The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Program
Labor Series

PAUL HILBURN

Interviewed by: Don Kienzle
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INTERVIEW

Q: I have the pleasure this morning of interviewing Paul Hilburn for the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project. Paul was a long-time labor attaché who recently retired from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

HILBURN: Tomorrow is my retirement date.

Q: Tomorrow is your retirement date. Well, normally, we don't interview people until they retire, but in this case since the transcript won't be ready until afterwards, we'll go ahead. Thank you very much, Paul, for agreeing to the interview on your next to last day of work, or is it your last day of work?

HILBURN: Tomorrow is the last day. I go off the payroll after the 30th of April.

Q: Shall we begin with a little bit about your background, your family, where you came from, and your education?

HILBURN: I grew up in a small town in West Texas. My father was a rural school superintendent in one of those big consolidated school districts that covered a lot of territory, because there's lots of territory and few people out where we grew up. When he wasn't being a school superintendent, he was a cattleman. He either bought or leased land and raised cattle. My mother was always complaining about the non-profitability of the cattle operation. It was something he loved because he'd grown up on a farm/ranch situation himself, although he was one of the first of his family to go to college and had majored in agriculture. My mother, on the other hand, was a product of a college campus. Her mother was the person who lived in a dorm with girls, a dorm mother. They lived in the dorm, and she grew up in that situation and majored in Latin and Greek and Classical Studies, so we had this odd combination of Dad with the agricultural background and Mother with her classical history and classical languages background. I tended more toward Mother's side of the intellectual spectrum, I guess. I was more interested in things like history and reading and so forth. My dad was always trying to get me to come out and help him with the cattle de-horning, emasculating, and other kinds of very pleasant

tasks that I was eager to escape from.

Q: You are not the first one in this group of people being interviewed who emasculated cattle. Was there a town that was nearby?

HILBURN: We lived in a little town of about 500 people named Evant, named after one of the early pioneers that had settled in that area. There were 25 people, for example, in my high school graduating class and about 100 in high school. We played class B football and sometimes wavered between having enough for eleven-man football and six-man football, if anybody ever remembers what that is.

Q: Well, six-man football is very popular in the rural parts of America.

HILBURN: When I was in school, the town was going through one of its more prosperous times, so we had enough to elevate us over the eleven-man threshold with or without substitutes. We had a few substitutes, obviously offense and defense at the same time. After high school, it was foregone that I was going to go to Texas A&M. That's where my daddy had gone, and that's where all of his brothers had gone to school. For a long time, I had thought that I would probably go into the military. Texas A&M, at that time, was all-male, all-military. It was like The Citadel or VMI in those days. Of course, in later years, it changed. Now it is a huge, sprawling land grant college of the type that you'd find in the Midwest.

Q: Where is A&M located?

HILBURN: It's at College Station, Texas.

Q: Is that in West Texas?

HILBURN: No. It is about 90 miles from Houston, so I was 400 or 500 miles from home.

Q: That's a long distance.

HILBURN: We used to make these flying trips back home for Thanksgiving. We'd leave after class on the last day, drive all night, and arrive home in the dawn hours of the next day.

Q: What was your major?

HILBURN: I majored in History and Government, following the proclivities inculcated by my mother, I suppose, more than the agricultural, engineering, and educational activities of my dad.

Q: Was it American history primarily?

HILBURN: It was primarily American history, with a minor in Latin American history. After college, as is every Texas Aggie, I was commissioned at the same time I was graduated. Then I went into the armed services: the Air Force, in my case. I delayed my entrance into active duty for a year. I got a Scottish Rite fellowship to go to George Washington University. I spent the following year in Washington at George Washington University studying Public Administration. In June of the following year, the year after I graduated with my undergraduate degree, I was called to active duty. It was one of the recurrent Berlin crises, I think, in about 1962 or 1963. It was 1963 when I went on active duty, but I don't remember the exact political situation. I wasn't keeping up with it that much.

Q: Well, there were lots of instances and problems. I was in Berlin from 1962 to 1964.

HILBURN: Really? Well, you would know more than I. But that was the pretext I was given. Whether it was true or not, I don't know. Anyway, I was called to active duty and then went to Japan pretty soon after that. Then I was reassigned, following that, out to California to George Air Force Base. All of these units were tactical fighter units, although I was not a pilot. I was just a ground support kind of person, a squadron commander in one case. The squadron was the ground support element of the headquarters. I saw pretty quickly that I didn't want to stay in the Air Force unless I was a pilot, and my applications for pilot training had been turned down because of high blood pressure. I decided that I would just leave the Air Force at the end of my allotted time, and I went back to graduate school. I applied for a number of places. Whoever gave me the highest paying scholarship or assistantship, I was going to go with. That happened to be Texas A&M again. I didn't finish the MA at George Washington, so I went back to Texas A&M and was an assistant and finished my MA.

Q: Was it an assistant government?

HILBURN: Yes, it was an assistant government. Then, I took the Foreign Service exam really thinking, "What the heck can I do with this history degree?" In the meantime, while waiting for the Foreign Service, I taught history at a nearby junior college not too far from College Station.

Q: What was the name of the place where you taught?

HILBURN: It was Tyler Junior College. It was in deep East Texas, a highly conservative little community with a highly conservative college administration. One little anecdote will illustrate the kind of administration it was. During those days they had the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley, and it was followed, I guess, by the Filthy Speech Movement. There was a series of movements, all of them segueing into the Vietnam protests, which were beginning to arise at that time. This is now the mid-Sixties. This is 1967. After a particularly egregious demonstration—egregious, of course is a relative term, but it was in the eyes of the administration of Tyler Junior College—out at Berkeley, the administration came on the loud speakers that were all in our classrooms

and said that because we were so antithetical to Berkeley, we were going to be given a day off for good behavior.

Q: Is this Ross Perot country by chance?

HILBURN: Ross Perot wasn't around in those days. He was just beginning to make his millions in EDS or whatever it was.

Q: Isn't he from East Texas?

HILBURN: He was from Northeast Texas. Tyler is a little more south, around Nacogdoches. I took the Foreign Service exam at Nacogdoches and went to a small federal building, which was the post office, as I recall, or maybe the district courthouse. I was the only one taking the examination in this classroom-sized room.

Q: How did you find out about it? Was it publicized?

HILBURN: Well, I had asked my professors what I might be able to do and had been referred to the various library resources where you find out that history majors are sought by insurances companies and other things that didn't sound too interesting to me. I kept asking around and somebody said, "Have you looked into the Foreign Service or government work of some kind?" In an odd sort of way, it was only by fate, I guess, that I was in the Foreign Service because I could just as easily have gotten into the CIA, assuming they would have taken me.

A CIA recruiter came to the campus while I was in graduate school. I obviously was looking for employment and went and interviewed with him. They were interested enough in me that they wanted a further interview. They gave me a ticket that I was to bring some weeks hence to Austin for this further interview. Austin is about 120 miles away maybe. We made arrangements to go to the interview over in Austin. We started off in the early morning hours and got about half way there, and I remembered that I didn't have this ticket. I had forgotten this ticket that they gave me. I thought that with the CIA, if I don't have the ticket, I am sure not going to talk my way into it. So, I just gave up on that as a lost cause. By a certain fortune, I didn't follow through with that. I might have gone with them if they had continued to be interested in me.

Anyway, the Foreign Service became the live possibility. As I said, I took the exam and was the only one that day in Nacogdoches. This was in the fall of 1966. I waited around and got the news that I had passed the first round of the exam and was invited, then, to come to Austin. This time I remembered the letter or whatever it was, and the interview was at the federal courthouse in Austin. I remembered the building because earlier in my adolescence my daddy had taken me to Austin on one of his trips and had gone to the federal courthouse. He took me in to observe a trial that was going on. While Daddy was always pretty careful about wearing suits and ties, especially when he was in a business situation, I never really owned a suit, I suppose, until I was in high school. In those

days—and maybe it's still true—you couldn't go into the courtroom without a jacket. The federal courthouse kept this closet full of cast-off suit jackets that everybody had to wear who showed up and wanted to observe and didn't have a coat. I had to put on that coat, and I felt extremely embarrassed. It was a sort of Goodwill coat.

Q: I wonder if that's still the case today?

HILBURN: I don't know. I knew the courthouse, and it was the same place that memory awakens after all those years. I went in and there was this three-member Foreign Service examining team, and I remember being tremendously relieved when–I was obviously nervous-- the first question was to tell them what my Master's thesis was about. Of course, I was pretty up on that subject.

Q: What was your Master's thesis title?

HILBURN: It was "The Rise of Political Parties in Washington's First Administration." It was the beginnings of the Federalists, the non-Federalists, and the Republicans and all the scurrilous newspaper attacks and so forth that occurred in that time between the Jeffersonian wing of the Federalists and the Hamilton wings. Some of those newspaper accounts and some of those charges and counter charges make our present day Whitewater and campaign financing controversies seem pretty tame.

Q; They must have been relieved that you were dealing with the Washington administration rather than contemporary events of 1967 or so.

HILBURN: I don't know, but anyway, that was an easy question. I don't remember any of the other questions except that the hardest one for me was when the USIA panelist asked me to pretend that I was going to be the cultural attaché in some West African country and had to collect all the materials that I would want to take with me from the United States to this country. We are opening up an embassy or something. So you have to have this broad selection of cultural materials that should be on the library shelves of the embassy or in the record collection or whatever it might be.

Q: Give us a little run down of what all that would be!

HILBURN: Wow! Then they dismissed me, and I was asked to wait in a little anteroom. In about 15 to 30 minutes, the chairman of the panel came out and said, "Congratulations! You have passed the oral examination, and you'll be hearing from us." He explained a little bit about the register at that time. Subsequently, I was asked to go get a physical examination. I was married at this time. I remember we went over to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, which was the nearest federal facility to give a physical examination.

It was then a matter of waiting around. It was now the spring of 1967, and I guess I knew I was pretty close, so I didn't sign a new contract for the following year to teach at Tyler

Junior College. I wasn't called to active duty, if that's the right word for the Foreign Service, until October of 1967. My paycheck ended at the college at the end of August, so there was September and most of October that we were unemployed. We spent two months traveling around to various indulgent relatives under the pretext of a vacation.

Q: You were saying goodbye before going off to Washington, DC.

HILBURN: We bought a 1965 Volkswagen Bug when I was in the Air Force. It cost $1,600. I'll never forget that price, as it was my first car. Then, we packed up and put it all in the bug and took out for Washington, driving though Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, then cutting up northeast and heading up through the Carolinas and the valley of Virginia.

Q: Do you mean the Shenandoah Valley?

HILBURN: Yes, and then we drove up to Washington.

Q: It is still beautiful.

HILBURN: I don't remember where we stayed when we first got here but at some point we found an apartment in Northern Virginia. It was, I thought, relatively convenient to FSI, and then I started the A-100 Orientation Class.

Q: Do you remember Fred Chapin?

HILBURN: Oh, I remember Fred.

Q: Fred Chapin was the coordinator of the A-100 (Foreign Service introductory training), of course.

HILBURN: I don't remember much about it, but I do remember one exercise we did. We were given a copy as a translation exercise of a Venezuelan petroleum law, or maybe it was a decree. It wasn't all that long, but one of the exercises was to take that Venezuelan petroleum decree, I'll call it, and put it into an airgram. Do you remember airgrams?

Q: Oh, yes. And mimeograph machines, and all that.

HILBURN: That was the sum of our writing exercise.

Q: Where was your first assignment?

HILBURN: The assignment was Guayaquil. I had no conception that one had to do anything particular to further one's own career in the Foreign Service. Having come from military school and then, most recently, the Air Force with a little bit of graduate school and teaching involved, I was pretty much indoctrinated in the philosophy of just take an

order, salute, and try to carry it out. I think the Foreign Service maybe took advantage of me because they said, "We want you to go to Guayaquil, Ecuador."

Q: Wasn't that your first choice?

HILBURN: I didn't really have a choice, I don't think.

Q: You had a minor in Latin American studies.

HILBURN: I had a minor in Latin American studies so I guess there was some rationale to that. So when they said, "Guayaquil," I just saluted and went. Guayaquil was a decent deal at that time. If you are not familiar with Consular Affairs, you may not recall that at just about that time there had been legislation that ended the numerical limits on Latin American immigration. It was a part of a series of legislative acts over the course of the mid- to late-60s that generally loosened up United States immigration law. That began to change it from the Western European oriented to a less ethnically oriented legislation. I think that one of the first things that happened was that Latin America had had a cap which had limited immigration. That was lifted, and the flood gate was opened up. You still had to have the labor certification in those days unless you were a family petitioning. I think you still had the possibility of doing the family relation kind of immigration but, otherwise, you had to have a labor certification. There were certain trades–seamstresses and tailors and shoe makers or shoe repairmen–on the list of labor certifiable occupations. There was, I suppose, a great traffic in these kinds of credentials. At least in Guayaquil, we suspected there was.

Q: Was there fraud as well?

HILBURN: Oh, yes. There was lots of fraud, I suspect.

Q: Did you do any other types of work?

HILBURN: The hellish work was the non-immigrant visa line because this was the way people were attempting to evade their ineligibility, of course, for immigrant visas. Our turn-down rate was 70-90 percent of people. There was just a minute for an interview.

Q: Do you mean only one minute per interview?

HILBURN: Maybe it was two or three minutes per interview, if you considered the formalities of "have a seat, who are you, and so forth." The consulate in Guayaquil in those days was located on the first two floors of this downtown office building, and the upper floors were consular residences where we all lived except for the Consul General who lived out in an imposing mansion in the best barrio in town. We would hear the lines begin to form early, early in the morning from our consular building apartment. The various vendors would come along offering breakfast, juice, and cigarettes to the people who were standing in line. There were guys who would sell you one cigarette at a time.

The buses would arrive there and disgorge their visa applicants.

Q: It sounds depressing!

HILBURN: The lines would snake around the consular building, and about this time I would be awakening at six or seven o'clock in the morning, and I could hear all my potential customers down there getting their stories. They were probably trading stories about, well tell them this, tell them that. If you were going to get the visa, you would say you were just going for a vacation and never mention the word "work." About eight or nine o'clock, we would go down and face this hoard of people. You tried to dispose of each day's crowd every day, and there was just a huge effort to interview quickly and turn down quickly.

Q: It must be very draining.

HILBURN: It was. There was poor morale. There were three junior officers who had all come in at about the same time, and the consul who was the head of the consular section. We had half a dozen local employees, and then there was, upstairs in the quiet precincts of the regular Consulate General, a Deputy CG (Consulate General), a CG, an Economic Commercial Officer, a USIA establishment of either one or two people, and an Administrative Officer. We were on the ground floor, and they were on the second floor. Down below was this chaos, confusion, and bitter disappointment and depressed, low-morale consular officers dealing with these crowds of people. Upstairs, it was a quiet precinct with political and economic work going on.

Q: How long were you there?

HILBURN: I was there from 1968 to 1970.

Q: Where were you after Guayaquil?

HILBURN: My wife was so disappointed with her first experience in the Foreign Service at Guayaquil. By this time we had an infant son, and one day we decided we would go across the Guayas River on a little sight-seeing excursion. The VW Bug was still with us so we could go to lots of places in that thing. To get across the river in those days you took an old OSP. There was no bridge at Guayaquil, and there still may not be a bridge, I don't know. Somehow someone had acquired an old OSP, I guess it was, it wasn't an OST. It wasn't a big ship; it was a landing craft for personnel is what it was, so the front door would drop down, you'd drive your car on, then you'd go across the river, and they'd let you off.

As we were going across the river, Nancy and I had stepped out of the car and our son was in the back seat in an infant crib-like thing. We just stood outside the car by the doors. After only a few minutes inattention maximum, we looked back in and everything but the clothes on our kid's back had been stolen. The blankets, the toys, and all the baby

stuff were gone. Things like that really upset my wife.

Q: But they didn't harm the child?

HILBURN: They didn't harm the child.

Q: I think she had reason to be upset.

HILBURN: It has always been tougher for the women to make the transition to Foreign Service posts, I think, than men. We all just go to an office that's pretty much like a lot of offices and deal with people that are pretty much in a Western context, at least on the surface. But the women have to deal with market places, maids, and that sort of thing. I suppose that sounds very sexist these days but that's the way it was in those days. Wives had to fend off the requests from the Consul General's wife to make their quota of hors d'oeuvres for the various kinds of entertainments that were going on at the CG's house. I remember Nancy, at one point, had volunteered or was asked to make some kind of hors d'oeuvres. For the next two years, the Consul General's wife would call up and say something about those *wonderful* hors d'oeuvres and could my wife make another two dozen for whatever it was the next week.

Q: That was exploitation!

HILBURN: After Guayaquil, I came back to a series of U.S. assignments and, in agreement with my wife, resolved to stay as long as I could in the States. In those days, it was eight years.

Q: Is that right? You were able to stay eight years?

HILBURN: That's right.

Q: What kinds of assignments did you have?

HILBURN: I came back from Guayaquil to be a staff assistant in the ARA Bureau. This was in the days of Charlie Meyer. The big issue, although I wasn't very associated with it, was Chile.

Q: Did it relate to Pinochet?

HILBURN: No. It was before Pinochet.

Q: Was it Allende?

HILBURN: It was Allende and the copper companies and that sort of thing. I guess it was Frey who was the Christian Democrat that the U.S. supported, and Allende was the unknown danger who won. I spent about a year doing that, then I went on to be a desk

officer in ARA.

Q: For which country were you a desk officer?

HILBURN: It was for a number of the little islands in the Eastern Caribbean at that time. I was an FS-6 at that point. I don't think I was an FS-5 yet.

Q: Did you get a trip to the Eastern Caribbean every year?

HILBURN: Yes. I went to Barbados, Trinidad, Tobago, and several of the other islands. It was very nice. At this point, I began to think that I was going to leave the Foreign Service. The job in Guayaquil had been just awful. I didn't think that anything else I'd seen was all that great either. I remember that I spoke to my daddy about going into the cattle business together. I thought that maybe what I wanted was something where I was at least somewhat independent and non-bureaucratic and non-hierarchical, something not so wedded in protocol and status.

Q: Do you mean that you'd seen Washington and had enough?

HILBURN: Maybe I had. I remember a conversation with my daddy, and we were talking about how much it would cost and how much I'd have to have to support myself those first few months until revenue started coming in. It just seemed that it would be an impossible task. My share of the investment was going to have to mean something that was so far beyond my financial means that it just didn't pan out.

I began to look at returning to teaching, and I got a job offer at a little junior college in Texas. I still had people who knew me from my graduate school days—professors who would vouch and that sort of thing. I just couldn't bring myself to do it. I can't quite remember the sequence of events but I decided that maybe what I would do to transition out of the Foreign Service was to take a detail. I guess they began to offer details.

Q: They had a lot of them back then.

HILBURN: I got myself a detail to the Office of Education, which was before it was a department, because I had the education background. I was assigned to the Office of Bilingual Education, and we supervised projects. The funding that the Congress had provided for this program was to fund pilot projects. I remember one of my projects was in Laredo, Texas, and others were in New Mexico. Each of the people in this office had a series of projects that they administered or supervised or monitored or whatever the right term is. I did that for about eight months, and it was so awful. It was so terrible. It made the Foreign Service and Guayaquil look really good. My estimation of the bilingual program was that this was a way that various kinds of people were building little empires back in Texas for whatever purpose they might have had, whether it was local electoral politics or something else. It seemed to me like a pretty gross boondoggle, although there were some pretty touching and heart-warming stories about little people that made one

think that perhaps some good was being done. I don't think most of the people were interested in continuing with their Spanish. They were mostly interested in learning English as soon as possible. At some point I had become acquainted with the fellow who ran the Office of Intelligence Liaison, McAfee.

Q: Was it Bill McAfee?

HILBURN: Yes. It was William McAfee, an old-time civil servant. Maybe it was because of the ARA front office connection. Anyway, at some point he called me up while I was over in the Office of Education and said that Hal Saunders who was then the Director of I&R, a Middle East expert, by the way, was needing a special assistant because somebody had left or something. They were wondering if I was interested.

Q: Was it out of the blue?

HILBURN: Yes. It was out of the blue.

Q: That's incredible.

HILBURN: I said, you bet. When do you want me over there? He said, "Well, I'll get you approved." I forget now the steps that it took but I was brought into that office as a special assistant. I did that for about a year and a half during Hal Saunders' administration. He'd been moved on to become Assistant Secretary in NEA (National Education Association) following Roy Atherton, a name many people remember. The Deputy Director of I&R in those days was a guy named Roger Kirk.

Q: Oh, yes.

HILBURN: He had just been named to go to Vienna to head up the IAEA mission [The International Atomic Energy Agency] there. That was before there was a single United Nations mission arrangement in Vienna for all the U.N. agencies there. There was a little office in the embassy that handled UNIDO, and there was a pretty substantial mission that handled IAE affairs with non-proliferation issues, of course, being important. Finally, having caught on to the Foreign Service way of doing business, I found myself someone who would be my patron in the assignment process.

Q: You'd get something in return for saying, "Yes, sir"?

HILBURN: With Kirk's help, I was assigned to Vienna as administrative political officer. I did a number of political tasks associated with running a mission and dealing with the board of governors and things like that.

Q: What years are you talking about?

HILBURN: It was 1977 to 1980, I guess. That was a very nice assignment. This is getting

to how I became a labor attaché. I began to look out for the next assignment. When we had been in Ecuador, one of the nice things that we did do was to go on a vacation in Peru. I saw Machu Picchu and other things that Peru had to offer. Peru was a pretty nice country in those days. We thought it looked a hell of a lot better than Guayaquil.

Q: They had long-time border disputes, didn't they?

HILBURN: That was there ever since 1941 but the border issues were quiet in those days. I noticed that the political labor officer job in Lima was among the possibilities for assignments that year. I thought that would be a good job, and it happened.

Q: Did you have any previous connection whatsoever with labor prior to that? Your father was a school administrator.

HILBURN: There was no labor in West Texas.

Q: Yes. There was no organization to speak of, I imagine. It was probably a pretty anti-labor climate out in West Texas.

HILBURN: My daddy was a big New Dealer. He had gone to school and had been helped by a number of New Deal-type programs. He worked for WPA (Works Progress Administration). I don't know what kind of work it was, but he did plumbing work and construction work during the time that he was going to school, as well as some work in the dairies and farm labs of the college, as it was in those days. The sun rose and set on Franklin Roosevelt.

Q: Oh, I see. He was a New Dealer.

HILBURN: Of course, everybody in Texas in those days started out as some kind of Democrat. There was no Republican Party to speak of. It was a real eccentric kind of Republican Party. They didn't put up any candidates in the local elections. I don't think there were candidates put up by the Republican Party while I was growing up in the state. Maybe a few had begun by the time I left Texas but I don't remember that. The election was the primary. Of course, there were two wings of the Texas Democratic Party. There was the liberal wing typified by someone like Ralph Yarborough in my day. Then there was the Alan Shivers wing—he was a governor—and all of this played into national politics and the election of Dwight Eisenhower and off-shore oil lands. Daddy was a New Dealer and member in good standing of the Texas liberal wing of the Democratic Party. I remember going around with him, handing out electioneering posters and that sort of thing. He would do that sort of local politics although he never ran for anything himself. He may have considered it at one time but he never ran. He would be the local guy in town for Congressman Pogue, who was the guy in those days and lived in Waco.

Q: The idea of doing labor work, then, was something new?

HILBURN: It wasn't totally foreign, but it was not very familiar either. Frankly, I took the job because I wanted to go to Peru.

Q: Did you take a training program?

HILBURN: In those days there was a six-week summer labor course. It was given out at the old UBC campus. There were about eight or ten people in the class. Sorry, but I can't remember any of them now. I took the labor course and went to Peru.

Q: Who organized the labor course? Was that under Jack McKenzie? He was one of the professors.

HILBURN: There was a lot more Labor Department, as I recall, involvement in the course than there is today. I just don't remember who the coordinator was or anything like that.

Q: Did you lobby behind the scenes to get the assignment with SIL or did you just put your name in?

HILBURN: I just put my name in and it happened. Anyway, I took the labor course and we went on down to Peru. The political side of the work was to follow the Agra Party, the *Aprastas,* as they were called. It was a long-term leftist party, or left of center; it ranged from left of center to pretty far left. The confederation nationally—how do they call it—CTP, *Cooperacion Tabajos Peranos*, was the "democratic" labor union associated with the Agra Party, so that was how the labor work evolved. The job consisted of following the Agra Party, which was out of power but a long-time contender for power in Peru and its associated labor organization, the CTP, which was then the labor organization favored by the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial organizations), as opposed to the General Federation of Peruvian Workers, which was thought to be Communist dominated and the enemy of a free labor movement in Peru. There was a small Christian organization but it was, I would say, more paper than real.

Q: How large were these two confederations?

HILBURN: I don't know. I just don't know. The CTP was a pretty substantial organization. My memory is very fuzzy as to what they had in terms of membership. I would say mostly it was in the industrial and court workers. The CGT, as I recall, was stronger in the public service, teachers for example, but I could be wrong about this. This is what my memory is dredging up. The mining sector, which was very important, was where labor and economics and, then, U.S. interests came together probably more than anything.

Q: Did you have contact with both of the labor federations?

HILBURN: We were not to have contacts with the CGTP but, of course, we had close contacts with the CTP. The head of that was a guy named Julio Qusado in those days. The Agra Party–maybe it was nominally independent–was really a part of the Apra apparatus. The Apra Party was factionalized between more conservative elements and more liberal elements or even, maybe, leftist elements. Ultimately, the Apra Party won out after I left in the form of a guy named Alan Garcia. It was a pretty general consensus that he was a disaster for the country. When I got there, the country had only recently come out of a long period of military rule. People thought that it had been run down pretty far by the military. Various kinds of policies had encouraged a lot of rural-urban migration. Cities were terrible hell holes for recent immigrants from the Sierra, mostly the mountainous parts of the country. The Indian population coming down to Lima lived in these communities called pueblos, or young towns, under atrocious conditions. It was a huge informal sector, and the labor movement didn't begin to reach into any of these areas of real poverty and deprivation and degradation.

Q: Were they only in the industrial and modern sector? Were you there when the Shining Path was active?

HILBURN: The Shining Path was just beginning to be active. One bomb had been thrown up on the embassy's front porch while I was there. Bizarre kinds of incidents occurred. The most bizarre one was that one day we awoke to find the newspaper headlines saying that all over a certain section of town the *Sendero Luminoso*, the Shining Path as it was called, had hung dogs from lampposts. In the political section, we were trying to fathom what this all meant.

Q: What did they mean by it?

HILBURN: The ideology of the organization was always very questionable in those days. Maybe it became clearer subsequently but, in our day there, we couldn't really figure out what these guys were. The best we could come up with was that they had made some statement of warning or threat against the running dogs of capitalism. You couldn't figure it out.

Q: It was cruelty to animals, if nothing else.

HILBURN: Generally, the other things that were going on, like the bombing of power lines and water works or distribution system, meant that you might have a power outage of sometime and then water would be interrupted. They threw a bomb against the wall of the ambassador's residence while we were there. Ed Cour was the ambassador. Do you know the name?

Q: Oh, yes. He entered the Foreign Service with me.

HILBURN: Another big issue that Ed was very much involved with was a flare up of this border dispute between Ecuador and Peru over this mountainous jungle area. Oil was the

underlying issue there. This boundary dispute goes back to colonial days.

Q: Wasn't it something like 150 years of dispute?

HILBURN: At some point, if I recall correctly, the king had drawn the boundary of the viceroy of Peru one way and, in another decade, some other king had drawn the Ecuadorian boundary another way, so I think that may have been the origin of the dispute. All of this is a bit hazy but this comes back to Ed Cour.

I'm sure Ed wouldn't take it amiss if I were to say something like this but Ed had been a lieutenant in the Marine Corps, a platoon leader. The war up there, as it could be called, was basically a platoon level skirmish. The numbers of troops involved, even in these latest outbreaks, had been extremely small in 1979 or 1980 whenever this was happening. I can't quite remember the year now. This was a war of platoons. Neither side could support larger units in the field and, to give them credit where it's due, it was an impossible terrain and there was no infrastructure. Ed had been a platoon leader, so he thought he knew what was going on pretty well. It was my first introduction to real "clientitis" with the U.S. ambassador in Ecuador supporting the inquisition and Ed supporting the Peruvian side. Cables were being prepared for his signature, which might have cast the Peruvians in a bad light. You had to be careful and scrub those a little bit to make sure that we didn't put our clients in a bad light.

Q: Well, getting back to the Shining Path, did they have any impact on the labor movement there or were they totally separate?

HILBURN: At this point it was a terrorist organization of unknown strength and unknown ideology and very much a mystery as to what kind of an impact it was going to have.

Q: Was there no constructive outlet in the political process or channel?

HILBURN: At that point, Peru was at least a nominal democracy and the military had ceded power to a guy named Fernando Belaunde. It was in his first administration, and in the years subsequent to that, there of course, had been a series of elections. There was a chamber of deputies. I don't recall what laws might have been proscriptive or otherwise prevented it. They seemed to be pretty hard rock revolutionaries. When you read some of the subsequent material on them that developed over the succeeding years, they were pretty ruthless people who, I think, would not have been particularly interested in any political opening offered. I have a great deal of sympathy, for example, with Fugi Morey and his position. These people are take-no-prisoners type of people. They wiped out entire villages of peasants who wouldn't support them or in some way were felt to be traitorous to their cause. One laments human rights violations and brutality but, at the same time, Fugi Morey was dealing with an intractable enemy. I felt some sympathy for the way he's considered to be a very hardliner but perhaps not too careful of human rights and other democratic rights as he's gotten a hold of the terrorist situation.

Q: Was your wife at all upset by the violence in Peru?

HILBURN: Not so much by that as by the petty crime, the filth, the interrupted public services, and the garbage accumulating on the streets. Public services were just abysmal. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lima seemed to be a city that functioned and even had a certain charm to it. It was a city of wide boulevards, and everything, of course, depends on irrigation. Water coming down from the Andes irrigates this desert where Lima is located. It seemed to work but in the years between 1969 and 1980 when we arrived, the place had just gone to hell. There's no way to really describe it. Public services were deficient. Then it was exacerbated by the beginning incipient terrorist movement.

Q: What about this huge influx of people? Was AFIELD active?

HILBURN: Yes. AFIELD had an office there. I saw the AFIELD director and maybe, when I look at the transcript, I'll recall the name but it is escaping me at the moment. The person who introduced me to the hierarchy of the CTP, the approved central, was the AFIELD director. I made contact with him early on. They had education programs going on at the time.

Q: Were relations pretty good between the embassy and AFIELD?

HILBURN: Yes. We were in frequent contact. I was also in frequent contact with the ILO office. That's where I first learned something about the ILO and its work. A fellow who later became prominent in the ILO was Julio Galer, who was the office director. I remember having lots of conversations with him about the labor movement in Peru and the issues of concern to them.

Q: Did they have a regional office?

HILBURN: They had a regional office in Lima. I forget what its area was but anyway it was a regional office. Galer was in Argentina and he later became a candidate--not a very successful candidate-- for the Director General of the ILO (International Labour Organization). My memory about Peru is truncated in a way because I became very ill in Lima and, ultimately, was emergency evacuated from there and my assignment was curtailed before the full tour was over.

Q: Was that because of climate there?

HILBURN: No. I had a heart attack. I was about 40 and it was something of a surprise. I was playing squash and, as a matter of fact, I was in very good shape. I used to play squash a lot. There were various kinds of clubs in Lima, so I played squash a good deal. During one of these games, I felt funny and brushed it off. My wife, however, over the next week and days, continued to implore me to go to the doctor. Finally, I went, and I went directly from his office to the hospital because I had had a heart attack. A long

period of convalescence then ensued. I did various kinds of little jobs and when I finally came back to work, it was 1982. I think I was assigned, first of all, to O/MED, just over complement or something like that. I did various odd jobs. Finally, something came along in IO, the office dealing with the ILO. I was the desk officer for the ILO. That's how I really got into labor, I would say.

Q: Was that in 1982? That was just after we had rejoined the ILO.

HILBURN: Yes. It was just after we had rejoined the ILO. We were out from 1977 to 1980. Things were still not running along too smoothly, especially on the U.S. side. The inter-governmental apparatus dealing with the ILO was not quite put back together.

Q: Was that during the period when we were trying to convince ourselves that our departure had been functional?

HILBURN: I am not sure I understand the question.

Q: Had it served a useful purpose for us to withdraw and then return?

HILBURN: Those debates occurred before I got to the office but the echoes of them were still around. The story that I got most often was that our absence had reached a point where it was becoming non-productive. In other words, they were becoming reconciled. Its leverage as a means of change was diminishing, and our absence had achieved about all it could. Therefore, we needed to just go on back before a new status quo without us had developed and people had realized or maybe thought that they could get along well without us. The State Department was opposed to withdrawal. I think I remember that from the historical record.

Q: I think that's correct.

HILBURN: The State Department seems to have been opposed and the motor, of course, behind it was the AFL-CIO, as I understand it.

Q: That was Big George Meany.

HILBURN: You are right.

Q: There were others, apparently, in the AFL-CIO who were not enthusiastic. Reportedly, Irving Brown had reservations but George Meany decided it was time.

HILBURN: I remember seeing memos in the file that outlined these various differences and, from talk, came to the conclusion that it was the AFL-CIO or Meany that wanted it to happen. The government was somewhat dragged along.

Q: What other issues did you deal with in that office, relating to the ILO, of course?

HILBURN: There were various jobs in that office, and I progressed through a number of the jobs. Ultimately, I became deputy director of the office with responsibility not only for the ILO but for a number of other UN organizations, among them UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization). Of the other issues during the period from 1982 to 1986, the one that stands out most in my mind was our efforts to condemn Poland for the suppression of Solidarity in the ILO forum. As you know there are numerous legal channels that one goes through in the ILO to condemn states for violating their obligations under ILO conventions. Not only under ILO conventions but also under the terms of free will association, you can violate your obligations without having signed the convention. You can violate them because you fail to fulfill your constitutional duties by adhering to the ILO.

Q: Which committee reviews them?

HILBURN: Well, the free will association committee is one mechanism for dealing with alleged violations of commitments. But, then, that's an extraordinary kind of mechanism. The more ordinary mechanism is for a group of experts to examine law and practice in a particular country as a part of its normal monitoring procedures. They then report on discrepancies between law and practice in a country and the norms of a convention and report those discrepancies to the conference every year.

Q: These people would be appointed by the Secretary General?

HILBURN: They would be appointed by the Secretary General. It is called the committee of experts. This is the normal process I am talking about now. Their report would go each year to the conference, something called the CACR, Conference Committee on Conventions and Recommendations. This was a tripartite committee, and the workers have a third of the votes, the employers a third, and the government a third. The workers and employers, informally, would look at this report and decide which of the cases they believed were the most interesting and useful for the purposes of strengthening ILO norms. It was a compromise between those because the workers obviously had some and the employers had some. Those would then be the cases that would be explored more thoroughly at the conference during this three-week period that it meets. The conference committee would issue a report, which contained the possibility of fairly severe condemnation in the case of really egregious violations of obligations under ILO norms. These are called special paragraphs, which is the most severe form of ILO condemnation.

Q: Do the special paragraphs come out of the conference?

HILBURN: They come out of the conference and are adopted by the plenary.

Q: Do they have their own language that they translate into various degrees of severity?

HILBURN: Right. The most severe condemnation is for a country to be cited in one of

these special paragraphs. Usually, only one or two at most and, in some years, not even any countries were cited. That's the regular ILO supervisory machinery in action to produce a special paragraph or something lesser. The special machinery is the committee on freedom of association whereby labor unions and employers' organizations for that matter can breed complaints. Obviously, there was a complaint against Poland for having violated its obligations both under freedom of association and right to organize. I think 98 and 87 are the two conventions involved. Over a long period of time these cases were heard and argued, and this was in the Cold War period, of course. Poland had its defenders. There was the usual U.N. sort of line up of East Bloc defending, U.S. and other Western countries attacking, and sort of a Third World group in between. Ultimately, the ILO voted for a commission of inquiry, which is another special mechanism to investigate the situation. I can't remember the exact constitutional provisions now but the freedom of association committee's actions can lead to a commission of inquiry. Ultimately, it can wind up at The Hague in the International Court of Justice if the country chooses to contest it. It never got that far. Things in the ILO, of course, move very slowly.

Q: It takes a while. I take it that the AFL-CIO was a prime mover behind the challenge to Poland.

HILBURN: Right, but it was supported by a lot of other trade union organizations, of course. The ICFTU group controls the workers' group in the ILO.

Q: They supported the AFL-CIO initiative on Poland.

HILBURN: Yes. A major U.S. element of activity in all of this was that of the Commission of Inquiry, when it was established on Poland. It was a fairly bitterly fought outcome. Interested countries were invited to submit evidence or comment to the Commission of Inquiry on Poland's infractions. We undertook a fairly major effort to put together a submission for the Commission of Inquiry, and it fell to my office to honcho it.

Q: Was the State Department, in effect, supporting the AFL-CIO's effort on solidarity? I take it that the business community was in agreement, including the Chamber of Commerce at that time.

HILBURN: No. By then, when the United States withdrew in 1977, U.S. business representation had been by the Chamber of Commerce or maybe a combination of the NAM and the Chamber of Commerce. Afterwards, I don't think they were so hot to come back. That's my impression. Business wanted to be represented. They wanted to have an agency, so to speak, in the organization. It is my understanding that–I may be a little off on this–it was at this time that the U.S. Council for International Business was established. It was a sort of condominium arrangement between the NAM and the Chamber to handle not only the business interests in the ILO but also in the OECD and maybe even in a couple of other places.

Q: So it was created at that time as a kind of umbrella organization for these international obligations?

HILBURN: I think so. The same people, for example, are at the U.S. Council for International Business, and present day it's Abe Katz, and has been for a long time. He is very active not only in the ILO but also in OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), and they are very active in the various committees. There's the TUAC (Trade Union Advisory Committee) for the OECD, which is the trade union advisory council, then there's the business advisory council counterpart. Anyway, that's how I think the business got back in. They made this special arrangement. The U.S. Council for International Business, whatever its initial mandate was, has grown to include a lot of other things. They are very interested, for example, in things like Chinese trade and a number of other issues. It's not just the ILO.

Q: On Poland, though, the commission was established and periodically...

HILBURN: It rendered a judgment. All of these judgments slowly rendered were against Poland, as I recall.

Q: The Yarizelski government felt...

HILBURN: Yes. Ultimately, after I left Geneva. I went from the office that dealt with the ILO to become the labor attaché in Geneva.

Q: What a logical next assignment. That's almost too logical for the State Department.

HILBURN: Roger Schrader is somebody you may know.

Q: Oh yes, we've interviewed him, too.

HILBURN: He was on the detail from the Department of State over to the Labor Department, heading their international affairs office. I was saying things like maybe I needed a break from the ILO. He said this is a great assignment, you'll love it, don't think for a minute that you ought to turn this down.

Q: Had he been the representative at the ILO earlier?

HILBURN: He was earlier on but I forget his dates. His children even went to school in Switzerland. Anyway, Roger and I got to be good friends at that point, and he convinced me to take the assignment.

Q: What were the dates of your ILO assignments in Geneva?

HILBURN: It was 1986 to 1989.

Q: 1986 to 1989, so it was a logical next step.

HILBURN: I really had, I guess, become the government expert in the State Department anyway. The Labor Department has a small staff of civil servants who deal with the ILO.

Q: But there's probably no one who actually would spend any more than, say, the month of June in Geneva.

HILBURN: I think I alluded earlier to the fact that when the U.S. first came back into the organization in the early 1980s our intra-government organizations were not clicking on all cylinders. There was a good deal of friction, I think, between the State Department and the Labor Department. I'm not sure how much of that is personality or how much of it was institutional. Part of it was institutional in the sense that the State Department was very concerned about budget issues even in those days. The Labor Department, not being responsible for the budget, had a less critical interest, let's say.

Q: Was their main focus worker rights?

HILBURN: Their main focus was the application of ILO norms. The applications, conventions, and recommendations and the protection of those supervisory machineries were the main focus. In those days, the Soviet Bloc was pretty constantly trying to find ways to undermine the machinery because we obviously wanted to turn the machinery on them.

Q: Well, there's also this big issue of the politicization of the ILO and Israel, in particular.

HILBURN: I would say there were four main issues. Defend against politicization. Impede the efforts of others, and that particularly involved Arab-Israeli and, to a lesser degree, South African efforts. The Arabs and the Africans wanted to leverage their two main issues.

Q: I see. So they were playing one off against the other.

HILBURN: Africans support us; the Arabs, the anti-Israeli issues.

Q: Exactly. I see.

HILBURN: They all ganged up on the regime in South Africa, which probably deserved it anyway. That was the dynamic of the politicization issue. The forum for that was primarily the resolutions committee in the ILO wherein delegates from countries can bring forth resolutions to put before the conference. Generally speaking, there was an anti-Israeli resolution brought at each conference. The political job of the U.S. delegation was to block that resolution. There were several means to do that. I don't know if you are interested in going into it. There were ways we traditionally operated to do that.

There was an apartheid committee in the ILO. That was the see-saw. We felt like these issues should be addressed, although we admitted that the world worker aspects to these issues could perhaps be addressed in the ILO. In our view, the Arabs and Africans always went beyond those to include trade sanctions or other elements such as boycotting sports teams and a whole range of sanctions. For example in the case of the apartheid committee, they wanted the ILO to endorse and apply in some way. But we were against those. But in the case of the Israeli-Arab issue, we were generally pretty successful in keeping that out. In the apartheid area, we were not successful. The reason was that, in the case of the Arab-Israeli issue, we could count upon labor. The ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) group was sympathetic to U.S. aims of keeping it out. Therefore, we had worker support in the resolutions committee to low rank these Arab resolutions and prevent them from coming up. Whereas, in the apartheid committee, the ICFTU had interest in membership and in fostering trade union organizations in Africa. Its political interests were served by being favorable to their various kinds of resolutions and initiatives on the apartheid front. The low ranking, in effect, was using the clock of the convention against bringing these issues to the floor and debating them.

The mechanics of it are probably a little boring, but the mechanics, in brief, were that all of these resolutions were thrown into a hopper and, at the end of a particular period of debate, membership of the resolutions committee had to vote on which ones they wanted to take up first. Since there was only a limited amount of time, anything that was ranked lower than two or three was not going to be considered, and it would die on the table, so to speak. The effort was to marshal enough votes to low rank what we considered the egregious political resolution and to high rank something dealing with health and safety or any kind of resolution that we thought was within the ILO mandate. But none of that worked in the apartheid committee because the U.S. was just too isolated and the workers and even the business groups were extremely diffident about signing on to U.S. efforts to tone down and eliminate some of these highly political initiatives in the apartheid committee. As I recall it now, the labor would vote against us because they had African interests and trade union interests at stake, and the business would abstain. The United States, perhaps from time to time supported by the U.K., was pretty much alone in opposing these. I remember making many speeches in the ILO resolutions committee deploring this particular resolution about to be adopted.

Q: It must give you a chilling feeling to stand up there with absolutely no response from the audience.

HILBURN: There were boos!

Q: That's even worse. I think Tony Freeman tells some stories about being very much alone at some of these sessions at the ILO.

HILBURN: I generally sat in on the apartheid committee but, then, at some point Tony started. He wanted to for some reason I think. Maybe he just enjoyed the *joie de combat* (joy of a good fight).

Q: You said there were four major areas and politicization was one.

HILBURN: The second one was defending the ILO supervisory machinery. In other words, to make sure that the Soviets didn't eviscerate both the special and the regular supervisory machinery, which they tried to do in various ways. They used various tactics that are arcane to the ILO.

The third area was programmatic. The State Department didn't care about it that much. We didn't care all that much what the employment department was doing.

Q: Were these technical programs of the ILO, and were we kind of lukewarm towards them?

HILBURN: We—in a grand sense, meaning the Labor Department, the AFL-CIO, and the business community—had interests in those things but the State Department itself was pretty much willing to say to Labor, "You handle this," and Labor undertook to get the delegates to organize our participation in these technical committees that would be the ILO. I don't remember being very much involved in scrutinizing ILO programs in the various technical areas of social security, occupational safety and health and that sort of thing.

My interest, then, led into the fourth major area, which was budget. These things obviously had an impact on the budget. Even at that early date, the watch word was "no real growth." At that point, I guess we were willing to admit nominal growth to allow for currency fluctuations and inflation but we didn't want any real growth in ILO budgets. I represented the U.S. on the budget committee and made speeches, talking about the need to control cost and prioritize programs. The ritual was to say something like, "You're not going to get enough money to do everything you want so prioritize."

Q: By prioritizing, did you cut the bottom items off?

HILBURN: Remember that the first priority was the special and the regular supervisory machinery. We didn't want that cut. This was, of course, in the days of the Cold War. The usual efforts to find some advantage in the ILO forum was always present. Even the most arcane technical committee could sometimes erupt into a political issue because somebody would want to insert language on a resolution condemning Israel, condemning South Africa, or declaring that nuclear weapons were a major threat to the occupational health and safety of the workers.

Q: Did you get involved with the committee on Israel at all?

HILBURN: That went on for years and years.

Q: That was the resolutions committee. They made periodic visits to Israel.

HILBURN: That was the Secretariat function entirely. At some point, some resolution had been passed, but the Director General was responsible for preparing and presenting to the conference an annex to his general report of the year on the Arab-Israeli situation. I forget the exact title but it was artfully worded. To do that report, he would send a team to the occupied territories every year. Then they would essentially write the report.

Q: Did the team consist of three to five members?

HILBURN: It was something like that. The Director General and the Secretariat were pretty careful to make sure that their report was non-political, that it dealt with issues such as the disposition of Arab social security and trade union contributions and whether or not they were beneficial to them and that sort of thing.

Q: The Israeli government was very nervous about these visits.

HILBURN: They were, but when I was there, I don't recall a really credible threat that they were going to stop these committees or these missions from coming. But in later years, they did, as I recall, say that they just weren't going to have them anymore. Various kinds of machinations resulted from that. I don't recall how they came out.

Q: From the middle 1980s, the Israelis wanted to have these visits stretched out to every two years rather than every year.

HILBURN: They were always unhappy about them.

Q: They were claiming that the recommendations couldn't be implemented within a one-year cycle and show any results, so at least a two-year cycle would be much more sensible.

HILBURN: It sounds pretty reasonable to me.

Q: I thought it was pretty reasonable myself. When I was labor attaché in Tel Aviv, I had a certain point there.

HILBURN: When were you there?

Q: I was there from 1982 to 1986 as labor attaché. I wonder if you could discuss something that has always interested me. What was the ILO attitude towards our worker rights/human rights issues and not using the ILO mechanism as a primary way of examining, say, worker rights issues?

HILBURN: Do you mean our particular situation in the ILO not having ratified any of the conventions?

Q: No. I haven't explained it very well. We have our annual human rights report. One section deals with five worker rights. Logically, to the uninitiated, one might think that these issues should be handled through the existing ILO mechanism and the obligations that one takes on by signing the convention. I was wondering whether the ILO had ever challenged us on the fact that we had an independent way of examining worker rights in all the countries around the world and weren't using the ILO channel, which seemed to pre-exist our system that we have set up.

HILBURN: I don't recall any discussions about that at all. Maybe I was oblivious to it but I don't recall that it ever came up. Do you recall when we began to include those worker rights things?

Q: I think it was in the late 1970s. It was during the Carter administration...

HILBURN: ...when that became a part of the annual human rights report...

Q: ...and that was broken out as a separate piece, maybe a little later. It could have been like 1989 or even 1990. It evolved over time. Different issues were addressed and different parts of the country reports and then a separate section was put in around 1990, I believe.

HILBURN: The labor sections of the U.S. country reports are very heavily dependent upon ILO reports and actions. One of the main criteria for including or mentioning anything about a country's failures in the area of freedom of association or right to organize would be the ILO reports. If labor attachés or labor reporting officers don't do it, what was SIL and later became the DRL (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor) office would very much go through the ILO reports to ensure that if something was warranted being mentioned about a particular country in these areas, it was, and that there was some documentation to support it.

Q: Did it work the other way? Did the ILO use the Human Rights Report as a source of information?

HILBURN: I can say informally that the people in the norms section—that's the standard section, mostly a group of lawyers—did use the Human Rights Report. I remember very much an interest on their part in getting copies. You know how we all are in embassies trying to assist our contacts and to make sure they're happy and that they get their brownie points. I was always very fast off the mark, or tried to be, to make sure that the Human Rights Reports got over to the people who I thought were interested in having them.

Q: Did they have any criticism of various countries based on a feeling that there were political criteria involved in some of our reporting?

HILBURN: I never heard that.

Q: So the credibility of the reports was pretty good?

HILBURN: I thought the credibility of the reports was pretty high. They seemed to think so. There was never any citation, of course, of the U.S. Human Rights Reports or anything like that. That wouldn't have been very appropriate to have a member state source, particularly one that's pretty much interested in everything that's going on. It was a background.

Q: In general, are the two systems parallel in the results that came out?

HILBURN: Yes. The egregious violators of worker rights that are cited in the Human Rights Report have all been, I would suspect, pretty much caught up in the ILO. There are huge chapters in the ILO reports on El Salvador during the 1980s or Indonesia, for example. Those two come readily to mind. The one thing, during the early part of the 1980s when I was associated with the ILO work, that was, of course, irritating to the United States, was that these huge, rightly in our view, violations of worker rights that occurred in the Soviet Union and satellite states largely escaped ILO condemnation. The debates would take a predictable line. We would say something about the failure of the Soviet Union or the satellite states to observe freedom of association or right to organize, and they would say something like, "Well, we simply emphasize other rights. You have this emphasis on political rights, but we make sure, for example, that everybody's got a right to work." That would be sort of the way the debate would go. That's very abbreviated.

Q: You served last just about the time the Soviet Union collapsed and the empire disintegrated. Did you see any of that before you left?

HILBURN: No. I was just thinking. It was the last year I was there. I believe it was 1989 that the influx of East Germans through Czechoslovakia and Hungary began to occur. Then I made the move from Geneva to Brussels, and the next thing I remember was the fall of the Ceausescu regime in Romania.

Q: In the meantime, what was happening in the former Soviet Union?

HILBURN: Gorbachev, of course, was in office. I can't remember the parallel events in the Soviet Union about 1989. Maybe I do remember a certain odd–this is very anecdotal, but everything is that I am talking about—greater contact with Soviet representatives at the ILO, in other words, a certain fall, I would say. For the most part, we had pretty much gone our own way and didn't have much to do with them and them with us in the ILO. There wasn't much contact between the delegations at all. We would run into each other at various kinds of social engagements but, in terms of lobbying the corridors, in terms of meeting to discuss issues and that sort of thing, they knew where we were and we knew where they were, and never the twain would meet. There really wasn't all that much to talk about although there was a certain "maybe" interest in the budget. They may have

been pretty strapped themselves. The last year I seem to remember being approached by the Soviet labor attaché and asked about this or that, but that's about all I can remember.

Q: Did he discover that you didn't wear horns after all?

HILBURN: I guess so. Maybe I discovered he was a pretty good guy, too.

Q: Do you have any final observations you'd like to make about the ILO and Geneva before we turn to Brussels?

HILBURN: Of course, one works in this field with a certain frustration because the ILO is a fairly interesting organization, and its interests writ large are very interesting. Of course, there is not much public—or even beyond the walls of the IO bureau in the State Department—interest in it. So you are working out in the far 40 acres of the place, and nobody ever drops around to see how the crops are growing. There was a certain frustration about that.

Q: So, there isn't any real constituency for the ILO?

HILBURN: There isn't, I would say, much constituency in terms of the labor or business. It's a highly specialized, very small cadre—one could also even say club—of people who are interested in the ILO. They keep coming back. It's the same people all the time. Irving Brown, of course, died, and he was an institution in the ILO.

Q: Do you see a lot of Lane Kirkland in Geneva?

HILBURN: Yes. Lane was not an active participant in the work on the plenary floor or in the committees of the ILO, but he was there. I gather that what he found valuable about being there was simply the opportunity for contacts with other trade unions. He was following an AFL-CIO trade union agenda. That was my supposition. He was perfectly prepared to leave to his subordinates the actual management of AFL-CIO interests in the ILO. Perhaps he made plenary speeches, but I'm not sure. I can't recall that right now.

Q: Was Jim Baker the main participant?

HILBURN: It was Irving Brown, then Jim Baker, and then Chuck Grey. I believe that was the order. Not only was Irving Brown interested in it but, institutionally, the AFL-CIO had said that the European office is going to do our work in Geneva. When Irving left the scene, then Jim succeeded him, and he became the institutional player from the AFL-CIO that sat on the governing body board. He came back and Chuck was head of the international department. At that point it changed because Jim Baker's place was taken by a fellow named Ziller. He didn't play the same role as Jim did. He was always there and very much an advisor but not the public speaker or the debater.

Q: Did you have much contact with the Secretary General of the ILO?

HILBURN: Oh, yes.

Q: Are there any comments you'd like to make about leadership there?

HILBURN: Blanchard was the Secretary General, or the Director General, when I arrived. He was re-elected to another term during the time I was there, so he encompassed my entire period except for the new man, Hansen, who was elected the last year I was there. Who would be Blanchard's successor was a fairly significant issue, of course. Blanchard provided, I think, fairly effective leadership to the ILO. He was an impossible person for Americans to deal with because he was off-putting in the sense that an interview or a meeting with Blanchard was simply to listen to a monologue by Blanchard. Blanchard reminded me of that old saying, "He gave so much of himself in conversation that no one else had a chance to give." There was another aspect to him, of course, that was very effective diplomatically. He was like trying to pick up mercury with a fork to try to get him pinned down. He was the consummate secretary general or director general of an international organization, realizing on the one hand that his biggest contributor and his most influential member was the United States but on the other hand, there were these other forces and countries that were a part of it as well. I thought he did a pretty good job walking that fine line.

Q: Did we generally support him?

HILBURN: I think so. There was never much in the way of alternatives in terms of ILO leadership. Stillborn candidacies would arise. Some third world country person would decide that he'd like to be director general. I don't know if the Western European/United States hold on the director generalship will survive much longer. In those days, and I'm sure it still is, we were very concerned to get a Western European in there or an Australian, for example. Blanchard never faced very serious opposition as I recall. One of the difficulties about Hansen, his successor, was we thought he was okay but who else is out there? I remember comments from people saying that Hansen was taking a long time to get started. One of the common comments among Europeans, even, was that he was having a hell of a long take off.

Q: Was he French as well?

HILBURN: He was Belgian from the Christian side of the house.

Q: Blanchard was French, wasn't he?

HILBURN: That's right. Other sources will have to tell you how Hansen has gone. My personal opinion is that I think we would have been ready to support some other people if they would have really gotten into the game. Who was the Australian?

Q: You are thinking of Bob Hawk.

HILBURN: He flirted with the idea, and he was always sort of out there. I think maybe the labor movement, too, was always sort of waiting for Hawk to arrive but Hawk never flew the coop. He had lots of friends over at the AFL-CIO. We voted for Hansen. I think there have been ups and downs. I went back as a member of the U.S. delegation. I was actually co-chair of the delegation in 1995 when I first got back from Europe and was in DRL. We were terribly on the outs with Hansen on budgetary issues. We have a fixation with the budget, it seems. Of course we were terribly in arrears or were until a little while ago.

Q: Have we paid all of our dues to the ILO?

HILBURN: I think we've maybe come to some arrangement but it's very recent.

Q: Was it refinancing?

HILBURN: I don't have the details.

Q: Anyhow, let's turn to your assignment to Brussels now.

HILBURN: Liking Europe very much and looking for another European assignment, I decided to bid on Brussels, but this was a bilateral embassy. I was still an 02 at this point. There are three establishments in Brussels: NATO, UC, and a bilateral embassy. I was a supporter of DOL or SIL in those days, and I got that assignment without too much difficulty. It was a very uneventful year I spent at the embassy. Then Dan Turnquist was going to move on as counselor from over at the EU mission, EC mission, as it was called in those days. I made a play for getting that job, succeeding Dan, and was successful. Relatively shortly after I arrived in Brussels, I went over to the job and that was extremely interesting. It was the best job I ever had.

Q: Before we move to that, were there elements in the job the first year dealing with the labor movement?

HILBURN: Do you mean dealing with the Belgian labor movement? I can't think of anything really. When I got back to being in the department and had to help make choices about abolishing labor attaché positions, because they were going to be abolished anyway, I was content to say the Belgian could go because we didn't really have that much of an agenda—Ray Perrins, the leader of the Christian trade union aside. The Christians and the socialists are further divided into Walloon and Flemish communities. Perrins was the head of the Christian trade union movement, and he then became the labor spokesman in the ILO committee on conventions and recommendations and application of conventions recommendations. He was a useful contact. The Christians, of course, despite Belgium being a small country and the godfather of Christian trade unions throughout the world, is the Belgian WCL, the Christian trade union. That's where the money in large measure comes from. There was a certain amount of contact with Willie

Perrins on ILO issues, just generally staying up. It was more a question of what position were the Belgian trade unions about to take on "x" domestic issue and how did that factor into the overall political chain of events.

Q: Did you cover other subjects besides labor?

HILBURN: What did I do? The political section in Brussels was shamefully over-staffed. There were five of us. There was the head of the political section, an internal political affairs, a political military officer, a labor attaché, and a junior officer. We each had pretty well defined portfolios. All I did, other than the labor, was the international account. I took care of whatever demarche was required at the foreign ministry on some international organization's issue. I would do that but that was about it. I didn't do human rights; that was done by the junior officer. I didn't do internal politics nor minority party politics. That was handled by the internal affairs guy. Anything dealing with the political military, of course, went to that person.

Q: So you then moved to the greatest job you ever had?

HILBURN: The best job I ever had was with the EU mission. It just felt like one was dealing with big and important issues. I arrived there just after the Single Market Act had passed and was going into effect. European integration and future dimensions and shapes of the EU were very much in debate as the member countries were leading up to the Maastricht treaty negotiations. The negotiations dealt with how to take into account, perhaps, common foreign policy and maybe even common defense policies and how they were going to deal with immigration and other kinds of issues. They were, you know, important issues but went beyond just the integration of the market.

They discussed the establishment of a free trade area or a tariff union of some sort. These were really embryonic steps towards some European federalism. I think a lot of that has slowed down in the meantime, but those were fairly heady days. The mission was growing, and there was an important labor dimension in this. It was very much of interest to the U.S. business community, and we received a good deal of visits and had a lot of interaction with the U.S. business community on what was going to be the social dimension of the European Union, or earlier, the Common Market, then the Union.

There was a lot happening in terms of legislative proposals. The heads of state, all except the UK, signed a social charter about that time and pledged themselves to implement certain things in the social area. The Secretariat was attempting to translate those lofty charter aims into legislative instruments, which were wending their way through the legislative process of the EU. All that was interesting to follow, and U.S. economic stakes were involved. I was always a bit surprised—and maybe this will be an interesting thing for somebody who's looking at this in historical terms—at the apparent lack of interest by the U.S. labor movement, the AFL-CIO, in these developments.

Q: Didn't they see a potential parallel with their own situation in the social charter?

HILBURN: The only thing I ever heard later that indicated that--I may have been mistaken and they had their own sources of information and contacts that I never even heard of—was when Lane Kirkland, in opposing the NAFTA treaty, said that what we ought to be doing instead of NAFTA is to be having a similar trade pact with Europe because Europe has the kind of social institutions that are more compatible with our own. Nothing ever happened as a result of that. Although there is something happening—but, I guess, desultory—about free trade between the EU and the U.S. That may not be totally front page or headline, but I think it's still percolating along in some way.

Q: What about the business community's reservations on the legislation?

HILBURN: The business community had great reservations about the effect of some of these laws on its operations in Europe. Just to cite an example, the European Union was attempting to pass legislation which would have established minimum time off and maximum working hours, not a wage and hour law, but some community-wide standard in that area. I remember Time Warner, for example, being very interested in that because they were in the movie making business, and they were using European locations and European crews. They would make arguments such as, "When the sun shines, we have to shoot. We can't be stopping because the light crew has suddenly run up against the maximum hours or the minimum time off that they're supposed to have every week. We have to plow ahead."

There is a very active U. S. Chamber of Commerce in Brussels. They had special committees for a lot of things but among their special committees was social policy. They were very well informed on these developments. They were apprehensive about it. Of course, one of the things they were most apprehensive about was this works council idea. I think the charter said something like there should be a voice for labor in business, so then the Secretariat had translated that into a works council piece of legislation that would obligate companies of a certain size operating in two or more community member states to establish a fairly defined sort of works council with mandates as to what they would consider and so forth. Of course, business felt like this was an intrusion on its management prerogative.

Q: Were these works councils pretty much along the German model?

HILBURN: The intellectual inspiration, I think, came from that model. Typically, as I recall it, the legislation calls for these big companies to establish a works council made up of representatives of the workers, which was also a problem because they were non-union. Who were going to be the representatives of the union? The representatives of the workers were going to be the unions. Whereas if you maybe had some other phraseology, you could have had non-union worker representatives. Anyway, these were finer points that were very much debated about the law. The law would have requiredd—the directive is now implemented—companies of a certain size to establish a works council that meets at least once, maybe twice, a year.

It would deal with a defined range of subjects such as business intentions, investment plans, closure plans, and the impact of technology on labor forces and broad range of issues. I'm not being very precise and don't remember precisely about some of these things. It was seen, I guess in some ways, as a forerunner of community-wide collective bargaining. It would be a way that unions throughout Europe could influence company decisions in certain sectors fairly directly, whereas the pattern had been that General Motors in Belgium had dealt with the local unions that were in its plants. Now it would be required to take into account the input that might come to the works council from General Motors operations in the UK or Germany or wherever else they might have been. It would have been a way that workers could have more coordinated their activities vis-à vis some of these companies. It was considered the most important piece of EU directed legislation during the time I was there.

Q: Did you see effort on the part of the trade secretariats in either Geneva or Brussels to use this mechanism?

HILBURN: There were a number of trade secretariats in Brussels, as you know. There also were a number in Geneva. I saw the ones in Brussels more closely because I was in pretty regular contact with them. They were very much interested in this because the trade secretariat that dealt with the chemical industry, which I guess now is combined with the trade secretariat that was in the mining industry, would be very interested in having means of influence and access via its constituent members into the works councils of the big European chemical concerns because they're certainly multinational.

Q: Was Mike Boggs there at the time?

HILBURN: Mike Boggs was there for a time while I was there dealing with the chemical workers.

Q: Were they ever able to develop real coordinated bargaining across national borders?

HILBURN: No. I remember going to one session of the metal workers international meeting about collective bargaining. There was a lot of reservation on the part of trade union members represented at this meeting. I don't remember quite how the lineup was; I just remember that it wasn't a foregone conclusion that all trade union organizations saw advantage to them in having community-wide collective bargaining.

Q: Was that a north to south issue? Was the north afraid that it might lose at the hands of the south?

HILBURN: Perhaps. But that was the overriding dynamic in this whole debate.
The whole purpose of the social charter, of course, was to level the playing field between north and south, between the most advanced countries in the community and those that were less advanced. There was a fear, of course, that there would be what was called

social dumping. In other words, the big companies would take their operations to Spain and Greece or the UK where they had lower levels of protection and social benefit. As the years wore on during my stay in Brussels, the concern grew to be less about social dumping in the context of the EU than social dumping in the context of a now free Europe. There were great masses of under- and un-employed, but nonetheless well-educated, work forces in Eastern Europe. I know from personal experience with friends of mine in the German business community, for example, that they were moving their permanent operations to Poland and places like that. So there was that fear as well.

Q: It's wage competition of a sort. That's interesting.

HILBURN: Then there was also social dumping in reverse. It's not the kind of social dumping that is involved when an investment goes to Spain or Portugal, but the free movement of labor from places like Portugal and Spain to work in the construction industry in Germany. Since there's free movement in the European Union, one can go and work. Legislation was being drafted and considered at the time I was there on what to do about these Portuguese firms that won a sub-contract on a construction project in Germany and brought with them its work force, which it paid on Portuguese wage scales. There was that concern as well. That became a very exacerbated political issue, particularly in the construction industry in Germany, given their 10-12 percent unemployment.

Finally, aside from the evolving legal situation in terms of European labor and social law, the other big issues that I covered in Brussels were the beginnings of some community efforts in migration control. One of the big issues at the end of my time was the Bosnians and the various people coming into Germany, particularly from the Balkan States. That was an issue that the Europeans were trying to get their hands on that I followed as labor counselor. As I said, the job was wonderful to me. I got a promotion out of the Geneva job, which occurred just as I arrived in Brussels. Then, a few years later, relatively soon, I got a promotion to the Senior Foreign Service. It was great timing, and that's probably why I think it was a great job. Not only was it interesting, but it did well by me personally.

Q: Let me ask one other question about Brussels and the European Union. Were there such barriers to the outside that, say, cheap labor in India or North Africa didn't present a real option for the Europeans?

HILBURN: Cheap labor from North Africa was a problem. It was a problem very similar to our Mexican problem. They wanted in, and there were large communities already in that were a magnet for others. It was also a problem in Italy, I think. It's an undocumented labor problem, as I understood it, and there's a great deal of concern about it.

Q: What about plants being shipped off to China? The Germans have textiles and shoes in North Africa.

HILBURN: I don't know about that. I don't remember that being a major concern. The overriding concern with regard to Asia and China, that I recall, was the economic competition with the US and whether or not the Europeans were going to have their fair share of those markets.

Q: Do you mean of the US market?

HILBURN: I don't mean the US market, but the Asian markets.

Q: Didn't the Europeans continue to have significant barriers to the importation of Asian products?

HILBURN: Yes. There were a number of trade barriers, not only for Asia but for a number of other countries. I remember all the officers in the mission would get a sample of the community regulations, like the *Congressional Record*. It would be on your desk every day, and I remember thumbing through it when I first got over to the mission. There was a regulation, for example, prohibiting the importation of cucumbers from Poland beyond a certain level. That stuck in my mind.

Q: Poland!?

HILBURN: Yes. The Europeans were going to protect their cucumber farmers. Probably Poland could have supplied the entire Western European market with cucumbers at a price much more advantageous than others. That was an egregious example, it seemed to me. I remember being very shocked at the limitations on automobile imports and the tariff situation with regard to automobiles in certain countries.

But, all in all, it was a wonderful job. I was there at a moment of great historical and political import with the failure, for example, of some of these referendums that occurred on the Maastricht Treaty. I watched Europe reach a high point of élan and enthusiasm for integration and then experiencing a certain deflation after countries questioned the Maastricht Treaty. They are getting set, as you know, for another round of constitutional negotiations à la Maastricht, and I'll be interested to see if or how far along the road to integration they get. Then, of course, all that's happening at the same time that monetary integration is taking place. That monetary issue has great implications for labor in Europe.

Q: Do you mean in terms of labor mobility?

HILBURN: I mean the question of whether or not there can be any collective labor bargaining across European frontiers, if there isn't a common currency. Then there is the question of what does it do in microeconomic terms as countries try to meet the criteria and adhere to the criteria for European monetary union. There was beginning to be great controversy in my last years there on the part of labor questioning these criteria in terms

of debt limits and inflation limits and so forth, which have micro impact on wages. Labor, simplistically stated, being in favor of a more inflationary possibility, whereas the central bankers led by the Germans being anxious to keep the damper closed so that inflation wouldn't get out of hand and erode the possibilities of a common currency.

Q: Paul, we were just concluding your Brussels assignment. Do you want to make any additional comments about Brussels before we move on to your assignment in Washington, DC?

HILBURN: I think there's something that might be interesting for the future that we didn't touch on last time. With the adoption by the European Union by the Treaty of Maastricht, there came into being what they called a pillar system of European Union. Three pillars were elaborated in the Treaty of Maastricht. One pillar being the straight economic commercial common market kind of idea, another pillar being greater cooperation in foreign and defense policy, and a third pillar being greater cooperation in the areas of refugees, migration, and internal movement within the European Union. As my tour in Brussels was actually coming to a close, the mission began to get more interested in the system because Washington consumers were more interested in this third pillar. The third pillar not only included migration and immigration affairs but also cooperation in police matters, drugs for example, and international crime. I fell heir to that.

The labor attachés had been in many ways over the years interested in migration and movement of workers and that sort of thing, so there was sort of a natural segue from that traditional aspect of labor attaché work, although perhaps not a prominent feature of labor attaché work. Anyway, I fell heir to it at the mission and found it really rather interesting. The main point is that the Europeans began to do things with regard to immigration, the handling of refugees, determinations about what constituted refugee status and protected status, and that sort of thing. That was of great interest to the United States as another using country in the sense of the European Union. It was inaccurate but, nevertheless, the U.S. was another country that was a receiver of refugees and one that had global interests in refugees, migration, and international crime.

The last couple of years in Brussels, I spent a great deal of time entertaining delegations from the Department of Justice, from INL, and from various agencies of the Department that weren't particularly labor related in the traditional sense. That got to be about 25 percent of my job as the Maastricht Treaty began to be implemented more and more. The U.S. objective in all this was to have a voice in European policy making because the policy that could result would affect us. That's what we strived to do.

Q: Did you have a formal voice?

HILBURN: We never had a formal voice when I was there, but subsequently, I have heard, the Europeans allowed for US participation in some technical bodies that they had set up to study or to consult on migration and other kinds of issues. The whole matter has

probably been carried farther now. I'm just not aware of it. When I left, that was the aim and I subsequently heard that we had achieved something along those lines and it may have developed further.

Q: There were a lot of guest workers in Germany and France, as I recall. How would this new mechanism or policy affect the workers in Germany or the North African workers that were in France?

HILBURN: That was part of it. The main impetus behind it was the tremendous flow of refugees from the former Republic of Yugoslavia. That was the thing that was precipitating action, and it was having its biggest impact in Germany. Through Germany these issues of refugees and the status of refugees were coming to the European forum. Germany wanted others to bear a share of the refugee problem that it had because of proximity to central or southeast Europe.

Q: It was Germany's policy after World War II to admit almost any bona fide refugee.

HILBURN: I'm not familiar with German law to say that was that policy but Germany was tightening up. Germany wanted the Europeans to tighten up, and Germany wanted the Europeans to take over, ultimately, some of these refugees that were there: Croatians, Bosnians, and whatnot.

Q: Did the third leg also involve the so-called social contract that has been discussed so frequently?

HILBURN: No. The third pillar did not include the social contract. The social contract was a part of the first pillar, the unified market. That was an issue. The third pillar was criminal law cooperation, immigration, migration, and even some civil law cooperation and convergence. The social contract, the legislation of the European Union after Maastricht in the social area, was based on the trade related elements of the European Union, the first pillar, in other words.

Q: What were the labor market issues?

HILBURN: The central issue was, does a country with lower labor standards obtain some sort of advantage, which should be erased or diminished by European-wide legislation as a result of its labor law.

Q: Were you involved in those issues?

HILBURN: Oh, yes. I think I mentioned earlier that the American business community was very much interested, in contrast to the labor community, which may have been but didn't express its interest in queries or contacts with me.

Q: I think the British opted out of the social contract.

HILBURN: A feature of the Maastricht Treaty was the British opt out. They essentially removed themselves from certain elements of the social contract. I can't remember the exact membership of the Union at that point, but all members but the U.K. made a separate protocol to the Maastricht Treaty, which allowed them to proceed in the social area, absent the UK. The UK could participate, but it could opt out as well, as I recall.

Q: Will the UK's opting out impact adversely on the implementation of the social contract for the other members?

HILBURN: Well, the British maintain that it would impact positively because, they would claim, they are attracting the greatest flow of foreign investment, for example, thus creating jobs and income for their workers because they were out of the contract. What this new government will do is hard to say. I can't imagine that the Labour government wouldn't renounce the opt out. I'll have to get Turnquist in here to elaborate on that. Even with the divorce, as it were, between the Labour Party and the TUAC (Trade Union Advisory Committee) in the U.K., I can't believe that the constituency wouldn't demand that. There's a new intergovernmental conference going on right now, which carries on the work done at Maastricht and, ultimately, I suppose result in new treaty arrangements, some further advance in all of these areas towards unification, or maybe it'll be stalled. I suspect that might be taken care of pretty soon.

Q: Before we turn to Washington, are there any summary comments you'd like to make about Brussels?

HILBURN: I didn't mention much in Brussels about the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions). One of the major aspects of the job was staying in touch with the ICFTU. Also, there were a number of international trade secretariats located in Brussels, just as there are in Geneva. The main ones in Brussels were the miners and the chemical workers and I had the most contact with them. They were in the process of merging at the time I was leaving, and I believe they have, in fact, merged subsequently. Running over and staying in touch with the leadership of the ICFTU was a big issue. A major element of that was the question of trade union aid and support to the former republics of the Soviet Union. There was a great deal of interest in the European Union, of course, providing aid to the newly independent states and to the former East Bloc countries. The trade union movement was interested in supporting both independent free trade unions in those areas. We were watching very closely matters such as the relative factions of the newly independent trade unions versus the old official structures and how they fared after the demise of communist government in the Warsaw Pact. The ICFTU, of course, with US leadership from the AFL-CIO, was very much opposed to any truck with these old official structures. They wanted to keep them out of the ICFTU. On the other hand, there was a certain element in the European union movement that had had a willingness, a disposition even in the Cold War period perhaps to deal with these official unions. They were more interested in bringing them into the ICFTU structure.

Q: Which Eastern European federations or unions were brought into the ICFTU?

HILBURN: I can't remember how the sequence went now but I believe the first one was the Czech Independent Trade Union. The Czech trade union had been considered, by the time I left, as sufficiently reformed to merit membership in the ICFTU, and I believe it had come in. Maybe just as I was leaving, if memory serves me correctly.

Q: Is that Riga?

HILBURN: The Hungarians were brought in but also, I think, the old MOMS or whatever if I recall correctly the initials of the official structure. I think you have the Czech Republic and Hungary, the old official structures having been deemed sufficiently reformed to be brought in along with the new ones. Some of the new ones are from places like Bulgaria and Romania and others whose names are escaping me. There are at least one or two. Solidarity had been brought in long before that, even during the days of suppression. There was that aspect of trade union politics going on in Brussels while I was there. Another aspect was whether or not and who would take the lead. The question was whether the ICFTU would be able to participate in some of the funding provided by the EU for aid to trade union education and development efforts underway. This was an issue between the ICFTU and the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation). In the ETUC. there was probably more of a disposition to be, shall we say, more forgiving toward the old official structures whereas, with the American membership in the ECFTU, there was less willingness. That's the way I perceived it, anyway. There was a certain cross town rivalry between the ICFTU and the TUAC and how this aid, which was funded by monies from the EU, would be handled. The ICFTU wanted part of it.

Q: Correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't most of the European members of the ETUC. also members of the ICFTU and that there isn't much difference between the European membership of the ICFTU and the ETUC.?

HILBURN: That's right. So it's really a case of how much influence the AFL-CIO and other non-European unions would have on it.

Q: So what was the outcome?

HILBURN: The ICFTU got some sort of a role. I don't remember the details but they ultimately, I believe, were declared to be something on the order of an approved MGO in terms of the EU. Therefore, they were available to participate in some of these programs. The ICFTU and the ETUC worked out some arrangement. How well it's gone, I don't know. They, I believe, came to some sort of agreement about the time I was leaving. There was the aspect of international trade union politics going on, and there was this aspect of the EU and its funding for programs to aid the development of free trade unions in the East. All of that, of course, was directed in the sense of restructuring the economies of the East. The safety net and how to ensure it was an issue as well as how to build responsible employee organizations and how to train trade unionists to negotiate and

participate in a free market economy. That was the direction of these programs.

Q: Was the AFL-CIO working through the ITC, I say FTU in eastern Europe were working primarily bilateral channels?

HILBURN: I think it was mostly the latter.

Q: So, it was really trying to affect what others were doing in eastern Europe other than using the ICFTU as a conduit?

HILBURN: The AFL-CIO had its own row to hoe and was hoeing it in Eastern Europe, to continue the analogy. My impression was that they wanted the IFCTU to have a role because, therefore, they would have a voice. Whereas if the ATUC was exclusively the agent for using EU money, then they wouldn't have a voice and there might be this issue, then, of the old structures considered unreformed by the U.S. trade unionists but maybe considered okay enough by the Europeans. It was the continuation in a different circumstance of the age-old discrepancy in viewpoints between the AFL-CIO and some of the Europeans.

Q: Which countries were active through the IFCTU in Eastern Europe? I would assume that the Deutsch were dominant.

HILBURN: They were. A lot of countries had some little piece of action somewhere. Even Spain, I recall, had something going on in the Balkans.

Q: Is that right?!

HILBURN: Italy had its little programs.

Q: Which Italian union was this?

HILBURN: I think it was CICO mostly.

Q: Was it not the communist-dominated union?

HILBURN: No. I don't believe so.

Q: I think they are members of the ETUC, aren't they, or am I mistaken?

HILBURN: There have been some changes since I've left with regard to the ETUC. and even the ICFTU with regard to both the CGT, the Communist, and the CCOO in Spain and the comparable Portuguese organization, and maybe even the French communist trade union.

Q: Did all those changes occur after the dissolution of the Soviet Union?

HILBURN: You'll have to talk my successors out in Brussels to see what happened there historically. There was a certain validity about the time I was leaving although it hadn't been channeled yet.

Q: What was your view of the trade secretariat? How important is it in the larger scheme of things?

HILBURN: It's a question that's kind of hard to evaluate. I don't know. Take the miners, for example, headquartered in Brussels. They conducted trade union education and other kinds of programs in central and eastern Europe. They were also a part of this game, if you want to call it that, of how to deal with the old structures. The miners, as I recall, were fairly ready to deal with the old structures. There was a certain belief on the part of the miners and maybe even the chemical workers there in Brussels that Western trade unionists needed a partner in the East. There was Western investment duly arriving in the East, and there were labor market considerations that were at play after the fall of the Warsaw Pact. The partner that they got might not be the partner they would really like, but they needed somebody to deal with these issues that were affecting the Western labor market in the wake of the fall of the Wall and the emergence of independent countries in the Soviet Union. There were some Europeans and the miners, I'd say, that were part of this that were guided, I believe, by what they would perhaps call a pragmatic point of view. Okay, maybe the official Soviet or Russian miner's federation is a pretty strong echo of the old Soviet system, but we need to work with them. What happens in the Soviet mining or Russian mining industry affects the German coal industry.

Q: Was there any concern about the anti-Semitism that some of the Russian miners showed early on after the demise of the Soviet Union?

HILBURN: I don't recall that arising. It may have been a dissident union group. To come back to your larger question, some ITSes were strong and some not so strong. The miners seemed to me to be a viable, dynamic organization. The metal workers were in Geneva, and I dealt with them down there. The European metal workers, I believe, were in Brussels. There were these parallel organizations, too. There were ITSes and then there were European trade union secretariats that were attached to ETUC. I was in some contact but not a lot. I usually just would make one office call and introduce myself and that might be the last contact.

Q: Were there any Americans leading these ITSes?

HILBURN: There was Mike Boggs, for example, if you know that name.

Q: Yes, I do.

HILBURN: He was in charge of the chemical workers. Herman Raban was down in Geneva with the metal workers when I was there.

Q: Herman has been kind enough to give us an interview. As a matter of fact, he gave me this knife with the logo of the IMF on it.

HILBURN: The metal workers, I felt, were the most interesting because they were really on the cusp of the emerging EU law and the consolidation of the potential...that's not the right word. They were most cognizant, it seemed to me, of the potentialities of a European sort of bargaining area. They were the trade secretariat that was taking the lead in looking ahead to monetary union and further steps that were going to be taken in Europe and what that meant for collective bargaining in the metal sector. I remember going to seminars that they put on in places like Luxembourg. I listened to some of the internal debates there that were going on among European metal working unions about the desirability of moving toward community-wide collective bargaining and its feasibility.

Q: Did you see any concrete examples of that occurring or cross border negotiations or plants of the same multinational in two different countries?

HILBURN: No. Not yet. I think that's going to change. I remember in our last tape discussing this European works council legislation. I think these works councils will move that forward because the worker representatives will be trade unionists. That was an issue, by the way, whether they needed to be unionists or not, or had to be unionists, or could they just be workers. The participation of the workers on these works councils will be, I think, largely informed by trade union leadership. Ford, FM, and Renault and all of the other companies of interest to metal workers will have these councils, and there'll be a certain arena for concerted action, which wasn't available, perhaps, before.

Q: Were there any precursors of that with demonstrations of solidarity at plants in one country where workers in other countries had issues?

HILBURN: The ones that I remember were those instances when companies would make relocation decisions. A big one that was of interest to us was the decision of Hoover to move a manufacturing operation from Alsace to Scotland, if I'm not mistaken. The trade unionists made the point that this was an erosion of lowering of the bar socially because of the enticements that were being offered. There were some demonstrations with regard to that. Hoover was one, and there are others but they just don't come to mind at the moment.

Q: Was there some communication across borders?

HILBURN: Absolutely. There's been a big instance of that with the decision just in the last few months of Renault to close down a big, very modern manufacturing plant in Vilvoorde, just outside of Brussels. Renault is restructuring, and the axe fell on this plant near Brussels. There was a pretty big hue and cry about it, not only in Brussels, Belgium, but in France and other places as well. Maybe there were even solidarity strikes in all of

the Renault operations.

Q: Shall we turn to your Washington assignment? When did you return and what were your responsibilities?

HILBURN: I came back in September 1994, and I was going to be the director of the office of international labor affairs. State Department leadership had decided that there no longer should be an SIL. The Clinton administration had made this decision to abolish SIL. It was part of a number of changes that all revolved around the creation of this undersecretaryship for global issues under Tim Worth. The SIL had been abolished, and it had been put under DR/Human Rights and DR or HA as it was called in State Department parlance was now DRL (Democracy, Human Rights and Labor).

Q: Would this have been mid-1993?

HILBURN: I think it was actually implemented in early 1994 or late 1993.

Q: Was Tony Freeman still head?

HILBURN: Tony Freeman, of course, was the SIL, and then he became the Deputy Assistant Secretary under John Shattuck, who was the Democratic appointee for Human Rights. He became one of three DASes. There was a DAS for democracy, one for human rights, and one for labor. The staff of SIL then became an office in this classic sort of State Department hierarchical arrangement under DRL, so Tony was the supervising deputy assistant secretary for the office, and I was the office director.

Q: Who did you replace?

HILBURN: Tony got this offer that he couldn't refuse to head the Washington office of the ILO, so John Shattuck, then, asked me to become the acting DAS. During this period, there was a subsequent reorganization, and the office of international labor affairs acquired other functions, such as the Congressional relations function in the bureau and the outreach to non-governmental organizations. There was a person in DRL whose job it was to maintain contact with NGOs interested in human rights.

Q: I see.

HILBURN: Ultimately, I became the office director that included those functions as well, and the office then became the office of International Labor and External Affairs (LEA) with international labor responsibilities. There were two people working on that and a person working on Congressional relations and a person working on external outreach programs.

Q: Who were the two that were working on labor at that point?

HILBURN: Well, this was Alden Irons, then for most of the time it was a younger officer named Ed Sutto, who was the second exclusively labor person in the office. Then we had a secretary. There were seven of us in all. It seems like I am missing somebody. Anyway, those are the main functions of the office. The issues involved in all of this were, where does labor stand in the Department's areas of concern? There was a school of thought that said this represents an obvious downgrading, that the labor function had been sitting at the secretary's right hand as a special assistant at one point, at least nominally.

Q: Do you mean the undersecretary?

HILBURN: Yes. I mean the undersecretary RP or the deputy secretary or somebody. I think it sort of tracked Larry Eagleburger in recent years. If he was PEEN, that's where the relationship was. If he was DEAN, then that's where the relationship was.

Q: The more stable relationship was Larry Eagleburger on the one hand and Tony Freeman on the other. Lane Kirkland was the other outside participant.

HILBURN: This reorganization removed at least the nominal relationship directly between the secretary and SIL.

Q: What was your feeling on whether it was downgraded?

HILBURN: I was agnostic about it because I have a different take on it.

Q: Okay, can we have your take on it, now that you are no longer on the payroll?

HILBURN: There's a lot of controversy about this and maybe my views are shaped by my Brussels experience too much, and they aren't informed by other considerations. I thought that the labor function had increasingly become the focus of labor in the State Department. More and more rested on international economics. I don't deny that there are human rights aspects to labor work–there certainly are–but I believe that if it was going to be reorganized, I think I would have preferred to see it reorganized somewhere into the E area.

About this time, the Clinton administration created an office of NE for business affairs. I thought it would have been a highly symmetrical move to have created an office of business and labor affairs. This business office was created to provide a place for businessmen who were trying to invest or increase exports or do business abroad. If they ran into difficulties, then they were supposed to come to this office. It seemed to me like there could have been a separate, similar office for labor. It seemed to me that most of the time the issues we were dealing with involved labor and the international economic scene. It involved human rights but those were related, by and large, to economic issues. The worker rights, we'll call it, were related in our office's daily work to things like the GSP program, whether or not we would accord or withdraw preferences based upon worker rights issues. Another major aspect of the office was this idea of some sort of

social clause–that's the French term for it. We don't like it so much but, just to be shorthand, I'll say some sort of social clause in the GATT or now the WTO. Then the other issue is the kinds of things I was talking about that were happening in Europe about community-wide collective bargaining, economic issues, and labor issues writ large on the world scene. Those seemed to me to be the issues that we were dealing with and there, perhaps, it would have been best to put it in E.

Q: Didn't E have someone working on the worker rights issues?

HILBURN: Well, E has people who deal with trade, and they have an office of trade policy. They have people who do look into worker rights.

Q: Joe Sallo used to do that.

HILBURN: We were in close contact a lot with an ED office on trade policy because they had the actual seat with respect to the GSP program. ED had the actual seat that was on the USTR panel to consider these issues.

Q: We went, and Alden Irons was our representative.

HILBURN: Yes, and he was usually backed up by Ed Sutto, as I mentioned. He went and spoke but the institutional arrangement was ED.

Q: ED was the voting member on the sub-committee?

HILBURN: ED was the *de jure* voting member. The counter argument to what I'm saying, in my view, was that labor might have been downgraded by being reorganized into DRL. Leadership in DRL may assign higher priorities to more classic human rights issues and leave labor issues sort of in the wake. The environment in the E area would have been even more hostile. The labor would have found itself continuously outvoted.

Q: Do you think that's true?

HILBURN: I don't know. Anyway, I returned to find this reorganization with Tony Freeman as the DAS, the office being reorganized as I have described. In my experience, there just simply was not any real interest beyond the rhetorical in labor issues.

Q: Do you mean within DRL?

HILBURN: Yes, I mean within DRL.

Q: The leadership didn't have any labor background?

HILBURN: It didn't have any labor background. These issues were perhaps a little new. I don't impute any evil intent in this, I just think it's a result of background and interests of

the people.

Q: Is it just that the overwhelming focus was on the human rights side and labor was the stepchild?

HILBURN: That's right. There was a great deal of recognition of the domestic political implications of all of these things.

Q: Do you mean 16th Street and the AFL-CIO?

HILBURN: I mean that the leadership in DRL and perhaps even higher was cognizant of the impact that 16th Street and the trade union movement could have. They were certainly willing to recognize that and took it into account, as I say, rhetorically. But on the day to day basis, it was not a particular factor.

Q: It was sort of when a problem arose they became involved, but otherwise, it was off the scope. Is that a fair characterization?

HILBURN: That's my impression.

Q: When Tony went on to the ILO and you suddenly found yourself the deputy assistant secretary, did that make any difference in your work routine?

HILBURN: No, because—I don't know how crudely you can put things in this interview—as we would say in a Texas fray, boy, we were sucking hind tit all the way. Maybe it's common every place. Whether I was office director or acting DAS, my impression was that John Shattuck was really wanting me to handle the issues that arose and come to him when necessary. He basically wanted me to keep the decks cleared and keep everybody pretty happy without actually having to involve him too much.

Q: During your watch, there were a lot of personnel issues that came up about positions and what positions would be cut.

HILBURN: That's right.

Q: What was your role and how did Mr. Shattuck react to your attempts to get him involved?

HILBURN: Our institutional role was to defend the positions as vigorously as we could by marshaling the kinds of arguments that we thought might be effective. We did the usual bureaucratic things. We wrote memos to personnel, and we wrote memos to the IG (Inspector General). When the IG inspection report, for example, recommended a reduction or elimination of a post, we contested embassy plans to eliminate labor attachés. We thought that was advisable. The labor attaché corps, in my opinion, was badly deployed. When I came into the office, just to use round numbers, there were about

50 labor attachés around the world with various kinds of nomenclature associated with these positions. They weren't all attachés. Some were labor officers, some were counselors, some were attachés, and some were people who did lots of labor work. We believed we had about 50 people around the world. Most of them were in Europe. That reflected an earlier situation.

It was my belief that there was a need to redeploy those resources because the issues that were coming up were issues that involved Southeast Asia and labor in China. We had no labor attaché in China, we had no labor attaché in Thailand, and they were going to abolish the labor attaché in India, which was one of the leading countries that was against having the social clause in the new WTO. We were badly deployed, I thought, by having labor positions in places like the bilateral embassy in Brussels. Maybe even The Hague would fall into that category. It was my thought, perhaps, that even a labor attaché office with a labor counselor and an assistant would be more effective than covering the entire EU. It would free up some of those positions, or maybe you could just have labor counselors in the G7 countries and have them cover other countries by having some regional responsibilities. None of those ideas ever came to any fruition because of other bureaucratic imperatives.

Among them was the difficulty of reprogramming a position. We could say, okay, we don't believe it is necessary to have the labor attaché anymore in the bilateral embassy in Brussels. We would like to put that person in Thailand, but that was impossible because the bureaus controlled the positions. If the labor attaché in Brussels was going to be reprogrammed, they were going to make the position a political officer some place maybe in Eastern Europe, or do something else with it.

Q: When you say over deployed in Europe, are you including Eastern Europe?

HILBURN: No. I am talking about Western Europe. We are under deployed in Asia for the most part.

To sort of sum it up without getting into a lot of bureaucracy or bureaucratic parlance, the Department was under pressure to downsize. Those pressures had been conveyed to the bureaus and the bureaus, particularly in Europe, were responding by eliminating labor attaché positions. While I was not averse to the idea of eliminating labor attaché positions in Europe, I would have wanted to see some of them translated into labor positions someplace else. That was not going to happen.

Q: Would it be fair to say that the fact that the bureaus were so decentralized on personnel issues that each bureau could decide which positions would be abolished, and there wasn't a central authority on it?

HILBURN: That's precisely how it worked. The senior management in the department decided that the bureaus would have to take certain cuts. I don't remember the exact figures, but in Europe, for example, I think it was in the range of 400 to 500 positions.

The Department said to the EUR (European and Eurasian Affairs) bureau, "You have to cut them." I think the EUR bureau then made some sort of allocation of cuts to the embassies. It was in that process that the labor attachés were often hit. It became really a local embassy decision which positions would be hit. We made the point, on several occasions, to central personnel that there ought to be some mechanism that has a global view with regard to labor attachés. This shouldn't just be left to the discretion of an ambassador.

Q: Were you able to shield any particular positions in the end?

HILBURN: I don't think we were very successful at all. I can point to some but I still think that falls under the category of not very successful. In the case of El Salvador there had been an IG inspection that we should have revised the labor position. We, along with others, were successful in reversing that. We were able to hold on to some a little longer but I don't consider that we were very successful at all. I really believe it was like King Canute commanding the tides. I don't think we had any effect on the tides.

Q: There was never any central decision that a certain number of positions would be saved or certain designation positions?

HILBURN: Before I got to DRL, it had been agreed at some point that there would be a new statement of purpose for the international labor attaché program, a joint statement of purpose issued by the Secretaries of State and Labor. That had been done. It was a statement that was to outline the role of the labor attaché program in the post-Cold War world. A statement had been issued, and a redrafting of the generic labor attaché functions had taken place. A task force had been created that was to look into the role of labor attachés in the post-Cold War world. This had been launched with a great deal of fanfare before I got here. Lane Kirkland attended, Tim Worth presided, and John Shattuck was there. Of course, this was all organized by Tony and my predecessor who was Jack Muth.

The task force was supposed to continue. It was not only a task force that was charged with looking into the role or describing the new role of the labor attaché program but was also supposed to address a number of issues such as deployment, training, promotion, and many of the things that were collateral issues stemming from this newly defined role of the labor attaché. Under my co-chairmanship, this task force proceeded to do its work. The work of the task force was co-chaired by me and by a DAS in PER. Where do they go?

Q: They go in a hurry.

HILBURN: She is now the deputy director out here at FSI.

We chaired a task force, the Labor Department came, and all the bureaus came. We wanted to devise a deployment. The DRL office's aim was to have this task force

elaborate a new deployment scheme, taking into account the factors I mentioned earlier. None of the bureau representatives had any plenipotentiary powers to do anything, so all they could do was voice an opinion. We weren't able to elaborate any recommended deployment scheme that would meet the post-Cold War new situation. There was a great deal of disagreement with regard to whether or not there should be a separate labor track. As you know, there is now but I think it's in danger or maybe even on the verge of being eliminated. But there was at the time we were discussing a separate labor track over the threshold in the Senior Foreign Service, which was there in order to encourage people to consider labor assignments as a career and to stay with labor for more than an assignment or two. It would discourage people applying for a labor position just because the particular labor position was in a post that somebody wanted to go to. There wasn't even very much agreement about that.

There were some people involved in labor work who believed that all of this had served to create a ghetto, if you can use that phrase, of labor officers who were not well esteemed by the rest of the State Department and Foreign Service, and they believed that this separate track should be eliminated. This was all, of course, strongly contested by the Department of Labor, which had representatives at these meetings. The Labor Department was very much of the view that labor work required a dedicated corps of people who had training and long years of experience in labor work. They believed that the interests of the Labor Department and the interests of labor, as an issue in foreign affairs, could best be served by that kind of arrangement with the attendant assignments and promotions that go along with that point of view.

Q: Was this Harold Davies?

HILBURN: Yes, it was Harold Davies.

Q: It was the Labor Department position in general.

HILBURN: On the other hand, the other extreme was represented, I think, by Personnel, which took the view that the Foreign Service was made up of generalist officers, particularly political officers. The embassies and the Foreign Service Officers assigned to them would handle the labor tasking that arrived just as they handled other kinds of tasking. The ambassador and the country team would decide what were the priorities in country X, and if labor is one and there were taskings and so forth involved in that, then general purpose Foreign Service Officers would handle the issue. There might be some posts, they allowed, that were particularly labor intensive, if you want to use that word and, therefore, the incumbents in those positions should receive certain extra training. Therefore, there could continue to be the FSI course and that sort of thing. For the most part, you just assign officers who are capable, and one tour can be labor work, the next tour they might be doing a political military job, the next tour an economics job, and some other tour a straight political and internal reporting job. They believed that the State Department had the caliber of people that would be able to handle the labor work in that manner, as opposed to some separate corps of people.

Q: What was the office position and then your personal position?

HILBURN: The DRL position was one of nominal support. To put it as I saw it (it may sound a bit pejorative), my boss, John Shattuck, recognized that he had a certain institutional obligation to take on board the advice of people in his office who were experts in this matter and to support them. But, I don't really believe his heart was in it. I believe he thought it was a rather esoteric argument that was a lot of sound and fury signifying not much, and that he would do his duty by us and sign the memos. But I don't have the impression that he was prepared to make the phone calls and really go to the mat on these kinds of issues.

I have to say that, in my own view, I had a certain mixed view about it. I guess if I had to say on which side of the ledger I came down on, I would say that Foreign Service Officers probably could do the job required of State Department labor diplomacy, if they received the training. There should be a kind of eclectic approach. There were some positions where particular training and experience were relevant but in the large number of posts, probably most Foreign Service political or economic officers could do the job. I did feel very strongly that there had developed over the years a certain ghettoization of the labor function. I don't know why that happened but I ran into it all the time.

Q: In what sense did it happen?

HILBURN: I'll tell you a story that illustrates it. We could not get a suitable bidder for a very important labor job in Japan. This was a minister counselor level job, and we just had no one for it. So the Labor Department thought it was important enough also that it should certainly be filled, so they scraped together the resources to second a Labor Department senior official to be the labor minister counselor in Tokyo. We agreed with that because we had nobody. There weren't enough senior officers in the labor cone to fill this. They simply weren't available, and there weren't any serious bidders for it from someone at the senior level who is perhaps not a labor officer but fairly well qualified. So we went along with it.

It became our job to make the arrangements with EB that would affect the decision that was agreed to ultimately. I remember talking to people in the EB executive office, and I remember being struck by the views. They didn't think they were getting a labor minister counselor person who could make a well-rounded contribution to the country team and the embassy's work. I remember one of the guys in the office, I guess he was the deputy director EX, saying "We see so many labor attachés. If you come to them with perhaps a codel and you want them to be the control officer, I've had them say to me: 'That's not my job description. I'm a labor attaché. I don't do this or that.' We are not getting all the value we want by having a labor attaché. We'd rather have somebody who's just a member of the political section and who handles the labor work that comes along and is required. In the meantime, he's available for the general run of the mill kinds of things that political sections have to do." In a way, it was a rather classic labor flexibility issue.

In other words, the management wanted interchangeable parts and ultimate flexibility, and they felt like they were impeded by having people who had a more specific concept of their duties and responsibilities.

Q: Do you think the criticism is fair? Do you see evidence?

HILBURN: In some cases it was. I don't think it is fair currently but I think it might have been a fair criticism historically in certain cases. I don't know that for a fact. I just have an idea that it might be true. It might have been true in those years when a large number of labor attachés were brought in from outside the Foreign Service. Dues and traditions might have been established perpetuating this point of view. I do believe there was a serious ghettoization of the labor function in the department.

Q: You saw a lot of the work of the labor attachés when you were the senior labor attaché. Do you find the quality of the work up to your expectation, or did you see gaps?

HILBURN: I see gaps but I'm not ready to be condemnatory about that because I think one of the great failings of our office was to focus work. In other words, we were defending positions and fighting these bureaucratic battles, and one of the consequences of that was that we didn't have the time, staff, and energy to really try to pull together a global sort of effort in the labor area. We needed an effort that would focus the labor resources that we did have and that were deployed correctly. I am leaving aside the badly deployed assets that would have perhaps brought home to senior policy makers the issues involved in international labor diplomacy. I count that probably as my greatest failing in the time I was in the office.

Going along with this idea of badly deployed labor attachés, I think there was certain headquarters element in that as well. I would personally have preferred fewer labor attachés. I would have sacrificed quite a number of European labor attachés if we could have had the trained staff in Washington that would have made it possible to follow some of these worldwide economic issues. I'm talking about following worker rights issues in areas that we never really got into that much. Examples are World Bank lending and project development and the relationship of loans to worker rights and trade union development. We needed to really be a serious player in international economic policy making as it affects labor. We needed to really ride herd on and monitor some of these various business codes that were being developed for implementation around the world in response to consumer activists and those sorts of things. I think there was really a lot to do but we needed resources in Washington that would augment our ability to task and pull together and integrate the work of labor attachés and to make them a more valuable commodity for policy makers. I think we failed to do that.

Q: I guess Alden Irons essentially followed the worker rights issues.

HILBURN: Coming back to your first question about the quality issue. It varied. We had excellent labor reporting officers and officers who could relate the labor developments

that they were reporting on to broader U.S. national interests. We had others who didn't. Some would report adequately but they seemed to be reporting on things that really weren't that apropos to the issues we were most concerned with. Our inability to turn that around is part of what I was talking about as a failure. We didn't care anymore in the office, for example, about strikes and that sort of thing in and of themselves, but yet there were a number of labor officers around who still recorded things that were not necessary to report. Strikes that were involving American industries that we might get inquiries about, we always wanted to know about. We wanted to know about a general strike because of some economic restructuring plan that the government was putting into effect because of the World Bank or a Monetary Fund loan or something like that. That was different. To talk about the internal politics of local trade unions was not something we were particularly interested in. During the Cold War, we were interested in what faction was in control of what trade union but not any more. I was just trying to think of any particular examples of "bad," but I don't want to mention anybody.

Q: You're welcome to if you wish.

HILBURN: It would be useful to mention particularly good examples. South Africa was a situation that I might mention, as an aside, that seriously undermined the issue of whether or not there should be a specifically trained labor attaché corps to do labor reporting. We never had one there as long as I can remember in the last decade. We never got a labor attaché, in the true sense of the word, assigned to South Africa. We just had general political officers who wanted to go to South Africa for one reason or another or wanted to be the labor attaché for one reason or another in South Africa. However, we got some of the best reporting that we got from South Africa. People would say, you just nominated this fellow here to be your labor award winner for 1990 whatever it was, and he's not labor. We had at one point Stickley and later Ray Parten. For the last three or four assignments, I don't think it was a labor attaché but I stand to be corrected on this.

Q: I don't have my historical list.

HILBURN: I think the bottom line is, as we are into 1997, that the labor attaché corps as a distinctly defined element of the Foreign Service is on its last legs.

Q: It's fading at this point?

HILBURN: That's my impression. I understand they had a seminar on the issue of whether to do away with the labor sub-cone along with narcotics and science over at the Foreign Service Institute.

Q; What impact do you think that would have?

HILBURN: As I say, if I'm forced to come down on the issue, I don't believe that the work that the State Department does requires a specialization. Maybe it should, but what is out there now, if I'm forced to choose, does not, in my opinion, require a specialized

labor attaché corps. In the final analysis--although I don't say it is an open and shut case—I don't buy in the final analysis the Department of Labor view that labor jobs can only be adequately performed by people who have a long history of labor work and the attendant training. I do believe, as I said, that there are labor positions in embassies in countries where labor training is necessary. If you are going to send somebody to Germany, for example, they'd better be well trained in labor market economics. If you are going to establish a labor attaché position in China, then there needs to be training involved in it. There are lots of places where that is the case but I think, with training, that can be done.

Q: How much training are you talking about? Are you talking about something like the current three-week course at the Foreign Service Institute?

HILBURN: No. I think it's unfortunate that some of these positions are being filled with just a three-week training course. I think it should be more than that. Again, going back to my bias in favor of ultimately putting the labor function in E area somewhere, I think there needs to be a good deal more training of labor officers in international economics and international labor economics, if such a discipline exists. I think labor officers need to be able to fully participate in the consideration and evaluation of something like, for example, the OBCD study on the impact of worker rights and trade that was done a year ago and issued last year. It had a certain technical element. It involved economic theory analysis. It also had a certain political element. I don't think the labor attaché corps, as it is constituted now, brings to the table that kind of expertise. I don't think it's necessarily labor work as we've previously defined it.

Q: What about the contact work that labor attachés do? Do you think that's something any Foreign Service Officer should be able to do?

HILBURN: Do you mean like with NGO (non-governmental organizations?

Q: I mean intense work with the labor movement and grassroots organizations.

HILBURN: I don't believe that's a labor officer monopoly. That, to me, is a question of the embassy's senior management being prepared to expend the resources on it.

Q: Do you think they understand the need for that type of contact work and the importance of someone in the embassy getting out there and beating the bushes to find out who the influential people are?

HILBURN: I'm not sure they do in all cases. But I don't think you need someone with a labor background to do that.

Q: Was your own preparation for Brussels adequate?

HILBURN: In those days, it was the six-week course that was run over at the University

of the District of Columbia. They probably gave me a lot, but I didn't absorb it all. I felt myself to be inadequately prepared to deal with professionals, for example, in DG5 in Brussels who were talking about employment issues and employment creation. That's a big element when you are talking about Europe. You've got Germany, France, and Italy with its double-digit unemployment figures. One of the main, if not the main, issue is how to create jobs out of GDP. I didn't feel like I was able to do it justice.

Q: How about a year of graduate study in some university? You are talking about very complicated and sophisticated issues.

HILBURN: I think if the United States wants to send a credible labor attaché to EU that that's one of the positions where that training ought to be available. I don't think a person who goes into that, in the final analysis and if push comes to shove, has to be a long-serving labor attaché. I think it could be helpful. I think it could be nice. Yet, in the final analysis, I'm not sure it's a necessary prerequisite. I had long arguments with Herb Weiner. Herb was always dropping around, and we used to have long arguments about this. His view was that these jobs could not be done without someone who had long experience and particular training. I grant the training part but I wasn't so sure about the long experience.

Q: I think the argument also includes the issue of credibility with trade unions. If you want credibility with, say, the TUAC where Herb has a lot of credibility, you have to have some union credentials and experience in dealing with trade unionists.

HILBURN: My conception of the labor attaché went beyond dealing with the trade unions. I think this is a part of my assignment pattern—Geneva and Brussels, particularly. The labor attaché should be a credible interlocutor with not only the labor community but with the business community and a wide variety of NGOs. Again recalling back to the days in Brussels, I would go talk to these NGOs that were dealing in migration and refugee issues and that sort of thing.

Q: You yourself sort of fit the pattern that you described of the Foreign Service generalist who moved into the labor area and, obviously, did extremely well.

HILBURN: I don't know about that. I guess I was of a different generation to a certain extent. I see the contrast greatly delineated when I go to one of these luncheons like we had the other day. I'm not the same kind of labor attaché and never was that I see represented there from the days of the 1950s, 1960s and, even in some cases, the 1940s. I suppose that's perhaps not good but I think there was a conscious decision in the 1960s to recruit from within the Foreign Service. Those who were recruited prior to that from the trade unions may reflect a different approach. Herb Weiner was actually the first Foreign Service Officer who went into the labor function after he had become a Foreign Service Officer very early on. I have never regretted the labor work. I've always found it very interesting. I was always happy to be involved in, to enjoy the independence of and, one might even say, the benign neglect of ambassadors and DCMs (Deputy Chiefs of

Mission). It was unfortunate in one sense, but in a personal sense it was nice.

Q: There was also a lot of contact work that went beyond the Foreign Ministry and included not only the labor ministry but the trade unions and the grass roots organizations.

HILBURN: And I'm getting very personal now and it may not be of interest to your historical overview, but I've just tended to like the people that were in the labor sphere better because they were real human beings.

Q: You stuck them and they bled! You said something offensive and they screamed at you.

HILBURN: I just liked them better than I liked a lot of the regular Foreign Service people who were more interested, it seemed to me, in one-upmanship. My wife felt the same way, as a matter of fact. I remember on several occasions coming home and saying, "Well, the delegation going to the ILO conference is going to be in town next week, and I think it would be nice if we did something, maybe have a little cocktail or something." And she would say, "Are they State Department people or are they Labor?" If they were Labor Department people, she was generally more inclined to say, bring them on, as opposed to State Department people, whom she thought were more likely to want to dominate the conversation with their own erudition than listen. The Labor people have more human faces, it might be said.

Q: That's part of the argument for having people who are committed to labor. They relate to other labor people better than a lot of mainstream Foreign Service people. I certainly come out of the mainstream of the Foreign Service.

HILBURN: The issues involved in this question of labor track or non-labor track are not clear-cut. I think they are extremely grey and oftentimes ambiguous. The judgment that I've rendered in this conversation is predicated on if push comes to shove and I have to choose. That's the way I guess I would go.

Q: I think there are a lot of personality factors. There are some very natural contact people serving as labor attachés, and I think they tend to do well no matter what they're doing. People like Jim Shay.

HILBURN: I always preferred to go over and have an afternoon's conversation with a wide variety of people as opposed to trying to discern the subtle movements in a *communiqué* or a series issued on the Bosnian situation.

Q: It's easier with a sledgehammer then. I wanted to ask you about the AFL-CIO's role in the personnel process. Did you have a lot of contact with them when you were heading up the office?

HILBURN: My impression is that it was fitful interest. Let's put it that way. They on

occasion could be either motivated or implored or otherwise brought to bear on a particular issue and I remember letters from Lane Kirkland to the undersecretary protesting the decision to abolish or downgrade a labor attaché position, but I've never perceived sustained interest in it. On the other hand, the people in the State Department at the decision-making level were conscious that the AFL-CIO, if its views were disregarded at the State Department, had avenues that were higher and more authoritative than the State Department.

Q: Some of those avenues might not be far from their headquarters.

HILBURN: It was a presence but it was a presence that to me was not sustained. Maybe that was our fault. Maybe we should have been asking them.

Q: Did you communicate directly with the AFL-CIO on the personnel issues at your initiative?

HILBURN: Yes, I did.

Q: Was it with Lane Kirkland's office?

HILBURN: Most likely it would have been, at my level, with the director of the international affairs department or somebody in international affairs.

Q: Would it have been Gray?

HILBURN: In the last year of my tenure in DRL, the AFL-CIO was pretty riveted on its own internal politics with its ultimately successful challenge to Kirkland's leadership. Then that challenge, having been successful, there was a certain breaking in period and months of uncertainty, as I recall, about how they were going to deal with international issues, who would deal with international issues. Ultimately, of course, Barbara Shaler was appointed. That was happening just about the time I was leaving.

Q: Did Chuck Gray move somewhere else?

HILBURN: Chuck was, I think, put in a special advisor position because he was elected in his own right as the AFL-CIO representative of the ILO governing body. In other words, that was something he held independent of his personal position. I think there were other things like that involving Chuck that kept him on as a special advisor.

Q: Did John Sweeney make any representations at the State Department?

HILBURN: John Sweeney came to the Department one time shortly after his election in February or March of 1996, because he was elected in the last quarter of 1995.

Q: Maybe it was October or so.

HILBURN: John Sweeney and some of his staff came over to meet with Christopher. I sat in on the meeting. Christopher, of course, congratulated him on his victory. It was beginning to be the primary season in the Republican Party, and Sweeney made it clear that they were very interested in that and the upcoming presidential election and even the Congressional election. I think that was the first time I had heard something to the effect that they were going to spend over $30 million to see if they couldn't overturn the Republican control of Congress. That came up in the meeting. Christopher, on the other hand, was very circumspect in his political comments. General congratulatory comments from Christopher to Sweeney and Sweeney back to Christopher on his perceptions of the domestic political scene and his eagerness, as I recall it, for Dole to get the nomination were exchanged. I think he made a comment to the effect that he believed that the president would tear Dole up in debates and that sort of thing. There was maybe 10 minutes or so of conversation along those lines. Then Sweeney started reciting his brief that he'd been given.

Q: Did he include the attaché program?

HILBURN: It included a number of items. It included the trade-worker rights issue, and it included the level of funding from AID to fund the AFL-CIO contracts. There was concern expressed about the dwindling and diminishing resources available for that, there was a good deal of concern mentioned about the labor attaché program—in other words, the diminishing number of labor attachés with less emphasis on labor attaché programs. The secretary, throughout the meeting, was non-committal on all points. On the trade issue, I think he said something to the effect that he knew that Mickey Canter was very much concerned with this, so he was quite sure that the AFL-CIO's views on this matter were being considered at the highest level of U.S. trade policy formulation.

Q: It sounds like boiler plate to me!

HILBURN: On the issue of aid, he said something to the effect that we'll certainly look into that. The ILO came up with regard to the U.S. contribution. This was during the time when there was a great effort on the Hill to cut ILO funding. The Secretary said something to the effect that he was certainly sympathetic to making sure that the ILO didn't receive a disproportionate cut.

Q: A disproportionate cut, did you say? In other words, we don't hold out for five years, but only three.

HILBURN: No. He meant that if the UN account was going to be cut 30 percent then the ILO should not take anything greater than that. The ILO shouldn't take a 50 percent cut and WHO take a 10 percent cut or something like that. On the question of labor attachés, I think he said something to the effect that senior management would look at every one of these and that there wouldn't be any labor attaché abolishment unless senior management agreed to it.

HILBURN: That was all aborning as I was a-leaving. I can't really speak authoritatively about that but Jim Baker was put in charge of a study to decide what to do about the institutes and how to make them more efficient. We would decide how to cut overhead costs and to generally conform the AFL-CIO's international activities to the emphasis that Sweeney had promised during his campaign for the presidency. As you recall, Sweeney had said that his view on the international side was to make the work of the international department and the AFL-CIO's apparatus more work-place related.

Q: Does that mean affecting employment in the United States?

HILBURN: I took it to mean less concern about the traditional AFL-CIO interest in who was the leadership in a particular trade union abroad and what the status of reform was in a former-Soviet trade union structure. There was more concern about things like the social clause in international trade, and more concern about, say, a Japanese company like Bridgestone-Firestone, who was holding out and being very recalcitrant. There was concern to bring to bear the international resources of the AFL-CIO on an industry or a sector or a foreign investment in the United States that had an overseas angle to it. I remember that Bridgestone-Firestone was one of these. They were, at the time, undergoing a major strike and industrial action regarding the U.S. chemical workers at Bridgestone-Firestone somewhere in Ohio, or maybe beyond Ohio. So how do you deal with that internationally, as opposed to some of these things that had been the focus of the AFL-CIO.

Q: Would educational exchange activities and training programs and cooperatives be de-emphasized?

HILBURN: That was my impression. Another example that I thought he was talking about was Food Lion. Food Lion is a big chain that is growing out basically from the southeastern United States where it originated. The United Food and Commercial Workers were then very interested in organizing it, I think unsuccessfully at this point.

Q: It's a Belgian firm, isn't it?

HILBURN: It's controlled ultimately in Belgium by a firm Delays, which has the same logo in Belgium as in the United States. Management in the United States is American but the ultimate control is Delays. I forget the stock arrangements that make that possible.

Q: I think the management here is openly anti-union, isn't it?

HILBURN: Yes. There is an issue where there is an international angle. My impression of what Sweeney and his administration and the AFL-CIO want to do is to somehow bring to bear the international resources and apparatus of the AFL-CIO on those kinds of issues. Maybe they would have to de-emphasize some of the other more traditional things they are interested in. Some hotel out in Las Vegas is Japanese-owned, and there's a labor

dispute. How do you do that? That's what I took him to mean.

You mentioned the institutes. Their funding was being decreased but there was a funny relationship. The institutes weren't all that interested in bringing DRL in on these issues. That's my impression. They were dealing with AID. They had a long-standing relationship with AID and, by and large, it had been satisfactory. To bring in the sort of political State Department as a way of end running a difficulty with AID, I think, they thought might have been counterproductive.

Q: Didn't they see the labor attaché corps as supporting them in the parallel track and advocating on their behalf?

HILBURN: I'm speaking strictly about their funding issues. Their political judgment was that it would be counterproductive to have the State Department in the form of John Shattuck or Tony Freeman or somebody higher knocking on the heads of somebody over in AID on a funding issue, at least as long as they thought there was a chance that it could be worked out otherwise.

Q: What did you think of that assessment?

HILBURN: I always felt a little cut out.

Q: Was it a realistic approach from your point of view?

HILBURN: It was to a certain extent, at least under the Clinton administration. I felt that there was a certain sympathy, certainly, at the working level toward the AFL-CIO institute's claims and contract aspirations. There was a desire to accommodate them.

Q: What about at the State Department side?

HILBURN: No. In AID. I'm talking about people like Peter Accola who were dealing with the Labor Department. They didn't really come to us, seeking our assistance in their dealings with AID that much. What they came to us about mostly was facilitating the work of their people abroad. This took the form of cables notifying embassies that John Doe was coming out and was going to be meeting with A, B, and C in the trade union movement in a particular country. They wanted to meet with the embassy's labor officer and wanted to discuss this contract or that program and get a general appreciation from the embassy of the labor situation. We had a lot of contacts at that level.

Q: Do you think you could have assisted the AFL-CIO more if they had brought you into the process?

HILBURN: I thought there was something of a disconnect. We could have been a lot more helpful to each other but Chuck Gray was pretty hesitant, in my opinion, to involve the State Department. I am not sure that I thought there was a great deal of partnership

there. To put it bluntly, I thought there was a certain reticence on his part to deal with the Department.

Q: You put it very politely.

HILBURN: I don't know why that was but I've had others say the same thing. They felt it as well.

Q: How was it with the institute directors themselves, like Ken Hutchison?

HILBURN: I thought we had good relationships with them.

Q: Did they attempt to involve you in the funding issues?

HILBURN: We heard a lot more from them than we did from the international department.

Q: Did the international department itself take an arm's length?

HILBURN: Do you mean Paul Samogee and people like that? The AFL-CIO international department, it seemed to me, was pretty well focused on the ILO and relatively few issues. Speaking from an impressionistic memory now, I seem to have more recollection of dealing with the institutes than with the international affairs department. Other dealings with AFL-CIO included calls by out-going ambassadors. At least the more savvy ones usually made the Labor Department or the AFL-CIO an item on their consultation list.

Q: With whom did they want to consult mostly?

HILBURN: They wanted to call on Lanker. There was a certain amount of that kind of work.

Q: Did he receive most of them?

HILBURN: Yes. He received most of them.

Q: Did they call on Tom Donohue?

HILBURN: He did not receive so many although I do remember him, on occasion, sitting in. They usually were with Lane Kirkland. He was attended by, infrequently, Donohue but always by Chuck Gray and maybe one or two others from the international affairs department. Senior levels of the State Department were interested in calling on Kirkland. I accompanied Richard Moose, for example, when he was undersecretary for management, on a call to Kirkland. Again, this was recognition, to which I have referred several times, of the role of the AFL-CIO and its potential impact on the State

Department decision making.

Q: Did they ever actually have any serious problems with the State Department?

HILBURN: Kirkland really reamed out Moose on certain points.

Q: What was the issue?

HILBURN: It was on the issue of labor attachés. He recalled certain ambassadors that were going out. In extremely eschatological language, he said he could tell from the very beginning that they didn't have any interest in the program, and they were certainly not going to do anything to further the interests of labor diplomacy and international labor issues.

Q: Did he name names?

HILBURN: He did one. I guess I could do it for the historical record. Kirkland was extremely unhappy with Gardner who had been assigned to Spain. This is the same Gardner that at one point had been ambassador to Italy. He was eschatological in his evaluation of him. Moose gave an undertaking at that meeting that there certainly wouldn't be any labor attaché position abolished without consultations with the AFL-CIO. That along with the Secretary's pledge to take a look at them individually never translated into personal action. They were just tossed off by the personnel bureaucracy for the most part. Well, the Secretary has to see these things. There are larger issues here, I guess. We've got to get down to 500 positions in Europe and so forth. We dutifully trotted out those comments though. My memorandum of conversation about the Secretary's meeting with Sweeney was a well-thumbed document. It was frayed at the edges and tattered in the battle.

Q: That brings us up to the last two years in Washington. Were they frustrating, maybe?

HILBURN: They were very frustrating and devoted to these endlessly unsuccessful resource battles with only the most spotty and wildly improbable successes.

Q: This crowded out the more issues-oriented approach that would have been nice in the best of all possible worlds?

HILBURN: Yes, it did, plus the fact that we just didn't have a staff that was big enough or qualified enough. I felt Alden was very, very good at international worker rights. We could rely on him absolutely. I would take his advice absolutely on issues involving the GSP program and what our stand ought to be. He was ably seconded by Ed Sutto who did other things as well.

Q: What did Ed Sutto do in the labor field?

HILBURN: He was essentially the desk officer, and he backed up Alden on worker rights issues. He took the lead on worker rights issues in Latin America as that was an area where he had personal experience and he was familiar with the territory there. Alden was familiar with primarily the Asian and African territory. Sutto was the person we looked to to respond to requests from labor attachés, to be the desk officer type person, to read the mail, to read the cables, and to see what action was required that was being requested by labor attachés and to respond.

Q: And would he flag any potential problems for you and Alden?

HILBURN: Yes, Gare Smith and he did that.

Q: You haven't mentioned Gare Smith very much. He came in somewhere in there.

HILBURN: My impression is that while I was acting deputy assistant secretary, Shattuck wanted me to just keep these issues in hand and refer to him as necessary but try to keep it as seldom as possible. At the same time, he didn't think that the DS position as it had come to him with Tony and now with me was broad gauged enough. Essentially, he wanted a utility infielder. He wanted an assistant who could handle any number of issues, and he didn't think that I fit that bill. I asked, for example, to be considered for permanent investiture as the deputy assistant secretary, and he promised, of course, that he would consider me for it. But ultimately, he decided he wanted Gare Smith who had been a foreign policy advisor on Senator Kennedy's staff and then, I think, had become the foreign policy advisor on Kennedy's staff with the departure of his superior on the staff for some period of time. It was relatively short but I don't remember how long. After about a year or less, he was finally brought on as the deputy assistant secretary. I reverted back to the office director. By then, the office had become a different sort of thing with not only labor but other functions.

Q: Did Gare become the utility infielder?

HILBURN: Yes. Shattuck wanted Gare to do things like deal with American Indians who were clamoring for a certain human rights convention on indigenous peoples that was working its way through the human rights mission in Geneva. He wanted him to be the DRL's representative on the inter-governmental councils and meetings that were dealing with this business code. He wanted him to sort of take charge of China, and to be, in a way, his number one advisor on the human rights situation in China.

Q: So Gare was responsible not just for worker rights but for human rights as well?

HILBURN: He effected this decision by bringing another office under his supervision in addition to our office and other people. He brought in the office in DRL that deals with multilateral affairs. There's bilateral human rights and there's multilateral human rights. Multilateral human rights dealt with the UN agencies primarily, particularly the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Gare became the supervisor and assistant secretary for

that office as well and has just recently spent six weeks out in Geneva being the senior DRL person on the delegation to the annual six-weeks Human Rights Commission meeting dealing with a wide variety of human rights issues such as our unsuccessful efforts, as you know, to get some sort of resolution on China. Burma, I think, came up, and others. It was the general gamut of human rights issues that came up in that forum.

Q: What about the labor side? Did Gare take an active interest?

HILBURN: Gare was interested in labor. I wouldn't want to short change Gare in any way. He was interested in it but he had a lot of other things that Shattuck was asking him to do.

Q: Did he come with a background in labor?

HILBURN: Not that I know of.

Q: So he really was a general utility person who picked up the labor portfolio as well and listened to you reasonably well?

HILBURN: Yes. Gare was a great boss. He was prepared to consider and accept my advice on virtually every case I can think of. He signed the memos that I had written in his name and read or recited the talking points that I prepared. He gave full faith and credit to our office.

Q: He certainly had very nice things to say about you at the labor attaché luncheon on Foreign Service Day.

HILBURN: It was very embarrassing. He had a lot of other fish to fry. He often remarked about how thinly he felt himself spread and even, on occasion, he was apologetic for not being able to devote as much time as he felt was warranted to labor issues. The ultimate result of this re-organization has been to take the labor function from the full-time attention of a special assistant to the secretary, to a DAS and, then, to a bureau. One might even use the analogy of a distant star in a faraway galaxy.

Q: It sounds very poetic, I must say.

HILBURN: Then, a further evolution in the last few years has been that the full time attention on labor issues has gone from SIL to DAS to an office director then, with the further addition of functions, to the office to even, you might say. I am afraid that's the trajectory.

Q: What about the labor advisors in the other bureaus?

HILBURN: They have virtually disappeared. Only Latin America and Africa had them. Asia had a person whose portfolio included labor. Human rights and the UN were also a

part of his portfolio.

Q: Is Bruce Melkin still there?

HILBURN: He's in EUR. They didn't even have the responsibility in one person. It was diffuse. We had a name we called.

Q: It makes it difficult.

HILBURN: At NEA it was the same way. These were people in regional affairs offices that by tradition or otherwise had just been given the labor to the extent that it came up. There was no regional labor attaché network to speak of.

Q: Had that disintegrated by the time you arrived?

HILBURN: We tried to rejuvenate it to a certain extent. Our advice to Gare was that he should meet with these people, whoever they were or whatever their titles. They were the people that were designated to whatever degree, and we should be meeting with them on a regular basis but those kinds of things defaulted to daily exigencies.

Q: Ten years ago, Tony used to meet with all the labor advisors.

HILBURN: One can't be too critical about failing to meet those kinds of self-imposed requirements, particularly when there's nothing urgent that month to discuss, so you let it go. There was a lot of contact between DRL and ILO over the ILO. That was one place where there was an active consultation.

Q: You had a person designated in ILO, didn't you?

HILBURN: There's an ILO desk officer. It is a very strange sort of arrangement. Tony and then I and then Gare were the delegates to the ILO conference. Day to day responsibility for the ILO is lodged in IO, and they control the money. They have the contribution.

Q: Who was the desk officer?

HILBURN: It was Betsy Anderson. She was very capable. She was a very good person to deal with. Also Melinda Kimble who was her supervisor and Steve Blodgett who was her direct supervisor. Melinda Kimble dealt with me and Gare when those issues came up at that level. She was very good, although there was always the fear at DRL that IO would do us in when push came to shove on the amount of money available for paying the contribution to the ILO. There was a certain suspiciousness attached to IO.

Q: How did it turn out in the end?

HILBURN: In the end, it turned out okay.

Q: Did you get your allocation?

HILBURN: We weren't disadvantaged, as I recall.

Q: Disproportionately?

HILBURN: Disproportionately, yes. AFL-CIO and DOL were always suspicious that Melinda was going to do them in or IO, to put it more institutionally. The ILO was not the favorite of the Department. The WHO has a lot better press. It's out there vaccinating infants and is seen to be doing that sort of highly visible, highly relatable kind of work, whereas the ILO is a much more diffuse, more hard to dramatize kind of organization.

Q: Is that true even on some issue like child labor?

HILBURN: Child labor is a little different. That may be changing as the child labor issue becomes more salient. The child labor issue was only beginning to take on a certain impetus while I was there. Toward the end of my tour it was. That was something that was new. That sort of thing happened toward the end of my tour.

Q: Is that what gave it the impetus, do you think?

HILBURN: I guess that was the big story.

Q: What about the Labor Department's efforts over the last three years or so?

HILBURN: Their studies undoubtedly helped. There was a good deal of activity in the NGO community on child labor issues. I think they must have seen that this was potentially a highly dramatic situation.

Q: The evidence is pretty compelling that there were a lot of very serious abuses going on out there.

HILBURN: It was a worker right that would be hard to argue with.

Q: Yes, I certainly agree with you.

HILBURN: You might find yourself really having a bunch of glazed-over eyes if you talked about freedom of association and that sort of thing. If you could bring in pictures of children choking on rugs, it was a pretty compelling thing. There was a good deal of activity on the Hill, too, as you recall. And there was testimony from people in Latin America. There was the murder, whether or not it was related to his child labor work, of the Pakistani child labor activist. It was a child who had really fled a sweat shop and then was murdered on his bicycle. I think that's moving along. I think that's something that

perhaps the office can build on to buttress its *raison d'être*, which is, of course, questioned. I don't mean the office so much but the program. Anyway, that's my life.

Q: Any final comments on the program?

HILBURN: I certainly don't have any regrets about it. I enjoyed my work, and I count it a great plus to have been able to do it. There was a little going-away lunch for me at one point, and Tony Freeman said, "What do you look back on and think of as the greatest thing you did?" Of course, in the bureaucracy, *functionnaire*, as the French call them, don't do things on their own. They occupy a position, and we carry our little grain of sand to build whatever it is that's under construction.

Q: You're talking about a sand castle before the waves come.

HILBURN: If I were looking back over the years of labor work, I would take most pride in that constellation of efforts during the mid- to late 1980s that dealt with Poland and solidarity. That was when I was at the ILO, and that's when I was working on ILO affairs and heading up the effort to pull together an American contribution to the Commission of Inquiries. It was all very esoteric, and it's extremely boring, I'm sure, to outsiders. But anyway, I did feel like I helped make a little contribution there. Of course, the solidarity issue ties into huge, historical, epic-making developments, so there I can say that I was a little bit tied to the solidarity issue and the solidarity issue was tied to the entire question of the stability of the old Soviet empire and, ultimately, its downfall.

Q: Of course, American labor had a big role to play in the solidarity chapter as well.

HILBURN: What I should have said the other day at the luncheon when they were presenting me with that very nice plaque was that I didn't know that I would ever get rewarded for just doing my duty. I've always been motivated by a sense of duty. I just found myself in various jobs and tried to do my duty.

Q: I think we all try to do our duty.

HILBURN: I don't know that any special recognition is warranted for that.

Q: I think you did very well.

HILBURN: I consider myself a Stoic in the classic Roman sense.

Q: You stand there until the bitter end, as the positions are cut.

HILBURN: Defend, if possible, and do the duty that falls to your lot.

Q: Any comments on your future plans, now that you are retired from the Foreign Service?

HILBURN: I don't have any particular plans. I am anxiously awaiting the net bottom line of my first annuity check. I think I have an idea of how much it will be but I could be mistaken. I could be in for a rude surprise.

Q: I am sure your wife is interested, too. Do you plan on staying in the Washington area?

HILBURN: We'll stay here at least indefinitely to see how the finances go. I'm off to tell people about what kinds of opportunities can come their way by following the Foreign Service. I'm also off to Vienna at the end of this month for an interview for a job as Secretary General of CARE International, which would be quite exciting. It is headquartered in Brussels.

Q: You'd be going home, almost.

HILBURN: I would be going back to a city we enjoyed very much and a milieu that I enjoyed very much. Much of the financing for CARE International comes from EU, so I'll be going out there next week to do this interview.

Q: Well, we wish you luck. I certainly want to thank you, Paul, for taking time to give us this interview.

End of interview