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PERU

N/A

PHILIPPINES

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JOHN D. FINNEY, JR.
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Deputy Director, Philippines Desk
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Washington, D.C.
(1985–1987)

Dr. John D. Finney, Jr. was born in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1939. He received a BA and MA in American History from St. Louis University. After a year of service as an Army Combat Engineer, Dr. Finney received his PhD from Georgetown University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1966, with his first assignment in Arequipa, Peru as a Vice Consul in 1967. Dr. Finney held many posts in Washington and overseas, specializing in political-military affairs, regional security, and U.S. foreign policy in Asia, Africa, and the Balkans. His assignments included senior roles in Vietnam, Thailand, Zambia, the Philippines, and Bosnia, and culminated in advisory positions to military commanders at U.S. Pacific Command, the Chief of Naval Operations, and NATO forces in Bosnia. After contributing to interagency coordination following 9/11 and advising in both Iraq and Afghanistan, Dr. Finney retired from the Foreign Service in 2004. John D. Finney, Jr. was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – U. S. Assessment of the Filipino Election

Q: Was Gairy raising hell about your activities?

FINNEY: ...So I finished that assignment in April, went back to work for Rich Armitage.

In the summer or early fall of 1985, after about 14 months working for Rich, including this intervention in Grenada politics, again I got a call to be the Deputy Director of the Philippine desk at the State Department. As you know the problem with Ferdinand

Marcos was rocketing up then. So John Maisto who was our director and later became our ambassador to Nicaragua and Venezuela, a very fine officer, asked if I would go come back. Rich knew how important the Philippine situation was, so he released me from my tour at DOD about eight months early. I went back to State to be the Deputy Director of the Philippine desk (EAP/PHL). That was in the fall of 1985, and from the fall of 1985 to the summer of 1987, I was deep into the whole issue of resolving the crisis: of helping, participating, staffing, working on this terrible problem of what was going to happen in the Philippines with Marcos' dictatorship, the assassination of Aquino and, of course, the revolt there that led to Mrs. Aquino's arrival in power.

Q: When you took it over, what was the situation in the Philippines as seen from the American perspective?

FINNEY: First of all John Maisto was the office director; I was his deputy. Paul Wolfowitz was our Assistant Secretary for East Asia. Rich Armitage was Assistant Secretary at DOD for ISA. He had a lot of East Asia experience in the Office of Secretary of Defense. We had a very strong team over at the NSC. Of course everybody was consumed with this in the East Asia Bureau. George Shultz had a particular interest because of his experience in this part of the world during WWII, of what would happen to our base at Subic Bay if the Philippines descended into chaos. There were basically two principal things going on. One of them was trying to resolve the investigation of the assassination of Senator Aquino Sunday, August 21, 1983, at Manila International Airport.

Q: This happened before you got there.

FINNEY: Before my arrival. Two years before my arrival. There had been a series of investigations and court processes going on, and the outcome of this investigation appeared to lead directly to President Marcos. So if President Marcos, as the evidence seemed to suggest, was directly involved in the assassination of Senator Aquino, what would that mean for his future and the future of Philippine politics. The second major thing that was going on was a rapidly spreading Philippine communist insurgency under the New People's Army. That was becoming extremely strong in provinces north of Manila and south of Manila particularly in Mindanao. Then, of course, a third thing was we had concluded an extension of our basing agreement at Subic in 1983 for another 10 years. But that was coming into question. So those three things were going on. What is going to be the future of Marcos with this Aquino investigation? This New People's Army which appeared to be threatening the stability of the Philippines and which had set up urban terror teams in Manila which were targeting Americans and Philippine police. What would be the future of our base at Subic? Our basing arrangement in Subic was a key part of our naval presence in the western Pacific to counter Admiral (Sergei) Gorshkov and his burgeoning Russian Navy in the Northern Pacific. The Russian Navy was starting to appear for the first time in the mid-1980s in the Indian Ocean. So there was a lot of concern about that.

What then emerged in the fall of 1985 was that on the political front that Aquino's wife, Cory Aquino, called for national elections. She emerged as the spokesman for the Philippine opposition. Rich Armitage and Casper Weinberger the Secretary of Defense had to decide whether we were going to continue our military assistance program to Marcos at the same time that he appeared to be culpable of the assassination of Senator Aquino, and at the same time when the Philippine insurgency seemed to be growing by leaps and bounds. While this was all coming to a head, a key diplomatic move on our part, after much inter agency deliberations which deeply involved the Philippine desk, was to send Senator Paul Laxalt, who was Reagan's close friend, a senator from Nevada, out to Manila to tell Marcos that he should submit to elections. Also, Laxalt told him that if he didn't submit to the election call that Aquino's wife had raised that it might be difficult for us to continue our relationship with him. So he decided to have the elections. Then the elections were held on February 7, 1986. I was appointed the action officer from

State to escort a delegation from our Congress headed by Senator Richard Lugar plus about a 12 or 15 member house and senate delegation, with some others like Mort Zuckerman, to go out to the Philippines to observe this election. So I found myself in late January at Andrews Air Force Base on a plane with Richard Lugar and Senator Thad Cochran, and a very ambitious and hard charging young senator from Massachusetts named John Kerry. We go to the Philippines to observe these elections. So on the plane on the way over, there was real concern that Marcos and his election machinery would not permit our delegation to have free and unfettered access to the polling process. So we had a little bit of a crisis, and we got that resolved. We divided up into different teams. Our ambassador in the Philippines was a very able fellow, Steve Bosworth. He later became our ambassador to South Korea. So we went out with Lugar and John Kerry and the others and did the polling. We observed the election. At the end of the day, Lugar, Senator Kerry and others felt that they had clear evidence that substantial portions of the balloting was rigged.

Then that night [Ed: February 9], about 9:00 pm, a group of Philippine vote counters at the Philippine national convention center, where they were headquartered with all their computers, broke from the convention center, sought refuge in a church, and stated that it was rigged. I was down at the Manila Hotel when this happened. Senator Kerry came running out of the hotel, saying, "I have got to have a car. I have got to go to this church where these Philippine vote counters are, because there are rumors that Marcos' police and military are going to move in on them and storm the church and arrest them." So Senator Kerry said, "I have got to go over there." We got a car. I went with him. The church was barricaded. And Senator Kerry was absolutely fearless. It was absolutely surrounded by Philippine military and police. Kerry just shoved his way past and said, "I am Senator John Kerry. I am here to observe these elections." He stormed into the church. I am ten feet behind him, saying am I going to watch a U.S. senator get shot right here before my eyes, because these military were mad as the dickens. Tensions were high; it was an electric situation. Then we went to the back of the church behind the altar and we found maybe 15 to 20 of these vote counters. They were trembling and crying. Some of them couldn't speak English. I got an interpreter for Kerry. We sat there and we interviewed them. They told him how in essence the election was rigged. Kerry took all this aboard. There was constant noise going on outside and shouting and screaming and searchlights and some kind of muffled explosions. I thought, well, they are coming in here. I was looking for a thick pew to crawl under and see what the heck Kerry was going to do, where he was going to hide. At the end of the day it didn't happen. Kerry said, "I have heard enough. I am going back to the hotel." We went back to the hotel; he reported to Lugar and Thad Cochran. Next day they called a press conference and said, "There is no doubt in our minds that there has been serious malfeasance in this election. We are getting back on the plane and we are going to report to the President."

We got back on the plane and flew back to Andrews. My admiration for Lugar is boundless. I mean his determination, at the same time his calmness. His keeping these 10 or 15 Congressmen, Republicans, Democrats, very ambitious people like Kerry, very smart and retiring people like Thad Cochran and others, and then we had some journalists. Ben Wattenberg was there, and Mort Zuckerman who was head of U.S. News

and World Report, and a zillionaire real estate developer, very liberal New Yorker. Anyway, Lugar kept them all together, and listened to everybody. Those who had the most extreme views, those who had a different view, he kept them all together. Got off the plane, and he went straight to the White House to brief President Reagan because we had a serious problem. Don Regan who was the chief of staff in the White House for some reason was concerned because of an article that appeared in the New York Times, which suggested that Cory Aquino was pink and unreliable. If she emerged as the winner of the election all our security relationships with the Philippines would go down the toilet. Don Regan told the president you have got to stick by Marcos because if you don't, we don't know what we are getting into, and it could result in a worse case scenario. So Lugar had to go and tell the president directly, "Sir, this election is not fair. Marcos, even though he declared himself the winner, you know this is not in our view the legitimate outcome. In our view Cory Aquino was probably the outcome." That wasn't enough. Shultz, who found himself in a battle for President Reagan's mind, sent Phil Habib, venerable old Phil Habib, sent him out to the Philippines. I got off of the plane at Andrews, and John Maisto, my office director, got back on the plane with Phil Habib to go back out. So you had a situation where Lugar's report, as persuasive as it was, was not enough. So Habib went out there. Habib came back and Shultz went with him to see Reagan. Habib told President Reagan straight forward that the Marcos era is over. We have a new situation. While this debate was going on rebels under Gregorio Honasan and others within the Philippine army revolted. They took over this big army camp on the outskirts of Manila. Then the chief of staff of the Philippine army, General Eddie Ramos, broke with the Marcos administration and joined the rebels, and so did the defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile. So that revolt which led to the...

Q: These weren't communists; these were regular army officers.

FINNEY: These were regular army officers who were fed up with the corruption in the army and wanted to defeat the communist insurgents. So, that revolt with General Ramos and Defense Minister Enrile joined led to a dramatic confrontation. Marcos sent his military forces out to take over the encampment from the rebels, and the military forces refused to do it. So, we then evolved into a situation where it looked like civil war, and the American contribution was to arrange for Marcos' removal. So Habib, who went out there to verify that the election was indeed fraudulent, wound up verifying that the Marcos era was indeed over, and "President Reagan," he said, "our contribution is to offer Marcos asylum to avoid Philippine civil war." So Shultz and Habib went over there, face-to-face with the President, made that presentation, and overwhelmed Don Regan's arguments. President Reagan asked his close friend, Senator Laxalt, "Call Marcos and tell him to cut and cut clean." So Marcos agreed to be evacuated. So we did arrange for helicopters, flew him to Clark Air Base, and then flew him and his family and his entourage to Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu. There he eventually was provided medical support and protection. Cory Aquino was proclaimed President of the Philippines, the winner of the election.

Secretary Shultz arranged for her to come here in September of 1986 to address the Senate. We had a big party for her afterwards. She won the day in the Senate appearing a

very courageous and plucky democratic leader. We had a big party for her on the top floor of the White House. Richard Holbrooke came with his girlfriend, Diane Sawyer. It was a cast of thousands. I was one of the spear carriers. George Shultz, I have never seen a U.S. official so smitten with another official as he was with Cory Aquino. He just beamed and glowed and wore one of her Cory Aquino dolls on his lapel all evening. So that turned out a positive transition. Marcos departs in a democratic election. Aquino comes in, and with renewed efforts, you know, we poured in hundreds of millions of dollars to President Aquino and her Philippine military under Eddie Ramos' leadership to go after the New People's army. So I did that work following up on the Aquino success and triumph and the new huge assistance program to the Philippines amounting to close to a billion dollars. That is what we worked on through the summer of 1986 and the fall and the winter and spring of 1987. I must tell you Paul Wolfowitz, our Assistant Secretary, was brilliant. He was the key guy for George Shultz in getting Habib out there and that whole battle to win the President's mind and tell him that the election was flawed and with this revolt we had to arrange for Marcos to leave. Paul worked hand in glove with Rich Armitage and the NSC staff. I appreciated how well the inter agency process worked in the Philippines with State and OSD and NSC all coming together for what I thought was a positive outcome.

Q: Well John, one question. How were we reading Cory Aquino? You have Don Regan's attitude and he was a very firm and difficult man. He came out of the business world and Marcos and Imelda Marcos cultivated tons of friends. They worked very hard in the United States in Congress and elsewhere. On the other hand must be trying to read Cory Aquino before she came in. I talked to people who said, "Oh yes they remember her at Harvard where she would come around and pass out hors d'oeuvres." I mean that was her image, housewife.

FINNEY: Her husband was there on a fellowship, right. There was a lot of serious questioning on this because Don Regan had laid down the gauntlet. His famous term is maybe she is just a housewife. His critical assessment of her rested on two points. Number one, that she didn't have what it takes to be a president, to run a tumultuous country like the Philippines. Simply didn't have the experience, didn't have the moxie to do it. Only a housewife. Number two, but more deeply from Regan's perspective, she had surrounded herself with lefties. She basically was hostile to our security presence in the Philippines, Subic Bay and Clark, which Casper Weinberger and the White House and State appreciated as well, was the cornerstone of our security presence in the western Pacific. Japan and Korea being the other two parts of that security triangle. So that was Don Regan's estimate. Now within State, sitting in on meetings, listening Paul Wolfowitz of EAP and Rich Armitage who often came over to talk about these things, and others in our building and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary John Monjo who was the key DAS on this issue. Listening to them discuss this issue, they appreciated the comments that Reagan made, but basically as I recall they came down saying this. "Well, fundamentally, we agree that she is an unknown quantity in terms of her ability to manage and lead the country. But, she is so far and away the best alternative to Marcos or anybody else out there on the left, that we are willing to give her the benefit of the doubt." They didn't see her leftist views as deep seated and worrisome as Don Regan and other conservatives did.

Yes she was associated with these folks, many of whom from State's view had been driven to leftist perspectives because of Marcos' oppression and misrule. So State, particularly after she was literally embraced by George Shultz and given a thumbs up by Phil Habib, State accepted the fact that she may not be a strong leader, but fundamentally she appreciates the U.S. and our commitment to democracy in that country.

We thought she will be able to restore democratic rule to the Philippines which from State Department's perspective was the best way, A: get the country back on even keel and B: ensure the continuity of our security presence there. Now, flash forward. I went out to Manila in September of 1989 to be the Political Counselor there. Nick Platt was our ambassador. On the last day of November, 1989, two or three months after I got there, there was the first coup attempt against Cory Aquino. Then I participated as part of Rich Armitage's negotiating team the following year, 1990 through 1991, to extend our basing presence. And at the end of the day, it turned out that President Aquino was not a very competent president. She was unable to keep forces in the Philippines, particularly the rebellious Philippine military officers who led the initial revolt against Marcos, she was unable to really keep them in check. And she was unable to impose consistent economic reform. And at the end of the day she was ambiguous about our continued military presence there, and only at the eleventh hour lent her approval to the hard negotiated treaty that Rich Armitage and our team put together. But it would end up being defeated narrowly by the Philippine Senate. So by that time, in 1992, the bloom is off the rose within State, not only by Ambassador Nick Platt, by his successor Ambassador Frank Wisner, and by our assistant secretaries back in Washington. The bloom was off the rose for Cory Aquino in terms of being an effective leader.

Still, having lived through all that, particularly the bitter disappointment at the end that we couldn't get the base agreement extended, in spite of all that, I and I think people like John Maisto who is one of our really top Philippine experts, come to the conclusion that she was still better because she was able to revive the democratic spirit there. And after she left office, Eddie Ramos the former chief of staff and defense minister, became president of the Philippines, and democracy was restored to the Philippines. And at the end of the day, despite everything, I think that makes Cory Aquino's performance worth it, although it was much less than sterling.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JOHN J. (JAY) TAYLOR
Department of State
Director
INR Bureau
East Asia and Pacific Affairs
Washington, D.C.
(1983–1985)

John Jay Taylor is a veteran U.S. diplomat with nearly four decades of service specializing in Asia and Africa. He held senior positions including Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, Chief of Mission at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, and Political Counselor in Beijing and Pretoria. His career focused on key Cold War and post-Cold War issues such as U.S.-China relations, Taiwan, apartheid negotiations, and intelligence coordination. Taylor played a significant role in shaping U.S. policy on China, Africa, and Cuba, earning multiple awards for his reporting and negotiations. After retiring, he remained active in diplomacy and academia, including work with the Carter Center and Harvard University. John Jay Taylor was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Topical Focus – U. S. Assessment of the Filipino Election

Q: Did you anticipate what would happen in the Philippines in 1986?

TAYLOR: Actually, we did. Together with my analyst on that country I traveled throughout the Philippines in the fall of 1985. That visit resulted in a memo I drafted from Mort Abramowitz to Mike Armacost, the undersecretary for political affairs. I took the position that Marcos could very possibly be overthrown through some kind of popular uprising. But, we speculated, more likely he would become overly confident of his ability to win another election without rigging the vote count. He had many ways of controlling the campaign and thus shaping the outcome. We speculated that if the United States pressed him to agree to closely monitored polling, he could well decide to proceed with no rigging at the polls themselves. But if he did so, he would discover at the last minute that he was losing. At this point he would probably blatantly steal the election by rigging the count. This act in turn would create such a public uproar, probably supported by the Army and the Church, that he could be forced to resign. That is actually what happened. Marcos became overconfident, the actual polling was quite straight forward, he quickly realized he would lose, and it was only through altering the results after the closing of the polls that he “won.” By this blatant corruption of the process, he lost what credibility and support he had and this led to the popular uprising that, with the key support of the army, overthrew him. Our predictive analysis, I was told, helped the 7th floor deal with the crisis in a way that encouraged the favorable outcome. Casey, I am sure, was not happy.

Before the crisis, the dynamics of the American position on the Philippine issue was shaped by the fear of the President and right wingers that if Marcos was ousted, the communists would seize the initiative and perhaps take over the country. Reagan thought that Jimmy Carter had allowed the Iranian crisis to explode in 1979 by abandoning the Shah when the latter faced an outburst of internal opposition. The resulting fall of the Shah cost the Democrats the election. Reagan was obsessed with the goal of not repeating this scenario. Besides, the President felt a personal as well as political camaraderie with a strong anti-communist leader like Marcos. This inclination was backed up by the NSC staff and Don Regan, who repeatedly warned that the United States should not abandon Marcos or trust Mrs. Aquino. One morning Poindexter showed Shultz a newspaper headline saying “State Dept. assails Marcos.” “The President doesn’t want that,” Poindexter warned, “...watch it.”

Wolfowitz, so far as I know, fully supported the Shultz position, but did not play a major policy role on this issue. The Under Secretary for Political Affairs was Mike Armacost, whose last position was as ambassador to the Philippines. Mike was very close to the Secretary and became the key policy man on this crisis. The tense atmosphere between State and the White House on the Marcos question was also shaped by the much more bitter arguments then raging under the covers between Shultz on the one hand and Reagan and the NSC on the other over the proposed secret and illegal sale of U.S. arms to Iran in exchange for American hostages. A story that becomes more relevant in discussing my next job.

Mort Abramowitz himself visited the Philippines in January, 1986. He returned convinced that Marcos was digging his own grave and that the Philippines and the United States would be better off without him. According to Shultz's memoirs, when Mort returned, Shultz upbraided him for offering his strong anti-Marcos views in a staff meeting. Mort argued that he could separate any policy views he gave the Secretary from the objective analysis of his bureau. But, the Secretary warned, pushing a policy view inevitably colors an appraisal of fact and undermines the perceived integrity of an intelligence organization. Mort always insisted that our job was to produce as objective analysis as possible without any regard to what he or any other official in the Department thought. But I think the Secretary was right that the INR Assistant Secretary should not volunteer his own views on a policy debate but only "fact-based analysis," including the costs, benefits, and other consequences of the different policy options. Mort, of course, henceforth adhered to the Secretary's guidance.

The CIA predicted a 55% to 45% Marcos victory in the February 8, 1986 elections. We thought if this was the result it would be fraudulent, and this outcome would in turn lead to a massive public protest. When blatant fraud first became evident soon after the polls closed, Reagan's public statements seemed to favor Marcos. Finally, the abuse of the process became so obvious that a reluctant Reagan was finally persuaded by Shultz to issue a statement condemning the outcome, but until February 24 he refused to press Marcos to abandon the presidency.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

GILBERT H. SHEINBAUM

Department of State

American Consul

Philippines

Cebu, Philippines

(1979-1983)

Sheinbaum first worked on Wall Street and then served in the Army during the Korean War. He entered the Foreign Service in January 1957 and has made his principal home in the Washington

area ever since. He began his diplomatic career of thirty years in Asia, Africa, and Europe with an assignment as finance officer in Vientiane, Laos. With the Foreign Service he served posts in Washington dealing with Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg, Charge d'Affairs in Madagascar, Deputy Ambassador in Malawi, and American Consul for Philippines in Cebu from 1979-1983. Gilbert H. Sheinbaum was interviewed by Thomas J. Dunnigan in 1995.

Topical Focus: USAID, Electoral Modernization in the Philippines - early 1980's

Q: Which has just let you go on a trip to the Philippines?

SHEINBAUM: That's correct. They brought me on because they hadn't done much in Asia. They'd had some minor involvement in Mongolia, Nepal, and Bangladesh, but they didn't have money from AID for Asia -- most of their money comes from AID but there's money from foundations and corporations. They didn't have any money specifically for Asia because, to a certain extent, Asian governments have had good electoral experience, although they do need a lot of work in my observation in improving and modernizing their electoral systems. And so, they asked me would I be willing to come on board halftime? I felt that my usefulness with the NSEP, the scholarship program, was coming to an end because we got the program going and all I was doing were routine things for the last six months. So this happened to be a very fortuitous circumstance. The primary objective was to set up a conference of senior Asian election administrators in 1996, which I'm still working on.

Q: To be held in Manila?

SHEINBAUM: It may be in Manila. We're asking the Philippine government if they would agree to that. I don't see any reason why they wouldn't. And then we've got other projects going on. My reason for going to the Philippines was not for that but because the Filipinos wanted some guidance from our experts on modernizing their own electoral system. I don't have experience as an election expert but I do know the Philippines and that's why I was asked to be team leader. I had two experts including the Executive Director of the DC Board of Elections.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JAMES ZUMWALT
Department of State
Staff Assistant, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Washington D.C., USA
(1985-1989)

James Zumwalt was born in 1956 in La Mesa, California. He completed his undergraduate

education at UC Berkeley. He entered the foreign service in 1981. During his foreign service career he served in a number of posts including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Japan (both at the consulate in Kobe and at the Tokyo embassy), China, Senegal, and Guinea Bissau. He retired from the foreign service in 2017 and was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2018.

Topical Focus – End of the Marcos Regime, US relationship with Aquino

Q: Had Aquino been...

ZUMWALT: When I arrived in EAP, Benigno Aquino had been assassinated, but Ferdinand Marcos had not yet left Manila. To be honest, President Reagan got along with and liked Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos. This was an issue where Paul Wolfowitz worked closely with the Defense Department and NSC to manage the congressional pressure and to ease our president away from his rock-solid support for Marcos. Stephen Solarz, who chaired the United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs' East Asia Subcommittee, was convinced that we needed to ease Marcos out. U.S. Philippine policy had inertia like a battleship — we had been supporting Marcos and even though almost everyone recognized that Marcos' rule was coming to an end, it was hard to change our policy. Paul Wolfowitz (a Republican) and Steve Solarz (a Democrat) were good friends who had worked together in the past on the issue of emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union. This personal connection helped them overcome policy differences between the administration and Congress to work together. Even though they disagreed on certain policy issues, the two were friendly and talked frequently. If Solarz planned to criticize the Reagan administration, then he would call Wolfowitz in advance and they would talk over issues. I think Solarz understood that it was hard for the Reagan administration to shift our longstanding approach, so he was playing the role of the outside catalyst, poking and prodding us. But he would not want to embarrass his friend Paul Wolfowitz, so he would provide a heads-up about an upcoming speech or new resolution. Wolfowitz would sometimes talk Solarz out of an action, sometimes not.

The challenge on this issue was President Reagan. I think Secretary Shultz saw the writing on the wall, but to move forward with helping to ease Marcos out of office, we needed to bring President Reagan along with the decision. For this reason, someone came up with the idea to send President Reagan's good friend, Nevada Senator Paul Laxalt to the Philippines. We thought that once Senator Laxalt understood Marcos' tenuous situation in Manila, he could talk President Reagan into shifting gears. There was a lot of work briefing Laxalt prior to his trip to Manila. There were a lot of papers to prepare.

Q: It's one of these things where one can almost describe it as a battle for the president's soul.

ZUMWALT: Exactly. The gambit worked. Senator Laxalt reported to the president that it would be a disaster if we continued to stand by Marcos. He reported that at some point, the Marcos regime was going to implode and we would be on the wrong side of history. The Philippine opposition consisted of many different elements, but most seemed to want good relations with the United States. Marcos' opponents were mainly also Philippine elites — politicians, business leaders, and religious figures — who were begging us to pull back from our support for Marcos.

Q: We were a key element in their cause.

ZUMWALT: These opposition figures had friends in the United States, including people like Stephen Solarz. While I was a staff assistant, I would see many memos coming up. We had two different Philippines office directors during my time there. The first was John Maisto, who had been involved with Philippines policy for twenty years. He was married to a Filipina and well-connected to the Philippine opposition. The second director was named Charlie Salmon, an outstanding officer and also a great guy who became one of my Foreign Service mentors. Salmon also wanted to change our pro-Marcos policies. There were a lot of briefing memos describing developments in Manila as well as telegrams from Embassy Manila reporting on the situation. Sometimes the front office would tone down their comments, but by and large, Secretary Shultz was receiving this information. My impression was that Secretary Shultz too supported moving away from Marcos, but that the opposition was coming more from President Reagan.

The Philippine presidential election took up much of the bureau's bandwidth at that time. The fractured opposition had coalesced around Corazon Aquino, the widow of the assassinated opposition leader Ninoy Aquino, as their candidate. Marcos was using his connections to purchase support and there were physical threats and some violence. Embassy Manila did a lot of reporting on the potential for fraud in counting votes.

Within the U.S. government, there was a lot of sympathy for Cory Aquino. She was a good election campaigner. I remember her reply to President Marcos whose message was "Who is this housewife? What does she know?" She had this brilliant reply: "The president is right — I don't have much experience. I don't have any experience in lying, I don't have experience in cheating, I don't have experience in stealing. So, if you want experience, vote for Marcos!" Marcos was also paying off many local surrogates, so Aquino urged Philippine voters to "Take his money but vote for me!" Her campaign strategy was brilliant. She gained the backing of much of the Philippine business elite, and the Catholic Church, led by the ironically-named Cardinal Jaime Sin, went all-in to support her. Estimates are that she won the popular vote, but Marcos' cronies stuffed the ballot boxes, so the election outcome was contested. Most Filipinos concluded that Aquino won, but that Marcos had stolen the election.

The big crisis broke on a Saturday morning in Washington, February 22, 1986.

I was on duty that morning in the EAP front office. Most Saturdays, our work was more relaxed and people came in dressed in a shirt and slacks — no suit, no necktie. On Saturdays, I could arrive at eight a.m. rather than six and most of the office directors showed up around nine a.m. Saturdays were the time when Paul Wolfowitz had the most desk time to consider various decision memos. Consequently, many office directors would come to the front office hoping to grab a moment with him to force a decision on an issue. On workdays, one staff assistant worked mornings and the other afternoons, either six a.m. to three p.m. or two p.m. to ten p.m. On Saturday, only one came in. Usually we would arrive at eight on a Saturday morning and finish when Paul Wolfowitz left — sometimes that was late, perhaps between six or eight p.m. — so for the staff assistant on duty, Saturday was a long day.

That Saturday, I arrived in the office early because we had been receiving reports from Embassy Manila of plans for massive street demonstrations in a show of civil disobedience to protest election fraud. They called it the EDSA Revolution after the name of the avenue where crowds assembled. The embassy reported from Malacañang Palace and Philippine Army sources that President Marcos had ordered the army to suppress the demonstrations. The embassy reported

that there was not much violence despite the huge crowds and that the demonstrators enjoyed massive public support.

Our defense attaché had great contacts with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine Constabulary leaders. The head of the police was a West Point graduate named Fidel “Eddie” Valdez Ramos. Many leaders of the army of the Philippines had also received extensive military training in the United States.

That Saturday was a blur. Many people from our embassy and from our Defense Attaché Office were calling Philippine military and constabulary leaders, urging them not to fire on the demonstrators. The Embassy Manila team was reaching out at all levels, urging the opposition to refrain from violence, telling Marcos his time was up, and urging the military not to shoot. The army did deploy its tanks, but people on the street were handing the soldiers flowers. I opened a phone line with the Embassy Manila duty officer so that we could hear instant updates from their sources all day long over the telephone. We could also see on television that there was a tense standoff between the crowds in the street and the armored vehicles.

At this point, people from Washington began calling Marcos, telling him that it was time to go. They told him that President Reagan supported this advice. We promised to help Marcos get out by providing U.S. military transport. Our ambassador was actively working on this departure process.

The atmosphere in the EAP front office was electric. Because it was a Saturday, most of the bureau was not in the office. Of course, the entire Philippine desk came in as well as the Philippine hands in our Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). DAS John Monjo and Paul Wolfowitz were there. It was a very top-heavy group of officers that day, with me as the only junior person providing logistical support to the front office and running back and forth between our sixth-floor office and the Operations Center on the seventh floor. I remember, for example, typing a telegram as John Monjo dictated a message to me. But it was exciting to be present and to see history being made.

There is always a risk of exaggerating one’s own role and most credit for the peaceful transition of power should go to the Philippine people themselves for standing up to the threats of violence. However, I do think that the United States helped tip the balance in favor of democracy that weekend. Once President Marcos realized we were no longer supporting him, the conversation shifted to how he would leave.

That began another negotiation: Who goes on the evacuation plane? How much luggage can they take? Where will the plane go? These were all questions that needed to be resolved. These were contentious issues and this process took time. A military transport plane eventually took Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos and a small entourage to Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu. Marcos later claimed that he thought he was being flown to Ilocos Norte, his home province, but that was never something we considered seriously. Flying him to Ilocos Norte, where he still had a lot of support, would have been a terrible idea because then he would have been able to undermine the new government from his base in the north. By removing him from the country, his remaining support collapsed.

When Marcos landed at Hickam Air Force Base, there were still many issues to resolve — many passengers arrived with only their clothes on their back and needed to be housed, clothed, and fed. The Air Force was suddenly hosting many unexpected guests (I cannot recall the exact

number). Some of Marcos' close associates and his bodyguards were quite demanding. There were questions of who would pay the bills for food and lodging. There was also a large commissary bill as the entourage purchased clothing and other items on the base. Some in the new Philippine government wanted to put Marcos on trial for crimes and began issuing subpoenas for information from Marcos' banks and financial advisors. The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs was handling these issues in the aftermath.

Q: I realize this is hard but did you get any feel for what we the State Department thought about Cory Aquino?

ZUMWALT: She was a sympathetic figure because her husband had been assassinated. She was well-educated and she had graduated from a Catholic college in the United States, so she understood Americans. She was from the Philippine elite; she grew up in a privileged family. She was sophisticated. I did not know her personally — still, I believe she never wanted to be president but saw that role as an obligation to her country. This quality is what made Aquino so endearing to many Filipinos. She had been thrust into this role because the opposition needed a unifying candidate in order to unseat Marcos. Aquino was everyone's second choice as opposition leader, after themselves. I think a lot of the macho Filipino men thought they could manipulate or control her because they saw her as a "housewife." They underestimated her.

I wasn't privy to all the conversations, but I think there was a lot of optimism and hope in the department when she came to power. I recall hearing that Secretary Shultz was impressed when he met Cory Aquino. Virtually everyone thought that she was an improvement over the corrupt Marcos. Aquino also had some good advisors like Harvard Business School graduate Jaime Ongpin, who became her minister of finance, and Eddie Ramos, who was her secretary of defense.

Over time, the U.S. government came to recognize that Aquino had her own flaws, one being that she was indecisive. The disillusionment was not about her personally; she was honest, a good person, and had a moral compass. But she was not fully prepared for the rough and tumble world of Philippine politics. I know Aquino had a good relationship with Ambassador Bosworth and later with Ambassador Nick Platt. They provided very good insights into her thinking and her decision-making process.

In those days, the telegram channel called NODIS was meant to be a message from the ambassador directly to the secretary of state. One was not allowed to photocopy these messages and the bureau was only allowed one paper copy to read and store in our files. Of course, we ignored that rule — we didn't make many, but we made copies for the assistant secretary and the DAS and we kept the original in my office for the office director to come up to read. Only the office director was allowed to read it but then he could ask me to add others to the message.

Virtually every day, there would be a couple of these NODIS messages from the region; probably two-thirds of the NODIS messages that arrived in that period were from Embassy Manila.

Embassy Manila's NODIS messages were often "my conversation with Cory Aquino," or with one of her key advisors, from the ambassador. We joked that NODIS (which stands for "no distribution") really meant "Notice" because everyone really wanted to read these telegrams when they arrived. Most of these messages could have been just a confidential telegram, but Ambassador Bosworth understood that the department paid more attention to NODIS messages.

Although a junior officer, I could read these telegrams because my job was to put a cover sheet on the message and mark who was authorized to read it. I got to know the Philippine office director very well because he was in my office almost daily, reading a telegram that could not be copied and sent down to him.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM PIEZ
Department of State
Economic Officer
Manila, Philippines
(1966-1971)

William Piez was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1932. He completed his undergraduate education at the University of Rhode Island. He joined the Foreign Service in 1955, but was conscripted for a two year stint in the U.S. army in 1956. During his Foreign Service career he served in a number of posts including Germany, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Japan. He retired in 1991 and was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Topical Focus – Marcos Regime, Vietnam War, Naval Base

Q: Let's talk about the Philippines from '69 to '71. You arrived there in early '67. What was the situation in the Philippines would you say.

PIEZ: Well Ferdinand Marcos was the president, having been reelected after, I believe, a reasonably clean but really a very adept campaign. He really knew how to run for office. One device he used was not to fix the balloting, but to fix the pre-election polls. As a big poll winner he would be swept into office through the bandwagon effect, which was always strong there

Q: And his wife too.

PIEZ: And his wife. She was younger and attractive and very smooth.

Q: Also in '67 the war was going hot and heavy in Vietnam. The Philippines was a support base.

PIEZ: That was a major topic in our discussion with the Philippines at the time. The bases -- the Navy had a very substantial base there at Subic Bay, and the Air Force had Clark Field in Central Luzon.

Q: What was the feeling that you were picking up. When you arrived there obviously one is all ears on what is going on. What was the impression you were getting on the support in the Philippines for our involvement in Vietnam?

PIEZ: There was nominal support. I would say there was a general recognition by Filipinos of the facts. There was some concern about a communist threat should South Vietnam fall to a communist regime, but I think they saw that as quite distant. I think they felt that their democratic institutions were quite strong and not particularly threatened. Filipinos are quite devoted to elections and they really enjoy election contests. There were vestiges of a Marxist communist insurrection in central Luzon, but they felt that it was under control. While I was there the difficulties in Mindanao, in the far south, where there is a Muslim region became...

Q: That was more of a Moro thing.

PIEZ: Yeah, and that was a region that had been in rebellion from time to time all the way back to General Pershing in 1906.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR STEPHEN BOSWORTH

U. S. Ambassador

Manila, Philippines

(1984-1987)

Stephen Bosworth was born in 1939 in Grand Rapids. He completed his undergraduate education at Dartmouth. During his career in the Foreign Service, Ambassador Bosworth was foreign policy expert on and did most of his work in Asia. He served as ambassador to South Korea, the Philippines, and Tunisia. Beyond his diplomatic service, Ambassador Bosworth served as the U.S. special representative for North Korea policy under the Obama administration. Later, he became dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and was senior fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He was interviewed by Michael Mahoney in 2003.

Topical Focus – Philippines National Elections, Corazon Aquino, Ferdinand Marcos

Q: Your arrival in the Philippines as ambassador was about when?

BOSWORTH: It was in April of 1984.

Q: So, set the scene then. You arrive in '84 and what's happening?

BOSWORTH: Well, the Philippines is getting ready for national assembly elections. This was the first significant political event since Aquino's assassination. The first electoral process of any note that had taken place since Marcos had lifted martial law, which I think, was done in '81 or '82 or something like that.

Q: Your instructions from the Department going there are what essentially?

BOSWORTH: Basically to keep the Philippines quiet, don't let it blow up. Some of us saw I think then that Marcos had become a liability.

Q: Were you told to take a particular attitude to him before you went?

BOSWORTH: We were distancing ourselves from Marcos and from the Malacañang palace. Marcos himself by this time was not well. We knew that, we didn't know exactly how ill. We weren't sure what was wrong with him, but we knew he was not well. There was a political legal process that had been launched after Aquino's assassination in response largely to pressures from the U.S. Congress to try to ascertain what actually had happened and who was responsible. It was a national commission that was interviewing witnesses and laboring away on this subject. This election was scheduled for May of 1984 and was the first time that members of the democratic opposition were allowed to run for office. They were not very well organized. They were quite fractionated. We were intent on creating and helping them to create enough democratic space so that they could organize themselves, campaign and basically bring out the vote. I had to go out early in fact in order to be there when that occurred. My wife and I were planning to be married sometime later in the year, but we learned I was going to the Philippines, we accelerated that process. We were not able to accelerate it enough so that she could go with me in April. I went out in April. I was there for the national assembly elections. I went back to Washington in early June, we were married and we came back to the Philippines in June.

Q: Of 1984?

BOSWORTH: 1984. The Philippines was a very tense place. Marcos had ruled there since 1965. He had imposed martial law in 1972. He had lifted martial law in the early '80s. There was an unbelievable level of corruption in the country. The military was both corrupt and repressive. The communist insurgency known as the New Peoples Army had begun to attract the attention of Washington intelligence analysts because of their growth. The democratic opposition lacked someone to rally around a number of people who had been active politically before martial law, some of them even during martial law. Corazon Aquino, Benigno's widow had gone back to the

Philippines after he was killed, she was there. She at that point was not very active politically other than as a symbol. The economy was in terrible difficulty. It had very little if any foreign exchange. Demand was repressed, depressed. The Philippine businesses were unable to obtain the letters of credit. They couldn't do normal commercial business. It was just not a very easy time for the Philippines and for the U.S. it was not an easy time. Many people had begun to accuse us of having propped Marcos up and having kept him in power. We were trying to distance ourselves from him but not to the extent to which we would bring him down. Reagan was president. He and Marcos had what they considered to be a close personal relationship. I couldn't quite understand that because they had never spent all that much time together. Reagan had been elected on a platform, which included among things the need for American support for longstanding friends. This was after the Shah had fallen in Iran and it seemed to happen after that. Somoza and Nicaragua, so there was a belief deeply held in the Reagan administration that we had to stick with our friends and Marcos was a friend.

Q: This was the substance of the Jeane Kirkpatrick article that we talked about before?

BOSWORTH: Yes, it was.

Q: It kind of crystallized.

BOSWORTH: But Jeane came to the Philippines in the first two months that I was there and we called on Marcos and had a long conversation with him. I got her together with some members of the democratic opposition as well as other people in the Marcos government. I think she came away with a clear understanding of the complexity of what we were facing and just to say that we supported Marcos was not sufficient. We had to also be supportive of a democratic process. That basically was the horse that we rode in the Philippines for the next couple of years.

Q: This is a riddle that you often find in many countries with which we do business even until today.

BOSWORTH: Indeed.

Q: You're there and you're trying to stimulate the democratic process so to speak and how does that develop and what happened?

BOSWORTH: Well, I think you try to create and put some pressure on the government and that's what we were doing in the Philippines.

Q: How do you do that?

BOSWORTH: You go in and talk to them. Without being too blatant about it you make it clear that some elements of the American relationship are dependent on their beginning and in this case Marcos beginning to allow more space to the democratic opposition and express concern over the gross extremism on the left. You push for economic reform and end the corruption, etc. All of this of course gave Marcos very much the impression that we were pushing him, we were putting him in a stressful situation which we were indeed doing

Q: So from '84 to?

BOSWORTH: From May of '84 through that rest of that year. Then we had the national assembly elections, a conclusion of the first phase of the investigation of the Aquino assassination which produced the result that sent it further into the legal morass. Marcos continuing not to be healthy. He was suffering from various things including we now know a kidney malfunction. He was on dialysis and had a kidney transplant in 1985, which did not work. Anyway, '84 was relatively calm after the national assembly elections. Then we went into '85 and we were putting more and more pressure on Marcos at my recommendation. We were encouraging the political opposition to organize themselves more effectively.

Q: Washington was backing you up?

BOSWORTH: Washington was more or less backing us on that. Shultz was backing us very heavily. He saw very clearly that the long term relationship with Marcos had been changed here. Marcos had to change or our relationship had to change, otherwise we were placing our longer term interests in the Philippines at risk because it was not in our interest as having propped Marcos up beyond the time which his own national constituency didn't any longer want him.

Q: How did the Pentagon feel about this?

BOSWORTH: By and large they understood. They of course were always very conscious of the need for the bases, but we were fortunate at that point in having some people in the Pentagon who I think were quite clear thinking. One of them was Rich Armitage. He was the principal kind of Pentagon guy in the Philippine account. More and more pressure was mounting on Marcos in '84 and '85. Finally in November of '85 we had had a number of people over there. Bill _____ had come and then Paul _____ came out as a special emissary from the president, to basically push Marcos to try to get him to make some economic and political reforms. Marcos didn't really ever evidence much desire to do that. What he did do was to prove that he wasn't well understood so he hired a top-notch republican public relations firm in Washington to present his case.

Q: Is that Hill and Knowlton?

BOSWORTH: No, it was Black, Manafort and Stone. I kept telling Marcos that his problem was not how the message was being transmitted, it was what was in the message. He was not too fond of hearing that. I got along with him during all of that time pretty well. I rather admired him in some ways. I mean he was a man of enormous intellect. The only man in the Philippines I ever found I could sit down and have a kind of global conversation with. He reached a point where his moral compass had gone badly astray. He had no vision of his own life beyond being president of the Philippines. He was not in good health. He was under pressure from his wife and various cronies around him to just keep plunging around him because they knew if he left or if he reformed to any significant extent that they were, their status was very much at risk.

Q: So, you're going along through the middle '80s and this is '85 and '86 and how is the attempt to?

BOSWORTH: Finally in the fall of '85 the pressure on Marcos had become quite severe. Casey having been there, [inaudible] having been there, messages from the president all of which I was orchestrating from the embassy. I was continuing to tell him very strongly that he had to allow more space for the opposition, he had to do something about bringing those who most people thought had been responsible for Aquino's assassination, at least have been the agent of that, he had to bring them to justice in incredible fashion. He really couldn't bring them to justice in incredible fashion because that would have cost him all of his support or much of his support that he had within the senior ranks of the military. So, in November of '85, while being interviewed on one of the Sunday morning talk shows on American television, suddenly said, well, I'm tired of you guys pressing me and I'm going to have an election and then I'll show you who really deserves to run the Philippines. He called an election, the so-called snap election. This was in November. The election was scheduled for early February. Corazon Aquino was persuaded by some people in the opposition that she should be a candidate. She and a fellow named Salvador Laurel fought it out as to who would be the presidential candidate. She won and Laurel became vice president. He was constantly besieging me to try to get me an interview with her and persuade her that they should be reversed. The ranking should be reversed and he should be the presidential candidate. The U.S. position in the Philippines was really in a way kind of unique. We were on the one hand in the minds of many Filipinos seen as the great Satan of the West. On the other hand we were seen as the *dues ex machina* from whom all solutions would come if only we decided that's what we wanted to do. Most of the Filipinos were saying two thoughts in their minds simultaneously. There was a degree of dependence if you will on the U.S. that was very much exaggerated in many respects. People really thought that Marcos was still there because we

wanted him to still be. December and January were given to campaigning. The campaign had developed fairly rapidly and was quite vigorous. Marcos himself was not in good health, but he had a tremendous will of his, he was out there on the campaign trail, making speeches and shaking hands. I think from the beginning he thought, he basically thought he was going to win easily. He was out of touch with popular sentiment. I think his fall back was he thought, well, if I don't win I can always cheat enough to win. What he didn't anticipate was that the level of international interest would be as great as it was and the presence of the American journalists, foreign journalists and the various election inspection observation teams that came from the congress and from the civil societies in the country and elsewhere around would be as great as they were. So, his ability to win it by cheating became very constrained. To this day no one really knows who won that election. My belief has always been that she won it probably not by as wide a margin as some people thought, but nevertheless she won it. He, however, then within the week after the elections sort of seized the process and managed through his minions and the national assembly predictably to introduce the vote saying that he had won. Well, that wasn't the end of it contrary to what I think he had assumed to be the case because then the public antipathy began to rise. They didn't just shut up and go back to being a housewife. The opposition became even more vigorous. Because of pressures in our own congress and in our own public, we remained very engaged. We came to the position of pushing away 84 from Marcos in that week or two after the election. There was one, I remember, one statement out of the White House that Reagan was quoted as saying, well, there was probably some cheating on both sides, at which point the Filipinos went nuts. I fired back a message to Shultz and to the White House saying that we couldn't stay on that position. Fortunately over the next three or four days with a lot of heavy lifting from George Shultz the White House issued another statement that said the government had not run a fair election.

Q: What would have led Reagan to say that? Were there partisans of Marcos in the NSC or elsewhere in the White House?

BOSWORTH: There were partisans of a view that we should not abandon our friends and Corey Aquino was a non-entity, unknown and untested and that the democratic opposition in the Philippines was dangerously left and that our presence at the bases would be at risk and that we should continue to back Marcos. Phil Habib who was then retired from the Foreign Service came out as an envoy from the president about a week after the elections when all of this was boiling away; he came out basically to gain us some time. I mean there was nothing he could do other than go around and see a lot of people, which he and I did including Marcos and Aquino. Phil came away from that week convinced that Marcos had lost the capacity to govern and was no longer capable of governing because he didn't have the support of the Filipino people anymore. He went back to Washington to expound that point of view which was the point of view that I was expounding from the embassy. The day he left to go back to Washington was the day that there was this so-called people power revolution in the Philippines that began. Ironically it began

because a group of young military officers who were opposed to Marcos had become opposed to it and to their chief of staff had been plotting as we now know Juan Ponce Enrile, the minister of defense and to some extent with Fidel Ramos, the acting chief of staff until Marcos just before the election basically found their innocent.

Marcos' forces basically knew that these guys were plotting a coup. We knew it in the embassy as well. I had been sending word back to the coup plotters to stop it, not to do it because as much as I thought Marcos should go, I thought it would be in some ways be totally disastrous to have him replaced by a military government particularly. To arrest these coup plotters. They also knew that Juan Enrile, the minister of defense, was involved. That was of course quite a shocker because he really had been a long time supporter of Marcos. This group of colonels and young officers took refuge in one of the military camps out on the outskirts of Manila and [inaudible] called me. This was the first that we knew that this was happening. I was in the residence in my office writing a cable reporting on Habib's and my last conversations with Marcos and others.

Q: This was about what date now?

BOSWORTH: This was I think the 21st or 22nd of February, 1986.

Q: 1986.

BOSWORTH: Yes. Then [inaudible] called me and said, we are surrounded. We're holed up and you've got to help us. Well, it wasn't clear to me at that point exactly what we were dealing with. Still I thought it might be at that time was just a military coup. Of course we let Washington know. By this time it was on the airwaves. CNN finally, the first time, had the capability to telecast directly via satellite and they had a cameraman and a reporter in the camp where the military people were holed up. So, I alerted Washington, it was early morning back there. They were watching it on CNN. They knew more about what was happening on the ground there than I did in the embassy because I didn't have access to CNN. That evening I was in contact with Mrs. Aquino's camp and her directly. She had been down in the central Philippines. We were very concerned about her safety and I offered her refuge on a U.S. naval vessel that happened to be in the vicinity.

Q: That was on your own initiative?

BOSWORTH: Yes. I told Washington afterwards that I was quite confident that they would approve. I had been in contact with her brother who was one of her principal advisors during the political campaign because they were very concerned that Marcos would try to knock her out by basically assassinating her which was not by any means unthinkable. Washington had given its approval with the notion that if at all, if everything else failed I could invite her to come to the

embassy residence. I couldn't do that because she was not in Manila, but I did offer her refuge on the ship. She wisely concluded that she didn't want to do that. She didn't want to appear to be under U.S. sponsorship, so she took refuge for the night in a convent and then early the next day came back to Manila. In the meantime Cardinal Jaime Sin had gone on Radio Veritas which was a very small transmitter sponsored by the Catholic church when he learned that Enrile and Ramos and their supporters were in the military camp and he said to the Philippine public that you've got to go help them, take them food. Of course at that point people began to pour out into the streets and once that happened it became clear that this may have started as a military coup, but was much more than that now. She came back the next morning and she sort of took visible control.

Q: This is Aquino?

BOSWORTH: This is Aquino. Which was very important because I was very conscious of the need not to be seen as to be putting the U.S. behind a military coup attempt. Since we had by this time pretty much concluded publicly that she had basically won the election, there was nothing wrong with putting our support behind her. For the next two days my role consisted primarily of 1) keeping Washington fully informed and 2) warning Marcos directly on the phone that he should not move by force against Enrile and Ramos in a military camp. He should not do anything that would jeopardize the safety of hundreds of thousands of Filipino civilians who were out in the streets supporting Mrs. Aquino and demanding Marcos' resignation. Finally, over the next couple of days the situation played out so that we issued a statement, the U.S. from Washington, which I then transmitted, to Marcos and others saying in effect the time has come you should leave.

Q: Yes. So, you get a statement then that basically says that the position of the U.S. government that Marcos should go.

BOSWORTH: Right. The time has come. With that we had removed the sign of heaven from him, the mandate of heaven. He was done. Then it was a question of how to get him out safely.

Q: How did that? I mean did he immediately say, okay, I'm leaving?

BOSWORTH: No, he didn't say, okay. His first words to me were I'm terribly disappointed. You don't understand. Your government doesn't understand. This is a military coup and I have to resist it. I said, well, we don't agree that it's a military coup any longer. We think that it is something bigger than that. Anyway, these are my instructions. I then got back to him the next day. He was in the palace with his family and his grandchildren. We offered him three alternative

routes out. Basically by land and by sea and by air. He opted for the air route and he sent some of his minions and his baggage out by boat. We took him out by helicopter. We took him to Clark where he spent a few hours and then we put him on a plane and he went out first to Guam and then to Hawaii. Of course, he died in exile.

Q: That's the idea of going to Hawaii. It sort of evolved from a discussion process?

BOSWORTH: Yes. There is a big Filipino presence in Hawaii. He knew Hawaii. It was 87 very important to us and to President Reagan in particular that we not allow him to be harassed, that we would give him safe haven basically in the United States, but we wouldn't let him go back to the Philippines. Well, he never really had a complete safe haven because the legal people began coming after him very quickly. Eventually, even after his death they continued to go after the estate. He never went back to the Philippines until after his death.

Q: He leaves and Mrs. Aquino comes to power.

BOSWORTH: Mrs. Aquino comes to power and a great upsurge of national spirit and good feeling. The U.S. for a time at least was, we were heroes, because we had taken him out. I remember going down to call on her the day after Marcos had left. She was not yet living in the palace. She was in her office in her family's building. As I came out having exchanged statements of good feeling with her and her principal aides, a big crowd of people on the outside all started cheering for the U.S. and me. It was really kind of an extraordinary experience since I previously used to go into my office at the embassy driving through large crowds of demonstrators all saying, Bosworth go home. Some of them had little clips underneath that Bosworth go home saying and take me with you. Filipinos had a sense of humor if nothing else.

Q: How would you characterize your relationship with Mrs. Aquino in a policy sense and what did you make of her?

BOSWORTH: I had a very close relationship with Mrs. Aquino in many ways personally of course. It was incumbent upon me just because of circumstances to try to interpret her to Washington and interpret Washington to her. This was of course the normal role of an ambassador, but in this case it was more demanding because she had so little experience. She was a woman of tremendous integrity and great courage and I liked her generally and personally. She liked me and she liked my wife. Her great supporter turned out to be George Shultz. Others in the Reagan administration were less enthusiastic about her and many questioned her ability to run the country effectively. I always considered that she was sort of the mother of the Philippines. Her role essentially was to oversee the reestablishment of democratic institutions. There were missed opportunities. The government was not very coherent. It was torn from the right and from the left. There were great divisions within the government so that particularly in

terms of economic policy, there were opportunities that were lost that were not regained until she finished her presidency and Fidel Ramos became president. That was a time of considerable consolidation and forward movement economically.

Under her the Philippines became a democracy again with all of its imperfections. She endured numerous military coups because Juan Enrile, who had been frustrated by her having taken over the revolution in effect, he never accepted the legitimacy of her presidency and even when he was minister of defense was supporting coup activity against her. She overcame all of that again with strong support from the U.S. That was after I had left. I think the U.S. relationship with her was on the whole very positive. There were things that we did that she didn't like. She did not like to receive what she called gratuitous advice. You had to have a relationship with her in which she would ask for your advice, but just to go down there and tell her what we thought she ought to do, didn't work. Of course Washington's sensitivity to that was not always too well defined. We didn't like the fellow who was then her chief of staff because we thought he was not doing well by her, and we were suspicious of his longer term motives about us. I remember one time I received an instruction in effect to go down and tell her we didn't like her chief of staff and we thought she should get a new one. I simply refused to do that, feeling that there were many people around the world who probably didn't like Ronald Reagan's chief of staff, but we would not continuance them telling us to get rid of him. There was a patronizing attitude on the part of some in Washington.

The President himself, Reagan, never developed much of a relationship with her largely I think because Nancy Reagan had this close relationship with Imelda Marcos and she was never willing to set that aside.

BOSWORTH: I think just managing the new relationship with her. I remember the embassy country team the morning after she had been inaugurated and sworn in as president. I said, you know, we're all going to look back on yesterday as the end of a fairly easy era in U.S. Philippines relations because one of the positive things about dealing with a dictatorship is that if it is an effective dictatorship it can run the relationship quite effectively. You may not like what it costs, but when we have a problem we can work it out fairly efficiently. Of course, with a sprawling newborn democracy, that was not possible and the relationship was frequently quite messy.

POLAND

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DARRYL NORMAN JOHNSON

**Department of State
Deputy Chief of Mission
Poland
Warsaw, Poland
(1987-1991)**

Mr. Johnson was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1938 and was educated at the University of Washington and Princeton University. After earning his M.A. in English, he volunteered with the Peace Corps in Thailand. Mr. Johnson entered the Foreign Service in 1965, where his work took him to India, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Moscow, China, Poland, Lithuania, Bosnia, Thailand, and the Philippines. He served in senior level positions throughout his career, ultimately becoming the Ambassador to Lithuania and Thailand. He also notably served as the Director of the American Institute in Taiwan and the Political Advisor to the Chief of Naval Operations. Mr. Johnson was interviewed by David Reuther in 2006.

Topical Focus – Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek Meeting, Presidential Visit to U. S., Polish Elections

JOHNSON: The Roundtable was going on from January until late spring of 1989. A part of this big package deal, in addition to all these other major agreements and major areas of policy, was that there would be free elections on the fourth of June, 1989, throughout the country, with certain caveats that I mentioned before on the allocation of seats in the lower house. But everyone could vote for senators and members of the lower house of parliament.

John Davis and I had a meeting with Geremek about three weeks before the elections. He was going to the States for something, for some meeting or some award. So we talked with him for about half an hour; it was just him and the two of us. He was the campaign manager for Solidarity. We had been sending our political reporting officers out and the junior officers out throughout the country to find out what was happening in each of the constituencies. Everywhere our people went they would see the Solidarity candidates. They would have headquarters much advertised, and they would have materials to hand out. They were very active. The candidates were all over the place ...

It was a fabulous time to be there. President Bush had decided to visit Poland again, right in the middle of that process. I have to say, he understood better than a lot of other people did, what was going on. Even back in April, at the time of the round table when things were looking rather glum and it looked like the Communists might try to pull the plug on this whole round table process, Bush made a couple of very balanced comments, saying, in effect, "This is a process, and we have every reason to hope and expect that the process will play through and that it'll be unencumbered. The Polish People should have the right to decide who will lead them." He wasn't buying into the conspiracy theories at all.

He and his team began to look at this State Visit, to take place in July. The voting was in June; they were going to come in July. The advance team came in May. As DCM, I was primarily responsible for that visit -- for the arrangements, that is. We didn't know for sure what was going to come out of the election or what to expect, but we went ahead and made all the plans for this visit which was less than two years since Bush had been there earlier as VP.

The new parliament convened on July 4 -- not coincidentally. The first non-communist parliament in Eastern Europe convened on the Fourth of July. Bush came on the 10th and spoke to the parliament on the 11th at its first plenary meeting in the chamber of the parliament. It was a grand event. We really celebrated. Everybody in Poland celebrated, and President Bush deserved a lot of the credit for the way we reacted.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DONALD L. PRESSLEY

USAID

Mission Director

Warsaw, Poland

(1993 - 1995)

Donald Pressley studied at the University of South Carolina for his undergraduate degree before entering the US Army in 1968. After graduating from Georgetown Law School in 1975, he joined USAID, where he served in many different positions in several countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Poland. He was interviewed by Ann Van Dusen in 2022.

Topical Focus – Political Party Establishment in Poland

PRESSLEY: It did, but not as much as you would expect. The one clear change was the emphasis on democracy building under Brian Atwood. But by then we were pretty locked into the idea that the bulk of the program would go to enabling private sector development. The new administration accepted that approach, interestingly enough, and it continued as long as I was there.

Q: So, in democracy building, it would be things like support for the free press. Or support for the court system. What were some of the activities?

PRESSLEY: A significant part of it was using the international Democrat and Republican organizations to encourage setting up systems about how to vote, run campaigns and bringing in a variety of actors. In Poland, in those early days, you had this proliferation of parties, and

literally, you had one party called the Big Drinkers Party, and another one called the Little Drinkers Party.

Q: Mainly personality driven, I imagine.

PRESSLEY: Exactly! And so, to have a real political party -- what it meant, having principles, etc., we had the NGO's [non-governmental organizations] doing that kind of work. Then we had programs to support freedom of the press, we worked with the court system to change the laws so that you had an election law, and you had an election oversight body, and you had a way to tally the votes. Personally, I think our democracy programs may have been too focused on elections. I felt that we needed to do more institution building because I felt that strong institutions would last longer than strong elected officials. Even if the elected officials had the right ethics and the right ideas, if the government structure wasn't supportive, nothing would change. And that is actually some of what happened.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

MICHAEL G. ANDERSON
Department of State
Consular/Political Officer
Poland
Warsaw, Poland
(1979-1981, 1990-1993)

Mr. Stevenson was born in Berwyn, Illinois and raised in Wheaton, Illinois. He attended the University of Illinois in Champaign and the University of Chicago, taught inner-city kids in Chicago, and spent a year studying in France. He entered the Foreign Service in 1973 and worked in various positions in Italy, Poland, Pakistan, and especially Washington D.C. He also taught at the Coast Guard Academy.

Topical Focus – Political Climate in Post-Soviet Poland

ANDERSON: By the time I got there, in fact, Bernie Opel who was my predecessor, had already started covering the developments of the strikes and so on that were breaking out in Lublin and Gdansk. I think even when I was down in the consular section I had been helping him a little bit to try and pick up whatever we could on what was going on. The summer of 1980 was a period of huge events in Poland. I think a lot of it was lost sight of back here because of our own political situation and so on. Also because of the hostage crisis that had been dominating things in Iran. I remember that vividly. Up until January of 1981 when they were finally released. You know the deterioration of the situation in Poland wasn't sudden. It had been working its way down and by the summer of 1980 we had strikes breaking out over in Lublin and then up in Gdansk especially on the Baltic. This is something that had already happened in 1970 and again in 1976. I think during the 1976 events they had formed this committee called KOR (Komitet

Obrony Robotnikow) which was the committee for the defence of the workers. They were involved in some of these areas and that was the work of Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik and those people. Others were Catholic intellectuals being called in to try to help the workers to formulate their demands. One was Tadeusz Mazowiecki who was of the Catholic party. He became Poland's first non-communist prime minister in the post-war era in 1990. Be that as it may, there was an awful lot going on and I was just sort of thrown into it. I did speak better Polish than, I don't think I spoke better Polish than Bernie, but I spoke better Polish than John Vought who came in. I think he didn't speak much Polish at all or read it. Nick Andrews who was our DCM however was a very fluent Polish speaker and reader so he was actually an integral part you might say of the reporting.

Q: How was the Polish government responding to these strikes? What were they doing?

ANDERSON: I suppose it was the combination of the carrot and the stick. They were trying to offer the workers who were on strike a concession. The whole thing started over a raising of the meat prices which is exactly what happened in 1970. Polish workers consumed large quantities of meat, pork I would guess and the price of that meat seems to have been a kind of a sore point and when it was raised in 1970 that set off the strikes that resulted in killing quite a few workers actually. So they didn't want a repeat of 1970. They were very, very conscious of the fact that these were workers and if they came down on them with a military reaction as they had in 1970 it would have drastic repercussions. There was in other words a real, real political price that had to be paid so they were trying to find some way to separate these workers from the radicals, the activists, the KOR people. They're harassing the KOR people; they're arresting them, they're trying to put them and split these people off from the working sort of element without too much success. What you were finding was that people like Walesa and others are emerging now as a kind of revolutionary working class. They have a higher consciousness in a sense and they see these activists like Kuron as being people who are essential to their success and so they are protecting them, they keep them in the shipyard for instance or otherwise protect them from the authority. I think as I say, the problems started when Piotr Jaroszewicz was the prime minister up to February 1980. He was a corrupt guy. Gierek was also corrupt.

Q: When you say corrupt in the Polish sense, what do you mean?

ANDERSON: Well, they all took trips to Western Europe where they had apartments in Paris or other places. They went on shopping trips. They had luxurious hunting lodges in the southern part of Poland. Both Jaroszewicz and Gierek and others. There of course had been total censorship of the press so most people weren't aware of this but of course those who were now were able to get that information out into the public media and what happened is that they started Solidarity, it wasn't quite Solidarity yet. One of the first things that happened is that censorship started to break down. Leaflets became available, flyers run off on illegal photocopy machines or Xerox or old fashioned duplicating machines. These things were then handed out and of course they started to establish places where diplomats and journalists could go and pick up information. So we began to learn an awful lot about the underside of Polish party life. Maybe our intelligence people had known this stuff all along. I don't know. But to the average Pole these revelations about the high life of the party officials contrasted with the poverty of your

typical worker and the worsening situation that they had. That I would say was one of the key elements in discrediting the party for most people.

Q: What was your impression of some of the Solidarity people? Solidarity had not yet become a full pledged organization, had it, while you were there?

ANDERSON: Certainly not by the beginning of say the summer. I suppose in the fall of 1980 they came down to Warsaw. I don't know if it was the fall of 1980 or spring of 1981 and they had to register. This was a big thing. Register their by-laws, their credentials with the court in Warsaw. There was to be a hearing and everything. I mean they had been around but not recognized by the government. Of course their banners were in place and they had a lot of public image and the poster and the Solidarity banner was kind of everywhere.

ANDERSON: Oh yes. There certainly was a lot of change and the change was going on as we got there. You could see it happening before your eyes. The consumer revolution had struck which is the way I see it. It had ceased to be a political issue and was more of an economic issue at this point I'd say. Although obviously the development, I think it was 1989 already, the Mazowiecki government had come in. They had some kind of communist majority, fake majority in the parliament there, Sejm, as it is called. Then that had been swept away in another election. They had set up this kind of attempt to have a controlled democracy. A controlled election there so it would guarantee that the communist would still retain hold over at least one House of Parliament. In any case, by the time I got there in the summer of 1990 the communists had been pushed now really out of power altogether, except that General Jaruzelski remained as president a while longer, until he was replaced by Lech Walesa in December 1990. Tadeusz Mazowiecki was the prime minister when I arrived there, a Catholic intellectual who had been an advisor to Solidarity during the strikes of 1980 and 81 and then I suppose had been interned at one point and then released and whatever. Bronislaw Geremek was another Catholic intellectual who eventually became foreign minister there and so on. These guys were the moderate voice of reform in a situation where the country was more interested in economic issues I would say. People saw their economic security evaporating, not that it was great to begin with but they did see that there was inflation, people didn't have enough money, a lot of jobs disappeared as a lot of these uneconomical state concerns were closed down. Unemployment was way, way up. I have no idea what the percentage was. Here they were trying to bring about a new regime or a new democratic way of life in Poland at the same time of course that the economic situation had disintegrated.

Q: Poland, I mean all these eastern European countries sort of chose different paths. As I recall Poland had chosen to sort of bite the bullet and make the change to a capitalist economy and to suffer the hard knocks.

ANDERSON: That was the theory. Jeffrey Sachs's "shock therapy" or whatever they called it. The idea being that there is no easy transition from a communist non-market to a market

economy. You kind of have to do it all at once which in my opinion is baloney. I don't think there is any truth to that. You see what's going on over in China right now. In fact it just proves what Sachs was saying that in fact they've managed to, okay they're getting rid of their state sector, but they're doing it gradually. What they have managed to do of course is to finance this whole old sector with the vast profits that they are making through cheap labor and exporting their goods to the west. Poland never succeeded in doing that. Of course China's ace in the hole was that it had all this cheap labor and is able to get all this foreign investment. Poland didn't attract foreign investment that way. That was the missing element obviously and it still hasn't really attracted foreign investment in anything like the amounts that they would have liked to. While I was there there was very little foreign investment.

Q: What was your job at the embassy?

ANDERSON: I was doing reporting on political developments internally. I'm trying to think. I also did a lot of running back and forth to the foreign ministry. I sort of had a mixed portfolio. I did some of the new parties. There had been a number of new parties formed, when the Sejm, the Polish parliament, was elected on a free basis and I think they had their free elections like in 1990 shortly after I got there and shortly before, I can't remember. There were maybe 20 different parties. Then the Solidarity Coalition sort of started to split up. I always thought of Solidarity as the germ cell for the future civic or free society of Poland. Of course it included everything from right wing kind of neo-liberal type thinkers all the way over to socialists, Kuron and people like that. There was no coherence to it. All it had in its coherence was they were all anti-communist. They all wanted to get rid of that. Once that regime was gone why then you saw this germ cell sort of split up into all these different organs if you will, all these different pieces. I was following the free marketers. One was the *parti przyacziu piwa*. The "beer lover's party" it was called. They actually elected quite a few people to parliament. They were campaigning on the idea that we need to replace vodka consumption with beer. It's a much more healthy drink. It's going to have much less toxic effect. That was partly a joke but partly it was also serious. I think there was a previous attempt to do this down in Czechoslovakia. That's kind of where they got the idea.

Q: How did you find dealing with political parties? Was the process that they were learning how to be political parties or were they all over the place or what?

ANDERSON: In a new situation like that where there is no previous experience being politicians. These were all guys who had been, I don't know where a lot of them came from, out of academia, some of them maybe had been sort of trade union types, but even the trade unions were sort of, free trade unions were a new idea. They were inexperienced. There were an awful lot of personality clashes. People were trying to establish a party really of one it seemed like a lot of times. So you had many, many different rivalries going on, former Solidarity types. There was a pair of twin brothers there -- the Kaczynski brothers -- but in any case they were the head of the Centrum it was called. They called their party the center party which it really wasn't but it was a successor to Solidarity and Solidarity had its own. It couldn't make up its mind whether it was a trade union or a political movement or what it was. It had sort of one foot in and one foot out of

the political arena identifying or endorsing various candidates. You had a lot of lawyers, people who had come out of the liberal professions, I would say mainly lawyers, but some teachers and professors who got into the thing without too clear a notion as to what their program was but sort of advancing their own particular interest. I used to cover the parliament quite a bit. Go over because we were just a few steps away from the parliament house. There were constant, seem to be, crises of government because the government could not maintain any kind of a parliamentary majority. They kept splintering. So that was an issue. There was another guy who came in there who was kind of a hardliner. I can't remember his name right now but in any case his backing was more kind of I would say anti-western in a way. Leszek Moczulski was this one guy, it was called the KPN, Committee, what did they call it, not committee, in any case his party was almost proto-fascist kind of group you know. We watched him. Then he was replaced by an American Pole who came over there. A guy named Tyminski. He was a complete and utter nutcase but he got a lot of votes too. They had elections there. I think he was running against Walesa for president or something. When Walesa decided to run for president that was a big issue. Whether he should do that or not because he had been kind of the hero of the resistance to the communists, but a lot of people didn't think of him as being presidential material. He wasn't distinguished enough. Well that was just a challenge to him to sort of say, well darn, I can be president and of course he did get elected president. He did a credible job I guess. What happened of course is that the movement went on sort of without him. Once you're president it was more of a figurehead position although he tried to make it more of a power spot. Things kind of went on without him and he resented that and there was just a lot of bad feeling between him and government. He was trying to run things out of the Belvedere Palace and the government of course had its own program. So you just had the sense that there was no good political structure there. No parties that were really worth the name. Of course no clear idea of a government program that was agreed upon and no constitutional coherence between the role of the president and that of the prime minister. I think the current guy there, Kwasniewski, and he's been there quite awhile and of course he is a former communist and I knew him when I was there. I think he is called president. The prime minister in other words has lost.

Q: More like the French model.

ANDERSON: That seems to be what it's evolved into. But always before the president had been, under the communists, the presidential office had always been a kind of figurehead one. I don't know whether they have done some, they must have passed some constitutional amendments that I'm not aware of. There was a period, if you will, of incoherence there in terms of where the power lay and how it was to be exercised and where we're going. People of course realized that and I think pretty soon they started to turn back towards the old communists or the former communists. Cimoszewicz, I think his name was, was in there for awhile as prime minister or maybe president and now Kwasniewski. I guess in a way it's kind of what Russia has done with Putin. Of course the Russians never did have a non-communist political class that ever achieved any kind of position. They never had a Catholic intellectual or anything. What you find is that building a political class is something that just doesn't happen overnight. It's like saying, "Oh well, gee we should have a whole class of entrepreneurs here that are going to start running all these businesses that the state used to run." Where are they? They don't exist. You don't just say, "Oh well, they're just going to pop up automatically." They don't. In fact you very often get thugs of one sort or another or just people who have no reason to get into those positions.

Opportunists I guess you would say. Both political and economic opportunists who get a hold of power and then you have to root them out eventually because they are dragging things the wrong way.

Q: While you were there, were we interested, were they interested in joining NATO?

ANDERSON: Oh yes.

Q: How was that planned?

ANDERSON: How was it planned? Well, I mean the Solidarity groups were very much in favor of it. This was to them of course the guarantee that they would not be invaded by the Russians who they still felt were a threat. I remember many times hearing from my contact Andrzej Kern who was the deputy president of the Sejm, "Oh we've got about ten years to get our house in order here because then the Russians are going to get back on their feet." He said this in 1990 or 1993 so I don't think he was really right but let's face it once they are back on their feet they're going to try and take back what they lost. They always looked at the history of the Soviet Union or Russia going back to the Tsarist times that it was not going to accept permanently its loss of status and I think our friends in the Baltic states also feel that way and Ukraine certainly feels that way. It's only a question of time until the Russians get their act together and once they do they are going to try and re-assert their control over this area and that's why they felt NATO the sooner the better. The sooner they got inside that NATO kind of defence line, why then they would feel secure.

Q: Were you saying well cool it because this isn't going to happen right away or what were we saying?

ANDERSON: I can't remember making too much of it. We had a lot of visitors. Colin Powell was out when he was head of Joint Chiefs to talk with their defence secretary or defence minister. I remember going to that meeting and Powell reassuring him that we would stand by them. They shouldn't worry. This was before they were in NATO and trying to work out some cooperative arrangements for training purposes and so on. Our own policy towards the former Soviet Union by that point, because in August of 1991 while I was in Poland, why the thing disintegrated, was obviously up in the air too. The Bush administration was shocked by what happened. Let's face it. They didn't know what to do. They were afraid. They didn't want Germany to reunify too quickly. They were afraid that we would have a very difficult time controlling a reunited Germany. In a sense you could say that Bush was sort of rooting for Gorbachev there for awhile and I think Reagan and the Europeans, the West in general. They thought Gorbachev really, oh you know don't rock the boat here Poles because you know you're going to make it even harder for Gorbachev to try and get this thing under control. Obviously by 1991, August of 1991, with the overthrow of Gorbachev and the coming of Yeltsin and all that. Then we're faced with a very different situation. It was out of control. Nobody was in control of what was happening and our policy was, as best as I could tell, basically we're running along behind what was going on.

Q: By the way, did the creation of Ukraine do anything in Poland, reaction to this, good, bad, indifferent?

ANDERSON: They did, I recall, some of the Solidarity people went down to help sort of steer Ukraine what they thought would be in the more constructive direction. There was no love lost between Ukrainians and Poles. Of course within Ukraine there was a huge difference between the western portion of the country and the more Russian portion of the eastern part of it and the Poles recognized that. On the border between Ukraine and Poland there was also a sense that Ukraine could be a problem for Poland. I mean on one hand Poland could help Ukraine but on the other hand Ukraine could drag Poland down in a sense because Ukraine could say, "Well we want to be part of Europe and we think we should be part of Europe" and of course Poland says "Wait a minute we're first and you guys are like dead weight, you're a big anchor. We don't want you vetoing or otherwise obstructing our movement to the west dragging us back." So there was this certain sense that Ukraine could be a sort of trap of some sort for them but I don't think that has materialized either.

ROMANIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR ALAN GREEN, JR.
U. S. Ambassador
Romania
(1989-1992)

Mr. Green was born and raised in Oregon. He was educated at Stanford University and the University of Oregon. After service in the US Army in World War II and work in the private sector, Mr. Green became involved in Republican politics and national affairs. He participated in the Port Equalization Agreement of 1974 and from 1981 to 1985 served as Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission. In 1989 he was named US Ambassador to Romania, where he served until 1992. Ambassador Green was interviewed by Jim Strassmaier in 1999.

Topical Focus – Romanian Election

Q: Let's go back and pick up that story of the problem of approaching the election and what were the issues there and how they were responding and how well they were listening to you and so forth. In dealing with them and talking to them about the upcoming elections, what were you saying to them?

GREEN: Well, you know, number one, "Yes, we're the United States of America, yes, we're important to the future of any of these countries, but it's their country. So you can only say so much without them misinterpreting, looking like you're being heavy on them. I remember receiving an absentee ballot from Oregon, and I took it over to the foreign minister, and I said, "This may help you with your coming election. I think it's illegal for me to do this, but I want to do it anyway just so you can see how we work it in the United States for the people who are out of the country, or in the Merchant Marine or Navy or something like that, so they can vote if they're not home." I don't know if they used it or not, but it gave them an idea. And apparently I was forgiven by the government of the state of Oregon. I never heard from them on this matter. Anyway, I remember there were people from the United States constantly coming in looking for troubles. "It can't be the way you're saying it is," that sort of thing. I'm the type of person that looks optimistically at something; I don't look pessimistically at things. And I suppose that really I was wrong in a few things, but not in the important stuff. They were making a sincere effort to have a free and fair election. That was the whole - those were the key words, "a free and fair election." So there was tremendous preparation for it, and I had a governor - I think from New Mexico - who came over who was the President's personal observer. The polls were supposed to close at 8:00 at night. We started at about 5:00 in the morning and went way out in the country, you know, looked at things. We even got inside an army post, if you can believe it. I demanded - because I was supposed to have free access to anything to see if it was being done fairly, freely and fairly. And I said, "Let's try that." And it took us about half an hour to get inside, but we got inside. I don't know, maybe they prepared a few things and put up a few posters during that half hour, I don't know. But the fact is - it doesn't make much difference - the fact is we got inside. I

mean, to me that was terrific, and the governor agreed. But everybody - it was a hot day. It was May, I think, and everybody was dressed in their best suit and best dress. And at eight o'clock at night when we were at the official closing hour - a lot of churches were their polling places. - You know, and there was no way these people were going to be deprived of their vote. They'd never voted before, most of them. So they left it open, and I think wisely. And I think they voted all night. And then it was overwhelmingly that Iliescu was elected. He was just appointed, first. I mean, I don't know who appointed him; maybe this group that came up after the revolution. Those things just kind of grow like Topsy, you know. But I think they were lucky to have him. They have replaced him. He's not there as we talk. They had some marvelous people. You'll see them there. You'll see Adrian Nastase, for example. He's the foreign minister. And there was a wonderful guy in there whose wife was the TV commentator on Romanian television. I liked him a lot. He had an American sense of humor. Romanescu, I think. Might have been. But anyway, he's identified in there.

RUSSIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

THOMAS REEVE PICKERING

U.S. Ambassador

Russia

(1993-1996)

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 – Democratic Posturing in Russia

Q: Did you feel when you were on the seventh floor that we were becoming disenchanted with Yeltsin? Or were we kind of wedded to Yeltsin? We got wedded to Gorbachev at one point and I was wondering if whether we tended to focus on leaders?

PICKERING: I think Gorbachev was an alternative, but we had no role in making that happen. He was different than Brezhnev and certainly Andropov and Chernenko who succeeded Brezhnev. Many pointed out that he had a sense of reality within their system about what changes were needed. Similarly, Yeltsin came in at a time when he was actively campaigning against Gorbachev whose relationships with the party at least, with key members of the party, were still very much a part of Gorbachev's preoccupations. From my talks with Gorbachev, all of which took place during the Yeltsin period, led me to believe that he was unwilling to give up on communism but very seriously interested in changing many facets of it. He, in fact, looked at the world through spectacles that saw a changed, reformed, a kinder more gentle communism, but nevertheless communism -- lots of state ownership, state control, state decision-making in organizing the economy and political life, limited political choices on some types of things.

Yeltsin came at it from a different point of view. He said this whole structure is rotten and it has to go, it has led us to serious problems domestically and internationally, it is oppressive, it is, in fact, unfriendly to the human condition and it has to be dropped. He had no master plan and indeed, I think, there is no real master plan. How you change an entrenched 70-year old

autocratic system based on ideals which exceed the human capacity to achieve them on the one hand and on the notion that somehow the state is the perfect instrument in the hands of the party to control the lives, the future of all aspect of what's going on in the country on the other. That is very hard.

Yeltsin began to move, that is he began to move toward liberal democracy and he put in place a new constitution. He in a number of key places made difficult decisions. They were not easy indeed. My fellow friends who watch Russia have been of two minds on whether his decision in October of 1993 to confront the then elected, but really essentially Communist Party operated parliament, was wise. It was a parliament elected by Communist Party with choices, but nevertheless it was a Communist Party parliament. He had to confront that parliament with a use of force. Was it a wise decision or not? Now I happen to think that it was a wise decision and a very difficult decision to make. He had through that summer been stymied by 300 changes to the constitution inaugurated by this parliament on a majority vote basis which really made the process of change in which he was engaged extremely difficult. These were changes oriented against him and what he wanted to do. His view was that this parliament did not represent either his interest as president, he had been elected, or popular will, and that in the future that had to shift, so he used force to do it but promised open, follow-on elections. Well he was criticized, including by a number of Americans including some diplomats in the embassy, for having taken that action to use force in a situation where these people who were being replaced had been elected too, but also barricaded themselves in the parliament and collected weapons. He had in turn ring fenced them in with the paramilitary police -- and where they may have fired the opening shots and he fired the final shots. Very few people were killed happily and he did it quite effectively. But the thing that he did which I thought was both risky but probably political necessary to assure international and even domestic support was then to go to elections. Those elections did not produce the result for which he had hoped.

Over that period of time as we watched, it was Yeltsin's pattern to try to be correct, and he was on most things at the critical points, and on other points to use Russian nationalism as a tool for the solidification of the direction toward which he was going. That often made for circumstances which were not necessarily to the U.S.'s interest -- where he would take foreign policy attitudes contrary to the direction in which we thought things should go. Some of those had to do with the Balkans in which the Russians looking toward both their influence in the Balkans and with some concern at what they thought was a western kind of Christian gang-up on the Orthodox Serbs. It was true that the Orthodox Serbs themselves had committed many crimes and blunders -- but as anybody has said over the ex-Yugoslavia which was in the course of shredding at the time, there is blame enough to go around. So he took the view that we collectively ought to defend the Milosevic-Serb regime to the extent that we can -- and certainly not see it forced to knuckle under. They were concerned about preserving the territorial integrity of Serbia and they were

concerned about the unhooking of Kosovo, even though they understood at least intrinsically the Serbs had committed many mistakes in dealing with the Albanian Kosovars.

PICKERING: I remember going several times with George Shultz to a full session of the House where they had set aside time to hear us in the House Chamber. So you had a real opportunity to do those things. John McCain used to bring the Republican Institute over for elections in Russia and my attitude was always if they are coming to Russia to look at elections I'm spending most of my day with them. As they went around it was helpful for me to talk with them -- it gave you had plenty of opportunities for briefings. With Senator McCain on a couple of occasion before or after the elections we would have dinner together with his wife and talk about Russia. The Republicans had more interest in Russian elections than the Democrats. At one point we asked to see criminals and others incarcerated participating in the vote at Lefortovo prison. They were a little taken aback, but arranged it for us within an hour or so of our asking. We often went to the polling place near the barracks of the presidential guard. They marched to the polls and voted individually. I would use the afternoons to go and see polling in my local district of Moscow taking my interpreter along. They got used to me and welcomed me. One polling place was next to the Ministry of Defense and we watched soldiers voting. They had a system if you were away from your regular polling place you could vote anywhere by showing your national identity card. The vote would be temporary until such time as they were able to check out the cards to make sure they were still valid and were not being used twice or more.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JANE MILLER FLOYD
Department of State
On-Site Inspection Agency
Russia
Moscow, Russia
(1988-1989)

Jane Miller Floyd was born in Washington in 1954. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of Washington. She joined the Foreign Service in 1980. Her career included positions in the Former Soviet Union and Moscow. Mrs. Floyd was interviewed on December 6, 2004 by Charles S. Kennedy.

Topical Focus – Russian Elections

Q: Did you ever feel the fine hand of our intelligence services wanting to know what was going on there?

FLOYD: I wouldn't even characterize it as intelligence services. I would characterize it as the role of an American diplomat. My collection was all entirely open, from local newspapers, from local officials. While we were there, the Soviet Union had one of its first multi-candidate local elections. We talked to a number of the candidates. We went to polling places on election day. I had no classified reporting capability, so everything that I wrote back to Moscow was all unclassified. But this was a time when, for the first time, the embassy had incredible access to developments outside of Moscow and Leningrad.

Q: Were you getting any reflection of people wondering what the hell was going on back on Moscow? I mean Gorbachev was doing his thing and this was such a revolution, really, that it must have made local people both happy, but pretty uncomfortable. I mean, they'd been used to one thing . . .

FLOYD: Exactly. And holding in their background the fact that one part of their heritage was exile. They were nervous about what was coming. Excited, but still a little antsy. The first round of elections, there were a few sort-of-independent candidates who didn't do very well, but they don't do well in our country. It was the folks who came with organizations – labor unions, communist party – that won. They are the ones who had name recognition. No overwhelming amateur observations of ballot box stuffing. But the first time you do anything, you tend to lean towards the familiar.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

**DAVID M. SCHOONOVER
AGRICULTURE MINISTER COUNSELOR
MOSCOW, RUSSIA
(1991)**

David M. Schoonover was born and raised in Illinois. He received a bachelor's and master's degree in Agriculture Economics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He joined the Foreign Service in 1984. He served in Beijing, Moscow and Seoul. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Topical Focus – Political Upheaval and Economic Engagement in Russia

SCHOONOVER: I remember that USDA and Commerce jointly hosted a large group of Soviet food industry officials at a conference in Washington that year. I guess in my own assessment at the time I was feeling that working with agriculture officials in the Soviet Union, and improving our relationships with them would be to our advantage in the Agricultural Office, as well, and it would provide us with contacts. But this is the sort of thing that we were doing that first year, and it included accompanying several teams of U.S. government and private sector officials on travel and visits in the Soviet Union. Later in the year it was decided that we would initiate a credit guarantee program for the Soviet Union for the purchase of agriculture commodities. It

had been quite a few years since we had an active credit guarantee program with the Soviet Union. As best I recall, that was about late 1990, toward the end of the year. And so we had quite a lot of interest in that program, and that was about the point in the beginning of '91 when things really started changing. I can't recall exactly when Gorbachev became President as opposed to General Secretary. I believe it was March 1990. But it was during this period of '90, '91 that Gorbachev was no longer just the General Secretary of the Communist Party but also held the position of President, which had been created for him. The republics began asserting themselves much more during this period. The nationalistic feelings of people were quite obvious already in the spring of '90 in Estonia, when I made a trip there. As early as the beginning of 1991 Lithuania had demonstrations in Vilnius, including the incident when Soviet military put down the demonstrations at the TV tower in Vilnius. A lot was going on, not only in Lithuania and the Baltics, but in other republics, too. Yeltsin was beginning to rise to the forefront.

Q: He was mayor, wasn't he, of Moscow?

SCHOONOVER: He had been Mayor, earlier, and then his position among the Soviet leadership had slipped. Then the elections for Presidency of the Russian Republic took place in June of '91, and Yeltsin became the Russian President. A lot of political ferment and changes were going on during this period, and the republics were beginning to individually assert their independence, and Gorbachev was resisting. There was a lot of discussion about working out new charters for the relationship between the republics and the union. '91 was a very turbulent year, of course, in the political relationship between Gorbachev and the "Center", and the individual republics. I remember one trip I made to Georgia to participate in a conference either late in '90 or early in '91. Outside the conference site, a huge number of Georgians were demonstrating for independence and filling the main street of Tbilisi. For me, '91 was a fascinating, but extremely busy year.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

**BARBARA TURNER
USAID
NIS Program Task Force
Russia
Moscow, Russia
(1994)**

Barbara Turner grew up in northern Virginia before joining USAID in 1966 while finishing her BA in Public Administration through Upper Iowa University. She later obtained her Master's degree in Health Sciences at Johns Hopkins University. During her career, she pioneered programming in Egypt and in the nations emerging from the Soviet Union among many other accomplishments. Turner retired from USAID in 2005 and became President of University Research Company. Barbara Turner was interviewed by Ann Van Dusen in 2017.

Topical Focus – USAID Russian Election Assistance and Democracy Programming

TURNER: It was a step too far into their way of life, I think.

Also, we developed programs to support a free election process, the democratic process. And this was really a time when Brian Atwood was the new USAID Administrator about 1994 and introducing a wide range of democracy activities in many countries. We were welcomed with those programs in most of the soviet states at first, especially with the opposition parties, and we were helping put a lot of educational messages on TV and radio but it clearly had an American democracy twist. I don't mean it said we're Americans telling you what to do but it was an American style that everyone knew the Americans paid for this political ad on TV encouraging people to vote. We did not support individual parties or candidates. But, it was sensitive and I don't think that went over well with some Russian leaders. NDI and IRI did a lot of training, honestly, just how to run a campaign and create a platform, how to set up a ballot. There were some simple, simple things to us but could have sounded like telling them what to do. And of course, some of the elections didn't come out the way they wanted and I'm pretty sure the US got blamed for interfering in some way because we had a presence there that was significant.

One other area the US had a strong influence over was the development of advocacy groups and the NGOs. When we arrived- when the Soviet Union collapsed there was no such thing as an NGO. Private citizens could not even assemble, not even in your own condo, in your own building were you allowed to assemble. So, there was no such thing as advocacy groups, and we helped draft laws to permit them and train groups to organize and with two or three years, there were 10,000 NGOs throughout the NIS. I think the governments saw those as a challenge to the government, which in many ways they were, and I think they blamed the Americans for being involved and accelerate the growth of the NGOs faster than the government could control them.

Q: From the very beginning they tried to put constraints?

TURNER: From the very beginning. They couldn't understand letting people assemble and have a different opinion than the government; that was not seen too well. So, that was a struggle. But while we might have helped some of those NGOs we certainly didn't establish 10,000 NGOs; they came from the grassroots. Those were the people that were meeting in secret before and came out of the closet and established themselves as part of the reform era. And most persist until today.

The other thing that I think in Russia, AID policy and international economic policy got very confused and mixed up. So, you remember the ruble completely crashed and if that happens in Africa it doesn't influence the world all that much but if it happens in Russia it influences us a lot and so there was a lot of heavy handedness, I think, related to fiscal policies and to economic reform that had to happen at the top level, particularly from State and Treasury and from international organizations. And not just American government; I mean, they were getting advice from a lot of countries and the IMF, etc. So, I think maybe AID got blamed for some of that that was perceived as heavy-handed.

TURNER: Steel mills were huge businesses. There were shipyards. I don't think we even made a stab at Gazprom. Maybe the higher levels did but we didn't see that as a goal. We looked to see if we could get utilities that would and we did do a utility partnership with some utilities in the U.S. but we couldn't ever get them to move to independence and using it in a management sense. So, those were real constraints.

We also, I think I mentioned earlier got more into the democracy programs, which I think- I do think they had an impact. I do think in particular the rule of law programs introduced a lot of change in Russia and the NIS. Even simple things bench books to guide judges. NIS countries used to put the defendants in cages in the courtroom and that changed in most places.

We didn't do it by ourselves; we got the American Bar Association together with our Russian legal association and did those kinds of things. So, those things are critically important. I think that we as Americans think that a small little technical assistance program like that for a few million dollars will change the enormous, multi trillion-dollar economy that's been doing the same thing since the czars. It's not going to happen. And in '95, I guess, the oligarchs came back in and wanted to halt some of those things or not move that way, although I think their commercial law system is still in place today and they have much stronger women's rights, small businesses bloom all over the place. There are things, environmental groups are allowed to meet and work so there are all kinds of things that did change and that we had a hand in so I think we as Americans can feel pretty good about that.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

NADIA TONGOUR
Department of State
Soviet Desk Officer
Russia
Moscow, Russia
(1991-1993)

Nadia Tongour was born in Turkey and raised in South Carolina. She was educated at William and Mary and Stanford Universities and taught at several colleges before joining the Foreign Service in 1980. Primarily a Political Officer, her Washington assignments were in the fields of Soviet and Soviet bloc Affairs as well as Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Her foreign assignments include Brazil, Barbados and St. George's Grenada, where she was Principal Officer. Ms. Tongour was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Topical Focus – Electoral Assistance, NGOs

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.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

RALPH H. REUDY
Department of State
Deputy Public Affairs Officer
Russia
Moscow, Russia
(1995-1997)

Ralph H. Reudy was born in Cedar Rapids Iowa in 1943. He did his undergraduate education at Iowa State University. He then served in the Navy for several years, during which time he served in Vietnam. Upon leaving the Navy he enrolled at Duke University for Graduate school. He joined the foreign service in 1974. He served in a number of postings during his foreign service career, including East Germany. He retired in 2001, and was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Topical Focus – Russian Election, Boris Yeltsin, Corruption, Oligarchs

Q: It's been all over our TV with President Bush and all the world leaders at Red Square.

RUEDY: Yeah, but this guy felt that the old Soviet system had gained legitimacy or continued to have a hold on the Russian people because of the searing experience of World War II which they had won. Then when that World War II generation, the people who had been through that and had been branded with this patriotism of the great patriotic war, when that generation was replaced by a new generation who had that from the history books but not from personal experience, this generation was willing to look at the Soviet system and say the hell with it, this system is not working, this system is not doing anything. It's not producing for me and my family and it's not producing anything for my country.

Q: Did you get any...sort of the public affairs side, there must have been quite a revolution going on there especially about the media, the international, I mean all of that?

RUEDY: Oh yeah. That was going great guns and new newspapers were being founded and all kinds of stuff was going on. It was a period when things were pretty, well really open. It was the period too when this was sort of below my radar screen one had a sense that it was going on but this was a time when resources were being sold off, privatization, it was a period when fortunes were being made overnight.

Q: The robber barons and the Russian mafia as it was called.

RUEDY: The robber barons. When a guy who was really, really fast on his feet and really in touch with things could wind up controlling half the world's tin supply if you knew what you were doing and if you were willing to do whatever you needed to do to get there. It was an amazing period, an amazing era and I think I don't know, freedom of the press, freedom of speech all that stuff, I mean in the abstract, yeah, absolutely important. I have no doubt about that.

A lot of media stuff was being done also to provide mouthpieces. I think there was also a kind of overhang of Marxist era, how you did things under the Marxist system because of agitprop and making people aware. I mean this is a big thing for a doctrinaire Marxist and control of the media and shaping public opinion this is important. I think some of the people who made fortunes very quickly also realized that in order to hold onto those fortunes they had to make their voices heard. They had to, not propaganda in a negative sense, but they couldn't just stand by and sit on their money. They had to be engaged, they had to be involved and they had to help create political conditions that would nurture the kinds of things that they were involved in, put it that way. So people that were organizing free media, I mean well it's never quite as idealistic I

suppose as one project. These weren't John Peter Zenger types who were interested in free speech in the abstract. These were people with very definite political opinions that they wanted to put out there. I don't know, maybe part of the read on Putin is an attempt to roll back some of that and overreacting to it. I don't approve of a lot of what Putin's been doing in the last year or two years, but I think when Putin came to power he maybe had a sense of rolling back some of what he saw as the power that had accumulated in private hands rather than in the government hands.

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I was there for the big election, in '96 I think it was, when there was much concern about the communists coming back and Yeltsin being tossed out or support for him being much reduced because of the economic conditions we've talked about. There was general disgust and distrust of the privatization process and a feeling among many people that things had gone fundamentally off the rails so there was real concern that the communists would come back. I think in the mythology that Putin and others may be bought into it was the media and the media portrayal of Yeltsin during that very pivotal election campaign that really produced their mindset that the media won it for Yeltsin. The media are the folks that kept the communists from coming back and out of that grew maybe an exaggerated sense of the role that the media played in shaping public opinion and voter opinion in the new Russia. There did, I think, emerge this myth that it was the way the media strongly backed the Yeltsin camp and the "liberals" or "reformers" or "free market economic types" that kept the communists from making a comeback in that crucial election.

Q: Did you sense that the new cliquey informed people were getting their news from CNN (Cable News Network) and from BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and just other news sources and the Internet? Was the new generation coming in that was well plugged into the world net as they call it?

RUEDY: Yes, yeah, Russians are very smart and you had one hundred percent literacy. One of the things that the communists obviously did was to have this excellent educational system that reached down to everybody. Young people were very literate and very plugged in and very internationally minded. I'm a real novice coming into this but the old westernizer versus the Russophile thing that the Russian history 101 sort of starts with I think you felt that yeah this was very true. On the one hand the great sense of reaching out and being international and reaching out to the international community and being Europeans and being part of the world. On the other hand a sense of Russia's special place and Russia as a special mission, Russia with a special soul, Russia with a special mentality, something that made Russians special. I think there was that kind of thing going on even among young people who were defining the new Russianness, what it meant to be Russian in the post-Soviet period. They were plugged in internationally and at the same time I think they saw themselves as wanting to find, wanting to

forge a separate, unique Russian way and again I think that's what is going on now with Russia today.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

C. DAVID ESCH
USAID
Chief of Party
Russia
Moscow, Russia
(1993-1996)

Mr. Esch was raised in Wisconsin and educated at the University of Oregon and Vanderbilt University. He joined USAID in 1987 in the Office of International Training, and in 1989 joined the Foreign Service, working in the Office of Education Study of Human Resources Development (HRD). Continuing in this general field, Mr. served in Moscow and Ankara with USAID. He also served in the State Department as Desk Officer for Pakistan and Afghanistan and in the private sector dealing with educational development. Mr. Esch was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.

Topical Focus – Yeltsin Election

ESCH: But I think most everybody woke up to the fact that Russia was closer to looking like a Third World country than it was a First World. The first year many of them came back just totally amazed that Americans lived in single family housing, and that these were not the richest people in the world. These were very normal, average people, in fact, many of them making a lot less than the Russians were, who were Senior government servants or senior business people. They really were just flabbergasted by that. On the same hand they could turn around and say "Why can't we do it? Why can't we do that kind of thing?" and it was like "Yeah. Why can't you? Just keep going." I think some of the real impacts of this particular program were that when the elections came up for Yeltsin in '95, that enough people had seen other things and been out, through the U.S. programs. I'm talking U.S. Information Agency, Department of Commerce programs as well as NASA was there, we had Treasury there, we had the FBI. All kinds of different groups were taking people out as well as the (inaudible) community. All the people getting out really did help people to see that they couldn't go back. They wouldn't be able to go back to the communist period or way. Yet, even staff in my office did not vote for Yeltsin on the first go around. They voted for him definitely on the second go around. They wanted to send him a message that they didn't really care for him, but in the end they would accept him instead of going backwards the other way. Most of the staff owned and had dachas from the Khrushchev period one way or another, through family or through their own. Because of the hard currency they were paid in partially, they were able to improve their dachas. They were able to improve how they lived. I think especially around Moscow, you had the emerging pieces of a middle class

starting up. I think we very much contributed to strengthening many other regions, and that's been a long term trend in Russia. The regions are getting stronger and more independent of Moscow. I think that's a trend that the U.S. government has fostered and encouraged, and the Russians have grabbed a hold of

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

E. WAYNE MERRY
Department of State
Political/External Officer
Russia
Moscow, Russia
(1991-1994)

Mr. Merry was born and raised in Oklahoma. He was educated at the Universities of Kansas and Wisconsin and Princeton University. After serving briefly at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium and in Washington, DC at the Department of the Treasury, in 1972 he joined the State Department Foreign Service. In addition to assignments on Capitol Hill, at the United Nations in New York City, and at the Departments of State and Defense in Washington, DC, Mr. Merry served abroad in Berlin, Tunis, and Moscow. A Russian language speaker, he was a specialist in Soviet Union affairs. Mr. Merry was interviewed in 2010 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Topical Focus – Political Transition, Russian Constitution

MERRY: Russia was not an election issue in the United States in 1992, because the view of Yeltsin as a good guy was pretty consensual among Republicans and Democrats in Washington. Strauss had a lot to do with that. Personal encounters also helped to overcome skepticism. A number of congressional delegations came to Moscow initially quite skeptical about Yeltsin because of things they had heard about him. After a meeting the Congressmen would come away dazzled with his charisma, his convictions, just his sheer political dynamism. I recall one House delegation that had three meetings in one day. The first was with the speaker of the parliament, Ruslan Khasbulatov. The second was with the vice president, Alexander Rutskoi. The third was with Yeltsin. That evening, they were prepared to give Yeltsin almost a blank check, because they had seen what some of the alternatives might be.

However, 1992 was the year which demonstrated the fundamental weakness of the constitutional and legal constructs of post-Soviet Russia. The Russian Federation had a government system and a constitution, but they were of the Soviet-era Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, the RSFSR with some modifications. This was not a viable legal foundation for the new Russia because the RSFSR had always been kind of a legal fiction within the Soviet Union. In the turmoil of 1991-92 there was never time or political energy to replace the existing constitution, although everyone understood that constitutional reform would be necessary for post-Soviet

Russia. What kind of government the new country should have was a critical question. Many Russians, including many Western-oriented political figures, worried about Yeltsin exercising too much power. They worried that a presidential republic would not break from what later was called the “vertical of power.” After decades of Soviet over-centralization and excessive executive power, the inclination among many Russians was for a parliamentary type of government like that of Germany or Britain, rather than a presidential system like France or America. Given the pace of other changes, constitutional reform was pushed back from month to month until brought to the fore by political confrontation at the end of 1992. Yeltsin and his prime minister, Yegor Gaidar—who was never confirmed in the job, he was always acting prime minister—were operating under one-year emergency powers granted to Yeltsin by the Russian Federation legislature in November 1991 which would expire at the end of November 1992. Almost everything the Russian government did in economic policy during 1992, often in cooperation with Western governments and the International Financial Institutions, was under this temporary emergency power. That included the first stages of “shock therapy,” the elimination of price controls which created massive inflation, the collapse of many industries with consequent unemployment, the dramatic increase in poverty and the growing crisis of public health. The negative consequences of the Soviet collapse were attributed, by much of the Russian public, to the economic policies of the government, with Western sponsorship. Not surprisingly, these policies were not popular in Russia and were deeply resented by most of the legislators who had given Yeltsin his emergency powers. As the year went on, it was difficult to convince Washington that this situation was not going to last; the emergency powers were going to expire and almost certainly would not be renewed. The legislature of the Russian Federation was a real legislature, and it contained many people opposed to the policies plus many opposed to Yeltsin himself. The emergency semidictatorship was not going to last beyond the end of November. However, if you tried to explain this to people from Washington, they just didn’t want to listen.

Q: Was this a problem that so often happens, that straight-line projection?

MERRY: Oh, yes, to some extent. The view was “We like Yeltsin. We think Yeltsin’s a great guy. We support Yeltsin. So what’s the problem?” The problem was that not everybody in Russia supported Yeltsin, not by a long shot. Yeltsin’s popular support started going downhill from about October of 1991. Many people never forgave him for his role in bringing about the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and many others fundamentally disagreed with the character of the government he put together and the policies they promulgated throughout 1992. The opposition started with Yeltsin’s own vice president, Rutskoy, and represented a majority of the Supreme Soviet. The pain associated with the economic reform policies was very great for normal people. Anybody who paid attention to the dynamics of Russian politics—but frankly, there were very few foreigners who did—understood there was a lot more than just Boris Yeltsin and his government. Washington wanted to believe that Yeltsin could do whatever he wanted because he had been popularly elected.

Q: When you say Washington, it’s not George, it’s Washington. It had me thinking of a few people. Was this the White House, or the secretary of state?

MERRY: Oh, no. I think it was almost everyone. It was the White House, it was members of Congress, it was the State Department, it was the Defense Department, the Treasury, particularly people on the economic side. There was a belief that, since Yeltsin has our support, he must be able to do whatever he wants – meaning, whatever we want. Yeltsin, like Gorbachev before him, had become much more popular in the West and among Western governments than he was at home, and the same forces which had ultimately disabled Gorbachev now had their sights on Yeltsin. This would happen more quickly with Yeltsin than it had with Gorbachev, because the new power structure lacked the legitimacy previously exercised by the Soviet system. These realities were just not understood on our side. Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Communist Party stood atop a mechanism of real control and of established legitimacy. Yeltsin had only his position as the elected president of Russia and the twelve-month emergency powers on the economy. The fact that Gaidar was never confirmed as prime minister showed the parliament was already pushing back. In point of fact, the Russian Federation constitution gave much more power to the legislature, the Supreme Soviet, than it did to the president. The presidency was an ad hoc position created during the waning months of the Soviet Union, and was never fully fleshed out in law. Yeltsin exercised power because he exercised power, not because he had the juridical power of an American or French president. The legislators had bequeathed much of their power to him in the crisis conditions of late 1991, but come midnight at the end of November 1992 that would turn into a pumpkin, as his legal authority to do things on his own would disappear.

This message did focus some attention in Washington to the fact that, with the December session of the Congress of Peoples' Deputies and the expiration of the emergency powers, Yeltsin would be forced to restructure his government and change some of his policies unless he wanted to go outside the constitution and the law. One of the remarkable things about this period in post-Soviet Russia was the extent to which people really did value legality and its appearance. Maintaining respect for legal structures, even those left over from Soviet law, was quite important, because Russians wanted to believe their country was now truly European and a country based on law. Russians watched what was happening in Georgia, where the civil war was destroying the center of Tbilisi, and at other conflict areas around the former Soviet Union, and thought of themselves as superior, as a European country where things were now done in legal, civilized ways. In the event, Yeltsin had to make considerable concessions which he was very loath to do, including the replacement of Gaidar by Viktor Chernomyrdin, and the modification of some policies, particularly ones favored and sponsored by the United States. This political confrontation at the end of 1992 ended entirely peacefully, but it foreshadowed what would take place less than a year later, which would end violently. The political crisis of late 1992 established the terms of reference for the coming confrontation between Yeltsin and his supporters with the forces in opposition to him. This did not, by any means, divide good guys from bad guys, despite Washington's perceptions. Many people moved into opposition to Yeltsin, not because they favored Soviet policies, but because they were increasingly concerned about the directions of Russian legality. I knew a number of these people, including most prominently the Chairman of the Russian Constitutional Court, Valery Zorkin. These people had been Yeltsin's political allies in the late Soviet period, and certainly had joined enthusiastically with the effort to build a new, independent, non-communist Russia, but they were increasingly concerned about

the basis of legitimacy of the government and its policies. Many of these policies seemed, to them, wrong for Russia. That these policies were all advocated—and often originated—in Washington meant Russian policy increasingly appeared to be made in the United States. We were seen as on Yeltsin's side, while Yeltsin was seen as our man. This was, indeed, the way many people in Washington viewed things. This perception became an important problem for Yeltsin and for American interests with Russia.

Clinton correctly assessed that relations with Russia were going to be one of the most important foreign policy issues of his presidency and he wanted an ambassador who would have the kind of stature Strauss had. So he offered the job to former Vice President Fritz Mondale, who accepted. In Moscow, under instructions from Washington, we went to the Russian government to get what's called "agrément" (concurrence) for Mondale; this is standard international diplomatic practice. Not surprisingly, Yeltsin was delighted. Yeltsin had the highest regard for Strauss, but now was getting a former vice president, a former Senator, a former presidential candidate, someone of major political stature. Then Mondale changed his mind; decided, on reflection, he didn't want to go to Moscow, but to be ambassador in Tokyo. Clinton agreed, and decided to send the senior-ranking U.S. professional diplomat, i.e., somebody who would go where he was told. That was Thomas Pickering, who had been in New Delhi for less than a year on his sixth ambassadorship, which had included the United Nations in New York. He had no experience in Russia or the region and, as far as I could tell, had never served in a country with real winter. Russia was one of the few parts of the world he did not know from direct experience. We informed the Russian government, including Yeltsin, that they were getting a career Foreign Service officer, albeit the most senior and experienced we had, but were not getting someone with political stature. Thus, the new U.S. Administration started things off with Russia a bit on the wrong foot.

During this transitional period in Washington, support for Russia and for Yeltsin was still bipartisan. Russia had not been an issue in the presidential campaign, and the new Clinton Administration was determined to continue most of the policies the Bush Administration had conducted. After an initially difficult start, Bush and Yeltsin had achieved a good personal rapport. Yeltsin was extremely grateful for the support Bush had expressed in critical moments, and for the support of a more tangible character during 1992. The United States had favored Russia as the sole successor state for the nuclear arsenal of the former Soviet Union, something they obviously appreciated. The relative centrality of Russia in our policy was also appreciated, despite concerns about how active American diplomacy was becoming with the other countries. At the same time, their own resources were so lacking that Russian influence in many of these areas was often either ineffective or not centrally directed from the Russian presidency. With the change of American administrations, there was concern in Moscow that the priorities of the U.S. Administration would change. The new administration tried to project continuity, but the inability to send out Mondale as ambassador communicated a lessening of priority in Russian eyes. Only a handful of people knew about this episode, but that handful included Yeltsin and that's what really mattered.

My problem as head of Political/Internal was to communicate that Yeltsin was only part of a broader political dynamic in Russia, which was, curiously enough, still a democratic political dynamic. The legislature may have been a holdover from Soviet times, but it was an elected legislature, just as Yeltsin himself had been democratically elected. This political dynamic reflected pluralism and the many conflicting interests within Russian society, often not committed to Yeltsin either as a leader or to his policies. The new Clinton Administration engaged in unthinking, uncritical support for “Boris”—not even Yeltsin, it just became “good old Boris.” Washington wanted Russia to be democratic but for its leader to rule by decree. This was not, I thought, a very sophisticated or nuanced approach to dealing with a Russia that was going to have very serious internal political difficulties.

For the preceding week and a half, there had been a largely peaceful but nonetheless very high-tension confrontation between Boris Yeltsin’s government and his opposition, who were holed up in the Russian White House. This involved large scale demonstrations around the White House, which is right across the street from the American Embassy complex, and a very tense standoff over Yeltsin’s effort to abrogate the then-existing Russian Supreme Soviet with an eye to new elections and a new constitution. A constitutional drafting process had been in progress for much of the previous six months, but had essentially bogged down. Yeltsin had always intended that the Russian Federation would get a new constitutional structure to replace that which it had inherited from the Soviet Union, and this would create a much more presidential-style system, patterned somewhat on De Gaulle’s Fifth French Republic. In the late summer that effort ran out of steam, partly because of lack of focus by Yeltsin himself but for a variety of other reasons. In the early fall, the political process was in drift. Yeltsin, in midSeptember, decided to cut the Gordian knot by dismissing the Supreme Soviet, which constitutionally he did not have the authority to do. He called for new elections, not just for a new legislature, but for a new constitution, which was at that point half written.

Well, back to the domestic political story. In the aftermath of the very dramatic events of early October, the Russian government scheduled national elections for mid-December to include a referendum on a new constitution, which would be written entirely by Yeltsin’s people rather than reflecting a wide spectrum of viewpoints and political forces. What became known as the “Yeltsin Constitution” was an amalgam of Russian and Western models, but in its essence was patterned on the constitution of the Fifth French Republic written for De Gaulle. There would also be elections for the new parliament, both upper and lower chambers, to be created by the constitution. The lower chamber, the State Duma, was patterned on the German Bundestag, with half the seats elected in districts and half from national party lists. The elections presumed that the constitutional referendum would both pass and attain the 50 percent participation needed to be valid. So, Russians on one day were going to vote for two members of the upper chamber, two members of the lower chamber and the constitutional referendum. In some cases, there would be

regional and local elections as well. This was going to be a very big election. Washington assumed the election would be a great triumph for Yeltsin, reflecting his victory in early October, and would set the stage for a vast new wave of reforms favored by the United States. My job during November and early December was to try to convince Washington that such expectations were wrong. It became obvious to me rather early, both from anecdotal evidence and from polling data, that the party led by Gaidar, called "Russia's Choice" and essentially Yeltsin's party, was not going to have an easy walk to victory in the election. In part this reflected the popular revulsion against what had taken place in early October, but, even more so, it was due to public unhappiness with government economic policy.

As the elections, which took place on the 10th of December, approached, my view that the government was going to be decisively defeated increased. The information we had about probable voting intentions got worse rather than better, especially after national television appearances by all the leading political candidates. An irony was that the 1993 elections were, without question, the most legitimate, free and fair elections that have ever taken place in Russia, before or since. The government was so completely confident it would win that it engaged in very little cheating. This was the first full national post-Soviet election. Two years later the elections would not be as legitimate. There were some exceptions, especially in a few places with regional elections where local authorities cooked the books for their own purposes, but these were the most legitimate reflection of popular sentiment at the ballot box that Russia has ever had. Election day was a Sunday in Russia. Of course, we had a full-court press for reporting. I was in the embassy as sort of "election center" to collate reports from our various observers and to keep Washington informed on a continuing basis. The idea was that the vice president and a big American delegation would arrive in Moscow just after election day to congratulate and celebrate the victory of Yeltsin, Gaidar and the pro-American forces.

As the election numbers came in during the course of the night, things turned out even worse than I had predicted. I had been optimistic, wouldn't you know? On the positive side, the first of my dire predictions was not borne out, in that the referendum on the new constitution did get over 50 percent participation and hence was valid. There was – and, indeed, still is – debate on that subject in Russia, whether some ballot boxes had been stuffed to push participation above the required level. My detailed analysis after the fact was that it did get over 50 percent but not by very much, certainly not by the official 54 percent. My concern that the referendum would fail because of inadequate participation proved wrong, but it was a near-run thing. In contrast, the voting for the new State Duma, the main house of the new national legislature, turned out even worse than I had predicted, because Gaidar's party, "Russia's Choice," got only 15 percent of the vote, which for a ruling party in any democratic election is pretty bad. Due to the mixed party list/constituency system, "Russia's Choice" did somewhat better in parliamentary seats, but they still were badly outnumbered by opposition parties. The communists got slightly less, which was still impressive given that many of its leaders were in prison. The shocker was Zhirinovskiy's party, the illnamed "Liberal Democratic Party," which got almost a quarter of the vote. I had predicted, in the days just before the election, that Zhirinovskiy would get 17 to 18 percent, and

some colleagues at the embassy told me I was hysterical, that it was impossible. In point of fact, he got between 23 and 24 percent of the vote. Zhirinovsky became almost overnight a worldwide celebrity—I think it's fair to say most people in the West had never even heard of Zhirinovsky before the election—but he became an instant symbol of what seemed the rise of fascism in post-Soviet Russia.

Q: Oh, absolutely. Also, for anybody reading this transcript at a later date, then all of us, when there were elections, particularly if there's an unpredictability about them, political officers get a special place in heaven for their own satisfaction if they get it right. But as Wayne is saying the system itself just does not appreciate being proved wrong.

MERRY: In this case, we had an interesting situation, in that the U.S. Government was going to have to make up its mind what to say real quick because the vice president was arriving and a big reception was scheduled at the ambassador's residence, to which we had invited hundreds of Russian political figures and journalists. The plan was for it to be a victory celebration. Now it wasn't going to be. The United States could take the position that "the voice of the people is the voice of God," that the Russian people had spoken, and the elections represented legitimate popular choice and democracy. However, that was not the decision the U.S. Government made. The decision was to say publicly that perhaps our policy of "shock therapy" had involved too much shock and not enough therapy. The solution was to modify the program slightly and proceed with it. We communicated to the Russian leadership, to Yeltsin, Gaidar and company, that we felt they should stay with the program and since, obviously, this program could not be conducted in conjunction with the newly elected parliament, that it should be pursued outside the brand-new constitution, in defiance of popular will expressed at the polls.

Q: I take it the establishment in Washington felt almost that we owned the Russian system, that we were in charge in a way.

MERRY: Well, to an extent your question leads me toward the next major event in my story. I am accelerating a bit, but in the aftermath of the December elections and the establishment of the new constitutional structure and the new parliament, which was completely dominated by people antithetical to what the United States had been advocating in economic policy, there developed in Russia essentially parallel governments. There was the legislature that had just been elected and there were the structures of the presidency and the executive conducting policies of dubious legitimacy within the new constitutional system. There was something similar to what in France is called "cohabitation." In the French system, there was a period in which Francois Mitterrand was president and the opposition was in control of the legislature. In a very real sense, what Russia had was cohabitation with one side of the political spectrum controlling the executive and very different forces controlling the legislature. There were two important distinctions. In the French case, the prime minister is answerable to the parliament while in Russia the government answers directly to the president, and in Russia this situation came into being from the very initiation of the constitutional system. Yeltsin's constitution, which was referred to fairly openly as the "Yeltsin Constitution," since it had been written for him and was pushed to a national referendum by him, was now violated by Yeltsin himself and his people in rejection of the obvious will of the Russian people as expressed in national elections. (...)

My own feeling, a strong feeling, was that the real villain of this story was the so-called “Washington consensus,” the ideology of macroeconomic stabilization which the United States had favored, and which the finance minister, Boris Fyodorov, had instituted with such vigor in the early autumn. The Russian people were not rejecting democracy. Not at all. They were not rejecting a Western-oriented Russia or engagement with the outside world. What they were rejecting was a policy of economic stringency.

For me, there was never a question of being pro-Russian or anti-Russian, but of being realistic about what Russian society and Russian political culture could sustain in the early years of the post-Soviet era. I considered myself to be strongly anti-Soviet, but not anti-Russian – a distinction not always shared within our government. To me, the question was how to serve American interests by forging a working, cooperative relationship with the new Russian Republic. I had no fantasies of alliance or even of partnership, but only of generally cooperative relations developed slowly. To me, the worst approach was to seek to turn Russia into an economic dependency. The Russians remained intensely proud and deeply insular. Other than a few intellectuals, they would not accept tutelage from the United States, while they profoundly resented what they perceived as American condescension and arrogance. Their perception was, sadly, often justified. The institutional focus for U.S. Policy was the so-called Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, established by the Clinton White House in cooperation with the Kremlin to expedite bilateral initiatives. The idea was to engage the American vice president and Russian prime minister to cut through bureaucratic delays and opposition. I welcomed this approach and hoped it would really speed things up. Unfortunately, in the way of bureaucracy the world over, the Commission became a bureaucratic mechanism all its own. In some areas of cooperation where things were proceeding well, the Commission may actually have slowed things down. In other areas, the Commission was more a vehicle for periodic signing ceremonies and formulaic assertions of progress where little was actually occurring. The Commission came to resemble a Soviet planning mechanism, with its stress on meeting regular production targets, regardless of the quality or substance of the targets; it existed more to justify itself than anything else. This was sad, because the Commission might have been a real turning point in bilateral cooperation, if it had been tempered by an understanding of Russian realities. On the American side, people associated with the Commission did not want to hear bad news or questions about the program.

It argued basically three things. First, macroeconomic stabilization and the whole “Washington consensus” program wasn’t working in Russia and could not work. The legacy of seven decades of the Soviet Union had created conditions in which these policies were inappropriate and premature; it would take years or decades for Russia to transform before these economic mechanisms could work. Second, by trying to impose on Russia an American economic model—trying to force the Russian round peg into an American square hole—we were creating enormous antipathy toward the United States, both among Russian elites and also among the broad mass of the Russian people. The failures of these policies were attributed by Russians to their American authors; increasingly Russians blamed their daily pain of unemployment or

inadequate wages on the United States. Third, rather than fostering a useful potential partner in an American-led global system, we were doing exactly the opposite. A humiliated Russia would become an adversary rather than a partner. Thus, our policies were compounding the legacy of the Soviet era and poisoning the environment in Russia toward the United States.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR ROBERT STRAUSS

U. S. Ambassador

Soviet Union

Moscow, Russia

(1991-1992)

Ambassador Strauss was born and raised in Texas and educated at the University of Texas. After a stint as Field Agent with the FBI, he formed his own law firm in Dallas, where he became engaged in Democratic Party politics, eventually becoming Chairman of the Party. This brought him in close contact with both Democrat and Republican leaders and Presidents, who sought his advice and used his talents in Trade Negotiations and Middle Peace Negotiations. In 1991 President George Bush, a Republican, appointed him Ambassador to the Soviet Union, where he served until 1992. Ambassador Strauss was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Topical Focus – Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Russian Politics

STRAUSS: The first person I saw, one of the persons was Gorbachev. I went over to greet him, and he greeted me. Very warm, and he said he was glad I was there, that he had been expecting me and was glad I showed up. I said, "Well so am I. Who is going to speak here today, Mr. President?" He said, "Well, I am going to speak. The mayor is going to speak, and each member of the clergy is going to speak for two minutes. It will just be a 40 minute program," something like that. Less than an hour program. I said, "Well I would like to speak. I have a message from President Bush" He looked kind of stunned and kind of said no. I said, "Mr. President, let me tell you what is going on in this world and in your country. People are wondering about you, what is going to happen to you, senior people having just attempted a coup. Nothing could be as important to you as having a representative of the President of the United States stand up and give you his support for you as President of the Soviet Union." His eyes lit up just as if a light went on. He said, "You will speak just before me." I said, "Thank you. President Bush would like that. He wanted to show you his support and the world his support." (...) President Bush strolled in the office informally, preplanned, of course, where he could shake hands with Yeltsin, then head of the Republic of Russia, not head of the Soviet Union of course, and greet him but not be caught with him. The press reported he went to the White House and saw Scowcroft, not that he went to the White House and had a visit with the President. President Bush, obviously properly, was concerned that if he met with him it sent a wrong signal to Yeltsin, to Gorbachev, because they were already jockeying for position. This is long before the coup. After the coup that jockeying became, instead of nuance, became open. Yeltsin started pushing and pushing for power. President Bush, of course, was concerned about that, his people were. They hadn't really

established a relationship with Yeltsin. Jim Baker did a good job when he first went over and dealt with him the first time. He was Secretary of State when he went over. Yeltsin liked him almost from the get go. Yeltsin heard good things about Jim Baker, I believe, because I saw Yeltsin regularly, and it didn't take Baker long to show that he was even better than I was suggesting to Yeltsin. He handled it extremely well.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

**Micheal Hurley
Department of State
Public Affairs Officer
Russia
Moscow, Russia
(1987-1990; 1998-2003; 2009-2012)**

Micheal Hurley was born in Washington in 1950. He was educated at Seattle University, Western Washington State College and University of Washington. Post college, he worked with exchange programs from Meridian House International. After joining the Foreign Service of USIA in 1985, Mr. Hurley served in Washington and abroad in the field of public diplomacy. His foreign posts included Kuala Lumpur, Surabaya, Budapest, and Moscow. Mr. Hurley was interviewed on October 30, 2015 by Charles S. Kennedy.

Topical Focus — Russian Democratic Transition in the 21st Century (with a focus on Media)

Q: What was the media like at that time?

HURLEY: The Russian media? Well this was the time when organizations like radio station Ekho Moskvyy started up after the wall came down. It was a hard hitting news station. It is to this day. I became friends with the editor in chief who is still there, Aleksey Venediktov. They tried to gather all opinions. I convinced White House staff to have Bill Clinton appear at the radio station for an interview as per the station's longstanding tradition, and a few years later convinced the Secretary's staff to have Secretary Clinton appear there. The broadcast media was owned by rich oligarchs. It was the time of Gusinsky and Berezovsky, guys who were fabulously wealthy largely because they had stolen a lot of the previously state-owned resources and were more clever than their peers. They were eventually run out of town by Putin. In the time I was there NTV was Gusinsky's media empire. The government came in and just pushed them out of the way. They took it over and now it is an often aggressive state mouthpiece. The same way with a lot of the other media. One of the things I noticed at the time that concerned me greatly was the Russians didn't seem to care. When NTV was taken over by Putin's forces, there was virtually no protest in the streets. Whereas in Eastern Europe if this were even threatened people would be out in the streets immediately. But in Russia there were just a couple of hundred protestors who went away as soon as it was gone. The next day all the people I had known as journalists were gone.

Q: In a way it fits a simple stereotype of people who had never known a democracy and all so it is the same old thing. We had a brief window but there was a very complacent electorate.

HURLEY: Yeah it is an odd thing with the Russians. In my third tour, 2009 to 2012, there were huge anti-government protests. I just thought, looking back on the time we are talking about, why did this happen now in 2010 and 2011, and not in 1999, 2000, 2001? It was a different world. There is much more of an established middle class in Russia now, though not always in the way that we think about it. People who have something to lose and who later got tired of Putin just thumbing his nose at the election system—he said, “OK, I was prime minister and now I am going to be president again.” People said, “What are you talking about?” So there were lots of protests about that, but not in the time of transition to Putin.

Q: Was this a competitive media?

HURLEY: Yeah, the post-Yeltsin media was, but the sort of iron fist in the velvet glove became more prevalent as time went by. The first to go was the television networks that started as being independent but ended up being largely not. There is virtually no independent television now. The last one to go was one that was created much later, Silver Rain. They were just eventually shut down more recently by Putin by just saying OK, all of you companies that support this television station are now no longer going to do so and they stopped. So when I was there as press attaché (1998-2001), in the beginning it was very good and open and competitive and changing. The newspapers held on longer than the television stations, but within the last couple of years they changed the 46 laws once again to say that foreigners can no longer own media in Russia. So all of the foreign participation, e.g., the Moscow Times, Vedomosti, that had foreign owners, they are all now owned by Russian interests. Radio station Ekho Moskvyy, which is now owned more than 50 percent by Gazprom, still maintains their more or less independent editorial line. Sort of like B 92 in Belgrade in similarly dark times. They still exist.

Q: Was there much talk about who is this guy Putin and where is he going and what is he up to?

HURLEY: With Putin? Yeah there was. It wasn't clear in the early stages that he would still be there for the long haul. Within five years they began to ask questions about what Putin is going to do and speculating about how he could work it that 25 years later he could still be in office even under the Russian constitution.

Q: Well looking back on it how did you feel you did?

HURLEY: Hard to say at this point. You could look at a country like Russia and say well what good did it do to train all those journalists where the state took over the media anyway. The answer is that we planted a lot of seeds and the game isn't over yet. Who knew that Putin would come in and take back virtually all of the media in Russia and turn it into a state mouthpiece as opposed to what we were trying to do with it which was trying to make it independent of the government and to give people information they need to make informed decisions?

Q: So what you did to a certain extent is plant seeds that could flourish at some point.

HURLEY: Many of the journalists that we trained work at places like Ekho Moskvyy, the big radio station in Moscow. They've let it continue to broadcast since the beginning, based no doubt on some behind the scenes personal relationships. There is a propaganda purpose in that as well. So those journalists are all legitimate careful journalists, and a lot of them write from the outside. We worked with a lot of the journalists who were with Radio Liberty in Azerbaijan who were just thrown out. So it is an ongoing battle. If they cause discomfort with the government, that is usually a good thing. It is usually a sign that they are doing their job well.

Q: Well in the last few years did you see much outlook for change from your perspective?

HURLEY: First of all, the physical face of Russia changed enormously. Moscow is such a dynamic city that if you blink you miss something. It is enormously difficult for people who aren't there to perceive what is going on. Our worst enemy in the Embassy was somebody who had been there in the 90s or earlier and then came back as an academic for a conference or a CODEL (Congressional Delegation). They would assume they knew everything about Russia. They would think— I was here in the 90s and 15 years later it is still Russia. But it changed physically, it changed enormously. One of the scary things in 2009-12, was the massive billboards that said things like "*Rossiya dlya Russkikh*," Russia for Russians. Everybody else can piss off is what they meant. It was a nativist thing. At the demonstrations of 2011, you would see 100,000 people in freezing weather in the streets, protesting about Putin stealing the election and telling people "Mr. Medvedev and I have just exchanged positions." That was something of a last straw. People protested like I have never seen before in Russia. They would whistle at Putin when he appeared at public venues— a sign of disapproval in Russia. On the other hand, by the time I left, a lot of that had disappeared. You don't see massive demonstrations now in Russia. One of the problems with the demonstrations was there was no unifying theme. There was sort of anti-Putin, but there wasn't much else that seemed to hold them together. There were lots of disparate elements. The Communists were demonstrating too and were not pro-Putin.

RWANDA

N/A

SAUDI ARABIA

N/A

SENEGAL

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

STEVEN WAGENSEIL
Department of State
Political Officer
Senegal
(1985-1988)

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 – Election Observation and Political Legitimacy in Senegal

Q: So who won the election?

WAGENSEIL: Ah. The elections took place, I'm trying to remember, I think it was in '88, early '88; it might have been '87, I've lost track. And there were six or seven candidates for president. President Diouf was head of the Socialist Party. Abdoulaye Wade was the candidate, if I remember correctly, of the Social Democratic Party (PDS). And there were a bunch of others from other parties, which of course effectively split the opposition vote. And under the leadership of Ambassador Walker we organized the diplomatic community to observe the elections. It was not organized in a way that you and I know election observation now, 20 years later -- systematic with check sheets and arm bands and all -- but we did try to split up the country and cover different districts and so forth and then we all got back together at the end of the day or the two days and compared notes and so forth and so on. Our conclusion was that the election -- there were violations of the rules -- people wearing party regalia while voting, women in Abdou Diouf tee-shirts or, you know, skirts, wraparound skirts with Socialist Party symbols on them and that sort of thing but...

Q: Which was against the rules, of course.

WAGENSEIL: Which was against the rules but probably not a problem. Our conclusion was that the results of the voting did reflect the will of the people and that President Diouf was elected

because the Socialist Party was the most popular and he was the most popular candidate. But Dakar -- I don't want to say Dakar "burst into flames" -- but there were significant demonstrations, barricades, burning tires and whatnot as a result of the dissatisfaction of the heavily urbanized and outlying areas of Dakar. These were people who migrated to the city from the countryside over the previous years and who were most politicized and who had been the most active supporters of the oppositions. They thought they were robbed and thought the elections were rigged -- they were not fair and so forth 93 and so on -- and so there were demonstrations. And barricades and parts of the city were shut off and we had to send people home and pull the kids out of school and so forth for some time -- two or three days.

Q: Some political excitement for you.

WAGENSEIL: There was indeed, yes. And actually, Abdoulaye Wade -- who had been the principal challenger to Diouf -- was arrested and put on trial for organizing sedition or something. And the trial lasted like six weeks and I went to the trial. You know, I had met him many times and been in pretty close contact with some of his campaign advisors and been to several of his political rallies as I had been to others and so forth. I was the embassy observer at the trial and there were a couple of others from other embassies. He was defended by- wait a minute, I've lost his name- the French lawyer who's always defending the most radical revolutionary firebrand; there was just a book about him. Anyway.

And I was at the trial every day where there was a public session; it was at the Supreme Court building out on the peninsula of Dakar and I was there when he was acquitted. He and all of his co-defendants were acquitted of attempting to overthrow the government or anything because basically, as far as I can remember, the prosecution didn't have a case for any kind of organized rebellion. There was rebellion and it was in support of him but it had not been organized by anybody, it was pretty spontaneous, I believe.

Q: So a reasonable judicial system as well.

WAGENSEIL: Yes. There had been challenges to the elections, to the voting, and the count was supervised by the Supreme Court and I met frequently with the Chief Justice and he walked me through the stages of the vote-counting process and I remember seeing metal footlockers in his office piled up, the seal still on them and so forth. He said, "It's all there -- it's all very straightforward and aboveboard." No, they were very, very proud of their rule of law and it was pretty good. It was all above-board and by the book and as a result, as I say, the government lost the case and he was acquitted and released, and of course as a result of that kids burned some more tires in celebration. And I remember us walking out of the court building onto the front steps and you look northward from the front steps towards the center of Dakar and I could see

smoke rising and I said “Not again!” -- but it was just a celebration and nothing else really transpired.

SERBIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DOUGLAS B. WAKE
OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro
Belgrade, Serbia
(2004-2006)

Douglas B. Wake joined the Foreign Service in the Fall of 1981. Coinciding with his work in former Yugoslavia, he served in Latvia, Myanmar, Russia, Sweden, and the Soviet Union. Douglas B. Wake was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2014.

Topical Focus – U.S. Observation of the Montenegro Independence Referendum

WAKE:...The other thing that made it hard to question the results which was not the responsibility of my office but was the responsibility of the OSCE was a big observation mission, per capita probably one of the largest observation missions of any voting process in Europe. You only have about 600 thousand people in Montenegro and there were hundreds and hundreds of international observers for the referendum that took place in May of 2006. It was not a large margin but there was enough of a margin above 55 percent that it really couldn't be questioned seriously. It was briefly questioned by some in Serbia but the Serbian president, Boris Tadic, flew down immediately to Podgorica to congratulate the Montenegrins on their independence and we had one case in Europe, in former Yugoslavia, where two pieces of the former Yugoslavia separated without any violence or long-term conflict.

In fact, while there were issues to resolve, of course, relating to how diplomacy would be carried out, who got the ownership of the buildings and all these sorts of things, most of this was done pretty peacefully and most of it was worked out pretty well in advance because the Montenegrins knew that under that charter of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro if they were the ones who held the referendum they would be considered the new state under international law. Serbia would inherit essentially the continuous status that had been Serbia-Montenegro and previous Yugoslavia including its ownership of buildings and its role in international organizations and so on. Montenegro had to join the OSCE and other organizations but it was able to do so rather quickly and that was a smooth part of dealing with the politics of the region. The main mandate of the Mission where I worked was not these high political issues of the relations between Serbia and Montenegro; it was institution-building and support for modernizing and democratizing institutions in Serbia and Montenegro that had, of course, been first under Yugoslav Communism and then under Milosevic's nationalist and quite backward looking rule. So the priorities were police reform, judicial reform, media reform, a little bit of work on economic and environmental issues and overall democratization issues.

WAKE:...Previously under Milosevic there had been a kind of gerrymandering scene so that even though the Albanians were the majorities in these three municipalities, they never had any seats in the local administrations, they didn't have the mayors and they didn't have the authorities. So the deal was this: you guys stop fighting, lay down your arms, for the most part there was an amnesty with maybe a few exceptions for people who had been particularly involved in the worst violence, but then we the international community will facilitate a process and the Serbian authorities agreed a process where the election law will be amended. We will have immediate elections in these municipalities where it will be possible for these majorities to win seats and over the long term attention will be paid to development of these municipalities which had been very much ignored by Milosevic and previous Yugoslav governments (because they were the Albanian populations, so why bother to put good roads or industry there?).

By 2004, when I arrived, this thing had been rather well stabilized but there were still tensions. One of the ways of addressing the tension was that the OSCE mission had a very small office down in a place called Bujanovac in Southern Serbia with actually only one expat employee, a British guy. He had on his staff an Albanian and a Serb as interpreters but much more as liaison to the community. Then there was a small police training element because part of the deal was that some of the former fighters in this Albanian insurgency could qualify to join something called the Multi-Ethnic Policing Element so that you would no longer just have Serbs running around policing Albanian communities; you would have a multi-ethnic Serbian and Albanian mix; there was also a Roma population and some other minorities, even Bulgarians and others.

SEYCHELLES

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

RICHARD W. CARLSON
Department of State
Ambassador to the Seychelles
Seychelles
(1991-1992)

Richard Carlson was born and raised in Boston and enlisted in the Navy in 1958 before attending the University of Mississippi with the NROTC program. He worked in journalism and banking prior to joining USIA as Public Liaison Director. He became Director of Voice of America in 1986 and transitioned to Ambassador of Seychelles in 1991. Ambassador Richard W. Carlson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1988.

Topical Focus – State Department Democracy & Free Press Programming in Seychelles

Q: The fact that you were the American Ambassador there in a place where everybody was spying on everybody else they must have wondered why you were there and who you were?

CARLSON: I think this is basically true. The State Department was quite supportive of the idea of my pushing President Rene towards a multi-party democracy. The timing was perfect in the fall of 1992. All the changes that were taking place in Africa were of great interest to the Seychelles government. Their friends in the Eastern bloc had all fallen. The Soviet Union was in disarray. The former USSR ambassador had become the Russian ambassador. When I got there he was totally confused. I got to know him quite well. He was a protégé of Shevardnadze's, the Foreign Minister.

Q: He left to become the President of Georgia at the present time.

CARLSON: Yes, and the ambassador, whose name was Kilselov, had followed a very aggressive intelligence officer named Orlov who had been disliked and who had run a very aggressive, anti-US campaign. He did all kinds of provocative things behind the scenes to screw up relationship between the US and the Seychelles. Kilselov was a professional diplomat and this was his first ambassadorship. He had the rug pulled out from under him. He couldn't even get a return cable. There was no foreign policy. I used to go fishing with him a lot.

The State Department very much liked the idea of our pushing, in a little place like this, for a free press which they didn't have. They had no opposition press at all. It wasn't allowed. There was a law that prevented anyone from criticizing the President. Now the President, this is a London School of Economics graduate who used to speak kind of First Amendment talk until he got to be the President, then it all went out the window. So when I went over I stopped in Great Britain and met with the State Department

counterparts at White Hall and then had a meeting with people from the Quai d'Orsay on the subject. The French, British and Americans, and ultimately the Germans...there is no German ambassador accredited to the Seychelles is resident in Nairobi...formed a combined effort to push the President and the administration of the Seychelles into a liberalized press policy and a multi-party election. And we succeeded.

Q: These are easy terms, "we pushed," what do you mean?

CARLSON: I took the lead in this, but the British High Commissioner and the French Ambassador were very important to this...we all had conversations about it and some of it was probably reported to the President given the security apparatus of the Seychellois government and the fact that we had meetings at unsecured places. We took a fairly aggressive verbal position in representing our respective governments, that the time had arrived where the President must seriously consider the events in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Africa and the changes that were taking place and accommodate himself to those changes. And that the US government which supplies aid to...well it rents the tracking station and there is always an interest in increasing the rent of the tracking station and always an interest on the part of the US government to keep the rent down. There were AID funds in a limited fashion and really quite small funds considering. There is a high standard of living in the Seychelles much which is contributable to foreign aid, although they don't like to say that. It's a \$5,000 per capita income there. So \$20,000 for a family of four is quite a high standard of living. Most of that is out of foreign aid; some from tourism, but most from foreign aid.

The President was sensitive to this and in a series of sessions with him about the political realities of life and the resolve of the US government not to tell people how to run their own government, not to tell them what form of government they ought to have within a...

[side 2 of tape 3]

....there was no interest in the part of the US government in telling the President of Seychelles what form the government of the Seychelles should take in a finite way. That is not our role. But the idea that the people of the Seychelles ought to play a role in how the government is determined was something we strongly believe in. So do the British, and so do the French. It was the first time that this kind of pressure had been brought to bare in a concerted way where four strong countries were telling the President in effect that now was the time to do this.

Q: With the Soviet Union no longer in existence and all, this pretty well stopped any sort of counter offers.

CARLSON: Yes, that is right. We were appealing to the President's pragmatism, if nothing else. The President said he was a very strong socialist, but like most people he was really interested in power, and like most people in power he was interested in the perpetuation of the power. This is what I believe. It was probably more attractive to him to talk about doing good through power because you can get away with a lot if you do

that. If you talk socialism you can somehow skip over a few human rights violations here and there if they are not too egregious. Human rights violations were serious in my opinion. Of course, judged against actions in Africa they were nothing. Realistically people were not being strung up by their armpits on hooks. There were people killed in the Seychelles. Some were killed because of the government. But there were a small handful of them. That doesn't excuse it in the slightest, but there was no wholesale terror. But there was oppression of people.

Q: Well, a 3000 body guard...

CARLSON: That was terrible. Let me amend that. There were 3000 under arms. Part of them were militia. Nobody is allowed even to have a spear gun. Any weapon is outlawed. So the army and the navy were about 1800 and then there were another 1000 party members who were armed and had uniforms and were trained. They weren't full time military.

The President was mostly interested...I think his socialism was more of a public relations device. He would have been more interested in the welfare of the people if he had truly believed in it. He was much more interested in personal power.

We approved him in September, October, November and on December 5 he held a news conference announcing freedom of the press in the country. He didn't say that certain diplomats had been bugging him so he was going to do this. He, in fact, made it seem like this was something he had had under independent consideration for some time. In point of fact, the previous July he had stated in his July 6, a big holiday there, speech that he had no intention of going to a multi-party system, that one party was all that was required and that that was perfect for the Seychelles. They didn't need a conflicting newspaper. All it did was to cause chaos. The government controlled press was perfectly satisfactory.

There had always been an underground paper, but if you were caught with it you ran the risk of going to prison. I think the President was finally smart enough to realize that the underground paper savaged the President regularly. In the most unbelievable ways. They would print lists of his girlfriends and their addresses, and when he was there, etc.

As soon as the President allowed an opposition press, the opposition papers became immediately very responsible. They stopped doing that to the President. They realized their responsibilities. In effect he got a better...they became much less...everybody read the "Black Tortoise," which was the name of the underground paper, because it was so scandalous. But as soon as they got legitimized they became like the New York Times of the Seychelles.

They have had a constitutional convention, the President was nominated...this was after I left. They still have had not total electoral freedom, but they have moved a long way from where they were last fall.

SIERRA LEONE

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR CHARLES A. RAY
U. S. Ambassador
Sierra Leone
(2004–2007)

Ambassador Ray was born and raised in Texas. He was educated at the University of Maryland, Morgan State College, the University of North Carolina, and Benedictine College. After service in the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone, Mr. Hull joined the United States Information Service Foreign Service, serving both in Washington, DC and abroad. His foreign posts include Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Pretoria, Ouagadougou, Mogadishu, Prague, Lagos, and Addis Ababa, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. In 2004, he was named United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone, where he served until 2007. Ambassador Ray was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2013.

Topical Focus – Sierra Leone’s First Multi-Party Elections in 1996

RAY: Chairman Strasser. I actually met with him two or three times. I was one of the few foreigners he would actually talk to and I think it was because of the military background. What I don’t know but I actually had a lot of contact with the people beneath him. His number two I actually personally sat and watched TV in his house, him in his undershirt once while we discussed them stepping down and allowing elections. Then several of the other people on the junta I met once or twice a week. Strasser was very shy, not very comfortable around people. I would say though the one thing that makes me think that we had a good relationship is his aide, a young major named Terwelly was sent to my office every Friday to brief me on everything they had done during the week. We met on a couple of occasions and he was shy but friendly; he didn’t deal with people too well. But I did have an interesting last meeting with him; this was after the election. I won’t say we I was me, the UN Resident Representative, the German ambassador, the British ambassador primarily and the Nigerian ambassador talked them into not blocking elections, allowing the elections to go forward. They all agreed to it we would then arrange for them to get visas and scholarships to go abroad to study when things calmed down. Somewhere along the way Strasser decided to put his name up for election which is a violation of the agreement that they made and one Saturday morning as I was sitting in my apartment the doorbell rings. One of the members of the junta, I remember his first name was Karifa but I can’t remember his last name, he comes in and he wants to talk to me out on the balcony. He tells me about this and Strasser is reneging on the deal and they all feel bad about it because they made a promise and they just wanted to let me know that they weren’t going to let this happen. I said, “Well I hope you guys aren’t going to be violent.” “No, we’ve had enough killing” and he goes, “Well okay.” So he leaves. Monday the ambassador and I had to go to the foreign minister for

something and we are coming back and I see two cheap loads of armed soldiers heading toward the state house. I told the ambassador we better go back to the embassy right away; we're going to have to be sending a cable pretty quick. I hadn't briefed because I wasn't sure and then when I got back I briefed him and sure as the dickens we get a call about two hours later. In their weekly morning Monday afternoon meeting when Strasser walked in they grabbed him, slammed him down on the floor, handcuffed him, put a bag over his head, took him out to the airfield, put him on a helicopter and had him flown to Guinea into exile. We got this call saying we will live up to the agreements we made and they pretty much did. There were a few hiccups here and there. A few of the military commanders tried little shows of force but by this time it must have been about March/April of '96 I think the mood was the people wanted elections and they were ready to face the army down to get it. They actually had a fairly decent election. The guy who won, Tejan Kabbah, who was a retired UN employee who had come back home after he retired. Him, I knew pretty well, he had been on the advisory committee for the return to democracy that they appointed and tried to write a new constitution. He was actually pretty good at first he struck me as a decent, caring individual but then a year after I left he was overthrown in a coup and then reinstated to 62 serve out his term. I think he got the big man's disease; he became very intolerant of any opposition. They had a fairly contentious election that replaced him but they are on their way to having a country that almost functions normally now.

Q: Was there much going on with other countries?

RAY: Yeah, I mean when it looked like elections were going to take place there was a big UN mission, UNDP, again because it was an emergency situation; you had WHO, WFP and UNDP. The main actors in the effort to support Sierra Leone to go to democratic elections were the UN, the British, the U.S., the Germans and believe it or not the Nigerians even though at that time they didn't have a very democratic government of their own. Security for the American embassy was provided on an informal arrangement we had with the commander of the ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone who was a Nigerian. They had a large; I think they had two or three battalions of Nigerian troops in Sierra Leone at the time.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR THOMAS N. HULL, III
U. S. Ambassador
Sierra Leone
(2004–2007)

Ambassador Hull was born in New York and raised in Massachusetts. He was educated at Dickinson College and Columbia University. After service in the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone, Mr. Hull joined the United States Information Service Foreign Service, serving both in Washington, DC and abroad. His foreign posts include Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Pretoria,

Ouagadougou, Mogadishu, Prague, Lagos and Addis Ababa, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. In 2004 he was named United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone, where he served until 2007. Ambassador Hull was interviewed by Daniel F. Whitman in 2010.

Topical Focus – USAID Support for Elections in Sierra Leone

HULL: The United Nations was critically important to the democratization, to the success of the elections in Sierra Leone. So I worked very closely with the UN. We met regularly, first the SRSG and later the ERSG with myself. We coordinated with the British, the French, the Germans, the Chinese, the Nigerians and so forth. So we had a very compatible group of Ambassadors who could sit around and find common direction even if we all couldn't contribute in the same way. For example, in most countries, when you have an election situation, an election basket is created into which countries can make donations but the United States can never do so, because of our own aid restrictions. Nevertheless we could coordinate by agreement with the others saying we are going to do this before the elections. For example, in Sierra Leone we were able to use USAID funds to support the training and implementation of indigenous election observers in the country, while another donor funded through the UN basket, international observers for the election. So we worked with the others to make sure that things functioned smoothly. But it took all of us together as a team to achieve success. I think each of us individually could take satisfaction from the success that was achieved in Sierra Leone in terms of very genuinely free and fair elections. The critical moment came when the election commission was in limbo. Prior to the local elections in 2004, just before I arrived the election commissioners were fired; new ones were put into office, but they really lacked direction and they needed leadership. And they needed a Chairman of the National Elections Commission. I, and I am sure some of the other ambassadors under President Kabbah, I said to President Kabbah, "You need a person of integrity who is apolitical in this position or you will not have a credible election in this country, and by the way it would be best if you would appoint a woman, because women are not seen as a political threat to any of the male leaders of this country and therefore can be more acceptable to everyone." In point of fact, very shortly thereafter, he did what I was hinting at, to appoint Christiana Thorpe as the National Electoral Commissioner. She was a former nun, a no-nonsense woman who had been very prominent in education in the country, had directed a civil society NGO for education that coordinated with teachers throughout the country. So again another good example of somebody from civil society coming in and making a contribution. She came in and she fired everybody in the electoral commission so that all that was left were the other four commissioners and herself. The other four commissioners, the men were pretty useless. But what she did was she started hiring people and going out and finding uncorrupted people to staff the National Electoral Commission to make it truly independent and largely proceeded to ignore her fellow commissioners except when they were exceeding the bounds of what their positions were politically.

Q: But she is directly in charge of them.

HULL: Oh well theoretically yes, but some of them had political connections and so forth, but they were marginalized. She hired some people away from the Embassy, some of our good FSNs. But we could hardly object since we were supporting the Electoral Commission. I must say with support from the UN, from the British, from the Americans and others, support from

NGOs like Search for Common Ground, they did a superb job of preparing this election. When Christiana Thorpe was in a position where it appeared the government would not support her or the government would drag its feet to delay the election or whatever, the rest of us would step in and wag our fingers at the powers that be and say no you can't do this if you are going to have credible elections. We are very fortunate that President Kabbah had a career in the UN development program, the UNDP, so he understood the international importance of respecting internationally accepted standards for elections. So as they went forward, when push came to shove, the President always came down on the side of what would be the acceptable international standard for an election. He might not have liked it, but he swallowed hard and did it. Sierra Leone's credibility was on the line, and when they ultimately did have the election it was very credible. They had to have a run-off election which took place after I had departed the country. There was of course a temptation. This came after I left, but my parting words to the President and to others were you must respect the process and accept the results. After I left it took continued international pressure to make sure it happened and it did. I think the United States could take some credit and satisfaction for the type of election that was held. I think we have had a number of other elections in Africa such as in Ghana where we can be satisfied that you are beginning to see some reform in elections. But whether or not it is sustainable or whether it was a unique circumstance in Sierra Leone remains to be seen in future elections because you will not have the same international attention, the same international assistance, the same National Electoral Commissioner probably, and you just won't have that focus. So who knows what happens the next time around, but if it is sustainable, it would be wonderful. I would also point out something interesting. This applies to elections in Liberia and Sierra Leone which in Freetown we had funded by the Department of State, the military depot, a peace keeping depot where we kept vehicles and communications equipment and other such non-lethal materials which could be used to support peace keeping missions anywhere in Africa. But one of the ways we used this was to lend the vehicles to Electoral Commissions so they could get around the country and pick up ballot boxes and what have you. We did it in Liberia. The vehicles came back. Sometimes their engines had been traded out for crummy ones and their tires had been traded out for bald ones, but nevertheless we made the contribution to the election in Liberia. Then we in Sierra Leone likewise. It was the rainy season. Helicopters could not get around. The UN did not have the military helicopters; it was a peace building mission. Our vehicles were used around the country to deliver election materials and collect election materials. So even when we didn't have a lot of money to put into elections, we could contribute in a material way.

SINGAPORE

N/A

SLOVENIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

AMBASSADOR WARREN ZIMMERMANN

**U. S. Ambassador
Yugoslavia
Belgrade, Yugoslavia
(1989-1992)**

Warren Zimmerman was born in 1934 and was educated at Yale and Cambridge. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961. His career included posts in Caracas, Belgrade, Moscow, Paris, Madrid, Geneva and Vienna and was named ambassador to Yugoslavia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Topical Focus – Post-Communist Democratization in Slovenia

Q: What about the rest of Yugoslavia, Tudjman, and Croatia. Well, let's sort of go through it. What about Croatia?

ZIMMERMANN: All right. Croatia was still under communist leadership, and very retrograde communist leadership. It was not a reform communist government in Croatia. Tudjman was at that point in early 1989 a minor nationalist politician who had done jail time for nationalism in the Tito period. So, Croatia was not the nationalist opponent of Serbia, at least not to the extent that it became, that it was a year and a half later. Slovenia was the most interesting of the republics because it had a progressive reform communist leadership under Milan Kucan who is still the president of Slovenia which was prepared to organize Slovenian elections and to leave power if the communist party lost the elections. That is in fact what ultimately happened in 1991, and they did leave power. 123 They were at the time I arrived in Yugoslavia, without any question the most liberal communist regime in the world.

Q: How did you see the various republics by the time you were there after about six months or so and well into your tour? Was Croatia and Tudjman just sort of on a train that was going to end up in one place, independence and Slovenia. I mean is this something you could do anything about?

ZIMMERMANN: It wasn't apparent in 1989. They hadn't had elections yet in the republics in 1989. That was in 1990. You still had communist leaderships in all of the republics. In some republics they were quite good leaderships. For example, Slovenia had a very progressive communist leadership, arguably the most liberal communist government that ever existed. That doesn't make it all that liberal but it probably is the least illiberal that ever existed, and it was run by a then young man named Milan Kucan who was prepared to risk communist rule in a free election. Which he did a year later and lost. He won the presidency but his party lost control.

Kucan was not talking about independence in 1989. He was talking about somehow getting Yugoslavia out of the grip of Milosevic. He saw Milosevic very clearly as the enemy of Yugoslavia's ever getting in to the European organization because of Milosevic's attitude toward Kosovo, because of his dictatorial ways, because of his more retrograde communism. So Kucan was not talking about independence, but he certainly was talking about a kind of an autonomy for Slovenia that would make it independent of Milosevic's influence. In Croatia the party was quite corrupt, the communist party. They didn't like Milosevic but they were not pushing as Slovenia was toward a western style of democracy. In some of the smaller republics like Montenegro and Macedonia, you had some very good people, young people, in charge who were quite interested in democratizing. So it was a very mixed picture, but Milosevic was terrifying everybody in the approach he was taking. I think many of the leaders in the republics realized that Milosevic really wanted to take over Yugoslavia and run it in Serbia's interest. Of course that horrified them

SOMALIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ELIZABETH SHACKELFORD
Department of State
Political Officer
Mogadishu, Somalia/Nairobi, Kenya
(2015–2017)

Elizabeth Shackelford was born in Oxford, Mississippi, in 1979. After receiving her BA in History from Duke University in 2001, Shackelford received her JD in International Law and Legal Studies from the University of Pittsburgh in 2006. After a brief legal career that took her around the world, Shackelford entered the Foreign Service in 2010, beginning as a Consular Officer in Warsaw, Poland. She then served as a Political Officer in Warsaw, and Political/Consular Officer in Juba, South Sudan, a Watch Officer in D.C., and finally a Political Officer in Nairobi, Kenya, and Mogadishu, Somalia. She then retired from the Foreign Service in 2017 in protest of the Trump Administration. She now works as an author, a lecturer at Dartmouth College, a Senior Policy Director at the Dickey Center for International Understanding, and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune. Elizabeth Shackelford was interviewed by Mark Tauber in 2020.

Topical Focus – U.S. Role in Somalia Elections

Q: So, then today is September 8, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Elizabeth Shackelford as she prepares to go out—you are actually going out to Mogadishu?

SHACKELFORD: The permanent mission was still based in Nairobi at the time, so I was going out first to Nairobi and that tour would be split between our offices inside the U.S. mission in Nairobi and Mogadishu, in a bunker.

Q: Okay. The other aspect of addressing Somalia is the large number of refugees. Did you become interested, active; did you visit the refugees?

SHACKELFORD: Inside Kenya?

Q: Yes.

SHACKELFORD: Not in Kenya really. One of the curious aspects of how we divvy things up in the U.S. government is that the refugee camps, which are located in Kenya, were the purview of the Kenya mission. So, the ones who visited the refugee camps in Kenya were all folks who were connected to the refugee office in Kenya—you have a large number of refugees in Kenya, so they've got a dedicated office to refugee issues.

Q: Now, you arrive in Nairobi in what year?

SHACKELFORD: May of 2016.

Q: Okay. How did they divide up responsibilities once you're there?

SHACKELFORD: It was a small mission, but we had a number of career officers, so definitely more well-staffed from the State Department side than South Sudan had been. And I was one of four political/economic officers. We had a political/economic chief, we had a political officer focused on Puntland and Somaliland, which are somewhat separate entities. We had an economic officer and then I was the political officer focused on their national political issues and human rights. Because it was supposed to be an election year in Somalia, of sorts, the electoral process was my main purview.

Q: Is it worth describing how the election worked?

SHACKELFORD: It's a very interesting, complex situation. When I arrived, they were supposed to hold the process to elect the parliament and the president in 2016. I arrived in May. They had not yet figured out how they planned to choose them or when precisely the dates were going to be. So, I was dropped immediately into negotiations over how exactly do you choose the parliamentarians. They had had these hopes of reaching greater representation. It ended up being this incredibly complex situation of having elders, clan elders, who had been—you didn't really know exactly how these guys were all selected. They were all men, of course. And they would choose parliamentarians—or they would choose the number of electors, which ended up being several thousand, who would vote on parliamentarians. So, you have clan elders who would select electors who would vote on parliamentarians. And the parliamentarians would elect the president.

Q: Ah, okay.

SHACKELFORD: Every piece of it was an awkward, difficult negotiation over which clans and subclans had which representation and which were the legitimate clan elders. And who was able to select electors.

Q: Wow.

SHACKELFORD: It was a negotiation, right? Not an election, definitely a negotiation.

Q: (Laughs) Wow. Now, the people who are doing the electing, are they physically located in Somalia?

SHACKELFORD: If you look at the history of Somalia since the 1990s, it had been a very long time since you had this number of people selecting who would run the country. And it was notable that it was not entirely selected in Mogadishu. Mogadishu had been the location of all of the selection processes in the past since the transitional federal government had come into power in 2004 and had only gotten to Mogadishu in around

2007. There were a couple of iterations after that, but this had become a more national project, still not that representative, but the elections of parliamentarians happened mostly in the different federal member state capitals. So, people who had been selected by elders would go to the federal member state capitals to cast their ballots for the parliamentarians.

Q: How many states were there?

SHACKELFORD: We were still in the middle of the formation of the federal member states when I arrived.

Q: Right.

SHACKELFORD: At the time they were rapidly trying to piece together different smaller states as federal member states. They had not yet decided what Mogadishu would be, would it be a federal member state, would it be a separate entity? So, Somaliland remained on the outside, but it had representatives. Puntland was functional on its own as an established federal member state. And then you had four other federal member states that were recently established with Hirshabelle still in negotiations over that state's official formation. This was all part of the negotiations between the different regions and Mogadishu, which was trying to have a strong center from which to control a country. Other countries, like the United States, prefer that since they want to be able to negotiate with Mogadishu, not five or six other states.

Q: Right, right, right.

SHACKELFORD: Complicated.

Q: How different were the states in the sense of were there language differences, were there ethnic differences?

SHACKELFORD: There's a myth that Somalia is ethnically homogenous, but that isn't accurate since there is also a large ethnic Bantu minority in the population. Its size is unclear, with no reliable census data. But most of the country's other groups -- the ones that weigh in the most politically and economically -- are all ethnic Somali and speak Somali but are broken down into separate clans.

Q: Okay, okay.

SHACKELFORD: Of course, that's an oversimplification of what had happened there. But I quickly saw this massive vacuum of attention just sucked away from anything I was doing. Suddenly nobody in Washington was reading a cable that I wrote or cared what I had to say about the situation. All focus went onto the security situation again, which had all been going on in the background. We had I think eight State Department officers focused on Somalia. Five of them are focused on military issues because much of the military program there is funded by the State Department and managed by the State

Department. So, you've got those five who always have attention because of the security situation. I focused on other things, and suddenly my reliable spot in the bunker disappeared. I traveled in a lot less often because my portfolio no longer had primacy. And I suddenly had to face the truth that every other State Department person did, that all Washington cared about was the counterterrorism effort. And you see the result of that pretty quickly.

Q: Yes, I get it. That is something in State Department life you very vividly and very quickly see or kind of get left in the shallows. So, what are you thinking? Are you thinking about curtailing or are there other opportunities that are presenting themselves in sort of the same region but doing something different? What's next?

SHACKELFORD: Part of me was thinking, Oh, well, now I don't have to spend every waking moment and weekend in a bunker in Mogadishu; that's not bad. But this also came around the same time that Rex Tillerson, our new Secretary of State, did. I wonder if I had still been in the throes of the electoral process, which seemed to me like such a fundamentally important issue, that maybe it would have overridden my concerns about the direction of the administration. So many people who work in countries around the globe could stay the course because they get no focus from Washington. You can continue to plod your path for the interest that the State Department pushes, and you can do that out of the limelight and out of the sway of Washington because it's just not a high priority. But for me that was hard to do with issues like the Muslim travel ban coming up. Somalia is one of seven countries specifically targeted in the Muslim travel ban. And this all happens right around the same time, right. It's January, February, the election process there is wrapped up.

It was hard to ignore the fallout in Mogadishu. We had had the first election watch party in Mogadishu in twenty-five years, which was a particularly big deal given Somalia's own electoral process going on at the time. We'd invited dozens and dozens of Somali activists, government officials, and presidential candidates—there were twenty-six presidential candidates at one point in Somalia—to come join us at 4:00 in the morning, because of the time difference, to watch the results roll in on our presidential election. So, all of this is the backdrop to me wrapping up this work on trying to promote a less corrupt, more representative selection process of the Somali government. So, it's an interesting split screen, if you will.

Q: Were you, in terms of your own sense of accomplishment, were you able to do what you had hoped to do?

SHACKELFORD: On the elections in Somalia? Well, let's say I spent the first six months revising my expectations.

Q: Okay.

SHACKELFORD: And setting my bar a little lower. At which point, yes, I exceeded my expectations. It actually happened and there was a change in government.

Q: Okay, okay.

SHACKELFORD: It felt like the work that we were doing, that the U.S. government was doing there was really helping to bring in more diverse representation, voices from across a country where people across the country had not had a voice before. I worked very closely on—specifically on the effort to get Somalia to meet their own law, which said that they would have 30 percent female representation in parliament. They fell short of that, but—I want to say it was somewhere around 20 percent. It was respectable. It was a massive improvement. And that had been something I had really thrown myself into, so much so that I would go into meetings with representatives from different of the federal member states and they would just roll their eyes at me, like, You’re going to talk to us about women again, aren’t you?

Q: Laughs

SHACKELFORD: And I would, and I did. And that was where having the Somali language was very helpful. I would hear people making snide comments in Somali to each other, for which I would then call them out. I would respond, to their surprise, “I’m not a little girl. I heard that.” So, it felt as though we had really accomplished something, which is one of the reasons it was so hard to watch our position as a partner in the country starts to fade. The government was still very interested in our military assistance, which continued. But there was a sense that the State Department in the field, in Mogadishu no longer had much sway and that what we said mattered less because Washington contradicted it. We’d tell our counterparts in a meeting, “This partnership is very important. We’re working closely with you on electoral progress. We really want to make sure that we help you get a new constitution.” And then they would see tweets about the Muslim ban and that would be where their focus would be. And they just stopped trusting that we, the representatives in the field, really had a finger on the pulse of what the U.S. government was going to do.

Q: Were you reporting this back?

SHACKELFORD: Yes. Yes, and we as a mission sent back a cable specifically about the damage of the Muslim travel ban on our efforts in the country. It wasn’t a dissent because this came from our ambassador and that was our official point of view as a mission. We pushed back on it because it did nothing for our security interests and really harmed our partnership. It made it harder for us to send even our own staff back to the United States for training, for meetings, to send counterterrorism partners back to do training in the U.S. And it just looked really bad and fed right into Al-Shabaab’s narrative that we were Muslim-hating imperialists.

Q: Okay. Were there any other sectors of Somalia at the time that were nevertheless, let’s say at the grassroots level, making any kind of progress?

SHACKELFORD: There’s always progress happening on really small scales. USAID had had a fairly successful stabilization project that was working to help build resilience

against various shocks, whether that's climate shocks or security shocks. There were small success stories, but they faded to the back—the challenge is the sustainability when USAID funding pulls out, are these businesses still going to thrive. If AMISOM is not there holding that territory, are the people living there going to be able to continue to travel back and forth for trade? So, windows of promise but our focal point on military action made it difficult to have a lasting impact in areas of development and diplomacy

SOMALILAND

N/A

SOUTH AFRICA

FRANK SASSMAN
Cultural Assistant
Cape Town (1972-2001)

Mr. Sassman was born and raised in South Africa. He was educated at the University of Cape Town and the University of South Africa (UNISA). In 1972 he joined the staff of the US Embassy in Cape Town, where he worked as Cultural Assistant until 2001. During his lifetime, Mr. Sassman experienced the life of a black intellectual in South Africa in its apartheid years, with its strict racial segregation policies of segregation and humiliations. He also tells of the progress made in his country since the end of apartheid. Mr. Sassman was interviewed by Daniel F. Whitman in 2009.

Topical Focus – Elections in South Africa

Q: What was it that the old government did to convince cape coloreds to vote against the ANC?

SASSMAN: The surprise of the first democratic election in the country with regard to the results of the election in the Western Cape was that the majority of the colored, the colored is in the majority in the ethnic group in the Western Cape voted for the oppressor, the former oppressor the Nationalist Party. I tried to figure out what was it that brought this about. In trying to analyze this, I realized that the Nationalist Party knew the colored voter, or the colored person much better than anybody else. And they knew that with the so-called colored the religion was crucial in their lives. The poorer the person, the closer the person lives to that where his religion. When the Nationalist Party studies the less proportional representation less for the ANC, they saw that the first 50 members were members of the communist party or had communist leanings. In their campaign speaking to the colored they said, “Do you know that the first 50 members of the ANC proportional list are either communist or have strong communist leanings? Do you know what is going to happen to your church?” The communists are not religious and church going. This I think, was the thing that swung the colored voter to vote for the former oppressor. I can’t think of anything else.

Q: Could you also explain the importance of these lists, because it is a different system from the one we know in the U.S. the proportional lists.

SASSMAN: A proportional representation voting process, what happens is each party gives a list in priority order like in the case of the national vote for the national assembly. There are 400 members in the national assembly. Each party will submit a list of 400 members that if they win the election then they look at what percentage of the electorate voted for that particular party. If it

happens to be the ANC and 60% of the electorate voted for the ANC, 60% of the 400 members for the national assembly in parliament will be ANC members.

Q: This would be determined by their priority ranking.

SASSMAN: In the priority rank.

Q: As determined by the party, not by the voters.

SASSMAN: Yeah. The party will draw up the list and the party will do the ranking.

Q: That is why the nationalist strategy of actually truthfully saying that the top 50 people on the list, this would have been in 1994 I believe.

SASSMAN: Yeah, will go into parliament.

Q: Would be the type of political ideology that would not favor the church. Now building on that then, the COPE do I understand that you are saying COPE can actually have a chance of ruling the Western Cape in the next election because the ANC never did.

SASSMAN: Yeah, you see the ANC never won the majority vote in the provincial vote. There are three votes, the local government, the provincial and the national. Now when the provincial vote for the province, they never won the Western Cape. That is why the smaller parties, the DA is the main opposition and freedom front, all the other parties, they form an alliance. And because the ANC did not get an overwhelming majority as they got in the other provinces when the opposition formed an alliance they were the majority. So they were...

Q: This is why COPE is such... Now we are having an election in two months.

SASSMAN: Now COPE is going to take away a lot of the ANC votes. So they won't win nationally you know, but as a province the Western Cape vote is crucial because the ANC wants to win the Western Cape and COPE is going to hurt them by taking a lot of their votes away. If they form an alliance then COPE I think will have to go in with the smaller parties to form an alliance. It depends now on whether COPE is going to get more votes than the DA who is the official opposition with an alliance formed with the smaller parties.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

TIMOTHY MICHAEL CARNEY
UN Mission to South Africa

**Pretoria, South Africa
(1994)**

Ambassador Timothy Michael Carney was born in Missouri in 1944 and graduated from MIT in 1966. Carney studied abroad in France for a year before joining the Foreign Service. In the Foreign Service Carney served abroad in Vietnam, Lesotho, Cambodia, Thailand, South Africa, Sudan, Indonesia, and as ambassador to Sudan and Haiti. Ambassador Carney also spent time working with the Cox Foundation, the United States Mission to the United Nations and the National Security Council. Carney was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Topical Focus – UN and Elections in South Africa

CARNEY: I went to Lakhdar Brahimi as Special Political Advisor in the UN observer mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) for the elections that brought Mandela to power.

Q: You were in South Africa from when to when?

CARNEY: In Johannesburg—I want to say I arrived in March, but I will have to check that. I stayed through the election in May. Then Brahimi asked me to stay on an extra month, which I did.

The election itself was fascinating. First of all, there was a pre-Brahimi mission led by Angela King. She did not have enough horsepower and Brahimi did. He was a former Algerian foreign minister, Special Representative of the UN for the Congo. Then sent to South Africa as the Secretary General's man for the South African elections. Brahimi immediately recognized that I could be enormously useful. He picked the slice of my experience with white South African politics from when I had been political counselor in Pretoria from '83 to '86. Indeed I did know a number of white South African politicians and of course black South African politicians. He had a little stable of special political advisors—an Egyptian who is active now, another American who was a professor at City College, an African specialist who is now in the DC area. I had dinner with him the other night—Herbert Weiss. Brahimi had his own team which has continued with him now, a fellow whose name betrays an Armenian background, Seryadarian, an Iraqi Ala Almaman, who was chief of protocol, is in Bosnia now, if I'm not mistaken rather than in Afghanistan with Brahimi.

Brahimi was exceedingly good working with the very competent South African negotiators and that negotiating process included Rolf Meyer and Leon Wessels, and the ANC [African National Congress] people also engaged in it. The big problem was getting the Zulu prime minister, Gatsha Buthelezi, on board the effort. He had been an early ANC member. He had become creator of the Inkatha Freedom Party, the political wing of the Zulu. Over the years of his return to South Africa, Inkatha had become very independent. The Zulu never accepted to become a Bantustan, to become independent themselves in the vision of the apartheid government so that all black tribes would have their own and rather small quasi independent mini states. The Zulu completely refused ever to buy into that. It looked, and the ANC began criticizing Gatsha because he was so clearly a pole around which Zulu were rallying, rather than joining the ANC itself. Negotiations succeeded in getting Gatsha to participate at the very last minute.

Q: Your role was just to watch this?

CARNEY: No, it was to talk with the political figures, find out what was going on, see if there were any grievances that the UN needed to address, see if there were any trends that were leaning in an unhappy direction. At the election itself, I joined other UN monitors at polling places.

Q: You have a white government. You have a challenging ANC, an opening up of the electorate for the first time.

CARNEY: A number of other parties as well.

Q: Yes. What was the role of the UN?

CARNEY: The mandate was to monitor the elections and see if they were free and fair. But in fact it was bigger than that.

Q: Could you talk about what you were—

CARNEY: As nearly as I could tell, a major effort was at facilitating, where needed, early identification of any problems, facilitation of their resolution so that the elections could go forward smoothly.

Q: How did you get involved?

CARNEY: I was basically advising Brahimi on what was going on in white politics and notably in the Afrikaner political elements.

Q: What was going on with the Afrikaners? This had been the group that had been the most adamantly opposed to black rule.

CARNEY: Yes. A personal friend of mine was the chief of staff for Frederik Willem De Klerk, the State President. It was De Klerk who had looked at the situation in South Africa with his close friends and decided that P.W. Botha's, his predecessor's, direction was going to produce chaos if not bloodbath. It was De Klerk and his associates who decided there had to be a negotiation. Mandela had to be let out of jail, and South Africa had to move forward as a non-racial state with apartheid ended. Now, not all Afrikaners agreed. But what De Klerk did was, he set a referendum among whites for the very direction that I've outlined. That referendum passed overwhelmingly. But there were nevertheless strong, armed, unhappy, ultraconservative whites who insisted De Klerk was wrong and there could never be a unified, non-racial South Africa.

Q: As the election approached, was everyone looking at these ultraconservatives and saying, "Is there going to be an assassination or an armed uprising?"

CARNEY: There were plenty of incidents. There was a bomb at the airport. There was a major bomb downtown which killed a number of people and set off what could have become a major riot that was damped down. There were clear provocations certainly done by these very right-wing Afrikaners. It didn't work. Mandela was able to keep the lid on.

Q: How did the voting go when you watched this?

CARNEY: It was interesting. I myself went to Sharpeville of historical fame, where the major riot over Bantu education took place that essentially set South Africa on its course for the last third of the 20th century. I went to a number of other places where there had been serious riots and important killings of rioters and activists. Everybody wanted to vote. The first place we went to was in Soweto. There were two polling stations. There was about to be a riot there because people were breaking into line and the lines were enormous. There weren't quite enough ballot boxes. We helped bring over one of the peacemakers, which was a title given to younger men in their 30s who were part of (black) civil society groups organized to help effect the transition by acting at the very local level to resolve conflicts and disputes. A couple of them came over and restored order. They had the mandate of the ANC and everybody knew it.

Q: You stayed on after the election.

CARNEY: Yes.... I left at the end of July.

Q: This would be July '94.

CARNEY: That's correct.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM P. POPE
Department of State
Deputy Political Counselor
South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa
(1991–1993)

Mr. Pope was born and raised in Virginia and educated at the University of Virginia. After serving in both the US Army and the US Navy, he joined the Foreign Service in 1974. Mr. Pope served several tours in the State Department in Washington, dealing, notably, with Counterterrorism. His overseas posts include Gaborone, Zagreb, Belgrade, Paris, Pretoria, Rome, and the Hague, serving as Deputy Chief of Mission in the latter two embassies. Mr. Pope was interviewed in 2006 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Topical Focus – U. S. Role in South African Elections

Q: Well what developed while you were there in the political process? You were there from '91 to '93?

POPE: Yes. I left before it all came to fruition and before the 1994 elections when Mandela became President. But it went a long way. They agreed, they formed their own internal teams and their own internal positions and began to have initial contacts with each other, the key players, Mbeki and Cyril Ramaphosa and those people on the one side and Roelf Meyer and the others on the other side and began to reach out to each other and have small meetings and then larger meetings and then finally they settled on the spot. By then it was like a huge political convention. It was really big and there were a lot of people and of course the press was all over it and people swarming every time some important delegate would come out of a negotiating room, people swarming with microphones. We were swarming in our own way, trying to peel them off to ask them, because Washington was really interested, Washington wanted to know everything. So what happened was organizing internally, both the government and the opposition, and then coming together and figuring out how to begin the negotiations. And then actually starting the negotiations.

POPE: I was, I was very optimistic about South Africa. I don't recall that we understood what a toll HIV/AIDS was going to take yet. It was there, but I don't think we understood the toll it was

going to take all the way across Africa but particularly in Central and Southern. And the other thing that already was worrying everybody and was already quite serious was crime. Even if the rest of the political transition went well, went really well, and even if there were an election and Mandela became president and he brought in lots of officials of all kinds of creeds and races and had the best possible administration, there was at a minimum that cloud on the horizon. Crime was so pervasive it was driving people out of Johannesburg. People were living in armed compounds already, and I'm just not sure in retrospect that I understood how bad it was going to get.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PRINCETON LYMAN
Department of State
Ambassador to South Africa
Cape Town, South Africa
(1992-1995)

Ambassador Princeton Lyman was born and raised in San Francisco, California, and educated at Stanford University, the University of California, and Harvard University. He began his career with USAID, later serving as U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria and South Africa, and as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Topical Focus – South Africa's Democratic Transition and 1994 Elections

Q: Tell us about the 1994 elections.

LYMAN: They finally were held in April. The sides had been negotiating for years; at the end of 1992, I made some public criticisms about the slow pace. In 1993, Chris Hani was assassinated; he was probably the second most popular ANC figure. He was the head of the communist party and very popular. When he died, we thought that South Africa would blow up. It was this event however that drove the ANC to demand a firm election date. Without such a date, the prediction was for a calamity. So the date was set as April 1994.

The government's line was that it didn't object to holding elections, but it wanted a full constitution in place between the elections and the time a new constitution was to be ratified. The ANC just wanted a transition document. De Klerk rejected that and demanded a full constitution. So 1993 was devoted to writing a new constitution. Once the election date was set, it became a very important date. My argument with Buthelezi was over his desire to postpone that date; in my view, the process had dragged on long enough. The election passed much more peacefully than we had anticipated.

Q: The election was not a surprise.

LYMAN: The election came out as people had anticipated. The ANC just missed getting the 2/3 of the parliament, which it needed to pass constitutional changes without allying itself to another party. That was just as well. They captured every province, but two. I had told everyone that Buthelezi would be a factor; most people had dismissed him as a non- entity. In fact, he won his province.

Q: You were there how long after the elections?

LYMAN: Mandela was inaugurated in May, 1994 and I left South Africa at the end of 1995. The inauguration was magnificent. It was a wonderful affair. The election itself was touch and go. We didn't know whether violence would break out. There were bombs exploded at the airport on the morning of the elections; the police arrested all the perpetrators which was a good sign; there was no more violence that day. That gave us a clear signal that the security forces would abide by the results of the election.

Mandela walked to the dais, followed by all of the chiefs of staff. He took his seat in the front row; the military chiefs sat with him. Colin Powell, who was a delegate, said: "That is the transition." Mandela gave a great speech; de Klerk became a second vice- president, which was a very gracious gesture. Mandela offered a spirit of reconciliation. The feeling among whites and blacks alike was that finally South Africa was free. The whites were freed from apartheid, with all of the condemnation that went with it.

Since then, of course, a variety of problems have arisen, but that is not surprising.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ROBERT STEPHEN BRENT
USAID
South Africa Bureau
Washington, D. C.
(1993-1999)

Robert Stephen (Steve) Brent studied at Duke University for his undergraduate degree before joining the U.S. Navy for six years of service. He then studied at Harvard University for both his masters' and doctorate degrees before working as a staffer for Senator Nancy Kassebaum in 1985 and entering USAID's Africa Bureau in 1986. He served in South Africa, Egypt, and Washington D.C..

He was interviewed by Carol Peasley in July 2018.

Topical Focus – USAID Support for South African Elections

Q: Prior to '94 and the election, there was no USAID assistance to the government in South Africa. After the election, and the change to majority rule, how controversial and difficult was that? Did you have a lot of local partners?

BRENT: In all honesty, we were a little slow in giving up the NGO programs. Many people said, "Look, we're now the majority, just give the money to the new government." We had 20 years of experience with NGOs being very effective, and government being dysfunctional. And so we were gun shy. We did start a local government program run by Peter Natiello. We had a brilliant counterpart for that, Chippy Olver, who was an MD and white ANC member. It worked great while Chippy was there, but not as great after he left. So we knew the government had limitations, we had to walk a line. We probably stayed with the NGOs a little too long. We should have probably been a little bolder, but we were having trouble finding good projects because the government was so new.

Q: Did USAID provide any assistance when the '94 election was coming up?

BRENT: Yes. We spent a lot of money spent on the election, to the extent when Brian Atwood (who knew a lot about elections) came out afterwards, he said, "How could you spend so much on one election?" Aaron said, "Well, we had all this stuff we had to do." I mean, it was not easy. They're running the first election they've ever had in the history of the country in which everybody could vote. You had to get the procedures down. Suppose you'd had all kinds of foul-ups in the election. That would have been a disaster. So yes, we spent a lot of money on it. The electoral systems, the ballots, electoral people, the money to NGOs. We really stepped in.

Q: And for observation and all that?

BRENT: Yes. And I think it went off pretty well.

Q: Yeah, I think that's true. There was one other thing which I hadn't realized that AID had been involved with, until I did an interview with Aaron Williams. And that was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Could you talk about that?

BRENT: I don't think we gave the TRC money; I don't think they needed it. It was a big thing for the country. Aaron might have been involved, but I don't think it was a funding issue.

Q: He may have just been talking about having gone to some of the meetings.

BRENT: I think that was probably it. And of course, when Brian Atwood was out, he was talking to Bishop Tutu, and we were in touch with those people all the time. One place we did give money was a little bit later, with the anti-corruption unit, and Stacy took the lead on that. The unit was quite aggressive in attacking corruption, I think it was called the Scorpions.

Tim Bork came out to visit South Africa after he was at the Ford Foundation. I had him over at my house. I said, "Tim, what should we do, post-election?" He said, "The single biggest thing in this country is going to be corruption. You have to get on that." I remembered that. Stacy personally led it, which was politically sensitive because they went after some quite senior people. Of course corruption in the ANC became a much bigger issue later. But at the time they were making an effort on it.

So the point is we were looking at, where are the weak points, what should we try to do? And again, it's hard when you're sitting there, particularly when you've got a new situation, like a new majority government, to figure out what the critical points of input are. It kind of comes up by proposals.

Q: Were you involved at all with the Gore and Mbeki commission? Did you have any interface with that?

BRENT: I did. I'm not a big fan of these mechanisms, Carol.

Q: Well, I think most people in AID are not.

BRENT: I guess the idea is that, if you get top principals involved, they're going to come up with brilliant new ideas that the bureaucracy has missed. I found to be not true. And what you're basically doing, you're trying to come up with deliverables all the time. I respected Al Gore for his attempt, but I didn't see a lot of payoffs.

Q: I know. And it became a very time consuming for it.

BRENT: Massively time consuming. And you divert stuff from other things, because you have to get deliverables done. It made it harder to hold money back, particularly in Egypt (because we had another one of these commissions in Egypt).

SOUTH SUDAN

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM HAMMINK
USAID
Mission Director
Sudan
Khartoum, Sudan
(2009–2011)

William “Bill” Hammink grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota to a family of six kids. Mr. Hammink received his BA in Psychology with a minor in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Minnesota, followed by a MA at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs in public affairs with a focus on international economics and international Development. Mr. Hammink joined USAID in 1981 as an International Development Intern (IDI). While at USAID, Mr. Hammink was stationed in Swaziland, Senegal, Madagascar, Russia, the West Bank/Gaza, Ethiopia, Washington, D.C., Sudan, India, and Afghanistan. He held a variety of roles, such as a Program Officer, focusing specifically on Democracy and Governance, and Mission Director in many countries. After 36 years of service with USAID, Mr. Hammink retired in 2017.

Topical Focus – South Sudan Independence Referendum

Q: Would you be going to Khartoum or to Juba?

HAMMINK: At the time Sudan was still one country, and the Mission Director job was for all of Sudan and covered the entire country, meaning both Khartoum and Juba. But I was assigned to Khartoum which was still the capital of the country. Anyway, I left EGAT in February of 2009, and I got to Khartoum a few weeks later. As I mentioned, it was still one country, although what they called one country-two systems. There was a separate government in the south called GOSS or Government of South Sudan based in Juba, even though it was one country. Under the CPA, GOSS basically could set up as a regional government with its own security forces, but could not have any separate foreign policy or monetary policy or anything of their own, which was still under the purview of the government of Sudan based in Khartoum.

So, it was tricky and difficult. But the idea was then, half way through the fifth year of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, there would be a referendum that the south and the southerners would vote on whether they wanted to stay as one country within all of Sudan or whether they wanted the south to pull out and become its own country.

And so, I’ll get to that part, which I think everybody knows what happened on that.

I got to Khartoum late February of 2009. One country. So, we had officially one mission, but really, it was two missions, because we had a team in Khartoum assigned to Khartoum, and we

had a team in Juba assigned to Juba, each with their own budget and authorities as well as sanctions to maneuver around. And they rarely mixed, because going back and forth was sometimes tricky and risky.

I was based in Khartoum, but literally, I spent half of my time in Juba, because I was still responsible for a very large development program there and a large staff. It was a different appropriation, a different budget, different rules applied in the south and in the north. So, it was very much like running two missions, but it was still officially one mission.

Anyway, just before I arrived in Khartoum—while I was on my way in fact—the Government of Sudan expelled 13 NGOs—13 international NGOs and all their expatriate staff, as well as three or four larger Sudanese NGOs, out of Darfur. With one fell swoop, just before I arrived, the government of Sudan had abolished about 60 percent of the emergency assistance capacity in Darfur. So, I faced an immediate emergency the moment I landed in Khartoum.

We were the largest donor by far, providing food aid and other assistance for Darfur. It took a lot of effort and a lot of time to work through this new emergency. And the presidential envoy at the time, who was a former general, Scott Gration, flew out to Khartoum and started negotiations with the Sudanese government to get the INGOs back into Darfur. If I remember right, three or four of those 13 were U.S. NGOs. And so, we were negotiating to allow them to go back, one way or another. With the U.N., other donors and the INGOs and Sudanese NGOs still allowed to work in Darfur, the immediate issue was to fill the immediate gaps so that life-saving humanitarian assistance could continue. The international community and Sudanese humanitarian NGO community came together and many organizations and people picked up the work where the expelled NGOs had been working. Because of the immediate response, people's lives were not in danger and emergency assistance continued, while we supported the negotiations with the President's special envoy, General Gration.

Q: How much assistance was cut off? All of what we were providing to Darfur?

HAMMINK: We didn't cut any assistance. What was cut off was the—those NGOs that had teams in the field to distribute and manage that assistance. So, when they had to leave, we had to hustle to find other people to take their place. So, it was not so much the assistance from us. It was the implementing partners on the ground who were kicked out—

Q: Right. Were you able to find others?

HAMMINK: It took a while. It took a while in the negotiations to allow some of the American NGOs back. But for example, SAVE-U.S. (Social Awareness & Voluntary Education) could only work under the flag of, if I remember, SAVE-Sweden or SAVENorway. And so, it was very tricky. But in the meantime, we were able to continue the vital kind of life-saving humanitarian foreign assistance.

I spent half my time, as I mentioned, in Juba, and half my time in Khartoum. I would take and fly on this local airline that the British and the other Europeans would not allow their teams to fly on. They were, like, 50-year-old planes, you know, 727s and 737s and the like. And it was

always crowded. There were very few expats. I'd be taking those flights crammed on an old plane at least once a week.

Q: Who were the pilots?

HAMMINK: They were mainly from Eastern Europe and speaking, of course, Russian. And I was of course a little nervous, because planes have fallen out of the sky before in Sudan. But luckily while I was there, there wasn't a plane crash. I had a Deputy Mission Director based in Khartoum that ran the day-to-day work in the north and a Deputy Mission Director based in Juba that managed operations in the south.

Q: Who were those people?

HAMMINK: In Khartoum, it was Brooke Isham who was the Deputy Mission Director. She was fantastic. After Sudan, I met Brooke again when she was the Deputy Mission Director in Afghanistan. Now she's the USAID Mission Director in Iraq.

Q: Really?

HAMMINK: Yes. And it was tough for her, because she was there that night of the assassination. And she was "Acting" mission director. So, that was a very difficult time for her, but she helped me a lot to understand the seriousness and severity of the security measures that then were put in place and how important it was for us to follow them.

In Juba, the Deputy Mission Director was a guy named Peter Malnak, who you may know. After Juba, he became the Mission Director in Rwanda and then Nepal. So, he is a senior guy in the agency, and did a fantastic job in Juba. Both were terrific, because of course, I was in the other place half the time. And they ran things while I was not there. But in Juba, we were working with the Government of South Sudan that was totally nascent. You can imagine in South Sudan a situation where you've had decades of civil war, extreme animosity, tribal groups against each other, a very, very high illiteracy rate.

You had a large percentage of the population that had left the country as refugees and were now coming back with this peace agreement in place. And those who had stayed were unhappy with those coming back. Most of the returning refugees had some schooling in the refugee camps. Those who had stayed were basically mainly illiterate and resented these South Sudanese who were coming back and most of them getting jobs and the like. So—

Q: Coming back from overseas?

HAMMINK: Correct. Well, at least from neighboring countries where you had the refugee camps, like Kenya. I'm sure you've heard of the Lost Boys of South Sudan, many of whom came here to the U.S. Some of them returned to South Sudan as well, which is great. Very moving stories of course.

But it was a difficult time. You had a totally nascent government. Before you had zero infrastructure, because the North had not spent much money at all on sewer systems, water systems, and roads. You know, in South Sudan, an area the size of France, there was not one tarmac road outside of the capital, Juba.

You were starting from scratch on almost everything, including the Government of South Sudan that would continue as the government of a new country—depending on the referendum, if the people of southern Sudan voted to continue as part of Sudan, the South would still have some autonomy, and you would still have a separate government in South Sudan. So, we were establishing for the first-time institutions to carry out key functions of government.

And a lot of these government institutions had no procedures, no process, no buildings. Nothing. So, everything was starting from scratch. And I remember we funded a group to come in and do a study on very basic key functions of government. It was a seminal study on what are those key and basic functions of government. Thinking, OK, this is a brandnew government. What are those areas that a brand-new government in a new country would have to carry out, at a minimum? And then we focused on those key basic functions in our support to a dozen or so ministries.

Q: An incredible time!

HAMMINK: Yes. So, the CPA was signed in 2006. Sudan, including in the north and the south, had national elections in summer 2010. USAID had a large program of support for this election, which was necessary for the north to agree to support an independence referendum in the south. And then in January of 2011, the referendum for independence was scheduled. And we helped pull it off to have the referendum where people from South Sudan got to vote whether the south should stay with Sudan or become independent. This was an historical vote and historical moment, the outcome after decades of civil war and five years of a peace agreement. Even those south Sudanese who lived in Khartoum were allowed and encouraged to vote in the referendum. Many had fled to Khartoum during the civil war.

Q: Do you remember what the question was, how it was posed?

HAMMINK: Sure, it was something like, Do you want to secede? And “yes” or “no”. Because there were so many southern Sudanese who were totally illiterate, they had a symbol of, I think, an open hand and a closed hand. Something like that. I still have the ballot at home.

And so, USAID was very much part of the support for pulling off a referendum that was on time and that was deemed to be fair by international observers.

Q: What had USAID done to do that?

HAMMINK: Well, we brought in partners: NDI, IRI, IFES. I spent a lot of time in coordinating with the government authority set up to run the referendum, the other donors, our implementing partners and USG leaders. It was complicated, because under the CPA, there was an electoral body that was chaired by a northerner. And the deputy chair was a southerner. And members

were a mix. And then, they had to agree on the process and players and they had to agree on the “rules of the game.” It took a lot of upfront time, bringing in electoral experts, referendum experts who had worked on these types of activities before.

I still remember that we were behind the curve, and we were in Juba on a porch of the U.S. Consul General on the compound there. And the Presidential Special Envoy, General Gration, was very unhappy and very upset that things were going so slow. And if you look at the timeline of the number of days to do everything that needed to be done, such as to print the ballots and get them out, we were falling behind. And he was threatening to basically take USAID out of it, because he didn’t think we were doing a good job. And the Deputy Mission Director at the time, whose name is Susan Fine— Maybe you know Susan?

Q: Yes.

HAMMINK: She’s now the head of PPL (USAID Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning). She and I had a four-hour meeting with General Gration. The Chargé d’Affaires at the time, who was a former ambassador, didn’t say a word. He was basically letting us figure it out. And we walked through everything. We drilled down on all the issues. We kept our calm. We kept our cool.

And that was a useful kind of example of how important it is for leaders in USAID to, one, keep your calm and keep your cool. Use facts. Speak as much as possible based on evidence. And then, drill down and pull issues apart and agree on the main sub-issues that you could then agree on the specific steps to move things forward. So, after four hours, using this approach, we could calm down the Special Envoy and agree on next steps to move the process forward. It was a very, very tough meeting.

And then, General Gration and I went to Khartoum and we met with the head of the electoral and referendum commission. We knew exactly what we wanted to see. We wrote some letters with clear descriptions of needed actions from the electoral commission. And within a few days, we got where we needed to be. So, it was kind of a call to action.

Q: Was he under presidential pressure to maybe cut AID off at that point, or was that just his own—

HAMMINK: It was his own assessment to cut USAID out of the process. And yes, he was under a lot of pressure from the White House, where there were many people who strongly wanted this thing to succeed, including the National Security Advisor, Susan Rice. And so, I totally understand. I mean, we were all under a lot of pressure in fact, because things could’ve gone off the rails very easily with all that history, political issues, and security was still an issue.

So anyway, the referendum took place. And the vote was 90-plus percent to secede. And then Independence Day was scheduled. It was in the CPA that if the vote for independence was positive, then Independence Day would take place before the end of the five years of the CPA, which was July of 2011. From one day to the next there would be a new country; the youngest country in the world. So, we used those six months to work through bureaucracy back here in Washington to basically set up a new USAID Mission for South Sudan. The State Department set

up a new (U.S.) embassy for South Sudan the moment the country became independent. And for us in USAID to set up, we'd need a USAID mission too, a totally separate mission from the one in Khartoum.

So, that's what we did. We got everything laid out. We even had a new Mission Director approved by the SMG panel and named. So, I was fortunate enough to stay as the last Mission Director for the entire country—

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HAMMINK: —and was replaced by two mission directors, one for Sudan and one for South Sudan. And the guy who was chosen to—of course, it was a competitive process -- to be the first Mission Director for South Sudan was a guy named Kevin Mullally. He was serving as mission director in Senegal at the time.

We put all that in place. I was there on Independence Day, which I think was around—if I remember right—July 10 or so. And the next day, I flew back to Khartoum. I packed out, and I was out of the country by the 15th.

Q: Did you have your hat in the ring for one of those positions?

HAMMINK: No. I had been there two and a half years, and it's normally a one-year tour, because this is a very hardship post. So, I was exhausted and ready to move on.

Q: My goodness. I'm sure you went out very pleased with what you had led your missions to do.

HAMMINK: Absolutely. I had a great team. Of course, Susan Fine is great. And the Deputy in Khartoum at the time for the last year and a half of my time there was a guy named Doug Arbuckle, who then went on to be Mission Director in Malawi. And now he's back here in Washington.

So, I had a great team in both places, and they understood. We designed a new strategy for the south, thinking that whether the south became independent or not, it would need education, health, agriculture, an economy and jobs, infrastructure and a government with clear rules of the game, especially accountability and transparency. We also developed a separate new transition strategy for the north of Sudan.

So, my first year in Sudan was to do everything to make the two USAID teams—one in Khartoum and one in Juba—feel like one mission. And because people couldn't go back and forth very easily, we had our mission retreats in Addis (Ababa) or in Nairobi, because these were places people could fly to from both Khartoum and Juba. And especially for our FSNs, because it was hard for them to go to the other capital.

And then, my last year there I was preparing for two separate missions, with all the planning, staffing and approvals that entails.

Q: Oh, really?

HAMMINK: Yes. So, while I was there, and this had started well before I arrived, we were very close to finishing up a road funded by USAID from Juba down to the Ugandan border to a town called Nimule. And that was the first tarmac road in all South Sudan outside of Juba. You know, I heard recently, it's doing well.

But I can tell you, looking over the last few years, what's happened in South Sudan, it just totally breaks my heart. With all the good will and all the hard work and the excitement at independence. There were a million people at that Independence Day. It was so exciting. That the government there, including the President—who's still the president, Salva Kiir (Mayardit) -- had so much good will from his people and from the international community, and could have moved things forward. And because of a huge lack of leadership, both him and the Vice President Riek Machar, who came from different tribal groups, never did get along, never provided the kind of leadership that any country needs, much less a brand-new country.

And so, it's just heart breaking. I sat with other people who were also engaged on South Sudan and in senior positions back before 2011 in USAID and in the State Department and talked about what we could have done differently. And you know, my opinion on that, like others I talked to, was that we should have been tougher on accounting for funds and putting in place stricter systems to account for the oil money coming into southern leaders' bank accounts. But many people told me there was little we could have done differently. That it's just poor leadership, that they weren't ready to become a country. Maybe the UN should have maintained protectorate status.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM HAMMINK
USAID
Mission Director
Sudan
Khartoum, Sudan
(2009–2011)

William "Bill" Hammink grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota to a family of six kids. Mr. Hammink received his BA in Psychology with a minor in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Minnesota, followed by a MA at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs in public affairs with a focus on international economics and international Development. Mr. Hammink joined USAID in 1981 as an International Development Intern (IDI). While at USAID, Mr. Hammink was stationed in Swaziland, Senegal, Madagascar, Russia, the West Bank/Gaza, Ethiopia, Washington, D.C., Sudan, India, and Afghanistan. He held a variety of roles, such as a Program Officer, focusing specifically on Democracy and Governance,

and Mission Director in many countries. After 36 years of service with USAID, Mr. Hammink retired in 2017.

Topical Focus – USAID Support for the South Sudanese Independence Referendum

HAMMINK: But in Juba, we were working with the Government of South Sudan that was totally nascent. You can imagine in South Sudan a situation where you've had decades of civil war, extreme animosity, tribal groups against each other, a very, very high illiteracy rate.

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And then, my last year there I was preparing for two separate missions, with all the planning, staffing and approvals that entails.

Q: One more question.

HAMMINK: Yes.

Q: Just in terms of distances, what was the distance between Juba and Khartoum?

HAMMINK: It was a two-hour flight. So, that would be maybe 800 to 1,000 miles.

Q: But no way it could be driven?

HAMMINK: You could drive it, but it would take a week. There were no roads. Well, there were no decent roads once you got to the border of what became South Sudan.

Q: Oh, really?

HAMMINK: Yes. So, while I was there, and this had started well before I arrived, we were very close to finishing up a road funded by USAID from Juba down to the Ugandan border to a town called Nimule. And that was the first tarmac road in all South Sudan outside of Juba. You know, I heard recently, it's doing well.

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Q: Protectorate?

HAMMINK: Protectorate, exactly. Sovereignty for a while. It's hard to tell. I mean, you know, hindsight is always like that.

At the time, it was very exciting to be there for the Independence Day and for seeing this new country launch.

Q: Meanwhile, Darfur was still around.

HAMMINK: Right.

Q: What was going on during your stay there with Darfur? Was there any progress in dealing with those issues?

HAMMINK: Yes, that's a great question. A lot of my time and effort in Sudan was also spent on supporting the Darfur Peace Process and trying to move some of our assistance, where it was possible, away from just solely humanitarian assistance that could support development-type objectives and helping to build some local capacity. We wanted to help the millions of IDPs move into situations where they could be part of communities.

Q: IDPs are?

HAMMINK: Internally Displaced People. And the difference between an IDP and a refugee: IDPs are displaced people who stay within their country, whereas refugees are displaced people who flee to another country. And they're known as refugees.

In Darfur, as you know, all the IDPs had been displaced because of fighting and because of civil war. It was just tragic to see.

We were trying to work through the IDP issues with the lead taken by the UN. General Gration was also involved on the political side and I was involved on the development side in terms of what we could do to support that process. They were talking about building new communities: you know, schools and clinics and other infrastructure, for the IDPs to return to. You know, I think it was understood that those IDPs in IDP camps in Darfur could not all go back to where they came from, because some of their villages had been burned, of course, in the civil war. And much of the land they had fled from had subsequently been settled by others.

Q: So the land was gone.

HAMMINK: The land was gone. So, they needed to figure out new ways for resettlement. It was very complicated.

There are certain international norms and rules regarding returning the IDPs that had to be followed. You could not force IDPs to move against their will. You had to make sure that they had the means to live, including jobs, social services and the like. The Sudanese government claimed that IDPs did not want to move out of camps because they were getting so many benefits from the international community as IDPs, a huge disincentive to move. I went to several conferences on the peace process: for example, one in Bahrain and one in Cairo. I was the USAID rep (representative) at those. There was some forward movement but not enough.

As you know, even now, here we are in 2018, there are still very large IDP camps in Darfur. What's happening and has happened in other places in the world where you had large IDP or refugee camps, like the Palestinians who lived around Amman or other cities in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, those refugee camps have basically become part of the city that they started next to. And so, they're no longer viewed as a refugee camp anymore. Although people who lived there had certain special privileges.

In any case, that was around Darfur. That's what was happening.

In the northern part of the country, at USAID we also supported a peace process in an area that's called The Three Areas, which are three provinces in Sudan just north of South Sudan where a lot of the fighting in the civil war also took place. But in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, it was agreed that these three regions would be part of the North. They would not be part of the South, even though a good percentage of their populations were tribal groups that were from the South.

And the agreement was that people in those three provinces would be able to go through a process of broad discussions—community-level discussion. And then they would be able to decide whether they wanted to liaise with the North or with the South. So, we helped with that whole process as well.

Q: How is that presently?

HAMMINK: That, I don't know what's going on, unfortunately, because of the politics and fighting also broke out again in those areas. It was very hard for us to get into those areas even six, seven years ago to support peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Q: Were you dealing at all with the President of Sudan personally?

HAMMINK: The President of Sudan was of course indicted by The Hague (International Criminal Court)—he was an international war criminal.

Q: Was that while you were there, or was that later?

HAMMINK: It was just before we arrived. So, there was a prohibition against U.S. diplomats meeting with him. We weren't allowed to talk to him. We didn't have an ambassador to Sudan because of the sanctions against Sudan. There were layers of sanctions but most came from Sudan's support at one point in the 90s for Osama bin Laden and global terrorism. There were some serious sanctions from the '90s that were still in place. The issues around president Bashir came from his role in the atrocities carried out in Darfur. We were not allowed to talk to him. And we were very careful, whenever we had media follow us with the Senior Presidential Advisor, we were always looking around.

Q: (laughs)

HAMMINK: And it happened once to a visiting (U.S.) congressman. He was in a meeting there, and Bashir—President Bashir—kind of joined him as he was walking to his car. President Bashir had his photographers with him. So, it was an unfortunate setup.

But I was very fortunate, because I had an excellent counterpart, I remember, at the Ministry of International Cooperation, who had studied in the U.S. He still understood the importance of a good relationship and the role of development.

You know what? The Sudanese understandably were working with the donors to try to move beyond mainly humanitarian assistance. Some 95 percent of all the assistance, especially from the U.S., was humanitarian assistance. And they wanted to move that to recovery and rehabilitation type of assistance. I totally understood. We worked with (the U.S.) Congress and tried to figure out where and how we could do that.

Q: Were they getting assistance from Chinese and other donors?

HAMMINK: They were not getting typical assistance like we understand it. We tried to meet with the Chinese, but they would not meet with us from the development side. They didn't consider themselves donors.

Q: Right.

HAMMINK: They had huge investments in the oil industry in the North and parts of the South as well. So, it complicated the whole dynamic. Besides decades of civil war, there was oil and

money from oil. And so, it all had to be negotiated, because most of the oil— 60 or 70 percent—was found in the South. Whereas, it had to go through a pipeline that went up through the North up to Port Sudan.

Q: That was the only way out?

HAMMINK: At that time, it was the only way out.

Q: And now, is there—

HAMMINK: I think it's still the only way out, although the South has been trying to get money to build a pipeline through Kenya so that they wouldn't be dependent on the North. I think that those plans have now been on hold for the last three years because of the fighting in the south.

SPAIN

N/A

SYRIA

N/A

TAIWAN

N/A

TIMOR-LESTE

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

**Steven Wagenseil
United Nations
Chief Electoral Officer
Timor-Leste
(2006-2007)**

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 – UN Support and Electoral Oversight in Timor

Q: Were you advising the election authorities, the Timorese election authorities or was the UN actually running the election?

WAGENSEIL: No, the Timorese were running the election but there was great concern -- concern on the part of Timorese. The election is administered by the Government's "Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration" -- that makes sense -- which is part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Minister of internal affairs is a very militant member of the ruling party, FRETELIN, which had won 88 percent of the seats in parliament -- basically, ran the parliament, ran the government -- and opposition activists and NGO representatives and so forth were very concerned that the minister was prepared to steal the election for her party, and therefore they didn't trust the electoral secretariat, technical secretary under her authority, to be impartial. What the UN did -- obviously with the approval of the government and through a number of Security Council resolutions which were debated then voted -- the UN mission had staff posted in the Technical Secretariat, technical staff.

Q: Reporting to you?

WAGENSEIL: Working for the secretariat, but reporting to me, if you will. We had about 15-20 people -- logistics people; legal advisors; people working on voter education, civic education. We had a total -- I had, under my authority -- about 240 UN volunteers around the country who were

basically stationed in the district capitals or in Dili -- and they were sort of the eyes and ears and legs and strong shoulders of the election machinery upcountry -- and of course the UN was relied upon for vehicles to transport ballot boxes and people and so forth.

The other advantage that we had in Timor -- which I think is unique to the Timor situation -- in 2006-2007, under the terms of the Security Council resolutions -- which the Timorese government had agreed to -- the chief of the UN police force, under UNMIT, was the Chief of the Timorese police.

Q: Okay.

WAGENSEIL: So the Timorese police force were under his authority and the fellow who had that role was a Filipino -- former chief of police of Manila or something like that -- a guy with a lot of gravitas and professional credibility. He didn't speak Portuguese, which 193 was, for some reason, the official language of the country, but he did speak enough Malaysian Bahasa to interact with those who were speaking Bahasa Indonesia, which is sort of the Lingua Franca of Timor, which of course was under Indonesian rule for 24 years. So, he was able to ensure that the police behaved themselves and did not participate in any electoral fraud -- but were, in fact, reliable partners. And there was a special unit of Portuguese police, like riot police, attached to the UN Mission as well, under his authority.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DESAIX "TERRY" MEYERS

USAID

Mission Director

Indonesia

Jakarta, Indonesia

(1998-2003)

Mr. Meyers was born in Washington D.C. and lived in Dallas, Texas, Palo Alto, California, and Pasadena, California in childhood. He was educated at the University of California, Berkeley and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University before entering USAID as an intern in Kenya. He worked in various positions at USAID in East Pakistan, Indonesia, Senegal, India, Russia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Kosovo, and also worked in various desk officer jobs at headquarters. Mr. Meyers was interviewed by Alexander Shakow in 2017.

Topical Focus – USAID and East Timor Independence

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.

Q: And how did you balance what you needed to be doing for the Government of Indonesia and for the nascent East Timorese government?

MYERS: Well, I don't know that we struck the right balance because we were driven in part by political attention and by—

Q: Political "attention"?

MYERS: Political interest—there was a strong international movement in favor of East Timor's independence. Indonesia had held its successful parliamentary elections in May of 1999, everybody breathed a sigh of relief, and attention focused on East Timor. After the August 30, 1999 plebiscite when 78 percent of the population voted against Indonesia's offer of special autonomy (in effect, voting in favor of independence), things unraveled quickly. With support from Indonesia's military, pro-Indonesian Timorese militias and bands of thugs began their rampage, people fled to the hills and West Timor, and the level and extent of violence caught the world's attention and brought UN intervention, led by the Australians.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

STEVEN WAGENSEIL
UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
Chief Electoral Officer
Timor-Leste
(2006-2007)

Mr. Wagenseil was born in Danbury, Connecticut and raised in Brookfield Center, Connecticut. He spent a year of high school at Le Collège Cévenol in France and attended Gresham's School in England post-graduation before receiving his Bachelor's from Yale University. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ivory Coast before entering the Foreign Service. He held a variety of positions, including many assignments for the United Nations, relating to democracy, elections, development, human rights, and politics in Washington D.C., Spain, Mali, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Lesotho, France, Poland, Ivory Coast, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. Mr. Wagenseil was interviewed by Peter Eicher in 2008.

Topical Focus – UN Election Assistance in Timor-Leste

Q: Indeed, indeed. And you did some subsequent UN assignments as well, as I recall.

WAGENSEIL: I've done several others, yes. Immediately after I got home from Solomon Islands, the UN Electoral Assistance Division called me and asked me if I wanted to go to East Timor.

Q: Since you were an island specialist by that time.

WAGENSEIL: Since I had been out in that part of the world, sort of, at least in a nearby time zone. But I wasn't particularly interested in going back out again and so I turned down the inquiry -- which is good because like three days later riots broke out in Timor. There was a tremendous amount of strife on the island between those from eastern East Timor and those from western East Timor -- I mean, a totally meaningless dispute with no basis in ethnic or religious or cultural or financial disparities -- just the sort of thing that happens. But later that year -- this was in 2006 -- later that year I was again contacted by New York and accepted a position to go to Timor. I was hired (by the Department of PeaceKeeping Operations, DPKO) to be the Chief Electoral Officer for the UN new peacekeeping mission there, now known as UNMIT, the UN Integrated Mission in Timor. I went out for six months and stayed for 10, during which time they rewrote and adopted a new electoral law, a whole bunch of electoral procedures; they updated the voters registry and they held presidential elections -- first round and second round -- and a parliamentary election.

Q: And what was your role as the chief electoral officer?

WAGENSEIL: Well I was the lead person on the UN peacekeeping mission staff for elections. I was a member, if you will, of the "country team" under the Special Representative of the Secretary General. I was the expert -- or perceived as the expert -- on electoral law, electoral issues. I was called upon to interpret a disparity between election law and the constitution -- both of which were in Portuguese, which was great fun -- and their procedures.

Q: Were you advising the election authorities, the Timorese election authorities or was the UN actually running the election?

WAGENSEIL: No, the Timorese were running the election but there was great concern -- concern on the part of Timorese. The election is administered by the Government's "Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration" -- that makes sense -- which is part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Minister of internal affairs is a very militant member of the ruling party, FRETELIN, which had won 88 percent of the seats in parliament -- basically, ran the parliament, ran the government -- and opposition activists and NGO representatives and so forth were very concerned that the minister was prepared to steal the election for her party, and therefore they didn't trust the electoral secretariat, technical secretary under her authority, to be impartial. What the UN did -- obviously with the approval of the government and through a number of Security Council resolutions which were debated then voted -- the UN mission had staff posted in the Technical Secretariat, technical staff.

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Q: So a pretty good election then?

WAGENSEIL: I'm quite proud of the elections that took place in Timor while I was there, because in the first round of presidential elections there were, I think, 14 candidates and the results of the first round were challenged -- but kind of pro forma by some of the candidates who didn't win -- and the results of the second round were accepted by everybody as being representative of the will of the people and there was a change in power. The Fretilin candidate lost and an opposition candidate won.

Q: Well that's usually a pretty good indication of a fair process.

WAGENSEIL: Right, I think so. Although of course the opposition candidate who became the new president, José Ramos-Horta, had been a Fretilin member and Fretilin's foreign minister in exile for many years and I had actually met him in Geneva and Strasbourg and New York over the ages. And in fact, in the interim he had won the Nobel Prize for Peace. But anyway. And then the parliamentary elections, which took place like two months later, there were, I think, 17 parties competing. It was very complicated but it went very well -- everybody accepted the results, there were no challenges. There were complaints about this or that incident but nothing anywhere near serious enough to overturn the results in even one polling station -- much less nationwide -- and by and large the transition was peaceful.

Q: I'd say it's a great experience for a first, long-term UN experience.

WAGENSEIL: It felt good, quite rewarding to be involved in that. And, I mean -- obviously there is a lot more to a peacekeeping mission than just supporting elections -- but they were a very important part of the success of the peacekeeping mission, because if that had not been successful then the troops and the cops would have been much busier than they were.

TUNISIA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

GORDON GRAY
U.S. Ambassador
Tunisia
(2009-2012)

Ambassador Gray was born in New York City in 1956. He was the U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia from 2009 until 2012, witnessing the start of the Arab Spring and directing the U.S. response in support of Tunisia's transition. He served in Iraq as Senior Advisor to the Ambassador, and was DCM in Egypt.

Topical Focus – U. S. and the Tunisia Political Transition

Q: Okay, you served there from when to when?

GRAY: I got there September 2009 and I left July 2012.

Q: What was the situation there just before you went out?

GRAY: In the summer of 2008 – about a year before I arrived in Tunisia – there were labor strikes in Gafsa, a mining town in the center of the country. There were some manifestations of discontent with the Ben Ali regime and with the economic situation; the government was able to step in and put it down. Then, moving forward to 2009, there was an election coming up in October 2009, and everyone knew the result. Credible opposition candidates were barred from running. There was discontent and resignation about the political situation.

Q: Could you explain and set the scene what was the government like there and what was the economic international reputation at that point before we move on?

GRAY: Tunisia had been a French protectorate since 1881, and it gained independence in 1956. Habib Bourguiba was the first president; he had been the leader of the independence movement. He was very much secular in his outlook. Women had more rights in Tunisia than elsewhere in the Arab world. Sixty years have passed since independence, and Tunisia is still the only Arab country in which polygamy was outlawed. Tunisian women got the vote before Swiss women did. Bourguiba devoted more money to education than to the defense budget; a considerable

amount of government money was spent on education. Tunisia was not dependent on a single commodity, i.e., oil, the way Algeria (to the west) and Libya (to the south and east) were, so it had to diversify its economy. The result of all of these factors was, by regional standards, a tolerant, well-educated society, which had a high home ownership rate, a significant middle class, and the like.

Bourguiba was president from independence until November 7, 1987, when Ben Ali took over in what was sometimes called the medical coup. Bourguiba was suffering from senility; sometimes he was lucid and sometimes less so. In accordance with the constitution, then-Prime Minister Ben Ali took over as President. His move was well received at the time. As a parenthetical, I would note that I remember the day of the coup very well because I was a staff assistant in NEA. November 7 was a Saturday and I was driving into work day early that morning. (There were two of us, and we alternated working each weekend.) I heard the news on the radio and thought, “Oh great, there goes my whole weekend.” But we had a very good office director in the office of North African Affairs, Mary Ann Casey, who later served as Ambassador to Tunisia herself. As a result all the paper moved quickly and the weekend was not as long as I had feared from the work perspective.

Ben Ali set himself up as, in effect, president for life. He kept being elected president with 99 percent margins and the like, although it was dialed back to 94 percent in 2004 and 89 percent in 2009. There was less and less political discourse in the country. As in many countries, there was an unspoken social contract, with the government in effect saying that we may not give you all of the rights that you would want, such as freedom of expression or other political rights, but we will take care of you economically. That worked for quite a while; Tunisia’s economic growth rates were decent. One part of the equation that changed, though, was that Ben Ali’s family started to take a larger and larger percentage of business opportunities. The economic pie, so to speak, was no longer growing. That is one reason that Tunisia had such a low rate of domestic investment. To sum up, there was calm on the surface but discontent below the surface.

Q: When you went out there were we looking for regime change or was it something we could relax and live with?

GRAY: Regime change was not our policy, but our policy was definitely to encourage the regime to relax its restrictions on political expression and the like.

GRAY: As I said, there were presidential elections in October of 2009. Not everyone was free to run; they were very tightly controlled elections. According to the government figures, Ben Ali got 89 percent of the vote. The elections were held each five years and in the 1999 elections, he got 99 percent; in the 2004 elections, 94 percent; and I guess they decided to dial it back to 89 percent for the 2009 elections. I actually find the 89 percent figure somewhat credible, in the sense that the only people who would have bothered to vote were pro-government party members. What I find totally unbelievable was the government assertion that there was a 90 percent turnout. There is never going to be a 90 percent turnout when the result is a foregone conclusion. I was out and about on election day, and the Embassy had a very robust election observation mission operation. There was simply no way the turnout was 90 percent. You heard that again and again after the 2011 revolution, when the first free and fair elections were held on October 23, 2011. So many people said that this was the first time they had ever voted in an election. The Embassy therefore very strongly recommended (and Washington followed our recommendation) against any kind of routine congratulatory message from President Obama to President Ben Ali. For the State Department, these are fairly routine messages. Our argument, though, was that no matter how finely crafted the letter of congratulations was, and no matter how much it talked about the need for opening up the political sphere, etc., no one would read the fine print. All the Tunisians would see in the government controlled press would be a picture of Ben Ali, a picture of President Obama, and the headline, "President Obama Congratulates President Ben Ali." So we made sure there was no such message, and there wasn't. As I noted earlier, the Tunisian government under the Ben Ali regime was very protocol conscious, and it became a large issue in the bilateral relationship. The Tunisians ended up recalling their ambassador from Washington. When I say they recalled him, I don't mean for consultations - I mean they recalled him for good. They blamed him for not being able to secure a congratulatory message. Shortly thereafter - January 14, 2010 - the Palace changed foreign ministers, which I found very interesting. I am not attributing the change to the lack of a congratulatory message, as there very well may have been a change anyway after the election. The outgoing Foreign Minister, Abdelwahab Abdallah, was very close to the Palace and was also perceived as tilting toward the French, whereas the new Foreign Minister, Kamel Morjane, had a reputation for being more open to the United States. Regardless of the reason, I found the timing interesting. The whole episode taught me an important lesson: sometimes what you don't say is just as important as what you do say. Most important was not the government's reaction, but the reaction of Tunisian civil society. Civil society knew that we didn't send a congratulatory message; they derived some satisfaction and some sense of encouragement and support.

Q: Well, did you find that after the elections and our lack of positive response that relations cooled even more?

GRAY: Even more. Relations were “correct” to begin with, but even with that low standard we received an even colder shoulder from the Tunisian government. Without going into details in an unclassified conversation, the Tunisians put our security cooperation on the shelf or in the freezer - whichever metaphor you prefer. It was cutting off their nose to spite their face. But the Minister of Interior was not just responsible for security; he was also a member of the ruling party (the RCD) and the ruling party’s politburo. He was wearing two hats. While he did not exercise very good judgment wearing his security hat, I suppose he did what he felt he needed to do wearing his RCD hat.

Q: Sort of the lack of positive response to the election.

GRAY: Civil society? They knew. There were positive reactions from civil society.

Q: Okay well we’ll move on to what was happening after the elections?

GRAY: As I said, relations were correct at best. From the Embassy’s perspective, we were trying to find traction to build a bit closer of a relationship with the government and, at the same time, with the Tunisian people and their civil society groups. One way we were able to bridge the gap somewhat was humanitarian assistance program. It was a wonderful program funded by U.S. Africa Command, which would fund relatively small scale projects: up to \$500,000. That may be a lot of money for you and me, but it isn’t for the U.S. budget. We worked with non-governmental organizations on projects such as drug prevention clinics and the like. It was one way we could work with civil society without getting anyone in civil society in trouble with the government. The government saw the benefits of these projects...

GRAY:

When Ben Ali left the country, in accordance with the constitution the Prime Minister (Mohamed Ghannouchi, not to be confused with Rached Ghannouchi, the leader of Ennahda, the moderate Islamist party) assumed the temporary role as the head of government. Prime Minister Ghannouchi had been prime minister for close to eleven years. He was a technocrat and his primary responsibility was the economy, not security. While we were in our EAC meeting that morning, Ghannouchi announced that since Ben Ali had departed permanently a different article of the constitution would apply, and the speaker of parliament, Fouad Mebazaa, would become the head of government. I mention this because it showed how very careful the Tunisians were to

follow the constitution. When we were in this EAC meeting that Saturday morning, Prime Minister Ghannouchi also announced, “We are going to have free and fair elections and we are going to have them with the presence of international observers.” I mention that because that was obviously very important to the Tunisians. It was an aspiration of theirs, and it also contrasts with the way the Egyptian elections were conducted after their revolution – the Egyptians did not want to have foreign observers.

At this Emergency Action Committee meeting, one of the questions on the table was whether we needed to withdraw personnel, and/or whether we needed to withdraw families. We were not sure what the future would look like and, as I said, the airport was a complete mess as it was closed down. We decided to defer our decision for 24 hours to see how things would play out – and, since the airport closed, we couldn’t have flown people out. I spoke with Washington that evening, and said I wanted another 24 hours to see which direction things were going. Washington was amenable to waiting to see how events unfolded during the course of the day on Sunday, both in terms of our EAC meeting and on the ground. We agreed we would speak again Sunday morning Washington time, which was Sunday afternoon in Tunis as we were six hours ahead of Washington

Q: What was happening were there attacks on not only the Ben Ali property but how about on government buildings?

GRAY: I only recall attacks against property associated with the family or the ruling party. In fact, there was a great concern that Ben Ali was going to come back. That concern was exacerbated by a speech by Qadhafi who said something to the effect of, “Why did the Tunisians have to get rid of Ben Ali? He is a good leader; they are going to have elections in another four years anyway; they could have waited till then.” There were other Tunisians who pointed to the fact that the president’s wife’s maiden name was Trabelsi. It is a very common family name in Tunisia, and basically means someone coming from Tripoli. People imagined a Libyan connection. It’s quite possible Ben Ali was thinking of going back to Libya as a sort of a staging ground, but events in Tunisia and particularly events in Libya would have overtaken that plan, if there was such a plan in the first place.

Q: Was the new government forming rather quickly?

GRAY: Yes, the new Unity government was put together very quickly. Some of the people were hold-overs, by which I mean technocrats. In other words, they were people who had served in

economic ministries, not in security-related ones. The Foreign Minister stayed on for a bit. The new government also included people from civil society. Najib Chebbi joined the cabinet; he was a very prominent opposition leader who had been barred from running for president in the 2009 elections. The initial report we heard was that he was going to be the Minister of Interior, which just astounded us. We could not believe it was true as it would have been such a turn-around. It turned out that it was a bad translation and he was appointed Minister of Local Development, which made a lot more sense.

Q: Today is the 28th of July 2016 with Gordon Gray. Gordon, we are just talking now about the spread of the Arab Spring and Tunisia's role in this.

GRAY: Before we head in that direction, I'd like to talk a little bit more about Jeff Feltman's visit...

Q: Absolutely.

GRAY: ...which was right before things happened in Egypt, which gets on to your question. As I said in the previous interview, he was the first foreign visitor to visit, or certainly the first senior visitor to do so after the revolution. Also as I had mentioned, he had served as political/economic counselor in Tunis so he knew many of these civil society figures very well. One of the people with whom he met during Jeff's visit was a minister in the National Unity Government and then again in a more recent government. He made a point, which I thought was very interesting, in framing the Arab Spring. It was certainly relevant for Tunisia, but it also explains what happened shortly thereafter in some other Arab countries. He told Jeff and me that the causes of the demonstrations and unrest in Tunisia were not just unemployment and poverty, which, he said, exist everywhere. Rather, "It was the loss of dignity and the lack of dialogue." That phrase really stuck in my mind as the best and most succinct explanation of what happened. He went on to tell Jeff, "There is a certain respect for the U.S. position, in contrast with the French position," which he called unacceptable, and he noted the absence of any U.S. congratulatory letter from President Obama to Ben Ali following the 2009 elections, which we talked about in a previous interview.

Another telling comment came at a lunch I hosted for Jeff: "In Tunisia we are neither Lebanon nor Iraq." That's a direct quotation. The guest went on to say, "We are the most homogenous society in the region." These related points are important for understanding why things have gone more smoothly in Tunisia than in the other Arab Spring countries, even though Tunisia has had challenges and setbacks along the way.

Immediately following Ben Ali's departure, an apolitical commission was established with a rather loose mandate to help guide the elections for the Constituent Assembly, which was to draw up the constitution. The head of the commission was a very respected jurist named Yadh Ben Achour. He had impeccable lineage, as both his father and his grandfather were influential Muslim clerics. He was a French-trained jurist who was tainted by any association with the Ben Ali regime. He was also a man of sound judgment and integrity. In other words, he was the perfect choice to head this commission. When Jeff and I went to visit him, he was working out of his house and he was a staff of one. The commission's membership grew over the coming months to, I want to say, 172 people from all different walks of life: civil society, labor unions, NGOs, etc. The name grew almost as much, and the official name was something like "The Supreme Commission to Realize the Objectives of the Revolution." It was such a mouthful that the Tunisians just referred to it as the Ben Achour Commission. Not only did he come from impeccable lineage but his entire family was very accomplished. One of his brothers was the secretary general of the Arab League equivalent of UNESCO, and one of his sisters was a leader of a women's rights NGO; she was a very prominent member of Civil Society. Given his legal background, he helped frame some of the constitutional issues, and helped guide the process once people started to work on the constitution. It shows the depth and breadth of Tunisia's civil society and also the society's willingness to compromise.

Q: Did you see a government forming? Were they able to take over a functioning government and keep going or was it a period of transition?

GRAY: It was a period of transition. The aim of the revolution was straightforward: it was to get rid of Ben Ali's regime. Once that was done, the question became how would the government continue to operate. That is why the National Unity Government was established. It was a combination of continuity, particularly in the economic ministries, and also new people, many of whom had been in civil society and/or were opponents of the Ben Ali regime. Protests continued, although not on the same scale, because many people felt that the revolution had not been realized and that there was too much continuation of the status quo. So the National Unity Government only stayed in place through the end of February, when Beji Caid Essebsi became the prime minister.

One of the first things Caid Essebsi did was to reform the cabinet. He got rid of all the holdovers, and also asked anyone with political aspirations to leave the cabinet. His mandate, as he saw it, was to prepare the country for elections for the Constituent Assembly. He made that very clear, and in doing so he successfully changed the focus of the Tunisian political discussion so that it was no longer looking at the past. I am not saying the abuses of the past were forgotten, but political discourse shifted from looking in the rear view mirror to looking at the road ahead. And

that road was to elections for a Constituent Assembly. He rightly realized that until there were free and fair elections in Tunisia, no government would have the legitimacy that elections bestow.

Q: When a government collapses were people coming to you and asking for advice or were you giving advice? What was happening?

GRAY: I wouldn't say that the government collapsed. Rather, if you'll pardon the violence of the metaphor, it was decapitated in the sense that the very top level was removed. The Tunisians had functioning institutions in place, so it was not as if there were no civil servants left to make the government function. They continued to do their jobs. The advice we offered was along the lines of the need for compromise and the need to stay on course for the transition to elections and a more democratic system of government.

Q: Well from various non-governmental organizations.

GRAY: To their credit NDI, the National Democratic Institute, and IRI, the International Republican Institute, set up operations in Tunisia very quickly so that they could provide technical advice on the elections. They had great expertise and were very helpful, and they continue to play a constructive role in Tunisia. Some foreigners in the NGO community had great expertise about the conduct of elections but less experience as far as 120 Tunisia was concerned. As a result, there was a desire to have elections that met Swiss standards. While we should always strive for perfection, the goal of elections is not the election itself. Instead, the goal – and particularly during this transition – was for the Tunisian people to express their will democratically and to give the members of the Constituent Assembly the legitimacy that flows from that. Another way of putting it was that too many of the election experts saw the trees, but missed the forest. Some of that hand-wringing reached Washington (and particularly non-career appointees), and - to use a military phrase – some in Washington had their hair on fire. (After the elections, when I was still in Tunis, I re-read the trip report of one of the non-career appointees who had visited Tunisia and was reminded of Chicken Little.) When all was said and done, the elections were credible and the NGO representatives who observed the elections were pleased with the way they were conducted. They were not perfect, but they were very good, and the most important thing was the Tunisians accepted the outcome.

GRAY:

There was one party that everyone knew, however, and that was Ennahda. Since it was outlawed by the Ben Ali regime, it represented a clear change from the past, which is what people wanted. So the election results were not a surprise to us. We were confident of our analysis that Ennahda was going to win a plurality of the vote in the Constituent Assembly; there was no question in our minds about it. We didn't know what the exact numbers would be, but we thought it would be a pretty sizeable amount. We didn't think Ennahda would get a majority of the votes, but we thought it would do well. So we wanted to be very sure that Washington had our analysis well in advance. We wanted to socialize the idea in Washington, because what we did not want was Washington policymakers to wake up on October 24 – in other words, the day after the elections – to screaming headlines that said, “Islamists win Tunisian elections.” In other words, we wanted them to expect that result rather than be surprised by it. Fortunately, we had enough visitors from Washington that we had the opportunity to explain to them the likely results, and we were able to focus the discussion not on the outcome, but on the process. In other words, is this going to be a fair and credible process? As I mentioned before, several election observers came, including Rosalynn Carter; Tim Pawlenty, the former governor of Minnesota; Congresswoman McCollum; and NGO representatives. In addition, there were a large number of Tunisian observers. The elections were held credibly and without violence, and as we predicted, Ennahda did win a plurality of the vote: 37 per cent of the vote, which translated into 41 per cent of the seats in the Constituent Assembly.

Q: Well what about the religious leaders in Tunisia?

GRAY: At the local level, many of the religious leaders were discredited because they had been appointed by the Ben Ali regime, and because they were very carefully monitored. We had little interaction with religious leaders, but our interaction with Islamists was with people from Ennahda. We had excellent access; that was not an issue. They welcomed our interaction because it was, in their eyes, recognition of their acceptance. Our view was that you talk to everyone, and the United States would not determine the outcome of elections. We would judge them – the elections – by the process, not by the outcome.

Q: Excuse me - I wonder could you explain for the reader here I know but what you mean but could you explain beneath the radar?

GRAY:

The Oval Office meeting on October 7 went well. I was sitting next to a senior member of the NSC staff who passed me a note in the middle of the meeting saying, “It looks like you have a

great job.” The purpose of the meeting was to demonstrate U.S. support for the transition. Since it took place on October 7, and the elections were to be held on October 23, the timing also served to signal our support for those elections.

Q: Alright, then, where do we go from here?

GRAY: I guess we move forward to the elections, which were held on October 23, 2011. They were conducted with the observation of many Tunisian, U.S., and international observers, and the important thing was that the Tunisians accepted the result. Even people who were not particularly pleased that Ennahda, the moderate Islamist party, won the plurality of votes they respected the process, and accepted the results. So from then, for the next few months, the focus was on government formation. As I had mentioned earlier, Ennahda made the decision to rule in coalition with two secular parties, so the delineation of who was going to lead which part of the government was clear. All things considered, it was a smooth transition, and it was a peaceful transition. Our transition is from the early November elections until January 20. While we have a larger and more complicated government, their transition took a roughly comparable period of time. Again, there were educated and competent civil servants to continue the work of the government on.

Q: So during this period that they are putting this government together I would have thought that you and your officers would have been involved in advice on the side or at least saying this is how we do it or something like that?

GRAY: We were not prescriptive in any sense. One of the points we emphasized, though, was the need for consensus. We also emphasized the need for not just politicking, but for implementing good programs that would meet the needs of the Tunisian people. Those were then – just as they are now, five years later – jobs and security. We were very careful not to appear to favor any one group over another. Even though I like to think we were as careful as possible, there were many people who voiced the opinion that we were somehow behind Ennahda. The only rationale that I can see for that view is the misguided but persistent belief that nothing happens in the Middle East and North Africa without the U.S. orchestrating it. Over and above the predisposition to believe conspiracy theories, the fact that we were clear that the election was credible and accepted it as the will of the Tunisian people may have fueled that thinking. At the press conference I held right after the elections, Tunisian journalists were trying to suggest that the United States would not accept the election results because Ennahda was an Islamist party. I said, “Ennahda is not Hamas; it is not a terrorist organization.” That sound bite probably got the most attention, and it had the added virtue of being true. It was a good election and we respected the outcome. So did the Tunisian people, which is even more important.

Q: Well then as this is being put together did you have any concerns?

GRAY: As the government was being put together?

Q: Yeah, after the election.

GRAY: Certainly not with the composition of the government. We had two concerns, though. One was capacity. Tunisia was new to democracy, and at the same time there was a growing threat from Libya because of the influx of arms, refugees, and displaced people. As if the Tunisians did not have enough on their hands, it was winter and there was major flooding. In each case, whenever someone asked who is going to transport the ballot boxes or who is going to deal with the flooding, the answer was the military. It was a small military and it was overstretched, which is why we worried about its capacity and the capacity of the government.

Another concern we had was about the writing of the constitution. The existing constitution was not a bad document to begin with it, but it had been either misapplied or warped by too many years of authoritarian rule.

The third concern, which arose a few months after the government took power, was the rise of violent Salamis. It was unclear how the government was going to react and whether it would be tough enough. Like most departing Chiefs of Missions, I wrote a farewell cable summing up my views, and I really wondered if I was hitting the theme of the rise of Salafis too strongly. In retrospect, unfortunately, I'm glad I kept it as I first wrote it, because it was a threat that the government did not deal with as strongly and firmly as it should have.

Q: When you left Tunisia how did you feel about wither Tunisia?

GRAY: When I left the country at the end of my tour?

Q: Yeah.

GRAY: We were cautiously optimistic. If one is irrationally exuberant, to borrow a phrase, one shouldn't stay in this business very long. There was reason for optimism about Tunisia's prospects for many of the reasons we've discussed in the course of these interviews. People are, by and large, tolerant. The society is well-educated, it has had a great deal of exposure to

democracy, and it protected women's rights – for example, it is the only Arab country in which polygamy is outlawed. I liked to point out to audiences that Tunisian women got the vote before Swiss women did. The way I put it, when I was asked for my assessment, was that Tunisia has the necessary building blocks for a successful transition; the question is whether they are sufficient or not.

Now it's been four years since I left, and the Tunisians have had plenty of setbacks. But they have also had good elections, two peaceful transitions of power, and just the other day there was a vote of no confidence in parliament: the prime minister is resigning. Tunisians respect the will of parliament, so there is going to be a new prime minister selected by parliament. As long as each step backwards is matched by two steps forward, the country will continue to move in the right direction.

UGANDA

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

DENISE ROLLINS
USAID
Uganda Program
PD Officer and Office Director
Washington, D.C.
(1998-2000)

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, Ghana, 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 – African Elections, Corruption

Q: So, the program was very much focused on economic policies in both of those areas. Were you seeing a country make a real transformation in its own approaches to development?

ROLLINS: The other area, which people would probably raise their eyebrows now, was with democracy and governance.

Q: Yes. I was going to ask you about that. President Museveni by this time had been there for a while and clearly wasn't going anywhere. (Laughs)

ROLLINS: Museveni, the Ugandan President, had been in power for maybe fifteen to twenty years. It was clear he wasn't going anywhere.

However, because of the HIPC [Heavily Indebted Poor Countries] initiative, there had to be a governance process in place. So, Museveni created an anti-corruption commission led by a Ugandan female judge who—I forgot her name. Anyway, she headed up the commission, so I focused on working with her. And we came up with an anti-corruption strategy. It took eighteen months or so to get this done and it had to go before their parliament to be approved and it was. Of course, in hindsight, when we look back today (laughs) and say, “Well, what difference did it make?” But at the time, we were all very focused, and Museveni and his government gave everyone the impression that this would be a focal point of his administration. So, you know, I

worked a lot with parliament, with the ministry, with her—it wasn't a ministry, it was *la commission*.

We brought in a lot of expertise to help them design the commission and create policies to prevent corruption and improve governance in the country.

Q: Now, I think it's important to note that back at this point in 1997 to 1999, there were people writing about the African renaissance. Leaders like Museveni, Meles, Isaias and Kagame and others were seen as this new generation of leaders that were going to turn around Africa.

ROLLINS: That's right.

UKRAINE

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM GREEN MILLER
American Committee on U.S.-Soviet Relations
Washington, D.C. (1986–2019)

William Green Miller was born in New York in 1931. He earned his bachelor's degree from Williams College in 1953. His career has included positions in Isfahan, Teheran, and an ambassadorship to Ukraine. William Green Miller was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Topical Focus – Rigged Elections in Ukraine

MILLER: We're going to discuss Ukraine and its possibilities.

As it happens, I was an election monitor at the 2004 elections for President, the Orange Revolution. And this resulted in a rigged election, which was challenged successfully by Viktor Yushchenko, the man of sorrows of the time, whose-

Q: How was it rigged? I mean, was this part of the context of Ukrainian politics' rigging?

MILLER: Yes. "The Party of Power," as it's called, that is the term given to the incumbent government, which uses what are called "administrative resources" and this guarantees an additional 10 percent of the vote in a favorable direction to the government candidate. This cushion of votes is organized by former Soviet apparatchiks. It's not actually altering the outcome of the vote, although that has been done extensively, less so with the profusion of election monitors from the outside and monitors trained by NDI (National Democratic Institute) and IRI (International Republican Institute) and the Europeans in watching the vote and tallying. It's largely done beforehand by selection of candidates and control of media, TV, newspapers. That is, it was done this way up until 2004 and then the new technology of cell phones entered into the picture and the use of cameras at election sites became a part of the method of observing elections to see whether they were fair and properly conducted. In 2004, it was clear that the election had been rigged, and the results altered. The Supreme Court reviewed the complaints, the election results were thrown out and another election was held, which resulted in the defeat of Viktor Yanukovich and the election of Viktor Yushchenko. Yushchenko is someone that I had known from the earliest days that I came to Ukraine in 1993. We were close friends. It was one of the greatest disappointments of my life to find that he was as corrupt as his predecessors, that he benefitted personally, his family benefitted directly from the influence of office. He arranged for the sale of enterprises, state enterprises, Soviet enterprises to a favored few as rewards for loyalty. And the favored few included members of his own family and he himself directly. So the next election was preceded by internal strife within his government, those who were less corrupt or not corrupt at all challenging the Yushchenko regime and the personal struggle between Yulia Tymoshenko, the woman with the braids, and Yushchenko.

Q: Is she any relation to the general?

MILLER: No.

Q: Obviously the joke about that famous Irish general during World War II, Tim O'Shanko.

MILLER: Well she's a very courageous woman and very able, brilliant tactician, a great speaker, able to rouse a crowd. And she was emblematic of the difficulty of the Ukrainian political class. She was on the outside of the mainline of the Party of Power, of Kravchuk and Kuchma. Her expertise was in picking up enterprises and turning them around. She became a collector of the middlemen entities, particularly in gas and oil. That was the big item in Ukraine in the '90s and up through the present time. The middlemen who handled the contracts with Russian suppliers made enormous profits for their services in the form of kickbacks to the governments of both countries, which included the leaders of both countries. This process was a method of acquisition of power and the distribution of the national wealth in the form of distribution of state assets, in this case oil and gas, not only for home heating but also for the manufacturing industries of the oligarchs. The amounts of money that were made by the middlemen were in the billions. It was the heart of the oligarch class of power.

Ukraine had huge debts owed to Russia. Yulia Tymoshenko took on the debt which others could not repay. The mistake that Yulia Tymoshenko made was that she intruded upon the middlemen racket. She repaid the debt through the sale of commodities: tires, trucks, grain and oil seed that were produced in Ukraine and reduced the debt in this fashion. She made the mistake of not giving the Kuchma group a large enough kickback. There was internecine warfare among the oligarchs, of which she was one. She was the most attractive and the least corrupt in the sense that everything that she did was transparent. But these transactions were in the game of what in effect was mafia politics. But it was all on the surface and she exposed the racketeering of the governing group and was cast aside for coming out from under the tent of these mafia-like practices. Yanukovich won the election in the 2008 because of the impact of the crimes and misdemeanors of the Yushchenko government, its ineptness and its loss of favor within Ukraine and in Russia. Putin saw in Yanukovich an ally and someone he could work with and could corrupt and hold in check and in obedience through corruption. The election was free and fair as far as the conduct of the elections. It was predetermined as far as media and press and due to the disgust of the public with Yushchenko.

Yanukovich was elected and he took over, immediately putting in place all of his minions, including his son who rose from being a run of the mill dentist to a mega billionaire. I saw in the paper that he just was killed driving on the ice of Lake Baikal when he broke through the ice in the deepest lake in the world.

Q: Why weren't they aware?

MILLER: Because they were tending to their own business. I think some of the

tendencies of oligarchy were evident in the other Eastern European nations as well, particularly in the number of former Warsaw Pact nations that still had remnants of the Soviet past in their systems of governance. But the youth, the majority of the country, the largest group in the country, those under 35, were, as a whole disgusted with the behavior of their country and their government. And it came to a head in the Maidan demonstrations in which people had to take sides: “Are you for living a life like this, or are you for reform and change.” The electoral process was part of that but it was more a case of the people going to the forum in the ancient Greek manner.

The Maidan saw elections as a part of the process of needed reform, an end to corruption and enhances the possibility of living a civilized life with the dignity of an ethical standard enforced by just rule of law. The Maidan was like the Greek Forum, particularly, the Forum of Periclean Athens. I referred earlier to the oath of Chersonesus. On the Maidan, the oath was expressed every day and night by the demands to end the corruption of governance and to replace the corrupt Yanukovich government with new people who would bring dignity to Ukraine through a principled, ethical adherence to the just rule of law.

The Maidan experience coalesced the country in a way that was generational. The younger generation is the Maidan generation. They are in their late teens, twenties and thirties. Their parents are influenced to some extent but they’re held back by their own Soviet experience and the experience of the first 20 years of independence. The principles of Maidan were expressed repeatedly, night after night: “an end to corruption, reform of governance, the bad guys out”. And they succeeded. They’re very good people. I made a point of traveling to Ukraine to meet them and talk with them in order to see what their quality is. I met them here in Washington and other cities, like Chicago. They’re invited by the Diaspora groups to the U.S. They’re very good, and I think they will take over. Poroshenko, who I’ve known since 1993, who is a close friend of Yushchenko, funded Yushchenko’s campaign, is an oligarch himself, but he has been a good oligarch in the sense that his billions have been based on confections, the confectionary industry that produces excellent, popular chocolate biscuits and candies and he did very well. His product is very good. And he’s regarded as a bridge person, a transitional leader, by the Maidan people and I suspect that he will be allowed to govern by Maidan as long as he holds the country together, in its war against Russia.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

JON GUNDERSON
Department of State
Consul General
Ukraine
Kiev, Ukraine
(1990–1993)

Mr. Gunderson was born and raised in New York and educated at George Washington University, the University of Oslo International School, Stanford University and the National War College.

Entering the State Department in 1973, he served abroad in Moscow, Stockholm and Frankfurt. At Reykjavik and Tallinn he was Chargé d'affaires, in Oslo, Deputy Chief of Mission, and in Kiev, Consul General. In assignments at the State Department in Washington, Mr. Gunderson dealt with a variety of matters, including arms control, anti-terrorism and Balkan issues. Mr. Gunderson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2012.

Topical Focus – Ukrainian Politics and Independence

GUNDERSON: We gradually got a sense that the Ukraine was going to go independent. We'd talk to Party leaders, dissidents, labor leaders, members of the Rada, which is their parliament. They were beginning to sense that the center could not hold. Then CODELs began to come in. They had a vote on sovereignty in March 1991, which was voted for fairly overwhelmingly. This wasn't independence, it was a sovereign Ukraine in the Soviet Union, but because the vote was so overwhelming, you had a sense that they aren't going to stop there. We started reporting about that, that there was a real movement for independence. Embassy Moscow didn't agree. The conventional wisdom in the Bush I administration was that we could work with Gorbachev; we were beginning to sign arms control agreements and Gorby was a known entity. The thinking in Washington was, "Let's deal with the devil we know, we're getting these agreements, let's not deal with this nationality, independence issue."

We weren't saying, "They will become independent," Foreign Service people don't make such categorical statements, but "There is a good chance that they will be pushing for more and more independence and they we have to deal with this reality and have to think about what our policy should be: would we recognize Ukraine's claim as an independent statehood? What are the criteria for recognition? how do we coordinate with our NATO allies?, etc."

Q: I do. What were the Ukrainians saying? Was there a Ukrainian government at the time that could easily split off and become an independent government, or was there sort of a creature of Moscow?

GUNDERSEN: Well, they had a leader named Kravchuk. He used to be the ideological secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, but he was a crafty character and saw the way things were going. So he became more and more independent; he quickly changed to a black nationalist hat, and discarded his red communist hat. Meanwhile, the Rada had elections and elected some Rukh people, that's a democratic pro-independence party. So there was real, pretty open discussion on independence. And we were reporting that even the Communists were moving in that direction.

Q: Could you explain what that was?

GUNDERSEN: Well, Bush visited the Soviet Union in early August 1991, it was still the Soviet Union, to work with Gorbachev, because they had come to the recognition, from their perspective, that they liked Gorbachev's reform policies. We were signing arms control agreements. Bush was someone who placed great stock in personal relationships and he was comfortable dealing with Gorbachev. But we also knew that they had to deal with the nationality issue. So Bush scheduled a trip to Kiev after Moscow.. He was greeted by a million people in Kiev because he was seen as pro-democracy, the route was lined with people, it was a very

joyous occasion. And he gave a speech to the Rada. He talked about democracy and self-determination and human rights and Ukrainian history. Not a bad speech generally. However, two things he said became famous: he warned against “suicidal nationalism” and said that “Democracy does not mean independence.” So he was, in effect, telling the Ukrainians, “You can push for democracy, but not for independence.” I only saw the speech a couple of hours beforehand. I told the speechwriters: “This is going to go down really bad, because of these two lines.” And those were the things that were picked up by the press. I think it was Washington columnist Robert Novak who called this speech the “Chicken Kiev” speech. The Ukrainian-American community here reacted very strongly and negatively to the speech as well. All the good things in the speech were soon forgotten.

Q: Were you sort of relegated to the rear of the president's entourage?

GUNDERSEN: Yeah, I was there, but it was still the Soviet Union and Ambassador Matlock accompanied the President to Kiev, so clearly I was subordinate to him. I had to fight to get into meetings, because they knew what we were writing from Kiev. But I did get into the meetings, most of them. One of the results of the meetings was the Soviets were becoming increasingly suspicious of the Ukrainians and where they were going. So they sent down Yanayev, one of the leaders of the subsequent coup to remove Gorbachev from power, to spy on what Bush and Kravchuk were talking about. Kravchuk and Bush wanted to have a one on one meeting, so they told me to “Talk to Yanayev, so we can have a private discussion.” I have a picture of a very worried looking Yanayev sitting there with Bush and Kravchuk. Then Bush and Kravchuk disappeared. I think that was one of the key events that caused the coup makers to act. I think Yanayev reported back to his buddies in the Kremlin, but not Gorbachev, that: “Ukraine's going to go independent, we need to do something about it.” The coup occurred a month and a half later.

Q: Let's talk about the Ukraine, now.

GUNDERSEN: And we very much wanted to have Consulates in the Baltics and Ukraine, to have eyes and ears on the ground so to speak. But we also didn't really push for independence for those countries, because the Bush Administration was becoming comfortable with working with Gorbachev. It was much easier to sign these agreements with a single nation state. Diplomats are more comfortable with the devil they know rather than the devil they don't. So my charge as Consul General was basically to report on what was happening, to work with the government of Ukraine, which was still a communist government, and to encourage openness and democracy, but not independence. But when I got there, it became increasingly apparent, as I mentioned during our last session, that it would be difficult for the Soviet Union to remain a unified state, because Ukraine and the other constituent republics, particularly the Baltics, didn't want to be part of the Soviet Union. So the fatal flaw, in our view, was that you couldn't have democracy and openness without independence. And, as I said earlier, we began to report that, very carefully, because it was not the received, conventional wisdom in the State Department or in Washington or in NATO. (...) In the U.S. government, the first to really support the possibility of Ukrainian independence was the Defense Department, 'because they saw that in military terms. So they, in internal deliberations within the U.S. government, were the ones who were agreeing with our cables from Ukraine.

Q: From your perspective, were you able to sort of get out, you and your colleague in Kiev and sort of sample and get a feel about what would happen, was this for real, this desire of Ukraine to be independent?

GUNDERSON: (...) They had elections for the parliament. We, for the first time, we organized international visitors program grants for Ukrainians to visit the U.S. – and they readily accepted. We brought together a mixed group, including Communist Party members, democrats, labor representatives, to visit the United States. And that took a lot of delicate negotiations with the Ukrainians and with Washington. They visited Washington, New York and Ukrainian communities throughout the mid-West. Not only did they see an open, democratic diverse society, but they worked together, they sat together, they traveled together. So they realized that could work together at home as well. And many of them served in subsequent governments back home. The \$60,000 we used on the program was, I believe, money well spent.

Q: How about the Party, the Communist Party in Ukraine? Where was it coming out?

GUNDERSEN: The Party had always been very loyal to Moscow, very hard line, because they knew that many Ukrainians, especially Ukrainians in the west, were antiParty, anti-Russian, so they needed to prove their loyalty to Moscow. Vladimir Shcherbytsky, the Ukrainian Party leader until 1989, was one of the most loyal followers of Brezhnev and a member of the Soviet Party Politburo. Kravchuk was the Party chief when I arrived in Kiev and he had been the Party ideologue who took care of ideological purity previously. But he was a very wily politician and he began to realize that the world was changing. I met with him at least seven or eight times during my time there, sometimes one on one. In fact, after Ukraine voted for sovereignty in the spring of 1991, but it was clear where they were going. We started getting visitors like Brzezinski, Kissinger, Nixon and all sorts of CODELs (Congressional delegations).

My first thought when the coup occurred, was, the hard line Communists are going to return to Brezhnev era policies and it would be difficult for us to influence the course of events. At the same time, Rukh, the democratic movement we had been helping, basically took over the government in Kiev. I got a call from the head of RUHK telling me, “We know you’re looking for a building to house your consulate. Would you like a building? And they offered us the Kiev Communist Party headquarters, which is the current U.S. Embassy there. So that’s how we got that building. (...) The State Department eventually came around to accepting the reality of independence. Secretary Baker came to Ukraine, he visited Ukraine and the other newly independent states in January ’92. He turned the policy around 180 degrees and basically declared: “Yes, Ukraine’s going independent, obviously the Baltic Republics are and probably these other constituent Soviet republics are and we have to be ahead of the curve.” Right after his trip we recognized Ukrainian independence immediately and we said all the right things. The Ukrainians were very happy about it and so it was a sea change and we started getting aid programs, the Ukrainian-American community and we had been pushing for. The Nunn-Lugar Amendment was passed, which would give a lot of money for taking care of the scientists who worked on nuclear weapons. Nunn and Lugar visited as did Bradley, Cranston, Strom Thurmond, etc. By the way, Thurmond at 90, still had an eye out for attractive women. I was very much involved, sometimes as a policy maker, sometimes as a messenger delivering messages directly to Kravchuk such as: “We will be able to do all these things if you abide by international

covenants and agree to get rid of the nukes on your territory.” (...) We met every week with our NATO colleagues in the lead up to independence and recognition. The Canadians were probably the biggest advocates, because of their domestic politics. The others were thinking more or less like we were initially, being a little bit cautious about recognizing Ukraine, But everyone eventually followed the emerging NATO consensus about recognition. By the time I left most major Western countries had established embassies in Ukraine.

Q: Did our policymakers, both in Washington and at our embassy in the then Soviet Union divide into camps over Ukrainian independence?

GUNDERSEN: Well, there were camps. Those who wanted to go slow on recognition and those who wanted to go faster. It was largely DOD that pushed for quicker recognition. And there were some in the State Department who wanted that, especially in Policy Planning. But everyone eventually came around after the failure of the August coup in Moscow. By the end of 1991 it was clear to all that we needed to recognize Ukrainian independence. (...) At first, the big issue was would the Ukrainians vote for independence. So we had a fairly consistent and coordinated view of Ukrainian politics. Our Embassy had a lot of good contacts, because we had Ukrainians speakers on our staff and the Europeans did not. So we were able to share a lot of good intelligence. (...) What we knew was that Ukraine was a very immature country without civil society counterweights to government institutions and that it would be very difficult for it to develop along Western line, and it would take a long time. We knew a lot of the Ukrainian democratic activists who were more Western oriented. We didn't know the old Communist apparatchiks as well. We knew there would be problems, but I don't think we foresaw all the problems that have since occurred.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

WILLIAM GREEN MILLER
Woodrow Wilson International Center
Senior Fellow
Washington, D.C. (1998–2019)

William Green Miller was born in New York in 1931. He earned his bachelor's degree from Williams College in 1953. His career has included positions in Isfahan, Teheran, and an ambassadorship to Ukraine. William Green Miller was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Topical Focus – First Elections in Ukraine

Q: Well, tell me, in all this, and we're talking up to December of '91, where did something that was logically much more, but at that time, where did Ukraine fit in? Because it always struck me, looking at this as an -- that if Ukraine -- I have a hard time not saying the Ukraine, but one learns after a while to call it Ukraine -- moves out, that means Russia is no longer a particular threat to anybody. Because this is sort of the bread basket that got -- it's a huge state.

MILLER: That's the Brzezinski thesis, namely: Russia with Ukraine is an empire: without Ukraine it is just a powerful Eurasian state. That's only partially true. Russia alone, with thousands of nuclear weapons, is still a great threat.

Q: But that's destruction.

MILLER: Right, Russia still has large population resources as well as vast natural resources. By itself it is a great nation and, in the future, if they pull themselves together, will be even without Ukraine. But Brzezinski and Kissinger agreed that with Ukraine, it's an empire. It is an arguable point of view that has to be contended with and treated seriously.

I knew most of the individuals in the Ukrainian delegation in the last Supreme Soviets in Moscow, but I didn't know them or look on them at that time as Ukrainian separatist nationalists, and I don't think they looked on themselves initially as Ukrainian nationalists, except for a few from the western part of separatist Ukraine. Their view was, like that of most of the Interregional Group; reform the Soviet Union. Once confidence in Gorbachev's leadership declined and the Yeltsin approach took hold, the Ukrainian delegation led by Kravchuk went in the direction of independence for Ukraine.

It should be recalled that at the time, a good part of the Soviet leadership was Ukrainian. Forty percent of the military general staff were Ukrainian. Thirty to forty percent are good numbers to use in the apportioning the percentages of ethnic political leadership, too, because at times it was as high as 40 percent Ukrainian, looking at the Khrushchev and Brezhnev tenures.

Q: Brezhnev is also?

MILLER: He was Ukrainian, from Dnepropetrovsk. So the way Ukraine was perceived at that time by many, including myself, was as part of Russia. As one of my very good Russian friends once said about the newly independent Ukraine, "It was inconceivable that there could be a Russia without Ukraine and Crimea and southern Ukraine, where Tchaikovsky and so many of my relatives used to spend summers. This was a part of Russian life. Pushkin went there, and Chekhov, all of our great Russians were part Ukrainian. It was inconceivable that Ukraine and Russia should be separated."

USAID DEMOCRACY PROGRAMMING

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

Derek S. Singer
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
WAE consultant, Democracy Center
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
(1994-1997)

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.

Topical Focus – Reflections on the institutionalization of Democracy and Governance programming within AID

SINGER: Then, I worked for a year as a WAE ("While Actually Employed") consultant with the Global Bureau of AID/Washington in their Democracy Center. In DC I worked mostly on the elections and political processes team, and did a little traveling for them.

SINGER: Finding people to send for training was a first step, basically, to various court, legal education and legislative reform institutions and training organizations in the United States. Finally, we were reversing a policy in effect for many years and starting to surmount years of almost paranoid fears of appearing to “interfere in the domestic policies” of other countries. We were also beginning to talk about voting and elections. Today AID, as you know, has gotten into electoral reform and assistance in a fairly big way in many countries, and is monitoring many overseas elections and what have you through various groups like NDI and IRI, the Carter Center, IFES, and so forth. But, at the start of this decade, this was pretty radical stuff. We were just beginning to look into whether and how we could find an effective and useful role to play in the electoral process, to help it become more transparent, honest, effective and efficient. So,

while we were just starting to explore this area while I was there, much more was done after I left. I sort of began gathering data in the field. I found that to be especially interesting.

SINGER: You have heard me talk about my prejudices in favor of democracy and governance, especially when we have gotten into the election field. I think that NDI, IRI, IFES and the Carter Center, all of which are supported by AID of course, have often done a very good job. Emblematic of this work at its best, I think that probably includes the recent crucial elections in Nigeria. We are keeping our fingers crossed, but they were all in there, recently, taking a look at the really big one, as far as African elections are concerned. I think AID probably can claim some credit for what looks like a pretty free and fair election in that bellwether African country.

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ROBERT STEPHEN BRENT
USAID
1986-2006

Robert Stephen (Steve) Brent studied at Duke University for his undergraduate degree before joining the U.S. Navy for six years of service. He then studied at Harvard University for both his masters' and doctorate degrees before working as a staffer for Senator Nancy Kassebaum in 1985 and entering USAID's Africa Bureau in 1986. He served in South Africa, Egypt, and Washington D.C.. He was interviewed by Carol Peasley in July 2018.

Topical Focus: 1994 South African Elections

Q: Prior to '94 and the election, there was no USAID assistance to the government in South Africa. After the election, and the change to majority rule, how controversial and difficult was that? Did you have a lot of local partners?

BRENT: In all honesty, we were a little slow in giving up the NGO programs. Many people said, "Look, we're now the majority, just give the money to the new government." We had 20 years of experience with NGOs being very effective, and government being dysfunctional. And so we were gun shy. We did start a local government program run by Peter Natiello. We had a brilliant counterpart for that, Chippy Olver, who was an MD and white ANC member. It worked great while Chippy was there, but not as great after he left. So we knew the government had limitations, we had to walk a line. We probably stayed with the NGOs a little too long. We should have probably been a little bolder, but we were having trouble finding good projects because the government was so new.

Q: Did USAID provide any assistance when the '94 election was coming up?

BRENT: Yes. We spent a lot of money on the election, to the extent when Brian Atwood (who knew a lot about elections) came out afterwards, he said, "How could you spend so much on one election?" Aaron said, "Well, we had all this stuff we had to do." I mean, it was not easy. They're running the first election they've ever had in the history of the country in which everybody could vote. You had to get the procedures down. Suppose you'd had all kinds of foul-ups in the election. That would have been a disaster. So yes, we spent a lot of money on it. The electoral systems, the ballots, electoral people, the money to NGOs. We really stepped in.

Q: And for observation and all that?

BRENT: Yes. And I think it went off pretty well.

Q: Yeah, I think that's true. There was one other thing which I hadn't realized that AID had been involved with, until I did an interview with Aaron Williams. And that was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Could you talk about that?

BRENT: I don't think we gave the TRC money; I don't think they needed it. It was a big thing for the country. Aaron might have been involved, but I don't think it was a funding issue.

Q: He may have just been talking about having gone to some of the meetings.

BRENT: I think that was probably it. And of course, when Brian Atwood was out, he was talking to Bishop Tutu, and we were in touch with those people all the time. One place we did give money was a little bit later, with the anti-corruption unit, and Stacy took the lead on that. The unit was quite aggressive in attacking corruption, I think it was called the Scorpions.

Tim Bork came out to visit South Africa after he was at the Ford Foundation. I had him over at my house. I said, "Tim, what should we do, post-election?" He said, "The single biggest thing in this country is going to be corruption. You have to get on that." I remembered that. Stacy personally led it, which was politically sensitive because they went after some quite senior people. Of course corruption in the ANC became a much bigger issue later. But at the time they were making an effort on it.

So the point is we were looking at, where are the weak points, what should we try to do? And again, it's hard when you're sitting there, particularly when you've got a new situation, like a new majority government, to figure out what the critical points of input are. It kind of comes up by proposals.

Q: Were you involved at all with the Gore and Mbeki commission? Did you have any interface with that?

BRENT: I did. I'm not a big fan of these mechanisms, Carol.

Q: Well, I think most people in AID are not.

BRENT: I guess the idea is that, if you get top principals involved, they're going to come up with brilliant new ideas that the bureaucracy has missed. I found that to be not true. And what you're basically doing, you're trying to come up with deliverables all the time. I respected Al Gore for his attempt, but I didn't see a lot of payoffs.

Q: I know. And it became very time consuming for it.

BRENT: Massively time consuming. And you divert stuff from other things, because you have to get deliverables done. It made it harder to hold money back, particularly in Egypt (because we had another one of these commissions in Egypt).

Washington, D.C.—USAID, Director for Center for Development Information and Education (2003-2006)

Topical Focus: The Millennium Challenge Act and Corruption Indicators for Governments

Q: But before we get to the Threshold Program—I remember vaguely, because I was there in the counselor job doing stuff with you a little bit on this—I remember one of the big debates with the MCA was how they were going to implement the programs, the compacts and these project implementation units. That whole model, there was a lot of debate about this as well.

BRENT: Yes, they tried to copy the project implementation unit model from the World Bank. This was part of the idea of it not being a traditional aid program. They said, "We don't want to have a lot of Americans there. We will hire locals to run it." Their other principle was: "We're going to hold the country accountable. If it doesn't perform, we're going to cut them off." This was part of the good performer idea. The same logic implied that they wanted the country to develop their proposals for the MCA Compacts—after the country was chosen for a Compact based on the indicators, the content of the program had to be developed, and that was supposed to be done by the government of the country.

So for the first two years, the MCA message to USAID was "Keep your hands off Compact design. The country's got to develop their plan and own it."

Later, when Condoleezza Rice came in as Secretary of State and chaired the MCA Board, she asked about USAID's role in Compact development. I don't remember why she was talking to me; Andrew Natsios must have missed the meeting. Anyway, I gave her the party line: we were not supposed to help. She said, "This is not a test, this is a tutorial. I want USAID to help them if they need it. The idea is to get a good program." Clay Lowery was then the Vice-President of MCC and at the table. He took me aside after the meeting and said, "Steve, we are going to change the whole relationship with AID. We are going to let your Directors help the governments develop their proposals." I was much relieved because some of the Directors had already been doing this. Now it became official. Clay, to his credit, turned around like that. As soon as Rice said it, he shifted direction 180 degrees. Very professional.

There were lots of teething problems. Implementation units were not the biggest difficulty. They had a lot of trouble getting decent Compact proposals. When Clay went to one country (I think it was Mozambique), he told the government to write up their desires on a piece of yellow paper; they would start with that. Also, MCC didn't have U.S. contracting officers and didn't know how to do contracts. We helped them with those kinds of things.

Over time they developed their systems. Some of their early programs drew heavily on off-the-shelf World Bank infrastructure programs. They ended up doing a lot of infrastructure (e.g., roads) because that was what the countries asked for. That added a capability to U.S. programs, because USAID generally doesn't have money for infrastructure. But in general MCC had trouble implementing the original idea of major growth-enhancing investments. The investments were helpful but not large enough to lift a country to a higher level of development.

There were tensions at the organizational level. Most of the staff in MCC were politicals or Iraq veterans, or some from the World Bank. They viewed USAID staff as old guard and they were going to show the new way. They would say things like "we are the first aid program to be results focused and to hold governments accountable," which angered USAID people. I was sort of the USAID ambassador to MCC. I worked closely with the first president of MCC, Paul Applegarth. He was later replaced by Ambassador John Danilovich, who came out of Brazil. Danilovich was a real pro, who instantly improved relations with USAID and Andrew. He brought in Rodney Bent to be CEO. By that point MCC really began to hit its stride.

Back to the MCC Board meetings for a minute. These were quite high level: first chaired by Sec State Powell, with Sec Treasury or a rep, USTR [United States Trade Representative] (initially Zoellick), Andrew, Applegarth, and one or two NGO reps (CARE and there might have been another).

One of the problems was that most of the Board members didn't know much about the countries. They had the indicators, but they wanted more qualitative assessments. Andrew ended up mostly filling that role. They would hear the MCC staff presentation and then they would say, "Andrew,

what do you think about this?" Andrew would then talk about the country. He often knew the history, the leaders, the development problems, etc.

The turn-around on USAID's role was Rice's personal judgement. Nobody told her to do that. She knew something about Africa; and she had more of a development point of view than most people realize. She said, "Well of course you're going to help them develop the plan! Why would we not do that?" I'm not sure she even knew what a big issue this had been up to that point.

And the last piece was the Threshold Program. I had a very hard time with it at first, because I would send over AID people to talk to the MCC people, and the MCC management and staff hated what they heard.

Q: Right. And the Threshold Program was for countries that didn't meet the criteria.

BRENT: Correct, but they were close to qualifying. They would get \$20 million dollars for their failed indicator, which in most cases was corruption. So we had the mission of reducing corruption in Kenya for \$20 million dollars. Here was my breakthrough, Carol. I started getting the Mission Director for the country to call into the MCC meeting on the phone and talk directly to the MCC leaders and staff. One of the early Mission Directors to do this was Pam White. Wow, it turned around just like that! Because first of all, she knew the country cold. She knew the situation. She told them how it is, what the problems are. They're like, "This person knows what they're doing." Now the Threshold Program suddenly became gold. MCC hadn't liked it at first. Then MCC's view became:

"This is a little secret weapon for \$20 million. We're getting quite a bit out of this." The AID missions liked it because they were getting supplementary money. I liked it because all I had to do was visit the country and work with the Mission on getting started with the government. The Missions would say: "Yes, we can figure out a way to address that indicator. We can do that." My job suddenly became easy.

MCC also started to get its act together. They hired John Hewko, who was a very capable lawyer, who worked extremely hard to formalize the Compacts. Clay Lowery was a good VP; very fast. They created an agency in 6-9 months. Ended up hiring 200 people. That was an impressive accomplishment.

Q: Yeah, and over time they ended up hiring a lot of former AID people.

BRENT: Over time the tensions between MCC and USAID went away, or way down. MCC ended up later hiring a lot of USAID folks, Stacy Rhodes, Patrick Fine, others. But in the beginning it was like two rebel armies, or the Army and the Special Forces.

Q: And I believe that AID is no longer doing the Threshold Program.

BRENT: MCC took over the program. One of the things Rodney said—Rodney's also a very good manager—he said, "Look, we only did that when we were building. If there's going to be a Threshold Program, we should run it, and we will build the capacity." After I left in 2006 to come to NDU, they took it over.

Q: Because they developed in-country offices...

BRENT: A lot of their in-country reps are AID people. The ground has become much more collegial since.

Q: There were public members of the board as far as I recall, and so they had some NGO representatives—

BRENT: Yes, CARE and another NGO. I and the NGO reps would get together before Board meetings and we would coordinate our positions. We would go over the countries, because the vote was on that: which countries? We had quite a bit of influence, because we were the ones with the detailed country knowledge.

Q: I don't know if it was during this period or if it was later, but the Center for Global Development used to do its own numbers and give their recommendations. And if they thought there were any political pressures to do compacts and countries that might not really warrant programs. Had that started before you left? Or did you see any of that political pressure?

BRENT: That went on from the very beginning. Steve Radelet had been in on the early conceptualizing of the MCA as a Treasury Deputy Assistant Secretary. Then he left and went to CGD. He knew the MCA indicator system, in which the data came from standard sources (World Bank, Transparency International, etc.). So he could run the numbers ahead of time and predict who would pass the indicator tests and who not. He would publish that.

It was not a problem because MCC was going by what the numbers said. One thing that was controversial was how to treat democracy. Because originally the only hard hurdle was corruption, which was decided by President Bush. You couldn't be below the median on corruption. That by itself would fail you. Political rights were one of the indicators, but not a hard hurdle.

But later, because of the Administration's freedom agenda, they made political rights (above the median) a tacit hard hurdle (and I believe later a formal hard hurdle). That hit Rwanda. Rwanda scores well on most of the indicators, but not political rights. So this turned out to be pretty important, especially if we go back to our East Asian cases since none of them were democracies at the time that they did their growth pushes.

Q: None of them would've gotten MCC programs.

BRENT: Right.

Q: It was interesting, I mean do you--. One of the things that's often said is the incentive factor—that the MCC threshold indicators provide some incentive for countries. Do you have views on that?

BRENT: Yeah, I don't think it does. What I did see get affected was one of the indicators—days to start a business—because government could change that one indicator pretty easily. But as far as bigger policy changes to qualify for the MCA, I don't think you can demonstrate that. In my view, that was not due to failures by MCA but to the limitations of the preconditions model itself. We don't measure good performance by growth performance, or poverty reduction, or equity. We measure good performance by compliance with a set of indicators—which are input indicators, institutional descriptors—that we have constructed. If you do well by our test, we declare you a good performer, regardless of how well your economy is doing, how severe the obstacles are that you are facing. I just don't think that's the way growth happens.

Also some countries that are doing pretty well on growth and poverty reduction don't pass the indicator tests, like Rwanda.

Q: You should do a little article on an MCC meeting done in 1955, in which Taiwan and Korea...

BRENT: They would not have passed. As an example, look at this article by Andrew on Korea [hands Carol article]. Korea was the best example of a major USAID investment that paid off. In Taiwan we were late to the game--what precipitated Taiwan's reform push was the notice that AID was going to be withdrawing. We had done a lot of rural development, so we laid the base. And I think we were involved in land reform, but we were not that instrumental in Taiwan's growth push. But in Korea we were. We were heavily involved. The USAID Mission Director addressed their leadership and said, "Look guys, you need to develop your manufacturing." And General Park had a similar view. Park was an extremely active leader, but USAID was involved, funding experts, giving advice, etc. This to me is one of USAID's biggest success stories, maybe the biggest.

VENEZUELA

N/A

YEMEN

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

ELIZABETH JONES
Department of State
Acting Assistant Secretary, Near East Bureau
Washington DC., U.S.A.
(2012-2013)

Elizabeth Jones was born in 1948 in Munich, Germany. She graduated from Swarthmore College in 1970. She joined the Foreign Service in June 1970. During her Foreign Service career she served in a number posts including Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Germany, and Kazakhstan. She initially retired in 2005, however she has rejoined the Foreign Service a number of times after her retirement.

Topical Focus – 2012 Election in Yemen, Attack on the U.S. Embassy

I wanted to talk a little bit more about Yemen because that was one of the big issues that I dealt with in NEA. At the beginning of the Arab Spring, there was sentiment in Yemen including on the streets that the leader of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, was on the way out. There was a consensus among the leadership. There was even a consensus among his cohort, his allies and supporters, that it would be a better thing to go to—not necessarily a more democratic government, that's going too far—but to a government that would be more attuned to the needs of the country. A government that would be more prepared to help the people of Yemen in the kinds of things that they needed, such as a better life, more jobs, healthcare, and housing. The vice president, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, took office on February 27, 2012.

Q: So I think Americans don't know quite as much about Yemen as they do about these other countries we have been talking about. Yemen at one point had been two countries and they had been in some way—but that had been some time in the past, right?

JONES: It had been some time in the past. There was Yemen itself, and then there was the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. We called it PDRY, the short version. And through the years, the radical nature of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen faded away and the two countries seemed to have a lot more in common. They agreed to reunite to something that would be of greater interest and greater support to the people of Yemen, to the integrity of the country and to its independence, because it was always considered and considered itself an acolyte to Saudi Arabia. Although at one point, it had been an acolyte to Egypt and been overrun by the Egyptians.

Q: On the day of the attack on the embassy in Yemen, was it the same situation as in the others that the police and the military were not prepared to protect people?

JONES: That's right. They were unable. They had bad leadership. They didn't have the capacity to do the protecting of the embassy the way it needed to be done. And as I mentioned before, my theory was that the newer Arab Spring leadership was not prepared to order the police—they didn't have police leadership or military leadership that was capable of doing the kind of protecting that needed to be done. This was partly because they were so used to having the police be in support of the regime, that the idea that it would support the common people—i.e. American diplomats and the hundreds of Yemeni staff in the embassy—was something that they couldn't do. They didn't know how to do.

Q: Do you remember who was leading our embassy at the time?

JONES: It was Gerry Feierstein. He was the U.S. ambassador at the time. Jake Walles was the American ambassador in Tunis, and both of them did a really excellent job of keeping people safe, making good, quick decisions, and being in touch with any part of the security services—in Tunis for Jake Walles and Gerry Feierstein in Sanaa—that could give the help that they needed. Eventually Ambassador Walles was able to get the Tunisian military to help. And that was what finally pushed the demonstrators away from the embassy in Tunis and got the firetrucks there to put out the fires. The same thing happened in Yemen finally, but it was after the mob had been able to break through a rather substantial series of sets of metal gates. So they got very close to the embassy itself. Both of these embassies were what we call Inman embassies. They were built to very strict security standards, which is what saved everybody in both embassies, because they had extremely thick glass that withstood the kinds of weapon attacks that the mobs used. But when I later visited and they showed me all the damage, they said that it was really just minutes away from those structures actually failing.

Q: In both countries?

JONES: In both cases. Because these buildings can withstand a tremendous amount, a huge assault, but they can't withstand it forever. And it got pretty close, which of course they didn't know at the time. They just knew they were in severe danger in any case.

Q: And you mentioned elections and also on the day of the attack, you mentioned the new government wasn't used to handling the security forces. Had the elections already happened?

JONES: Yes, they had already happened, I think. But the other thing that was going on at the time was the whole issue of the previous leader, Saleh, being prepared to leave Yemen. The population and even his family, agreed he should leave. But then the question was, where does he go? We had a tremendous number of discussions with our Arab colleagues, colleagues from Arab countries, and our European colleagues as to which country would take him under the circumstances that he wanted to go and not be jailed and have a place to live, et cetera.

Q: Okay, I just checked the dates. So there had been elections in February, 2012—although there was only one candidate—and Vice President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi became president on February 25. Saleh resigned that day. So, it still was a fairly new government during the attack.

JONES: That's right. That makes sense. Right. And the new president, Hadi, was actually a very good guy. It's coming back to me now. He was a good guy. He got it about what he needed to do, but he wasn't too good at constituent outreach, shall we say. He had a hard time getting his government to stay together and to be as cohesive as it needed to be in order to make some of these tough decisions on domestic policy. The previous president, Saleh—finally the Italians said they would take him and we negotiated the whole thing. You know, the European Union and other European countries were involved in this. The Saudis were certainly involved because they were helping us persuade him to leave, Saleh. But, in the end he refused to go.

Q: He refused to go?

JONES: Yeah. He just said no. I think at some point he was gone for a while, but he came back. But I will say that Gerry Feierstein, the ambassador there, did a very good job. There was a small group of ambassadors who worked with the government on all of these arrangements. So Gerry, with his colleagues, did a good job in persuading the elites there as to what the plan should be and how we should go forward both on Saleh leaving and on the kinds of programs that were needed in order to put some heft into the government. He worked with them to understand the kind of work that needed to be done in order for the government to be able to function, for there to be a parliament, for there to be decision-making in the parliament, for the ministries to function and make decisions about the kinds of things that needed to be done so that the assistance money could be spent.

That was part of the problem. We had the same problem in Libya. The government there was a set of nice people, but they had a very hard time making decisions, a really hard time making decisions. One of the themes that was common, I thought was common throughout, was fear of financial decisions. One of the reasons they all had a hard time making decisions was that anything that had to do with any kind of funding or a budget or whatever, is they were worried about being accused of corruption, of having taken money in order to agree that that was the program that they were going to use. And that this was the budget that was going to happen. It was going to be used for whatever the program was, the domestic problem that they needed to fund. And so in order not to be accused of corruption, they made no decisions.

Q: Well, it's not easy being a brand new government, all of a sudden, right?

JONES: That's right.

Q: After being led by a king or an autocrat for so long. So, did the attack on the U.S. embassy affect internal politics at all in Yemen?

JONES: I wouldn't say it did, no. I mean, they were very upset that it had happened. They said all the right things. They were helpful as much as they could be in terms of what we needed to repair the embassy and all that kind of thing. So that wasn't a difficulty.

JONES: Here are the names of some of the people involved in Yemen. Ali Abdullah Saleh, of course, was the president who was then ousted as a result of the Arab Spring. He was in place and not in place at various times when his vice-president, Mansour Hadi, was elected to be president and took over. But Saleh still being there made it much more difficult to get things done and to get decisions made. Saleh went off to Saudi Arabia for a little while. The Gulf Cooperation Council was very much involved in helping Yemen and the international community work with Saleh to give up authority and give up the presidency, which eventually worked. Although after I left NEA, Saleh was back and was doing more difficult things. At one point during the time I was there, he did go off to New York in the end in January, 2012. So Hadi was very much in place and his own boss at that point, but that was also during the period of time that it was quite difficult for Yemen.

Interviewed by: Robin Matthewman

Initial interview date: April 26, 2005

YUGOSLAVIA

N/A

ZIMBABWE

Democracy and Elections Subject Reader

PAUL WEISENFELD

USAID

Mission Director

Zimbabwe

Harare, Zimbabwe

(2002-2006)

Paul Weisenfeld was born and raised in New York and educated at Queens College and Harvard Law School. He entered the foreign service in 1991, and has served in South Africa, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Peru, and Haiti. He was interviewed by Carol Peasley in 2022.

Topical Focus – Opposition Party Support in Zimbabwe

Q: You had mentioned one of the ongoing parts of the Zimbabwe program was support for democracy and governance. Do you recall the kinds of things you all were doing? Was there an election during the period you were there?

WEISENFELD: Yeah, I was an election observer. I traveled to remote parts of the country during one of the elections that Mugabe stole. I remember being mistreated by the police as we tried to get into polls. I was charge d'affaires when [opposition leader of Movement for Democratic Change and challenger to the 2002 Zimbabwean presidential election] Morgan Tsvangirai's treason trial was going on. I had instructions from Washington to go to the trial and a whole bunch of ambassadors were going from most of the big European countries. The Canadians and us are going, I remember being the only person who was not white among the group of ambassadors. And the police came out and said, "You can't go in." I don't think I spoke—one of us said, "We're a group of ambassadors," and someone said what we were there for. The police officer knocked me down. I always assumed he knocked me down because he probably assumed I wasn't an ambassador but was there accompanying them because everyone else was far older than I was. I was still in my thirties.

Q: Wunderkind here!

WEISENFELD: Combination of skin color and age. I remember there was a conversation about whether we should file a formal complaint that the Zimbabwean government had accosted the

charge d'affaires. I don't know that I would remember all these stories until you start asking questions. It's kind of amazing the things you experience in the Foreign Service over your career.

Q: Did you get into the trial ultimately?

WEISENFELD: No.

Q: No, no you didn't. And he was the opposition candidate, right? So, he was arrested after the election? To make sure that he would be quiet.

WEISENFELD: We were supporting groups that were supportive of the opposition. We couldn't directly fund the opposition, obviously. We would meet with them, you know. I had Morgan over to my house several times. The opposition eventually splintered, but at that point they were not splintered. I had meetings with several of these people. We wouldn't meet in the offices; they'd come to the ambassador's house or my house. The kind of official position is we're meeting with a whole range of political groups: the government and other groups. But the government took it as we were working actively against them with the opposition. And I think that's the position they probably would have taken no matter what we did. I was told at the time by security that I was probably under surveillance. It certainly affected me because I felt tense and anxious the whole time I was there, but I don't know that I ever saw anyone following me. I couldn't tell if someone was listening on the phone or something, but I was always told that I had to assume that.

So, our programs were lawyers for human rights kind of groups, local groups that were advocating for broadening civil society, and free elections. We also brought in NDI [National Democratic Institute] and IRI [International Republican Institute], of course. There was a whole election piece of it, trying to support the process of free and fair elections, and elections monitoring for not just the big presidential but other elections. And then groups that were advocating for full rights for the displaced. One of the big issues I dealt with involved a local community outside of one of the towns on the outskirts of Harare that was protesting a great deal. The community was called Murambatsvina and Mugabe just bulldozed this whole suburb of -- I feel like 30-40,000—a large number of people. And they went to live in the bush. It was just horrific. So, we were doing humanitarian assistance to them, but also supporting advocacy groups against displaced and human rights groups. It was a wide range of support and some of our counterparts would get beaten up and thrown in jail on a regular basis.

Q: Were there political tensions among the Zimbabwean staff, or were they pretty much aligned with those wanting more freedoms?

WEISENFELD: They were 90 percent aligned with those wanting more freedom. There was a small group in the embassy, not in USAID so much, who would argue that there were some reformers in the ZANU–PF [Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front], Mugabe’s political party, and that we should seek out the reformers. Most of the local staff thought they're just a whole corrupt cabal, and there's no one to deal with in that group.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about how you worked with the embassy on interagency relationships on all this. It sounds like you were obviously working very closely with them on this whole array of humanitarian and political issues.

WEISENFELD: It's the closest relationship I've had with the embassy, as much as the ambassadors were challenging to work with. It was daily contact. They were insistent on everything being hand in glove. The ambassadors were reviewing our portfolio at a micro level. Individual grants we were giving out, they wanted to know who the organizations were, and it was much more than I was used to. USAID and Washington’s view at the time was this is kind of an unusual circumstance, that the policy from the State Department and the assistance are so closely related in Zimbabwe. That's just the way it's gonna be. I’m still in touch with both of those ambassadors that I worked with. I had a good working relationship with them. Not that we were always in agreement. One, I don't want to go into too much detail, but one of them insisted that one of my staff had to leave the country. And I disagreed and could not get any support from Washington, so the person left and went on to another assignment.

Q: This was an American staff member?

WEISENFELD: Yes, an American. And they had a stronger view than I've seen elsewhere that, yeah, we'll listen to local staff, but they're not going to participate. It was difficult to get some of the local staff in meetings with the senior embassy folks. Deprose Muchena was our most senior FSN. And he was in the democracy area. He's now the head of the Open Society Institute for Eastern Southern Africa. He's a luminary in democracy in the region.

Interviewed by: Carol Peasley

Initial interview date: February 16, 2022

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