Uruguay, Nicaragua, serving in several high level positions before becoming Ambassador to Suriname. Mr. Leonard was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on February 8th, 2011.

Topical Focus – International Elections Observers in Nicaragua

Q: Today is February 3, 2012. We left it off when the Chamorro election came about. I want to ask what is your impression of the Carter group and other groups that came in to monitor the election? Did they keep everybody honest?

LEONARD: They did exactly what they were supposed to do. A key factor in getting everybody to agree to support yet another election in Nicaragua was that any election had to be free and fair, and the only way of achieving this would be to have international observers observing every step of the way. In the United States, of course, people found it extremely difficult to believe that the Sandinista government would ever accept that and many among the Republicans were highly dubious that that could be accomplished. On the other hand, within Nicaragua itself, our embassy pointed out many times that the key to a fair election in Nicaragua was that there had to be lots of foreign observers to keep an eye on things. That only in this way would the people of Nicaragua be prepared to vote the way they really felt; if there were not plenty of foreign observers most Nicaraguans would assume that their vote would not really be secret or that the tally would be manipulated by the Sandinistas who controlled all the levers of government. So it was quite an achievement to get the Sandinistas to finally agree that yes there could be lots of

international observers in Nicaragua for this election. There were two reasons. Number one, they wanted very much to get rid of the contra movement. They wanted very much to hold the United States to its pledge that we would respect the results of elections in Nicaragua as long as they were free and fair. This was the new George H.W. Bush administration policy. And without good reason, they were supremely confident that they could win an election even if there were lots of foreigners around. They felt they had tremendous advantages. They controlled all the levels of government. They had piles of money at their disposal with which to campaign. And probably most of them, including the leadership, had a very misplaced confidence in their popularity among the Nicaraguan people. In our embassy on the other hand, we believed the Nicaraguan people were fed up with the Sandinistas, but that they weren't about to take the risk of voting them out unless they were confident that voting against the Sandinistas would be safe, and they wouldn't be subject to a lot of reprisals. The only way they could be sure of that was if the country was full of foreign observers. In that we were correct. The Carter foundation and tons of other organizations came down to observe the elections, from the OAS (Organization of American States), from the United Nations, from all over the place. They played an essential role in making that election as fair as it could be.

Q: Did they get a fairly good European socialist delegation, because this is a group that had been very dubious about what we were doing there.

LEONARD: Lots of Europeans came to Nicaragua to observe the elections. Jimmy Carter's group was among the most active and spent the most time there. He, himself came down several times to observe the election. It is hard to overestimate Carter's role. And of course he was there on election day and into the night and the next day. He and several others, including Colin Powell, went to visit Daniel Ortega the day after the elections to hold him to his promise that he would respect the results of the elections. Undoubtedly with great reluctance and feelings of great bitterness, the Sandinistas were forced to turn over power.

aDemocracy and Elections Subject Reader

TODD AMANI
USAID
Program Officer/Chief of Mission Democracy Unit
Nicaragua
Managua, Nicaragua
(1992-1995)

Todd Amani studied at Wartburg College and then proceeded to join the Peace Corps. While in the Peace Corps he was paralyzed, leading him to instead complete his graduate studies at Johns Hopkins SAIS. He joined USAID in 1990. He served in a number of

postings while at USAID including, Egypt, Mozambique, Guatemala, and Honduras. Todd Amani retired in 2014 and was interviewed by Marcia Bernbaum in 2023.

Topical Focus – Nicaraguan Elections and Political Processes

Q: Let's start again with Nicaragua.

AMANI: While we were in Egypt, the word came that they were looking for people to go to Nicaragua. We thought that would be fun to do, though we'd only been in Egypt for two years. I went and talked to my superiors and said "we have some experience in Central America and speak Spanish, they're looking for people, would it be all right if we put our names in to go there?" They were willing to let us do that. So we went to Nicaragua, and I went there as a Program Officer.

The real need for the Program Officer was to figure out what the strategy should be and how should we spend good money to make a difference in Nicaragua and support this opening they were trying to see with Violeta Chamorro being elected. Our Foreign Service officers wanted to do some important things that would make a difference and create a different relationship with Nicaragua. We moved to Nicaragua and my job in the program office was primarily to put together a new program based on my discussion with all the other technical people who were brought in there. Janet Ballantyne was the mission director, Ken Schofield was the deputy director, Bob Burke was the head of the program office. He was an economist and not really a Program Officer, so a lot of that program work fell to me, putting things together, talking to people in the technical offices and what they thought should be done to address the issues in each area, whether health, the economy, all the other areas that USAID worked in: what could we be doing? I was the key person putting the strategy together based on input from everyone else, and still feel some pride in pulling all that input together into a coherent strategy that addressed the key issues facing Nicaragua and guided our work over the next few years.

Democracy programming was also an important area and eventually I moved into that because it was an area of interest to me, but I started as the Program Officer and spent quite a bit of time putting together the plan that would go to Washington for approval. I can't remember what the amounts of money were but they were significant because of the political importance of getting Nicaragua out of the Sandinista programs and trying to rebuild a different approach to the economy and the country as a whole. I ended up being the author for the program plan, based on my talks with everybody else and input from many other people. We got it approved. We were growing in numbers as the program grew, there were issues about housing, a whole process of getting back into a more usual

kind of mission, because during the Sandinista period there really wasn't a lot of work going on through USAID because of the political nature of what was going on.

Q: As I recall, Ken Schofield was program officer when we were in Nicaragua years earlier. Did he ever reflect on what it was like to come back?

AMANI: I don't really remember him telling us stories from the past, we were so focused on what we were doing then, how we would address the incredible issues we had to deal with. Including some debt issues. I understand why Bob Burke was brought in as an Economist because there were so many issues associated with how the whole economy would stand up.

I was proud of the fact that I could play a role in hearing from all these technical experts and bringing it together into a document that would get approval from Washington and play a role in making decisions about what was most important, how to spend the money to have an impact. It was a heady time, lots of work to do but very interesting.

Q: That's a lot of responsibility given you were a new USAID officer.

AMANI: That's really true because I didn't have a lot of experience on how USAID works. And here I was with some people who were really top of their game, dealing with a very important political issue for the United States government. Here I was, someone who had only been working for two years in Egypt, trying to pull all that together.

Q: Do you want to stop here or continue beyond Nicaragua?

AMANI: I'm just trying to think if there's anything more. We were there five years. We did get to see how things worked out. I shifted while in Nicaragua from the Program Office into the democracy part of the program. Part of that was focusing on funding another election and what USAID could do, given the reality on the ground, to make sure the election was free and fair, and how to deal with how things might undermine the process – the Sandinistas had their ways of working to get people to vote for them. So where would the other alternative come from? It was really interesting stuff. My own experiences in Congress in the United States were helpful, I liked the idea of democracy stuff even though I came in as a Program Officer. I was there five years in Nicaragua and the last couple of years, I was no longer part of the program office, I shifted into a democracy officer at that time.

Q: The U.S. has not shied away from helping to influence elections, even though we do want to ensure that elections are free and fair – what was our role in helping with the elections in Nicaragua?

AMANI: I think it was, or part of it was, what are the political parties? What is the alternative to the Sandinistas as we move forward? How much of what we were doing as the U.S. government could be appropriate and helpful. It was a little dicey in the sense of how much do they want the U.S. government to push into that area? But I think I needed to go back and look at who we were really working with at the time, to figure out how we move from the kind of Sandinista juggernaut for a while. Where is the alternative really coming from? There were still some really big issues in terms of the economy and all of that. I feel like in the first few years things were just "it has to be this, it has to be this, it has to be that." As I moved into my final years there, years four and five, it was like okay, how are we going to make this a functioning democracy. That wasn't so easy to figure out. There wasn't a lot in Nicaragua that showed any significant experience with democratic government. There had been the Somoza period before the Sandinistas. So that whole idea was difficult, how do you move from a dictatorship almost into a democratic government? I'm not sure we really were able to make the kind of impact we would have liked in that area. It was interesting to think about and try to figure out. I would say, based on what happened later, we didn't quite get there. It was an interesting thought process of what can we do with U.S. government money to help this country really become a democratic state, when there's hardly any experience with that. The future of Nicaragua doesn't show that there's a whole lot of democratic improvement there.

Q: Excellent. Fascinating times. You moved from one very political program to another very political program.

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Q: Todd, welcome, please continue telling us your fascinating story.

AMANI: Thanks. I think when we last spoke, it was about my time in Nicaragua and I wanted to go back and talk about the fact that I switched from being a Program Officer in my first few years in Nicaragua, to being a Democracy Officer, partly because of the importance of the upcoming election that would determine whether the Sandinistas would take over again, a lot of concern about the election and whether it would be free, fair, and open. I was really interested in that and, based on my experience in the U.S. Congress and other areas of study, I was interested in being involved in that. So I switched from being a Program Officer to being a Democracy Officer in the last two years I was in

Nicaragua. It was an exciting, interesting time, and also really difficult because there was a lot of concern about whether a free and fair election could be held, even though Violeta Chamorro had won the last election. Still a lot of concern about how democratic the election would be and whether it could be free, fair, and something we could trust.

Ultimately, I don't think it was. It was interesting to work with people who were focused on having a free and fair election and trying to ensure that a really important part of a democratic system would be handled appropriately in Nicaragua. I really did switch from being a Program Officer to doing something almost completely different. Then I ended up going back to Washington, I think before the election was held. I went to Washington to work in the Latin America and the Caribbean Bureau, focusing on the broader democratic issues in Latin America. So I was still in touch with what was going in Nicaragua but then I was involved in a bunch of other things and the broader kinds of programs that were being developed as the Agency became more involved in ensuring that democratic issues were dealt with in many countries, not just Nicaragua - recognizing there was more need for work in democracy.

NIGERIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR DAWN LIBERI
USAID
Mission Director
Lagos, Nigeria
(2002-2005)

Ambassador Dawn Liberi was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She studied at Hampshire College for her undergraduate degree and University of California Berkeley for her masters degree. She joined USAID in 1980, and served in Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and as the Ambassador to Burundi. She was interviewed by Mark Tauber in January 2017.

Topical Focus – Civic Engagement and Election Monitoring during the 2003 Presidential Election

LIBERI: In Nigeria we actually, at that point, became the largest mission in sub Saharan Africa. Uganda was quite large, I think Uganda was the second largest, (either) between it and South Africa. But because of Nigeria's size, we obviously had to have a fairly large budget, and that's when we were doing a lot in HIV/AIDS. We were also helping Nigeria prepare for the next round of elections, doing a lot of training of election monitors, (and) helping set up the electoral commission. We did a lot of work with economic development, and I worked closely with the governor of the central bank Charles Soludo, and the Minister of finance Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala We tried to have a fairly robust program (but) we weren't all over the country because there were still some security problems in the north.

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LIBERI: A couple of interesting developments were two programs that, through our implementing partners, we actually put on television. One was focusing on corruption, and it was a modern day law and order type of cops and robbers show where the theme each week was focused on corruption, and the script was written primarily by Nigerians. "Nollywood" was very big and (was) really burgeoning so we had some very good script writers. This became one of the big hits, as well as another program on election monitoring--making sure there wasn't election fraud--and civic responsibility. There was a big message about civic responsibility. These two programs- were like soap operas--

became very popular. I think (they) were among the most popular shows and by many accounts had a big impact. We would do focus groups before and after, and it was interesting to see that people had gotten the message about corruption and about civic responsibility, etc.

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Q: While you were there did the election take place?

LIBERI: It did take place, and we trained an enormous number of election monitors. Here again, people have to recognize the challenges of size. There were 110,000 voting precincts for people to go and vote, given the size of the population. USAID funded the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and other implementing partners working through the Nigerian election commission, to train election monitors, both domestic monitors who were the key because that's where you get the most number, and then working with The Carter Center and others to bring in international monitors. I think that the election by and large was a success. There were a few anomalies here and there, but basically it was declared as a free and fair election. We had a lot of civic education and a lot of training of people, and the results (came) back in a fairly timely manner. So (while) it was a very large endeavor, it did come off more or less pretty well.

Q: That's great. Did you actually go out?

LIBERI: I did. I have gone out and done election monitoring in just about every country that I've served in, including Uganda, Ghana, Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Q: In Nigeria what part of the country did you go to?

LIBERI: I was in the north, in and around Abuja, and up a little bit north of Abuja as well.

Q: Any interesting stories from there?

LIBERI: (There were) a couple of the interesting stories, and here again this is where training is important. I went to a couple of the polling stations to watch the count, which is always the important thing, and here is where cell phones come in handy. So there were counts in one or two places where it was very close and they had to do the count several times. Then all of the monitors from each of the political parties had to sign off, and the results were actually sent via telephone to the central election monitoring headquarters, to the INEC, (Nigerian electoral commission). It was very important to witness that process.

There was one instance where the crowd was very animated about the vote count and just made sure that all the ballots were going in the right piles. There were a couple of challenges to the count, and monitors helped make sure that things were on the up and up. So in that sense I think it was positive.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

LAWRENCE COHEN
Department of State
Economic Counselor
Nigeria
Lagos, Nigeria
(2000-2002)

Mr. Cohen was born and raised in Pennsylvania and was educated at Dickinson College, and the Universities of Pennsylvania, Tel Aviv, Chicago and Northwestern. Entering the Foreign Service in 1980, he served variously as Economic, Political and Political/Military Officer at posts in Mexico, Honduras, India, Hungary, Nigeria and Brazil. In his assignments at the State Department in Washington Mr. Cohen dealt with Foreign Assistance and Environmental and Scientific matters. His last post was in Afghanistan, where he had two assignments with Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Mr. Cohen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Topical Focus – Conflict and Corruption in Nigeria

Q: Was this because of thievery or terrorism?

COHEN: Terrorism, no. Criminal behavior: carjackings, theft, mayhem, certainly. Nigeria at that time was not a terrorism-ridden place. This was out-and-out crime conducted with no ideological bent. The trip between the Ikoyi/Victoria Island and the airport on the north side of mainland Lagos was nerve-racking and revealing. I suspect driving techniques so prevalent now in Iraq and Afghanistan were perfected in places like Lagos.

Pardon the cliché, Lagos is a teeming city, Africa's largest, densely populated with incredible, unspeakable poverty. It has suffered from decades of notorious corruption. When we arrived in 2000, the country had only recently emerged from a long dark dictatorship. The last dictator, Sani Abacha, died in June 1998. Semi-democratic elections -- I will not say democratic but pseudo-democratic – were held in May 1999. A former army general and military ruler during the 1970s, Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba, was overwhelmingly elected president. I use the word democracy with small letters.

With Obasanjo's rise as a democratically-elected president, hopes for Nigeria were high in Washington. For over a quarter century, the USG possessed a very jaundiced view of Nigeria. The U.S.-Nigerian relationship had been particularly rocky during the tenure of Sani Abacha (1993-1998.) Now, times had changed. The USAID program was beefed up. I believe it reached an annual level of $100 million during our tenure there. President Clinton visited Nigeria a week or two before we arrived. His visit was warmly received by the Nigerian people.

Q: Was there much payoff going on?

COHEN: Absolutely. But in Nigeria there was never enough money to satisfy everybody. That would have been impossible. Under the dictatorship of Sani Abacha, the scope of corruption was beyond imagination. From 1999, under President Obasanjo, corruption had been reined in compared to the Sani Abacha regime. But graft was still enormous and it went very high up in the governmental hierarchy. Transparency International (TI), the international anti-corruption NGO founded in the 1990s, usually rated Nigeria at the very bottom or close to the bottom of its corruption index every year. We in the west usually perceive corruption as an individual's peccadillo. However, in my experience, most corruption is institutional. It is structural. Accusing a particular person of being corrupt misses the point. The system is often corrupt. For one to survive and even thrive, corrupt practices must be employed to some extent. Salaries are inadequate. Rent seeking opportunities are too tempting. Families, clans, and tribes must be provided for. I do not know if President Obasanjo was especially corrupt; in fact, he was one of the founding members of TI. However, his vice president, Atiku Abubakar, suffered from a reputation of corruption. Many Nigerian governors led very lavish lifestyles. Patronage was widespread. To survive and rule in a place like Nigeria, within a very corrupt system, leaders had to manage their environment.

Q: What about Nigeria's military? Were they dominated by any particular group?

COHEN: I cannot tell you much about the military. In Lagos I did not associate with them. I never dealt with the Ministry of Defense. But I can remark on the role played by the military in the region. President Obasanjo sought to expand Nigeria's regional leadership. While governed by military dictators, Nigeria did not exercise much African leadership. But with Nigeria's democratically elected government, Africans welcomed greater Nigerian leadership. Under ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), President Obasanjo sent a contingent of Nigerian troops to Sierra Leone as peacekeepers. This was pretty remarkable. A couple of years earlier, Nigeria would never have been invited to provide peacekeepers. Now Nigeria was taking a lead role.

Unfortunately, many Nigerian soldiers sent to Sierra Leone contracted HIV. The incidence of HIV within the Nigerian military rose rapidly because of these deployments.

Q: One of the most important foreign relations overseas is between a consulate and an embassy. How did things work between the two?

COHEN: Generally with difficulty, occasionally with crisis, and every once in a while with camaraderie. The relationship was stressed for a multitude of reasons. Start with a large embassy in the country's largest city, Lagos. A small liaison office is located in the new capital, Abuja. Because of the sour bilateral relations during the Abacha years, the liaison office was intentionally kept small and insignificant. The USG did not want to offer any legitimacy to that dictatorship by having an embassy in the capital. So we kept a very small office in Abuja. Obasanjo becomes Nigeria's elected president. Our bilateral ties warm up. President Clinton decides to relocate the embassy to show our support for the new government. Many embassies have already made the move to the capital. It is the right decision.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

CLAUDIA E. ANYASO
Department of State
Public Affairs Officer
Nigeria
Abuja, Nigeria
(2002-2006)

Ms. Anyaso was born and raised in North Carolina and was educated at Morgan State University and American University. She joined the State Department in 1968, where she specialized in Education and Cultural Affairs, with particular regard to African countries. She had several tours in Washington as well as abroad. Her foreign assignments include Lagos, Abuja, Port-au-Prince and Niamey, where she served primarily as Cultural and Public Affairs Officer. Ms. Anyaso was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Topical Focus –Nigeria Under President Olusegun Obasanjo

Q: What was the government like at that time?

ANYASO: Whenever you go to Nigeria it's never simple. The last military dictator was Babangida, no Abacha was after Babangida but the fact that Babangida had annulled an election one of the freeist and fairest in Nigeria's history on June 12th he had annulled it,

thrown it out, the western part of the country where the Yoruba are politically strong are still upset. They were upset from Babangida through Abacha they were still upset. So at this point Obasanjo had been elected who had been imprisoned under Sani Abacha and I believe Tom Pickering who was an Undersecretary of State and Susan Rice who was the Assistant Secretary for Africa had been in Nigeria when Abiola died. Now Abiola was a candidate who had won this free and fair election; it had been annulled and he was thrown in prison. He was a Yoruba. So we had these American officials visiting him to make sure he was okay and he died.

Q: I have Tom talking about that. He said it was a rather tricky situation.

ANYASO: Unbelievable that here they were. The steward had gone out for tea, brought tea, drank tea and the man just falls out, he just collapses. Anyway, so this is the background to my return to Nigeria and Obasanjo has now been out of prison. In my previous incarnation, I had done a press conference for former President Carter who liked Obasanjo who was in prison at the time and pleaded with Sani Abacha to release him. So I believe at least Abacha went half way; he didn't release him entirely but he put him under house arrest.

Anyway, this is a man with an interesting political history so now he is out and he's won this election. People are happy, hopeful that things will get better and being Nigeria things just seemed to get more complicated. He's a folksy kind of guy, liked to be looked upon, as a father figure, papa, and he would have these weekly radio interviews and maybe even a talk show from time to time and talk to the public. Now he didn't like the media, he didn't like them questioning what he was doing but he would do this anyway because somebody told him it was a good idea. He allowed, well they allowed him more political space. At this point there was a legislature again after Abacha had cancelled it, abolished it, now there was a new national assembly that had been elected. He wanted to control it but they had a speaker and they were functioning. He had a vice president, it's interesting he is a military man he's not a democrat so he still wanted to dictate things and do things his way. He did not get along with his vice president and at one point when that vice president was running although it is a long story but anyway he seemed to try but there were things that were not good. For example, in terms of the budget, universities were used to getting quarterly stipends from the government to keep them running; he put them on a month to month basis and they were always late in getting paid so the universities had to go out to the commercial banks, borrow money to keep going; it was just horrendous.

PAKISTAN

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM B. MILAM
U.S. Ambassador
Pakistan
(1998-2001)

Ambassador Milam was born in Bisbee, Arizona on July 24, 1936, but he grew up in Sacramento, California. He received his A.B. from Stanford University and an M.A. in economics from the University of Michigan. His overseas postings include France, Liberia, United Kingdom, Cameroon, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Ambassador William B. Milam was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – Re-Democratization of Pakistan After Overthrow of Nawaz Sharif's Government

Q; So Musharraf is in. What are you doing?

MILAM: Musharraf, well we are trying to work with the Musharraf government to nudge it back toward the electoral democracy the Army had overthrown, and to get done things we want to have to have done, and keep it from doing things we don't want to have done. I think for the most of the two years I was there that Musharraf was in power, we talked primarily about Afghanistan, about the Taliban, about Al Qaeda, about catching Al Qaeda guys slipping through Pakistan to Afghanistan. I went to him several times when we were having trouble with the ISI in getting cooperation on catching Al Qaeda guys we thought were around. I think the relationship was becoming what it essentially always had been and should be, a transactional one.

Q: How did we see this? OK Musharraf is in. ISI has essentially been running the Taliban or at least giving support, and that includes Al Qaeda. Was the ISI responding to say Musharraf.

MILAM: I don't know what Musharraf was saying to them. Nothing much changed in the two years I was there. I understood this. Pakistanis thought that it was in their strategic interest to have an Afghanistan next door that was not hostile to them. They thought that a Taliban controlled- Afghanistan that point would not have been hostile to them. They thought they had influence with the Taliban. They thought that they could pretty much get their way if they wanted it there, because they had been so helpful. And

really you know, when you think about where Pakistan comes from, you understand they could not bear to have a hostile Afghanistan on one side and a hostile India on the other. Their eyes started to open about the Taliban in the spring of 2000. What started to open them was the incident where the Taliban destroyed those Buddhist statues. The Pakistanis were horrified by that idea, like the rest of the world. They tried to stop it. Musharraf sent two high ranking emissaries up to see Mullah Omar, one of them being my friend , Moinuddin Haider who had become Home Minister under Musharraf, and the other one being the director general of the ISI, General Mahmoud. I think they went up there thinking that if they asked the Taliban to do something, given their generous assistance to the Taliban, they will do it. Well the Taliban turned them down coldly. I think I started seeing light bulbs going on in their heads that maybe they didn't have as much influence up there as they thought. They were beginning to rethink their relationship with the Taliban. Would it have ever changed absent 9/11? I am not sure. But they were beginning to have doubts about it.

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Q: What about during your time there, were you I mean was the constant theme when are you going to get back to democracy, or did you feel it was going to happen shortly?

MILAM: I actually was a little too confident perhaps. Musharraf said he was going to return to democracy in three years, and I thought he meant it. Actually he may have meant it in his own mind, but he appears to have had a very dim understanding of what democracy really means. I didn't realize at the time that he had a different kind of democracy in mind than most of us have. Pakistan shows no signs of establishing a truly democratic system. I knew that when Musharraf said he was going to have elections within three years of taking over, he meant it; and he did have elections. It is just that the elections didn't produce much of a democracy. But democratization was a constant theme. I know when the President came out that was one of his themes.

Q: We were talking about Musharraf saying he would have elections within three years.

MILAM: Oh yeah, I knew he was going to have elections within three years. That was not a problem, but what kind of elections and where they would take Pakistan was the problem. We kept asking him for that road map I asked him for on the first day I saw him after the coup. We never really got what I would call a road map. But in fact I think we were all confident that he was heading back towards electoral politics. So when he said Pakistan was going to get back to elections in three years, everybody believed him, and it was true, Pakistan had an election at the end of the three year period he had set out. The The election, however, was to elect Musharraf as President.

PALESTINE - WEST BANK/GAZA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR JAMES FRANKLIN JEFFREY

Topical Focus – Democracy Through Elections in Gaza

Q: As you are on this subject, and we are approaching the end of the Bush 43 administration, how did you rate his foreign policy based on the promotion of democracy?

JEFFREY: This was a core Bush goal. It was employed almost entirely in the Middle East. The only exceptions were he was very enthused about Plan Colombia with good reason because that is probably the best example of American all elements of national power succeeding that I have seen since the 1940's; and far less successfully with Burma where his wife took a big role too. But other than those two minor exceptions there was not a concrete plan to advance democracy. When you had these color revolutions. You had one in Ukraine and one a little bit earlier in Georgia where it led to Saakashvili. You had one in Lebanon in 2005 after Hariri's death. The United States did various projects and programs and things but A it was not an all-consuming thing like Iraq was an all-consuming thing. And B, it only had an effect on the margins. Perhaps not always positively. It could have been one of the factors that led Saakashvili to provoke the Russians in 2008 because he thought the Americans saw him as a paragon of democracy and that was at the center of our foreign policy. But other than that, it was in the middle east and there with the realities of Afghanistan, Iraq and our efforts with the Palestinians.

Which led to elections in which both the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority people told us don't do this. This is at the beginning of 2006. We went ahead and did anyway and of course Hamas did extremely well. That led very quickly to Gaza falling into the hands of Hamas, several mini-wars with Israel, all kinds of other complications are flowing from that including the breakdown in Turkish relations. So it was the gift that just kept giving. By 2006-2007 there was no real emphasis on this. We let this fellow Nasrallah walk into downtown Beirut and let him overthrow the legally elected regime of Prime Minister Hariri. Hariri had to surrender and basically while he stayed on in power and he is still there it is very different from in that period 2005 to 2008. So therefore, in almost every case where we tried in the middle east it didn't turn out that way and of course we had no success with Mubarak. But Mubarak was so important to the president and so many things he was doing including Iraq and including just the Islamic world in general that, and of course Jordan is not a democracy either. So it eventually faded.

Q: OK, that was my impression in the field. It was often difficult for the officer to find ways of "foreboding the democracy agenda" because all we really did was express Washington talking points. If I were to distill it down into very brief things we would express Washington talking points whenever we had the opportunity but it very seldom turned out to be anything we did in terms of promoting a positive agenda with programs and policies and so forth.

JEFFREY: Yeah or even when you would have the programs they would be three percent of the entire U.S. EU, UN, NGO effort to modernize and to improve journalism and academics and all of that. They were nice little programs and we would go out and cut ribbons and such but this was not plan Colombia let alone the Marshall plan. That is a huge difference. That gets back to the idea of people obsessing on real presidential policy rather than others. The phrase I just used was if a penguin chokes on a peanut in Antarctica there will be a State Department task force set up to find out what the farm policy implications and human rights implications of this are and there will be national security council meetings and other things. And then we will then eventually start deluging posts with talking points and even worse, important demarches like deploying anti-ballistic missiles in central Europe and such will be larded down with these things because the office of combating and containing the choking on peanuts crisis in Antarctica will not allow our cable to get out of the State Department without putting three talking points on their pet rock subject on there. This is what we do most of the Time.

There are groups who care about all this, it is often Congress, it is often NGOs, it is often bits and pieces of the bureaucracy or the political leadership of the Department or some other element of the U.S. government, but they don't really matter. When you sit around in the NSC you very quickly know if you are going to survive focus on what the president and his or her top people care about and not all the rest of this stuff. That is particularly so when you have got ambassadors and political appointee ambassadors particularly who get this wrong who are trying to foist their pet rock on the president or on the next national security advisor. In the late Bush administration, it never got any further than me and I just had to figure out different ways to say don't call us; we will call you. But this is how democracy policy went.

PANAMA

N/A

PARAGUAY

N/A