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

M. GORDON JONES

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not completed or edited by Mr. Jones.]

Q: When and where were you born?

JONES: Los Angeles, California. September 13, 1943.

Q: Where in Los Angeles?

JONES: South Gate Hospital and my parents were living, at the time, in San Gabriel.

Q: On your father's side, what is the background as far back as you know?

JONES: My dad was from the old west. The family having scootered across sort of a generation at a time from Texas to New Mexico to Arizona and he was born in Globe, Arizona. The family was very much into copper mining. He was born in Globe and went to the University of Arizona in Tucson and got his BA in accountancy. He loathed accountancy and business in general. In fact he was an artist and quite a good one. Never could quite figure out how to make a living from it. My mom was born in Chicago, Illinois. She started coming to Arizona in the early thirties. Among other things, she did some graduate work up in Flagstaff. Then wound up teaching school in Globe. They met and courted there. And within a year of meeting, they eloped for California where a fair amount of the family had kind of moved on. As I say, the next generation was heading for California. They eloped in 1940, it was pre war. So I think 1940. My dad when the war came was ready to enlist, but he had been working at Thompson Products, a manufacturer with a lot of linkages into aircraft business. So when the war effort really cranked up he was preparing to enlist. By old family legends, the business told him that if he did enlist, he would, by god, be in the same chair with a uniform on and they would keep him there for the rest of the war. He did not serve except he did the same job as if he had enlisted.

Q: With your family coming from Arizona and all, were you getting any depression stories?

JONES: Well, yeah, my uncle was a banker. They hung back a bit, still in New Mexico. His bank was run on, like all of them. Some of them managed to keep on paying out their depositors as long as they could liquidate stuff and that is what happened with my uncle's bank. As a consequence it eventually went under, but supposedly they saved as many depositors as they could. Nice story. The New Mexico period in the family was kind of wild. We were in Lincoln County and that is where the Joneses met the Gordons actually. My grandparent's generation, there were a number of Gordon girls who married a number of Gordon boys. But one of the Jones boys ran with Billy the Kid, and we were in the Lincoln County war on the side of a murdered English remittance man. Which is amusing because my son-in-law is named Tunstall as well. It is more curious because his name is Gordon Tunstall. The Gordon does not relate to anyone in his family and apparently related to the remittance man as far as we can tell. But it's an odd quirk.

Q: How long did you all live in the Los Angeles area, San Gabriel?

JONES: Through the war and after the war. My dad was not happy working in business, his brother-in-law, Carl Merrick, my uncle, had a big ranch in Hemet, due east of Los Angeles, about 60 miles and in Riverside County. So he said to my dad, "Since the war is over why don't you go out and see if you cannot make this damn ranch do something." He was a top executive with Southern California gas so my dad did that and found it was rewarding work, which he very much enjoyed, and so for the rest of his life he ran it in Hemet.

Q: What kind of ranch was it?

JONES: Initially it was apricots, walnuts, and some field crops. They gradually realized that the future was not apricots and walnuts so they wound up taking them out and making it all field crops. The apricots were a lovely boyhood memory for me because we used to dry them in situ, which is a wonderfully colorful process where you burn sulfur in these wooden sheds. You cut the apricots in half and you put them on wooden flats and then you burn sulfur. It is a wild scene. And I remember it. It is this image of this wonderful smoke and people running around doing all the stuff. We used braceros from Mexico to do it, in those days. It was a rather interesting thing to remember from my childhood.

Q: As a kid, it is basically Hemet, where you remember?

JONES: Sort of. But then my dad died. He contracted very severe cancer, sarcoma, and within about six months of detecting it and two or three gruesome operations. He must have been in horrible pain. He passed away in August of '53. I was 10. I had three brothers and my mom. Her impulse was to try to get her teaching credential back and somehow that spelled Arizona. So she took us all off to Tempe where she went to ASU and got her teaching credential back and all the credits. But then she came right back to Hemet after that. She did not really like Phoenix.

Q: Let's talk about Hemet. What was Hemet like?

JONES: Oh, it was a wonderful little town that had grown up in the 1870's-1880's initially as an obscure resort because there are hot springs. There's a mountain community at Idyllwild which is quite close by, and it developed a pretty nice turn of the century small town with lots of Midwestern input. I mean lots of architecture from the time is Midwestern. Our ranch house is very Midwestern.

Q: One forgets that California at that time was really Midwestern. I remember Long Beach used to have Iowa picnics and it was chock-a-block full of Iowa farmers.

JONES: Right. My wife's family is from Iowa. They used to go to the Iowa picnics in Long Beach annually. This would have been the 60's.

Q: I remember it going back into the 30's. How about growing up as a kid at Hemet?

JONES: It was interesting. I was just back there a couple of weeks ago. My brother has moved back there in his retirement. He had been up in the bay area for twenty something odd years and he and his wife have now moved down to Hemet. And so I went there for three or four days looking around at the old haunt. Hemet is in fact now a big bedroom community, really outlying. So this is exurbia incarnate but there were definitely a couple things that conjured up the old memories. One of them was the old ranch house is still there, even though it is in the middle of a big sub-division. It is actually quite attractive and my brother says that there is some sense in the community that it is an historic

building and should be preserved while still in private hands and it has been fixed up quite nicely actually. Decades ago it was falling apart. But now it looks rather elegant.

Q: Were you pretty much a ranch kid or were you a little town kid?

JONES: Well we were in it, an incorporated city. I don't know why they cast their net over our farm land but they did. Pretty sure it was in city limits. But to get to school, it was a long walk to the bus station. It was about half mile away. We weren't otherwise too tied in to the city. There were neighbor kids a quarter of a mile away and that was about the closest and we did not really like them. We did not have a lot of neighbors that we were really close with although we had relatives again about quarter or half a mile away. My grandmother and grandfather before they passed away, which was the same year as my dad, they lived by some foot hills about a quarter of a mile away. The uncle who had lost the bank in the 30's had a ranch that was further outlying and another uncle had one up in the hills on the other side. So it was a fairly family place. Most of my memories go back to family kinds of events, extended family in this case.

Q: When you went back to Tempe where Arizona State is located, how long were you there?

JONES: May have a been a little less than a semester. I think she almost immediately got the classes knocked off that she needed for a credential and she realized that she could do it in California. So I think it might have been September '53. I can't remember if we returned in the winter or the fall or spring.

Q: So that was an excursion?

JONES: Six months, plus or minus.

Q: You went back to Hemet?

JONES: Yes, back to Hemet. She got a job in the school system and she promptly discovered that she did not like teaching. So she had another career from her past, which was social work and so she jumped from the teaching system into the county welfare department. She became a case officer and spent the rest of her career, I think like twenty years, happy doing particularly assistance for the blind and that sort of thing.

Q: How did you find the Hemet school system? I'm talking before high school.

JONES: Junior high school is a vivid memory. Well I didn't much like it as a matter of fact because it was still pretty rural based and the kids were rough and rowdy. We came from a ranch too, but we hadn't gotten that rough and rowdy. It bugged me a bit. I was the oldest. My brothers also didn't particularly love it. I think that was all input to my mother who didn't like warm weather. So she found another welfare department which was up the coast in San Luis Obispo. This was quite a jump for us because we were very much into a family scene.

Q: When was that?

JONES: It would have been my freshman year so that was must have been'57. I graduated in '61, so yeah that's about right. We were in San Luis Obispo which was quite the opposite. It's a small town but very nice and upscale and great kids and schools.

Q: But sticking to Hemet, as a kid, were you much of a reader?

JONES: Yes.

Q: Where'd you get your books?

JONES: Well, the local library was terrific and we bought a few. My parents had a fair collection of their own but we read all that. I remember the Funk and Wagnall Encyclopedia for some reason.

Q: As a kid in this period, were there some books that stick out in your mind that really grab you?

JONES: I was really into science fiction from very young from like 5th or 6th grade. I started reading adult science fiction. I really liked that a lot.

Q: There were these pulp magazines.

JONES: I read the name authors: Asimov, Bradbury. That was my first enthusiasm.

Q: How about school, were there any classes you liked and any classes you didn't like?

JONES: I hated physical education. To this day, I cannot bear to go to a gymnasium and exercise. I'll do the occasional exercises but not in the gym. I just hated that. I liked all the basic courses. I was under the weird notion that I was going to become an engineer like my mom's brother who was in the LA area and worked for North American Aircraft. I wound up the summer after my senior year working in an apprentice job in the warehouse of North American for the summer. It was a nice way to pick up some cash. I lived with my uncle. So I thought I wanted to be an engineer and possibly an aeronautical engineer. A year at Cornell's engineering school was all it took for me to know that I wasn't any kind of engineer. Back to the favorite subjects, I always did well in math and basically liked math but then I assumed that I was supposed to because that was what engineering was supposed to build on. Actually, I wasn't so gifted in math. I could do differential equations but it did not appeal to me ever. It just, intellectually, was off in a too abstract a sphere and I wasn't particularly good at real abstract.

Q: How about softer subjects, in reading or interests were you into literature or history or something?

JONES: Those things I was good at and enjoyed and felt that they were nice things to study. But then Sputnik happened.

Q: Around '57 I think.

JONES: Exactly. My vague sense was suddenly reinforced by the notion that, yeah, we were going to compete with the Ruskies and so I should get my tail in gear and get into school and get that damn engineering degree and build jet fighters.

Q: Where did your family fit politically?

JONES: Actually they were a little of both. My dad had been associated at one point with Barry Goldwater in Arizona back in the late 30's and I don't have much detail on that. I know he was involved in one political campaign of Goldwater's.

Q: Goldwater being a Republican and actually a Republican Presidential Candidate at one point.

JONES: Family legend goes that I guess Barry was governor at the time and I understand that he named my dad to the magazine staff of Arizona Highways and so my dad got to gauge his arts interest. There is that little bit of politics. My mom was a life-long liberal. That said, she was also a Catholic. My dad was not a Catholic. The Church was incredibly rough on her in the way that they used to be that if you cannot drag your husband kicking and screaming into the church then your kids are bastards in effect. The local padres were pretty piercing.

Q: It is hard to tell to back to that era. Now were you a Catholic?

JONES: I was baptized which actually came in handy much later. My second wife, my current wife, is a Catholic. We met and we wanted to get married in Rome and it was definitely part of her program to get married in the church and preferably in a lovely Roman Catholic church, which we did. We were able to do that on the ridiculous technicality that a baptized Catholic who married outside the church, who divorces outside the church, who then wants to marry a daughter of the church is welcome back with open arms and may do so. Under no other circumstances may a divorced person marry in the Catholic church.

Q: Was the church an important part of your life?

JONES: No. My mom was being given unholy grief by her local padres who were essentially saying, lady you are entering into sin, you are married to a guy and producing children who aren't really… your pushing it here. They essentially showed her the door and that was an either this or that. She wasn't going to ask my very agnostic father to jump into the Catholic Church. I don't think they really even thought about it much. But anyways, from then on she was somewhat of an outcast in her own mind. She tried a lot of the Protestant denominations, never getting any satisfaction out of any of them. I

remember we went to the Presbyterians, to the Methodists to Christian Sciences at several points. It was kind of sad because she really was at heart a Catholic.

Q: Did it have a religious background because some of these places where Midwestern congregations settled and become very important?

JONES: I know Hemet had all those congregations. I have always wondered where the name came from. It almost sounds religious.

Q: Sounds biblical.

JONES: So there must have been some of that but I'm not aware of it. It's not like Redlands or some of the Mormon based communities. It was a little inner denomination Protestant. But Methodist were big, the Presbyterians were big, Lutherans were big like that.

Q: So you moved up to San Luis Obispo when you were thirteen.

JONES: By the way it's pronounced by San Luis Obispians with the "s" because everybody in the world kind of likes to forget that California was colonized by the Spaniards, not the French, and I had even heard it on national network news. San Luis Obispo.

Q: What was it like for a kid?

JONES: A very sophisticated place. It had the big state college, California Poly Tech, which is a really dominate force in a small town. It was already in my day quite large and I think the student body then might have been six to eight thousand. It is now in the twenty five thousand zone. So it really was a kind of its business, plus that and being an old mission town because it is one of the Serra Missions. One of the authentic ones I must say, that survived undestroyed as a parish church. Many of them went out of business and you can see a little rubble in a plowed field today. But it's a really nice little mission, very charming and the town has a lot of charm and it has some tourism. It's a fairly big thing. It's close to the coast. Morro Bay is one town up going up highway one. They get a lot of tourism. So tourism is a big thing but it's just a very slick little town.

Q: By this time you had started high school?

JONES: Yeah, yeah.

Q: What was your high school like?

JONES: Very nice, very elegant. There was a really heavy emphasis on academics. There was a really solid sense of community involvement and all the classic things: the football season, the homecoming. It was very nice. I was much happier and I fit in much better there. I was kind of academically oriented already and while that wasn't particularly

appreciated in Hemet, it clearly was in San Luis Obispo.

Q: At high school, can you think of any teachers who were sort of influential?

JONES: Yes. There was Miss Cooley who was a marvelous influence. She was mainly the guidance counselor. She was mainly responsible, in her own mind anyway, for getting as many San Luis Obispo students into the Ivy League as she could. I mean she did. She had lots of access to them and she got me a wonderful scholarship to Cornell to go learn how to design jet fighters and she really sold it. I was clearly one of the show students. She would get like a dozen in and that was her whole beyond and all. A good friend of mine who is also in the Foreign Service, Doug Jones. He had his life altered because she was the fostering person for a student exchange program with Germany. One particular school in Stuttgart. So he got sent off to Stuttgart by her. So these young moldable but utterly naïve and unsophisticated kids were getting sent around the world by Miss Cooley.

Q: This is why I like to get these names mentioned because it's a little bit of immortality. These teachers are important and maybe nowhere else but where this thing will eventually go on to the Library of Congress Website and Miss Cooley will be there.

JONES: I'm sure many people have conjured her up for various memoires because she was more than just a teacher or administrator.

Q: What were your activities that you were mainly interested in?

JONES: I still wasn't into sports. I got quite involved in student government. I was Vice President of the senior class. I was in various interscholastic programs that brought people meeting in inter-schools kind of thing, student government associations and so I did a lot of that. I was a stamp collector.

Q: What was the dating situation?

JONES: I was socially engaged. I certainly hadn't been much in Hemet. I had a girlfriend through part of my senior year I remember. Although it might have been that mutual thing of gosh we gotta have somebody for the senior prom so let's see if we are serious long enough ahead of the senior prom to be a couple and so I remember that Sharon and I were that. But we weren't much else actually. There was quite a social scene.

Q: This was from '57 to?

JONES: '61

Q: '61. You were a young kid and all but did the Kennedy-Nixon campaign engage you? It did many young people.

JONES: Yeah, I seem to remember that my mother was really in to it. But I don't remember Kennedy as a particularly formative person. It's kind of funny, I wasn't really

political as a kid. I was aware of it but I wasn't so personally engaged in it.

Q: How about the International scene?

JONES: One of the things that Miss Cooley arranged to do was to make sure that the person in question had full grounding in German before they went. We didn't have a German program in high school per se but the individuals who were selected the previous year got a huge cram course in German. I was aware of my friend Doug doing all this and I suddenly was aware, wow, languages have a purpose. I had studied Latin in junior high and I took French in high school. Mostly academic exercises, but this friend of mine was suddenly very involved in German because he was going to have to defend himself. That would be my first serious thinking about international things that might affect me, though I wasn't thinking in terms of actually ever living or working overseas.

Q: Did ethnicity or race or anything intrude in Hemet or in San Luis Obispo or not?

JONES: Hemet, yeah because we were certainly aware of Mexicans. We used the Bracero Program for labor for the apricot season particularly. Oh, and we had some Indians of course in Hemet. That was the other thing that was kind of interesting. We had Indians in school and that was sort of a difference. They were treated pretty well in Hemet. These coast Indians, there were reminiscences all over the place. I don't know if you noticed in the fires here that several Indian reservations were affected by it. It was interesting. We had our little Soboba Indian reservation in the vicinity. Their kids came to school and so that was a little bit of a factor. We had practically no black students as I recall and very few in San Luis Obispo, which as I said was a very cosmopolitan place. It wasn't a big factor.

Q: What about Asian?

JONES: I can think of a couple of Asian kids in class. It wasn't a big deal. And San Luis had its historic China Town which consisted of two stores by the time we were there. But there were a couple of Chinese kids or kids with Chinese ancestry because I am sure that they were at least
three or four generations in the state.

Q: You got a nice scholarship to Cornell. Was this with great pleasure? How did you feel about this?

JONES: The way high school works is you find niches where you're appreciated. Here was a rather large niche and here I was able get this presumably huge thing. It was $3,000, which was a lot of money at the time. That paid for tuition and a fair chunk of room and board because my family wasn't very well off actually. The other parts of it that weren't covered by the scholarship, my mom had to very much scramble to get the money for airfares and for Christmas vacation airfare and clothes and a lot of stuff that certainly wasn't covered. And then the sad thing is that I discovered that I was not cut out for engineering and I was suddenly doing only average. I was getting C's, which I had never

gotten in my life and that was by dint of doing some really hard work. Also, I was an innocent, to some degree, abroad. I was really startled by the East. The East for a West Coast kid was a bit of a change. The houses were different and a fair number of my fellow students were from prep schools and things like that. I had no idea what a prep school was. The dating scene was very different from California where it was pretty casual. At Cornell it was very, very, competitive. I mean getting the right girl for the right weekend was a very big deal and that was all kind of overwhelming. And then snow. I had never really lived in snow and western New York is three feet of snow for two months of the year. That was a jolt. By the time I was discovering that I was getting lousy grades and just not altogether fitting in, I wanted one thing and one thing only, to get back to California. By early spring I was determined to forget that. So I went back to California because I was not beaten but humbled a little. I think that was a formative influence having been promoted actively as the bright young guy and then I'm just the average guy. That was a little startling. And the funny thing is that I sent off a letter looking for a summer job to a local civil engineering firm in San Luis Obispo because my brother was dating the daughter of one of the owners. So I set off this thing, asking for an engineering type job like survey work. On the strength of my Cornell letterhead, the company later told me that they had been so impressed. They had never gotten a letter from the East on university letterhead. They hired me. So I come home feeling lousy about stuff and I get hired and I immediately buy a car, which is sine-qua-non in California. I had not really thought what I was going to do with my next year to the extent that I thought that I was vaguely still interested in engineering. So I wound up going to Cal Poly, just there locally. It was a non-decision. It was there and then it turned out that I didn't just have a summer job but I had a job any time I wanted. They liked me and I liked them and it was a lot better than frying hamburgers.

Q: What were you doing?

JONES: Well I did some of the survey team work and then I found out that I was pretty good in the office. I had the basic drafting and stuff and I tended to be kind of an expeditor in the office and they really appreciated that. There would be these dogs of projects that no one seemed to be able to finish up and I could take them and finish them up where they could be taken and presented to clients and the bill paid. So they liked me for that. We kept on for the next three years. I would work full time every summer and whatever I could spare from my time at CAL-Poly, which kind of blocked me from even thinking about going to some other school.

Q: Lets talk about Cal Poly a bit. What was it?

JONES: Cal Poly was one of these, like Texas A&M, one of these agriculture and mechanics school. The idea being that you got these two hands-on businesses of agriculture on one side and engineering, machine building on the other and in some way they were compatible. Or at least they were to be hived off and put in that particular context. And so Cal Poly, by the time I was there, had one of the best engineering schools in California. It had one of the premiere agricultural faculties, second only to Cal (University of California at Berkeley)… but very good. My initial thought was just to

stay in school until I figured out what I was doing and I must have started in humanities. There was a humanities department and I basically took classes in that area and pretty much liked them. I liked literature. I liked poli-sci and history and economics, that all came easily and I was back to getting my A's and occasionally A+. My ego was definitely back in shape and I could afford a car. Suddenly I went from being a poor and not well integrated student on the east coast to an absolute paragon of the West Coast student existence. I had a lot of fun. I got into student government even though I didn't have a lot of time there because of engineering work but I did stuff, extracurricular. Very active in dating, had a couple of serious girlfriends.

Q: What was the dating pattern at that time? You know it changes, were you trying to go steady or were you playing the field?

JONES: I was looking for more steady than I was finding. I was finding interesting girls who wanted to date for a while and make out to an extent and I remember one particular girl. I was totally smitten with Betsey. She was an absolutely wonderful person but unfortunately she had a football player friend. He was in and out of her life. She was too bright for him and she needed more than the football player but she wanted the image of being a girlfriend of a football player. I was her serious boyfriend and then the football player could kind of claim her for the weekend but that was one way that went. It was a wonderful time. I was still living at home at that point. After a year of living at Cornell I was suddenly back at home.

Q: I mean this is serious stuff I mean this was not sort of a place to go between going to the mountains or to the beach or something like that.

JONES: I guess I have a lot of academic interests that really do motivate and interest me. I can't say the decision was very witting. It was very casual and it just happened but I took it pretty seriously. I got good grades again. Then when I was a senior I had a professor named Alexander. I don't remember his first name. He was in political science and he had been a Foreign Service officer, briefly. I don't know how long but for a while. He suggested the Foreign Service and told me about the exam. I was very seriously involved with a girl that I would end up marrying during senior year. We got married during Christmas time. I must have had Alexander's class in September, jumped on the idea, and got a letter into State. They put me on the list for the October exam and I went up to San Francisco and took it. I passed it. I think I shocked Alexander more than I even shocked myself. I went through all the clearances. By February the oral was on, so I went back up to San Francisco and damn if I didn't pass the oral.

Q: Do you recall any questions on the oral?

JONES: Sure, some of them. There were law suits back in the seventies and into the eighties as I recall. Kind of alleging that there had been some deceptive practices by the oral panelists and I was essentially involved in that in a sense. I realized afterwards. They had a really intriguing technique they thought was a test of not just knowledge but also of temperament. They would find out through their questioning what you were particularly

interested in. They would get you all set up. They would learn what you really want to talk about and then they would get you started on the key question and cut you off and see how you handled it. So in my case they chose literature. And they said, let's just imagine you're in a job overseas and you're called upon to give a lecture on American literature and let's just say as a prop you use a map, which we just happen to have here. Why don't you stand by the map and just extemporaneously give us a lecture on American literature pointing out people from various regions. Well I was thrilled because at the time I really could have given them dozens of authors. I loved Steinbeck for California. Faulkner from Mississippi. I could've done it. I got about three sentences into it and they cut me off. I thought holy Christ what have I done wrong. I just took it and sat there waiting for the next question, which I guess is what you are supposed to do, but some people would say god damn it you asked me, let me finish. I guess that wasn't necessarily the right answer.

Q: While you were at Cal Poly had you been following the world? Let's see you were there from '62 to '65. Were you following, sort of, the Cold War and events or not?

JONES: Well yeah, no question. Once I realized that I was going to need to pass these two exams, I seriously picked up Time Magazine every week to sort of get myself a little more up and running and it was enough to do the trick. You asked about Kennedy… the one thing I really remember is that day in November of '63.

Q: November 22, 1963.

JONES: As I said, I found my way back into student government a bit. A group of us were getting ready to go off that morning to LA for a meeting of the Association of Student Governments of State Universities or whatever it was called. We got the news just as we were about to hit the road. Well, we pondered what to do and we decided to go. We had the car radio on constantly all the way down the coast to LA because this was taking place at a Disneyland hotel. So we get to Disneyland Hotel, a lot of the events were immediately cancelled but we were around with like several hundred other people who had come ahead. Our hotels were already booked so we stayed. It was a Friday night and I think we stayed into Saturday. I don't think we stayed the rest of the weekend but we were around with everybody and I just remember all of those events. Yeah, national history was being made and there we were sitting around at this venue that didn't happen.

Q: The other thing that happened during part of this time… did the Cuban Missile Crisis engage you?

JONES: It did. I remember that one quite vividly. That's probably the first time I remember that I really paid attention to foreign policy as such. And that was a big deal.

Q: How much did you really know about the Foreign Service? Did you have any?

JONES: Nothing, absolutely nothing. As I said if it hadn't been for Professor Alexander and his recommendation and he had been a Foreign Service officer. That was good

enough for me. So I took the oral in February of ’65 and passed it. And then they said we’ll put you on the list here just after a few more clearances and stuff come together but we don’t know how long it will be. So I said that’s fine. I was kind of planning on Grad school and I had just gotten married. We were having a fun student married existence, kind of amusing. And so I graduate in June and within a week of graduation they notify me there was an August class and would I care to be in it. So I said yeah, great, because I was married and a little more income sounded like a nice idea. Even the notion of a career sounded like a great idea. I realized that I wasn’t going to do anything with the engineering even though I had fun working at it.

Q: Could you give a little background of your then wife and how she felt about the Foreign Service?

JONES: That’s very telling. Well she was quite young when I met her. She was seventeen, she might still have been sixteen. No she must have been seventeen. She had come as an early graduate from high school. I forgot how that happened. So she was at Poly and very young and I was the chairman, I remember, of the Social Committee of the College Union. And so I had organized an event and she volunteered to be on the preparations of things. So I thought, oh cute girl. There are some perks to this job and we started dating and we really got very involved very quickly. I later really only learned that she was kind of desperate for some sort of male support because her dad had passed away when she was fifteen and so she had kind of jumped really quickly back into academics. She was living in Santa Barbara at the time. We were really quite a quick item and it was very nice and I would go down to Santa Barbara with her and we would have good times there. In fact Betsey, the earlier girlfriend, was also from Santa Barbara. I had particularly a sense that Santa Barbara was where my love life was going to happen.

Q: Was there a draft situation there?

JONES: That’s a good one. There was not in ’65. I mean there must have been a draft, but as I recall once we were students deferred we kind of figured we were golden. And most times I think you weren’t drafted, in the early sixties. But then suddenly I was in the Foreign Service so I kind of forgot about my draft board until, as it turns out, the end of my first tour, which was Munich. And I come back to the States and this is now ’69. The draft board sends its greetings to me and at this point I was three plus years as a Foreign Service Officer. I called my Congressman personally and I asked the Foreign Service if there was anything they could do for me with this fact that I got a draft notice. They said, no, but we can put you on leave, indefinite leave and then your job’s safe and you’ll get it back. I wasn’t sure that I wanted to do that and so I called my Congressman. I said I am a Foreign Service Officer and I’ve got a three plus year investment in this career. I’m not really sure that I want to go off and interrupt it and essentially lose my momentum in it and he sent a letter to the draft board I guess. They gave me some other classification. So I did not serve.

Q: Let’s go to coming to Washington, what was your basic officer (A100) course like? Can you characterize it?

JONES: Yeah. That's a formative thing isn't it? One of those things you really look back on. Yeah, I kept track for a long time a lot of my colleagues. One of whom became a mass murderer, Brad Bishop. Have they ever found him? No.

Q: When I was Consul General in Naples they talked about maybe he was floating around there.

JONES: I had a tour in Rome just about that point, and one of my A100 colleagues was in Rome. She was tracking it herself just out of personal interest; so she filled me in in detail all about this guy.

Q: Anybody who is interested can look up Bradford Bishop who killed his family off and disappeared in North Carolina and there were so called sightings. Anyways, it was a very interesting case. Other than the psychotic break how was your class?

JONES: How was my class? It was good. My wife and I were young marrieds and there were quite a few young marrieds in the class. In fact, I think that was one of those things the oral panel had taken very seriously. Here I was a student leader quote unquote and married and showing all these signs of seriousness. Again I was just falling from one thing into another thing. It looked fairly persuasive. We got an apartment over here just off Mass. Avenue. We did a lot of entertaining among the people in the class to get together for this and that, all trying to figure out what the hell we had got ourselves into and it was all a really good thing. And I remember our first assignment business that always comes up in the course. They really used to lay hands on and try to get you to say what you wanted to do and so forth. I was still really caught up in the Kennedy thing by then and it had still been '65 and so I said I wanted to go to Africa.

Q: Of course Africa was THE place during the early 60's because of the coming of independence.

JONES: Exactly, I mean where were we confronting the Communists? In Africa. In fact, one of my more interesting Foreign Service connections much, much later was a former Soviet diplomat, a Russian who was my opposite number in the Russian embassy in Brasilia in the early 90's. He had just come from being Shevardnadze's aide covering Southern Africa. They were trying to do what the Russians in fact did do after the collapse of the USSR, trying to actually make some peace in places that they had previously not been interested in peace. Shevardnadze was a fascinating character. Anyway, he told me a lot about this because it was also the brand new day for their service. They could suddenly talk to the Americans. My old Africa interests suddenly kind of got flushed out. So I was interested in Africa and they said oh, no, we really need some detail. We really want to know where you want to go. Well I had no clue. I said let me get back to you. So I went over to the African Bureau. I did a little snooping and I found out that there were three junior officer positions coming available: Addis, Tenerife, and Lomé. I thought okay cool. They want to know where I want to go; I want to go to Addis, Tenerife, and Lomé. I figured, is there any better way to get an Africa segment?

Well it turns out there would have been a better way, merely to ask for Europe in those days. That was a sure way to get an Africa assignment. What they wanted to do to you was to give you a serious disappointment and see how you would handle it. I am sure they did that. What they did with me after I told them the three places, they sent me to Munich. The whole idea was, okay, this smartass kid who actually found out that those three jobs were available. They didn't tell me. I found it out on my own. They obviously said, hmm, we'll disappoint him. He will not like the gilded circuit. He really wants to be a Peace Corps type. Let's find that out. Well, frankly, I loved Munich.

Q: You went to Munich and you were there from when to when?

JONES: I did German at FSI. I think I started German in October and I think I finished in probably March. So I got there right after that and we fetched up in a lovely apartment just a half block from the Consulate right on the Koniginstrasse. God it was glorious, incredible life. I again was back in my bright young guy sort of mode and the CG liked me a lot.

Q: Who was the CG?

JONES: Oh he was marvelous. He's an old line guy. His early days had been in the thirties in places like Bucharest. Robert Creel. One of my disappointments in the Foreign Service was that he passed away I think on his next assignment, which was in Central America someplace. I met his widow subsequently and she said, oh, Gordon, we would have really liked you to come for the service. In fact we were sort of hoping you would be a pallbearer because we had a really nice relationship. But they couldn't find me. I forget where I was. I guess I must have already been in Montevideo at that point. They couldn't find me. He was my first mentor no question. He was a phenomenal guy.

Q: Let's talk about Germany at that time and Munich in particular. So this is?

JONES: '66-'69. So I was supposed to move out in '68, two year assignment, but we were held in place because of a budget problem. So there were few transfers in '68 and I wound up sticking around for another year which was great. I was happy. Munich was a great place. My German was good. I was getting out, doing a lot of low level political work at the University. This was '68 spring right?

Q: Yes. Let's talk about when you got there. How were American-German relations?

JONES: Quite good. I mean it was the early stages of Vietnam protesting and we and the Germans took an equally dismal view of the protestors. It was really wonderful to see how the German authorities were friends of ours. I sensed in general that the host government is frequently just there to be asked for the right things. We had on our staff in the consulate people who had been wiped out by the war. I recall a couple of Gräfin, countesses. We had somebody from the Bavarian immediate royal family on our staff and those were good jobs back in the day. They were hugely appreciative of the fact that they could work for the Americans and we were confronting the Sovs. The Czech border was

only a few miles away. The army was there. There were occasional incidents and stuff and I did some consular work. I was aware of how the communities where the army bases were were necessarily pretty overwhelmed by them, but by and large liking it.

Q: What sort of work were you doing?

JONES: This is a rotating business and I probably got the best rotation anyone ever did get. I started out in American Services so I did a lot of citizen services stuff. It was good stuff. Going and visiting people in jails and the hospitals. You know getting a few people, particularly crazy ones, repatriated to the States.

Q: How'd you work repatriation in those days because things have changed?

JONES: We would give them a loan authorized by State, which was for immediate passage back to the States and your passport was marked valid only for return to the United States. We had one case, I have dined out on for years. I used to have all the details. It was a totally crazy man, totally nuts. All we could really do was loan him money, make sure he had the ticket. Actually I think I took him out to the airport and put him on a plane. If I didn't I was there in spirit. I really practically had to make it that direct a thing back to States. He promptly got back to the States and in his lunacy decided he wanted no place else than Germany. So he came right back by the dint of having ripped that page from the passport. Even in those days the passport was set up you couldn't rip out a page or it would fall apart. So he taped it back together and he traveled internationally with great aplomb with this cruddy obviously altered passport. He turned back up on our doorstep to be repatriated again. I forget exactly how it all came out but it was just hilarious.

Q: This is still the period of the Wanderjahr? With the students from all the Western powers wandering around carrying hashish, did you get any drug case?

JONES: Not too many. I can't remember hardly any. I remember people being on the Afghanistan route and going that far. I remember hearing about them but I don't recall ever having to deal with them in any way. I went on to do some visa work which was alright. There were some people who hated it. I took it sort of seriously and again it provided me with a stock of stories for years.

Q: Can you tell any?

JONES: Well I particularly loved one. Little old lady. Her daughter had married a GI and had gone back to the States and so they wanted mom to come join them. So that was a very easy visa to give right? I mean you have the letters, everything was all proved and so forth. And then it turns out, we gave everybody in those days security checks with the German Police, it was just standard. And they turned up the fact that she had been a member of the SED, the then postwar Germany Socialist Party in East Germany. It was absorbed by the Communist Party of East Germany. Consequently we believed that anybody who was an SED member in certain time frames was by definition a Communist.

They were because in fact they were picked up and consequently she was ineligible in the old days with that crummy 'were you a Communist or are you a Communist sort of thing'. She not only was a Communist but she by God lied about it. I mean in the sense that she didn't think she was a member of the Communist Party and she told her story and I believed it. As I recall we actually got her in eventually. But the story was that she and her husband were those typical middle class Germans right after the war. She said all the Americans came in, Patton's troops, and said now you must become members of political parties so you can exercise your democratic rights so we went out and joined the socialists. That's the only socialists they could join at the time. In fact they were like Germans tend to be, utterly apolitical, and never thought another thing about having actually signed up to be in the SED. Well she gave us an affidavit to that effect and we managed to get her into States. She was a really sweet little old lady. Totally apolitical. It wasn't her fault. We documented the fact that the SED was absorbed by the KPD.

Q: After that, what else did you do?

JONES: Then I got into the substance side thanks to the fact that I had a really good relationship with the Consul General. Just a great guy. He was a political officer anyway. He loved the fact that I wanted to be a substantive officer. I knew that I wanted that. Either economic or political I wasn't sure which but that's what I did want. In the day, they didn't have cones. That came out a little bit later and it came out on basically from what job you were doing at the time. I did some work in the economic section. There was a good young economic officer there and I worked for him. We did some fun stuff. We did a lot of trade control stuff, the old end use checking and that sort of thing.

Q: You might explain what that was.

JONES: The whole business of getting licenses to export strategic goods of various sorts and the need of the buyer to document that he needed them for his own operations and he wasn't going to sell them onwards to the Communists. We had the Czechs just across the border and I remember one case where Siemens…

Q: This is an electronics company based in Munich.

JONES: And they had bought some sophisticated radio station equipment and bundled it into some bigger package they were doing and sold it to the Czechs. Well that was way against all the rules. We had to follow up with them. It was a lot of effort trying to find out exactly what happened to the equipment which was part of the law. We weren't sure we wanted to put them on the denials list and I forget exactly what happened but they had truly, possibly knowingly, infracted and it was a wild case. It was wonderful. We spent a lot of time on it and I did some political work. Particularly tracking the then brand new NPD, the Neo Nazi Party, which was having rallies and stuff and I remember going to a couple of their rallies. They would be public events and we were very naïve. We didn't assume that we would get beaten up or anything. I didn't, of course, but we would just wander in and listen to what they were saying. Size up who they were. I remember talking to several Neo-Nazis and writing them up. It made for good cables.

Q: Did you get involved at the University? You mention '68. '68 was like 1848. I mean the French Government was essentially brought down by students and others. Now what was happening in the Munich area?

JONES: They were definitely studying their French brethren. There was no question. There was Daniel Cohn-Bendit, their leader. The leader was in fact part German. I literally did go to a lot of student meetings and chatted up student leaders, took them out for a beer. In fact there was a big student government and I was an old student government hand in any case. I got really deeply engaged in some of the plotting. I was able to talk about it at staff meetings, which was always kind of fun. I remember coming back after being at one particular series of meetings. They had managed to turn out the existing student government, which was a bit leftish and was replaced by a slightly more rightish version. I came back and I was riding up in the elevator and my boss was there and I said – they've done it. They've thrown out the leftish rascal, etc, etc. I got to go write a cable and the boss said, I don't think anyone in Washington cares. He said, you can include it in some bigger piece but don't report that as news.

Q: How did you find German society for you and your wife?

JONES: Very nice. We did a lot of driving around in the countryside and in the mountains. Germans were positive and friendly folks. We just had a delightful time. It was a really nice period. One of my brothers came over and we did some traveling around Europe with him so we met a lot of people. He was a student at the time so he was even more into the student scene. We did have a wonderful time. We couldn't have had a nicer introduction into the Foreign Service and I've thought more than once about what sort of impression I'd have had on the first tour had that been in Africa. It might have been really interesting and engaging too but on a much different level.

Q: You were there till '69?

JONES: Yeah. They were still trying to figure out how to disappoint you. We used to send in the wish list. By then I had gone through a lot of changes of heart and mind and I decided that I still wanted to go to Africa but I wouldn't mind doing Asia and India was intriguing. So I put in all of those things and I literally joked that the one place I never indicated and particular interest in was Latin America. So guess where I was next assigned? Uruguay. It was a game they played and they really felt that if they couldn't get you to commit to going wherever the hell they wanted you to go they were just as happy that you concluded that this was the business that you didn't need to be in.

Q: I was wondering why? This seems to be pretty far down the road. You have already shown that you were a committed officer.

JONES: Well it's entirely possible that it was just dumb luck but the fact that there were these court cases afterwards, I kind of wondered. It happened that the three posts that I had asked for in my A100 course. The three posts had all been given to officers in my

group. None of whom had put in for Africa. And at least one of whom I later heard quit. Not over whether she was going to go or not and I think another one either refused or somehow didn't go. So they were getting that kind of reaction from some people who were disappointed, or unhappy or bitter. We had one junior officer come out to Munich while I was there. He had wanted to be in the Foreign Service since he was in grade school, amazingly enough. I thought of it and I said – I didn't know anything actual when I was in grade school. But he came. He had been hoping to join the Foreign Service for all that time. He prepared himself exquisitely. They put him to issuing visas and he gave up after two or three months. He said this is not what I want to do. This is not what I dreamed of. He didn't want to stamp visas and he quit.

Q: By '69, were you feeling any hot breath of Vietnam?

JONES: Yes. '69 is when I got my draft notice.

Q: But I mean as far as an assignment goes?

JONES: Well, oh yeah, as a matter of fact that was an interesting thing getting into the wish list business. I think about '68, before the draft notice or anything, I had gotten really interested in Vietnam and I said I asked for a lot of different places. I told a relatively senior guy in the consulate that I was seriously thinking about going to Vietnam and I said they have the CORDS program out there. You can have a fair amount of responsibility. You can this and that and maybe I should do this. And he says, no, Gordon you shouldn't, you're a decent officer. You will get so disappointed that we'll lose you from the Foreign Service and I don't want to do that. I don't think you ought to go. It won't be an occasion for any glory. It's not going to be something that you will take positively, and he knew me pretty well. Don't do it.

Q: Well this Montevideo thing came as quite of a shock didn't it?

JONES: Yeah. Oh I should say that there was one other thing that got me grounded in a little bit of a peculiar sort of way. Again, the Consul General looking for things to get me more deeply involved. I got sent, at his arranging from one day to the next without asking me as a matter of fact, sent off to New Zealand to be part of the preparations team for President Johnson's visit out there. The time he went to the sixth nation, allies of Vietnam tour. And I had three weeks in New Zealand preparing for this visit. It was an education and the Consul General was right. It was a huge introduction to the machinery of State.

Q: What were your impressions of both the tsunami that represented a presidential visit and that of New Zealand?

JONES: Well it was interesting. The embassy certainly needed help. Wellington at that time I think had six American officers and it was just a tiny sleepy town with a tiny sleepy little post. We came in like gang busters and the place was turned upside down. We had to re-commission a recently decommissioned passenger vessel that had plied the

Australian trades for half a century or something and tie it up at the main dock for housing for the press. We did a lot of crazy stuff like that. First thing they did when they came to town, they needed more cars so they promptly leased the entire taxi cab fleet of Wellington, the entire one. Shortly thereafter some of the advanced people from the news media came and found that they couldn't get a cab and that sort of prompted us to give a few back. It was really the road show. It was startling. It told me one thing for sure, that I never wanted to be a part of another presidential visit ever, anytime and I was in places where I think we had at least three of them. And I always volunteered to do whatever needed doing that didn't involve the actual President's visit because I knew there would be no glory. There would be a lot of briefcase holding and chasing down stuff that would never turn into reality. I remember trying at one point in New Zealand to get telex service. It did not exist and no one on our side would take no for an answer. I would be going back to telecoms authorities and saying can we lay some, can we string some, can we use satellite. We ultimately had to face the fact that they did not have enough international circuits to do what we needed to do. We were running around like fiends at that point. I got to meet LBJ who was truly larger than life, huge presence -- learned that he wanted a bottle of Bourbon on his bedside table every night. You think like that. I met Lady Bird too. Namely, I had to escort her uncleared hair dresser up to the terminus of a sky way (aerial tram). They figured it would be windy up on top and she would need her hair dresser and since he was uncleared, I escorted him for about an hour and a half. Great fun.

Q: Back to the world of reality, so you were in Montevideo from 1969 till when?

JONES: 1970 because as I said I got kidnapped. That's the reason that someone said I should be in touch with you guys

Q: Had you had any Spanish at all?

JONES: I had not. I took French in high school and I didn't take anything in college. So I took the FSI course in Spanish. I did pretty well and my then wife also took it as she did the German. We were kind of gung ho, and Uruguay sounded like a pretty interesting thing and it was.

Q: Let's talk about Uruguay at that time when you went out, what was the situation there?

JONES: It was a strange little country. My first substantive assignment even though I had done a bunch of stuff. I was a rotation officer. But anyway, the little country had made a huge amount of social progress back in the teens and twenties all fueled by the high prices around World War I for beef and wool, the two products they produced in excellence. I actually remember the numbers: 6 million cows and something like 22 million sheep and the country itself was about a million and a half people. If the cows and sheep had ever gotten angry over how they were being exploited, it would have been all over. But anyway they had done fabulously for so long. They had actually used the money pretty wisely: good education system, very good social welfare, old age pension, decent health system - very nice country in many ways and stable in unique ways. I remember that the story was that there had never been a real coup and the last thing that

had come close to being a coup was in the 20's and it was actually staged by the fire department. The bomberos were the aggrieved party and they overthrew the government. And that was the last time they had a coup. It's somewhat apocryphal, but it's cute. It's the standard story. And it turns out that then with the Tupamaros that there was indeed a real coup by the military after my time.

Q: How stood relations with the United States and Uruguay?

JONES: Quite good. We had a big AID mission because they were then economically pretty weak. Their foreign trade was suffering because beef prices, wool prices were lousy, and we were cutting them off from even exporting beef to us because they were not meeting sanitary requirements. In fact, I spent a lot of time on that particular issue. The seven big packinghouses all had been exporting in various times and levels to the States and they were all being one by one taken off by USDA. They weren't investing in the facilities; they were just letting them run like they'd always run, and increasingly that was not going to work. And so that was the big issue. We had the AID program; we had a lot of other things going on. In fact one of the things that happened was the Punta del Este summit while I was there. I didn't get too involved in it. I'm not sure why I didn't, but I didn't.

Q: Punta del Este summit was in economics: could you explain what it was about?

JONES: I guess we were talking about the Alliance for Progress in those days – so it was a big Alliance for Progress fandango. It was an attempt to really respond to the Latin Americans about the development inequities that they tended to see, whether it was trade, which was always an issue, or product prices, and that was generally an issue. Things like the Hickenlooper Amendment, I remember, which had some impact on trade, although I can't remember what it was.

Q: Well, the Hickenlooper Amendment was one where if a government expropriated American commercial enterprises and did not compensate, then all sorts of bad things happened.

Who was the ambassador when you were there?

JONES: It was – he was terrific; he died just recently – Adair, Chuck Adair (Charles Wallace Adair Jr.). Chuck was marvelous, and Chuck was the central kind of force in the whole context of the kidnappings, as it turns out. Chuck and his absolutely wonderful wife Carol – just delightful people, both gone now.

Q: Let's talk about the kidnapping – it happened rather shortly after you got there, didn't it?

JONES: It happened 18 months or so after. I must have gotten there in February/March, something like that. I think I was down for an 18-month tour, something very short. Or maybe it was a two-year tour, and I re-upped – in the day you could extend it by a year

easily, and so I extended so I could be there three years because I was really enjoying it.

Q: So let's talk before the kidnapping, and I think we'll pick kidnapping up in the next session because we'll go into some detail. How did you find, compared to the Germans in Munich, the embassy outreach to the Uruguayans?

JONES: There were some issues that we had, but we were all young and eager to sort of make things happen, make things function very well. We were working closely with our AID brethren to make sure the AID program did the necessary to try to get the country on a better course. As part of my work in the economic section, I spent a fair amount of time with the AID people, trying to figure out what they were doing and what they might be doing. Then we would talk to all the Uruguayans that we knew and we met about this and that aspect of it, and we all had great ideas of it. It just seemed like a very creative time.

Q: You mentioned the meatpacking thing, and I recall mainly – this is way after – but I remember talking to someone who was in Uruguay who said they had a real problem with ties, railroad ties. Does that ring a bell?

JONES: Don't remember that one.

Q: But anyway, I mean, these were not up to standard. Were you finding that the Uruguayans and their commercial sites were a little bit sloppy and the quality control?

JONES: Oh, yeah, and things happened. I remember we had a big scandal involving a shipment of PL480 corn, which was stored once it arrived. Our sense actually was that the Uruguayans had mismanaged the storage, so it spoiled. The Uruguayans claimed that it had been spoiled before it shipped, and it went around and around. One of the reasons I got involved in all this agriculture was that we had no AG attachés. We had an AGAT local, and he was really responsive to the guy in Buenos Aires, across the river. And so I was kind of his day-to-day supervisor, among other things – my first supervisory role in that business. I was, I say, the guy who people turned to on a lot of agriculture stuff. So, again, I worked with the AID people on agriculture as well.

Q: How did you find Uruguay statistic-wise? Economic officers live on statistics, and how did you find the statistics there?

JONES: Well, they were not bad. There's a funny story, actually. The head of the Statistics office – he might have been the Economic Minister; I think he was – did a briefing for all of us: the ambassador, me, the AID director, maybe two or three other people. It was funny: one of these charts was put up in a viewgraph or whatever, and he said, "We are going to do this this year, and we did that last year, and we did that the year before," and he said, "Damn, there's the same number down to the significant decimal point – the same number. Shoot, if we'd been at all thoughtful, we'd have changed that a little bit so it would be more credible." He was very frank. I thought that was pretty deep. He was kidding, of course. But I'd say, we thought highly of him, I remember that. He was not only a good personality, but he seemed to have really good ideas, and he worked

very closely with us on some things, and we seemed like we were going to be really making a difference there. And of course, the whole country got so turned around by this Tupamaro (urban guerilla organization) mess that all that effort, in effect, was pretty much cancelled by the politics of the next few years.

Q: Today is November 14, 2007. Gordon, you were in Uruguay from when to when?

JONES: Early '69 to August of '70.

Q: Let's talk about the Tupamaros when you got there. What were they up to, who were they, and how did they affect your work?

JONES: Well, they were a classic of the time: the urban guerilla that was organized to try to push into power and supposedly help out the poor and downtrodden and so forth and to basically redress all of the classical, classist wrongs of the hemisphere. There were groups in power; there were groups out of power, and they were out of power and wanted in. It was the time of Castro, and it was the time of lots of ferment. So there were a bunch of urban university types, mostly. They had the vague notion – and I don't think it was ever more than a vague notion – that if they just got into power, threw out the rascals, and as they like to say, force the army to show its hand (I think I mentioned the last time that the army hadn't as it were shown its hand in many decades and that the previous coup d'état that everybody kind of remembered was in the late '20s, and it was carried out by the fire department, which was a nationalist institution in the country). But the army was no more retrograde than a lot of military, and they weren't running the country; they were content pretty much to run their military exercises and to enjoy the other perks of the military life, but they weren't a real problem in the overall national equation of the country. It hadn't been anywhere close to power for a very long time.

Q: Were the Tupamaros trying to get the army on their side or to provoke the army to do something to them to cause a rebellion?

JONES: Exactly – to provoke them; to provoke them, as I said, to show their hand, force them to show how nasty and brutish they were; take power and then the people would rise up and recognize that the army were nefarious sorts.

Q: What were you doing at this time?

JONES: I was the number three, I think, in the economics section, and I was doing a lot of looking at agricultural development and a lot of foreign trade kinds of things, but it was pretty routine stuff. They, as they later seemed to acknowledge, had no clue what it was I was doing in the embassy. They had no idea that I was as junior as in fact I was.

Q: How did you get involved?

JONES: Nobody really, really knows, but I've got a favorite theory: after I left in August of 1970, I'd gone home on home leave. Then I'd come back to Washington, and I was on

my way to Mexico. The Department mails eventually got me a lovely little tube in which was my new exequatur, which is the certificate you get to be a consul if you want. And I was not in the consular side, but I had been promoted while I was there, and it was that division between vice-consuls and consuls, so I had been made, to no particular effect, a consul, and notified to the Uruguayan government. And as it happens, about three weeks before the kidnapping, the president of the country, Pacheco Areco, had signed this exequatur for me. Then it took all that time to eventually get it back to me for whatever good it would be. And my guess is that, little as anybody knows about all our titles, the title of consul sounds pretty good. Now, as I said, it wasn't even the kind of work that I was doing, but it's my theory, and nobody's really ever contradicted it much. I don't think anybody else much cares, but that's my theory. Several people I knew sort of said, "Oh, there was so and so at a cocktail party once, and you argued with him a bit, and they seemed like the kind who would have been Tupamaros, and they might have." But I don't think that. I honestly think it was just in search of a title. There's an irony to it, too. They were waiting for me in the basement of my apartment building that morning. And there was another guy from the embassy in the same building, a big apartment building, and we used to carpool into the embassy. And he'd gone down ahead of me, in fact, called me on the way out the door and said, "Come on down – we gotta catch up and find out what's going on at the embassy. Somebody's been kidnapped," which was Dan Mitrione. His name was Nate Rosenfeld, he was the Cultural Attaché. That's a pretty fancy title by itself, and the only way these guys from the Tupamaros knew who we were – they didn't have photos of us or anything like that – they got our IDs out of our pockets. And they had mine. They got mine after I got down there, and they already had his, and his was "Nate Rosenfeld, *Agregado Culturado*". And they said, "What the hell is that?" – sort of said, "Leave him; he's not important. This Jones guy seems like he must be important." I don't know why, but they thought that, so they literally left Nate. They hit him over the back of the head, and he kind of slumped, and they just left him there – stole his car, actually. We went off in his car. So as I say, with this title business, they had no clue who they were dealing with – no clue in terms of being unimportant. We were just unimportant little fish.

Q: So then, what happened?

JONES: As I said, they'd been waiting. There were three of them. They had 45s. I later described to somebody around the area as I was being debriefed, "The three had 45s and they were kind of all drab-colored. I hadn't recalled seeing a 45 that was that way," and they said, "Oh, yeah, that's U.S. Navy-issue, and we have no doubt provided them to the Uruguayan military sometime in the distant past." The reference is they're called Stinsonized (which actually is not such a distant past thing: sometime around World War II), but Stinsonized is olive drab color on the gun. Anyway, I identified it that far, so they were obviously stolen or something from the Uruguayan military. But there were three of them, and they had me at gunpoint and identified me, and I just stood there kind of feeling stupid, and my knees were going to jelly, which happens when you're under that situation. And then somebody hit me over the back of the head, as they were doing to Nate pretty much at the same time. And I went down, not wanting to get hit again, and I played dead pretty effectively. They genuinely thought (they'd seen too many movies,

you know) that one hit to the head will pretty much put you out. And so they bundled me into Nate's car, and we got out of there and drove a couple blocks and met a pickup by some kind of prearrangement. They tossed me from the car into the pickup, which I think was later figured out was stolen, too. Then we sped off with me in the back of the pickup and a couple of guys in the front. As it turns out, there was a guy with me, but I wasn't 100% certain of that at the time. They drove fairly quickly to the only kind of expressway there was in town called the Avenida Italia, and they were zinging down it. You could actually get up some speed. They had tied me up in the process. They tied ropes along my body so I couldn't move my arms and legs. So I was kind of there; I was conscious. The blow had not put me under. I said to myself, "Why don't you just sort of throw your tied legs from one side to the other, and your legs will clear the side of the truck, and you can kind of squirm the rest of the way over." But we were going pretty fast, you know, 40, 50 miles an hour. I said, "That sounds like a pretty painful landing," and so I said, "No, don't do that." Pretty soon, we turned off into a little neighborhood, a little barrio, and we got suddenly into midmorning traffic, and you could hear bus horns and people passing by, quite innocently doing their shopping and things. I suddenly got the brilliant notion that if I just could get up on one elbow, I could yell for help, and all these nice people I could hear just yards away could rescue me. So I got up on an elbow and yelled for help, and the guy who was guarding me – whom I may have known about but totally forgot about in that particular moment – hit me over the top of the head with his 45 and opened a lovely little wound, which kind of spurted, which those kinds of head wounds do. And so, he thought he'd half-killed me, I'm sure. You know, "Oh, God, I've killed the guy we were going to use to trade with. This is not a good thing." So he goes up to the front of the truck – I could see out of the corner of my eye – to tell the guys in front that he screwed it up; he'd killed the victim. So as soon as I saw him move any distance away, it was really nice: I had worked out, without thinking about it, the actual escape plan and just stashed it away in the back of my head. And that was throw my tied legs from one side to the other. I'd hit the side of the truck, and I could wiggle the heck over the side, and it worked beautifully. It only works if you have the adrenaline. I tried to do it once without adrenaline, and it didn't work at all. And there I was on the street, and I had attracted a crowd, yelling for help. So I had both elements: I had independently gotten myself free and created a situation where I was somewhat protected by people who didn't know about me but were perfectly nice about sticking around. Anyways, I looked at the truck when I kind of rolled to a stop, and it was 20 yards away, and I saw the brake lights. I thought, "Oh boy, they're coming back." Well, they looked at the people around me, no doubt, and said, "No, we can't get this guy back. Let's just get out of here." So then the brake lights stop, and they sped off, and that was that. That was just one of the dumbest luck things that could ever happen.

Q: Was there somebody else kidnapped with you?

JONES: Oh, yeah, that same day. The Tupamaros were kind of a flashy little guerilla group. They loved to stage spectaculars. They at one point found a really wealthy guy whom they held at gunpoint, and he had, allegedly, a safe full of gold – Maria Theresa Thaler or something, some kind of coins. So they managed to steal the entire safe. That was the local version of cool. They did all kinds of things like that. They weren't actually

all that known for killing people at that point. They got a lot blood thirstier as they moved along, but they staged what I eventually think we figured had to be four or five attempts in that morning, just the one morning. One was against the Brazilian consul, Aloysio Gomide. They got him, and they held him for a month or two, and eventually let him go. They got Dan Mitrione, who was our Public Safety Advisor with AID, whom they held for a couple weeks and then brutally murdered. Awful. I can talk more about that in a bit. I think they got the Public Works Minister, or at least they made a good stab at him. We kind of thought they probably tried for our AID Director because somebody had tried to cut off his car that morning, and the driver was clever enough as he saw the little barricade kind of forming up in the street, he took off and drove across the park and got away. So that was the theory at the time. I don't know if anything ever came of proving that or not, but there were actually four or five that morning. Two others were successful, and I think there might have been a third involving the Public Works Minister.

Q: What about Dan Mitrione? What caused him to get this treatment?

JONES: Well, they rather grossly misrepresented what he was doing. He was a small-town police chief from Indiana who signed on with AID to try to help in Latin America and in other places with what was then seen as a big problem: small police forces in various places in the world were just unable to cope with mid-20th-century and had no ability to do squad car radio networks, or among other things, keep them from torturing people who they arrested. That was their only real means sometimes of getting information was beat the hell out of somebody, and maybe they'll confess. The idea of putting in these police support guys was to professionalize the police and make it so they could use rather modern techniques and get what they needed and do their jobs without beating people half to death. But they misrepresented him terribly, saying he was CIA, he was this, he was that. And I guarantee you: he was in a totally civilian program of AID's, and later the Congress in its wisdom decided that program had suddenly shown itself to be too controversial and they stopped it, and it's really a pity because it was a good program. And he was good at what he did; he really was. He was a very solid guy and really a delightful man. When they eventually brought the body back to the States and so forth, one of the nicer things I heard of in the context was that Frank Sinatra (and I forget why Sinatra had any connection whatsoever) gave a benefit concert for him and raised a lot of money to educate Dan's kids.

Q: Probably the Italian-American connection.

JONES: Yeah, Mitrione, I suppose, could be. And of course, Mitrione wound up being played in this wretched movie by Yves Montand, a Frenchman. The wretched movie, you know, was a whole other story. This is this guy Costa-Gavras, who made all kinds of incendiary movies, but this one was one of the worst. This one was called *State of Siege* (*Estado de sitio*), which he made in Allende's Chile, in those days. Anyway, Costa-Gavras made this wretched film, which misrepresented a whole lot of things.

Q: What happened to you after?

JONES: Well, they took me to the embassy, and I sat with the ambassador and the country team.

Q: And the ambassador was who?

JONES: Chuck Adair, wonderful guy, just recently passed away. Anyway, he and the country team, and I was sitting there at his desk, and I was trying to remember every detail I could to see if I couldn't help provide some kind of clue even unwittingly that might have led everybody to Dan. If I had known where the hideout was, or if I could have identified any of the participants or something like that, there might have been some way to dope this all out and maybe we could get Dan back. That was our theory, and so we worked on that most of that morning, and about noon, the ambassador looked up, and he said, "Gordon, you're still bleeding." The head wound hadn't totally gone away. So he said, "Why don't you and the gunny (the gunnery sergeant) go off to the hospital and get yourself patched up and get back here because we'll probably still be able to use your thinking. So, I hadn't really realized I was bleeding. So we went off, the gunny and I, and it was really one of those nice, weird episodes. We were kind of paranoid, and so the gunny was in civil. He slipped a 38 into the pocket of his raincoat, and the two of us just went off – absolutely innocent abroad –to the hospital, got me patched up, and came back to the embassy and got back to work. Ed Grayson was his name, by the way; that's a name I will probably never forget.

Q: Normally, if somebody's kidnapped or something, they get them the hell out of that country.

JONES: Well, they did, actually. That's right. I wasn't particularly eager to go. One of the things that happens to you when you're in those circumstances is you get a little false courage, and you sort of say, "By God, they're not going to force me out of the country." But the papers got off onto all kinds of weird notions as to who I was and why they'd taken me, and the fact that I'd gotten away made them look bad, and things like that, and so the ambassador's decision was pretty quickly: "Let's get him out of here."

Q: Absolutely right.

JONES: Yeah, I couldn't have probably been very useful at that point. My family and I were staying at the ambassador's residence because it was considered the safest, the most secure place. I had a Marine guard of my very own for a little while.

Q: Did the whole embassy go on to a completely different pattern?

JONES: Oh yeah, and it became the usual war footing, really. Because we had Dan hanging out there, we didn't know what had happened to him, etc., etc., and the information wasn't coming back very well. The Tupamaros weren't making particular claims about who they had. One of the things that was really weird was within a few days of my kidnapping – I think maybe sometime like a week after I was kidnapped – the police had been watching a Tupamaro safe house, and by just dumb luck, because they

were under pressure by the political side of Uruguay to get some results in looking for these guys who had been kidnapped, they decided that there was a little movement in the safe house that they had been watching. And they said, "Well, okay, we'll knock off a courier or something, but we'll look like we're doing something." So they knocked over the safe house with a police raid, and they managed by dumbest luck to get the two top Tupamaro leaders: Raúl Sendic and another guy – the top two guys! And that's actually what led as much as anything to the thing kind of going downhill from there because, leaderless, they kind of desperately flailed around for some way to look like they still had the initiative. And that's apparently when they decided to kill Dan.

Q: So you decided you had to go; where did you go?

JONES: Well, back to California. The notion was I was going on home leave. I had been in country for 17 months and 25 days (or something like that), and they said, "Well, you actually can't go on home leave until you've been in country 18 months." So they said, "Okay, stick around three more days, and we can really say you went on home leave." That's what happened. I stayed like three days, just enough to say, "Okay, I'm legally on home leave." Then I went off to the States and went on to another assignment.

Q: Where did you go after that?

JONES: Mexico.

Q: What were you doing there?

JONES: I was the Assistant Commercial Attaché – that's how junior I was.

Q: You were there from when to when?

JONES: I was there from '70 to '73.

Q: I would think there would be so many commercial ties between Mexico and the United States that the commercial section wouldn't have much to do.

JONES: Oh, we had lots to do. You're right: there are a lot of ties. This was back in the days when the Foreign Service ran the Foreign Commercial Service. We really did all kinds of things. We were in the process of installing a brand new trade center there, which we wound up running for a decade or so or 15 years, and then they shut it down. We had trade shows with themes: milking equipment or printing equipment or things like that. And it was really big. But we were out beating the bushes for trade opportunities. I developed one steel mill opportunity that everybody went bananas for, and the American company actually went in and won the eventual tender. It was one of those things where we truly made a difference in the trade because that was $50 million.

Q: Did they name the steel mill after you?

JONES: Oh, no. Actually, Arthur G. McKee Company won the bid, and they had a senior vice president in town. He took me to lunch, and he said, "Gordon, that's all I can do for you. We obviously can't give you any kind of commission on this deal, but I'm allowed to take you to lunch. Incidentally, if you were just a commercial trade representative or an agent or something, you'd have been good for a commission on this one of four or five million bucks." And I go, wow, I'm in the wrong bracket.

Q: How did you find the Mexican commercial establishment?

JONES: It was a fascinating country because even then in the very early '70s, it's a lot more industrialized than we tend to think it might have been. You tend to go with the Mexican clichés, with *burros* and little villages and dusty main streets, which is just wrong. Particularly in various places in Mexico, there was an incredibly dynamic establishment. It wasn't that we were getting them their first steel mill – they had five or six – but it happened that Altos Hornos steel company (which they'd owned, but a pretty good company) was expanding, and so I'd gotten involved in that. But we did a lot of interesting stuff in those days. One of the things I did (because I think the commercial attaché was out of the country or something): I hosted Jimmy Carter in '73, just after he'd made the Time Magazine cover as this hot, young Southern governor. He was looking to get a little profile internationally, so they put together a trade mission from Georgia, presided over by the governor. So I got the very nice privilege of spending three days with Jimmy Carter, back when Jimmy Carter was unknown. And we accomplished quite a nice bit of work for Georgia.

Q: How did you find Mexican commercial law? Because this is often the key.

JONES: Oh yeah, we had problems. I remember, we had intellectual property problems that were just unceasing. They'd rip off an American company for this copyright or that industrial process, and their law was a little thin, and we'd try to help them make their case, but it was difficult. The Mexicans are a particularly challenging sort of government to deal with because after the several wars with the United States in the 19th century, the Mexicans have what you could call a grudge, but it wasn't exactly a grudge. It was more like an inferiority complex that the best thing that they could do, being Latinos, was to argue back. Well, nothing better to argue back with than the representatives of the U.S. government. So we had a rather more constrained relationship than we did with almost any other country I was ever posted in because, while they were proper and correct with us, they would frequently not want to be seen to be doing much with us. We would invite them to cocktail parties, and they would not accept or deny and then not show up. We would invite them to this or that, and they would feel perfectly comfortable in standing you up because that was acting on behalf of a Mexico that had been badly affronted historically by the US. And that to an extent is true today, that in Mexico you can account for some things by just the fact. It's not hatred; it's not even envy; it's just a vague sense that: the US has pushed its way around a little too much, and if we push back, well, it's our right. And that was a kind of unique thing in my career. But I must say, we had a wonderful three years there.

Q: How did you find social conditions? Let's look at the government – of course the PRI was in power for so long.

JONES: Yeah, I was there during the Echeverría government. It was a rather difficult government because Echeverría himself has been accused of having carried out this massacre or tolerated this massacre when he was Interior Minister and the Olympics were going on. There were student protests. They just quelled those student protests by killing, I think they say dozens but you can reasonably assume, hundreds of people who were demonstrating in perfectly normal circumstances. They were just taken apart by a bunch of toughs who were under the control of the government. Echeverría was Interior Minister at the time, and then by the time I got there, he was already president. We had a rather cool relationship with him, I must say.

Q: How did you find life? You were married?

JONES: Right. I was still with my first wife.

Q: How did you find social life?

JONES: Wonderful, except that we would see Mexican friends, but as soon as they were Mexican official friends, they really weren't friends; they were good contacts and maybe even acquaintances. You might get to socialize with them occasionally, but you couldn't do so dependably. They just wouldn't necessarily show up. It was probably the first post where I seriously spent some time with my diplomatic corps friends.

Q: Well, how strong you might say was the class system?

JONES: Oh, absolutely rigid, absolutely rigid. Again, that was the old regime. The place had changed very little in the first half of the 20th century. I mean, they'd had the Revolution, ending up by the late '20s eating all its children. And that's when the PRI kind of grabbed power and they had a major deal among the remaining heirs of the revolution: that they would stop killing each other and they would all divide power and share it kind of co-equally. What kept the PRI in power for half a century was they horrified themselves with the deaths of so many in the time of the revolution. But anyway, so, they were still in their heyday. Mexico had developed in many ways; in many ways, it hadn't. I remember, being control officer in the Foreign Service is kind of a fun thing sometimes. You get really interesting people coming to town, and they want you to just take over their visit and take them to see people that they need to see. That can be sometimes really interesting. And in addition to Jimmy Carter in that category, I had Lawton Childs, who was then a newly elected senator from Florida. He came down on a mission to go to some agricultural meeting. When he got there, he said, "Gordon, I'm going to be here for three days. I don't have any interest in this conference. I really didn't come here for that. I'm the junior guy in the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate, and I wanted to go get some international experience; here I am. So, program me. I want to see *campesinos*, I want to see people on family planning, I want to see this and that. Go do it for me." So I got real busy. As a commercial attaché, I knew nothing about

family planning and damn little about *campesinos*, but actually I set up things that were really pretty good. We went out to see a collective farm. That's what was reminding me about the traditional system. The collective farms are called *ejidos*. That goes back into classical Spanish landholdings. They were collectives of people out in the boondocks. They had been given properties that had been taken over during the Revolution back, 60 or 70 years before, and they were just left there to do whatever they could do. We in our AID program had given some money to buy American agricultural machinery and as I was desperately trying to find people for Lawton Childs to meet, somebody said, "Oh, well, follow up on the tractors. Let's have him go see one of our tractors." So, we went to Banco de México, which was administering the funding for this. We were given an agricultural engineer on their staff, and he said, "Let's go see so-and-so's *ejido*." We went someplace outside of Toluca in the back of beyond. We were in four-wheel-drive Jeeps. If we hadn't had this guy along from the Banco de México, we would have been totally lost. Anyway, we went out and we went to this *ejido* and went to an *ejido* meeting where they were talking about how they were using the tractor. And it was the wildest thing because nobody wanted to pay for the gasoline – that was the one thing I could see in the meeting. Everybody wanted to use the tractor, but nobody wanted to pay for the gasoline. But it was an incredible view into an ancient and crumbling part of the social structure. And I think Childs got a really interesting experience there. As I say, those can be some of the really fulfilling things you do.

Q: Oh, absolutely. You left there in…?

JONES: '73.

Q: Where did you go?

JONES: I came back to Washington, my first Washington assignment, which was initially to the Econ course. I was still an unfrocked or unlicensed economist, and so I actually took the FSI Econ course, and that was really good. I enjoyed it. It happened at the end of that process that the Pakistan country desk was vacant. They were looking for somebody with more economics than the average desk officer possessed because they were doing a vast debt rescheduling that came out of the Bangladesh war. They expected somebody who would actually calculate the present value of future debt flows and stuff like that. In fact, I could do that. I was recently certified that I could. So I took the job, and it was really fun. I did three years with the Pakistan desk, got to participate in the Paris Club Rescheduling of the Pakistan debt, and did a lot of interesting stuff for three years.

Q: While you were there, did you fall into the hands of Frances Wilson?

JONES: I know who she is, but I never really did because by the time I then did get an Economic Bureau assignment back in the mid/late '80s, she was either gone or just not part of the picture. Yeah, I know of her, for sure.

Q: With the Pakistan debt rescheduling, how did that work out?

JONES: It was odd because the old United Pakistan – which included Bangladesh – had (I can't remember the magnitude), it must have been a billion dollars or more worth of debt, even back in that day, for the United Pakistan. The idea was that the Paks were saying, "We're not going to pay you all this money back. We've been deprived of half our territory and more than half of our population. Let's work something out." And so eventually the negotiation was arranged in the Club of Paris to essentially take the former joint desk, split it in half, assign it to the two countries that were sitting there at the table, and promise them a whole bunch of new help that would help them pay the old debt. Everybody after it was all worked out was actually pretty happy. So the old Pakistani Unified debt was split two ways. A lot of new money went into the pot, and the effect was pretty good actually. You see occasionally references to Paris Club reschedulings, and they are fascinating once you get inside them and take them apart.

Q: I mean, it's a real shirtsleeve operation where everybody sits around. It's really quite a business.

JONES: Well, turning a de facto situation into a de jure one – essentially taking a reality, whatever it is: this country can't pay, or that country just got split in half, or whatever – and saying, "Okay, what can they pay? What should they pay? How much? Maybe we can make it easier by giving them some new aid on top of the old aid, and it will all kind of work out." And those things are worked up, and they usually do a pretty decent job.

Q: Well, then you were able to put your economics to good use, which often is not the case. People come out of the course often with: "It's nice, but okay, but it's way above my pay grade." But in this case…

You did this for three years, so this brings you almost up to 1980.

JONES: Ah, let's see, '73 to '76. Yeah, '74, '75, and '76. By then I was divorced – one of the facts of coming back to Washington sometimes. So, I was a bachelor again, and I'd always heard good things about Brazil, including as a bachelor. And so I said, "I wonder if there's anything coming up in Brazil," and I discovered there was an econ job in Rio that needed filling the next summer. So I got myself in line for that, a very messy situation, and they suddenly decided the person was coming out six months early, and they called me up and said (this was like November), "Could you be down there in December?" Well, I had all kinds of problems getting my divorce straightened around. I had a new girlfriend who I wasn't really sure I could abandon right then comfortably. And so I said to the girlfriend and then to the Foreign Service, "Look, I'd love to do it, but I just can't. I've got just too many commitments here in Washington." And so they said, "Okay, sorry, I guess you lose Brazil." And so I said, "I guess I do." Well, they wound up not filling it in off-cycle; come January and February, it was still unfilled, so they said, "Okay would you like it for the summer?" And I said, "Yeah, absolutely," so I actually got that job after seeming to lose it.

Q: Well, then, you went to Brazil still unmarried, I take it?

JONES: Yes, in fact, there's a funny story there. Only in the Foreign Service, right? I was in Brazil, and I sort of left things with the girlfriend back in Washington, "Well, it's been great, but you know, we've got six months together (or maybe eight or nine months together). I've got to go off to Brazil, and I'm paying all this alimony; I certainly gotta be where I can get out from under American rent for myself," and that sort of thing. We agreed: she would stay here; I would go down there. Well, it never quite broke off, and so eventually, (she was also in the Foreign Service) she came down to see me a couple times. We discovered that that relationship still had some life in it. It was an interesting time. They had just decided they maybe ought to take account of the needs of married couples in the Foreign Service. We weren't yet married, but my girlfriend at the time went to the authorities here because I was down there, and she said, "I'm going to be marrying this guy down there. There's no place for me in Brazil. Could we go someplace else and be together, where we'll get married?" She found a receptive audience in the personnel folks, and pretty soon they assigned both of us to Rome. This was taking me out of Brazil after only a year and a half, I think.

We're studying Italian together, and we decide we're really not meant for each other after all, so we broke up, and I wound up going to Rome. She got her assignment to Rome broken. I suddenly found myself in Rome and said, "How the hell did I get here?" It was one of those weird, weird, weird things. There I was, commercial attaché; this was just as the Foreign Service was losing the commercial function. I actually spent half of that three-year tour (or about that) technically seconded to the Commerce Department, which had inherited the function.

Q: Were they coming at you from the Commerce Department to enlist in their corps?

JONES: Yeah, and they were also trying to get a better sense of what it is that the commercial attachés did. It was nice when we were in Europe: I went to two or three conferences they held in terms of setting up the Foreign Commercial Service. One was in Paris, one was in The Hague, and I think there was a third one – maybe London? But I actually was in at the birth of the Foreign Commercial Service. We'd meet, and we'd tell everybody from Washington we ought to do it this way and take account of that, pull in people from here. You need to use your constituent posts well. And yet, I really wasn't taken with joining the Foreign Commercial Service for some reason, so I didn't pursue them. And, except for information, they didn't really pursue me. And it was great: I went on from Rome, where I actually met and married an American girl, not the girl I'd been interested in back here – in fact someone who's not in the Foreign Service. Anyway, we went then on from Rome, where I finished up as commercial attaché, and we went on as econ counselor to Lima.

Q: Let's talk about Rome and commercial work. How did you find the situation there commercial-wise?

JONES: Well, again, we had some terrific constituent posts. Our Milan post was gigantic. We had a trade center. There were trade fairs, too. So I spent a bit of time in Milan and

some time in some of the other constituent posts, just making the various programs that we had work, and making sure our local personnel were doing what they needed to do, and it was a really interesting job. I remember the other thing I had to do: I had to settle a takeover by a local community of an American electronics plant in Sicily, a very messy, messy situation, which I think we actually resolved to everybody's satisfaction. The thing that I did in Italy that was really wonderful was I got there in the wake of an inspections report. In the report, they gave our constituent posts high marks for being able to reach out in their consular districts. Then they said the embassy, which had its own consular district in the middle of Italy, was doing an absolutely rotten job of outreach in its district. Well, that had everybody kind of panicked, so they took about four of us, I think, who arrived in that timeframe – middle level people – and they said, "Now, each of you is going to get a *regione* of Italy" – however many provinces (I think there must be four regional governments in our district) – "Each of you is going to get one of these districts, and you're going to play like you're consul general. You're going to go out, and you're going to make the embassy's presence known locally. You're gonna go be everything: you're gonna be political, you're gonna be economic, you're gonna deal with the odd consular problem that somehow has to be treated at a high level and so forth. You'll do it all, and in fact, you'll even do some useless work. You'll just do the whole shmear." Well, I got the Molise in that deal. Molise is an utterly charming region. It's just above the spur on the boot of Italy, on the Adriatic coast and up into the mountains – wonderful place. A lot of American immigrants from Italy came from the Molise. It's a very poor region. I went out there and got myself introduced and had the best time being a *de facto* Consul General, wandering around, going to weddings, congratulating lord mayors on their investitures, and meeting actually a fair number of commercial connections in the process.

Q: What were the commercial prospects in an area like that?

JONES: Well, some. They weren't, what I recall, brilliant compared to what we were doing in Milan, Turin, or even Naples. They were tiny. There were little projects, and they needed a little help, and I could give them a little shove here, make a few connections there. There were a couple American investors who were delighted to see that they had some representation and that sort of thing. I remember going in to see the Archbishop, though, just a courtesy call, and he said, "Did you notice you came through a neighborhood where all the buildings are boarded up? That was from a bombing raid in 1944, and it's now 1977," or so, '78 maybe, and they've never been rebuilt. He said, "That's what's wrong with our city, and I know you guys had to do the bombing, but gosh, we're still recovering from WWII." There wasn't anything I could do about it, but it was rather sobering. I thought this was just a charming mountain town because it was fairly close to Monte Casino. That was the connection.

Q: Who was the ambassador while you were there?

JONES: He was a wonderful character: Gardner, Dick Gardner, a really important financial economist, and he's written a number of really serious books – an academic, but with a lot of Foreign Service cred, a very good guy, married to at the time (I think maybe still married to) an Italian woman who was quite a nice, nice person. Yeah, they were

good people, and Dick and I got along wonderfully.

Q: You were there from when to when?

JONES: Late ’78 until ’81.

Q: How did you find working with the Commercial Service? Obviously, it was just getting its feet on the ground.

JONES: We always kind of felt we had done a pretty darn good commercial job, but there was this deal struck back when they were trying to get the Tokyo Round, I believe, approved in Congress. Robert Strauss, who was at the time I think the lead negotiator…

Q: Trade representative…

JONES: Or maybe he was USTR in those days. Probably so. But anyways, to get Congress to pass the Tokyo Round he promised to create a Foreign Commercial Service under the Department of Commerce, and some congressman or senator had thought that was a terrific notion. So he was basically selling the Tokyo Round with this little giveaway. Well, it kind of bothered some of us that we’d been doing a pretty damn good job, and nobody cared to notice what kind of job we had been doing. But we could make the new organization function.

Q: Italy always has its disasters. I happened to be Consul General in Naples when they had an earthquake there.

JONES: In those days they had the earthquake?

Q: Yeah, it hit Avellino.

JONES: Oh, whoa, that was actually in Campania then. They had a big one I think just before I got there in Basilicata, which is down in the district.

Q: It killed about 1200 people and a good number in Naples, too. It was a scary time.

JONES: Yeah, we didn’t have any bad disasters while I was there, I recall. One of the things about Italy that was always fun was the fine hand of the Mafia behind all the other things that were going on. I’ll never forget: I was in a cocktail conversation, I can’t remember, it must have been a Congressional delegation (CODEL) or somebody was in town, and the prime minister came (Andreotti). We were chatting around and the talk suddenly came around to the *economia sommersa*, the underground economy. He said he represented a constituency in Naples, and he said, “I could never understand it. We are the largest exporter” – his district – “of globes from Italy, and damned if we don’t even have one globe factory.” (*Laughter*).

Q: I used to quote that to everybody. But you wander the streets of Naples, and I was a

streetwalker (I used to get out there and walk the streets) and down in the not quite cellars because they opened up onto the street, but you see all these people working away there. People talk about the Neapolitans, you know, lazy. They're not; they just don't do their regular job. I remember having a lunch, and we were talking about how awful that nobody was paying the cigarette tax.

JONES: They used to have the blue books. What did they call them?

Q: The azzurri.

JONES: Azzurri, you're right.

Q: I remember, here are some of the high people talking about how nobody is paying taxes. It's time to smoke, and they said, "Okay, everybody show your cigarette pack," and nobody had stamps on it.

JONES: Actually, a friend of mine was Consul General in Naples five or six years ago. We got to stay there with her on a visit – we were in Europe – in that wonderful old building where the CG has the top two floors.

Q: Did politics intrude in your work at all?

JONES: Well, as I said, there was that one crazy case of this local *commune*, down in Sicily as I recall, that decided that they would expropriate a local factory that was actually owned by Raytheon or somebody like Raytheon. Back in the day, they were still producing electronics in Europe, but that stopped another decade or so onwards. It took a lot of negotiating to get them to give it back. Nobody quite wanted the responsibility: not the federal government, not the *regione*, not the *provincia* – it was the *commune*. It was just the local town that decided it wanted this factory. It was kind of important to whatever they were doing. I remember it was just a wild negotiation because it was like: "You can't do this. You're a sovereign country and you can't just let your *commune* grab a factory because they want to." It just took an awful lot of finagling to get everyone to read from the same page. Eventually they gave it back.

Q: Did you get the feeling that federal government officials were very leery of dealing with Sicilians?

JONES: Yeah, exactly.

Q: A Guito might show up with a Mafioso friend…

JONES: We had a wonderful visit to Sicily. When I got there I was still fairly penuries because I was still paying child support and alimony. So instead of buying a new car, which I couldn't afford, I got to Italy and I thought I'd figure out what I'd get as a car while I was there. A guy on the staff (this was 1978) had just bought from a family up in Venico someplace an Alfa Mayo Spyder from about 1960. It was a beautiful car and his

wife wouldn't let him keep it because it was about at that time an 18 or 19 year old car. But where better to maintain an old Alfa than in Italy? I just had the best time, even though I couldn't spend a lot of money and it wasn't a lot of money at the time, and it became my car. One day we went off, my wife to be at that time still, and I went off to Sicily for a week's drive around in the spring and it was just glorious, back in the day. A lot has changed. We go back to Italy fairly often because we really enjoy it.

Q: Did you find yourself under the terrorist threat there?

JONES: Yeah, the *Brigate Rosse*. Exactly. Aldo Moro had just been killed before I got there – like a year before. At one point there was a siege in my neighborhood where the Red Brigades guys tried to take over the Christian Democrats party headquarters down on the Tiber, not too far from the Castel Saint Angelo on the main bank. They had a duel with machine guns for like 45 minutes as these things tend to happen in Italy. I don't think anyone was killed. It went on for the better part of an hour. Everybody went off licking their wounds. There was a bombing in a train.

Q: Well wasn't there that horrible bomb that went off in Milano?

JONES: That might not have been my time but there have been all these things. It was a pretty wild place and General Dozier was kidnapped in that same time – I think after my time.

Q: So you left in '81 and where did you go?

JONES: Lima.

Q: So we'll go to Lima next time.

[Note: This interview was not continued. January 2018]

End of interview